

Soldiers' Cat Pals Rescued From Iraq

SPCA International helps transport two cats out of war zone.

By Soraya Gutierrez

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Click to View Video of Caramel the cat.(WMV Format)Two cats rescued out of Iraq as part of Operation Baghdad Pups (and cats) put their first paw safely on U.S. soil last Thursday, according to Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals International.

The animal welfare group helped transport a total of 26 animals, including the two cats, named Caramel and Tom. This event marks the rescue mission's largest effort to date, according to SPCA International spokeswoman Stephanie Scroggs.

Caramel the cat was rescued from Baghdad.The goal of Operation Baghdad Pups is to provide medical care, clearance and transport for soldiers' companion animals out of the war zone. Because of heat restrictions on animal airline travel imposed in the summer months, these 26 animals were facing life or death, Scroggs said.

"Thanks to SPCA International and numerous supporters including FedEx, Caramel gets a bath from the soldier who adopted him.the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey elected officials and sponsors, the animals will be saved in the nick of time," she said.

The emergency rescue culminated with a welcome home ceremony at Newark (N.J.) International Airport. The animals were greeted by the partners and groups that worked to make this rescue a reality.

The cats and dogs are set to be reunited with U.S. soldiers who adopted them. To qualify for the program, puppies and kittens must have been found when they were less than 4 months old and not been part of a pack. They receive their shots in Baghdad, as well as medical examinations once in the United States.