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## **3rd Place Research Paper: "Cry 'Havoc!' And Let Slip the Dogs of War!": The Canine Experience in the A.E.F.**

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## 3rd Place Research Paper: “Cry ‘Havoc!’ And Let Slip the Dogs of War!”: The Canine Experience in the A.E.F.

### Comments

Amanda Larsh won Third Place in the 2016-2017 Kevin and Tam Ross Undergraduate Research Prize for her [essay about the experiences of canine units in the American military during World War I](#). This essay is the original scholarship that emerged from that research.

“Cry ‘Havoc!’ And Let Slip The Dogs of War!”: The Canine Experience in the A.E.F.

Amanda Larsh

For thousands of years man and canine have hunted, fought, and survived together, eventually strengthening their relationship and reaching the bond experienced in modern times. Although scientists remain unsure as to when canine domestication began, modern dogs are dramatically different from their ancestors in more ways than merely the size of their snout.<sup>1</sup> While World War I signaled a new era of warfare for humans, the role dogs played was not new or unfamiliar. Dogs battled alongside humans since the Stone Age, performed sentry duty under Napoleon's rule of Alexandria and acted as scouts in the Spanish-American War.<sup>2</sup> Despite their well-documented history of service during war, the only dogs owned by the United States military upon the outbreak of World War I were a handful of Alaskan sled dogs.<sup>3</sup> Until Congress passed the National Defense Act of 1916, America lacked any properly trained or established military veterinary units who could handle care these animals would require.<sup>4</sup> This paper explores the canine experience in the American Expeditionary Forces (A.E.F.) in an attempt to understand the roles these dogs performed, the effects they had on the humans they worked alongside, and how their affection was returned to their humans.

Despite the resurgence of interest in World War I, little has been written academically on how canines were used by the A.E.F., how they affected their men or how humans aided them, both abroad and on the home front. When these topics are discussed, however, they often comprise only a portion of the total body of work that is published, as in Ernest Harold Baynes'

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<sup>1</sup> James Gorman, "The Big Search to Find Out Where Dogs Come From," *The New York Times*, January 18, 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/19/science/the-big-search-to-find-out-where-dogs-come-from.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/19/science/the-big-search-to-find-out-where-dogs-come-from.html?_r=0).

<sup>2</sup> Michael G. Lemish, *War Dogs: A History of Loyalty and Heroism* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1996), 1-8.

<sup>3</sup> Lemish, *War Dogs*, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Congress of the United States of America, *National Defense Act of 1916*, H.R. 12766, June 3 1916.

*Animal Heroes of the Great War*. The animal historian's 1925 book was one of the few works released following the end of the Great War discussing how animals, including dogs, were used, as well as the soldiers' reactions to these "reminders of home."<sup>5</sup> Despite America's unpreparedness for the war, trainers and researchers around the world had been studying how dogs could be utilized in war for decades. Prior to World War I, famed British dog trainer Edwin Hautenville Richardson wrote *War, Police, and Watch Dogs*, a book he intended to act as a guide for military dog trainers around the world.<sup>6</sup> Writing *British War Dogs* in 1920, Richardson reflected on what these trainers had observed during the Great War and the necessary changes that would need to be carried out if dogs were to continue to play a role within the rapidly modernizing militaries.<sup>7</sup> Decades after World War I, but right in the middle of a new international conflict, Lieutenant Colonel Howard F. K. Cahill published his 1942 research paper discussing how animals were used in World War I by the A.E.F. In writing this paper, Cahill attempted to inform the U.S. military what went wrong during World War I in the hopes that they would not repeat their mistakes. Despite this intent, Cahill devoted a total of six lines to discussing the treatment of dogs within the A.E.F.<sup>8</sup>

Some books written about units which contained famous war dogs and mascots often omitted these tales, focusing more attention towards either the human element of warfare or on how the battles were fought and won, as was the case with *The Yankee Division in the First*

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<sup>5</sup> Earnest Harold Baynes, *Animal Heroes of the Great War* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), 5.

<sup>6</sup> Edwin Hautenville Richardson, *War, Police, and Watch Dogs* 1 ed. (Edinburgh, London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1910.)

<sup>7</sup> Lt. Col. Edwin Hautenville Richardson, *British War Dogs: Their Training and Psychology* (London, Skeffington & Son Ltd., 1920)

<sup>8</sup> Lt. Col. Howard F. K. Cahill, "Animals in the A.E.F., World War I" (Army War College, 1942).

*World War: In The Highest Tradition*. The Yankee Division contained Sergeant Stubby, arguably one of the most famous dogs of World War I. Nevertheless, author Michael E. Shay's book omits Stubby's story from the narrative even in instances where the dog's presence was well recorded.<sup>9</sup> With scholarly interest focused more on the technical elements of war, the vast majority of writing done on dogs in the Great War exists in children's books. These books focus more on individual stories, like Jack Rohan's *Rags: The Story of a Dog Who Went to War* and Ann Bausum's *Stubby The War Dog: The True Story of World War I's Bravest Dog*. Oftentimes these stories only tell a small snippet of a grander story, even condensing the dogs' accomplishments and role in order to be easily understood by children.<sup>10</sup> Until now, very little has been written in a scholarly or academic manner about how dogs were used by the A.E.F. in World War I, or even the emergence of a new role bestowed onto these animals by their humans.

At the time of President Woodrow Wilson's announcement of America's entrance into the European conflict, the U.S. military was the only major participant lacking trained military dogs in their ranks. In Europe, military operated dog schools and kennels were already in full swing, with the Germans and Russians already seeing great success with their dog training schools. Operational since the late 1800s during the Russo-Japanese War, the efforts of the

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<sup>9</sup> Michael E. Shay, *The Yankee Division in the First World War: In The Highest Tradition* (A&M University Press, 2008); President Wilson toured France one Christmas and while overseas visited the Yankee Division, where it's recorded that Stubby greeted President Wilson, if only for a brief moment. Michael E. Shay's book discusses this event, focusing more on what the men were experiencing, and omits Stubby's presence all together, while Ann Bausum's book, *Sergeant Stubby: How a Stray Dog and His Best Friend Helped Win World War I and Stole the Heart of a Nation* discusses what transpired by utilizing articles written about the exchange.

<sup>10</sup> Jack Rohan, *Rags: The Story of a Dog Who Went to War* (New York: Harper & Bros, 1930); Ann Bausum, *Stubby The War Dog: The True Story of World War I's Bravest Dog* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2014); This book is an adaptation of the longer, and more thorough, book about the relationship between Robert Conroy and Sergeant Stubby's both during and after the war.

Russian Red Cross Society had a lot to due with both the success, as well as existence, of these schools.<sup>11</sup> The British had successfully utilized dogs in the Boer Wars, prompting them to invite dog trainer Edwin Hautenville Richardson to join their ranks within their military. Discovering the qualities that made dogs so effective in police work after observing the way the Germans trained their canine units, Richardson was soon able to develop a system to train dogs for British military work.<sup>12</sup> In addition to ramping up the training of dogs, these countries had already begun conducting experiments that proved the effectiveness of such positions as Red Cross Mercy Dogs. These dogs were trained to seek out injured men on the battlefield, provide them with rudimentary first aid supplies stashed in their vests and then report the location of these men back to their handlers – all the while passing over the dead.<sup>13</sup> As warfare began to advance technologically, so did the need to adapt these animals to the growing challenges associated with a modernized war, such as increased, consistent, shellfire and mass casualties. Prior to the outbreak of World War I, Richardson argued that the enlarging of the battlefield due to the emergence of modern warfare, coupled with the fact that many wounded men would often use their remaining strength to seek shelter in ditches and shrubbery, would make the task of locating the wounded in time a nearly impossible task for humans. Setting out to prove the effectiveness of such positions, Richardson devised field tests which allowed him to scientifically prove that the dogs, even when completely devoid of artificial light and depending nearly entirely on their sense of smell, were able to find more men than a whole team of

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<sup>11</sup> Mark Derr, *A Dog's History of America: How Our Best Friend Explored, Conquered, and Settled a Continent* (New York: North Point Press, 2004), 252.

<sup>12</sup> Richardson, *War, Police, and Watch Dogs*, 70.

<sup>13</sup> Richardson, *War, Police, and Watch Dogs*, 71, 75, 80-83.

stretcher-bearers could in far less time.<sup>14</sup> Yet many of the tactics taught to these dogs would soon need to be revised, as trench warfare and the resulting No Man's Land dramatically altered how dogs would be trained and utilized in World War I.

The lack of dogs within America's military had not gone unnoticed by Richardson. Following his observation of American military techniques in Mexico prior to the outbreak of World War I, Richardson took it upon himself to present an American staff officer with a full report containing maps and illustrations outlining the benefits of having a division equipped to train dogs for use in their military. Despite his willingness to assist and his reputation in Britain, Richardson never heard back from any American military officials. After being brushed off, Richardson remarked that "it might be as well, however, if the American Army authorities devoted a certain amount of attention to this subject, in view of the fact, that it will, in the future, be increasingly difficult for America to remain outside the responsibilities of the civilized races of the rest of the world."<sup>15</sup> Ignoring Richardson's warning and the positive work seen by the European armies, upon entering World War I the only military dogs in the American military's possession were a handful of Alaskan sled dogs.<sup>16</sup>

Although dogs had yet to be properly utilized by the American military, the need to care for and treat the vast amount of animals required to fight a war remained. While dogs remained relatively ignored, the U.S. used animals such as horses and mules in all of their wars, animals which benefit from knowledgeable, well-trained veterinarians as much as their canine comrades. Yet even then, animals remained much of an afterthought throughout the preparations devised for the first wave of the military to leave for Europe. Departing for France in May of 1917,

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<sup>14</sup> Richardson, *War, Police, and Watch Dogs*, 75.

<sup>15</sup> Richardson, *British War Dogs*, 249-250.

<sup>16</sup> Lemish, *War Dogs*, 21.



General John J. “Blackjack” Pershing and his headquarters set sail without a single veterinary officer or personnel for a veterinary service aboard. Eventually, veterinary officers were sent abroad in small numbers as they were requested, but this aspect remained relatively unimportant until October, when animals began to be shipped to Europe in considerable waves.<sup>17</sup>

The Surgeon General of the Army, Major General William Crawford Gorgas, was finally forced to confront the looming issue of creating a veterinary unit capable of handling the enormous responsibilities that accompany purchasing, transporting, sheltering, caring and healing the vast numbers of animals to be used by the A.E.F. This extremely important work which, if not accomplished in a timely manner, would create havoc on the overall organizational structure of the A.E.F. If the veterinary unit remained unstaffed, the men fighting would be left without animals to pull their carts and ambulances or meat products fit for consumption.<sup>18</sup> Even then, the task could not be easily accomplished by the sixty-two veterinary officers serving within American military upon the outbreak of war.<sup>19</sup> Due to the excessively low number of qualified men enlisted within the U.S. military upon entering the war, the difficulty the Veterinary Corps faced was more extreme than other branches of the military. Having only recently established the Veterinary Corps of the Army underneath the Medical Department due to the wide-reaching National Defense Act of 1916, they lacked the proper amount of time to establish an organizational structure, or even staff it with veterinarians who had experienced

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<sup>17</sup> Col. Joseph H. Ford, M.C. *The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War*, Vol. 2, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1927), 419.

