

# THE USE OF DOGS IN WAR

## A FRENCHMAN'S NOTION OF THEM AS SOLDIERS.

### SOME INCIDENTS OF MILITARY HISTORY IN WHICH THE DOG HAS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART.

Should you take M. Le Lieut. Jupin's title to his interesting book and translate it literally the English of it would be "Military Dogs in the French Army." There is nothing like enthusiasm, and as to dogs Lieut. Jupin is full of it. He does not intimate that by using dogs as part and parcel of an army organization France is to win back Alsace and Lorraine, wresting them from the Germans, but he advances the idea that by employing dogs for particular military duties the advantages would be very great.

The utility of the carrier pigeon need not be demonstrated. When Paris was besieged all methods of communication were stopped; but for an occasional balloon and many pigeons the second city of the world would have been isolated. In war every possible thing which can be utilized should be brought into play, and man's best friend, the dog, can be made to serve a purpose in times of strife.

The dog's sense of smell is exquisite. It is probable that his hearing is more delicate and sensitive than that of a man's, and we know well enough that he runs faster and keeps up his speed longer than his master. Having these traits, Lieut. Jupin wants the dog to play soldier, and regularly attach him to the military formation. M. Jupin informs us that Germany, Austria, Russia, are all now at work with soldier dogs. There is nothing exactly new in this world, for the Greeks and Romans used dogs as auxiliaries in war. Vegetius, in his "De re Militari," wrote: "It is the custom to have dogs possessing a fine sense of smell, and to let these sleep in the forts. They can scent the enemy, and will at once bark, and so put the garrison on guard." In Herculaneum there is a bas-relief representing a huge dog, protected by a coat of mail, who is fighting the enemies of Rome. Every now and then historical notices may be found of dogs attached to armed bodies of men, and accounts are given of their usefulness.

In 1799 Napoleon wrote to Marmont about the dogs so common in Egypt, advising him to make use of them. "Tie up some of those dogs near the walls." The inference was that they would bark when any one came near. There is the record of that famous dog Moustache, who took part in many a fight during the wars of the Consulate and First Empire. We have no reason to suppose that Moustache was a dog educated in a military sense, capable of going through his faucings. Moustache loved to fight for fighting's sake, for the glory of the thing. During the Italian campaign of 1800 a detachment of Austrians ensconced themselves in a valley near Balbo, stole a night's march on the French, and there would have been a surprise had it not been for Moustache, who barked so lustily that he woke up the camp and the Austrians were repulsed. Some time after that Moustache nosed out an Austrian spy, who had stolen into the French camp in a disguise. It is told of Moustache that at Austerlitz he saved the regimental colors. The standard bearer had been killed when Moustache seized the blood-stained banner, pulled it out of the hands of the Austrians, and trotted back in triumph with it to his company. This dramatic dog, M. Jupin tells us, was rewarded for this noble action—"Moustache was decorated by Maréchal Lannes." Moustache, who was undoubtedly a plucky dog, if only a part of his warlike qualities are to be believed, lives always in the drama. That fight for the standard still electrifies pit and boxes. To keep up, however, all the traditions the Moustache of the stage ought to be a poodle, for of that race was the original hero of Austerlitz. And, by the way, let not the poodle be despised, for he is the leader of the canine race, has no superior in intelligence or fidelity, and has a much finer nose than he is credited with.

It is a historic fact that a well-laid attempt to surprise Athens came to naught because Turkish hounds gave notice of the advance of the Greeks. In Corsica, where murder is still common and natives and gendarmes are always at outs, those who work in the vendetta business owe their safety to their dogs. The dogs watch for the coming of the gendarme, smell him at a long distance, and run full speed to their master and give him the news.

In the minor wars between the French and Arabs the former have often used dogs. The small French garrison at Milianah owned an intelligent caniche. Every day the dog made a reconnaissance of his own accord, and showed by his actions exactly where the Arabs had sought cover. Lieut. Jupin gives information derived from an officer who was on service in Africa some five years ago. There was a campaign directed toward Southern Tunis. In the French service there are Spahie and Turcos, scarcely distinguishable in dress from the true Arabs, but the French dog never blundered. If he saw an object moving in the distance he would go at the top of his speed toward it, and if he barked that made it certain that there was an enemy too near. It was after Ghéok-Tépt that Skobeleff advised the use of dogs as aids to advanced sentinels. Four years ago the Germans began paying attention to the training of dogs for military purposes.

