MAN'S BEST FRIEND: BRITAIN, THE GREAT WAR, AND THE MAKING OF THE MODERN DOG

by

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ABSTRACT

BLAKE BROTZE. Man's Best Friend: Britain, the Great War, and the Making of the Modern Dog. (Under the direction of DR. DAVID JOHNSON)

The long nineteenth century and World War I greatly changed people's lives across Europe. The birth and subsequent rise of the middle class in industrialized nations significantly altered societies and cultures. In countries such as the British Empire, this new middle class challenged long-standing notions about things such as empire, human rights, and, most importantly, animal rights. The push for animal rights in Britain largely came from those in the middle class. In the second half of the nineteenth century, it represented the start of people throughout the country changing how they perceived their relationships with dogs. While the ability to own a dog as a pet was reserved for the few with the financial ability to afford to do so, the rise of the middle class in Britain introduced a whole new group of people interested in developing new relationships with dogs.

However, while the middle class in Britain changed how they understood their relationship with dogs, the vast majority of the country did not. A combination of fear- primarily due to stray dogs carrying diseases like rabies- and prevailing understandings of their relationship with dogs as tools prevented many working-class individuals from following the developments made within the middle class. The outbreak of World War I in 1914 presented those within the working class a new opportunity to interact with dogs. During the tumultuous years of the war, countless British soldiers sought the comfort of companionship a dog offers, challenging their previously held notions of the animal. This thesis is as much about the people whose interactions with dogs changed their perceptions as it is about the dogs who forged those relationships. For the middle class, who had the financial means to own a dog as a pet, or for the working class, who gained that opportunity through the war, the large reason behind the

changing perceptions of dogs in Britain was not other humans advocating for their better treatment; it was dogs who forged close bonds with humans.

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INTRODUCTION

A recently published selection in the British newspaper *The Times* highlighted the heroic actions of a decorated World War I Sergeant. Some of his brave actions in helping the war effort included saving his fellow soldiers from a gas attack and catching an infiltrating German spy. He was known colloquially to the soldiers in his infantry division as Sergeant "Stubby" and was one of the millions of animals who served in armies throughout World War I.[1] As a dog, he was both a mascot for soldiers in his division and served a vital role in helping to detect attacks. Sergeant Stubby was part of a broader conflict in a world war that saw massive devastation and death throughout Europe. Over 8 million soldiers died in the war due to wounds or diseases. Though animals were likewise affected by the conflict, historians understand little about how the war impacted animals, how people interacted with animals actively involved in the war, and how the war changed animal-human relations.

While the mechanization of warfare was in its early stages in World War I, the armies of various European nations utilized animals in multiple combat and auxiliary roles. These animals became vital to the success of campaigns throughout the war. Horses, for example, often acted both as the motor for wartime logistics and acted as vehicles under cavalry regiments. Like their human counterparts, animals also suffered greatly due to the war. Hundreds of thousands of horses, mules, and other animals of labor died due to exhaustion from overwork. In active combat, horse populations saw death in the millions. However, horses use in the war seemingly dissipated as technology improved, and armies began replacing cavalry regiments with more efficient tank brigades. Of course, horses were still used as transport tools, filling in for vehicles on terrains that they could not yet reach.

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[1] "Canines in Conflicts," *The Times*, June 21, 2011.

Historians like Stephen Badsey, Jean Bou, and Jane Flynn have already extensively studied the history of the horse in World War I. Less understood by historians is the impact of the War on canines, man's supposed "best friend." Like horses, they had their own important roles in all nation's armies during the War. Dogs like Sergeant Stubby served as important mascots for army divisions, increasing morale with their presence. Armies enlisted others in unique roles as messengers, bomb sniffers, guard dogs, and finding bomb victims. Nevertheless, despite these differences, one key characteristic that dogs shared with other animals that served in World War I is immortalized in words by the Animals in War Memorial in London: "They had no choice."

Outside of the more exclusive roles they served in World War I, dogs as domesticated animals are special. The very first species of animal that humans domesticated were dogs more than thirty thousand years ago. The transformation from the fierce wolf to the many breeds of dogs we have and trust today is one of the most remarkable feats of early humankind. Early humans quickly realized the potential benefits of managing to tame wolves, understanding the value they bring through hunting and other tasks they can learn. During their domestication, dogs developed the unique capacity to both understand and respond to human behaviors and emotions and display their own emotions in a way people can understand. In certain circles, these skills allowed dogs to occupy a status in societies above that of other domesticated animals like cattle or horses. Their ability to understand human social cues encouraged the development of stronger bonds between humans and canines.

