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Patriot, Pet, and Pest: America Debates the Dog's Worth During World War I

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Patriot, Pet, and Pest: America Debates the Dog's Worth During World War I

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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in
History

by

Alison Laurence

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ABSTRACT

During World War I, dogs held a contradictory place in American society. These animals functioned simultaneously as patriots, pets, and pests. This essay surveys the ways in which dogs either contributed to the war effort or seemed to subvert it through their uselessness as companion animals and their predation as feral ones. Ultimately, even worsening conditions on the homefront could not cause the American public as a whole to consider surrendering its affection for these animals, including the worthless ones. In the face of impending legislation that threatened to eliminate man's best friend as a war measure, the American people successfully defended the dog, while citizens in several of the other warring nations could not afford to do so. American admiration for the patriot, combined with affection for the pet, outweighed anxiety over the pest.

INTRODUCTION

After the United States entered the Great War in 1917, an American Army recruit, nicknamed Stubby by the other soldiers of the 102nd Infantry, 26th Yankee Division, boarded the S.S. *Minnesota* bound for France. He arrived at the frontlines in February 1918 and during his very first battle became ill from exposure to poison gas. After recovering, Stubby rejoined his unit and distinguished himself for an ability to locate casualties on the battlefield that Red Cross workers and medics may have missed. On one of his excursions, Stubby encountered and captured a German spy gathering intelligence on the Allies. The commanding officer of the 102nd promoted Stubby to sergeant for his heroics. After falling casualty to a grenade attack, Stubby retired from the service and returned to the United States, becoming a popular feature in the press and patriotic parades. He even earned an audience with President Wilson.

For all Stubby's accomplishments, it may not be apparent that he was, in fact, a dog. Nor was he an animal bred for war work. Stubby was a mutt of uncertain pedigree that wandered by chance onto the same Connecticut field where the recruits for the 102nd were preparing for deployment. He found favor among the privates and, after being smuggled aboard the *Minnesota*, soon became a soldier.¹ While Sergeant Stubby served alongside the 102nd in Europe, the rest of American "dogdom" was engaged, albeit not actively, in a similar fight for life on the homefront. In the abstract, the pressure of war on a nation's resources requires its citizens to live more conservatively, to abstain from superfluities. The patriotic populace determines the worth of someone or something based on its utility rather than its likeability. In the midst of such an environment during World War I, the American imagination transformed the nation's dogs—

¹ "Stubby," Armed Forces History, Division of History of Technology, National Museum of American History, accessed April 4, 2013, <http://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/collection/object.asp?ID=15>. This citation's URL allows one to see Stubby (he was preserved after his death in 1926) and the many medals he won in an online object record within the National Museum of American History's digital collections. As a point of interest, Stubby became the mascot of the Georgetown Hoyas when his owner, Pvt. J. Robert Conroy began studying law there.

pets, working animals, and strays—simultaneously into creatures of extreme usefulness and absolute worthlessness, verging on subversion. Ultimately, American dogs survived wartime austerity, due in part to the high profile of media darlings like Sergeant Stubby, but primarily due to the general affection for pets in the United States, where dogs had already become established members of the middle-class household.

This essay will endeavor to determine how the American dog adapted or, more properly, was made to adapt to the needs of a populace at war, World War I in particular. In the United States, the onset of war challenged the established social roles of the dog, but did not necessarily alter them; rather, war amplified how American society perceived the “good” dog’s value and the “bad” dog’s detriments. Historically and evolutionarily adaptable, certain dogs, due to the machinations of masters, became helpful to the war effort. Simultaneously, dogs that ran loose or lacked attentive owners decreased in usefulness during the course of the war, in fact putting a strain on national resources. These concurrent yet contrary roles forced upon the dog by American society during the war manifested in useless legislation—for even the dog regulation laws that state governments did pass proved ineffectual—and failed to remove the companion dog from its valued position within the family. Through an examination of two contradictory canine campaigns, one promoting the dog as a patriot, the other disparaging it as a pest, this essay concludes with analysis as to why dogs did not fall prey to the economy of war. Informed by the literature reviewed in the following pages, this study seeks to expand the dialogue regarding animals in society among historians, who have given little attention to the human element in canine social adaptation. Before delving into the role of dogs during World War I, this study first considers how dogs have related to humans historically.

Following a review of the pertinent literature, this essay will develop in three parts.²

Section one, “Dog as Patriot,” provides a survey of the ways in which the United States government, branches of the military, voluntary associations, media outlets, and private citizens used dogs to benefit the war effort, both on the frontlines and on the homefront. Section two, “Dog as Pest,” considers the ways in which dogs, especially during wartime, become burdensome. Primarily it will focus on a wartime campaign by American farmers to develop the nation’s sheep-farming industry in response to an international wool and mutton shortage, due in part to war conditions. These farmers viewed the loose dogs that attacked their flocks as predators that must be culled. This section will review sheep farmers’ arguments against the dog

² While a review of the literature pertinent to this project is included within the body of this paper, a more general historiography may be of interest to some readers. Animals as historical subjects are a rather new trend in the academy, developing both out of the cultural turn as well as the humane and animal liberation movements of the 1970s. See especially Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1975). There is no agreed upon title for the field, however I believe the term “Animal Studies” encapsulates it best due to the often interdisciplinary nature of the projects, interacting with psychology, philosophy, anthropology, and other methodologies. Some scholars give animal subjects agency (if not will); others chronicle the human (ab)uses of non-sentient beings. There are, however, a few trends already apparent in the literature, despite the field’s novelty. For information on the evolutionary history of animals, consult the work of Juliet Clutton-Brock, including *A Natural History of Domesticated Mammals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) and *Animals as Domesticates: A World View through History*, The Animal Turn [an edited series] (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2012). There is significant focus on changing attitudes toward animals, the beginnings of humane movements, and how pet keeping became a trend. See Susan Pearson, *The Rights of the Defenseless: Protecting Animals and Children in Gilded Age America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Kathleen Kete, *The Beast in the Boudoir: Petkeeping in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); and, Katherine C. Grier, *Pets in America: A History* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2011). Class conflict and economic considerations feature frequently in animal histories. For example, Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989) and Susan D. Jones, *Valuing Animals: Veterinarians and Their Patients in Modern America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002). Similarly, scholarly attention has also highlighted issues of classification within the animal world, especially Harriet Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid: And Other Figments of the Classifying Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997). For literature on thinking about animals, both historically and in the present, consult Aubrey Manning and James Serpell, *Animals and Human Society: Changing Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 1994); Linda Kalof, *Looking at Animals in Human History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007); Arnold Arluke and Clinton R. Sanders, *Regarding Animals* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996); Nigel Rothfels, ed., *Representing Animals* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2002); and, Hal Herzog, *Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat: Why It’s So Hard to Think Straight About Animals* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010). It is clear that much of this literature focuses at least in part on human considerations regarding animals, however some scholars have successfully argued for the measurable historic impact of the animals themselves. To understand how settlers’ livestock led the charge westward and shaped America, see Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). While this field is still in its infancy, this literature review has hardly touched upon the many ways in which scholars are inserting animals into their work; however, the scholarship cited above would provide a thorough introduction to how animals have entered the academy.

and discuss how state and federal legislators responded, looking comparatively across the Atlantic to the even more severe debate regarding dogs in Europe. Finally, section three, “In Defense of the Dog,” weighs the contrary perceptions of the dog against one another, demonstrating how the country’s conflicting opinions of the dog as both patriot and pest manifest in the rhetoric of politicians and in the transcripts of legislative proceedings. While working to curb dogs’ damages to flocks, by extermination if necessary, these public figures refused to condemn *all* dogs, instead pointing the finger at creatures they characterized as poorly-bred. This section argues that the verbal side-stepping and inability to pass sufficiently effective legislation against dogs are evidence that while war conditions challenged the position of the companion dog in American society, even this international conflict could not devalue the animals’ now intrinsic worth.³

The domestication of the dog occurred tens of millennia ago. Naturalists began debating the origins of the domestic dog, *Canis familiaris*, well before America existed as a nation. After centuries of study, modern scientists have declared the domestic dog’s genomic ancestor to be the wolf, *Canis lupus*, not the fox or jackal, though these animals are fellow members of the

³ This essay considers dogs as controversial figures during World War I. Cats, too, occupied a debatable space during the conflict. While public enthusiasm for feline heroism and against feline predation never reached the fever pitch directed toward their canine cousins, cats did function as both patriots and pests in this same era. This note surveys the situation in brief. In 1917, New York State passed what its legislators declared to be the very first law requiring the regulation of cats. Whereas dogs preyed upon sheep, cats hunted songbirds, frustrating human hunters. The “Cat Bill” required that any outdoor cat must wear a license visibly and “bow its hitherto unfettered neck to collar and tag, just like any common dog.” See “Cat Licensing Bill Stirs Lively Fight,” *The New York Times*, March 12, 1917. The bill only passed after Senator Theodore Robinson, nephew of former President Theodore Roosevelt, had amended the legislative measures allowing for the slaughter of loose, unlicensed cats and addressed the concerns of the state’s humane societies. “Pass Bill to License Cats,” *The New York Times*, April 12, 1917. Other states began to follow suit by passing regulations upon cats. One cat lover in Philadelphia protested her state’s cat licensing bill by proclaiming the “economic value” of the cat. She claimed that even the United States government recognized the animal’s value by literally employing cats to rid areas of rats, paying salaries in the form of food and shelter. “A Plea for the Cats,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 25, 1917. In this way cats became useful to the war effort also. One article recounts an Englishman’s visit to the United States in order to collect five hundred “savage cats” for war work. This man was sent to find cats particularly suited for hunting rats, which he described as the “chief pest” in the trenches. “From Isle of Dogs to Buy Trench Cats,” *The New York Times*, December 9, 1917. Thus, World War I sparked public debate about the worth of cats as well as dogs.

