

Moustache - The Barbet Hero | barbets Wierciłapa (en)

<http://kula.ndl.pl/en/moustache/>

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Have you ever wondered what animals accompanied the Grand Army? Quite simple – horses pulling mules ... , maybe the cattle driven in the role of live stocks. Eagles? Also, but rather, as emblems and coats of arms. More interested in the topic, will start to think ... maybe dolphins? After all, someone has created a plan of crossing the English Channel on these mammals, each soldier had to have his own water horse. There are bees also, hard-working insect with the letter „N” was a sign of Bonaparte. Pigeons? That is all, even in my modest library dedicated to the era, none of the authors did not devote even the shortest note to the dogs.

Moustache history began in 1799 (and thus in the year in which Napoleon’s star began to shine) when [40th regiment](#) (or if you like half-brigade) infantry marched through Caen in Normandy, heading to the front. Puppy of a local baker, was lured by the sounds of fun playing drums and stood long time to watch the motley soldiers, and when the regiment went out of town, he followed. For three days Barbet was keeping a safe distance from the regiment. At night, he circled around, and wandered through the surrounding swamps and marshes. On the fourth day when he approached the camp he was one big ball of dry mud. How do he have to look like if the soldiers nicknamed the dog „moustache”? , while the name of the breed comes from the characteristic beard? It is interesting that in the near future, the moustache will become a compulsory part of the appearance of veterans of Napoleon’s army.



At thirteenth of June 1800 during the Italian Campaign, dog detected an Austrian spy who infiltrated the camp. The evening the same day the French encamped in the valley of Balbo, in the middle of the night barking dog woke up the sleeping soldiers, the angry man couldn’t calm him down. Soon the „awaken” camp was attacked by the enemy using the cover of darkness. Soldiers repelled the enemy with difficulty and Moustache was slightly injured during skirmish. Everyone knew who they owe their lives to. A day later, Barbet took part in the Battle of Marengo, a warrant officer was defended by him against an attack of another dog. This was his service during the fight – always at the center of the regiment at the side of a warrant officer.

Fame came on the day of the greatest victory of Napoleon. On December 1805 – on fields of Austerlitz stood more than 150,000 soldiers. Fortieth regiment was positioned on the left wing, in front of Bagration, under the command of the Marshal [Jean Lannes](#) (the regiment was part of the second division of Vth Corps). On the opposite flank, Napoleon set 9,000 people under Davout, facing over 30,000 enemies. It is here where under the guidance of the brilliant Marshal took place the crucial part of battle. At the nine hell was unleashed. Davout hardly



maintained position, while Lannes was supposed to gain the position of the enemy. At about the fourteenth, when the battle was already won, Lannes ordered the attack. The French attacked the Russians, after one of the battles scarred troops retreated to reorganize before the next attack. Then it turned out that on the field between the armies remains severely wounded soldier with the regimental flag and with the eagle. The loss of these „relics” given by the Emperor himself was a



disgrace for each regiment and would be a strong blow to the morale of the troops (the loss of the eagle, occurred only once.) A dying soldier with last ounce of strength wrapped in the flag, to impede the opponent from gaining it. The distance between the armies was approximately 300

meters. Under the deadly fire there was no possibility of reaching the wounded. The Frenchman was left alone ... almost alone, dog keeping always close to the standard-bearer also this time did not leave, despite the heavy fire Barbet stood by the dying. This scene was so incredible that nearby troops ceased fighting. Fire (including artillery) on a narrow stretch was only maintained by the Russians trying to kill the dog. For several seconds without move, Moustache was targeted by several hundreds of cannons and rifles. Before the soldier died, the dog was hit twice. We do not know if the soldier gave him the last command, or the dog knew what to do. Moments later, pulling a banner Barbet headed back to their own. Loosing lot and ineffectiveness of the fire let the angry Russians to release their Great Dane, this over 60kg colossus sped towards the smaller opponent. Wounded Moustache, with the banner in his mouth, had no chance to escape when the dog approached, Barbet proudly turned in his direction and took the fight. The extraordinary event was watched by few thousand people, the officers of high ranks and Marshal Lannes himself. Nobody knew how Moustache done what they had witnessed. After a short fight Great Dane lay dead, and wounded Barbet arrived at the French line. Soldiers immediately brought out the little hero from the battlefield, the dog has been bandaged (except for two gunshot, he had broken his paw). Since in Napoleon's army everyone was measured by his deeds, and Jean Lannes, was the hero of the army, not without reason, so no one was surprised by visit, he made to a wounded dog. Gasconian decorated dog for bravery with a medal minted in silver, saying: „Moustache, French dog, a brave soldier, worthy of respect” on the back and „In the battle of Austerlitz, wounded with a broken paw, he saved the banner of the regiment. ” By the command of Marshal dog was enlisted to the payroll of the regiment, receiving a full food rations and pay. A few days later, Barbet was presented to Napoleon, for whom he performed some tricks. Emperor laughed, when after saying „the enemies of Napoleon, ” Barbet raised the rear paw. Another version says that that Moustache was saluting the Emperor



Moustache traveled across Europe, fought at Jena and Friedland (and thus in Poland), together with the regiment he went to the unfortunate Spain, where the star of Napoleon began to fade. In 1809, V Corps, participated in the second siege of Saragossa. On March 11, 1811, after twelve years of service, during the siege of Badajoz, the cannonball reached our Barbet veteran, the soldiers buried him on the battlefield, on the tombstone were the only two words: „Brave Moustache”. Unfortunately, the Spaniards destroyed the tomb and bones of the dog were dug up and burned. Few years later the same Spaniards, will ask falling Emperor for help.

Moustache was not only known Barbet era, a faithful guardian Moffino separated from the owner in far Russia, crossed half of Europe to find him in Milan. There was also a famous magazine keeper Toffino and Barbuche the watchman, who lost a paw in defending regimental drummer. Their stories are a task for a professional historian.

Napoleon wanders through the camp, asking veterans playing cards:

- How is the game going for the brave Moustache?

- He has good cards, but... he wags his tail then.



March 11, 2006 year in Asnieres-sur-comme commemorative plate was unveiled



Sources

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