The capability of dogs to read and understand people’s emotions is one of the most prominent reasons why, out of all domesticated animals, dogs were able to become pets to

people and be "man's best friend."[2] Unlike other domesticated animals bred into humankind's pets, like cats, dogs still had use as animals of labor. They occupied a rather exclusive category as both widely adopted pets and animals of labor. People's perception of dogs as a tool or a pet depended on their class. People in the working class typically viewed dogs in the same category as other animals. Meanwhile, a growing British middle class formed perceptions of dogs as companions and, in many cases, became politically active in fighting for their better treatment. This special category that dogs occupy offers a different glimpse into the effect of the war on human-animal relations. It is possible to see how people change how they interact with and treat an animal, viewed mainly as a resource and means of labor, versus a pet or symbolic figurehead like in the case of Sergeant Stubby.

Of all European nations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Britain's treatment of animals and dogs is exceptional. Historians like Deborah Denenholz Morse and Martin Danahay have noted the Victorian obsession with animals, ranging from the depiction of animal figures in nineteenth-century British literature to extensive elegies for recently departed pets.[3] Furthermore, the British Empire led the world in its legislation regarding the treatment of animals. British wealthy classes and the British parliament spearheaded serious efforts to improve the treatment of animals.[4] One example is the attempts to restrict the hunting of important native species in the empire, which helped these species regain their population after overhunting. While these efforts did help exotic species populations prone to overhunting, like the tiger, their motives were not entirely altruistic. As Harriet Ritvo long ago argued in *The*

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[2] Edmund Russell, *Evolutionary History: Uniting History and Biology to Understand Life on Earth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 54-65.
[3] Deborah Denenholz Morse and Martin A. Danahay, ed., *Victorian Animal Dreams: Representations of Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture* (New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 6,7.
[4] Richard Ryder, *Animal Revolution: Changing Attitudes towards Speciesism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989), 147.

Animal Estate, landowners and nobles believed that the extinction of such ferocious beasts would rob them of their pastime sport. Furthermore, organizations like the Kennel Club were designed to show their prized dog breeds in a display of high-class opulence.[5]

These efforts to improve animal treatment during the nineteenth century were in part a result of the influence of Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution in his 1859 publication *On the Origin of Species*. As Morse and Danahay state, "The effect of Darwin's ideas was both to make the human more animal and the animal more human, destabilizing boundaries in both directions."[6] In the early nineteenth century, the landed elite were the first people within Britain to support the development of animal rights. Few others could afford the costs associated with having an animal as a pet. Furthermore, the wealthy in Britain developed a unique perception in relation to animals, focused primarily on hunting and conservation of exotic animals. Coupled with the increasing environmental concerns around the British Empire during the nineteenth century resulted in Britain's position in defending and preventing the exploitation of animals across the globe.[7] Like Morse and Danahay suggested, for these wealthy elites, these laws came out of a desire to protect prey for their prestigious hunts rather than the animals' well-being. Conversely, middle-class communities treated animals with some of the harshest cruelties in Victorian Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century. Britain's early movements to prevent non-human exploitation and its fascination with animals create a unique setting to study the impact of a transformative war like World War I on human-animal relations.

Dogs occupied various roles throughout the war, as armies across Europe found them useful replacements for human lives during their war of attrition. Armies used them more

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[5] Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 99.
[6] Morse and Danahay, *Victorian Animal Dreams*, 2.
[7] Ryder, *Animal Revolution*, 147.

actively in battle during World War II. Even today, dogs play an essential role in militaries across the globe as frontline combatants. Did the experiences of the Great War contribute to the later role of dogs on the frontline? This thesis seeks to understand and answer these questions by analyzing the role dogs played in the military and the bonds created between man and animal in the crucible of war. Furthermore, this thesis seeks to understand dogs' roles in the military and the effect the bonds created through war had on people's perceptions of canines. Bonds forged between man and animal did not disappear once the war ended. By analyzing how dogs were handled and treated in the British army before, during, and after the war, this thesis will attempt to show how the Great War drastically altered human-canine and human-animal relations.