Canidae family. There is less scientific consensus as to how this once feral animal became “man’s best friend,” though a few theories predominate. Juliet Clutton-Brock explains the process of domestication in her contribution to *The Domestic Dog*. Archaeological research of Middle Pleistocene (ca. 781,000 to 126,000 years ago) communities has uncovered the bones of early hominids and wolves in close proximity. Once rivals competing over the same food source, this evidence of shared space indicates that wolves and early hominids began to cooperate as a practical survival mechanism. Wolves may have wandered into hominid camps searching for scraps of meat and lingered out of convenience. Hominid hunters may have killed wolves for food and captured wolf pups, more docile than the adults, to eat once they were fully grown with more meat on their bones. Some of these pups seem to have escaped this fate, perhaps due to a fondness that developed out of extended physical closeness, becoming companions and hunting-partners rather than a meal for their captors. Whether the former, the latter, or both theories are true, the cooperation between hominids and the wolf led to the development of a tame wolf, which would eventually evolve into the domestic dog. The evolutionary change is evident in canid bones that date to the end of the last Ice Age (ca. 14,000 to 10,000 years ago). The discovery of multiple human-canid burial sites from this period in Jordan, Palestine, and Iraq in which the canid bones are measurably distinct from early wolf bones confirms, according to Clutton-Brock, the completion of domestication.⁴ That owner and animal share a single grave signals the social significance and not just the practicality of keeping dogs as companions in the community. Domestication is not simply a biological process but a cultural one as well. The wolf

⁴ Juliet Clutton-Brock, “Origins of the Dog: Domestication and Early History,” in *The Domestic Dog: Its Evolution, Behavior, and Interactions with People*, ed. James Serpell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 8-11.

became a dog by isolation from its wild ancestors and immersion in human hunter-gatherer societies, adapting traits suitable to life among humans rather than wild animals.⁵

The dog proved a useful companion among hunter-gatherers, since it could search out, track down, and occasionally capture the prey. But humans eventually abandoned this nomadic hunting lifestyle and settled into stationary communities based on farming and agriculture. How could domestic dogs serve these communities? Raymond Coppinger and Richard Schneider add to the argument of the dog's usefulness by offering details on the evolution of working dogs. In agricultural societies, dogs no longer help to kill animals for food; instead, they protect them. Shepherd dogs, animals that have evolved to be so tame that they have lost the urge to hunt, guard sheep from predators such as coyotes and wolves, the dog's direct genomic predecessor. In agricultural societies, particular breeds such as shepherd and herding dogs play the role of farmhand, saving their human companions time and effort.⁶

Having surveyed the role of dogs in hunter-gatherer and agricultural societies, it is clear that the domestic dog adapts to fit the role demanded by humans. What, then, happens when society no longer requires dogs to procure food or protect property? During the nineteenth century, the nature of American life changed drastically. Industrialization and urbanization altered the landscape. The emergence of the middle class was complemented by its members' ability to spend money on nonessential things, such as pets, which served no measurable purpose in a household. Kathleen Kete has defined pet keeping as "kindness toward only a few favored animals" which exists alongside "a world where other animals are used for work and food."⁷ Pets

⁵ Ibid., 15-16.

⁶ Raymond Coppinger and Richard Schneider, "Evolution of Working Dogs," in *The Domestic Dog: Its Evolution, Behavior, and Interactions with People*, ed. James Serpell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 27-29.

are defined by what they are not: laborers, food. Americans did not keep pets simply for the sake of keeping pets, however. The trend was rooted in the changing nature of childhood during the nineteenth century. Families that did not need extra wages kept their children at home, out of the factories. They considered children creatures that must be cultivated. From this notion sprung a wealth of parenting literature. Lydia H. Sigourney published a particularly relevant instructional piece in 1838 that linked the raising of animals within the household to the raising of moral children. In *Pets in America*, Katherine C. Grier points to Sigourney's instructions as exemplary of and integral to a shift in how Americans related to other living creatures. "Instruct [the child] that the gift of life, to the poor beetle, or the crawling worm, is from the Great Father above, and not to be lightly trodden out." Sigourney's directives, aimed at a respectable, middle-class audience, encouraged the family unit to take an animal into the household so that children could practice this "domestic ethic of kindness." Grier explains that "kindness to animals [was] one of the identifying traits of respectable folk" as early as the 1820s and would become a tenet of the Victorian, genteel lifestyle for the century to follow.⁸ Americans considered themselves to be more human by keeping and showing kindness to non-human animals.

Having welcomed pets into the home in the nineteenth century, for Americans, the space an animal occupied became central to understanding what type of animal it was. Dorothee Brantz argues for the significance of designated spaces, for example the home or the farm, in defining a dog. She warns of the precarious position that dogs inhabit should they move from space to space. "Pets," she explains, only remain pets while they are "attached to a home." Stray animals, which were a common sight in city streets during the early twentieth century, posed a threat to

⁷ Kathleen Kete, "Introduction: Animals and Human Empire," in *A Cultural History of Animals in the Age of Empire*, ed. Kathleen Kete (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2007), 15.

⁸ Katherine C. Grier, *Pets in America: A History* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 161-166.

the established order. Neither domestic, in the literal sense of situated within a home, nor wild, stray dogs forced a new category, representative of a “civilized wilderness.” These liminal creatures “transgressed the boundary between the tame and the wild,” causing much anxiety among the urban public, which often targeted the loose dog population for extermination.⁹ Nor was this anxiety undue, for attacks by rabid dogs were a real threat to public health. Jessica Wang has written about the complexities of rabies control and the policing of dogs in New York City between 1850 and 1920, which depended on a sometimes volatile combination of work by voluntary associations and official state power. While Wang focuses her argument on how the presence of animals in society has contributed to the nature of the American state, she also illustrates clearly the urban spaces that animals occupied. Even into the twentieth century, livestock were a very visible facet of urban living. Stockyards and slaughterhouses were located in the middle of cities and many people still raised smaller animals such as pigs or chickens on their premises. In New York in particular, pigs were allowed to range free until 1866 because they gobbled up the refuse that would otherwise rot in the city’s gutters.¹⁰ But loose dogs were not like loose pigs. The urban population both rich and poor had welcomed the trend of pet keeping. Having come to understand these animals as domestic creatures, the sight of them behaving in an uncivilized manner in public space disturbed the accepted order. No matter that many of these dogs were owned animals, allowed out into the streets by their masters, loose dogs threatened the population. In order to curtail the threat to public health and peace of mind, the first two decades of the twentieth century witnessed New York City officials passing

⁹ Dorothee Brantz, “The Domestication of Empire: Human-Animal Relations at the Intersection of Civilization, Evolution, and Acclimatization in the Nineteenth Century,” in *A Cultural History of Animals in the Age of Empire*, ed. Kathleen Kete (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2007), 79-80.

¹⁰ Jessica Wang, “Dogs and the Making of the American State: Voluntary Association, State Power, and the Politics of Animal Control in New York City, 1850-1920,” *The Journal of American History* vol. 98, no. 4 (March 2012): 1001-1002.

increasingly strict muzzling laws. Public officials had the order to destroy any dog found wandering the streets without a protective muzzle. By 1918, New York City reported no rabies deaths; the muzzling ordinance effectively eradicated the threat of the disease.¹¹ The historiography on this subject would also suggest that this ordinance worked symbolically as a visible clue to all passers-by that this particular dog, though currently on a sojourn outside, functioned within the domestic space. A muzzle, not unlike a harness, communicates ownership, domestication, and civilization. The success of anti-rabies legislation will be a useful foil in sections two and three, which consider ineffective dog legislation.

Nigel Rothfels adds another layer to the literature on animals and their culturally-defined spaces in an essay on animals as entertainment. While acknowledging the ubiquity of loose animals for both city and country dwellers of early twentieth-century America, he catalogues the contemporaneous trend of collecting creatures. “Amid this myriad of beastly activity,” explains Rothfels, “all kinds of animals—both the exotic from overseas and the more quotidian—ended up as the caged and collected.”¹² These collected creatures, preserved in cages or perhaps more grotesquely as taxidermy, do not conform entirely to the trend of domestic pet keeping, but the action of caging is symptomatic of the early twentieth-century American desire to civilize nature. Rothfels’s point, in addition to the other scholarly arguments reviewed above, all contribute to the ways in which Americans responded to dogs during World War I.

SECTION ONE: DOG AS PATRIOT

The advent of World War I demanded that the dog adapt once again to the roles that its human companions required. In the months leading up to and throughout the duration of the war,

¹¹ Ibid., 1017.

¹² Nigel Rothfels, “How the Caged Bird Sings: Animals and Entertainment,” in *A Cultural History of Animals in the Age of Empire*, ed. Kathleen Kete (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2007), 96.

which for America lasted from April 1917 to November 1918, the dog became a symbol of patriotism, a paradigm of the good American. Moreover, the dog became a literal soldier serving alongside both the Allied and Central Powers in Europe. Military and Red Cross propaganda campaigns featured dogs prominently in their advertising. Newspapers reported relentlessly on the work of dogs at home and overseas. Publishers welcomed narratives that featured a dog as the central character. Throughout it all, one aspect is consistent. In nearly every report of the heroic dog, the author or artist has anthropomorphized the animal, assigning human characteristics and emotions where they do not exist in nature. The evidence that follows will demonstrate how the onset of war elevated the status of the useful, heroic dog to a nearly human level for the benefit not of the animals themselves but for the nation's prospects in the trenches.

The use of dogs for war work dates back millennia. Ancient Greek and Roman artwork depicts mastiff-like animals employed as attack dogs. Spanish conquistadors took dogs to the New World. Napoleon urged his troops to station dogs as guardians while occupying Egypt. Native Americans used dogs for pack and sentry work until the Spanish introduced horses to the Americas. More recently, by the turn of the twentieth century, most well-equipped armies acknowledged the benefit of dogs in war. The Russians used dogs successfully for ambulance work, specifically to locate wounded men during the Russo-Japanese War. The Bulgarians used sheep dogs as pack animals during the Balkan Uprising. During the wars for Morocco, Berber Rifs camouflaged their dogs in the North African desert. Dressed like their masters, these dogs would run ahead of the soldiers to attract Spanish gunfire, thus betraying the location of sharpshooters. In 1914, the Russian Imperial army put its dog program on display. The exhibition proved that dogs could carry heavy loads, work under gunfire, transport ammunition,

and deliver messages between two established masters.¹³ The United States Army expressed interest in a war dog program as early as 1896, when it deemed a collection of essays on the treatment, training, and employment of war dogs in the German army of enough interest to translate and distribute.¹⁴

By 1914, when the Great War first broke out in Europe, the training and use of dogs for wartime tasks had reached a sophisticated level. According to a 1943 War Department dog training manual, “It was during the First World War that dogs really made their mark.”¹⁵ Immediately after the Armistice, Ernest Baynes, a journalist, journeyed to the war zone in order to document the particular uses of dogs, among other animals. He reported that mascots brought from home, while untrained, were familiar and helped men to cope with life in the trenches. Messenger dogs served a dual purpose, to spare the lives of human runners and to speed delivery time. Other dogs served as sentries or scouts, accompanying night patrols and alerting their handlers to nearby combatants. Hefty draught dogs could transport munitions over long distances.¹⁶ Most famously, dogs assisted the Red Cross workers by locating and transporting wounded soldiers back to hospitals. While the United States Army did not officially institute a

¹³ United States War Department, Quartermaster Corps, *War Dogs* (Washington D.C.: War Department, 1943), 5-6.

¹⁴ United States War Department, *Military Schools in Europe, and Other Papers Selected for Publication* (Washington D.C.: Military Information Division, 1896), 5.