<sup>18</sup> During World War I those tasked with inspecting slaughtered animals for consumption were placed within a branch of the Veterinary Department. No veterinarians meant no one was authorized to control the quality of the food being sent overseas.

<sup>19</sup> Col. Charles Lynch, M.C., Lieut. Col. Frank W. Weed, and Loy McAfee A.M. M.D. *The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War*, Vol. 1, ed. The Surgeon General's Office. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923), 197.

battle or understood how the military operated.<sup>20</sup> Due to varying Congressional acts that had shifted the location and status of the Army's veterinary service since 1899, most veterinarians resided under the Quartermaster Corps, where they worked under laymen and not fellow veterinarians who understood their needs. The National Defense Act of 1916 transferred them to their own department, granting veterinarians something that had eluded them for 32 years – a commissioned status within the Army.<sup>21</sup>

Upon completion of the reorganization, the Surgeon General enacted a plan that called for the reorganization of veterinarians already in the military through an entrance exam intended for the regular corps. After failing to find enough qualified men to take and pass the exam, it was later extended to civilians. Surgeon General Gorgas also called for the creation of a veterinary advisory board in Washington, D.C. Together, the board settled on a plan which went all the way up to President Wilson, granting him full authority to expand the Veterinary Corps as much as he pleased without any additional legislation required, overruling parts of the National Defense Act of 1916. Additionally, they created General Orders No. 130 which not only established the Veterinary Corps of the National Army, but filled it with the amount of men the Surgeon General recommended to care for their animals: one veterinary officer and sixteen enlisted men to every 400 animals under A.E.F. control.<sup>22</sup> The board then established an organizational system based off both General Orders No. 130 and the successful British system. This organizational system

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<sup>20</sup> Congress of the United States of America, *National Defense Act of 1916*, H.R. 12766, June 3 1916.

<sup>21</sup> Lynch, Weed and McAfee, *The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War*, 197-199.

<sup>22</sup> "Special Regulations No. 70: Regulations Governing the Army Veterinary Service" ed. War Department. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918.); Lynch, Weed and McAfee, *The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War*, 199.

then developed into Special Regulations No. 70.<sup>23</sup> This pamphlet, while outlining duties and establishing a chain of command, established the objectives of the Veterinary Corps, whose goal being “to protect the health and preserve the efficiency of the animals in the Army.”<sup>24</sup> Despite all of this effort and progress the A.E.F. General Headquarters reorganized the Veterinary Department back into the Quartermaster Remount Service in the fall of 1917. By December 1917, Pershing allowed the Medical Department to exercise “general supervision” over the veterinary personnel, but ordered that the Remount Service would retain the right to make all assignments for these veterinarians.<sup>25</sup>

Although progress had been made to bolster the number of veterinary officers within the military service from their initial amount of sixty-two men, the recommended amount of animals each officer would be responsible for remained astoundingly high. Soon, some members of the department realized just how impossibly steep that ratio was.<sup>26</sup> “The allowance of one veterinary officer for every 400 animals (2.5 per 1,000) specified in General Orders, No. 130, W.D., 1917, at no time was sufficient for the requirements of the service. The ratio steadily mounted upwards as the war progressed, and was 4.7 per 1,000 on November 30, 1918, being practically the same in France and the United States.”<sup>27</sup> While the number of veterinarians did rise as the war progressed due to the expansion of entrance exams and the appeal of finally being authorized to

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<sup>23</sup> It should be mentioned that at no point does Special Regulations No. 70 mention “dogs” or “canines” in the pamphlet. While it does in cases mention “horses” and “mules”, the majority of the time the pamphlet references the general “animal(s)” when discussing how they should be treated, cared for, etc.

<sup>24</sup> “Special Regulations No. 70,” 3, 6.

<sup>25</sup> Mary C. Gillet, *The Army Medical Department, 1917-1941* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History: United States Army, 2009), 247-248.

<sup>26</sup> *Annual Report of the Surgeon General* (United States Army), 1918, 415.

<sup>27</sup> Lynch, Weed and McAfee, *The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War*, 203.

hold rank, the fact remained that by November 1918 there were over 14,000 animals residing in American veterinary hospitals. At this point in the war the capacity of the fifteen veterinary hospitals that had been established, but whose construction was not completed, was only 12,000 animals. By March 1919 there were 20 veterinary hospitals, excluding army veterinary hospitals, all of which were able to handle approximately 26,000 animals, with only 20,000 spots occupied. With 885 veterinary officers assigned to care for these injured and sick animals, the men were then responsible for only 22.6 animals instead of 400, a vastly more manageable number.<sup>28</sup>

Since many of these veterinary recruits were taken from outside the military they often lacked the proper experience and training needed to handle the now bureaucratic side of their job. According to Deputy Chief Surgeon of the A.E.F. Colonel Jefferson Kean, this inexperience lead to massive breakdowns within the organization. Blaming Surgeon General Gorgas for failing to prepare the men, Kean claimed Gorgas had done little to train these men on how to work within the military's regulations or even meet the department's expectations. Even citing one A.E.F. veterinary officer who was ignorant of protocols within the military administration that he "sent in a requisition for Vet. supplies written on toilet paper." Not stating whether this request was written on toilet paper due to incompetence or because the officer had run out of the proper forms, Kean felt Gorgas was personally responsible for this breakdown. Eventually, Gorgas was forced to face the looming fact that his veterinary department "was without organization and authority was not centralized. As a result, the veterinary service overseas was in a chaotic condition."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *History of Veterinary Corps, A.E.F., from August 24, 1918 to March 1, 1919*. Vol. 15, *Reports of the Commander-in-Chief, Staff Sections and Services*, (Washington, D.C.: Center for Military Service, 1919), 414-415.

<sup>29</sup> Gillet, *The Army Medical Department*, 249.

Despite the chaos happening on the bureaucratic side of the Veterinary Department, recruiting and training these new officers in the proper way of filling out forms was only half the battle. The U.S. military still had to deal with the fact that they lacked any formal veterinary units or training facilities where they could instruct the newly recruited veterinarians on such basic practices as wrapping bandages or inspecting meat. They would be forced to build centers, find instructors and fill these schools with capable men in addition to everything else that came with preparing for war. Scrambling to establish medical and specialty schools, the School of Meat and Dairy Hygiene and Forage Inspection was established in Chicago, Illinois, in August 1917. Established at Camp Lee in January of 1918, the second institution was designed to provide the men with both military and professional training. But this center never reached its full potential. Lacking the buildings needed for quarters and classrooms, the camp struggled to teach its students. The missing completed hospital facilities prevented its students from properly learning the skills needed to succeed at caring for the military's animals.<sup>30</sup> When they did receive training, it was often only when these veterinarians were allowed to sit-in on the courses being taught to the medical officers. By May of 1918 the division veterinary officers took matters into their own hands and established schools for Veterinary Corps personnel at all camps and remount depots. Despite their efforts, the instruction varied widely from each school as they did not adhere to the same regulations or handbooks as they would have had they been created by the military.<sup>31</sup>

The men who comprised Veterinary Company No. 1 recorded this struggle in the self-published book, *As You Were, 1918*. In February 1918, eleven men found themselves stationed at

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<sup>30</sup> Gillett, *The Army Medical Department*, 98-99.

<sup>31</sup> Gillett *The Army Medical Department*, 143.

Camp Greenleaf in Georgia. Upon arrival, the men discovered there had yet to be a veterinary program established at the camp, let alone any barracks for them. Soon, more and more men arrived at Camp Greenleaf to join the Veterinary Corps, to the point that the camp officers saw it was necessary to transfer these enlisted veterinarians to the Instruction Company No. 2, where they were put to work building roads and policing the other officers. By April, Lieutenants Maguire, Jones and Rundle were assigned to oversee the unit, and by May 2, 1918 plans for the reorganization of Veterinary Company No. 1 were finalized and the 159 privates were attached to the Seventh Battalion, which was then stationed at Camp Greenleaf.<sup>32</sup>

After three months in the camp the men were finally instructed in practices that would help them care for the animals for which they would soon be responsible. Practical lectures on veterinary subjects were carried out twice a week in addition to lessons on stable management. All of this preparation occurred leading up to the Surgeon General's orders on July 17, 1918, that 50 percent of the 1918 veterinary graduates across the country were to report to Camp Greenleaf, causing the number of men participating in the program to swell from 79 to 243 privates.<sup>33</sup> A second general order went out, and by August 25 the company roll grew to 500 men. With this growth came changes in leadership, for the worse. Again diverting the men's focus from preparing to serve their country as veterinarians, the newly placed Corporal St. Clair had the men policing, on sanitary duty and even digging ditches. In an attempt to fight the "idleness [which] stimulates unrest and homesickness," Corporal St. Clair was instead distracting the men from the true reason they had enlisted in the U.S. Army – learning to care for the millions of animals the

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<sup>32</sup> *As You Were, 1918*. (Chattanooga: MacGowan-Cooke, 1919).

<sup>33</sup> It remains a little unclear in the book why the number of men dropped from 159 in May to 79 in July. The reorganization of the unit into the Seventh Battalion may have cause some men to be permanently absorbed into that unit, they may have died from the Influenza which did hit the camp or they could have simply been sent overseas to carry out their job.

A.E.F. and Remount Depots would handle throughout the war. Throughout this period small numbers of privates and higher-ups were transferred to different camps, such as Camp Lee. Yet it was too little too late. After all the effort put into training these men, they were discharged when the fighting ceased. Thankfully, the men were able leave with something: the realization “that the military training received here has been of great benefit, but the greatest benefit will be derived from the stimulus of veterinary friendship and fraternalism.”<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, the expenses associated with training an entire department from the ground-up, the American military had to factor in the cost associated with fighting a foreign war. Publishing the *Guide for the Use of Officers of the Veterinary Corps Medical Department U.S. Army*, the military instructed their men that the overall goal of the department was to “develop a high rate of efficiency among the animals of the Army by helping to maintain a high standard of the stable management and control; by eliminating and preventing communicable diseases, sickness and injuries; by treating all cases of disease and injury so that they may be returned to service fit for duty at the earliest possible moment.”<sup>35</sup> While all this was true, the economic costs associated with animal care also important to the higher-ups. Outlining the need to both efficiently and economically treat these animals, the guide established what these veterinarians needed to do in order to manage costs. The guide established that “veterinarians should examine patients at the earliest possible moment and arrive at a decision as to whether the affected animals should be destroyed, sold or retained for treatment... By this method only will it be possible to prevent the retention in the Army of animals so diseased or injured that their cure

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<sup>34</sup> *As You Were, 1918.*

<sup>35</sup> *Guide for the Use of Officers of the Veterinary Corps Medical Department U.S. Army* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Surgeon General, 1918), 3.

would cost more than the placing of a fresh remount in service.”<sup>36</sup> Other methods of controlling costs and conserving manpower included veterinarians attached to units being required to send sick and lame animals immediately to the nearest hospital, as their duties in keeping the horses in their care healthy often left them without enough time to dress their wounds, operate on or devote enough attention to their ailments. Once sent to the hospital, the veterinarians and staff were instructed to only spend time on sick and injured animals that could be treated cheaply and who were able to return to duty quickly. The guide states that at no point should an animal spend more than 35 days recovering in any U.S. operated veterinary hospital, assuming the time and money spent on over thirty-five days of care for a single animal would have been better spent on simply purchasing a fresh horse.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to caring for the injuries and ailments of these animals, the veterinarians stationed in the Remount Depots oversaw the transportation and care of nearly one million animals from July 1917 to December 1918.<sup>38</sup> Not included in the break-down of these numbers were the recommended amount of dogs to be received by U.S. forces for use as sentries, messengers, pulling carts, finding men, aiding in patrol, and special supply missions. The need for dogs in the military was again brought to the attention of higher-ups by the document G-5, G.H.Q., in the spring of 1918. Recommending that 500 dogs be purchased from French trainers every three months while the U.S. military worked on becoming self-sufficient by adopting the training methods needed to establish their own canine programs in addition to the building of five kennels, each with the ability to hold 200 dogs. However, the project was ultimately rejected

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<sup>36</sup> *Guide for the Use of Officers of the Veterinary Corps Medical Department U.S. Army*, 3-4.