Historiography

Understanding the impact of the war on canines offers a new approach to the myriad changes that historians have studied that resulted from World War I. Some historians have studied how the war has shaped society throughout Europe. George Mosse, for example, wrote about the importance of the war on memory and how nations in the early twentieth century motivated soldiers to fight in these gruesome wars in a book he first published in 1990. Like Mosse, Jay Winters also studied how the war impacted European concepts of memory. His work resulted from the lack of studies on how Europeans remembered the war through what he defines as "sites of mourning." Areas like statues commemorating unknown soldiers or mass graveyards are the key study of his work.[8] Outside of an analysis of society and memory, historians have also studied the war's impact on gender identity and roles. An excellent historian on World War I and gender, Mary Louise Roberts studied how the war impacted and blurred the understandings and boundaries between males and females. These works were part of a broader trend in the

[8] Jay Winters, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 2.

1990s by historians to understand how World War I drastically altered European ways of life.[9] Notably missing from these Great War studies are the histories of how the war impacted animals. Animals, like their human counterparts, were also enshrined in their own sites of mourning, worthy enough of an independent study. For example, in Hyde Park, London, stands a memorial to commemorate every animal that died due to Britain's wars. Yet, despite the potential nuanced capability of an animal history study of the First World War, none have been written, leaving room for new interpretations of the conflict.

The historiography of animal history itself has seen its own great deal of changes. Scholars approach animal histories from various perspectives, fields, and disciplines, but primarily, environmental, military, and societal histories tend to dominate the subject. However, animal history itself has minimal development of its own methodologies and theories. As a result, many animal historians have utilized the approaches created by Michel Foucault and his work in his book, *An Order of Things,* published in 1970. Foucault himself mentions animals very little in his works, and when he did so, he used them only as a contrast to his more human-centered theorizations. Despite this, his overall concepts proved useful in helping the field of animal history develop a more concrete methodology. Matthew Chrulew and Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel sum up the importance of Foucault in their analysis of him and his importance to animal history: "Yet, clearly, the seminal thought of Foucault is providing a theoretical frame for the examination of issues in the field such as agency, inter-sectionality, language, and bio-power."[10]

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[9] For more on early WWI studies on culture, society, and gender see: Mary Roberts, *Civilization without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in postwar France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[10] Matthew Chrulew and Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel, ed., *Foucault and Animals* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), vii. For more on Foucault, see Michel Foucault, *An Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970).

Outside of Foucault, one of the most important early scholars in the field of animal history is Harriet Ritvo. Her work, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age,* joins other notable historians, like John MacKenzie and Richard Ryder who have written histories of animals at their center. Through her studies on animal-human relationships in Victorian-era Britain, Ritvo introduced the importance of the study of animals as a whole to the field of history. Her work became the benchmark for all future British animal historians studying the Empire and animals. Interestingly, she denies Darwin's impact on early human-animal relations, stating, "Darwin may have transformed the relation between human beings and other animals in principle, but the egalitarianism he had suggested by including human-kind among the beasts had little practical effect."[11] She examines the attitudes of people who had their own animals, farmers, pet owners, zoologists, and the like to argue that animals were, in many cases, stand-ins for people's aspirations and illuminates the various power structures within British society. Animals were symbolic as important symbols for class and social structures within Britain.[12] The British Kennel Club, for example, demonstrated how people understood their class through the selection of dog breeds.[13] Hunting, pet shows, cattle breeding, and scientific studies on rabies all show how the domination and exploitation of animals characterized the human-animal relationship of the nineteenth century in Britain.[14] Ritvo's work has had some detractors, like in the case of Steve Baker's 1993 work *Picturing the Beast,* which attempts to understand why human societies often utilize animals and their symbolism in constructing their own identities. Baker believes that Ritvo's depiction of the animal does not fully show how much

[11] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 41.
[12] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 41.
[13] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 100.
[14] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 4, 6.

power animals truly had in human society.[15] Despite the potential controversies Ritvo's work may face, it has become a necessary benchmark work in the field of animal history.

