

AMERICA'S SECRET WEAPON

SGT. STUBBY

In response to World War I, members of the First Company Governor's Foot Guard were activated and inducted into the 102nd Infantry Battalion of the 26th "Yankee" Division along with members of Connecticut's other Organized Militia units and numerous volunteers. During their training on the grounds of Yale University prior to deployment, they unexpectedly added a soldier to their company. Found by then-Private Conroy, Stubby was a brindle patched puppy of unknown descent with a short tail from which he received his name.

As the soldiers became familiar with army life, so did Stubby. Stubby became familiar with all of the bugle calls, the drill marching routines, and the routines of life in camp, even learning to give a dog's version of a salute. Stubby would put his right paw on his right eyebrow when a salute was executed by others around him. Stubby's effect on the soldiers around him as well as his dedication to training and his ability to salute earned him the right to remain in the camp, even though animals were not allowed.

When the troops concluded their training, they were not willing to part with Stubby, so Pvt. Conroy smuggled Stubby onto the transport and later onto the train. Stubby was then smuggled onto the transport ship *Minnesota* when the division departed for Europe. Stubby hid out in the ship's coal bin until the ship was far enough out at sea, at which time he was brought out on deck. Stubby's popularity with the soldiers soon extended to the sailors, with one machinist's mate even making Stubby his own set of "dog tags" like the soldiers wore.



At the conclusion of the trip, Stubby was once again smuggled off the ship, this time under Pvt. Conroy's greatcoat. Stubby was soon discovered by Pvt. Conroy's commanding officer, but after hearing about Stubby's training and his voyage, and after seeing his ability to salute, the officer allowed Stubby to remain. When the Yankee Division headed for the front lines in France, Stubby was given special orders allowing him to accompany the Division to the front lines as their official mascot.

The 102nd reached the front lines on the 5th of February, 1918. World War I was fought from trenches, and life was often cold, wet and very dangerous. While the opposing armies were hunkered down in their respective trenches, they traded sniper and artillery fire, and soldiers were injured and killed often. Stubby soon became accustomed to his new surroundings and learned to deal with the loud rifles and heavy artillery fire. All remained 'trench normal' until the day a large gas attack was launched by the Germans.

Stubby was injured once due to shrapnel from a grenade, and at least once from gas exposure. After each injury, Stubby was treated at nearby hospitals just like the two-legged soldiers, and like the two-legged soldiers, when he was well enough to be moved, he was taken to a Red Cross Recovery Hospital. When Stubby became well enough to move around at the hospital, he began to spend his time visiting the wounded soldiers and socializing with the nurses. Stubby's actions at the hospital proved a great asset in improving the morale of the injured soldiers. Soon, Stubby's recovery was complete and he was returned to his Division.

Stubby's experience with the gas made him sensitive to even the smallest amount. Due to his sensitivity to gas, Stubby was responsible for saving his entire company. When an early morning gas attack was launched by the Germans, the men in Stubby's portion of the trenches were sleeping, unaware that a gas attack had been launched. As soon as he picked up the smell of the gas, Stubby ran through the trench

barking and biting at the soldiers' shirts and boots waking them. Soon, as a result of Stubby's actions, the gas alarm was sounded and many men were saved from injury. With his job done, Stubby left the trench to avoid the gas and didn't return until he felt it was safe.

Stubby also became an expert in locating wounded men in the "no man's land" between the trenches of the opposing armies. Stubby would listen for injured and lost men shouting in English. He would then go out to them and bark for paramedics or lead the uninjured ones back to the safety of the trenches.

Stubby once even captured a German soldier on his own. One day, while on patrol in no-man's land, Stubby heard a noise coming from a small patch of brush. He went to investigate and found a German spy who was mapping out the layout of the Allied trenches. The German soldier tried to call Stubby to him but it didn't work. Stubby put his ears back and began to bark. The German began to run and Stubby took off after him, biting the soldier on his legs causing him to trip and fall. Stubby then attacked the soldier's arms and finally bit and held onto his rear end. By this time some of the Allied soldiers had come to see what all the noise was. When they saw that the dog had captured a spy they cheered.



Stubby had once again proven himself a real soldier. The commander of the 102d used this act of bravery to put Stubby in for a promotion to the ranks of the Noncommissioned Officers by awarding him the rank of Sergeant. He became the first dog to be given rank in the U.S. Armed Forces. Stubby even outranked his friend, Robert Conroy, who was only promoted to Corporal. Stubby's uniform, seen to the left, was made for him by the women of Château-Thierry, after the Allies recaptured the town.

When the war ended, Sergeant Stubby had served in 17 battles. Before his return to the United States, he visited with President Woodrow Wilson after leading the American troops in a pass and review parade.

Stubby was awarded many medals for his heroism, including a medal from the Humane Society which was presented by General John Pershing, the Commanding General of the United States Armies. Stubby was also awarded membership in the American Legion and the Y.M.C.A. He visited the White House twice and met Presidents Harding and Coolidge.

After the war, Stubby attended Georgetown University with his friend Robert Conroy, and took a position as the school mascot. Stubby's antics at halftime, pushing a football around the field with his nose, was said to have delighted thousands. Later in life, Stubby had his portrait painted by Charles Ayer Whipple, and had his photograph taken with General John J. Pershing.



Material for this article was obtained from the Connecticut State Military Department.

Stubby's obituary, from the New York Times, may be viewed at the Connecticut State Military Department's website.

NAME: _____ **PERIOD:** _____

SGT. STUBBY QUESTIONS

1. Which war did Sgt Stubby serve in?
2. Who was Stubby's owner?
3. Why was Stubby allowed to stay at the training camp which normally did not allow dogs?
4. How did Stubby get to Europe?
5. What type of injuries did Stubby obtain?
6. Stubby saved an entire company from what? How?
7. What was Stubby normally doing in "no man's land"?
8. Why was Stubby promoted to sergeant?
9. How many battles did Stubby serve in?
10. Name the three presidents that Stubby met.
11. Which college did Stubby become a mascot for?
12. What type of agent do you think Stubby could detect?