



Sergeant Stubby: How a Stray Dog and His Best Friend Helped Win World War I and Stole the Heart of a Nation

Ann Bausum , David E. Sharpe (Foreword)

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National Geographic tells the story of a stray dog who becomes Sergeant Stubby the War Dog during World War I. Beloved award-winning author and library darling Ann Bausum brings her friendly writing style and in-depth research to her first-ever book for adults.

Stubby's story begins in 1917 when America is about to enter the war. A stowaway dog befriends Private James Robert "Bob" Conroy at the Connecticut National Guard camp at Yale University and the two become inseparable. Stubby also wins over the commanding officer and is soon made an official member of the 102nd Infantry of the 26th division. What follows is an epic tale of how man's best friend becomes an invaluable soldier on the front lines and in the trenches, a decorated war hero and an inspiration to a country long after the troops returned home.

For those who loved *New York Times* bestseller *Rin Tin Tin* comes the memorable story of Sergeant Stubby--World War I dog veteran, decorated war hero, American icon, and above all, man's best friend.

Sergeant Stubby: How a Stray Dog and His Best Friend Helped Win World War I and Stole the Heart of a Nation Details

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From Reader Review Sergeant Stubby: How a Stray Dog and His Best Friend Helped Win World War I and Stole the Heart of a Nation for online ebook

Mary says

I expected to read about the activities and life of a heroic and lovable dog during World War I, but found that more of the emphasis is on the course of the war for the 102nd Infantry Regiment of the Yankee Division in a much more general sense, with some discussion of what this may have meant for J. Robert Conroy and Stubby. This is an honest book, and apparently there is little actual documentation of Stubby's and Conroy's experiences of the war, so there is quite a bit of "we don't know what Stubby did" and "stories of Stubby's adventures were exaggerated with retellings..." There were a few passages where I could not muster the concentration to follow and remember the battles. The third part of the book, which covers Stubby's and Conroy's lives and deaths after the war is more engaging. Oddly, I found the Afterword and the Research Notes and Acknowledgments describing how the information about Stubby came to light, and analysis of how the military's relationship with animals - especially dogs - has evolved since Stubby, to be the most interesting. I wished for more photographs, larger, and of better quality, and I would have liked the Appendix with the photo and list of medals on Stubby's jacket to be on facing pages for easier reference. And, if this short paragraph had been anywhere earlier than the last page, I would not have finished reading the book: "Six decades elapsed after Stubby's death, and yet Conroy never again owned another dog. Two wives, yes. But only one dog." !!!!

Kim says

I listened to the audio version narrated by Pam Ward, who did a fine job.

I liked this book. It was a good mix of WWI history and fun facts about a famous war dog. War history tends to bore me, but Ann Bausum managed to make learning about WWI interesting. I think the key for me was that just when I was starting to get a little bored with the military history part, the topic would shift to Stubby.

Hannah says

This is a great book for a high school student learning about WWI. This is a terrible book for an adult who wants some good historical nonfiction. I fell asleep twice with this book--which is rare for me. For a historical nonfiction book, the author employs a lot of "perhaps" and "may have"s. I've heard the children's book is a lot better, but that is probably because the audience is more appropriate for the subject matter.

Brittany says

I already knew the story of Sergeant Stubby, a lovable stray that served in WWI. I mean who doesn't love a story involving man's best friend?? However, this book didn't have a ton of new information and was a little lackluster. I'm sure it had pictures in it which would have been nice, but I listened to the audiobook.

Amy Smith says

Quick read outlining the life (or probable life) of a famous little dog from WWI, although it sounds like he was more famous for his owner's post-war media blitz than anything he actually did during the war. Indeed, in spite of all the medals, it seems his main duty in the trenches was companionship, which he carried out extremely well.

Because of the lack of primary source documents from his owner (letters, etc.), a lot of the first part of the book was general WWI history with some speculation on what Stubby might have done. That part was a bit tedious (for me) to get through, but it wasn't a bad look at the life of a WWI soldier. Just not exactly what I was expecting.

Jacob Stevens says

This book was a very lightweight treatment of the Stubby narrative, and while valuable, fails to really pack the punch that the introduction promised to provide. The book's narrative style ends up being rather cute but forgettable, which is sad, because the story material itself is very worthy of remembrance and cherishing. This book is the author's first "adult" book, so her bio on the back flap claims, so perhaps she can be forgiven for writing in a very basic and inch deep narrative.

Jeanette says

I loved it! The author was able to take what could have been a dry historical/biographical study and made it an enjoyable, informative read without too much troop movement or other technical jargon that could have weighed the content down. A good introduction to WWI with genuine heroes!!

Alan says

What a remarkable story and amazing dog. My journey with Sergeant Stubby began some years ago at the Smithsonian Museum of History. My daughter and I traveled to Washington D.C. to lay to rest a good friend of mine at Arlington National Cemetery. While there we visited the History Museum and I came upon this WWI war scene of a soldier in a gas mask advancing in the trenches. In the scene was this dog that looked like a regular mutt, not what you would think of as a war dog. There was something about that dog that held me transfixed and in awe. Being a dog lover, that scene at the museum has always stuck with me. Recently after reading a book on military working dogs throughout history, I saw a picture of a dog that I had a haunting feeling I had seen before. After a little research I came upon this book and discovered Stubby was the dog I had seen in the Smithsonian. I must have sensed he was special. He was a true War Dog and faithfully served his friend and unit. He also survived all that carnage and lived a long life which was truly

amazing.

