What a Character!

EXTRAORDINARY ANIMAL HEROES

Notable Lives from History





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First printing: March 2024

Master Books, P.O. Box 726, Green Forest, AR 72638

Master Books® is a division of the New Leaf Publishing Group, LLC.

ISBN: 978-1-68344-362-9
ISBN: 978-1-61458-877-1 (digital)
Library of Congress Control Number: 2024931280

Cover: Diana Bogardus
Interior: Terry White

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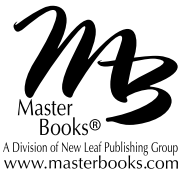

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World War I

World War I, often called the Great War, was fought from 1914–1918. Franz Ferdinand, **archduke** of Austria-Hungary was **assassinated** along with his wife, Sophie. The killer was a Serbian man who believed parts of Austria actually belonged to Serbia. Austria-Hungary, blaming the Serbian government, declared war on Serbia one month later. Europe at the time of the conflict was divided into two major powers — Germany and Austria-Hungary. Later, the **Ottoman Empire** joined the Central Powers. The Allied Powers were Great Britain, France,

archduke: Son of the Emperor of Austria

assassinated: Murdered

Ottoman Empire: An empire developed by Turks between the 14th and 20th centuries

and Russia. Later, they were joined by Italy. The United States at first remained **neutral**. In May 1915, the passenger ship RMS (British Royal Mail Ship) *Lusitania* was sunk by a German submarine, killing 128 Americans. This, of course, greatly upset the Americans. In February 1917, the United States learned that Germany had secretly tried **enticing** Mexico to attack the U.S. On April 6, the U.S. government, headed by President Woodrow Wilson, officially declared war on Germany, and by December 1917, 175,000 U.S. troops were in Europe. With the added strength of the United States, the Allies would win the war in November 1918, but before then it would be a difficult fight for the Allies.

neutral: Not helpful or supportive of either side in a conflict

enticing: Attempting to persuade

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Murphy, the Donkey Who Carried the Wounded

April 1915– January 1916	Gallipoli, Turkey, World War I

The Battle of Gallipoli was fought during the First World War from April 25, 1915, to January 1916. It was the first major operation in which Allied forces arrived from the sea. British and French troops landed on the Turkish peninsula with **disastrous** consequences for the Allies. Half of the soldiers were either killed or wounded. The Turkish soldiers fought bravely to defend their homeland.

disastrous: Causing great damage

Jack Simpson Kirkpatrick

Jack Simpson Kirkpatrick grew up in South Shields, England. Twice during the year, there was a Fair at South Shields Market Place called Murphy's Fair. As a boy, Jack would spend his summer vacation working there, getting paid a **sixpence** a day, caring for the donkeys and giving children rides along the beach for a penny a ride. In the winter he delivered milk to help support his family of ten, as his father had suffered an injury and wasn't able to work. Whenever Jack found jobs, he gave most of the money he earned to his mother, whom he dearly loved.

sixpence: British money which was then worth 1/40th of their pound or 12.5 cents

He joined the **Merchant Marines** at age 17 and ended up in Australia. He was working as a fireman on a little coastal vessel in Western Australia when the war started. He enlisted in Perth, the capital of Western Australia, where

Merchant Marines: Civilians who transport troops and supplies in wartime on ships

for reasons not fully known, he enlisted as John Simpson, omitting his Scottish last name of Kirkpatrick. From then on, he was known as Simpson. He hoped joining up would enable him to return to England and his family soon. Like many who shared his reason for joining, Simpson was disappointed when the first Australian soldiers bound for the war were sent for training in Egypt.

Simpson had always loved animals, and from his first day in camp, he usually had a dog or two following him around. He also found a young possum and kept him as a pet while at camp, carrying it around in his hat and letting it sleep in his hammock with him at night. Simpson was strong and robust, so he was given the job of **stretcher bearer** in the 3rd Field Ambulance. It took a very strong man to be able to carry the weight of stretchers bearing wounded men. He was among those who landed at Gallipoli on April 25, 1915. At first, the stretcher-bearers were told to expect 3,000 wounded men at Gallipoli. That was soon changed to 10,000.

stretcher bearer: Person who carried the wounded on stretchers

On to Gallipoli

Arriving at the destination, Simpson climbed down a rope ladder into an overcrowded rowboat, silently praying they would not be killed. Enemy gunfire was heard as they rowed closer to the cliffs, which were covered with low trees and bushes. Simpson wished he was back home at good old South Shields.

