

Name: _____

Tales of Faithful Service

By Lisa Hart

Millions of animals played a role in the First World War. They gave soldiers comfort, lifted morale, and much more. They faced much of the same terror as the troops, but we often forget their faithful service.

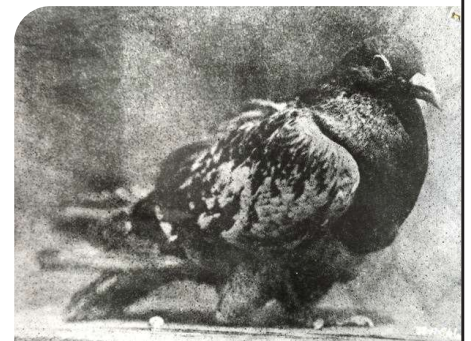
When rough ground and mud stopped trucks, mules and horses took over. They carried soldiers, doctors, and messengers. They pulled wagons, weapons, and ambulances. Sadly, many never returned. Along with deadly wounds and poison gas, they died from illness, hunger, or lack of rest and shelter.



Even before the war, pigeons were known to be good messengers. They were often used for their speed and sense of direction.

Homing pigeons are known for being able to find their way home from far away. In the war, they flew between command centers and the soldiers at the front, often through gunfire.

Dogs also filled many roles in wartime. Some carried messages through the trenches and fields. Breeds with a strong sense of smell or hearing made ideal guards and scouts. Mercy dogs brought medical supplies to the wounded, and stayed until help arrived or the soldier died. Much like the cats on board ships, terriers in the trenches worked to keep rats from stealing food.



Battlefield pigeon hero Cher Ami carried messages to and from the trenches.



Rags the Dog - WWI hero who delivered messages, alerted troops of dangers, and kept the soldiers company.

Glowworms were gathered in jars by the thousands to use in place of candles. Their bluish-green glow gave enough soft light to read maps, messages, and letters from home. Unlike candles, their glow did not bring the risk of alerting the enemy.

Even slugs formed their own brigade. Able to detect the very first trace of mustard gas long before the soldiers, the slugs squeezed their bodies and held their breath. The early warnings told troops to put on their gas masks in time to save thousands of lives.

Service took many forms for animals in World War I. Some soldiers adopted good luck charms such as raccoons and foxes. Some units had mascots such as monkeys, bears, or lion cubs. No matter what role they served, the animals that served in the war all made a difference.



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1. Why were mules and horses needed to carry people and pull wagons?

2. What skill or skills mentioned in the article helped make pigeons good messengers?
- a. their ability to repeat words after people
 - b. their speed and sense of direction
 - c. their strong beaks that could hold on to letters
 - d. their strong senses of smell and hearing

3. What does the author say both dogs and cats did in the war?

4. Other than alerting the enemy, what is one risk candles could have caused that glowworms likely did not cause?

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. _____ morale | a. vehicles used to carry sick or hurt people |
| 2. _____ role | b. insects that give off light |
| 3. _____ ambulances | c. animals that are the offspring of a donkey and a horse |
| 4. _____ glowworms | d. someone's part in something |
| 5. _____ brigade | e. long narrow ditches often used to protect soldiers |
| 6. _____ detect | f. a poison gas used in war |
| 7. _____ mules | g. animals or objects used to represent a group |
| 8. _____ trenches | h. to discover or notice something |
| 9. _____ mascots | i. feelings of loyalty or excitement about a job |
| 10. _____ mustard gas | j. a group of soldiers |