¹⁵ United States War Department, *War Dogs*, 6. The literature on “war dogs” is extensive compared to what has been written by historians on the social role of their civilian counterparts. The majority of these works ought to be considered sentimental fiction; however, a couple examples of scholarship are worthy of mention. Consult Michael G. Lemish, *War Dogs: A History of Loyalty and Heroism* (Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books, Inc., 1999) for a comprehensive survey of how dogs have been used in battle from World War I until the present. Lemish supplements his text with anecdotes and images that make it accessible to a non-academic audience as well. See also William W. Putney, *Always Faithful: A Memoir of the Marine Dogs of WWII* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002). Putney, a licensed veterinarian who oversaw the training of Marine dogs, writes with firsthand knowledge about their work in the Pacific theater as well as the extreme number of canine casualties there. Putney also chronicles his efforts to ensure proper treatment of decommissioned dogs, many of which were euthanized rather than returned to civilian life.

¹⁶ Ernest Baynes, *Animal Heroes of the Great War* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1927) 5, 168-9, 198-9, 193.

war dog program until 1943, during World War I American dogs served in the Red Cross and were donated to the war dog programs of other Allied nations. And some American companies brought dogs along unofficially. No matter a dog's national affiliation, the print media inundated the American public with the doings of dogs overseas.

An article published prior to America's engagement in the war reported on the heroic efforts of one British dog to protect its company's artillery. The author noted that the war dog as a class was "mentioned honorably and lovingly by all the men of every nation in the struggle."¹⁷ Another report issued prior to American involvement included a startling graphic, that of a dog wearing a gas mask designed for humans. That the accompanying text referred to the French army's war dogs as "wonderfully trained" and of "extraordinary intelligence" only added to the blurring of species barriers.¹⁸ While it was typical for soldiers to outfit their dogs and horses with masks made for humans, at least prior to the development of specialized animal masks, the image communicated to the reader that this extraordinarily intelligent animal which performed the messenger duties once left to men was verging upon human itself.

Many reporters used sentimental language and editorialized photographs to equate service animals with their human counterparts and earn them public sympathy. Below a picture

¹⁷ "British 'Long Tom' Saved by a War Dog," *The Ogden Standard*, August 12, 1916. American papers even mentioned German war dogs favorably. One correspondent wrote to *The New York Times* regarding the heroics of the Kaiser's "Sanitaetshunde," which served in ambulance companies. "'Dogs of War' Save Many German Lives," *The New York Times*, January 21, 1915. In fact, some of United States' first Red Cross dogs were bred from the Kaiser's own kennel. "U.S. First Red Cross Dogs from Kaiser's Kennel," *The New York Times*, January 30, 1916. These articles were published prior to United States involvement in the war. After engagement, American papers seem to report on the work of Allied dogs only. I have found only one publication that gives a negative opinion of German dogs. In the August, 1918, edition of the *Red Cross Magazine* a young stretcher bearer recalled a vicious German dog that patrolled No Man's Land. According to the story that circulated among the soldiers, this animal was a German creation—a dog with the brain of a man who hated the Allies. The Germans had created this creature because they were certain no Allied soldier would shoot a dog. The boy noted that because of this wartime tale, no one he knew would hesitate to shoot an enemy dog. This tale, an aberration from most of the sources which revere even enemy dogs, seems to function as anti-German propaganda. It is not the dog that is to blame for its actions but the Germans military for perverting it. Harvey E. Johnson, "Yankee Kid," in *Red Cross Magazine*, vol. 13, no. 8 (August 1918), 14.

¹⁸ "War Dog in Gas Mask," *Mohave County Miner*, February 24, 1917.

of an injured dog posed to look especially forlorn, the reporter explained that this regimental mascot encountered a grenade on the Aisne. "He doesn't remember just what happened next," wrote the reporter, as if he could read the dog's expression. In the same article, under an image of a Red Cross dog lying with its face in the dirt, the caption related that he had been hit by shrapnel and "now is just able to drag himself out into the sunshine."¹⁹ It is perfectly possible that neither of these animals was injured in combat; the editor has decided that a story about dogs on their apparent deathbeds, likely because of public appeal, ought to fill an entire page. Whereas this article anthropomorphized via sentimental language, sometimes the soldiers themselves, not the reporters, assigned human characteristics to their dogs. That men gave their dogs familiar, human-sounding names further closed the distance between man and beast. In some articles it is difficult to discern whether the author is discussing human or animal, except for a keyword early on. For example, "'Pvt' was brought down by a German bullet in Argonne. 'Toby,' alias 'Crapouillot,' died from a shell wound received at Vic-sur-Tourbe. 'Kaiser,' 'Kronprinz' and 'Francois-Joseph'... served zealously and fell upon the field of honor."²⁰

In addition to human names and characteristics, the language regarding dogs in newspapers occasionally applied core American values to the animals as if they were men. One writer, noting that the Red Cross "would be incomplete without its quota of dogs" stated that "blue-bloods are not the only ones needed. Yellow curs can do their bit for America also if they have the spirit and enough 'dog brains.'"²¹ Another journalist reiterated this belief, declaring not only dogs bred for service but even the common cur, of uncertain pedigree, suitable for war

¹⁹ "Dogs of War," *New-York Tribune*, May 13, 1917.

²⁰ "Dogs of War in Real Life," *The Jasper News*, July 5, 1917.

²¹ "Red Cross Will Use American War Dogs," *The Grand Rapids Press*, July 27, 1917.

work. These dogs had all of the “natural qualifications” to serve their country.²² Such sentiments could be seen to conform to American national self-identification: No matter the situation one is born into, good, hard work will help one get ahead.

Even after the war’s end, newspapers continued to laud the work of dogs in the trenches. One reporter declared that “perpetual pasturage would be just reward for our four-footed fighters, with freedom from further work,” continuing, “to Fido, allot choice bones to gnaw and if you’d make his home dog heaven rid the world of fleas for these, the ‘dogs of war.’”²³ This mawkish language is typical of the reports that reflected on the role of animals in the war.

Especially heroic dogs of war earned recognition for their service, as might any good soldier. Marquis, one of the earliest canine casualties of the war in 1914, ran a fatal mission to deliver important news through heavy fire. The French government acknowledged his sacrifice by announcing his death among the other human casualties of the day. Marquis’s human compatriots also raised funds to erect a monument to the animal, inscribed “Marquis—Killed on the field of Honor.”²⁴ In 1916, the French army issued a special citation to the memory of Medor No. 6, a dog that completed his mission to deliver a message despite being struck with bullets along the way.²⁵ Jacques, whom the soldiers spoke of “as they would of a fellow soldier” won special recognition by defending his machine gun company against assault and facilitating the capture of five German soldiers.²⁶ Sgt. Helen Kaiser, an American-bred war dog serving in the

²² “Says Hunting Dogs and Common Curs Possess War Service Qualifications,” *The Tomahawk*, March 28, 1918.

²³ “Dumb Heroes of the War,” *Pulaski Democrat*, September 17, 1919.

²⁴ “Honor for a Dead Dog,” *The New York Times*, November 29, 1914.

²⁵ “Dog Heroes Win Citations Before Army in France—Canine Intelligences as Sentinels and Scouts,” *The Times-Picayune*, December 3, 1916.

²⁶ “Dog Wins War Honors,” *The Times-Picayune*, April 22, 1917.

French army, survived poison gas attacks and shrapnel wounds. Her regiment awarded her the Croix de Guerre twice over.²⁷ Even President Wilson showed his appreciation for war dogs by inviting Nellie, the twice-injured dog mascot of the Belgian army, to a garden party at the White House. One reporter noted that Nellie must have forgotten her soldier's discipline because she frolicked wildly across the White House lawn, adding that "dogs will be dogs, no matter how illustrious."²⁸

Papers reported on the homefront loyalism of dogs as well. One story explained the perceived patriotic behavior of an Arkansas druggist's dog. Left alone in the shop, the animal ate four dollars worth of penny stamps before its owner returned. Pressed on why his dog had done this, the owner suggested the "act was prompted by patriotism, the dog believing that the more stamps Uncle Sam sells the better for his business."²⁹ Similarly, a Wyoming journalist compared "the hound-pups of Cheyenne" to the rest of "patriotic America" because they followed ration regulations. He lauded the dogs for observing meatless and wheatless days, failing to mention that this fasting was decided by owner, not animal.³⁰ Articles also chronicled the fundraising efforts of civilian dogs. In order to raise money for war work, an English bull terrier with the impressive show name of Imported Hambletonian wore a white sash embroidered with the Red Cross insignia while ambling around the lobby of a New York City hotel. Hambletonian's owner

²⁷ "D.C. War Hero, First American Dog to Enter German Territory," *The Washington Times*, March 10, 1919.

²⁸ Daisy Fitzhughs Ayres, "'Nellie,' the Mascot of War-Ravaged Belgium, Is in Receiving Line at Washington Garden Party," *The Times-Picayune*, July 8, 1917.

²⁹ "Dog Eats Stamps," *Norwood News*, date illegible, 1918.

³⁰ "Hoover Enters Kennels and Dogs 'Hooverized,'" *The Wyoming Tribune*, December 8, 1917.

was a Red Cross nurse herself.³¹ Similarly, a police dog named Officer Rex sold Liberty Bonds and War Savings Stamps at a war benefit hosted by a New York humane association.³² These newspaper articles illustrate only brief accounts of the work of civilian and war dogs.

Anthropomorphic narratives took longer forms as well.

Outside of newspapers, sentimental dog narratives abounded. *Red Cross Magazine* dedicated significant space to tales about dogs that suffered for their country. In an article that clearly aimed to pull on the reader's heartstrings, Ruth Wright Kauffmann, a contributor to the *Red Cross Magazine*, interviewed a French woman whose town, Roubaix, had been occupied by the Germans. Among other injustices, the Germans levied a tax of forty francs on each dog. According to the source, at that time almost everyone in her village kept a pet dog. As a show of resistance, she claimed that every resident of Roubaix drowned his or her dog. They wrapped the bodies in French flags inscribed with the phrase "Dead for France" and left them in the river as a manifestation of French solidarity against Germany.³³ While the dogs in this story do not actively martyr themselves for their country--they are, after all, animals without awareness of national allegiance--the wrapping of each body in a French flag transforms them into models of patriotism, little soldiers. No evidence corroborates this story out of Roubaix, but a related narrative surfaced during the war that lends some credence to the heart of the tale. In 1918, Eleanor Atkinson, an American author of sentimental narratives that frequently featured animals, published "*Poilu: A Dog of Roubaix*." Atkinson told the tale of a shaggy dog, called Poilu by its owners for its resemblance to the unshaven soldiers of France. The animal accompanied the men

³¹ "Dog Aids the Red Cross," *The New York Times*, July 13, 1917.

³² "Dog Helps Sell Bonds," *The New York Times*, April 20, 1918.

³³ Ruth Wright Kauffman, "The Dogs of Roubaix," in *Red Cross Magazine*, vol. 13, no. 3 (March 1918), 18-21.

of Roubaix to war and, after serving honorably, found its way back home. The family hid Poilu from the German soldiers occupying the town, but his mistress was caught purchasing extra scraps of food. The German officer who uncovered her secret demanded a tax of forty francs for the animal, an exorbitant amount, and allowed twenty-four hours for payment. Poilu's mistress, in impossible straits, fed the animal one last magnificent meal, then euthanized it in the night.³⁴ Atkinson made no mention of French flags or a citywide sacrifice of family pets, but the similarity between these two stories about dogs that died at Roubaix suggests perhaps a portion of the tale was based in fact.