<sup>37</sup> *Guide for the Use of Officers of the Veterinary Corps Medical Department U.S. Army*, 13-14, 19.

<sup>38</sup> Cahill, “Animals in the A.E.F., World War I” 28-30.



and the U.S. military went back to purchasing sporadic numbers of dogs from whoever could supply them while also relying on donations from its citizens.<sup>39</sup>

As citizen organizations across the country began rallying to support their men, the President of the American Humane Association offered his organization's services, and those of its allied societies, to the War Department. First organized in May of 1916, the American Red Star Animal Relief was crafted upon invitation from the Secretary of War and resided under the auspices of the American Humane Society. The Red Star was granted the position of being the only animal-focused volunteer society with authorization to render aid to American forces during times of war.<sup>40</sup> Created with a similar function in mind as the Red Cross, the Red Star operated with the intent of "rendering assistance in the event of war to wounded animals employed by the army; furnishing base hospitals, veterinary supplies, and ambulances in a capacity similar to that in which the Blue Cross functioned for the allied foreign armies."<sup>41</sup> Distributing over 80,000 pieces of literature and first aid pamphlets to veterinarians and untrained army soldiers, their goal was to increase the survival rate of animals, ensuring they received the care needed while raising awareness of the lack of preparation on the government's side. In total, the Red Star expended almost \$100,000 in supplies for the army alone.<sup>42</sup> Claiming that the average lifespan of a war animal stood at approximately ninety hours, the Red Star worked to increase that number by

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<sup>39</sup> Cahill "Animals in the A.E.F., World War I.", 1.

<sup>40</sup> Lynch, Weed and McAfee, *The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War*, 557; Baynes, *Animal Heroes of the Great War*, 287.

<sup>41</sup> Operating underneath Our Dumb Friends League, The Blue Cross was first launched in response to the Balkan War and was reopened in 1914 for World War I. The European organization participated in the war efforts, focusing on providing treatment and supplies to the animals involved in the fighting, acting in a similar manner to that of the American Humane Society and the Red Star.

<sup>42</sup> Lynch, Weed and McAfee, *The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War*, 557.

providing the necessary funds to create an infrastructure capable of caring for these animals.<sup>43</sup> It was not until June 7, 1918, that the Red Star was officially authorized to operate with the U.S. military.<sup>44</sup> Even then, upon Secretary of War Baker's release of Circular No. 25 from the Office of the Surgeon General, the conditions under which veterinarians were allowed to accept any gifts or donations from citizen organizations to be used during official duties was severely limited.<sup>45</sup>

Citizen run organizations such as the Red Star and Red Cross stepped up to aid in the care and supply of animals. Their members hosted tea parties and ran hotels for a day in an effort to raise funds. They even training beloved pets to donate to the Red Cross Mercy Dog program.<sup>46</sup> Red Cross Mercy Dogs refer to a specific type of training program for dogs, which allows the animal and handler to work together to locate and save injured men, in a similar manner to modern search and rescue dogs. Although dogs had been used in a similar fashion in prior wars, the dramatically different style of warfare experienced in World War I made a fair amount of what had been applied in prior wars unusable this time around. Having previously been trained to bark to alert the stretcher-bearers when they discovered a wounded soldier, the dangers this action posed in No Man's Land forced the Red Cross to reexamine their training techniques. As noted in *The Red Cross Magazine*, "it is no use hurriedly taking dogs into training in times of

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<sup>43</sup> "Red Star Work Shows Big Growth," *Pasadena Star-News*, (Pasadena, California), July 26, 1917; While conducting my research, I have found no official statistic which aligns with the Red Star's claim that the average lifespan of these animals was 90 hours.

<sup>44</sup> Lynch, Weed and McAfee *The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War*, 557.

<sup>45</sup> Baynes, *Animal Heroes of the Great War*, 289-290.

<sup>46</sup> "Notes About Red Cross Work," *Pasadena Star-News* (Pasadena, California), August 14, 1917; "Red Cross to Run Hotel for Day," *Pasadena Star-News* (Pasadena, California), July 27, 1917; Ellwood Henderick, "Merciful Dogs of War," *The Red Cross Magazine* vol. 12, February 1917.

war. The only method is to have a training establishment, where a large stud of dogs are kept in constant training in peace time, and where men can come to be instructed in the working... The dog should be trained daily, and should attend the manoeuvres [sic].”<sup>47</sup> While the European arms quickly learned from and adapted to this new type of battle, the Americans struggled, lacking the basic infrastructure or numbers needed to even begin creating their own canine division. It was at this point that America’s citizens began to rally in order to provide their country with the amount of trained dogs needed to successfully fight, as was the case with the residents of Pasadena, California.

Dispatching America’s first Red Cross Ambulance Company in June of 1917, the city of Pasadena decided to ensure their boys’ success by gifting the men two police dogs, Minka and Adolph.<sup>48</sup> Donated by Freeman A. Ford, the dogs were to be used in conjunction with the ambulance company’s work of locating the wounded on the battlefields. Minka and Adolph cost Ford \$1,000 each.<sup>49</sup> Due to the newer status of canine training for war use in America, Ford’s well-intended donation was not without faults. Since his experience was limited to training ranch dogs, Ford hired a Mr. Larson to help prepare these dogs for the work that would soon be expected of them.<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately, Larson’s experience was limited to preparing shooting dogs for field trials and private work, not ambulance dogs for war. Lacking the necessary tools or

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<sup>47</sup> Richardson, *War, Police, and Watch Dogs*, 86-88.

<sup>48</sup> “First Red Cross Ambulance Company in United States Will Represent Pasadena in an Errand of Mercy at War Front,” *Pasadena Star-News*, (Pasadena, California), June 13, 1917.

<sup>49</sup> “Royal Welcome on Arrival at Camp,” *Pasadena Star-News*, (Pasadena, California), June 23, 1917; It is currently unclear what the breed of these dogs were, as the Pasadena Star-News continually refers to them as German dogs or German sheep dogs, while the Allentown Leader (Allentown, Pennsylvania) calls them Belgian dogs. The two breeds are very different, yet both are used in a police capacity.

<sup>50</sup> “German Police Dogs Filmed in Plays,” *Pasadena Star-News*, (Pasadena, California), May 17, 1917.

pamphlets to guide them on how to train Minka and Adolph, the pair crafted their own program which “eliminated from the course of training all the police dog work – that is, attacking, refusing food from strangers, etc. – specializing in trailing, forced retrieving, jumping and other work which might be useful in the Red Cross service.”<sup>51</sup> The men even created controlled tests to ensure their training program was working by staging “lost” and “wounded” men throughout the local hills and mountains to teach the dogs to locate wounded men, a skill desperately needed if the pair were to succeed as ambulance dogs.<sup>52</sup>

Unfortunately, their limited experience proved nearly detrimental as they failed to prepare the dogs for one of the greatest shocks on the front – noise. Everything from the sounds of the bands sending the unit off to the streetcars that rattled by terrified Minka and Adolph. Upon arrival at their training camp in Allentown, Pennsylvania, the men wasted no time preparing the duo.<sup>53</sup> Going through their drills everyday, the dogs responded positively to their new training program, “proving intelligent and capable.”<sup>54</sup> Establishing a newer kennel west of Linda Vista in Pasadena after learning from his mistakes with Minka and Adolf, Ford continued to train dogs for the Red Cross. As a member of the Army and Police Dog Club, he promised to donate every dog he schooled to any Southern California Red Cross unit who may benefit from their assistance, refusing to sell a single dog for profit.<sup>55</sup> While Ford and Larson’s efforts were

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<sup>51</sup> Walter A. Dyer, “Wanted: More Red Cross Dogs for America,” *The Red Cross Magazine* 12, no. 10 November 1917, 540.

<sup>52</sup> “German Police Dogs Filmed in Plays,” *Pasadena Star-News*.

<sup>53</sup> Dyer, “Wanted: More Red Cross Dogs for America,” 540.

<sup>54</sup> “Training Red Cross Dogs to Help in the War Zone,” *Pasadena Star-News*, (Pasadena, California), July 7, 1917.

<sup>55</sup> The article “Wanted: More Red Cross Dogs for America” does not use Freeman A. Ford’s name, but it does share part of a letter written to Dyer by a Pasadena man who donated a pair of dogs to the Ambulance Corps. No 1, which was sent to Allentown, PA for basic training with two ambulance dogs. The photograph included in the *Pasadena Star-News*’ article “First Red

tremendous, they were also unusual. When visiting the Allenstown Camp, reporters for the *Philadelphia Evening Ledger* wrote, “the most interesting feature of the ambulance training camp at Allenstown... is the Red Cross dogs with the Pasadena unit.”<sup>56</sup> Their actions even attracted the attention of nearby Hollywood filmmakers, who casted some of Ford’s dogs alongside Mary Pickford in a scene for a movie that required dogs to search for wounded men and carry dispatches.<sup>57</sup>

Ford and Larson’s efforts were also recognized by *The Red Cross Magazine*, which Ford wrote to detailing the important nature of his work at his kennels.<sup>58</sup> Writing about the success they were experiencing and the important work performed by the dogs in saving American lives, the men’s stories inspired others on the home front to help their men in any possible manner. Within a week of the story being published, seven dogs were left at the doorstep of the Red Cross National Headquarters. From German police dogs to cocker spaniels, people began donating their pets to help the cause. By the end of the second week “the dog situation was becoming quite serious,” to the point that that the “avalanche of dogs” needed to stop “before [the national headquarters] were snowed under.”<sup>59</sup> Although the article does not state how many dogs the Red Cross received after the publication of the article or how long the call of “No Dogs Need Apply” remained, the number of dogs donated to the Red Cross during this period was

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Cross Ambulance Company in United States Will Represent Pasadena in an Errand of Mercy at War Front” and follow-up article, “Royal Welcome on Arrival at Camp”, confirms that there were only two dogs attached to the unit when they left Pasadena, and that those dogs had been donated by Ford.