He was the second man to get into the water and head for the beach. The first man and third man were killed beside him. Simpson felt a bullet whiz by his head as he waded toward an overhang to seek shelter. Soldiers swarmed onto the beach attempting to reach higher ground as they had been ordered. They clawed their way up steep slopes, using their bayonets to push themselves along and gain a foothold on the steep rocky banks. Enemy fire exploded overhead showering the area with **shrapnel**.

The 3rd **Brigade**, Simpson's squadron, captured the first of three ridges and chased the enemy inland, but having no **field artillery** in place, they suffered heavy losses. The guns had to be dragged up steep banks and were not yet there. Half the men were falling wounded and others were suffering from lack of food and water. Machine guns and shrapnel did much damage. The Turks had the advantage of having been there for months, plus they had many more men.

Simpson edged along narrow tracks, **evacuating** a steady stream of wounded men, and carrying them to lifeboats waiting along the shore. Stretchers became scarce as **casualties** mounted. "Shrapnel Gully," so named because of the constant barrage of shells flung down from the Turks, was the main highway to the front line. It

shrapnel: Fragments of a bomb or shell

brigade: Subdivision of an army

field artillery: Large guns used in warfare on land

evacuating: Removing from a place of danger

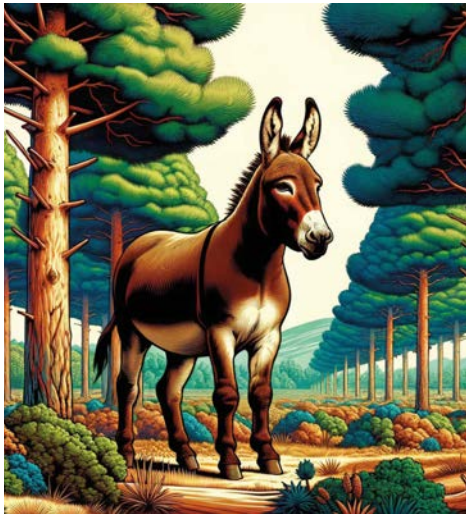
casualties: Persons injured in war

was said this area was more dangerous than the actual **front line**. The stretcher-bearers did much of their work there. The cry of "stretcher-bearer" was heard from desperate wounded men, and respect grew daily for those who answered that cry and performed their miracles of bravery.

front line: Area closest to the conflict

A Donkey

On his second day after landing, Jack Simpson was reported missing, but actually, he was hard at work. He had come upon a donkey cowering in a grove of pines. Apparently, a few donkeys had been brought ashore with some mules to carry water to the men, but in the confusion of landing, some had been thrown out of the boats and left to swim to shore if they could make it. Jack, having a love for donkeys and prior experience with them, comforted the little fellow and named him "Murphy." Coming upon a wounded soldier, Simpson gently lifted the man onto Murphy's back, guiding the donkey with a lead rope he had improvised from field bandages. Murphy began to head down the stony **ravine** with his passenger. This was the first of many brave rescues. In rain or shine, Simpson was seen trudging up Shrapnel Gully with Murphy by his side. They made between 12 and 15 trips daily, carrying water to thirsty soldiers and coming back down with a wounded soldier **straddled** on Murphy's back. Simpson and Murphy were

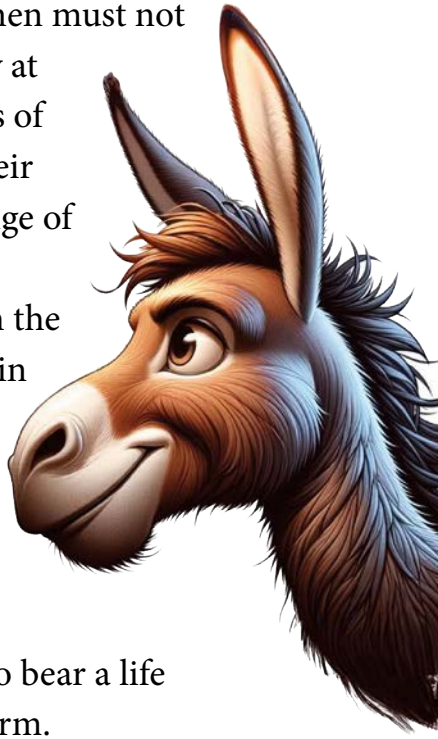


ravine: Deep, narrow gorge with steep sides

straddled: One leg on each side

inseparable. Fearless for his own welfare, Jack Simpson was always considerate of his donkey.