John MacKenzie and Richard Ryder helped to intertwine environmental histories with animal histories, both publishing their works a year after Ritvo published *The Animal Estate*. John MacKenzie analyzes the hunting culture in the British Empire during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. MacKenzie notably builds off previous historians who have studied the products of animals in international trade by focusing on the animals themselves in his book *The Empire of Nature*. He shows how hunting, once a tool used by hunter-gatherer societies to obtain food or as a means of a ritual, changed at the hands of the British throughout the world, turning it more into a sport and a symbolic activity.[16] Like Ritvo, he also remarks how animals under the British empire were exploited, in this case, primarily to gain exotic materials and prestige from hunting dangerous beasts. Conservation efforts began when low populations of exotic animals threatened to end the British hunting sport. These efforts to preserve indigenous animal populations throughout the Empire often came at the expense of locals who lived nearby.[17] Similarly, Richard Ryder also shows the connection between environmental and animal histories. However, Ryder differs greatly from MacKenzie by analyzing the field in a more theoretical sense and raises the question of power when historians write about animals in history. Since almost the early modern period, humans have had total power over animals yet often portray them as equals in a fight. Animals have human feelings and emotional qualities placed onto them without the ability to express their true feelings fully. Furthermore, Ryder takes issue with some

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[15] Steve Baker, *Picturing the Beast: Animals, Identity and Representation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 11.
[16] John MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 7.
[17] MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, 297.

of the terms used in animal history, such as non-human, which inherently implies subordination.[18] As a result, any written animal history is inherently speciesist. Historians must try to grapple with that fact, with a potential exception to images and photography, which remove most human interpretations. What is important from both of these authors is how they developed the early historiography for environmental studies on animal history. Moreover, all three early authors helped to redefine and develop the field of animal history.

The next major shift in the historiography of animal studies occurs in the early 2000s due to the posthumanist movements developed in part by Michel Foucault, Donna Haraway, and Jacques Derrida. Authors have tried to remove the distinction between humans and animals through such a perspective. Derrida, for example, takes the radical approach in attempting to "speak for" animals. In some ways, Derrida's views here might seem to go against Richard Ryder's concepts and help develop speciesism within academia. However, he also attempts to fight against speciesism through the overgeneralized use of the word "animal" when discussing a wide range of life forms. Derrida also reinforces Ritvo's concept that the boundaries drawn between animals and humans are representative are expressions of political dominance over animals themselves. Moreover, the lens of the animal is still useful as a methodological tool to understand Victorian-era society.[19]

Another aspect of the early 2000s works can be found through the greater scrutiny they place on language and terminology. Scholars like Harriet Ritvo, Erica Fudge, and Cary Wolfe all

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[18] Ryder, *Animal Revolution*, 2-6.

[19] Jacques Derrida, "And Say the Animal Responded?," in *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*, ed. Cary Wolfe (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 121-46. See also Harold Guither, *Animal Rights: History and a Scope of a Radical Social Movement* (Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998); Greg Goodale and Jason Edward Black ed., *Arguments about Animal Ethics* (New York: Lexington Books, 2010); Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003); Peter Steeves and Tom Regan ed., *Animal Others: On Ethics, Ontology, and Animal Life* (Albany: Sunny Press, 1999).

contest the current terminology and perceptions people have of animals. Ritvo notes that scholars will always be influenced by the terms that they use in their writing, terms which often help reinforce the animal-human boundary and, as Ryder showed several decades ago, are inherently speciesist.[20] Erica Fudge, in her 2000 work, *Perceiving Animals,* also believes that humans create imaginary boundaries between themselves and animals to define their human-ness. Moreover, she reinforces previous concepts created by Ritvo in *The Animal Estate* and notes that "Animals represent human power: their self-sacrifice is an image of man's control."[21] Wolfe, who studies the origins of animal rights, helps show the degree language and terminology play in altering our understanding of animals. He states that the "very notion of 'animal rights,' to begin with, seems impossible insofar as it is modeled on human rights, because the very idea of human rights is predicated on the difference between humans and animals."[22] These boundaries described by Ritvo, Fudge, and Wolfe, that we create through language, terminology, and perceived differences are the same boundaries that we define ourselves against animals today, which in turn impacts our perceptions of animals when writing histories about them.