<sup>56</sup> “Red Cross Dogs Excite Interest,” *Pasadena Star-News*, (Pasadena, California), July 13, 1917.

<sup>57</sup> “Physicians Ordered East: German Shepard Dogs Are Given,” *Pasadena Star-News*, (Pasadena, California), May 28, 1917; The article does not mention what movie these dogs starred in, only referencing Mary Pickford’s name.

<sup>58</sup> Dyer, “Wanted: More Red Cross Dogs for America,” 540.

<sup>59</sup> “No More Dogs, Please,” *The Red Cross Magazine* 13, no. 1 January 1918, 76.

nowhere close to the number needed to successfully fight. Whether or not the donated dogs were ever trained to work for the Red Cross was not stated in the article. While a large influx of untrained dogs could easily put a burden on already strained resources, had the U.S. military or the Red Cross possessed the proper amount of kennels and training facilities prior to war, there would have been no reason for them to bar Americans from donating their pets for service.

Seeing the importance of such war work, the residents of Pasadena and surrounding Los Angeles communities rallied, working tirelessly to provide their soldiers everything needed to succeed. Socialites and heiresses across the Los Angeles area came together to support the war effort through their love of animals, attracting the likes of Lucretia Garfield, a Pasadena resident and widow of former President James A. Garfield. She was the first member of the Pasadena Chapter of the Red Cross in 1914.<sup>60</sup> Anita M. Baldwin, daughter of businessman, landowner, and racetrack owner Elias Jackson “Lucky” Baldwin, became the chairwoman for the Los Angeles Branch, and Western Representative, of the American Red Star.<sup>61</sup> In hopes of attracting donors, Baldwin began organizing social functions like a dog show in Long Beach, California and a lavish benefit performance at the Baldwin Ranch. The latter was so successful she soon found herself opening her home on the first Sunday of every month to an eager public. Baldwin’s work ensured the animals on the front received the proper assistance they needed to survive.<sup>62</sup> Other successful benefits included a Bohemian Celebrity dinner, graced by the likes of Richard Walton

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<sup>60</sup> J.W. Wood, *Pasadena, California – Historical and Personal: A Complete History of the Organization of the Indiana Colony*, (Pasadena, California), 455.

<sup>61</sup> “Valuable Dogs to be Shown in August,” *Pasadena Star-News*, (Pasadena, California), July 6, 1917.

<sup>62</sup> “Benefit Planned at Baldwin Ranch to Swell Humane Fund,” *Pasadena Star-News*, (Pasadena, California), July 13, 1917.

Tully, L. E. Behymer, and Homer Grunn.<sup>63</sup> Baldwin's efforts went as far as donating her prize winning Airedale, Conan of Anoakia, to the men of the Company B Engineers, N.G.C. who were then stationed in Los Angeles' Exposition Park. Renamed Amigo by Captain James Irvine and the rest of the men, the \$600 dog soon became a much-needed companion to the unit.<sup>64</sup> Bringing attention to the plight of animals in war, Baldwin collaborated with Colonel Charles F. Hutchins of the Seventh regiment, N.G.C., for Company 1 to participate in a Red Cross pageant at Pasadena's Tournament Park.<sup>65</sup> The pageant exhibited the type of work she hoped to accomplish as president of the Red Star, with Baldwin and the men demonstrating the type of aid often performed on the front, using animals from her private kennel and stable for the men to use in their demonstrations. The unique pageant led numerous delegates to attend, from as far south as San Diego all the way through to Santa Barbara, witnessing the work performed in Pasadena. Hopefully, leaving inspiring to return to their towns and begin creating their own Red Star chapters.<sup>66</sup> For her tireless work aiding the animals and veterinarians of World War I, Baldwin was honored at the Shrine Auditorium on June 8, 1917.<sup>67</sup>

Baldwin and Garfield were not the only women serving their country. Alongside her husband, Mrs. A. A. Blacker began serving in the Pasadena Red Cross chapter in 1914. In an

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<sup>63</sup> "For The Red Star," 1917, Arcadia – Baldwin, Anita – Red Star Society, The Arcadia Public Library.

<sup>64</sup> "Mrs. Anita Baldwin Gives \$600 Dog as Engineer's Mascot," *Pasadena Star-News*, (Pasadena, California), July 12, 1917.

<sup>65</sup> Tournament Park in Pasadena, California, was the main site for the city's large gatherings and events, including the original Rose Bowl games, until construction of the Rose Bowl was completed in 1923.

<sup>66</sup> "Company 1 To Appear in Pageant," *Pasadena Star-News*, (Pasadena, California), May 15, 1917. In attendance was J.W. Wood, author of "Pasadena, California – Historical and Personal: A Complete History of the Organization of the Indiana Colony," according to the "Notes About Red Cross Work" in the May 16, 1917 edition of the *Pasadena Star-News*.

<sup>67</sup> "Souvenir Program," 1917, Arcadia – Baldwin, Anita – Red Star Society, The Arcadia Public Library.

interview for the *Pasadena Star-News* in 1917, Mrs. Blacker spoke about the importance of her work, not just for her country, but for women like her. Explaining how she was raised to sew and mend, clean and cook and generally be a good housewife, Mrs. Blacker claimed that the education of girls had “entirely failed to fit them to do anything well enough to become a real cog in the social machine.” By allowing them to participate in Red Cross work,

many of our young women are waking up. They are coming to the Red Cross anxious to be of service, and when they find that in order to serve they need to be trained, they are applying themselves in earnest to get this training. In some cases they forgo social pleasures and in all cases give up leisure. In Pasadena there is opportunity not only for young but for middle-aged women, if they have failed to perfect themselves in some one work to still do so, either in the night schools or for many under the auspices of the Red Cross... I feel that society is to very greatly gain in the increased efficiency of its women, for what is true here is doubtless true everywhere.<sup>68</sup>

For these women, participating in organizations such as the Red Star and the Red Cross allowed them to not only serve their country, but to do so in roles they would normally not be allowed to occupy. From performing more traditional service roles such as garnering socks or crafting bandages to taking on real leadership positions, it remains unclear who these women helped the most: the animals or the fight for women’s rights.

In an attempt to raise as much money or collect as many goods as possible, some forms of fundraising on the home front were rather unconventional. After seeing how much attention their silver-haired Yorkshire terriers attracted when out in the town, one California couple decided their dogs, Rags and Tags, would help the Red Cross the way they knew best – looking gorgeous and showing off their one trick. Attaching little boxes marked with the Red Cross’ signature emblem, the couple encouraged Rags and Tags to demonstrate their one trick of sitting up on their hind legs, side-by-side. The brothers’ trick went over well, earning them two dollars,

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<sup>68</sup> “Red Cross Has Noble Work Outlined,” *Pasadena Star-News*, (Pasadena, California), May 12, 1917.



which their owners donated to the Red Cross. Inspired by the dogs' success and seeing their actions as an inventive way to fundraise, the couple decided to write a mock diary of the brothers' antics, from the perspective of Rags and Tags. The pair wrote: "We've never kept a diary before, but our master, Billie, writes in a little book every night and we thought we would try, because a lot of interesting things keep happening to us... One day last winter something happened that we don't quite understand, but it has to do with a man called 'Uncle Sam' and a man called the Kaiser." Detailing their tales, the diary followed Rags and Tags' adventures from collecting money to becoming official members of the Red Cross to even escaping and collecting funds on their own. Bringing joy to the hearts of nearly everyone they met, they soon realized that individuals with dogs of their own were much more likely to put money into their little boxes than those without a canine companion. After working for nearly a month, the duo managed to raise twenty dollars, writing in their diary: "We know it isn't nice to be proud, and we are trying not to be, but we have just sent our personal check to the Red Cross for \$10 and another \$10 to the ambulance corps, and it does give us a perfectly lovely feeling all the way from our ears to our tails." Soon Rags and Tags became known around town as the Red Cross Dogs, with their efforts allowing them to become official members of the Red Cross.<sup>69</sup>

Published in *The Red Cross Magazine* in April of 1918, the editors of "The Diary of Two Red Cross Brothers" claimed "it isn't only the actual money they have collected that counts, but the friends they have made for themselves and for the Red Cross that have added something worth while."<sup>70</sup> Whether their story was true or was a creation simply for the sake of the article,

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<sup>69</sup> Julia M. Sloane, "The Diary of Two Red Cross Dogs" *The Red Cross Magazine*, 13 no. 4, April 1918, 25-28.

<sup>70</sup> Sloane, "The Diary of Two Red Cross Dogs," 25.

the fact that these little Yorkshire terriers had a poem written about their efforts demonstrated their effectiveness in getting people to sympathize with, and buy into, the cause.

A little bit added to what we've got  
 May cool a brow with fever hot,  
 May help to end this awful strife-  
 May soothe a pain or save a life.

(Author unknown, "The Diary of Two Red Cross Dogs")<sup>71</sup>

Demonstrating to Americans that everyone, and every dog, could help the war effort, this poem about Rags and Tags showed the importance of befriending people to the Red Cross and its cause. Claiming that the simple act of begging for spare change in their hometown was possibly enough to "end this awful strife" or even "save a life," this poem was clearly intended to motivate those on the home front to do their part. By choosing two tiny dogs, the Red Cross removed any and all excuses for not helping Americans overseas. Rags and Tags were even filmed as part of a movie, which screened near their home. Although they were not allowed into the theater, the dogs' efforts were seen around the country, further prompting Americans to do their bit.

Another dog who did his bit for the war effort was Buttons, a little poodle from Somerville, Massachusetts who was tired of hearing about how useless some dogs were and how the men on the front were in need of wool. Buttons soon found his purpose when a neighbor, who noticed how soft his white fur was, asked for his fur the next time he was cut in order to spin it into yarn. Eventually, Button's fur became a soft pair of socks for a Sammy to wear during the winter months. Seeing the endless possibility of items that could be made from Button's fur, his owners stated that they planned to continue to shear him in hopes of making a helmet or another pair of socks for the war effort. It remains unclear if the actions of Button's

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<sup>71</sup> Sloane, "The Diary of Two Red Cross Dogs," 28.

owners were fabricated for the purposes of this pamphlet, as “Button’s Bit: The Story of a Patriotic Dog” was clearly intended to act in a similar manner as “The Diary of Two Red Cross Dogs.” Most likely created to piggyback off the Red Cross’ already existing “Knit Your Bit” campaign, the pamphlet was intended to inspire Americans to do their patriotic duty. Featuring pictures of the small, shaved, white dog posing with a mountain of his fur in one photo and a pair of white socks in another, showed that every bit helped when it came to ensuring Sammy had everything needed to fight. Additional similarities between the two articles are to be noted, as both were written from the perspective of the dog and included poems written about the animals’ efforts, such as the poem included in “Button’s Bit”:

I cannot sew, I cannot knot,  
I wish that I were wiser;  
But I resolve to do “my bit”  
To help to down the Kaiser.