One man recalls, "When the **enfilading** fire down the valley was at its worst and orders were posted that the ambulance men must not go out, the man and the donkey continued **placidly** at their work. At times they held trenches of hundreds of men **spellbound**, just to see them at their work. Their **quarry** lay motionless in an open patch, in easy range of a dozen Turkish rifles. Patiently, the little donkey waited under cover, while the man crawled through the thick scrub until he got within striking distance. Then a lightning dash, and he had the wounded man on his back and was making for cover again. In those fierce seconds, he always seemed to bear a life unusually protected from harm.



enfilading: Bombarding

placidly: Steadily

spellbound: Curiously watching

quarry: Wounded victim

charge: Wounded man he was responsible for

limp: Helpless

unruffled: In a calm manner

unconscious: Passed out

Once in cover, he tended to his **charge** with quick, skillful movements. Then the **limp** form was balanced across the back of the patient animal, and, with a slap on its back the man started off for the beach, the donkey trotting **unruffled** by his side."[1] Most of the wounded men were unable to walk, and Simpson was often seen holding an **unconscious** man with one arm while guiding the donkey with the other. Jack always had a smile and a word of encouragement for all.

At nighttime, Simpson often camped with an **Indian** artillery unit that named him *Bahadur*, meaning "Bravest of the Brave." They had the utmost respect for his bravery. The colonel of Simpson's squadron decorated Murphy's forehead with a red cross armband as he said to the donkey, "You're worth a hundred men to me."[2] **Padre** George Green said, "If ever a man deserved a **Victoria Cross** it was Jack Simpson. I often remember now the scene I frequently saw in Shrapnel Gully of that cheerful soul calmly walking down the **gully** with a red cross **armlet** tied round the donkey's head. That gully was under direct fire from the enemy almost all the time."[3]

Indian: Soldier from the country of India

padre: Minister

Victoria Cross: One of the highest awards for bravery a British soldier can receive

gully: Ravine formed by water

armlet: A band a medic would wear indicating his job as medic

Anzacs: Soldiers in the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps

barrage: Concentrated blast

The Last Trip for Simpson

In the middle of May, the Turks made their most violent attempt to drive the **Anzacs** and their Allies from the cliffs and send them back to the sea. There was a tremendous **barrage** of fire from their guns. They came across the narrow strip all together, rushing wildly, climbing over the sandbag lines only to die by enemy rifles. The battle raged on, but when it was finally over, it had failed. The Turks hadn't taken the trench. It was on the morning of this last attack, the 19th, that Simpson made his last journey. He went up for breakfast as usual, but it wasn't ready. Cheerfully, with a wave of his hand, he told the cook, "Never mind, get me a good dinner when I come back."[4]

Simpson set out with his donkey, as usual, to rescue more wounded men, as he did every other day. A Turkish soldier, taking careful aim, slowly squeezed the trigger. His target was a man leading a donkey up the steep incline at the junction of Dead Man's Ridge. Jack Simpson was struck in the back and the bullet passed through his heart, killing him instantly. Fellow soldiers dragged Jack off to the side. Andy Davidson, one of his friends, said, "We went back and covered his body and put it in a dugout by the side of the track and carried on with our job. We went back for him about 6:30 p.m., and he was buried at **Hell Spit** on that same evening."[5]

One of the other soldiers, when asked where Simpson was, answered that he was at Heaven's gate helping the soldiers through. The men had a hard time believing he was actually gone. Soldiers were teary-eyed as they watched Murphy trudging alone to the hospital station bearing his wounded cargo. Indian gunners, overcome with grief, risked their lives to collect a wreath of poppies to decorate a wooden cross. A hush had fallen over the camp.

