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## Military dogs diagnosed with PTSD

Published: Thursday, August 12, 2010, 8:07 AM

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Military dogs are coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan with something resembling post-traumatic stress disorder, according to a **story by the Associated Press**. An Air Force sergeant with a Portland pooch connection helps the dogs recover.

The dogs, which are used for bomb-sniffing and patrol purposes, mostly, are subjected to loud explosions and traumatic events such as riding in trucks that flip over after running over explosive devices.

PTSD is of course well-documented among the men and women returning from the wars. Some veterinarians are hesitant to label the dogs' symptoms as PTSD, because they think it would demean the soldiers suffering from it, and because behavioral changes are harder to pin-point without verbal communication.

But everyone agrees that some of the dogs that were friendly and energetic before they shipped overseas come back as shadows of their former selves.

The dog described in the AP story is just beginning to show its usual behavior again, one year after returning from Iraq. Gina, as the dog is called, came back terrified of humans, the kennel master of Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado said in the story. He and other handlers have slowly nursed the dog's psyche back to health.

That kennel master, by the way, is Master Sgt. Eric Hayes. When he's not helping dogs recuperate from the battlefield – or preparing others to go to battle – he's a trainer for **Angel Service Dogs**. The Colorado non-profit takes dogs from a Portland breeder and turns them into allergy dogs, which help children detect the presence of substances to which they are deathly allergic.

An Australian Labradoodle named Benelli, portrayed in a **recent Pet Talk column** about a Vancouver girl who depends on the dog daily, was trained by Hayes.

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