The days grew war, my hair was long  
And softer far than chamois;  
They sheared my coat, and spun soft wool  
And knitted socks for Sammy.

(Author unknown, “Button’s Bit: The Story of a Patriotic Dog”)<sup>72</sup>

Whether or not these articles reached their intended audience and were able to inspire change remains unknown, but they did emphasize that no man or dog had any excuse not to help the American soldiers fighting overseas. Though it is not clear if any dog-fur socks were donated, the more pressing question may be whether or not a soldier actually wanted a pair of socks made out of dog fur.

During World War I dogs quickly learned to adapt to their roles on the front, despite the lack of training they received at U.S. operated training facilities. One position which received

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<sup>72</sup> Josephine Thompson, “Button’s Bit: The Story of a Patriotic Dog,” (Hudson Print Co: Boston, 1918).

very little training or attention from the American military prior to the start of war was the Red Cross Mercy Dogs. As stated earlier, the emergence of Red Cross dogs occurred near the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the experiments conducted by European militaries in more expeditious ways to clear the battlefields of wounded or dead soldiers. Once a dog was determined to have the necessary qualities to work as a Red Cross dog, the training began. After mastering basic obedience, the dogs moved on to field lessons, which included distinguishing between the uniforms worn by their comrades and those of the enemy. Next followed the understanding of the difference between dead soldiers, whom they were trained to pass over, and those who could be rescued. Up to that point their training remained similar to what had been taught prior to World War I. Trench warfare and its creation of No Man's Land forced trainers to modify the way the dogs were to notify their handlers that they had located a wounded soldier. Instead of barking to notify their handlers, an outdated technique that would have resulted in the dog, its handlers, or the stretcher-bearers to most likely be shot by enemy fire, new methods were devised. In the event the dog located someone while in the field alone, the animal was trained to retrieve something from the man's body and present it to their handler. This method created problems as some dogs, desperate to follow through on their training and return with something to present their handler, would sometimes pull at the injured man's hair if they had been taught to retrieve a hat and the man lacked one. Some dogs would even rip-off the bandages the men had applied themselves. Adapting to this discovery, dogs were taught to urge their handlers to follow them to the injured person. If the dog failed to locate any survivors, they were to return to their handlers and sit or lie down at their feet. In addition to all that training, many of these Red Cross dogs wore vests bearing the iconic Red Cross, which contained first aid supplies. The dogs were instructed to allow the injured men, if they were well enough to do so, to go through their

vest and locate whatever medical supplies they thought they needed in order to keep themselves alive long enough until it was safe for the medics and rescue workers to reach them.<sup>73</sup> That being said, the Red Cross symbol that adorned the vest they wore containing life-saving medical supplies often failed to protect them, as it instantly made them a target for enemy fire.<sup>74</sup> This trend, as noted by several French soldiers, was pointed out in a February 1917 article inside *The Red Cross Magazine*. Despite the article, there is no indication that any consideration was taken to remove the Red Cross emblem and replace the tan colored vest with something darker in hopes of protecting the dogs from enemy fire.

Although trainers such as Larson and Ford had the best of intentions, they were unable to truly prepare the dogs for the front. This is because they were unaware of what the front was truly like, and the errors they made were simple oversights due to that lack of knowledge. Ultimately, the dogs were simply unprepared for the work that lay ahead. Being badly spooked by bands and the bustle of a small city would not translate well to working anywhere near fighting. Had the American government established, or even owned, any kennels prior to the start of the war, there would have been authorized training manuals or guidelines for how these dogs needed to be trained. But because the American military possessed only a handful of sled dogs upon entering World War I, they lacked any regulations by which anyone, military or civilian, could follow. This absence created a new market. Intent on doing their part in the war effort, many trainers published books concerning proper training procedures to prepare dogs for the different roles they would play within the military. Due to the short duration of America's

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<sup>73</sup> Henderick, "Merciful Dogs of War," 70-72.

<sup>74</sup> Theodore F. Jager, *Scout, Red Cross and Army Dogs: Historical Sketch of Dogs in the Great War and a Training Guide for the Rank and File of the United States Army*. (Rochester, New York: Arrow Printing Company, 1917), 23.

involvement in the war, most of these books were published after the armistice. Edwin Hautonville Richardson's 1910 book, *War, Police, and Watch Dogs*, became an incredibly useful guide for those interested in training dogs.<sup>75</sup> Written with the best of intentions, many of Richardson's methods, such as training Red Cross dogs to bark upon locating a wounded soldier, were outdated by the start of the war. Seeing the changes that needed to be made if dogs were to continue to play a role in warfare, Richardson published *British War Dogs: Their Training and Psychology* in 1920. While serving with the British military during World War I, Richardson saw exactly how the techniques he developed years prior failed. Publishing *Watch Dogs: Their Training and Management* in 1923, Richardson further adapted his teachings to fit in with modern warfare in order to continue to advance the techniques and methodology used to prepare dogs for war.<sup>76</sup> By openly publishing these findings Richardson ensured other countries, whether they were interested in maintaining and possessing military kennels post war or not, would be better prepared for whatever the future held.

Whether or not these dogs were able to perform their jobs was often dependent upon multiple factors outside of their training, ranging anywhere from the current status of enemy activity to whether it was night or day. From barbed wire to chemical gas, these dogs faced an array of risks every time they left the safety of their station. Despite the obstacles, many dogs were able to successfully complete their missions. After a single battle Prusco, a nearly all white and wolf-like French dog, managed to locate over one hundred wounded soldiers, drag them into the relative-safety of bombed out craters, and then return with rescue teams.<sup>77</sup> Dogs like Filax, a

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<sup>75</sup> Richardson, *War, Police, and Watch Dogs*.

<sup>76</sup> Edwin Hautonville Richardson, *Watch Dogs: Their Training and Management*, (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1923).

<sup>77</sup> Lemish, *War Dogs*, 13-14.

sheep dog whose owner donated him to the Red Cross after he failed to win a prize at the New York dog show, found their purpose at the front after saving the lives of a hundred wounded French soldiers as a mercy dog.<sup>78</sup> Some dogs not trained by the Red Cross still managed to save lives, like Lassie the Collie, who was awarded the Order of the Merit by the Canine Heroes League. As doctors and rescue workers pulled victims from the wreckage of the H.M.S. Formidable, which was sunk by a German U-boat's torpedo in 1915, one man was incorrectly placed alongside the dead upon the beach shore. Lassie, noticing the human error, stayed by the man's side and attempted to wake him up on her own by profusely licking his face. When this failed, she quickly alerted the doctors, who were able to save his life.<sup>79</sup> Not only did these dogs play an important role in saving lives, but their actions invoked such emotion, as demonstrated in this poem:

If on the battlefield you lie,  
 May Red Cross dogs all pass you by.  
 A dogless wanderer may you be,  
 For you've no heart for such as we.  
 (Author unknown, "Scout, Red Cross and Army Dogs")<sup>80</sup>

Wishing the worst for those who did not believe in the benefits of utilizing Red Cross dogs, this poet's opinion was rather extreme yet still in line with what the men thought of these four-legged warriors. Further sentiments established that "the esteem in which Army and Red Cross dogs are held by the authorities is, however, but a fragment of what the crippled soldiers think of them."<sup>81</sup> Highlighting the difference in opinion of the effectiveness of the dogs between those in authority

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<sup>78</sup> Ernest Harold Baynes, "The Sagacity and Courage of Dogs: Instances of the Remarkable Intelligence of Man's Best Friend Among Dumb Animals." *The National Geographic Magazine*, March, 1919, 264.

<sup>79</sup> N. Tourneur, "Four-Footed Heroes," *Our Dumb Animals*, 51 no. 6 (November 1918), 87.

<sup>80</sup> Jager, *Scout, Red Cross and Army Dogs*, 13.

<sup>81</sup> Jager, *Scout, Red Cross and Army Dogs*, 27.

and the men on the ground, stories and poetry like those just described only begin to show how important the dogs were to the men they fought alongside.

Despite those stories and sentiments, war correspondent and canine historian Ernest Harold Baynes claimed in a 1921 article for *Harper's Monthly Magazine* that most of these tales of canine heroics were false, including those he had written about extensively.<sup>82</sup> Discussing the matter further in his book *Animal Heroes of the Great War*, Baynes stated that

not a single life was saved in France by a Red Cross dog. It was not that it was impossible to train dogs to do any of the feats required for such duties, but that it would have taken too much of the time of too many good men to establish and maintain an efficient Red Cross Dog Service in time of war... But, as we shall see, the fame of the war dogs may well rest on the splendid work they actually did; it needs no support from the stories of what some of the sentimentalists would like to believe they did.<sup>83</sup>

Although he had written about dogs throughout the war for publications like *National Geographic* and *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, even writing in 1919 that “the greatest service [dogs] have rendered has been in connection with the Red Cross,” it is unclear what caused Baynes to change his opinion.<sup>84</sup> It remains unclear if he was forced to publish these positive reviews and heroic antics of Red Cross dogs serving within the U.S. military, and therefore did not genuinely believe that these dogs had been successful, or if his sentiments and beliefs simply changed at the end of World War I.

Despite Baynes' disbelief in the achievements of canine units, dogs successfully served their country in other ways. Serving in a sentry capacity, a dog's keen hearing and heightened smell allowed them to alert their handlers to nearby enemy combatants. While growling to alert

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<sup>82</sup> Ernest Harold Baynes, “Our Animal Allies in the World War,” *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, January 1921, 171.

<sup>83</sup> Baynes, *Animal Heroes of the Great War*, 139.

<sup>84</sup> Ernest Harold Baynes, “Mankind's Best Friend: Companion of His Solitude, Advance Guard in the Hunt, and Ally in the Trenches,” *National Geographic*, March 1919, 201.



their handler was not preferred as it could easily give away their position, many handlers and their dogs were so in-tune with one another that by just becoming uneasy or suddenly wagging their tail, a dog could alert their human to danger. Together, they sat for hours on end at listening posts, alert for any signs of an approaching raid, and acting as the first line of defense for entire companies.<sup>85</sup> In order to train these dogs to detect the enemy, and not their own men, their handlers would have a soldier whom the dog was not accustomed to approach the animal and handler while on duty, wearing an enemy uniform. Repeating this lesson until the dog was able to distinguish between the different uniforms, the trainers were able to ensure the sentry dogs would not only smell the enemy, but recognize him as well.<sup>86</sup> This ability to differentiate between uniforms was crucial to the animal retaining their usefulness for another reason. If these dogs were trained to respond to only one person, in the event of that handler's death the dog would become unable to work. But by teaching the dog to respond to all members of a squad or even anyone wearing the right uniform, the animal would be able to continue working.<sup>87</sup> Additionally, in the event that the enemy captured the dog, the hope was that this training would prevent them from responding to, and eventually being retrained by, the enemy.

Most often, dogs were tasked with performing jobs which they had been bred to do for generations. The Belgian army found dogs so useful at pulling heavy items like machine guns that they were able to replace many of their equestrian units, opting for the more reliable canine troops.<sup>88</sup> As Richardson pointed out in an article for the *Army and Navy Gazette*, "although the utility of the horse in warfare is generally recognized, many do not realize the extremely useful

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<sup>85</sup> Baynes, "The Sagacity and Courage of Dogs," 257-260.

