

[Fun & Fundraisers](#) [Know Your Neighbor](#) [Lawn & Garden](#) [Senior Scene](#)

NEIGHBORHOOD EXTRA

http://journalstar.com/niche/neighborhood-extra/cats-and-world-war-i/article_6878e3f0-0f23-52ea-8f48-843e846cea8b.html

Cats and World War I

by Wilda Lyons / Coalition for Pet Protection May 30, 2017

This is the 100th anniversary of America's involvement in World War I.

On Memorial Day, we remembered and honored those who served, in that and other conflicts.

These brave soldiers of "the war to end all wars" faced horrible conditions. Not only from the dangers of battle, but of loneliness, boredom, and health threats from vermin.

Felines to the rescue!

Cats played important roles in World War I.

Throughout this war, cats were a very common sight. It is estimated that 500,000 felines were dispatched through the trenches. These cats helped keep the rodent population down, thus improving the health of the soldiers. Beyond these mousing duties, they served in the roles of regimental mascots and pets for lonely soldiers. They also helped save lives when detecting gas.

On ships, cats were also an integral part of the war effort. This tradition dates back thousands of years. Felines were considered good-luck charms, and given the run of a ship. Again, they kept the rodent population down, which is very important in the seafaring world. Rodents can chew through life saving ropes, and rapidly deplete food stores. Both scenarios at sea would be life-threatening to all aboard.

Togo, Pincher, and Ching were well-known feline ship mascots during WWI. Spark Plug was a feline mascot for an aviator squad. Pitouchi was probably the most famous feline of the ground troops. This cat was orphaned at a young age, and was adopted by Lieutenant LeKeux of the Belgium military. Pitouchi is credited for saving the Lieutenant's life, when he came across German Soldiers, Pitouchi provided a diversion, and the lieutenant was able to escape.

The cats' efforts kept the vermin at bay, and supplied much needed love and companionship to the soldiers. A "purr-fect" escape during a terrible time in history.

The Coalition for Pet Protection is a local, non-profit animal welfare organization. 2017 is our 25th year.

We specialize in funding assistance

for emergency feline care, and have an emergency animal food pantry. All donations are tax deductible, and

are used locally. The members of CPP would like to thank the Lincoln community for their generous

support on Give to Lincoln Day 2017. More information on CPP can be found on Facebook, and

at www.petcoalition.org, or by calling 402-434-7922.