Lieut. Jupin presents many cases of surprises in 1870 occurring both to his own service and to the Germans, and believed that if dogs had been in use nothing of the kind could have happened. He tells of a French Sergeant who, in the ugly work of killing sentinels, boasted of having shot not less than 27 Germans by stealing up to them and dispatching them. If these poor fellows had dogs the marauding Frenchman could not have continued his murdering business. A clever bit of strategy was one in which the Saxons got the better of the French, near Ville Evrard, on Dec. 21, 1870. The Saxons hid themselves during the day in caves, and sallying out at night completely disconcerted the French. A smart fox terrier would have nosed them out, and a wide-awake officer would have noticed that there was something uncommon going on within those caves.

In 1870 the Prussians were very much addicted to night surprises, which always are risky. M. Jupin says that these attacks on the part of the Germans were entirely too successful. Before the French knew of it, down were the Prussians in the middle of them. A dog is no more timid at night than in the daytime. His vigilance even increases at dusk. So M. Jupin argues quite correctly that had there been regularly-trained dogs in the French service these night attacks would have been successfully parried by the French. In the theory of war, at least, no surprise is admissible, least of all a night surprise, for then the utmost vigilance is supposed to be exerted.

Honor to whom honor is due; and if protection has done little that is useful in this world, we are at least indebted to it for a race of highly-intelligent dogs (without, perhaps, much moral sense) who have grown upon the confines of France and Belgium and the Spanish frontier. From the smugglers' school of dog instruction Lieut. Jupin has acquired many useful suggestions. The dog census of what is called *les chiens fraudeurs* is a big one—100,000—and they carry contraband goods from Belgium to France, principally tobacco, lace, and coffee. At first the puppy is familiarized with the goods he is to carry, so that he knows pretty much the character of the merchandise. When still a puny and unsophisticated dog the smuggler, who has treated him so far kindly, acts toward him as does the bad uncle in "Aladdin." He carries him beyond the border, and leaves him with a brother smuggler, who pens up doggy. At night he is untied, gets a good licking instead of a supper, and is allowed to escape. Of course he makes all the speed he can to find his dear old master and his cherished kennel at home. Once there he is rewarded with a lump of sugar and caresses. The dog has a number of experiences of this kind, beginning with the stick and ending with the sugar. Then he knows by heart that as soon as he gets away from his home it is expected that he will make the quickest and shortest tracks homeward. Then he is loaded for the first time with a light burden, and if he gets through all right in time he carries his regular pack. After a while not one dog, but a whole band of them, move off together, but there is something more than this.

Only the common dogs are the beasts of burden, for there are animals among them endowed with a superior intelligence. The cleverest of these graduates acts as the leader. He has no tobacco or lace to carry. He is the captain. He noses the other dogs clear of it—shows them the road—and takes them through a by-track out of the line of the trouble. But set a thief to catch a thief, and so the French *douanier* has been taught his lesson, and as "imitation is the sincerest flattery," he, too, has his trained politico-economic dog, whose business it is to find out and thwart the dodges and doublings of the smugglers' dogs.

Lieut. Jupin does not tell us exactly which of the two kinds of dogs are the cleverer. Certainly we are not going to express publicly our sympathies or advance the idea that overprotection induces in both men and dogs a certain loss of self-respect, a flabbiness of mental fibre, but from what we have heard the commercial Belgian dog far exceeds in cleverness the French Governmental dog nine times out of ten. M. Jupin tells us that at and around Charleville there is a brigade of 1,033 Custom House officers, who have for auxiliaries over 805 dogs, and that the capture of the free trade dog amounts to about one in the hundred. Evidently the French dog has not his heart in the business.

The particular duties M. Jupin would entail on the dog are various. In all cases it is his vigilance which is to be called upon. A sentinel has his dog, and the animal warns the man of the approach of a friend or an enemy. In a reconnaissance dogs run on in advance and sit-

ing the presence of an enemy, no matter where concealed. If dogs are used in an advance there is the impossibility of blundering into an ambuscade. In flanking supports on a march dogs would be equally serviceable. In the rear no sudden attack could be made if dogs were taught to follow the column. When in camp at night a dog or a number of them would give notice of an enemy's approach. This all follows the natural instincts of the animal and he requires but little instruction.