More recently, Harriet Ritvo comments on the growing importance of environmental histories in her 2004 article, "Animal Planet." She believes that it is vital for environmental historians to utilize animal history in their own work. Ritvo notes, "It is hard to count the ways in which other animals figure in the stories that environmental historians tell." Animals are part of a larger narrative surrounding domestication, the transformation of nature resulting from agriculture, and other large-scale events environmental historians often study. Their presence in

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[20] Harriet Ritvo, "On the Animal Turn," *American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 136, no. 4 (2007).
[21] Erica Fudge, *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 2000), 4.
[22] Carey Wolfe, *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), ix.

urban areas has helped establish the city as a worthy setting for environmental studies.[23] Much as in the case of her social analysis of animals in her book *The Animal Estate*, which was published over two decades ago, an environmental study of animals is no less bleak. Ritvo's depiction of animals again shows them at the mercy of human power; something man saw in tandem with nature as needed to be conquered. Through connecting urban areas to environmental studies, Ritvo opened the way for environmental-animal historians like Frederick Brown and his 2016 book *The City is More Than Human*. Brown shows one way in which animals influence and affect human development and landscapes, a reverse of the popular conception that humans shaped animal landscapes.[24]

Other environmental historians, like Edmund Russell and Richard Tucker, highlight the exploitative nature of people and countries when it comes to animals in warfare. In his 2001 book, *War and Nature*, Edmund Russell explores how total war was fully realized through the control and conquest of nature. He argues that war and nature coevolved and affected each other. Control over nature helped to expand the overall scale of war while simultaneously expanding the degree to which people controlled nature.[25] Interestingly, he notes that military historians have recently begun to connect war to its impacts on civilian society, but not through its impact on nature. Here Russell joins Richard Tucker in trying to highlight war's consequences on the environment. In a book Russell and Tucker co-edited together in 2004, they argue for the "study of nature as a soldier."[26] Until this point, scholars tended to write environmental histories from

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[23] Harriet Ritvo, "Animal Planet," *Environmental History* 9, no. 2 (2004): 204.
[24] Frederick Brown, *The City is More Than Human: An Animal History of Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), 2.
[25] Edmund Russell, *War and Nature: Fighting Humans and Insects with Chemicals from World War I to Silent Spring* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1-9.
[26] Richard Tucker and Edmund Russell ed., *Natural Enemy, Natural Ally: Towards an Environmental History of War* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2004), 1.

the civilian perspective. Yet to fully understand either military and environmental histories, both fields must merge. For environmental historians, this means realizing war is an important force in large-scale changes in nature. For military historians, this means including the environment as one of the consequences and casualties of warfare.[27] As the fields of animal history and environmental history are also intertwined, understanding how scholars like Russell and Tucker weaved nature into the story of warfare provides one method to do the same with warfare and animal history.

The most recent shift in animal history occurred due to a scientific study on animal consciousness. The 2012 Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness was a consensus by scientists that most animals have consciousness, and therefore sentience, just like humans. While historians had written and expertly shown the importance of animals in history before 2012, the Declaration helped to reinvigorate and reshape the field of animal history. Previous attempts to establish the importance of animal agency in history were only done by scholars influenced by the ideas of Michel Foucault but were still centered around human history. Newer animal histories prioritize animal agency, crafting works about animals in human society, not human society, using animals as a lens as previous scholars like Ritvo, MacKenzie, and Harraway tended to write. There are still significant issues that remain within the field. While there have been efforts to tell the histories from the perspective of animals, assigning them complete agency is impossible. As Richard Ryder described several decades ago, any attempt to write a history about animals will be inherently speciesist. After all, aside from humans, there are no creatures capable of accurately recording their own stories, and people have written every source depicting animals throughout history. These newer histories focus more on approaching human-animal

[27] Ibid, 2.

relationships through visual tools, something different than the explicitly historical discussions on animals that mostly lacked images. More modern historians now grapple with separating human culture and history from the natural world, something challenging, as all archival sources themselves are inherently anthropocentric.