<sup>86</sup> Jager, *Scout, Red Cross and Army Dogs*, 69-70.

<sup>87</sup> Jager, *Scout, Red Cross and Army Dogs*, 62.

<sup>88</sup> Henderick, "Merciful Dogs of War," 74.

service the dog is rendering in the present war to the armies of the enemy and those of the Allies.”<sup>89</sup> The men found that dogs were able to continue on with their delivery even in the event that their entire unit may have become incapacitated, and more likely to keep the weapons out of enemy hands than equine units. Additionally, their much smaller stature than that of the equestrian units meant they were much less likely to be struck by gunfire. The benefits of their size was demonstrated in one sector around Verdun when 17 human couriers were shot down, one after another, while a single dispatch dog successfully ran the same route seven times before dying.<sup>90</sup> Their size even allowed them the ability to hide in the trenches with the rest of their unit.<sup>91</sup>

Given a dog’s ability to haul half their body weight at up to eight miles an hour, the fact they only needed to consume three pounds of food per day and that there were many readily available draft-dogs, the Belgian army’s decision was a practical one. Their overall strength became even more useful in the transportation of wounded men, as these cart dogs were transformed into ambulance dogs, able to pull two-wheeled carts specifically designed for this purpose with one man lying flat or two sitting upright.<sup>92</sup> This skill was further demonstrated in sled dogs, which kept the men in the Alp trenches stocked with provisions and munitions, even in the dead of winter. One kennel, consisting of 150 dogs, reported moving over fifty tons of supplies from the valley to the front line on the mountain in four days, despite recent heavy snowfall. By utilizing dogs to complete such menial tasks, the armies on both sides of the conflict were successfully able to free up their men and use them for more pressing tasks. The

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<sup>89</sup> Jager, *Scout, Red Cross and Army Dogs*, 22.

<sup>90</sup> Albert Payson Terhune, *A Book of Famous Dogs* (Garden City, New York: Country Life Press, 1937), 228.

<sup>91</sup> Henderick, “Merciful Dogs of War,” 74.

<sup>92</sup> Lemish, *War Dogs*, 16, 31.

heroic actions of one team of American sled dogs earned their handler the Croix de Guerre for successfully rescuing a trapped French outpost high in the Alps. Pounded by a fierce storm and enemy fire, their dispatch bearers had failed to return after being overcome by the storm. With the need of these supplies growing by the minute, Lieutenant Rene Haas hitched his dog team to a light sled and left to find help. Successfully able to descend the mountain, Lt. Haas successfully secured fourteen sleds loaded with ammunition amid enemy fire and blinding snow. On the fifth day the teams returned to the outpost, and the men were able to fight off the Germans.<sup>93</sup>

Being “the only four-footed beasts who could be trusted to do a piece of work strictly ‘on their own,’” dogs became the more advantageous option when it came to delivering everything from soup to dispatches.<sup>94</sup> Sent to the front with large canisters of hot soup strapped to their sides, these dogs acted as a beacon of warmth and friendship to the weary soldiers during this time of terror and strife. By ensuring the men were able to receive something as simple as hot rations, the dogs played a crucial role in their survival. As the mess carts were often unable to get close to the front due to continuous enemy bombardment, this bit of warmth was crucial to their survival, as most of the men had been standing in mud and cold water for days on end.<sup>95</sup> With warm soup and a friendly dog by their side, the men were able to enjoy a break, even if it was just for a few moments, from the chaos surrounding them.

Messenger and dispatch dogs were another position crucial to the survival of their men, as the enemy worked tirelessly to cut their lines of communication. With a basket strapped to

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Baynes, “Mankind’s Best Friend,” 201.

<sup>93</sup> Baynes, “The Sagacity and Courage of Dogs”, 257-261.

<sup>94</sup> Baynes, “Our Animal Allies in the World War,” 170.

<sup>95</sup> Baynes, “Mankind’s Best Friend,” 201.

their back containing carrier pigeons or a tube on their collar for messages, these dogs ensured units were able to maintain contact with each other and with headquarters.<sup>96</sup> Under the conditions of war, dogs were found able to run distances up to five miles in less than half the time it would have taken a healthy man to run the same distance. Additionally, their ability to run messages at night was drastically better than that of humans.<sup>97</sup> Yet, these dogs are not to be confused with liaison dogs, which were trained to find and deliver messages only to one specific handler.<sup>98</sup> This presented obvious issues upon the death of that handler, which is often why it was preferred to train the dogs to respond to uniforms instead of one specific person. Aside from the obvious task of delivering messages quicker than their humans, these dogs served another crucial role – that of saving the lives of men who would otherwise be tasked with running these messages.<sup>99</sup> Since dogs remain closer to the ground when running than a human, they were much less likely to become a target of enemy gunfire. Although the enemy would still shoot at messenger dogs in an attempt to stop the message from reaching its destination, it was much more difficult to shoot at the smaller framed dog, or even detect their lighter footsteps.

One of the most famous examples of a messenger dog was Satan, who earned international praise for his role in saving the lives of an entire unit. As German troops quickly surrounded one sector of Verdun due to an unexpected change in the fighting, the greatly outnumbered Allied forces were unable to call for assistance. With their telephone lines cut and all their carrier pigeons dead, their only hope was a small messenger dog, Satan. Zigzagging amid a barrage of enemy gunfire, as he had been trained to do in order to avoid being hit, with

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<sup>96</sup> Baynes, “Mankind’s Best Friend,” 201.

<sup>97</sup> Baynes, *Animal Heroes of the Great War*, 168.

<sup>98</sup> Baynes, “The Sagacity and Courage of Dogs”, 257-260.

<sup>99</sup> Baynes, *Animal Heroes of the Great War*, 168.

two pigeons in a basket strapped to his back, he hurried to reach his men. But enemy bullets struck him once, then twice, before he fell at the feet of the isolated French troops. Strapped to his collar was the message that they would be relieved the following day, but the way the fighting was going the men knew there would be no tomorrow for their garrison. Fastening a message to the two pigeons, the unit described the new phase of the siege as well as the position of the German hill batteries. Aware of the contents of the whicker basket that had been attached to Satan's shoulder blades, the German snipers were ready when the French troops finally released the birds. Shot down almost immediately by German snipers, the first bird fell. But the second pigeon rose above the barrage of gunfire and successfully notified the French army that reinforcements were needed immediately, or the village was to be lost to the Germans.<sup>100</sup>

As the fighting increased, so did the need for dogs. Although there were no properly established canine kennels to pull from, the demand grew more and more urgent. Though that desideratum was partially filled by donations from civilians, the amount received was nowhere near the total amount required to allow U.S. soldiers to fight effectively. Certain breeds,

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<sup>100</sup> Terhune, *A Book of Famous Dogs*, 228-235; Lemish, *War Dogs*, 18-20; It should be noted that Michael G. Lemish is not a historian despite his position of "Official Historian" for the Vietnam Dog Handler Association. In his book, *War Dogs: A History of Loyalty and Heroism*, Lemish committed some critical errors, specifically when it comes to how he tells the story of the messenger dog, Satan. Referencing Terhune's *A Book of Famous Dogs* when discussing Satan, Lemish credited the dog with saving "The Lost Battalion," despite Terhune's claim that Satan may have saved the entire Verdun campaign. Satan saved a unit of French soldiers during the Battle of Verdun, which occurred from February to December, 1916. The Lost Battalion occurred in October, 1918, and consisted of U.S. soldiers who were saved by U.S. soldiers, not French troops. Lemish's error may deviate from an assumption behind the similarities of both stories as both units were saved thanks to the ability of a single carrier pigeon to deliver a message back to headquarters. But even then, The Lost Battalion was saved by Cher Ami, arguably one of the most famous U.S. pigeons of WWI. The pigeon in Satan's story is never named. This critical error may also be due to the close proximity of both locations, with the city of Verdun being some 20 miles from the Forest of Argonne, where The Lost Battalion became lost.

including those considered to be “police dogs” like German and Belgian shepherds, were preferred due to their natural intelligence, curiosity, and ease with which they bond with a single individual.<sup>101</sup> Eventually the time came when the American military was no longer able to be particular about what types of dogs they received. Due to the tremendous shortage of dogs for war work, people began to perceive dogs differently as specific traits, not breeding, were preferred in order to ensure the dog was as successful as possible in their position. For example, grey and black dogs were often preferred for Red Cross positions due to the advantage their coat granted them when it came to blending in with the night.<sup>102</sup> Had a white dog attempted to scout No Man’s Land for wounded men, it would be much easier to spot and therefore increase the animal’s chances of being shot, even possibly tipping off the enemy to a wounded soldier or the handler’s location. In the end, the dogs chosen to take on this dangerous role were selected based on their character and how receptive they were to training, as “character is the hardest thing to breed, and the aristocrat with a shift eye goes into the discard.”<sup>103</sup>

Serving in just about every way imaginable, these dogs had a tremendous impact on the daily lives of the soldiers with whom they interacted. By playing the role of friend and companion, these dogs performed a crucial role in maintaining the psychological well being of the troops. The tales that have survived demonstrate the strong, often intimate, bond between man and dog. Playing the role of companion in an unfamiliar environment “their merry pranks and the keen interest they showed in everything that was going on; by their readiness to respond to every kind word and to every friendly act; by their courage, loyalty, and everlasting good

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<sup>101</sup> Jager, *Scout, Red Cross and Army Dogs*, 44.

<sup>102</sup> Henderick, “Merciful Dogs of War”, 71.

<sup>103</sup> Henderick, “Merciful Dogs of War”, 71.

nature-they helped to relieve the feverish strain of war and to keep up the moral of the men in the trenches.”<sup>104</sup>

Few canine corpsman ever garnered as much international fame as did Sergeant Stubby. The brindle Boston terrier pup with a stub of a tail’s story began the day he met James Robert Conroy. Conroy, who had enlisted in the Connecticut National Guard, was sent to Camp Yale for basic training after his outfit was renamed the 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment.<sup>105</sup> It was here, in the summer of 1917, that Conroy and Stubby discovered one another. Keeping up with his new friend’s drills and training exercises, Stubby quickly learned to understand the meanings behind the numerous bugle calls, became used to the rhythm of the regimental marching bands and paraded around in formation with the soldiers upon the athletic fields at Yale University. But his signature trick was his ability to salute on command. Sitting back on his haunches before rearing up, Stubby would raise his right paw to the right side of his face and gaze at his fellow soldiers in as serious a manner as possible for a small dog until his gesture was returned. Stubby quickly became the unit’s clear choice for a mascot.<sup>106</sup>

As time progressed and plans were drawn for war, the 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment was soon placed within the 26<sup>th</sup> Division, Yankee Division, and Conroy, who had volunteered to serve as a mounted scout, was assigned to the support staff for the regiment’s headquartered company.<sup>107</sup> As the men began to pack up their tents and bags and prepared to leave Camp Yale, Conroy and Stubby soon learned that dogs were not permitted to board the ships departing for Europe. Ignoring this rule, Stubby fell into rank with his fellow soldiers, marched with them to the

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<sup>104</sup> Baynes, “Our Animal Allies in the World War,” 171.