Sometimes these sentimental narratives were more lighthearted examples of canine "martyrdom." In the April 1918 issue, the editors of *Red Cross Magazine* devoted four full pages to the "diary" of two Yorkshire terriers named Rags and Tags that sacrificed their time and comfort on the homefront to help the war effort. In reality, the dogs' owners had attached small boxes to their collars and walked them around town to collect donations. But in the diary, the dogs have agency and a collective voice, due to the style in which Julia M. Sloane authored the piece. The notion that these dogs were truly suffering in their efforts shaped the sentiment and the humor of the piece. Regarding the collection boxes they wore around their necks Rags and Tags complained: "They were most unpleasant and in the way, but we couldn't do anything about it." The next day: "Had a bath, which we detest...Wore our new boxes (we had chewed up our old ones as they annoyed us)." And the next: "Begging is hard work. The sun is hot, and our backs get rather limp, but we are going to do our best." Eventually though, Rags and Tags became model citizens, boasting: "We feel rather proud and are practising [sic] sitting up without any crackers or sugar or anything." This article, though silly, reveals the ways in which

³⁴ Eleanor Atkinson, "*Poilu: A Dog of Roubaix*" (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1918). Atkinson most famously authored *Greyfriars Bobby*, a fanciful story based on a particular Skye terrier that kept watch over its master's grave in Edinburgh for fourteen years,

Americans employed civilian dogs as vessels for patriotism. And by printing this “diary” in its magazine, the Red Cross has transformed one family’s attempt to do its share into a large-scale marketing and fundraising campaign. The editors, perhaps reluctant to appear as if they are exploiting poor Rags and Tags, included a statement declaring that “it isn’t only the actual money they have collected that counts but the friends they have made for themselves and for the Red Cross” that make the dogs’ efforts significant.³⁵

Images of animals, in addition to narratives, functioned to elevate the status of the war dog and evoke a sympathetic or patriotic response from viewers. The Red Cross frequently employed illustrations and photographs of dogs in its publications and propaganda. One fundraising poster distributed in 1917 forces the viewer to gaze directly into the unblinking eyes of a Red Cross dog (Fig. 1). This animal sits with a soldier’s hat clenched between its teeth collecting donations. The hat, though nowhere near full, is already weighed down with an assortment of coins, bills, and annual membership receipts. The poster encourages Americans to “COME ON-JOIN NOW,” declaring that the Red Cross hoped to have fifteen million members by the close of that year. In addition to using dog imagery to mobilize American support for the war, the Red Cross also published more sympathetic illustrations in which the dogs required and, according to the publications, are worthy of help from humans. In August, 1918, the Red Cross included a dog on the cover of its monthly magazine. But this dog was not the typical hero of the fundraising efforts. Navigating the hazards of a barbed-wire battlefield, an American soldier crouches low, carrying a wounded Red Cross dog to safety (Fig. 2). The original illustration by John Olaf Todahl is entitled “The Wounded Comrade.” This prominent reversal of roles, man saving dog rather than dog rescuing man, communicates that by this point in the conflict, at least in the opinion of the Red Cross, the war dog had proved its mettle and ought to be treated as any

³⁵ Julia M. Sloane “The Diary of Two Red Cross Dogs,” *Red Cross Magazine*, April 1918, 25-8.

human brother in arms. In November 1918, *Red Cross Magazine* published another image that delivered a similar message. This print of a painting by Norman Rockwell titled *A Red Cross Man in the Making* imagines a Boy Scout tending to the wounds of an injured pup (Fig. 3). The animal's nervous mother looks on as the boy wraps its paw in a clean bandage. Rockwell's painting stresses the importance of kindness to animals, which had become engrained in the social consciousness of the American middle class by the late nineteenth century, a facet of the "domestic ethic of kindness." But the scout's actions seem not to be motivated by kindness alone. Rockwell painted this scene from an angle that does not allow its audience to see the boy's face. It is the pup that stares directly out at the audience, inhabiting the most central and perhaps the most human space in the painting. Through these sympathetic images, the editors of *Red Cross Magazine* convey that dogs, for their heroic work during the war, deserve compassionate treatment from humans.

The United States military also employed dogs in its recruiting campaigns. One U.S. Army recruiting poster depicts a dog with the insignia of the Red Cross draped across its flank (not pictured).³⁶ The dog stands atop a pile of rubble, panting, while the city in the background burns. The artist has set this canine's expression into what might be a smile, the animal presumably pleased with the rescue work it has accomplished. The caption below this image challenges its human audience: "EVEN A DOG ENLISTS[.] WHY NOT YOU?" By communicating to the viewer that even an animal without will can "volunteer" for war work, this propaganda piece attempts to convince potential soldiers that as men they ought to do more for

³⁶ View this propaganda poster within the Imperial War Museum's digital collections. "Even a Dog Enlists Why Not You," Imperial War Museum, accessed April 4, 2013, <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/33836>.

their nation than the beasts did.³⁷ The Marine Corps also used dogs in its propaganda. One widely produced recruiting poster welcomes the viewer into a canine chase sequence (Fig. 4). A burly bulldog, playing the role of an American Marine, pursues a German dachshund, which flees with head turned in trepidation and tail set firmly between its legs. The breeds convey clearly which nation each dog symbolizes, but the artist has inserted another clue. While the bulldog wears a simple helmet over its square skull, the dachshund sports a crested headpiece emblazoned with an eagle, wings outstretched, a recognizable emblem that denoted a Prussian regiment. The poster declares that German soldiers had already nicknamed the American Marines “*Teufel Hunden*,” meaning “Devil Dogs.” It matters little that the origins of this moniker are mythical. The military’s use of the dogs as tools for raising money and recruiting men stands as evidence of how the American people reshaped the role of their dogs to serve the war effort, in this case imagining them as soldiers themselves, nearly human.

Americans seemed eager to volunteer their own dogs for war service. *Red Cross Magazine* chronicled how American citizens on the homefront supported the war effort through their pets, an indicator of how dogs and civilian mobilization were intertwined. In the November 1917, issue of the *Red Cross Magazine*, Walter A. Dyer, a journalist, editor, and prolific writer of canine-centric fiction, had written about the contribution Red Cross dogs were making to the war effort, adding that more were needed to help with hospital work. Immediately, the public responded to his call by donating dogs generously. By January 1918, the Red Cross National Headquarters had to turn dogs away and issued a statement begging “No More Dogs, Please.”³⁸ In this instance, at least according to the *Red Cross Magazine* report, the American people

³⁷ Whereas the majority of evidence in this chapter blurs the lines between human and animal, this propaganda piece is exceptional in creating a clear divide between the two.

³⁸ “No More Dogs, Please,” in *Red Cross Magazine*, vol. 13, no. 1 (January 1918), 76.

supported their soldiers by donating pets. This same year, the government began requesting that the public donate their pets to the Bureau of Mines for gas mask testing. “If you raised Fido to be a hero,” began the advertisement in a newspaper serving upstate New York, “send him to the bureau of mines [sic].” The announcement continued by declaring that these figurative guinea pigs “may be the means of saving the lives of hundreds of American soldiers.”³⁹ There is no available source that reports on the numbers of pets received by the Bureau of Mines, but it is likely fewer than the deluge that fell upon the Red Cross. The notion of sending one’s beloved pet to be gassed in a laboratory evokes far less heroism than sending it to a war zone.

Furthermore, as the next section will make clear, stray or destructive dogs and cats were abundant in both city and country. While the Red Cross might not have had use for such animals, the Bureau of Mines could have conducted gas tests on any living creature. Why then ask Americans to sacrifice their pets? Given that I have found no further evidence of these donations except those reports published by the Red Cross and the Bureau of Mines, it is possible that these organizations, by encouraging civilian sacrifice, were endeavoring to construct a shared culture of patriotism. Certainly some Americans did donate pets to the service of the nation, but perhaps not in the extraordinary numbers claimed by these organizations. It was the mere notion that citizens were making wartime sacrifices, rather than the reality, that might encourage other Americans to follow suit.⁴⁰

During the war, Americans put their dogs to work both literally and symbolically toward the Allied cause. As soldiers, fundraisers, and paragons of patriotism, these animals that evolved

³⁹ “War Dogs and Cats Needed,” *Canton Commercial Advertiser*, date illegible, 1918.

⁴⁰ English citizens similarly donated their pets for war work. An American journalist reported early in 1917 that pets played a “prominent part... of war charity” there, donated for work on the battlefield or to be auctioned off in order to raise funds for the military. However, so many citizens donated “unsaleable pets” that many were simply euthanized. “Pets Sold For Charity,” *Olympia Daily Recorder*, January 3, 1917.

by adapting to the needs of man, were in this instance adapted by men to fill social roles necessary to national security, elevating them to something more than animal.

SECTION TWO: DOG AS PEST

Despite the overwhelmingly positive public opinion of war dogs, the American people's reception of all dogs was not homogenous, especially with regard to companion or stray animals. During World War I, the governments of the warring nations began to question whether citizens had the right to own and waste resources on nonessential things such as pets. In America, animals without clear ownership or those that were destructive to property sparked debates among state and federal lawmakers about how best to combat the pests. This section will consider in what ways the dog became a menace during the war, examining the arguments that Americans expressed against the animal in newspapers and official legislative documents. It will also compare the situation of dogs in America to the even more grave existence they faced in England and on the European continent, where war conditions had put an extreme strain on the citizenry.

War inevitably challenges the lifestyle of a civilian population. When citizens must ration their food and contribute their time and money toward the war effort, can superfluities such as pets be allowed? Lynn Festa has addressed this question in her essay on an eighteenth-century English tax on dogs, the debate around which serves as a precedent for the arguments for and against dogs in the United States during World War I. In 1796, the British Parliament considered passing a new tax on dogs in order to raise revenue for war against France and to significantly decrease the nation's dog population, a move that would reduce incidents of rabies in the city and attacks on sheep in the country. The proposed tax also aimed to "prevent the poor from squandering their money on useless pets, while the quantities of food lavished upon dogs might

instead be used to feed the indigent.”⁴¹ Proponents of the tax did not mean to target the poor alone. All English dog owners would be required to pay the tax, but the poor, assuming that they would not have the disposable income to pay it, would have to forfeit their pets. Opponents of the measure argued that “the poor are perfectly capable of weighing the economic cost of the dog against its sentimental or personal benefits.” According to Festa, they have elected to support an extra belly because they derived something of value from the animal.⁴² It would be unfair to deprive these poor citizens of a thing that contributed, albeit inestimably, to their lives. When Parliament finally did enact the tax, poor households were exempt from payment, unless they owned more than one animal.⁴³ Dog lovers successfully defended the useless and destructive dog as a creature of value. A very similar controversy surfaced in the United States as global war loomed. This section surveys complaints about the dog that parallel those that British parliamentarians addressed over a century prior. And while what follows confirms that useless dogs had become a nuisance in America, especially during wartime, dog lovers seem ever successful at transforming legislation intended to restrict or exterminate the animals into humane-minded laws that instead defend them.