Rebecca Woods' 2017 work *The Herds Shot Round the World: Native Breeds and the British Empire, 1800-1900,* is one of the more recent books analyzing how animals were impacted by human society. She examines how farm animals were grown and the importance and role of meat in British society during the nineteenth century. As the British population swelled and urbanized during the nineteenth century, supplies of meat were drastically reduced. This shortage forced Britain to import different cattle breeds to supplement their meat supply. As Woods argues, this created a stigma of foreign cattle breeds, which coincided and resulted in a greater understanding of the breeding process throughout Britain.[28] Also important is the development of breed preference within Britain, as British people tended to prefer British cattle breeds. This is part of a broader trend in nineteenth-century Britain, affecting how Victorian-era Britons chose their dog breed.

Aaron Herald Skabelund dives deeper into a study of dog breed preference and nativism in his 2011 book *Empire of Dogs: Canines, Japan, and the Making of the Modern Imperial World*. Like Ritvo, he utilizes dogs to understand the past by tracing the role that dogs played culturally in Japan, investigating how the interactions between Japan and the west changed the animal-human relationship, and showing how canines were culturally represented. His work branches off and expands Ritvo's in that it looks at animal breeds and their significance when using animals to study cultures and societies in the past. By explaining the perception and

[28] Rebecca Woods, *The Herds Shot Round the World: Native Breeds and the British Empire, 1800-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 2.

treatment of Japanese native breeds in imperial Japan, Skabelund shows how breeding selection reveals how Europeans and the native Japanese people felt about Japan itself. Skabelund also introduces the concept that dogs occupy a unique position when considering animal-human relationships. They are both used by people as tools while also being their pets and companions. Skabelund adds to Ritvo's work by analyzing human-animal relationships as one between companions and shows how pet selection and choice can be tied closely to a nation's culture.

The last major sub-discipline not discussed yet is military history. For the most part, the historiography of military historians studying animal history ignores trends from the study of animals. One commonality through all types of animal-military histories is the themes that run throughout any study of animals and their exploitation. In the context of warfare, they were used as tools for humans and for human desires. Some traditional military historians like Jean Bou and Stephen Badsey simply analyze animals and their success and or failures on the battlefields of World War I. More recently, military historians are seemingly moving away from the traditional military histories, attempting to tear down the "species boundary," which helps to continue to enable speciesism throughout academia.[29] An example of this can be found in Jane Flynn and her study on the soldier-horse relationship in World War I. Military historians studying animals in the First World War are characterized by focusing on studying horses and their relationships with people or their efficiency in war as an important piece of the dying Great War cavalry regiments. Bou and Badsey both attempt to show how the cavalry regiment was still an essential part of World War I armies. What is less agreed upon is the degree to which armies saw them as vital. Jean Bou believes that the mechanization of warfare throughout World War I resulted in armies

[29] Anthony Nocella, Colin Salter, and Judy Bentley ed., *Animals and War: Confronting the Military-Animal Industrial Complex* (New York: Lexington Books, 2013), 22.

viewing cavalry regiments as obsolete. Additionally, many successful campaigns came early on in the war and in special circumstances.

Conversely, Stephen Badsey, in his book published in 2016, argues that cavalry forces, despite their increasing obsoleteness at the hands of increasing technological innovations, still had their uses in more remote theaters of the war, like the Palestinian desert. He believes that the attempts to replace cavalry during the Great War resulted from radicals and military men who styled themselves as reformers. Horse-centered tactics still enjoyed significant successes outside of the stale trench combat that characterized the Western front in World War I. He mentions that they had considerable success at the closing battles of the Great War in Amiens and Megiddo in 1918 and were key to these victories. While Badsey's ideas were contested and not well received by his contemporaries, believing his ideas about cavalry effectiveness to be outdated, he accurately shows how cavalry regiments can be effective in certain circumstances. This limited effectiveness was the cavalry's dying breath; however, following World War I, the use of horses in active combat roles dropped drastically, largely due to the advances made in transportation and machinery.

Jane Flynn and her 2020 book S*oldiers and Their Horses : Sense, Sentimentality and the Soldier-Horse Relationship in the Great War* examine the relationship between the soldier and the horse during World War I in the British Army. Flynn was one of the first historians to study the relationships between man and their horse companions in World War I. Flynn argues that the soldier-horse relationship grew out of a 'sympathetic consideration' that the soldier had for his animal that grew out of their training together and discipline.[30] The soldier and his respective horse often lived and worked together in the dangerous conditions surrounding World War I. The

[30] Jane Flynn, *Soldiers and their Horses: Sense, Sentimentality and the Soldier-Horse Relationship in the Great War* (Oxfordshire: Taylor and Francis, 2020), 7.

