

Rags: Hero Dog of WWI

A RIF GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

Themes: Bravery, Friendship, World War I

Book Brief: Rags was just a stray mutt—until the day he met Private James Donovan and found not only a home, but a friend. This book tells the incredible true story of their friendship and of their adventures together in the First World War.

Author:

Margot Theis Raven

Illustrator:

Petra Brown

Content

Connections:

Social Studies



TIME TO READ!



BEFORE WE READ, LET'S LOOK AT...

The Cover: Have students guess what the book will be about based on the title and cover illustration.

What does the abbreviation

WWI stand for? Why might the dog's face and leg be bandaged? What does the picture suggest about the setting of the story?

The Pictures: Flip through the pictures. What do students notice about the military uniforms and equipment? Do soldiers still look like this today? When do you think this story is set? Why?

Prior Knowledge: Ask the class what they know about WWI. Briefly explain the history of WWI. Locate the major powers involved on a map or globe. Then, explain that, unlike modern warfare, much of the fighting in WWI was *trench warfare* because of the technology of the time. What do students think life was like living in the trenches? How else was technology more limited in the 1910s? Why would a dog have been useful for soldiers in the trenches?

Vocabulary: sirens, battalion, mascot, infantry, rations, trenches, shells, epilogue

Purpose for Reading: As we read, pay attention to all the different ways Rags helps Donovan and the other soldiers. Think about what makes Rags a hero.

WHILE WE READ

MONITORING COMPREHENSION

- ◆ Why does Donovan lie about Rags being his division's mascot?
- ◆ How does Rags help out in the trenches?
- ◆ What does Donovan do as a signalman? Why does he need to lay down telephone wires?

- ◆ How does Rags become a legend?
- ◆ What important message does Rags need to carry in the Argonne Forest?
- ◆ Why do Rags and Donovan return to America?
- ◆ What happens to Rags after the war? (Don't forget to read the epilogue!)

LET'S THINK ABOUT

Our Purpose: Why is Rags a hero? Because he carries messages and bites enemies? How else does Rags help the soldiers? Is Rags a hero in the hospital? Explain. Is there more than one way to be a hero?

Extending Our Thinking: Think about the last line in the book: "His best friend now lived in his heart." What does this mean? Why do you think the final page of the story is a picture of photographs of Rags and Donovan together? What are the author and illustrator trying to say?

NOTE TO EDUCATORS

- ◆ Extension Activities for Educators also available.
- ◆ Vocabulary Scaffolding Sheet also available.



Reading Is
Fundamental