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***SMOKY WWII WAR DOG HERO RECEIVES AUSTRALIA RSPCA PURPLE CROSS AWARD***

**December 15, 2015 (CLEVELAND)** - On December 11, 2015, the **Purple Cross Award**, Australia's Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' (RSPCA) most prestigious animal bravery award, was bestowed upon Smoky, a tiny Yorkshire Terrier who served in New Guinea and the Philippines during World War II, by Rocky River Mayor Pamela Bobst, on behalf of the City of Rocky River and Queensland, Australia's RSPCA.

The award was presented to Smoky and WWII Army Air Force Veteran William A. Wynne, age 93, her owner and trainer during and after the war, at a special ceremony at the Rocky River Library on Friday afternoon. Simultaneously, Nigel Allsopp, author of *Smoky The War Dog*, on behalf of RSPCA Queensland President Andrew Tribe, acknowledged the award in Australia. A memorial statue to Smoky resides at Australia's War Memorial at the Queensland Wacol Animal Care Campus in Brisbane, Australia.

The presentation of the **Purple Cross Award** was preceded by William A. Wynne's presentation, *"The Story of Smoky The WWII Dog Hero,"* and was attended by a very large crowd.

**About 'Smoky The War Dog'**

**Smoky** not only performed numerous acts of bravery during war times; she also became known as the first published, post-traumatic stress canine. A 4 lb. (1.81 kg) high 7 in. (180 mm) tall Smoky was found in a New Guinea jungle foxhole in March, 1944 by an American soldier. The soldier sold the Yorkshire Terrier to then-Corporal William A. Wynne for two Australian pounds.

"Smoky" spent the next 18 months moving about in a backpack, and going on combat flights with Corporal Wynne, who served in the 26<sup>th</sup> Photo Reconnaissance Squadron of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force. During this time Smoky also learned to parachute from a tree.

Smoky became a bona fide hero in January 1945 when, on Luzon Island in the Philippines, she helped engineers lay teletype communication wire beneath the 70-foot wide airstrip. Smoky was placed into an 8 inch diameter pipe with a kite string tied to her collar so that a telephone line could be attached to it and delivered to the other side of the airstrip. Corporal Wynne called the tiny dog from the far end of the pipe, and despite darkness and many blockages of sand and soil leaving her with only a few inches of headroom, Smoky was able to achieve this feat within two minutes. Her efforts turned what would otherwise have been a three-day dangerous exercise into only several minutes, enabling the airfield to remain open, saving 40 planes and 250 ground crew personnel from exposure to enemy fire.

When Corporal Wynne ended up in a New Guinea hospital with Dengue Fever, nurses took Smoky on their rounds with them, where Smoky became the “first therapy dog of record.” Smoky’s work with wounded soldiers helped many to cope with the terrible injuries they received, and the horrific sights they had seen, in what today is recognized as battlefield PTSD. Smoky also visited the sick and wounded at the U.S. 109th Fleet Hospital and at the 42nd General Hospital in Brisbane, Australia.

Smoky went on to be credited with 12 combat missions, and was awarded eight battle stars. She entered the United States in a specially designed flight oxygen mask carrying case, and went to live and work with Bill in Cleveland, Ohio. Often known as “Yorkie Doodle Dandy,” the title of William A. Wynne’s book, Smoky spent the rest of her life as a medical therapy dog, visiting hospitals, nursing homes and orphanages. She also entertained on a live, weekly local television show in Cleveland with William Wynne as “Mr. Pokey”, performing new tricks for families every Sunday morning.

Smoky has six monuments dedicated to her throughout the United States, and two in Australia. Smoky passed away in 1957 at the age of 14, and was laid to rest in the Cleveland, Ohio Metroparks. William A. Wynne served his post-war years in Hollywood as a dog trainer, and later as a recognized NACA (NASA) photographer and Cleveland Plain Dealer photojournalist. He presently resides in Mansfield, Ohio.

#### **About the Australia RSPCA Purple Cross Award**

The **RSPCA Australia Purple Cross Award** was established in 1993 to recognize the deeds of animals that have shown outstanding service to humans, particularly where they have demonstrated exceptional courage, by risking their own safety or life, to save a person from injury or death. Since its inception, only nine animals have been awarded the prestigious award.

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Studio A LLC is a Cleveland, Ohio music composition, production, publishing and recording business that is also engaged in film development, promotion and production, including feature film development for *Smoky The War Dog*. David C. Tabar is President.