While American newspaper reports lauded some dogs as patriots, they condemned others as pests. Even before the United States’ involvement in the war, newspapers warned that pets were a drain on national resources. One reporter made the case that frugality was a matter of “national necessity.” Pointing to an argument first made in a London paper, the writer declared “in the piping times of peace it may be merely a matter of private choice” to keep a family pet,

⁴¹ Lynn Festa, “Person, Animal, Thing: The 1796 Dog Tax and the Right to Superfluous Things,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* vol. 33, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 1-2.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 11-12.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

but “under the pressures of war, the pampering of these animals actually means robbing the children of their food.”⁴⁴ People of all sorts wrote letters to newspapers to voice their opinions about dogs during the war. Dr. W. A. Evans, a professor of “hygiene” at Northwestern University and formerly Chicago Health Commissioner, expressed a negative view of dogs in general, due to their threat against public health. Despite acknowledging the “material service” dogs rendered man throughout history, Dr. Evans declared that during this war, “man would be better off without them,” since their aid no longer outweighed their nuisance. “Certainly there is no need of, and no place for, dogs in a city,” he charged, continuing, “They do no good...They are always a potential menace.”⁴⁵ Jessica Wang’s study on rabies outbreaks and preventative legislation in New York City highlights similar arguments against the dog. After an outbreak of rabies in 1914, New York City health commissioner Sigismund S. Goldwater tried to reason with the dog-loving public by questioning the merits of dogs in an urban environment. Wang points to a statement published in *The New York Times* in which Goldwater asked, “Can you tell me what dogs are good for in a city? In the country they are all right, but in a city they are a nuisance from the point of view of sanitation, and there is always the danger of rabies.”⁴⁶ A farmer in Augusta, Georgia, expressed that even in rural areas, dogs had little use anymore. “When there were wild animals to prey on the country the dog did some good. That day has passed in Georgia.”⁴⁷

⁴⁴ “Dogs Rob Children of Food,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, January 7, 1916.

⁴⁵ “The Case Against Dogs,” *The State*, August 14, 1917.

⁴⁶ This declaration against dogs in the city streets expresses just the opposite anxiety to those expressed by rural New Yorkers concerned about the activities of loose dogs on their land just a few years later; Wang, 998.

⁴⁷ “Letters from the People: He Has No Sympathy With the Dog-Protection Campaign, *Augusta Chronicle*, January 22, 1917.

Dogs not only threatened public health and drained resources, they effectively counteracted certain war measures. In order to understand how dogs were detrimental to the Allied cause, this essay will briefly shift its attention to another member of the animal kingdom: the sheep. In much the same way that Americans boosted war dogs as paradigms of patriotism, they promoted the nation's sheep as symbols of support for the war. Prior to the outbreak of war in Europe, American agriculturalists had made efforts to expand sheep farming in America. Years of severe drought in Australia at the turn of the twentieth century had devastated that nation's sheep industry, giving American farmers an opportunity to enter the market.⁴⁸ International warfare increased the demand for sheep products--wool needed for soldiers' uniforms and mutton for their meals. The shortage of wool during the war was especially dire. According to a writer for *The Agricultural Digest*, a soldier's uniform crafted of good-quality wool might last only six to eight weeks in the trenches. Lower-quality wool garments fell to pieces more quickly.⁴⁹ Another agriculturalist blamed the "muddy trenches" of France for ruining uniforms, noting that "in former conflicts clothes could be stripped from the dead and used by the survivors," but the conditions of this conflict precluded such recycling.⁵⁰ The wartime need for sheep-derived commodities generated among the American public a favorable opinion of sheep and the farmers who raised them.

In 1917, the New York State Agricultural Society held a "Patriotic Sheep Meeting, Exhibit, and Sale." One headline regarding the event proclaimed "Building Up of Sheep Industry

⁴⁸ United States, *Federal Dog Tax and Predatory Wild Animals: Hearings Before the Committee on Agriculture, House of Representatives, Sixty-Fifth Congress, Second Session, on the Feasibility of a Federal Dog Tax For* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), 5.

⁴⁹ National Agricultural Society, *The Agricultural Digest*, vol. 2 (May 1916-May 1917): 584.

⁵⁰ "A Story About Wool," *New-York Tribune*, March 3, 1918.

Patriotic Duty.”⁵¹ This was not mere rhetoric. In the spring of 1918, President Wilson confirmed that American sheep could contribute to the war effort. In cooperation with the American Red Cross, the president donated ninety pounds of wool clipped from his own White House sheep. Volunteers separated the wool into units and distributed the packages among the governors of each state, instructing the elected officials to auction the wool for the benefit of a Red Cross mercy fund.⁵² State rivalries contributed to the success of the auctions. The *New-York Tribune* reported on the governors’ competitive attitudes as evidenced by the telegrams they were sending in to the paper. Governor Boyle of Nevada wired that his state, which had raised substantial funds for the Sanitary Commission during the Civil War, had “not forgotten how to bid for liberty.” Governor Catts of Florida wrote that “every dollar contributed will help the boys who are going over there to shear the Kaiser’s goat.”⁵³ Ultimately, Massachusetts, one of the leading textile-manufacturing states, earned the title of highest bidder. Abraham Koshland, president of the Boston Wool Trade Association, allegedly set a world record by spending \$2,000 for his state’s share of the wool clipped from Wilson’s White House sheep.⁵⁴ Thus, sheep products contributed directly and, by way of a creative fundraising campaign, indirectly to the war effort.

While many American farmers gladly began raising sheep to help the Allies, some profiteers, not entirely unlike the canine predators discussed in the following pages, tried to take advantage of the high demand and low availability of wool. In 1918, the War Department seized hoards of wool from two men. A Pennsylvania farmer had been holding decades of wool

⁵¹ National Agricultural Society, *The Agricultural Digest*, 722.

⁵² “Wilson to Auction Wool,” *The Sun*, May 17, 1918.

⁵³ “Many Towns Already Have Given Quotas in Red Cross Drive,” *New-York Tribune*, May 21, 1918.

⁵⁴ “Wilson Wool \$1000 A Pound,” *The Sun*, May 28, 1918.

clippings, some of which he had sheared in the nineteenth century. He insisted upon waiting to sell until the price climbed even higher. A Vermont farmer maintained a similarly aged stockpile. Ignoring protests from both farmers, the government forcibly purchased the wool at a low fixed rate declaring the seizure as a war measure.⁵⁵ Besides such individual acts of greed, one other obstacle prevented American farmers from doing their patriotic duty and investing in sheep--the predatory dog.

In 1915, the United States Department of Agriculture issued a *Farmer's Bulletin* on "The Sheep-Killing Dog." Highlighting the high prices of wool and mutton due to recent droughts and the demand created by the war in Europe, the publication urged farmers take to raising sheep. There was, according to the document, only one impediment to building a successful flock: "Sheep-killing dogs are not only recognized as the worst enemy of eastern flockmasters... but are known to be the principal cause of so marked a decrease in the numbers of sheep kept on farms." Farmers reported on the destruction caused by dogs as if the animals were criminals. "We have grown faint-hearted," admitted one former sheep farmer, "and joined the ranks of the sheepless...The one reason for present abandonment would be shouted by thousands of shepherds if the question were put--just dogs! Old stuff? Yes; but it's ever new to the sheepman...who has walked out to his pasture to find dead, torn, bleeding, crippled, and scared sheep."⁵⁶ While many dog lovers would choose to blame these attacks on stray and feral animals, the farmer stated that the issue is not due to a singular type of dog. "I have seen too many pairs composed of one mongrel and one pedigreed cur crossing the farm together to have faith in dogdom."⁵⁷ In order to

⁵⁵ "Old Wool Is Seized," *New-York Tribune*, October 4, 1918.

⁵⁶ United States Department of Agriculture, *Farmers' Bulletins Nos. 651-675, With Contents and Index* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), 2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

curb the dog menace, the bulletin recommended raising the tax on dogs and instituting a more effective system of enforcement by passing uniform laws in each state.⁵⁸ The issue of sheep-raising and dog-legislating was “neither new nor local,” as an Oregonian farmer pointed out early in 1918.⁵⁹ Predators, be they wolves, coyotes, or loose dogs, always posed a threat to farmers’ flocks. But the war gave these farmers a platform on which to argue their case and by which they believed they had a better chance of achieving results. The following section will consider how policy makers in the United States on both the state and federal level condemned the dog, using a New York State law and a federal hearing as evidence.

Early in 1917, the newly formed New York Joint Legislative Committee on Dairy Products, Live Stock, and Poultry proposed “An Act to Promote the Sheep Industry,” legislation that would encourage the extermination of dogs that might attack sheep. Essentially, the act would require government officials to capture, impound, and, if unclaimed, euthanize all dogs witnessed running wild in the country.⁶⁰ The Committee put forth these measures after listening to testimony from farmers such as Clark Allis, who claimed that he had at one point owned over 500 sheep. After attacks by “worthless curs and upper crust dogs” alike, he had fewer than 200

⁵⁸ Ibid., 9-10.

⁵⁹ “Sheep and Dogs,” *Oregonian*, January 3, 1918; “Neither new, nor local” nor, it seems, resolved. In the March 2013 issue of *Vogue*, a female farmer based in Maine wrote to the editors of the magazine complaining about a recent article in which a society writer described a visit to Scotland with her dog. The woman admitted to allowing the animal off its leash to chase some grazing sheep. As have so many before her, this angry farmer declares “one of the greatest threats to sheep is the domestic dog,” explaining that the loss of sheep is both “heartbreaking” and potentially “financial disaster.” Kathy Garcelon, “Dog Days,” *Vogue*, March 2013, 290.

⁶⁰ New York State Legislature, *Preliminary Report of the Joint Legislative Committee on Dairy Products, Live Stock, and Poultry* (Albany: J. B. Lyon Company, 1917), 11-12; Initially, the proposal contained a measure that incentivized the killing of stray dogs, offering a monetary reward to any citizen that finished off a loose animal. However, the public protested against this piece of the bill, arguing that feuding neighbors or street urchins might take out their social frustrations on helpless animals, using the loose dog provision as a cloak. In response to the outcry, the legislators amended the bill.

sheep remaining.⁶¹ Dog depredations became so troublesome that the federal government took notice. In the spring of 1918, the House Committee on Agriculture heard testimony on the theme of a “federal dog tax and predatory wild animals.” J. A. Delfelder, a sheep farmer from Wyoming, spoke before the Committee to assert that maintenance of American wool production by means of exterminating predators was essential to success in the international conflict, since the European warring nations could not tend to the sheep industry while war raged.⁶² He argued that dogs, in the Eastern part of the United States especially, depleted flocks to the point of draining farmers’ profits. In Mississippi, where farmers were experimenting with raising sheep, they would see only ten percent of their original lambs survive, because dogs could jump a protective fence or burrow under it. As to what kind of dogs these were, Delfelder replied, “They are dogs that nobody owns in particular. They have just been turned loose,” confirming that no one kind of dog was responsible for these crimes.⁶³ Delfelder did not hide his negative opinion of the useless, companion dog, stating “If there is anybody here who can tell me what a dog is really good for outside of the few who handle the sheep, I should like to hear it? I have failed to find it.”⁶⁴ P. W. Jenkins, a representative for the American National Livestock Association, spoke out on how irresponsible it was to waste money on pet dogs when other Americans were trying to conserve food and resources. “I can not see the reason for inaugurating meatless days,” Jenkins announced, “if we are going to feed the meat to a bunch of worthless curs. I do not

⁶¹ Ibid., 19.