Where education and training come in is in making dogs the method of communication between various posts. A picket could have a dog attached to it, the dog wearing a collar. A few words written on a bit of paper and slipped into the collar could be carried by the dog to an advance post or to the main body or to headquarters. M. Jupin tells how it is done, the dog following the direction given him by motion of the soldier's hand or of any soldiers who happen to see him. As a dog can travel fast and pass through, over, and under obstacles which would stop a man, a message could in many cases reach headquarters faster than by a mounted courier. A dog can be made to swim rivers which a man on horseback would find troublesome. M. Jupin calls this dog, specially trained, "*le chien-estafette*," and a courier dog follows perfectly the French words.

There is one service M. Jupin believes a dog capable of performing which seems to us to be rather more difficult to accomplish. He proposes that the dog be used, during action, as a carrier of ammunition. A French soldier when on the line of battle is supposed to be able to get as a maximum supply not less than 175 cartridges. The 78 rounds the man carries have to be supplemented by 97 more. The ammunition wagons are supposed to furnish all deficiencies, and between the wagons and the firing line soldiers bring the men additional cartridges if they are wanted. This service space is just as dangerous as the front, and carrying on their duties, many men must be killed. Would dogs supply the places of the regular ammunition distributors? M. Jupin's dogs, then, are to be trained like the smugglers' dogs, and are to carry their loads of cartridges between the points of supply and demand, and he gives us the picture of an exceedingly wide-awake dog who has strapped on both sides of him a case containing cartridges.

After the battle there can be no doubt that the dog, if employed to find out the wounded, would be the means of saving many a life. Oh! the untold misery of the poor wounded man who, at nightfall, drags himself behind a tree or hedge and cannot move. At the military manœuvre at Luben, the Prussians tried what dogs might do if used to find out "make-believe" wounded men. After the sham battle certain men were told off who were to hide themselves in out-of-the-way places and play dead. The dogs found them all out, and, more than that, the sagacious brutes ran to litter bearers and the ambulance corps and brought them at once to the places where the men had dropped.

Some of the methods of training are amusing, but they all enter into the category of serious dog lessons. If France has no friendly feeling toward Prussia she takes a dummy, dresses it like a German, and the dog is taught to attack it. He has this impressed on his canine mind—that the dummy hates him and has a stick concealed somewhere. If necessary the French property man can change the dress of the dummy and make him an Italian.

What breed of dog is the best for military purposes is not yet quite decided upon. Excellent results have been derived from setters, but setters which have never been hunted. The shepherd dog, the most intelligent of all animals, M. Jupin tells us, has showed excellent traits. The Germans use that peculiar, ugly, lumbering bluehound, which has not, we think, a single redeeming trait. For outpost duty a fox terrier, with his nervous activity and quickness, makes a good dog. The trailing qualities of the foxhounds would be often called into use. The color of the dog should be looked at, as white dogs would be too visible. There are many "yaller dogs," perhaps, which would be excellent—heroes, in fact, whose fine qualities have never been appreciated. Crosses with St. Bernards, even of the mastiff, might make good "war dogs."

It would be interesting if some of our military organizations in New-York would take a dog and teach him what to do. That dog might go first through a course of private training, and when an encampment was in order during the Summer the capabilities of the animal could be tested. There are plenty of men in the National Guards who are sportsmen familiar with the breaking of dogs who could readily train a dog for at least all the more easily acquired military accomplishments. English has not that plastic quality French possesses or we would try and translate what M. Jupin means when he writes: "Ces chiens se militariseront aux-mêmes en quelque sort." The nearest thing on a translation would be: "Dogs militarize themselves almost of their own accord."

This clever and hard-working French officer loves the dog and knows all about him, and the dog respects him, otherwise he never could have written: "Every officer knows how the soldier loves his dog, and if he has the chance how he pets him, and he, wanting only a slight caress, expresses at once his delight."

Dogs in the men's quarters are often declared nuisances by officers in our own service, but some not quite martinetts, remembering the good services that the truest friend of man has rendered, wink at the canine presence. Special prizes for the dog shows of 1890 and 1891 might be thought about. These dogs ought to belong to and to be trained only by members of the National Guard. Awards could be given to those dogs who would best work out problems of a purely military character. The points would have no reference to the physical condition of the dog, but only his intelligence. It would not be in the stubble field, but on the mimic *champ de bataille* that merits could be adjudged.