Colonel John Monash wrote to Headquarters, New Zealand and Australian Division: "Private Simpson and his little beast earned the admiration of everyone at the upper end of the valley. They worked all day and night throughout the whole period since the landing, and the help **rendered** was invaluable. Simpson knew no fear and moved

Hell Spit: The most exposed part of the area held by Anzac troops

rendered: Given

unconcernedly amid shrapnel and rifle fire, steadily carrying out his **self-imposed** task day by day, and he frequently earned the applause of the personnel for his many fearless rescues of wounded men from the areas subject to rifle and shrapnel fire."[6]

How many lives Simpson and Murphy saved no one can say for sure, but it is estimated to be hundreds. Amazingly, it was done in less than the three weeks since they had landed.

So, what became of Murphy? Dale Collins and Dr. Charles Bean, Australia's official war correspondents and authors of Australian history books, both claim that Murphy became the pet of the 6th Mountain Battery Indians, who took him with them at the evacuation.

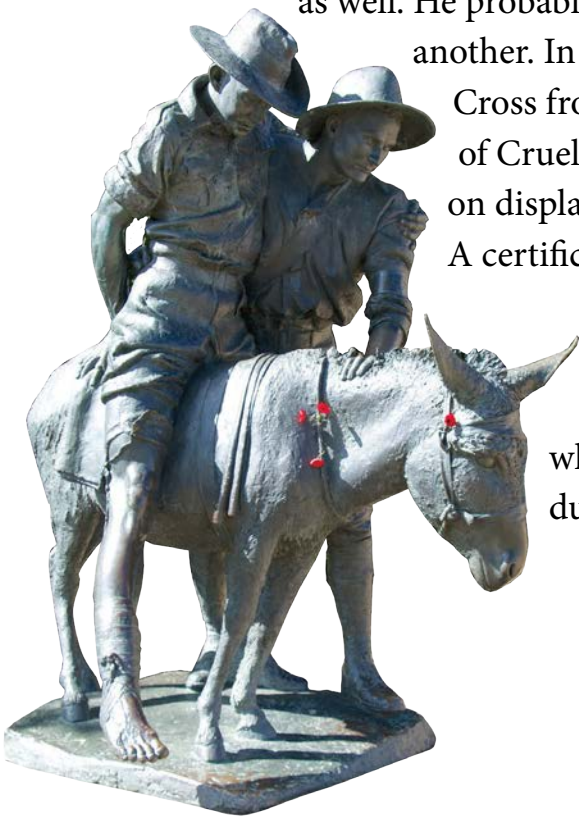
self-imposed: Job he had taken on himself

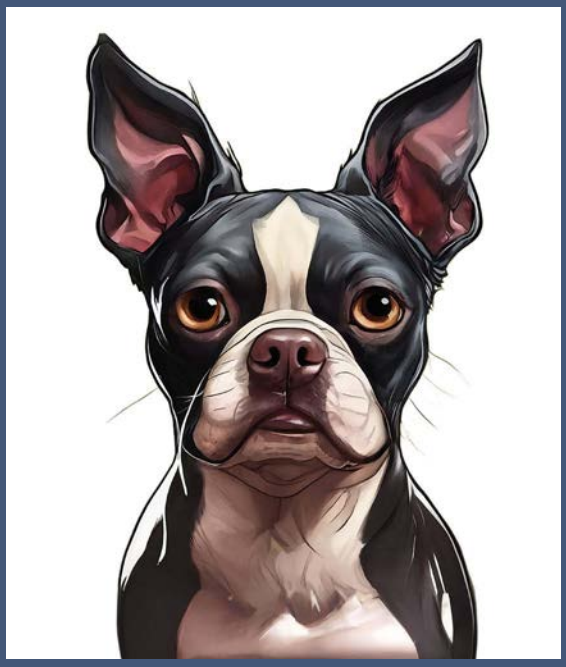
A letter was found written by the surgeon of an Indian Field Ambulance on Anzac, T.J. Carey Evans. He wrote that Murphy was evacuated to the safety of Mudros, a Greek island loaned to the Allies as a naval base so he would not be left to the mercy of the Turks. The letter also said that Murphy the donkey was well-known and liked among the Australians and the Indians who fought side by side. Carey Evans recalls a collar fastened on the donkey by the Australians on Mudros, reading: "Murphy VC — Please

look after him." They **speculate** that Murphy spent the rest of his days contentedly munching grass on the peaceful plains of the little island with memories of the kind man who adopted him, and with whom he walked the long, rough trail up and down Shrapnel Gully, saving many wounded men.

