

# St. Bernards

## As Rescue Dogs

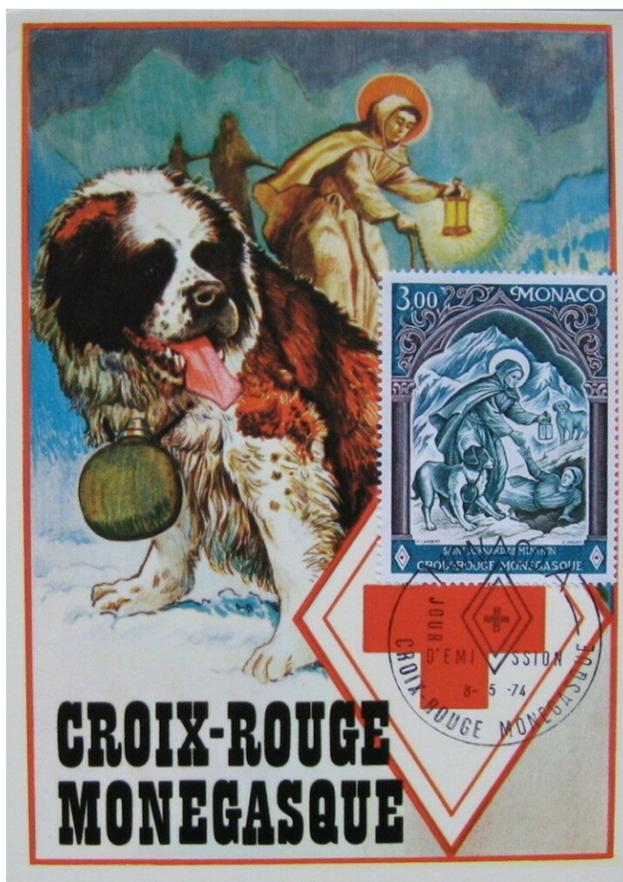
The history of the diligent and dependable Saint Bernard dog as a rescue animal is as storied and as noble as the breed itself. Even so, the details of how the breed came to be and who is responsible for its name are little known. The Saint Bernard's story is one of both myth and legend. This exhibit will tell those tales on the way to exploring the surprising history of this incredible dog. The story begins in Switzerland where the dogs were introduced to the world as partners in aiding travelers in need.



(Left) Issued March 2, 1989, for the bi-millennium of the Great Saint Bernard Pass. (Right) Albania: issued October 30, 1966, depicts the Saint Bernard rescuing an injured traveler.



Germany FDC, September 21, 1970 features a Saint Bernard in a mountain rescue scenario. Stamps celebrate Freiwillige Hilfsdienste (Voluntary Service) of emergency workers.



Monaco: Maxicard, issued May 8, 1974, honors the Red Cross, St. Bernard's work to help distressed travelers, and the dogs who would eventually become known for coming to the aid of others.

### Myth: Busted

Tourist and advertising pictures of Saint Bernards often show the dog sporting a cask around its neck, allegedly containing brandy as a medicinal aid. [An 1820 painting by Edwin Landseer](#) depicting a Saint Bernard and cask is thought to have initiated this myth. Actually, no documentation exists proving that the Saint Bernards of the Alpine hospice ever carried casks. While we consider this myth busted, many Saint Bernard stamps show the dogs wearing such casks.



Above: Hospice monks and Saint Bernard dogs help an avalanche victim. Right: postmark featuring a special hospice fancy cancel. Left: Saint Bernards with casks on stamps from Switzerland 2001; Argentina 1999; Japan Personalized Stamp

