

★★

75¢

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

THE OLDEST NEWSPAPER IN ILLINOIS™

SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 11, 2006

# Dog of the Year

*Shepherd receives national honor for saving area family*

By **JAYETTE BOLINSKI**  
 STAFF WRITER

LITTLETON — It's a canine rags-to-riches story, if ever there was one. Lucy, a 4-year-old German shepherd, went from a life of neglect and running loose on the streets of Chicago to being adopted by a loving family in rural northern Schuyler County. But the story doesn't stop there. She saved her family earlier this year when their house filled with

**"A DOG running the streets of Chicago ended up ... at a no-kill shelter, and two years later, is being honored by the ASPCA."**

— JENNIFER GORSUCH, LUCY'S OWNER

smoke from an electrical fire. On Nov. 2, Lucy was named the national Dog of the Year by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

"It's amazing to me that a dog running the streets of Chicago ended up through a series of events at a no-kill shelter, and two years later, is being honored by the ASPCA," said Lucy's owner, Jennifer Gorsuch, who squealed, then cried, when she got the phone call that Lucy had been named the dog of the year.

"I would call that rags to riches, in my opinion. She went from a street dog to a home and a family that loves her. She didn't have to do anything heroic for us," Gorsuch said.

Lucy is a happy, high-energy Houdini who sometimes manages to escape from her crate and loves to go for walks.

Gorsuch first saw Lucy in May 2004 at the Quincy Humane Society's no-kill shelter. Gorsuch's previous German shepherd, Sassy, had died in October 2003, and she had begun looking for another shepherd on www.petfinder.org.

The Quincy shelter had posted Lucy's photo on the site. The dog had been at a municipal animal shelter in Chicago, where there is an 80 percent kill rate, after being found wandering the streets. A member of the Quincy Humane Society visiting that shelter saw something special in Lucy.

It was love at first sight for Gorsuch.

"(Lucy) was very excitable in her cage, desperately trying to get my attention," she recalled. "I think people had walked by her cage so much — she's a big dog, she's barking, and that's intimidating to a lot of people — I think she was simply trying to get attention. She got mine."

All the attention the Gorsuch family gave Lucy was repaid — "tenfold," Gorsuch said — one night last March. The family had gone to bed, but at about 1 a.m., Lucy climbed on top of Gorsuch, stood on her chest and barked in her face until she woke up.

"I begrudgingly got out of bed,

See **DOG** on page 4

"The people that fly now wouldn't believe the things we did with that aircraft."

JOHN JEWETT

# FLIGHT TIME

Members of 187th Assault Helicopter Company remember Vietnam War from the seat of a Huey

By **DANIEL PIKE**  
 STAFF WRITER

John Jewett pops the trunk of his car and digs around for a moment, finally producing the green flight helmet he wore in the Vietnam War, when he flew UH-1 "Huey" helicopters for the Army's 187th Assault Helicopter Company.

The government said Jewett wasn't allowed to keep the fiberglass helmet, which still has his name painted on the back. But he shipped it home anyway. It's his lucky helmet, after all.

"I got shot when I was wearing this," says Jewett, 61, of Petersburg, who organized this year's reunion of the 187th in Springfield.

Someone asks where.

"In the face," Jewett says. "How in the hell does that make it lucky?" laughs Bob Bess, 64, Jewett's good friend and a fellow Huey pilot for the 187th.

Jewett flips down the plastic visor, which covers the wearer's eyes. The rounds that pierced Jewett's chopper that day sent shards of glass flying through the cockpit. Much of it embedded in Jewett's face — so deep that for years Jewett would find bits of it while shaving — but the visor spared him from almost certain blindness. See, it really is lucky.

A UH-1H Huey, much like the ones Jewett and Bess flew, arrived Friday outside the Route 66 Hotel and Conference Center on East Joseph Street, courtesy of the Prairie Aviation Museum in Bloomington.

The helicopter — tail No. 67-17832 — which has been restored and repainted, saw time with the 187th in Vietnam. Some reunion attendees this weekend actually flew or worked on the helicopter in the war.