speculate: Have made an informed guess

There is a bronze statue of Jack Simpson and Murphy beside the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, Australia. It's believed that Jack Simpson had at least one more donkey like Murphy that had been brought but abandoned, that he named "Duffy," and possibly others as well. He probably would give one a rest while using another. In 1997, Murphy was awarded a Purple Cross from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), which is on display at the Australian War Memorial. A certificate they issued says: "… and for all the donkeys used by John Simpson Kirkpatrick, for the exceptional work they performed on behalf of humans while under continual fire at Gallipoli during World War I (1915)."





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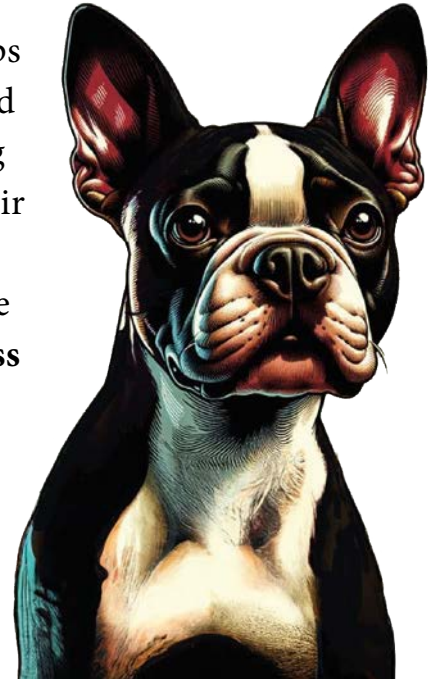
Sergeant Stubby, the Dog Who Caught a German Spy

1918	Third Battle of the Aisne, France, World War I

By the Third Battle of the Aisne, much of the world had been at war for three years. France, Great Britain, and Russia had been fighting with Germany and Austria-Hungary. The United States joined the Allied Powers only after Germany started attacking some American supply ships and tried to talk Mexico into going to war against the United States in exchange for land in the southwest part of the country. On April 6, 1917, America had officially joined the war.

Two Friends Meet

By summer of 1917, the Connecticut National Guard began training on the athletic grounds of Yale University. There, Robert Conroy, a 25-year-old private from New Britain, Connecticut, and Stubby became acquainted and soon became fast friends. No one seemed to know where Stubby, a brindle Boston bull terrier, had come from, but soon the soldiers found him hanging around the camp kitchen looking for scraps to eat. Stubby was exceptionally likable and intelligent, and all the men enjoyed having him around. He would visit soldiers in their tents, join them for military training exercises, and march in formation with the men. He definitely knew where all the **mess kitchens** were. It wasn't long before the friendly dog and the kind man found each other and became inseparable.



mess kitchens: Areas where meals are prepared for the soldiers

Moving Out

Robert taught Stubby many things, including how to **salute** by sitting down and rearing up on his hind legs while raising his paw to his forehead. At the end of the summer, change was about to come. Conroy's regiment was summoned to board a train for Norfolk, Virginia, where they would depart on the ship USS *Minnesota*, bound for Europe. There was one problem, though: dogs weren't allowed on board. Stubby didn't know that. He was bound and determined to follow his friend wherever he went. Robert and his fellow soldiers **formulated** a plan. They wrapped Stubby in a blanket, told him to be very quiet, and carried him up the **gangplank** into the vessel. There they hid poor Stubby in a coal bin in the ship's huge engine room until they were far enough out to sea that no one would even suggest sending the dog back. Stubby was a joy to the soldiers on the ship, reminding them of happier times back home with their families. During the voyage, Stubby would visit the **sentries**, join in ball games on deck, and snuggle up to many a soldier who was writing a letter home. At night, though, he would cuddle up to Robert in his bunk. Some soldiers who worked in the machine shop made Stubby a set of **dog tags** for his collar just like the men wore. They read, " 'STUBBY' 102nd INF, 26th Div."