British government also helped create the bond between animals and humans as a closer relationship meant that they would be a more effective combat weapon in the war. This relationship is also indicative of the British army's attitude towards the welfare of its soldiers. Flynn importantly emphasizes that while horses had little to no agency during the war, their handlers considered them individuals, which shows up through their letters and diaries. Her work also represents a potential shift in academia by studying soldiers and their horses and better contextualizing the human-animal relationship in war. Most of these animal histories lack how our modern notions about animals developed, particularly concerning one of the greatest transformative events in European history, the Great War.

Methodology

In the decades leading up to the outbreak of the war, people throughout the rapidly growing British middle class fought for animal rights. The first chapter, "Dog Days: Animal Rights, the Vivisection Debate, and the Rise of Modern British Society," follows this rise of the British middle class and how they helped to pave the path for a different kind of animal protection legislation distinct from the landed elite. As more people entered the middle class within Britain, more engaged with animal rights discourse, eventually forcing the government to pass increasingly harsher legislation to protect the rights of animals. The prewar animal rights movement ended with the debate over experimentation, commonly called vivisection.

The growing political clout of these middle-class animal rights activists more broadly represents Britain's changing political, social, and economic landscape in the nineteenth century as the country shifts into the society we recognize today. Furthermore, many of the most influential middle-class animal rights advocates were women who saw the plight of animals

similar to their own. It is not a coincidence that the most famous activists were simultaneously suffragettes and often anti-imperialists.

The second chapter, “The Dogs of War: The British Army and Canine Interactions During the First World War,” follows the war. While the middle class played an important role in shifting the ways people understood their relationship with dogs, the transformative nature of World War I changed it for people in all classes. Working-class conscripted soldiers, who comprised the bulk of Britain’s frontline on the Western Front, interacted and formed a companionship-based relationship with dogs. Whereas previously, working class people's perception of dogs remained either as a tool to assist in work or as a disease-carrying nuisance. Additionally, people working paycheck to paycheck in Britain did not have the financial capability to afford to own a dog as a pet if they did not support their job. Among the few who did own a dog to help aid in their work, even fewer treated the animal with care or compassion.

Working-class people throughout the Western world that interacted with animals were far more likely to abuse them than to treat them humanely. Animals that labored alongside those in the working class, such as the mules and horses that still transported goods, often worked till injury or death. Despite the canine’s remarkable ability to detect, understand, and convey emotions, most people in the working class understood dogs as expendable resources. These perceptions amongst people in the working class extended past Britain as well. In one case in the United States, a farmer’s wife nursed an injured dog back to health. However, when she realized the dog could no longer work, she attempted to give it away. While people in the middle class have the luxury of having a relationship with dogs based purely on companionship, the few working-class individuals who had dogs in Britain require the labor that these beasts provide.[31]

[31] Earl J Hess, ed., *Animal Histories of the Civil War Era* (LSU Press, 2022), 170.

Most throughout Britain perceived the lives of dogs as beneath those of humans. During the war, the British military staff viewed them as a cheaper alternative for roles people often had to play. Through their introduction into the army, dogs saved countless human lives, which the upper echelon of the British military was then able to use elsewhere. Outside of combat, working-class individuals, more often than not, abused dogs that no longer served their purpose. The progressivists in the middle class promoted the better treatment of dogs throughout Britain. For example, one of the many middle-class organizations formed to help prevent animal cruelty in Britain sought to alter how the poor in Britain treated their animals by providing medical services and teachings to working-class people. The "Our Dumb Friends League" worked throughout London and attempted to educate children and adults in humanely treating animals and rewarded those that performed heroic deeds on behalf of animals. They also provided veterinary care to the animals in the care of disadvantaged people. The League fought to try and decrease the number of animals thrown away by working-class people once they no longer fulfilled their role.[32] However, for most within the working class, groups like the "Our Dumb Friends League" could not change the basic socio-economic status that did not allow them the financial ability to support a dog simply as a companion.

