

## Soldiers Fight to Get Dog Out of Baghdad

**SPCA International launched Operation Baghdad Pups to help soldiers bring their adopted dogs to the United States.**

Posted: November 27, 2007, 5 a.m. EST

Charlie waits in Iraq as the soldiers who adopted him and the SPCA International try to take him to the United States. Courtesy of SPCA International The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) International recently launched a new campaign aimed at helping dogs in Baghdad – an effort spurred by a dog named Charlie.

Soldiers stationed in Iraq from the unit known as Charlie Company were on patrol when they encountered a weak, malnourished puppy who they suspected would not live to see the next day. Attempting to provide comfort for a dog at death's door, the soldiers scooped up the puppy, wrapped him in a blanket, and gave him leftover food and clean water. Not only did the dog make it through the night, but he began to recover. The soldiers named the dog Charlie and declared him the unit's mascot.

Soldiers from Charlie Company contacted the SPCA in September hoping to get Charlie out of Iraq and to the United States before their unit is reassigned. Upon reassignment, they'll be forced to leave Charlie behind where he'll face a perilous, uncertain future.

Many obstacles stand in the way when attempting to get a pet out of Iraq – and costs are estimated at \$3,000 to \$4,000 per dog. The multiple-step process begins with vaccinations followed by a 30-day waiting period. Additional steps include secondary vaccinations, blood tests, veterinary assessments, a 30-day quarantine, and air transport to the United States.

Charlie recently received his first set of vaccinations and is currently in his 30-day waiting period.

Although it's against military policy for soldiers to take in any homeless pets, dogs and cats are frequently found with soldiers who were unable to turn their heads from an animal in need.

In response, the SPCA International recently launched Operation Baghdad Pups in an effort to raise money to get soldiers' pets safely out of Iraq.

"Our brave troops are serving us selflessly," said Stephanie Scroggs, SPCA Director of Communications. "It is our duty to help them save the animals that have given them so much love and strength through grim realities of war."

For updates on Charlie's progress, or for more information on Operation Baghdad Pups, visit [www.baghdadpups.com](http://www.baghdadpups.com).