⁶² United States Congress, House Agriculture Committee, *Federal Dog Tax and Predatory Wild Animals*, 5.

⁶³ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 7,9.

believe in taking the meat out of the mouths of children and giving it to the dogs. I stand for the home first.”⁶⁵

Throughout this hearing, Representatives continually challenged the usefulness of dogs. One concluded, “I do not know of any use you can have for a dog in the State of Pennsylvania. You have use for them out there [i.e. in Wyoming]; we do not.” Another countered, “We [in Wyoming] have use for about... a million dogs that would be of some use in the production of foodstuffs, but outside of that I would either have them declared a nuisance or an ornament.” The same member of Congress elaborated upon this point stating that “it is the worthless, no-account cur that should be exterminated; nobody has any use for a dog that commits the depredations that we desire to prevent in order to increase the sheep production of the country.”⁶⁶ All who valued sheep agreed that a dog’s worth ought to be measured by its usefulness.

In concluding the proceedings before the Committee on Agriculture, Wyoming State Representative Franklin Mondell revealed that in the weeks prior to the hearing he had received letters “from all over the country,” not just his Wyoming constituents, expressing support for strict dog legislation. He claimed that not a single one of these letters opposed taxing dogs in order to promote sheep.⁶⁷ Ultimately, the federal government decided not to pursue the dog tax on a national level, the Committee recommending instead that each state pass its own restrictions on dogs; however, the opinions expressed in this hearing reflect a national frustration among those who understood the value of sheep.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 9, 13.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 9-10, 17.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 17.

While American newspapers, presumably via the instructions of their editors, in general offered favorable opinions of dogs, there were a number of published attacks against the animals. One editorial reprinted from the *Wall Street Journal* by a Wyoming newspaper that served a community of sheep farmers demonstrated sympathy for New York shepherds. Published at the height of the dog legislation debates, the article equated dogs to enemy weaponry, declaring that “sheep-killing dogs and commerce destroying submarines belong to the same class and deserve the same treatment. Offensive and defensive measures are necessary against both.”⁶⁸ Thus, while Americans frequently anthropomorphized the patriotic dog, in contrast they also eliminated humanity in reference to the pest. Others agreed that decisive action must be taken. A contributor to a Washington State paper expressed his confusion about the care and food given to dogs while the nation’s “leading men” were trying to conserve rations. He proposed that the United States should institute a “national dog-swatting day,” implying a general and violent cull of the canine population so as not to waste food “fit for human consumption.” In defense of his drastic proposal, the author demanded, “Is this not a necessary and patriotic measure?”⁶⁹ These men were not advocating violence against dogs without cause. They judged the animals not just as useless but also as detrimental to the United States’ war effort.

American concern over canine usefulness extended beyond national borders. Throughout the war, American newspapers alerted the public to how England’s dogs were faring. Early in 1916, the English government announced a possible increase in its national dog tax as a response to “the first war needs.” In reaction to the potential tax, reported one American journalist, English pet owners began to abandon their animals in the streets, which “gradually... became

⁶⁸ “Sheep or Dogs, Which?” *The Wyoming Tribune*, April 19, 1917.

⁶⁹ “Swat The Cur,” *Aberdeen Daily News*, April 19, 1917. The author attacked other animals as well, noting that “cats and many other pets which do not fill a necessary place in the world” eat food that could otherwise feed the army.”

burdened with soft-eyed dogs, new to the ways of the world." He claimed that "thousands of owners had found their love for their four-footed friend not quite equal to the test" of the tax and abandoned their pets in the streets "already too full of other and more human cares to have a place for just dogs." The writer's overly sentimental language suggests that he may have exaggerated the "dog waif problem" throughout his report, but it also illustrates successfully the lifestyle sacrifices that war forces upon a nation. The article concluded by explaining that the English government had chosen to abandon an increase in the dog tax, for reasons unknown. All of the families that cast their pet dogs out into the streets had done so prematurely.⁷⁰ But the war was in its earlier stages; worsening conditions would challenge the place of England's pets again and again.

Exactly a year later, in January 1917, reports surfaced that the English government was planning to exterminate all useless dogs. An American journalist reported that the English "axe man" would spare sporting and working dogs, for their usefulness as farmhands, especially with so many human farmhands fighting on the front. The proposed national cull would instead target the "pink-ribboned, brilliantined, carefully combed and valeted animal" that "dines with a butler's attention." Considering the scarcity of food during wartime, officials were concerned that these useless pets would drain the national food supply and deprive needy humans of meals.⁷¹ A group of women led the protest against such drastic measures, arguing that while their husbands and sons were away at war they needed dogs to protect the home, thus actively shifting the role of pet dogs from useless into useful animals. Their protests led to a defeat of the proposition.⁷²

⁷⁰ "Just Dogs," *The Times-Picayune*, January 4, 1916.

⁷¹ "Pink-Ribboned Dogs in England to Be Doomed," *Wilkes Barre Times Leader*, January 1, 1917.

⁷² "A Word For the Dog," *The Times-Picayune*, January 7, 1917.

Despite these women's arguments regarding the necessary role of dogs in the home, the debate about a national cull continued for months, according to a letter sent home in May 1917, by an American soldier stationed in London, which noted that English authorities were considering a general cull of all cats and dogs due to the strain these animals put on the country's already rationed resources, making no mention that certain dogs might be exempt from extermination.⁷³ However, the English government still did not put these extreme measures into practice.

Another year later and England still had no suitable solution to the useless dog problem. In May 1918, after resuming talks regarding an increase in the national dog tax, the government once again halted proceedings toward a tax that would, some argued, "kill dog-breeding as an industry" and instigate class strife since wealthy households could easily afford the tax but the poor would be forced to give up their pets. Instead of a general tax, the exchequer proposed to prohibit the breeding of dogs during the remainder of the war unless the owner purchased a license. While British law would not eliminate the family pet outright, the American reporter anticipated a bleak outlook for these animals. Due to a literal shortage in dog biscuits, he predicted that owners would soon have to find some other way to feed their animals, implying they would be sharing their own precious food with their pets.⁷⁴

Sharing rations with the family dog was hardly the most extreme measure faced by some during the war. Due to food shortages in Germany, Austria, Belgium, Serbia, Poland, Bulgaria, and France, household pets were essentially "doomed" there.⁷⁵ In certain war-ravaged towns, it became necessary to turn these pets into rations. In the middle of 1917, the German occupation

⁷³ "British Authorities Consider Killing of All Useless Animals," *The Evening News*, May 21, 1917.

⁷⁴ "Shortage in Dog Biscuits Raises Serious Problem," *The Duluth News Tribune*, May 27, 1918.

⁷⁵ "Making Dogs a Luxury," *The Idaho Daily Statesman*, January 27, 1917.

in Ghent, Belgium, began permitting the slaughter of dogs for food. The authorities allowed butchers to sell only two pounds of dog meat per family each week.⁷⁶ The “poorer classes” in Germany also had to source unconventional meats when they ran out of rations, eating camels from local menageries as well as dog and horsemeat. One article noted that butchers could sell dog meat for two marks, whereas horsemeat was worth only one mark. Was dog meat more expensive because it was in shorter supply? Did the starving citizens consider it more of a delicacy (or more taboo) than horsemeat?⁷⁷ Because American correspondents have provided this information regarding the activities of a combatant nation, the reality of these reports ought to be questioned; however, even if articles on the slaughter and consumption of household pets in Germany are mere propaganda, they indicate how abhorrent Americans considered this act. While dogs faced challenges to survival in the United States and England, residents of the war-torn European Continent could not afford sympathy for these animals.

English dog lovers tried to relieve some of the pressure on their pets by transforming them into useful animals. In 1918, the British Dogs’ Wool Association began promoting the quality of “wool” woven from the coats of long-haired dogs, a practice which reflected the “newest of war economies” by addressing the demand for woolen hospital garments and competing against the high price of sheep’s wool. In October 1918, the Royal Academy of Art in London hosted an exhibition of products crafted from dogs’ “wool.” One article, both playful and sincere, listed the items on display, including a “poodle cardigan,” a “toy spaniel muffler,” and “Samoyede hospital stockings.” Queen Alexandra, the dowager queen of England and mother of the reigning King George V, attended the exhibition and responded enthusiastically when the Red Cross workers presented her with a “chow cardigan.” The article instructed any

⁷⁶ “Dog Slaughter Houses Necessary in War Zone,” *The Wyoming Tribune*, June 11, 1917.

⁷⁷ “Camels, Dogs, and Horses On German Bill of Fare,” *The Wyoming Tribune*, May 21, 1918.

Americans wishing to contribute to “send their savings” not from their bank accounts as one might expect but “from the coats of their pets” to the Ladies’ Kennel Association Collecting Depot, where volunteers would card and spin the dog hair into woolen garments.⁷⁸ Due to English dog lovers’ ingenuity, remarked one reporter, people may consider the keeping of pets “as a patriotic duty instead of as a wasteful and demoralizing luxury.” Still, “short-haired dogs are discredited and in peril of destruction” warned the journalist, should dog lovers be unable to find some helpful purpose for these breeds also.⁷⁹

The months, and eventually years, of debate about the worth of dogs began to wear on the American people, evidenced by one article entitled “Again the Project of Ridding the Country of Dogs.” One frustrated reporter stated the obvious, that legislation had thus far been entirely unsuccessful. “As all methods heretofore employed to protect sheep from dogs have failed it is manifest that we shall have to employ some other method or suffer, perhaps very severely, for want of wool and meat.” He then ventured to make a drastic suggestion. “I think, as many others think, that the thing to do is to get rid of all dogs” qualifying the radical recommendation by stating “except possibly those, if any, that are of proved benefit to the general public.”⁸⁰ Despite the “many others” of a similar mind that he cited in the article, this man’s opinion is in the historical minority. As the following section will illustrate, the American people and even the politicians tasked with finding a solution to the dog pest problem never truly considered a general cull, perhaps because the war ended before these measures were necessary. The United States did not endure war shortages to the same extent as the other warring nations.

⁷⁸ “British Canine Pets Give Coats for the War,” *The Times-Picayune*, October 20, 1918.

