

Yomiuri 15/12/91

Rottweiler Pulls Paraplegic Woman From Flaming Van

FRANKLIN, Ind. (AP)—A paraplegic woman credits her pet Rottweiler with pulling her from her small truck moments before it burst into flames.

The dog, named Eve, dragged 41-year-old Kathie Vaughn from the vehicle Wednesday night after it caught fire along an interstate highway near Franklin, she said Thursday.

"When I pulled up, the dog was pulling the lady through the grass, to get her away from the fire," said Trooper Mike Snider of the Indiana State Police.

Vaughn, who is paralyzed from the waist down, escaped uninjured, but her 6-year-old dog suffered burns on the pads of her paws.

Vaughn, an antiques dealer, said she was headed toward Atlanta, Ga., for an antiques show when she heard a single pop and smelled smoke in her brand new van. As she pulled to a stop on the shoulder of the road, she saw smoke coming from the engine compartment.

When she realized she couldn't control the fire, she began gathering the parts of her dissembled wheelchair. But "the smoke was really getting bad and I was disoriented at this point," she said.

Eve grabbed Vaughn and pulled her out the door of the van. Vaughn fell to the ground and the 47-kilogram dog pulled her away, dragging her into a drainage ditch about 6 meters away.

"Not too long after we got there, the cab poofed (exploded)," Vaughn said, and flames spread quickly through the passenger and cargo areas, destroying the load of antiques.

Snider was summoned by a trucker who reported the fire by radio, but the trooper was unable to stop the flames



Associated Press

Kathie Vaughn gets a kiss from her dog.

with a fire extinguisher that he carries in his car.

As for Eve, she continued to protect her owner—this time from the policeman. The dog "had to help me get to the police car, because she wouldn't let the policeman get to me," Vaughn said.