salute: Make a formal hand gesture to display respect in military situations

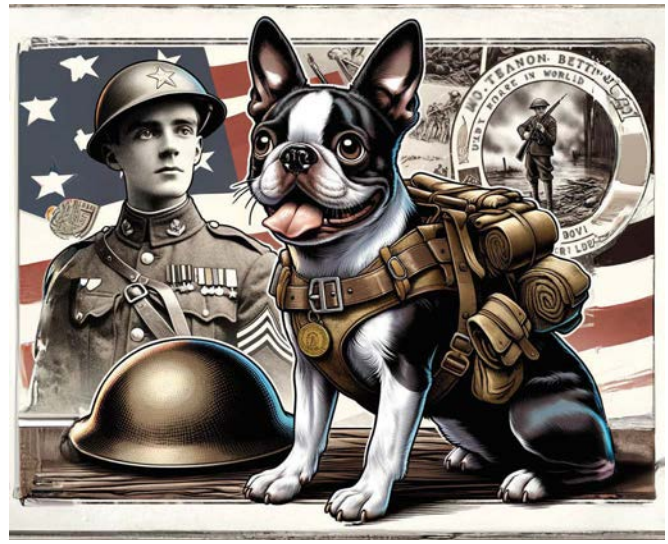
formulated: Developed

gangplank: Movable plank used as a ramp to board or disembark from a ship

sentries: Soldiers stationed to keep guard

dog tags: Soldier's metal identity tags, usually worn on a chain around the neck

Arriving in France



At last, the journey was over. Fellow soldiers caused a friendly but noisy disturbance while Robert **stealthily** carried Stubby off ship in his blanket. Robert's commanding officer, however, suddenly spotted Stubby. Stubby immediately sat down, reared back on his **haunches**, and saluted the officer.

The CO was so amused and impressed that Stubby was not only allowed to stay but was proclaimed **mascot** of Conroy's unit. He was now an official member of the 102nd Infantry in the 26th Division, nicknamed the Yankee Division, as most of the men grew up in the New England states. They were among the first divisions to reach France from America, where they continued their training while waiting for more troops to arrive. Robert worked in the intelligence section. His unit was responsible for learning and transporting information for a regiment of 3,700 men. When Robert was carrying messages to other outfits, Stubby trotted beside the horse Robert was riding. When Robert stood guard, Stubby was faithfully by his side.

stealthily: Secretly and quietly

haunches: Fleshy hindquarters of an animal

mascot: Animal kept to strengthen the morale of soldiers

The Front Lines

It was February 5, 1918, when the Yankee Division reached the front lines of northeastern France at a place called **Chemin des Dames**. It was the job of the American soldiers to keep the Germans from breaking through French **fortifications** that were protecting the capital city of Paris. The French front lines were a series of interconnecting **trenches** dug into the ground. Sometimes the men had to sleep in the mud and dirt. Between the German and French lines was an open field called "No Man's Land," because no man wanted to get caught out there without the protection of the trenches.

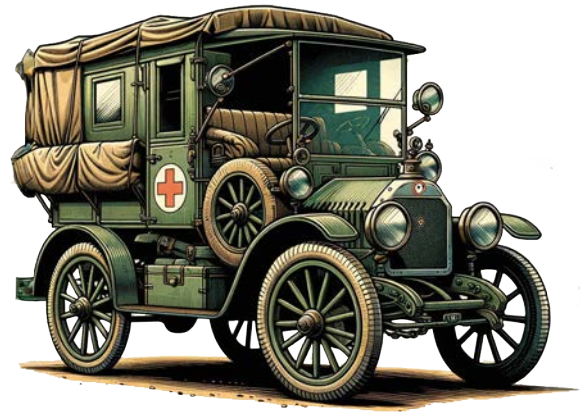
Chemin des Dames: Ladies Road

fortifications: Defensive walls built to strengthen against attack

trenches: Long, deep ditches used as protective defenses

Stubby soon learned the difference between the sound of French and German guns. He heard the sound of approaching shells long before the men did, alerting them by barking furiously. Dogs have a keener sense of smell than humans, and he forewarned the men of the invading smell of poison gas coming their way, so they had time to grab their gas masks and put them on for protection. Stubby had his own gas mask that Robert would put on him when the danger came. Sensing an attack, he would run through the trenches barking to warn his soldier friends. Stubby also helped the men by killing many rats that swarmed through the camp and trenches.