⁷⁹ “England Urges Dogs Be Raised for Wool,” *The Grand Rapids Press*, April 12, 1918; In defense of shorter-haired dogs, another reporter claimed that even their wiry hair could serve a purpose as fill for pillows or mattresses, “British Canine Pets Give Coats for the War,” *The Times-Picayune*, October 20, 1918.

⁸⁰ “Woolless Civilians,” *The Sun*, June 1, 1918.

SECTION THREE: IN DEFENSE OF THE DOG

Despite measured arguments representing the dog as a nuisance to society during war, the public maintained a favorable opinion of the animals in general. Sheep farmers expressed frustration with this trend. One Oregonian farmer complained that because shepherds were in the minority compared to the number of Americans who owned dogs, they had a difficult time winning legislative support for their sheep. Furthermore, the growing urban areas in America worked against farmers' interests, since "city folks dismiss the issue quite generally as one which they do not fully understand." He concluded that "if it ever comes to pass that we are compelled to choose between mutton and sheep-killing dogs, there is no question that the dog will have to go. But it takes time to awaken public sentiment, and still more time to secure action by Legislatures."⁸¹ Farmers across the nation became aggravated at the lack of successful legal measures achieved against dogs. During the summer of 1917, *The Mississippi Press* issued an editorial, republished in New Orleans' *The Times-Picayune*, complaining that public affection for the dog stymied legislation that would benefit the nation. "Hundreds of politicians have gone down to defeat," claimed the author, explaining that they lost reelection campaigns because they had the "backbone" to propose measures that would "impose a tax on dogs or curtail their liberties." He demanded that the dog become useful or disappear. "Men are yielding up their money and their lives for the sake of their country," so "why should not the dog yield a revenue or forfeit his life?"⁸² The editors of *The American Sheep Breeder* agreed that politicians were too concerned with the public's love of dogs. They published a statement late in 1918 declaring, "We have done too much pettyfogging in this dog campaign. We have made it a township affair

⁸¹ "Sheep and Dogs," *Oregonian*, January 3, 1918.

⁸² "War and the Dog," *The Times-Picayune*, August 12, 1917.

instead of a great national matter. Here we are, straining every nerve to provide food for our army and navy... and at the same time we are feeding eight or nine million worthless dogs... It is a national folly and a positive crime.”⁸³ For these farmers it was clear that the sheep provided a greater service to the nation than the dog; however, convincing a majority of the American people of this proved an impossible task.

Evidence of the American public’s persistent affection for dogs appears even in the media condemnations and legislative measures against the animal. In many instances, even while disparaging dogs for the purpose of promoting sheep, journalists, farmers, and legislators countered their arguments with compliments toward the well-behaved, helpful dog. The 1915 *Farmers’ Bulletin* with the sinister title “The Sheep-Killing Dog” still conceded that “owing to his many acts of faithfulness and devotion, the dog rightfully holds a strong place in the minds and affections of men.”⁸⁴ Throughout the legislative debates, politicians pushing for regulation of dogs rarely degraded *all* dogs. Instead, they carefully qualified their remarks, speaking ill about only a segment of the dog population. Even J.A. Delfelder, the sheep farmer who in testimony before the Committee on Agriculture demanded to know “what a dog is really good for,” admitted that his home state of Wyoming charged no state tax on dogs because the animals were useful there, herding shepherd’s flocks and warding off predators. Delfelder asserted that if there were to be a tax, any Wyoming farmer would be glad to pay it for the service of the dogs, insisting, “We do not want you to make that tax so high as to drive the dogs out of existence. We want to eradicate these wild animals.”⁸⁵ Furthermore, politicians frequently reassured the dog-

⁸³ “‘Tell Truth About Dogs’ Says Sheep Publication,” *Wyoming State Tribune*, November 20, 1918. The publication ignores the fact that the war in Europe was officially over, continuing to use the wartime need for sheep products as a platform to argue in the farmers’ interests.

⁸⁴ United States Department of Agriculture, *Farmers’ Bulletins Nos. 651-675*, 7.

⁸⁵ United States, *Federal Dog Tax and Predatory Wild Animals*, 7, 9.

loving public that they were not targeting the family animal. It is inconsequential whether such statements reflect legislative reality or are part of a reelection bid. Rather, the significance rests in the fact that these messages appealed to the people. New York State Senator Charles Wicks, chairman of the committee that drafted “An Act to Promote the Sheep Industry,” responded to concerns that his legislation intended to exterminate dogs *en masse*, declaring “No good dog will suffer as a result...The well-bred dog stays at home...The mongrel roams the countryside slaughtering sheep,” though testimony from farmers proved the latter part of his statement false.⁸⁶ The more cynical of New York’s residents were not convinced, believing Senator Wicks was anti-dog or looking to make a profit off of grateful sheep farmers, as his committee, the Joint Legislative Committee for Dairy Products, Live Stock, and Poultry, was formed in the interests of the state’s agriculturalists. The statements made by politicians to the public and throughout the legislative processes do not acknowledge or demonstrate awareness of the evidence given by the former sheep farmer cited in “The Sheep Killing Dog,” who testified that he had witnessed attacks on sheep by canine “pairs composed of one mongrel and one pedigreed cur.”⁸⁷

Even when state legislatures did enact new measures against dogs, they were ineffective. One reporter lamented that “dog taxes do little to abate the dog nuisance,” even if properly enforced, he declared it unlikely that they could counter the damages made by dogs on flocks.⁸⁸ His estimation proved true. In the spring of 1919, the *Lake Placid News* published a report on the effectiveness of New York State’s 1917 dog law, “An Act to Promote the Sheep Industry.” The author explained that within eighteen months of the law’s enactment, New York State distributed

⁸⁶ “Dog Killing Bill Passes the Senate,” *The New York Times*, April 25, 1917.

⁸⁷ United States Department of Agriculture, *Farmers’ Bulletins Nos. 651-675*, 3-4.

⁸⁸ “Dogs or Sheep?” *The Sun*, November 8, 1918.

\$322,500 as remuneration to farmers whose livestock had been destroyed by ownerless dogs.⁸⁹

While the law indicated that the owners of property-killing animals would be charged for damages, often magistrates could not determine an owner, if one existed at all. Thus, the financial burden instead fell upon the state's coffers. By regulating only a portion of the dog population or softening legislation to appeal to dog lovers, politicians produced weak or more accurately *useless* laws. The failure to regulate sheep-killing dogs contrasts starkly with the success of New York City's anti-rabies legislation, which solved a public health crisis virtually upon enactment by regulating all rather than some of the city's dogs.

The public's insistence upon protecting dogs may have been in direct response, even if a subconscious one, to the war itself. Kathleen Kete, the scholar who defined pet keeping as "kindness toward only a few favored animals" has proposed that the humane treatment of pets is self-serving, a way to shield the mind from the brutality inherent in nature and exaggerated by modernization. She asks, "Is not pet keeping, then, another way to hide from ourselves the real violence between humans and animals beneath an image of sensibility, or even a means to deflect us from awareness of the violence between ourselves and others in an age of class conflict and global domination?"⁹⁰ Given that the ongoing international engagement assaulted the world's human population on an unprecedented scale, the American public's attempt to ensure the humane treatment of the nation's dogs could be seen, in part, as an effort to spare life during a time of rapid acclimation to the reality of global casualties. Those same newspapers that offered daily reports on the bloodshed occurring across the Atlantic also informed the public about the doings of dogs overseas and potential legislation to restrict these animals on the

⁸⁹ "The New York Dog Law," *Lake Placid News*, April 4, 1919.

⁹⁰ Kete, "Introduction: Animals and Human Empire," 15.

homefront. A concerned Georgia man wrote to the *Augusta Chronicle* regarding the treatment of loose dogs in his state, ultimately confirming Kete's hypothesis. He asked the paper's readers, "How can we stand still, keep quiet and see our faithful friends shot down at our very doors?" He continued, "Is there not enough slaughter going on in the world at present that our officials might satisfy their bloodthirsty nature if they would but think of these things?"⁹¹ This citizen's interest in protecting dogs, even those dogs that some Americans perceived to be acting subversively, demonstrates how valuable the general public considered the animal despite its proven nuisance and illuminates the complex and shifting relationship between humans and dogs.

Even certain sheep farmers, whose property and prospects would be protected by new, more severe dog regulations, protested these laws. Some had little care for the canines in question; instead, they had doubts that the sheep industry could truly impact the Allied war effort.⁹² Other sheep owners, however, did express concern for dogs. "As a farmer and a sheep raiser," began Stuyvesant Fish, New York resident and former president of the Illinois Central Railroad, "permit me to protest most earnestly against... 'An Act Encouraging the Sheep

⁹¹ "Letters from the People: In Handling Dogs Have We Returned to the Ways of the Dark Ages? *Augusta Chronicle*, January 22, 1917.

⁹² R. W. Eggleston, a man who condemned New York's new law for its leniency toward dogs declared that dog licensing legislation would have little impact on the war. "If there were any need of increased production of foodstuffs," in this case mutton and wool, "the government would not be so unwise as to take away the very means upon which such increased production" depends, suggesting that if the development of the sheep industry were integral to national security, as some proponents claimed, the United States government would have exempted sheep farmers from the draft. There is no evidence to suggest Eggleston's assessment existed among the wider public, however he has reached a logical conclusion. If sheep were essential to war work on the homefront, would not sheep farmers inhabit a similarly hallowed place in the country's mobilized mentality? If sheep deserve protection under the law from dogs, have not sheep farmers earned security from the draft? Some dog lovers agreed with Eggleston that the sheep-raising movement would little impact the United States' war prospects. William Stillman, President of the American Humane Association, responded to the notion that the regulation of dogs was a "war measure," explaining "it cannot take less than ten to twenty years to build up sheep raising in New York State, and by that time the war will have long since been ended." "Wicks Dog Bill Called a Humbug," *The New York Times*, June 3, 1917. William Stout, legal counsel to the Bide-a-Wee Home Association, a pet welfare organization in New York, made a similar point in stating that supporters of pro-sheep, anti-dog legislation were "masking" the reality that these laws would have little immediate impact by labeling them "patriotic war measure[s]" in order to achieve passage despite extreme unpopularity among the public. "Evils of the Dog Bill." *The New York Times*, June 10, 1917.

Industry.” Mr. Fish did not take issue with an increased tax on dogs. He admitted that his own dogs, which guarded his property and flocks, were well worth the expenditure. His complaint was against the initial draft of New York’s pro-sheep, anti-dog law that included a proviso to reward any private citizen who killed a dog running at large, a proposal he judged as a “piece of brutality.”⁹³ While Mr. Fish was a sheep owner, he was by no means a sheep farmer. Because his fortune lay elsewhere, Fish had no reason to express contempt for or demand regulation of dogs. Like the Dowager Queen Alexandra, who expressed enthusiasm for products crafted from dog’s wool, the publicly expressed desire of a prominent industrialist such as Fish to protect dogs from harsh wartime legislation may have influenced the opinions of other less affluent Americans. English royalty and American aristocrats had the means to care for useless animals even during wartime. Their expressed love for these creatures may have engendered concern for pets even among those who could not afford their care.