<sup>105</sup> Ann Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby: How a Stray Dog and His Best Friend Helped Win World War I and Stole the Heart of a Nation*, (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2014), 27.

<sup>106</sup> Bausum. *Sergeant Stubby*, 30.

<sup>107</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 40.

railway depot and hopped aboard the train. No one stopped him. Enlisting the help of a crewmember aboard the U.S.S. Minnesota, Conroy safely stowed Stubby in an engine room coal bin, where the dog hid until the boat was far enough out to sea that nothing could be done about the four-legged stowaway.<sup>108</sup> It was not until after they reached Europe that Stubby was discovered. Thankfully, Stubby remembered what he learned in basic training and delivered a well-executed salute to the officer who discovered him. He was immediately named the official mascot of the unit.<sup>109</sup>

Together, Conroy and Stubby aided their division in a multitude of ways, even playing a significant role in nearly all of the A.E.F.'s major engagements.<sup>110</sup> The couple worked side-by-side in whatever position Conroy was placed in, starting out in the regimental headquarters company as a dispatch rider and making their way to the front.<sup>111</sup> But moving to the front brought a whole slew of new perils for both man and dog. In an attempt to protect Stubby, Conroy ordered an ill-fitting French-made dog-sized gas mask. Thanks to the assistance of a French lieutenant, an alternative mask was created. With a bit of training, Stubby learned to retreat to their dugout during a gas attack in order to have his mask placed on him.<sup>112</sup> Eventually stationed in Toul to protect the Sibille trench, it was only a matter of time before the duo would experience fighting firsthand. Greeted at the front by enemy signs reading "Welcome 26<sup>th</sup> Division," the unit knew their troubles were just beginning, especially since their training had been cut short. German troops attempted to take the trench soon after they arrived in an engagement that would later be known as the Battle of Seichepny. Although they won back the

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<sup>108</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 45-46.

<sup>109</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 48-49.

<sup>110</sup> Shay, *The Yankee Division in the First World War*, XI.

<sup>111</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 53.

<sup>112</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 65.



trench and beat off the Germans, it was in the quiet hours after the battle, when Stubby was wandering the forward territory, that he was hit with shrapnel from an unexpected enemy shell. Crawling over to his friend and pulling him to the safety of the trench, Conroy administered first aid until the threat had passed and he was able to carry Stubby into the village. A doctor at one of the Army's first aid stations spotted Conroy and Stubby, calling him over and examining the dog's wounds before dressing them. The doctor then did something unusual: he ordered Conroy to place his friend alongside the wounded men waiting inside an ambulance bound for a nearby field hospital. Upon arrival at the hospital, the surgeons properly cleaned and stitched up Stubby's injuries despite the fact that it had most likely been the gravest day of fighting the division had yet experienced. One reporter picked up on this tension, noting that "for days there was deep gloom in the outfit lest 'Stubby' should not get well." Thanks to the treatment Stubby received from the surgeons, he was back on his paws after a month and ready to follow his comrades wherever they went.<sup>113</sup>

Moving from Toul to the Marne and on to Verdun and eventually to the Meuse-Argonne area, Stubby learned new skills along the way to help his fellow doughboys. The seasoned mascot became a rescue dog, sniffing out surviving Allied soldiers and returning with medics, even providing companionship in a soldier's final moments. He acquired an intense dislike of Germans as a guard dog, to the point that he had to be tied up whenever German prisoners were brought in, if only for the sake of their trousers.<sup>114</sup> He fought alongside his men during the St. Mihiel drive and assisted them as they brought in prisoners of war from Vigneulles. Stubby even captured his own German. Although the facts of what exactly happened remain murky, even

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<sup>113</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 72-77.

<sup>114</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 84-85, 88.

tainted by hearsay and misinformation spread by the press, Stubby did in fact capture his very own German soldier. This accomplishment earned Stubby more than plaudit, it won him the title of Sergeant and a German Iron Cross, an accolade that his men tastefully hung on his vest just below his tail.<sup>115</sup> On November 10, 1918, the men received news that they had been waiting to hear for years. As the guns fell silent on November 11 at 11 a.m., Conroy and “hundreds of friends crowded around Stubby... many credited him with causing the gods to yield the good luck of victory.”<sup>116</sup>

Unfortunately no known diary or letters home from Conroy have survived, but Stubby’s tales live on in a scrapbook in which Conroy compiled the photos he took of his comrade as well as the newspaper clippings he saved of their time together. Their story also lives on in the form of a vest. Handcrafted by the residents of Château-Thierry as a token of their appreciation for when Stubby alerted his men and the citizens of an impending gas attack on the town, this hand-embroidered, leather vest became the place where Conroy placed all of Stubby’s, and his, medals.<sup>117</sup> Stubby’s first souvenir medal was bestowed upon him by the residents of Neufchâteau, which honored the city’s ties to the French heroine Jeanne d’Arc and became one of the many war trophies that told the adventures of Stubby’s service.<sup>118</sup> Among the many awards to find home upon his vest include a Purple Heart, a three bar service stripe denoting his, and Conroy’s, eighteen months of service and a U.S. World War I Victory Medal with five clasps, commemorating battlefield service at Champagne-Marne, Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne and the Defensive Sector. After the war, Stubby continued to collect medals and

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<sup>115</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 111-112.

<sup>116</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 119-121.

<sup>117</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 89-91.

<sup>118</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 53.

awards from organizations like The American Legion, the YMCA and the Humane Education Society, which gifted him with a solid gold pin cast in his likeness that was pinned to his now medal-laden vest by none other than General Pershing.<sup>119</sup> Conroy paraded Stubby around the country in the years following the war, participating in victory parades immediately after the war and animal parades later on, becoming the mascot of Maryland State and then Georgetown, even meeting Presidents Warren Harding and Woodrow Wilson.<sup>120</sup>

Stubby and Conroy both survived the war, returning home to America to live out their lives together. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of March, 1926, Stubby passed away in Conroy's apartment. Despite their bond, Conroy wrote little about the death of his "closest companion," stating that "his passing was a peaceful end to an adventurous life... and it seemed as though his last message was one of gratitude to all who had loved, and been kind to him."<sup>121</sup> Knowing the war hero deserved more than a simple burial, Conroy had Stubby's body stuffed by a staff taxidermist at the Smithsonian Institution. Honoring the dog further, his remains were cremated and placed within his body. Yet death could not keep the two out of the spotlight, as Conroy and Stubby continued to attend veteran's events and reunions. Stubby was even placed on display in shop windows from time to time. Keeping faithful to his attempts to chronicle their story, Conroy continued to save press clippings about their attendance at such events. Attempting to keep Stubby's memory alive, Conroy donated his closest companion to the American Red Cross Museum in Washington, D.C. in 1927, where Stubby remained on display until 1941 when work surrounding World War II caused him to be relocated. Finding his way back into Conroy's

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<sup>119</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 211-214; Maryland State is now a part of what we know today as the University of Maryland.

<sup>120</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 164-167, 170-171.

<sup>121</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 186-187.

apartment, the two remained together until a 1954 fire at the apartment caused Conroy to escape with his most important possession. Realizing that Stubby needed a new, more permanent, home if he were to remain safe, Conroy parted ways with his closest companion on May 22, 1956, donating Stubby, his handcrafted collar, vest and scrapbook to the Smithsonian Institute.<sup>122</sup> Donating Stubby on a permanent basis meant the friends would finally be separated, something death had not managed to do. Conroy knew that this decision, though difficult given all they had experienced together, meant that Stubby would live on, continuing to gather fame and admiration.

Although Stubby may have been left out of the books written about the Yankee Division, including the part where he greeted President Wilson when he was touring France, the fact remains that his memory lives on in the stories told by those who were lucky enough to have known him.<sup>123</sup> Of all the honors Stubby was bestowed over the years, none may be more personal or touching than how he was remembered by his fellow soldiers. While some drew portraits or snapped photos of Stubby, others took to poetry to express how much Stubby meant to them, as was the case with Sergeant John J. Curtin, who owed his life to the dog when Stubby woke him after he had slept through a topside alarm warning of a gas attack.<sup>124</sup> After the attack, the soldier wrote:

Listen to me and I will tell,  
Of a dog who went all through hell,  
With the 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, U.S.A.,  
Stubby was with us night and day.  
.....  
North of Verdun were our hardest battles,  
And many brave men gave death rattles,

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<sup>122</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 188-190.

<sup>123</sup> Shay, *The Yankee Division in the First World War*, 210-212.

<sup>124</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 66.

But Stubby came back through hell O.K.  
And is ready to go back to the U.S.A.

He is a fighting bulldog of the old Y.D.,  
And is the joy and pride of our company.  
When we take him back to the U.S.A.,  
Stubby will hold the stage night and day.

His owner Bob will take him home,  
And never more will Stubby roam,  
He'll enjoy a much earned rest  
In the place WE ALL LOVE BEST.

(Sergeant John J. Curtin, "Our Regimental Mascot")<sup>125</sup>

What made this dog so special was perfectly summed up by one war reporter, who wrote that Stubby "was not a 'one man' dog, but everyone's friend".<sup>126</sup> It was this admiration and love that allowed a simple dog to receive a 3-column obituary in the *New York Times*. In a tribute befitting of a war hero, they remembered Stubby's achievements in the regiment, and how "he seemed to know that the greatest service he could render was comfort and cheerfulness."<sup>127</sup> It was this admiration that allowed him to meet three U.S. presidents and General Pershing, lead victory parades and receive numerous honors upon his return. Even before Stubby's death he warmed the heart of a nation, attracting attention from media outlets and even the likes of Margaret Shanks, war nurse, poet and end-of-life caregiver for Susan B. Anthony, who wrote:

Stubby---on the field of battle  
You have won immortal fame  
Written on the page of history  
Will be found your home-spun name.

.....  
Stubby---doggie what a lesson  
To us humans, you can teach  
Humbly wearing regal honors

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<sup>125</sup> Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession No. 210736, Catalog No. 58285, Division of Armed Forces History, "Stubby: A.E.F. Mascot Scrapbook".

<sup>126</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 67.

<sup>127</sup> "Stubby of A.E.F. Enters Valhalla: Tramp Dog of No Petigree Took Part In the Big Parade in France," *New York Times* (New York City, New York), April 4, 1926.

Lifts you just beyond our reach.