Wounded



On April 20, 1918, the enemy attacked the Allied lines. Heavy fighting took place. Finally, as the battle progressed, the German **assault** collapsed, and they began to **retreat**. When the shelling quieted down, Stubby ventured out of the trench to check the battlefield for wounded men. Suddenly a shell exploded, and shrapnel lodged in his chest. When Stubby howled, Robert crawled from the trenches and rescued him. He was hurt badly, but Robert did his best to patch him up until he could get him to the regiment's doctor.

assault: Attack in battle

retreat: Withdraw

Stubby was put into an ambulance with wounded soldiers and went off as Robert watched. An army surgeon removed the shrapnel and stitched and bandaged Stubby's wound. Robert and his buddies worried a lot about their furry friend. "For days there was deep gloom in the outfit lest Stubby should not get well."[7] Six weeks later, they were reunited, and the men learned that Stubby had fully recovered. They also learned Stubby had cheered the men laid up in the hospital while he was there.

Back to Work

It was June before Stubby could rejoin the 102nd regiment. Conroy and Stubby continued delivering messages between Allied forces and gathering information about the enemy's movements. Shortly after

Stubby returned, they were on the move again. The **Second Battle of the Marne** was about to start. The Allies left their trenches. Fighting took place in big open wheat fields. Many men were killed or wounded. That's when Stubby took on a new role. He began to find wounded men who had fallen and were hidden from sight by waist-high wheat. He would alert medics to their location. Stubby knew the difference between Americans and Germans by their uniforms and how they talked. If Stubby sensed a man was dying, he would snuggle up next to him in his last moments. He brought comfort to many. Many Germans were surrendering. Robert would talk to them to get information; Stubby would make sure they didn't try to sneak away while being led to prison.

Second Battle of the Marne: An offensive during World War I by the British and French forces

disinfected: Chemical removal of bacteria

Stubby Gets a Jacket

In early August, the 26th Division earned a little break from fighting. The men were able to take much-needed baths, and get their clothes cleaned and **disinfected**, as they had been too engaged in fighting to be able to bathe. Stubby and his unit had helped liberate the French town of Chateau-Thierry, and now many local women sewed Stubby a jacket out of tough chamois leather. It fastened under his neck with decorative buttons, and snaps closed it shut on his

stomach. They sewed braided cord onto the coat, writing "Stubby" and "102nd U.S. INF" on the left side. They even made a colorful **emblem** out of silk thread for the back of his coat. They made it to show their appreciation for his efforts in **liberating** their town.

Capturing a German Spy

In early September, the 26th Division helped clear Germans from the area around St. Mihiel, France, capturing 15,000 soldiers in four days! The Yankee Division then joined what the Allied commanders hoped would be the last operation of the war: the **Meuse-Argonne campaign**. Half a million soldiers secretly moved into positions along the 30-mile battlefront.

emblem: Badge

liberating: Freeing

Meuse-Argonne campaign: Largest operation of the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I

What was supposed to be over in a few days lasted more than six weeks. Rains caused much mud, and soldiers had to eat cold food. The shelling seemed unbearable. The men never got much rest. It was during this time that Stubby accomplished what was probably his most outstanding wartime achievement. He captured a German spy! Stubby spotted the man and somehow recognized him as not being a member of their

division. Dogs have very sensitive noses, and the spy most likely gave off a scent that would alert a dog to danger. Stubby barked a loud alarm to alert his men. When the man attempted to run away, Stubby knocked him down and bit the seat of the soldier's pants, holding on until help came. The Americans discovered the man had written details of their camp that would have significantly helped the enemy. Stubby earned high praise for this tremendous act. Stubby was given the rank of sergeant. He even was permitted to keep the German spy's **Iron Cross** as a reward for capturing the spy. "To the victor goes the **spoils**," said one of the soldiers as he handed the Iron Cross to Robert, who then pinned it to Stubby's new coat.[8]

The Final Attack

It was mid-October when the commanders in charge stopped the Meuse-Argonne assaults and began to regroup troops for one final attack. The Yankee Division's job was to distract the Germans on the flank and keep them from moving reinforcements to the middle of the front line. That is where the Allies were planning to launch their attack. The ground the Germans held was known as the Hindenburg Line. It consisted of three long bands of trenches that covered 12 miles behind No Man's Land, which the Germans had held since 1914, so they were well-established. The Americans began to gain ground; then they would lose ground, only to gain it again. The men of the Yankee Division were hungry and tired, but they continued to push on, making progress slowly but surely. The Germans constantly were bombing the Americans with gas shells.