Marti says

I had never heard of Stubby's exploits during the First World War, so I thought it was an amusingly cute little story. It has all the makings of a Capra film starring either Jimmy Stewart or Gary Cooper (and if ever a story was in need of Hollywood invention it is this one). It was as though Bob Conroy, Stubby's owner, lived quietly in the background and allowed his dog to accept credit for his own accomplishments, while all the time orchestrating a publicity campaign worthy of PT Barnum. It got to the point where, even after the war, wherever Stubby went, people wanted to shake his paw (and if he got weary of that, he did not let on). Of course, many of those people were probably in it for the reflected publicity such encounters offered (which is how Stubby got to meet General Pershing and every sitting president during his lifetime).

The only problem is that the details I was interested in were rather sparse. For instance, I can only speculate as to why Conroy abruptly left his first wife. Even though he did not seem to consider marriage until after Stubby had "gone West" (as Doughboys said of their departed comrades), I can imagine that his life with his new bride paled in comparison to his adventures with Stubby. (I was reminded of a scene in the film *Slaughterhouse 5*, in which Billy Pilgrim clearly prefers his dog to his wife). I imagine that was common to men returning from war.

Even though the book is intended for adults (because the author tells how she wrote a children's version first), the first half reads a little bit like a high school text book. The reader is given a very basic overview of the events that led to America's involvement in the war (The Lusitania, The Zimmerman Telegram etc.). I guess that's necessary because most people really don't know anything about what happened before 1980, much less the details of a war that happened 100 years ago.

One thing I did learn though was that the Pet Cemetery we always drive past in Hartsdale, NY is the oldest pet cemetery in America, and contains, among other things, a memorial to World War I animals (though not Stubby because he is at the Smithsonian). Next time I am up there, I will have to check it out.

****Update April 13, 2018 - I guess someone was listening because there is now an animated independent feature film based on the story.*

Sandy says

Read in conjunction with the 100 yr anniversary of WW1 for our book club. I have to say I was rather disappointed in the book. The author tried, but so much about the life of Stubby and his master Robert Conroy was not recorded. The book contains much conjecture which should not occur in a work of non fiction. Nice pictures but no maps. Some of the battles mentioned should have maps and more info on those battles was needed.

Jonathan says

Author Bausum gives a very readable but somewhat labored and at times necessarily speculative account of

her subjects' lives. The paucity of direct information about owner "Bob" Conroy's wartime experiences and thus those of his dog "Stubby" mean that there is a lot of general World War I filler. That's to be expected, given the man left no letters or memoirs behind, but the filler is a bit watery; more substantial material is wanted to bind the wartime experience into an overall context. The horror of the fighting and of the conditions he and his dog experienced in the trenches is not adequately conveyed I think. Although his grandson reports that he led an active social life as an elderly gentleman in Palm Beach, Conroy does come across much of the time as a loner, living for or through his dog, and seemingly damaged in a fundamental way by his wartime experiences in the 26th or "Yankee" Division of the A.E.F. One does wonder how many other men of his generation were so affected but there's not context.

A mildly interesting tale but not really enough to satisfy about wartime service, or use of dogs in the war (although there is a bit about rescue dogs).

There is an 80 page children's book "Stubby the War Dog" by Bausum also published by National Geographic.

Bob Schnell says

Advanced reading copy review

The story of "Sergeant" Stubby and his human companion Robert Conroy is a good read and adds a new dimension to the collective history of WWI. Many animals were put to work during the war, a few became famous but only two are preserved in the Smithsonian Museum of American History (the other is the carrier pigeon Cher Ami). The big drawback to this book is the lack of personal papers (letters, journals, etc) from Mr. Conroy. He did keep a scrapbook of Stubby's press clippings, but little else remains. This means that much of the story is basic background filler on WWI. If you've ever read any in-depth books on that subject, much of Sergeant Stubby will seem like a grade school refresher. However, the tales of Stubby and his exploits on and off the battlefields of Europe make up for this shortcoming. You don't have to be a dog lover to enjoy this book, but it helps.

Gail says

A fascinating blend of WWI history, family story and the incredible bond between Stubby, a scruffy stray that becomes the most decorated canine of military history, and his human combat soldier, Robert Conroy.

Jami says

First off, 100 stars for Stubby the dog!

I really enjoyed this book. I had heard of Stubby, but never read anything about him. This book brought Stubby and his best friend, Bob Conroy, to life. I read the author's research notes, and it sounded like she worked really hard to put all this together; it wasn't like she could just go online and find everything she

needed. I have read quite a bit about WWII, but not a whole lot about WWI, so this time period was interesting. Some parts made me think, such as how the people who lived through WWI thought it would never be forgotten; now, it is such a distant memory and has been eclipsed by more recent events.

I loved the glimpses into Stubby's personality, such as when he saluted fellow soldiers and those higher in the chain of command. The author also pointed out some of the legends about Stubby that are probably just that - legends, as opposed to facts.

One thing I really got a kick out of was a picture of Stubby marching in a parade with the soldiers. If you look at the bystanders, 95% of their faces are turned towards Stubby, even after he passed by. Stubby definitely outshone the rest of the marchers! It told a lot about the impact Stubby had on not only his fellow veterans, but on the general public as well. Hurray to Bob Conroy for making sure that his legacy lived on!

Donna says

I love a good dog story. I enjoyed Sergeant Stubby's story and the story of his soldier owner. Animals are great companions, especially dogs.

This was a short book. The author used private letters and newspaper clippings but it felt like the author was hard pressed to fill its pages. Admittedly, the author states that there wasn't much info out there regarding this little dog. So there seemed to be a lot in here that didn't have any thing to do with the pup or his soldier. The extra war info felt slapped in to extend the reading experience.

It sounded like this little pooch was special and received a heroes welcome. I wish this book showed more of that.
