

BEASTS ON THE BATTLEFIELD

ANIMALS IN COMBAT



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Words in **bold** are in the glossary.

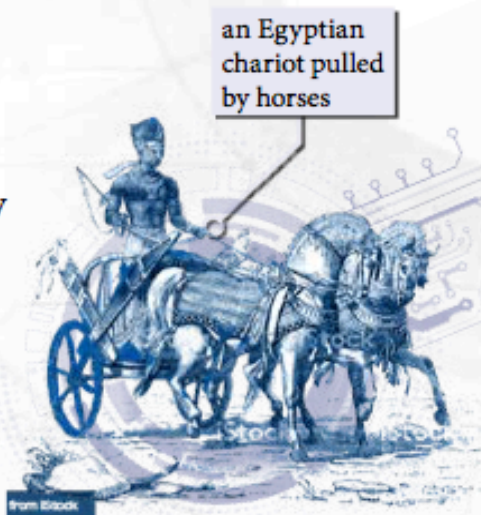
Charging into Battle

The War Horse

Throughout history, horses have been very important animals. Humans first tamed horses about 3500 BC. They were soon used in armies around the world.

In Ancient Egypt, horses pulled **chariots**. The speedy animals helped Egypt's soldiers strike quickly in battle. By the year AD 1200, Mongolian ruler Genghis Khan's army mastered war on horseback. By riding horses, his warriors could move swiftly against their enemies. Horses helped Khan to quickly conquer central Asia.

Horses were also prized by knights in **medieval** Europe. Knights on horseback were fierce warriors. They could easily defeat enemies on the ground. Horses were later brought to North America. Spanish armies used them to quickly take over parts of Mexico.



Fact:

Cavalries are armed forces on horseback. They have been used throughout history. Cavalries still play minor roles on battlefields today. Some U.S. soldiers ride horses to fight in Afghanistan's rugged mountains.



Giants of the Battlefield

War elephants were important in the ancient world. The sight of these mighty beasts struck fear into enemies. Soldiers rode in battle towers on the elephants' backs. These powerful animals could easily trample enemy soldiers.

soldiers in
battle tower

armor helped
protect the elephant



Hannibal's war elephants at the Battle of Zama in 202 BC

Carthage was an ancient empire led by Hannibal Barca. He wanted to attack the empire of Rome. At the time, Rome had the strongest army in the world. Rome was also protected by the Alps mountains. In 218 BC, Hannibal led his army and nearly 40 war elephants across the Alps. Hannibal failed in the end. But his elephants became legendary.

Fact:

The Romans had a creative defense against war elephants. The big beasts are terrified of pigs. The Romans released squealing pigs onto the battlefield. It caused the elephants to run in fear.

Dogs of War

Dogs were tamed by people more than 30,000 years ago. They were valuable hunting companions. Dogs later showed their worth in battle too.

Ancient armies often used dogs in war. Some dogs wore metal armor and spiked collars. They followed commands to attack enemies. In the 1500s, dogs helped Spanish explorers take over Mexico and Central America. They trained dogs to attack the native people.

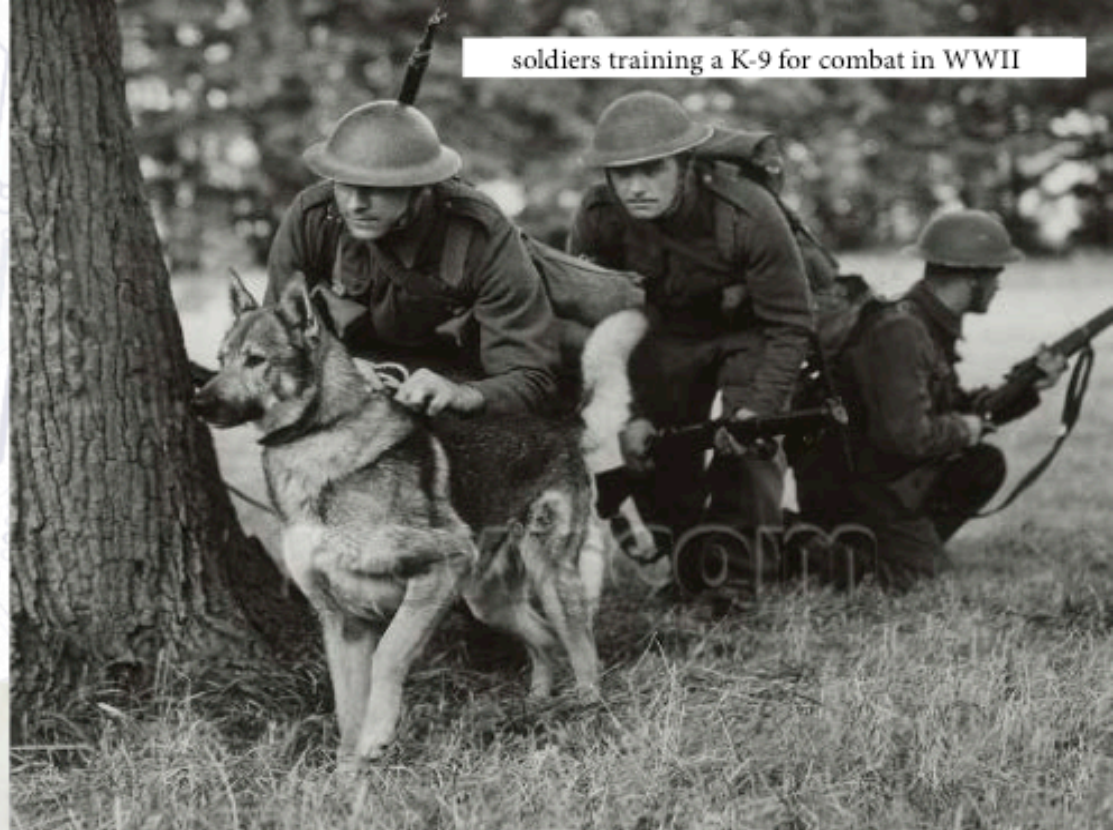
Fact:

Dogs were useful in World War I. Speedy dogs delivered messages across battlefields. They also helped find wounded soldiers.

message
container



soldiers training a K-9 for combat in WWII



Dogs have amazing senses of hearing and smell. During World War II (1939–1945), the U.S. army trained more than 10,000 guard dogs. They alerted soldiers about nearby enemies. This war dog program became known as the **K-9 Corps**.