Iron Cross: Highest German military decoration for bravery

spoils: Plunder

Some of the chemicals made breathing hard, some caused temporary blindness, and others made men break out in painful blisters.

On November 2, one of the shells came so fast that Stubby had time to bark a warning, but Robert couldn't get his mask or Stubby's on fast enough. Both man and dog struggled to breathe and had to be taken to a nearby Army hospital to recover. When they returned to duty, it was only a question of when the Germans would surrender. The Allies, although losing many men, had been able to drive 43 German divisions back about 30 miles over some of the most difficult terrain and most heavily fortified positions on the Western Front. The war was drawing to a close.

Cease Fire

On Sunday, November 10, the rumor was that an **armistice** would happen in the morning at 11 o'clock. Both Allies and Axis powers told their men to use up all the ammo with one last push to continue taking ground. The noise of the guns was deafening. Then, all of a sudden, at 11 a.m., there was silence. "The silence is oppressive. It weighs in on one's eardrums," one soldier wrote in his diary.[9] Immediately, soldiers left their trenches and celebrations began. Many soldiers gathered around Stubby, congratulating him for all his help in obtaining victory. Former enemies met in No Man's Land, swapping souvenirs and helping each other locate the dead from both sides. Even though they had lost the war, most

armistice: Agreement made by opposing sides in a war to stop fighting for a certain time

Germans were so happy that the war was over, and they could go home. One of the Yankee Division soldiers wrote a poem about Stubby and read it to all the men at an **impromptu** victory celebration. Robert whispered to Stubby, "You're coming home with me, Stubby. If I have to, I'll sneak you on a ship like I did before."[10]

The soldiers soon learned going home wouldn't be a fast process. They settled into postwar camps while arrangements were made.

When President Woodrow Wilson visited the Yankee Division on Christmas Day 1918, he met Stubby and shook his paw. Stubby received wound stripes and service bars for his uniform, along with all the soldiers. The French gave the soldiers medals to thank them for their participation in liberating France. Robert made sure Stubby received his too. His jacket was adorned with red ribbon from Verdun, gold and red ribbon for St. Mihiel, and white ribbon for Chateau-Thierry, along with a commemorative award hung from a peppermint-striped ribbon given by the French government. Each Allied nation also issued its own victory medal. Stubby's victory medal included five crossbars to identify where he had fought: Champagne-Marne, Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne, and the "Defensive Sector." Stubby was credited with participation in 17 battles. People honored Stubby as a hero dog.

impromptu: Unplanned

Home at Last

Robert came down with the Spanish flu, a **potentially** deadly virus that had killed many during the war. Stubby was allowed to stay with him as he recovered at a local hospital. When Robert Conroy's ship finally landed in Boston Harbor, friends, relatives, and the governors of three states greeted them. Some 20,000 soldiers of the Yankee Division marched through the streets of Boston in a victory parade. More than a million people cheered them on. Stubby walked in a place of honor with the 102nd regiment.

potentially: Possibly

Stubby lived with Robert for the rest of his life. Post-war, his fame continued to grow, and he met three presidents: Woodrow Wilson, Calvin Coolidge, and Warren G. Harding. General John J. Pershing pinned a gold medal on him given by the American Humane Society. Even as he aged, he attended dog shows and veteran fundraising events, had his portrait painted, and participated in charity events and parades. Stubby never tired of being around old Army soldiers.

He remained devoted to Robert and died peacefully in Robert's arms at 12 years of age. Robert had preserved Stubby's body after his death. It now abides in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C., along with his brass-studded collar, his leather harness, and his highly decorated jacket, located in "The Price of Freedom" exhibit. Books have been written about Stubby. His story still inspires young and old today.