## Veterans Day parade route

The Veterans Day parade will form at 9 a.m. today at the parking lot on the south side of Madison Street between First and Second streets. The parade will step off at 10:15 a.m. and proceed down Second Street to the Capitol. The Springfield High School marching band will provide music.

The parade route is different this year to accommodate the visiting 187th Assault Helicopter Company's UH-1H "Huey," which is too large to pass under the railroad bridge on Capitol Avenue, said Bill Peters, commander of the Interveterans Council of Sangamon County.

An 11 a.m. ceremony after the parade will be in the auditorium at the Howlett Building, 501 S. Second St. The speaker will be Sgt. 1st Class Peter Dowding, who served in Somalia and Iraq and is a recipient of the Purple Heart.

**Below: Members of the 187th Assault Helicopter Company patrol near their base in Tay Ninh, Vietnam, in 1969.**

Photograph by John Jewett



VISIT SJ-R.COM

for an audio slide show about John Jewett and his experience flying a "Huey" during the Vietnam War.

"Some of these guys haven't been in one of them since Vietnam," Jewett says of the aircraft, which will be featured during today's Veterans Day parade.

The ships are held in high regard by members of the 187th. They know the machines inside and out; they managed to land them despite bullet damage and major malfunctions; they carted soldiers to safety in the Hueys.

In many ways, the Hueys and their pilots formed close relationships. After all those hours and close calls, it became hard to tell where the human ended and the machine began.

"When you fly 100 or 150 hours — I flew 182 hours one month, that's actual air time — you get to where that helicopter is just a reflex," Jewett says. "You see the whole panel without looking at it. You don't think about flying. We used to say we just strapped the thing to our ass and took off."

"The people that fly now wouldn't believe the things we did with that aircraft."

Eddie Lucero, a crew chief, flew combat missions with Jewett in Vietnam. They experienced things that were intense and unsettling, the sort of things many of their "brothers," as they call other 187th members, still struggle to speak about.

See **FLIGHT** on page 5



# Police still searching for armed robber

*Shooting victim in fair condition*

By **JAYETTE BOLINSKI**  
 STAFF WRITER

Police on Friday called the shooting of a man and armed robbery of an elderly woman outside a currency exchange Thursday evening "heinous."

No one had been arrested in connection with the crime as of Friday evening.

The shooting victim, a 32-year-old Springfield man, was listed in fair condition at St. John's Hospital, where he was being treated for a gunshot wound to the abdomen.

The 78-year-old woman, whose purse was snatched by the gunman immediately after he shot the man, was not injured.

"We are vigorously pursuing this. The heinous nature of the crime

that was committed is cause for concern," said Sgt. Pat Ross, spokesman for the Springfield Police Department. "We are pursuing all investigative avenues."

The crime happened just before 5 p.m. in the parking lot of Springfield Currency Exchange, 2800 S. MacArthur Blvd.

According to police, the robber walked up to the first victim, who

had just paid a bill inside the business and was getting into a white pickup truck.

The robber began banging on the truck's window and demanding cash, but the victim told him he didn't have any. The robber pulled out a handgun and shot the victim

See **ROBBER** on page 4

© 2006, The State Journal-Register, a division of Copley Press, Inc. All rights reserved. Our 176th year, No. 2

7 94683 22222 3

Delivery questions? Call 788-1440

## INDEX

ADVICE	14	MARKETPLACE	17
AT HOME	16	OBITUARIES	38
CITY/STATE	8	OUTDOORS	11
CLASSIFIED	23	POLICE BEAT	9
COMICS	44	PUZZLES	37
ENTERTAINMENT	14	RELIGION NEWS	10
FOR THE RECORD	9	SPORTS	39
HOROSCOPE	37	YOUR OPINION	7



WEB SITE

Stay connected with breaking news.

## HOLIDAY HELP

People are giving to Friend-In-Deed.

