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BUILT ON THE SHOULDERS OF VETERINARY GIANTS COMBAT CANINE

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No one knows when Sergeant Stubby was born. It was in the months leading up to American involvement in World War I. We know he was the most decorated war dog of his time and the only dog promoted to sergeant through combat.

Stubby served 18 months and participated in 17 battles on the Western Front. He saved his regiment from surprise gas attacks, and found and comforted the wounded. Once he caught an enemy spy by the seat of the pants and held him until his colleagues arrived. This action led to his promotion to sergeant. Stubby's adventures were front page news across the world.

His story began when the stray Pit Bull/Terrier mix appeared at Yale Field in New Haven, CT. Soldiers were training and Corporal Robert Conroy developed a fondness for the dog. When it came time for the soldiers to ship out Conroy hid Stubby on board the troop ship.

Somewhere along the way Stubby was discovered by the commanding officer. Conroy quickly gave the order to "present arms" and Stubby saluted the officer. From that moment on Stubby was allowed to follow his troops wherever they went.

Entering battle in February 1918, Stubby soon came under constant fire day and night for over a month. In April he was wounded by retreating Germans throwing grenades. Stubby was sent to the rear for convalescence and, as he had done on the front, he was able to improve morale. Once recovered, he returned to the trenches.

Being a canine, Stubby could hear the whine of incoming artillery fire before his human companions. He was adept at letting his unit know when to duck for cover. Following a victory that reestablished allied positions, women of one town made Stubby a chamois coat to display his numerous metals and awards. You can find images of Sergeant Stubby via Google.

After the war Stubby became a celebrity, and frequently led parades across the country. He met Presidents Wilson, Coolidge and Harding. In 1921, he attended Georgetown University Law Center with Conroy and became the Hoyas' football team mascot. At halftime, he would nudge the ball around the field to the applause of the crowd.

Stubby was made a life member of the American Legion, the Red Cross and the YMCA. The Humane Education Society awarded him a special gold medal for service to his country. The medal was presented by General John Pershing.

Sergeant Stubby died in Conroy's arms in 1926. His remains are featured in *The Price of Freedom: Americans at War* exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution.

Stubby was honored with a brick in the Walk of Honor at the World War I monument at Liberty Memorial here in Kansas City on Armistice Day on November 11, 2006.

