

Stubby

Mascot, 102nd Infantry,
Connecticut National Guard/U.S. Army

In 1917 a stray dog wandered onto a field in New Haven, Connecticut, where soldiers were training to fight in World War I. A soldier named Robert Conroy spotted him and named him “Stubby” because of his short tail. The two quickly became friends. When it was time for the soldiers to leave for France, Robert Conroy did not want to leave Stubby behind. He hid Stubby on the ship to Europe. When officers found out about Stubby, the dog won them over by raising his paw and saluting. After that, Stubby was allowed to stay with the soldiers when they arrived in France.



Stubby cheered up many American soldiers during the war. He was also brave and helped save people’s lives. Stubby could hear enemy airplanes and smell poisonous gas before his human friends and would bark to warn them. He helped find men who had been wounded in the fighting so that doctors could take care of them. He even helped capture a German soldier. Stubby was wounded in the leg during one battle. He spent two months recovering at an army hospital. Women in one French town made Stubby a coat. On it were flags, medals, and a stripe to show that he was injured during the war—just like a real soldier’s uniform.

At the end of the war, Stubby returned to Connecticut with Robert Conroy. At home Stubby was a real celebrity. He marched in parades, starred in traveling shows, and met three United States Presidents. General John Pershing awarded Stubby a medal in 1921. The YMCA made him a lifetime member. Newspapers around the country published articles about him.

Stubby died in 1926. His body has been preserved and is on exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., so that people can learn about his contributions to American history.