Page 9



## SUNDAY

### DEERLESS DECADES

Remember when deer were rare in Illinois and couldn't be hunted?

## WEATHER

Clearing and much colder today; high 40. Clear tonight; low 29. Sunny Sunday; high 55.



More on page 22





Justin L. Fowler/The State Journal-Register

**Bob Bess and John Jewett go over a map of Vietnam during a reunion at the Route 66 Hotel and Convention Center.**

# FLIGHT

## ■ From page 1

More than 35 years later, those things bond the men. And it's impossible to leave Vietnam behind.

"I call him 'Mr. Jewett' because I respect him," Lucero, 57, says. "Everybody else here we talk to on a first-name basis, but Mr. Jewett was Mr. Jewett. You keep that respect for Mr. Jewett. He was just that kind of a person."

Lucero, of Espanola, N.M., is one of 97 unit members and about 200 family members who are in Springfield from across the country. This is the seventh edition of the gathering, which is held in a different city each Veterans Day weekend.

The reunions, which began in 2000, ended decades of little or no contact among many of the men.

"In my life, there's always been a year missing," says Lucero, who served with the unit from 1969 to 1970. "I've never had any verification that that year even existed, you know what I mean? Since I started coming to the reunions, it kind of lets me realize that year re-

ally did happen."

There's plenty of testosterone and hilarious trash talk. But the respect Lucero expressed for Jewett is apparent throughout the gathering — the men genuinely call each other "heroes" and sing the praises of their brothers.

Still, it's the quieter times, when stories are recalled and emotions resurface, that seem to draw the men back year after year.

It's a chance to connect in ways combat never allowed, Jewett said.

"There was a very, very odd closeness and camaraderie, but nothing you would call emotional contact," Jewett says of the war. "When one out of five people are going to be killed, you don't get attached."

The 187th AHC, originally called the Blackhawks and later the Crusaders, flew combat assaults exclusively from 1967 to 1972 out of Tay Ninh Province in southwestern Vietnam. Jewett, who served with the unit from 1968 to 1969, said the 187th logged more than twice the air hours of an average unit, and "the fact that we didn't do anything but combat assaults meant that we did it better than everybody else."

After the war, the members of the 187th scattered. By the late 1990s, Bess was wondering where everyone went.

Bess and Jewett were close in Vietnam — "he was my personal barber," Bess says. So Bess, who had secured a partial unit roster from another member, cold-called Jewett one day.

"I couldn't hardly talk," Jewett says. "I was kind of dumbfounded. I didn't know what to say, and he said, 'Well, I'll be out next week.' He lived in West by-God Virginia, and he came out here."

"I thought, 'Man, after nearly 40 years, what the hell's this going to be like?'" Jewett says. "I've trusted this guy with my life and everything, but what if it turns out he's a jerk and we're nothing like we were back then? And there's a lot of wounds and things that you're not really sure you want to open."

The meeting turned out so well, though, that the men began talking about getting the unit back together. That happened in 2000, when the 187th gathered near Tampa, Fla. Since then, reunions have been held across the country.

Bess says Jewett's initial hesitation isn't uncommon. Reunion or-

ganizers are still trying to convince some guys to come out.

And just the other night, Bess says, a reunion rookie became emotional when a fellow soldier's death was mentioned. The other members helped console the man. After all, the 187th prides itself on the phrase "leave no one behind."

"That's what these things are for," Bess says. "I'm willing to bet my next paycheck that next year he'll be back, and it'll be a lot easier for him."

It's easy to think the passage of time helps the men better handle the emotions. But Bess isn't sure that's the case. In fact, he wishes the reunions began long before they actually did.

"Some people carry this thing to this day," he says. "Some of them still have the nightmares and so on. I never have, I never came home and shot my grandmother or robbed a bank, but some of them did."

"And for those people, I think the earlier we got started with these things, the better off they would have been."

Daniel Pike can be reached at 788-1532 or [daniel.pike@sj-r.com](mailto:daniel.pike@sj-r.com).