

9/11 rescue dog gets stem cell therapy

By Nancy Deville, The Tennessean

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- A four-legged veteran from Tennessee has been honored with a rare medical treatment intended to improve her quality of life.

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Bailey, a 14-year-old black Labrador retriever that helped rescue victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the Pentagon, received stem cell therapy Friday to help relieve pain from debilitating arthritis in an elbow.

Doctors removed fat tissue from behind Bailey's shoulder blade, separating the stem cells from fat, then injected the cells into her elbow joint to prompt cartilage to grow.

With the treatment and rehab, her vet hopes to see some improvement within two weeks and a lot of recovery by six weeks.

Kentucky-based MediVet America developed the treatment and partnered with Companion Animal Hospital in Goodlettsville to donate the procedure, which usually runs about \$1,800.

"Bailey deserves this aftercare for helping everyone and serving her country," said Katherine Wilkie, director of lab services for MediVet America. "This will give her the pain relief she needs to act like a younger dog again.

"We see very good results, especially since these are cells from the animal's own body. ... You are hitting the problem of her elbows at the source, rather than masking it with anti-inflammatory drugs or giving her a steroid."

The procedure took about three hours. Bailey was scheduled to go home Saturday.

Bailey's sole purpose was to be a good family dog, said owner Keith Lindley. But her training to do live search work made her a hero.

The **Federal Emergency Management Agency** called Lindley, then a **Shelby County** firefighter, and Bailey to help at the Pentagon. Later, Bailey served as a therapy dog for human rescue workers.

"Although she didn't find anyone there, she did a lot for everyone there," Lindley said. "Bailey just showed such high drive to do search work. She's real small and was real easy to move wherever we wanted to go."

In 2002, the pair traveled to **Salt Lake City** for the **Winter Olympics**. They waited on standby, getting daily briefings in case of an emergency.

It's been a rough journey for Lindley to watch his beloved dog suffer in recent years from

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arthritis. She's been by his side since her birth.

"She did do a lot for the country, and I wanted to seize this opportunity and go with it," he said.

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