Despite the pressures of the conflict, in the United States, compassion for animals seemed to increase during the war, and not just among the elite. In the summer of 1917, not long after the United States entered the war, the *Scarsdale Inquirer* reported on perceived changes in how New Yorkers related to their pets. The journalist explained that more pets had been buried at New York’s Hartsdale Pet Cemetery from 1914-1917 than during the previous eighteen years of the cemetery’s existence. The author mused, “What connection the war may have with this increase in demand for resting places for pet dogs and other animals is perhaps too subtle a thing to trace definitely, but may it not be that such stories as those of bravery displayed by French dogs in the trenches have aroused a deeper feeling among dog lovers everywhere?”⁹⁴ An article in the *Port*

⁹³ “The Dog In the Country.” *The New York Times*, March 20, 1917.

⁹⁴ “Where Dog Friends Rest Under Marble Stones,” *Scarsdale Inquirer*, August 22, 1917.

Jefferson Echo sponsored by the Humane Education Press Committee the following spring reveals that the humane association hoped the assumption made by the author of the previous article would prove true. After surveying the roles filled by dogs during the war, the animal advocate wrote, “Perhaps when the war is over and those who do not now appreciate the value of the dog have learned the part these faithful animals have played in serving the cause of humanity...there will be less demand on the part of these people for the extermination of the dog.”⁹⁵ Though the writer did not reference rabies hysteria or dog legislation, these volatile topics are certainly at work in the article.⁹⁶

While individual citizens might voluntarily sacrifice their dogs for the war effort, worsening conditions on the homefront could not cause the American public as a whole even to consider surrendering their affection for these animals, including the worthless ones. On the European continent, desperate nations could not afford to maintain pets and in some areas allegedly resorted to consuming them. In England, legislation briefly threatened to exterminate that nation’s dog population. In contrast, never did American legislators propose a national canine cull. During World War I, American admiration for the patriot, combined with affection for the pet, outweighed anxiety over the pest.

⁹⁵ “Dogs in the War,” *Port Jefferson Echo*, March 23, 1918.

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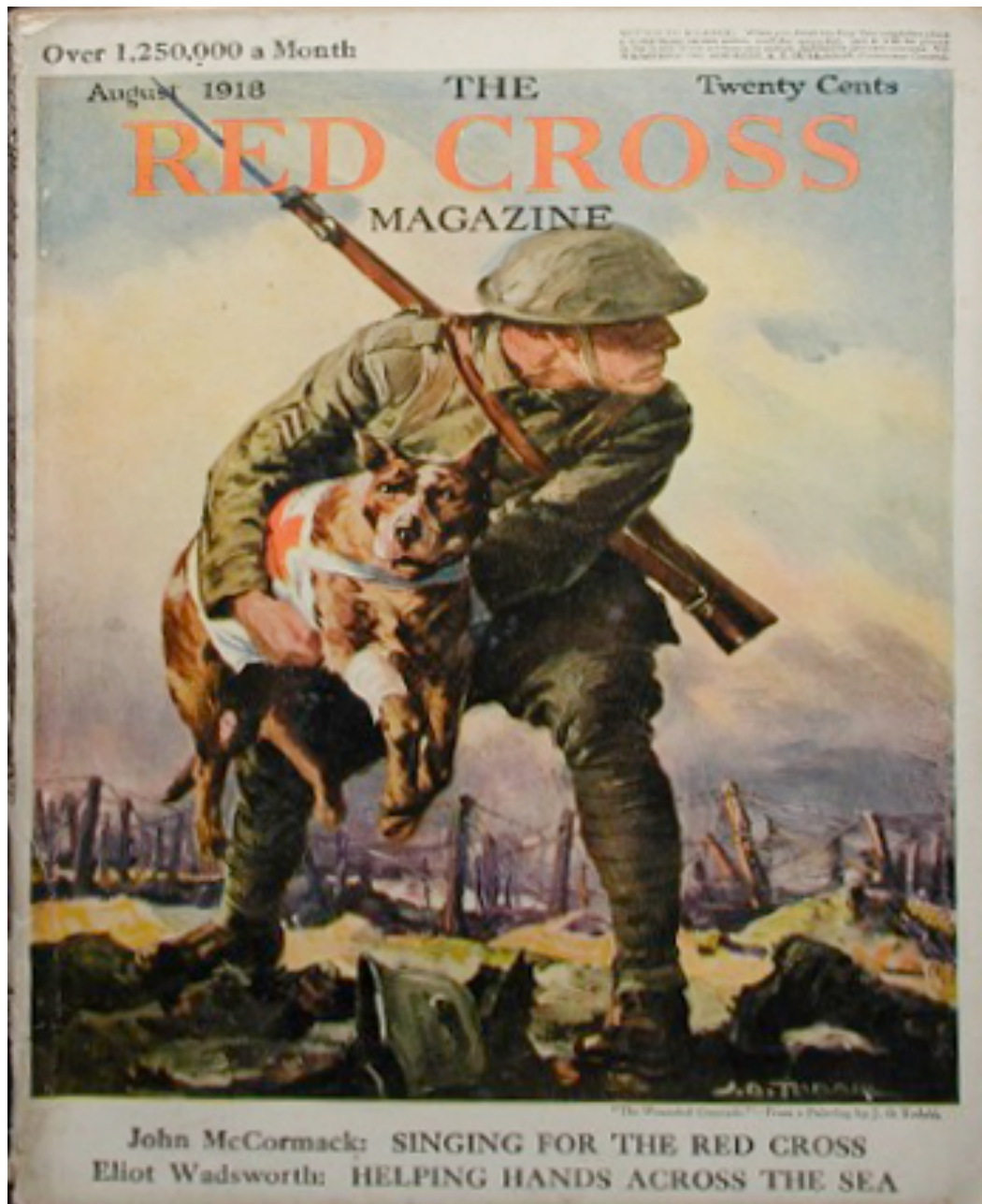
APPENDIX

Figure 1, “Come On--Join Now”⁹⁷



⁹⁷ R. Fayerweather Babcock, *Come on - Join now 15,000,000 members by Christmas*, 1917, lithograph print, 92 x 60 cm., Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA.

Figure 2, *The Wounded Comrade*⁹⁸



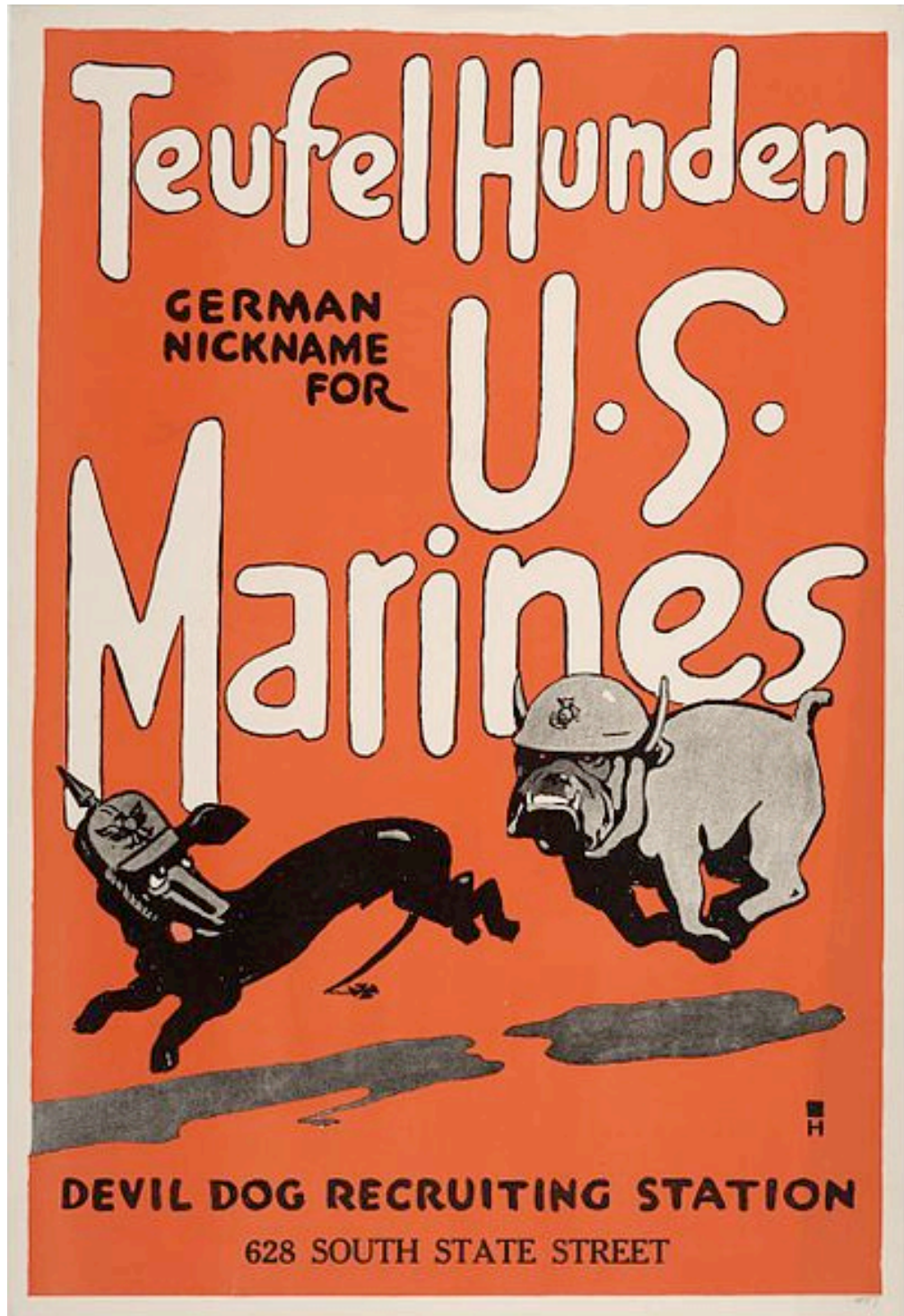
⁹⁸ John Olaf Todahl, *The Wounded Comrade*, 1918, print, originally published in *The Red Cross Magazine*, vol. 13, no.8 (August 1918), cover; open-source image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons candidate image, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Todahl_on_Red_Cross_Magazine_Aug_1918.png.

Figure 3, *A Red Cross Man in Training*⁹⁹



⁹⁹ Norman Rockwell, *A Red Cross Man in the Making*, 1918, print of a painting, 7.5 x 10.25 in., originally published in *The Red Cross Magazine*, vol. 13, no. 11 (November 1918): 35; open-source image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Norman_Rockwell_Red_Cross_Magazine_1918.jpg.

Figure 4, *Teufel Hunden*¹⁰⁰



¹⁰⁰ *Teufel hunden*, German nickname for U.S. Marines Devil dog recruiting station, 506 Fifth Street, 1917, lithograph print, 71 x 48 cm., Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA.

VITA

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