



Kaelin Wang Hu

As an eighth grader writing "Stubby, C'mon, Boy!" about a true World War I dog hero, Kaelin has liked writing as well as reading since the age of seven when he started to learn about American history. Kaelin enjoys reading history textbooks about the early 20th century onwards and is very much interested in all the modern wars. Kaelin's favorite genre is historical fiction, especially stories about 20th century conflicts that showcase history from the viewpoints of specific characters. "Stubby, C'mon, Boy!" is an example of an unusual depiction of the brutality of World War I as experienced by a dog who, in other circumstances, would be an unlikely candidate for a hero. When Kaelin isn't reading or writing, he has to be playing piano or doing homework, and if he isn't engaged in those activities, he is usually relaxing by playing video games.

Stubby, C'mon, Boy!

Based on a true dog hero in World War I

The artillery shells rain over No-Man's-Land like big black droplets of rain, roaring into our trenches, exploding, and sending shrapnel whizzing overhead. Though I have served in many battles in France on my 12-month tour, this 10-day siege of Chemin des Dames has been grueling for both men and dogs. The stench of burnt flesh and blood hangs in the air, while distant cries of pain make my ears and tail droop. My 30-pound Pit Bull body tries to duck under the trench, my short legs shaking.

"Stubby, c'mon, boy!" shouts my owner, whom the others call "Corporal Robert Conroy." Robert, wearing a worn-out grey uniform as weary as his face, jumps over the trench. I follow him, knowing what I am supposed to do. He gives me a boost and I sprint into No-Man's-Land, dodging close bullets as I scamper over the wet, uneven dirt reeking of rotting flesh and burnt bodies. I smell a wounded soldier, groaning in pain and clutching his leg in agony. I run to his side, desperately grabbing his stiff collar with my teeth. Sniffing around, I smell a flooded-over foxhole, foul with dirty water, and start barking for the soldier to crawl slowly to it, guiding him. When we have arrived down the steep slope of the foxhole, I start licking his face as he whispers, "Good dog." He smiles faintly, though still in pain.

"That's my job!" I happily start barking, commending myself for another rescue done well. I sit, wagging my tail and yelping at regular intervals until a medic arrives, and wait for him to give me a treat. Ahardtack biscuit! Checking once more that the soldier is carried off, I gnaw at my biscuit before doubling back to my squadron for another assignment. As I run over No-Man's-Land, heading toward the German trench, I realize with increasing concern that my owner was stationed at the most dangerous part of the battle: the front of the charge.

A mortar shell explodes right next to me, the heat searing my fur, but I ignore the whistling shrapnel, intent on finding Robert. Approaching the enemy trench, my nose picks up an extremely faint scent, the scent of the rifle oil, the mineral oil that Robert uses to clean his rifle. It is mixed with blood, sweat, and smoke, and I cannot pinpoint the exact

location of the smell. I start running in the general direction.

I spot Lt. Pherson, our company commander, and sprint to him. Surely he knows where Robert is!

"I see the squadron, but where is Robert?"

I look around worriedly, yelping to Lt.

Pherson as I wonder about my trainer.

"Is he wounded, crippled or even . . .?"

Daring not to think the worst, I quiet down.

"There you are, Stubby!" Lt. Pherson pats me lightly on the head, still on alert.

"Where's Robert?"

I bark back several times. "I do not know! Please give me his location as well as his status!"

"Shhh! Quiet, Stubby! You don't want to be spotted, right?" Lt. Pherson cautions as he starts ordering his men. Frustrated, I leave him behind and continue my search for Robert. As I start running, I again catch the scent of the rifle oil, much stronger now, but mixed with a grimmer smell, the smell of Robert's fear, sharp and piercing like shards of glass. Straining my little legs, I sprint toward the origin and ignore my burning muscles, panting heavily to cool myself.

"Jackpot," I feel some relief as the smell gets stronger and more pungent. "I found him!"

I arrive at the scene to find Robert almost unconscious, his leg strangely twisted and a minor artery most likely ruptured. Before I can start panicking at the sight of my injured owner, I reel into my normal procedure and start looking for a foxhole, barricade, or other forms of protection. However, the land seems so flat and desolate and Robert cannot survive much longer. A mortar shell explodes near us, the shrapnel barely missing my face. I try to pull on his collar, but, proving too stiff and ungainly, I pull instead on his sleeves. I bark as I tug him, trying to wake him up so I can escort him to the nearest barricade, a busted, rusting tank.

"Stubby, c'mon boy, you can do it," I repeat to myself.

Robert finally budes. "Nearly there, and then I can call over a medic!" I smile to myself.



BAM! An artillery shell detonates right next to me, deafening me temporarily, singeing my remaining fur, and slamming my head against the tank. I struggle to stand up and smell blood, my own blood. Shrapnel from the shell embeds tiny pieces into my skin. I crawl over to Robert, who seems barely awake, and whine softly in his ear.

"Stubby, good boy, well done," Robert weakly whispers, gently patting my head. Lying down beside him, I start yowling again, hoping for a medic to appear soon as the world starts to roll out of view.

"Stubby! C'mon, boy!" Robert calls me. I scamper proudly onto a podium in Washington, D.C. on a bright, windy spring day a year later. Facing a crowd of proud men and women, General Pershing, commander of all American forces, approaches me to pin a Purple Heart onto my little khaki jacket. He announces, "Ladies and gentleman, this dog was rescued as a stray in Brooklyn and smuggled onto a troop freighter. Trained for medic duty as an orderly used to locate the wounded, he has captured a German spy, detected tear gas countless times, and rescued many of the soldiers. In 17 battles over the course of 18 months, he has become a grizzled veteran, bravely risking his life for many of the men. Let us celebrate this little sergeant, Stubby of the 26th Yankee Division!"



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