(Margaret Shanks)<sup>128</sup>

Further demonstrating the love between dog and man Conroy's grandson, Curtis Dean, recounted that the only element of World War I which his grandfather would talk about was his pal, Stubby, in an interview conducted by Ann Bausum for her book "Sergeant Stubby: How a Stray Dog and His Best Friend Helped Win World War I and Stole the Heart of a Nation." Dean recounted that his grandfather "would just say, 'I was with Stubby.'... I have to tell you, that man was devoted to that dog... the dog may have been what got him through the war."<sup>129</sup>

Although Stubby and Conroy's relationship was extraordinary, numerous friendships between dogs and soldiers were formed by the war, playing an important role in helping these soldiers maintain a positive mental state throughout the conflict. Many men, unable to bear the loss of their four-legged friend after everything they had experienced together, smuggled their companions home. Hiding them in their packs, wrapping them up in blankets and stashing them in any space big enough to conceal the animals, the returning soldiers did everything in their power to see that their companions were able to come home with them.<sup>130</sup> Soon, the U.S. military faced a new challenge when bringing their men home – what to do about all these smuggled animals. Although this action was in violation of G.H.Q. Bulletin 106, the military eventually gave up on trying to curb this flood of animals, allowing all "dogs, cats and similar animals on active duty as troop mascots, [to] be carried as passenger baggage and so listed on baggage reports." Receiving transportation alongside their comrades as honorary members of the A.E.F., these animals received the same privileges and rights as their human counterparts regarding

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<sup>128</sup> Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession No. 210736, Catalog No. 58285, Division of Armed Forces History, "Stubby: A.E.F. Mascot Scrapbook".

<sup>129</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 78.

<sup>130</sup> "Dogs Smuggled in Planes," *The Stars and Stripes*, January 17, 1919, 8.

travel and accommodations.<sup>131</sup> While some dogs did require a quarantine period before being allowed into America, it was nowhere near as long as what British troops experienced. Being an island nation with a perpetual fear of rabies, the British government imposed lengthy and expensive quarantine periods, forcing some men to abandon their friends upon arrival.<sup>132</sup> The efforts of these men allowed many dogs like Rin Tin Tin, the internationally renowned four-legged movie star, and Sergeant Stubby to live out long and happy lives after playing their part in the war.

Numerous factors come into play regarding why these men felt so compelled to smuggle these dogs home, especially given the risk they placed themselves in had they been caught. While it remains unclear if British Lieutenant Ralph Kynoch attempted to bring home a four-legged companion after the war, he did have this to say about dogs within the military: “People who haven’t been at the front don’t know what a little companionship means to a man on patrol duty, or in a dugout, or what a frisky pup means to a whole company... If we can’t get a dog we’ll take a goat, or a cat, or a pig, a rabbit, a sheep, or, yes, even a wildcat... We’ll take anything for a trench companion-but give us a dog first.”<sup>133</sup> These stories of love and compassion from man to dog do not stand alone, they are repeated over and over again in stories, articles, letters and poetry. After the war, some writers began picking up on the benefits of a dog, noting that “the lonely soldier on guard, who, for the first time probably, faces the dark shadows with their lurking dangers in the enemy country, will do his duty better and more fearlessly, if a faithful dog is with him to warn him of impending events.”<sup>134</sup> This sentimentality may be due to

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<sup>131</sup> “Animal Mascots to get Trip to States,” *The Stars and Stripes*, May 16, 1919, 1.

<sup>132</sup> Baynes, *Animal Heroes of the Great War*, 17-18.

<sup>133</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 43.

<sup>134</sup> Jager, *Scout, Red Cross and Army Dogs*, 17.

the fact that these animals stood as reminders of home to the terrified and shell-shocked men, helping to hold them over during an extremely “difficult period during which they had broken away from their old lives, but had not yet become accustomed to the new.”<sup>135</sup> It could even be that their presence brought a brief glimmer of light during the darkest of nights. Or simply “they gave men a temporary reprieve, a brief ‘leave’: from their surroundings while “reassur[ing] many soldiers that there still existed, in all the surrounding madness, a sane order to life that would always override the temporal carnage.”<sup>136</sup> One reporter from the *New Britain Herald* may have perfectly summed up the reason when they wrote, “a dog is a dog, some folks will say... But there are times when a dog is more than a dog; when he has all the attributes of a human being, plus such undying love and affection as few human beings possess for anyone but their own kith and kin.”<sup>137</sup> Whatever the reason was, these four-legged soldiers helped their two-legged friends survive one of the most terrible experiences of their lives.

Although many of these stories of heroism and comfort may have become lost to time, the legacy of their actions lives on in places like the Hartsdale Canine Cemetery. Erected in 1923, the War Dog Memorial stands as tribute to the thousands of U.S. military dogs who perished in the Great War. Designed by Walter A. Buttendorf and sculpted by Robert Caterson, the monument depicts a German shepherd, alert and at the ready, standing watch atop a ten-ton granite bolder. Wearing the Red Cross vest with a dented helmet laying at his paws, the monument represented the important work carried out by these dogs. “Dedicated to the memory of the war dog... man’s most faithful friend for the valiant services rendered in the World War,”

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<sup>135</sup> Baynes, *Animal Heroes of the Great War*, 5.

<sup>136</sup> Richard Van Emden, *Tommy's Ark: Soldiers, Their Animals and the Natural World in the Great War*, (Great Britain: Bloomsbury UK, 2010), 5.

<sup>137</sup> Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 187.



the monument was designed to stand as “a reminder to our posterity of recognition of [the War Dog’s] invaluable service.”<sup>138</sup>

Despite the work performed by these dogs and the efforts of their humans to ensure their success, every canine remaining in the U.S. military’s possession at the end of the war was euthanized. The canine units of the French, British, German, Italian and Russian armies all met the same fate.<sup>139</sup> In their hurried efforts to clean things up, accurate records of just how many dogs were destroyed by the A.E.F. were not kept.<sup>140</sup> Although “it would take another war before officials could be convinced that war dogs, like soldiers, could return home,” numerous speculations regarding this brash decision exist, ranging from America’s desire to return to their post-war isolationist status to the lack of military operated kennels existing to house these dogs.<sup>141</sup> By the end of World War I the U.S. military had already scrapped any plans they had to establish their own training kennels or canine training programs. This decision essentially doomed the country to repeat their mistakes should any new international conflict arise, as was the case with World War II.<sup>142</sup>

During the war the role of dogs began to shift away from that of solely being a working animal towards that of pet. Prior to World War I, most veterinarians focused their practices on bovine, equestrian and other farm animals. Trained to detect and prevent the spread of infectious diseases while ensuring farmers and entire regions would not lose their stock, and their livelihood, almost none either studied or practiced to be, what is known today, as a small animal

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<sup>138</sup> “War Dog Memorial,” Hartsdale Pet Cemetery and Crematory, accessed March 5, 2017, <http://www.hartsdalepetcrematory.com/about-us/war-dog-memorial/>; Peter Shaw Baker, *Animal War Heroes*, 1 ed. (London: A. & C. Black Ltd., 1933), 127.

<sup>139</sup> Lemish, *War Dogs*, 29.

<sup>140</sup> Lemish, *War Dogs*, 29.

<sup>141</sup> Derr, *A Dog's History of America*, 255.

<sup>142</sup> Lemish, *War Dogs*, 30.

veterinarian. Veterinarians such as Louis A. Merillat worked hard to establish new roles for these animals and their caretakers, both during and after the war. Serving as commanding officer of the Advanced Section Veterinary Hospital at Neufchateau, he was later promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, the highest rank possible within the veterinary service. Following a brief retirement after the end of the war, Merillat returned to teaching, devising courses in the care of previously ignored animal species – essentially everything but horses. He even successfully established his own canine medical practice. From there Merillat served as president of the American Veterinary Medical Association from 1924 to 1925, continually working to establish a small animal category within the organization in an attempt to subdue the “forever-a-horse-doctor” section of the institution. His efforts failed and the organization ultimately pushed these veterinarians out, leaving them to establish their own organization and periodical where they could garner the respect they deserved.<sup>143</sup>

Following the cease-fire, dogs began to inhabit a new role within society. Dogs that had survived the war and euthanasia attempts by their military served soldiers in new ways, such as guides to blinded veterans, like with Dick the Poodle at the Soldiers’ Home for the Blind in France. His companionship was tremendously important during this trying period of their lives. Coaching the injured men to rely on an animal to be their eyes, Dick led the men about the grounds and through the local streets, helping prepare them for a life that was very different than the one they were accustomed to when they returned home. Dick allowed these men to begin to heal from the physical wounds of war, even helping them regain part of the life they had lead

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<sup>143</sup> Kenneth B. Haas, “Forgotten Veterinarians. 7. Louis A. Merillat,” *Veterinary Heritage Bulletin of the American Veterinary History Society*, November 2007, 30-31.

prior to war.<sup>144</sup> France's War Dog Service adopted and trained dogs that had been wounded, were nursed back to health, and deemed unable to return to back to fighting as guide dogs for their blinded veterans.<sup>145</sup> Despite the success of this program, many people objected to "this service, largely because of the feeling that a blind man led by a dog must necessarily appear to be an object of charity."<sup>146</sup> This stigma against the reliance of man on a dog flew in the face of everything these veterans had just experienced. Initially expected to act as an object of war by higher ups, these dogs had taken on a role subconsciously expected of them by those in the trenches. In order to physically and mentally survive the war, these men had leaned on these dogs throughout the war, relying on the friendship, courage, intelligence and resilience of the dogs they encountered during the most challenging part of their life. But the men who served at the top, those in the trenches and those who had not served viewed the role of dogs, within both the realm of warfare and the home front, differently, allowing this idea that a reliance upon a dog was something unseemly. It was the men who had directly interacted with these animals, who wrote home about their new friends, constructed beautiful poetry and drawings about these dogs, who understood their importance and who changed their role from that of an object, to one of companion. Despite this change in the way dogs were viewed by the men they served alongside, when it came to the military, almost everything returned to the way it had been prior to the start of the war. The U.S. military remained fundamentally uninterested in this aspect of modern warfare, and relatively unaware of the positive psychological role these animals played, until after December 7, 1941.

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<sup>144</sup> Baker, *Animal War Heroes*, 123; Anderson, *War Dogs of the World War*, 17-18.

<sup>145</sup> Baynes, *Animal Heroes of the Great War*, 198.

<sup>146</sup> Baynes, *Animal Heroes of the Great War*, 198.

While the invention of the tank signaled the end of horses in battle, dogs continue to play a role in America's military. Though the U.S. military was unprepared to handle this new addition to its ranks, its citizens were not, stepping up to help them through fundraisers, even donating beloved pets so that their men may have a friend in their time of need.<sup>147</sup> While stories of heroism and love like that of Sergeant Stubby survived the war, there remain countless others whose dedication and actions died along with them. While some were buried along with their masters, even receiving their own tombstones or commissioned statues, many found their final homes to be unmarked graves.<sup>148</sup> Although they may have not received a final resting place befitting the work they performed during the war, the memory of those dogs lived on in the minds of the men who survived thanks to the actions, and love, of these four-legged soldiers. Despite the heroic actions of the dogs who served, the U.S. military's hasty withdrawal and quick closure of military kennels ensured meant they lacked any trained canine units should an international conflict arise, which occurred some twenty years later. Lacking any canine units, training schools, or military kennels upon joining World War II in 1941, America was doomed to repeat every mistake they made, once more entering an international conflict with only a handful of sled dogs.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> "Mrs. Anita Baldwin Gives \$600 Dog as Engineers' Mascot."

<sup>148</sup> Lemish, *War Dogs*, 11.

<sup>149</sup> Lemish, *War Dogs*, 33.