The development of the perception of dogs as companions closely follows class lines. It began with the middle class, who helped to popularize having dogs as pets amongst those who could support themselves. It ended with the working class, who fought together and interacted with dogs during the Great War. One major similarity between the middle and working classes is that their opinions concerning dogs largely changed due to their interactions. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, the financial ability of those within the middle class

[32] "Our Dumb Friends' League," *The Times*, September 3, 1909.

allowed them to own a dog as a pet rather than as a tool. Subsequently, many of these new pet owners supported animal rights due to the companionship and emotional bond they now shared with an animal. Similarly, people within the working class created that bond through their interactions in the War where they otherwise would not have been able to. Once the war ended and the soldiers returned to Britain with their experiences. While they fought in the war, soldiers saved up their earnings back home, giving them the finances to afford to own a dog as a pet. The end of the war and the return of soldiers to Britain also marks the end of a century of transformation in how people in Britain understood their relationship with dogs.

Abused throughout the nineteenth century, only to be the victims of experimentation and the unknowing combatants of the deadliest war to date at the turn of the century, the story of dogs in this period is one of history's more depressing tales. Like many other animals throughout history, they had little to no agency in the situations they found themselves in. Yet ironically, dogs were also responsible for part of the change. This thesis is as much about the people whose interactions with dogs changed their perceptions as it is about the dogs who forged those relationships. For the middle class, who had the financial means to own a dog as a pet, or for the working class, who gained that opportunity through the war, the large reason behind the changing perceptions of dogs in Britain was not other humans advocating for their better treatment; it was dogs who forged close bonds with humans.

CHAPTER ONE: DOG DAYs: ANIMAL RIGHTS, THE VIVISECTION DEBATE, AND THE RISE OF MODERN BRITISH SOCIETY

In an annual meeting of the Scottish Liberal Club in 1900, past Prime Minister Archibald Primrose discussed the scenes of animal cruelty he experienced outside of the British Isles. On his visit to Italy, Lord Rosebery remarked on one of the tests he witnessed.[33] "I have seen another little experiment at the Grotto del Cano, at Naples, where they put a dog into a cavern to test the murderous nature of the fumes, and the dog comes out expiring or dead. I am not at all sure that the people who cause these convulsions of nature are not more like the dog than the persons who put the dog in."[34] The distinctions that Rosebury drew were a pointed example of the belief in British exceptionalism so visible in the late nineteenth century—in this context, showing the different perceptions around animal rights in the Isles. However, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in Britain and the rest of the world, animals suffered at the hands of humans, who deployed them in experiments precisely like the one that Lord Rosebery witnessed. Most countries throughout the long nineteenth century had little in the form of legislation to protect animals, be these beasts of labor or pets. Britain was an exception. For example, in the early nineteenth century, the British Parliament passed some of the first animal rights legislation regulating animal use in sporting events featuring fighting. Of course, despite the early attempts to prevent the suffering of *some* animals, animal cruelty continued well into the twentieth century in Britain.

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[33] The Grotto del Cano at Naples was an early tourist attraction in Italy. Inside the cave, heavier Carbon Dioxide gas accumulated at the floor of the cave. Meaning that smaller creatures, typically dogs, will pass out, and in some cases die, as a result of carbon dioxide poisoning. To visitors, it would appear as if the dog passed out due to supernatural causes.

[34] "Lord Rosebery In Edinburgh," *The Times*, January 27, 1900.

The most visible form of animal cruelty in Britain during the nineteenth century was in sports. Public events often pitted dogs and other animals against each other in a scene reminiscent of gladiatorial matches of the ancient Roman empire. The frequency and visibility of these matches made them the focus of early nineteenth-century animal rights advocates. One of Britain's first attempts to protect animals occurred in 1800, in a bill attempting to prevent a growing sport referred to as bull baiting. Bull baiting, a sport in Britain that resulted in the creation of the aptly named bulldog, involved pitting dogs, often in a group, against a bull. The spectacle resulted in dogs getting gored and flung far into the air or the bloody takedown of the bull. However, even though disputes against the practice were rising among Britain's growing middle class and clergy, the House of Commons predominantly found the discussion comical, with few even showing up to discuss the bill. The small number who participated defended the practice, believing it improved men's courage and nobility. In their recounting of the session, *The Times* briefly remarked on the bill's failure, believing such a discussion to be a waste of the House's time. The bill only reached the ears of parliamentary members due to the outcries of a small but vocal group of British clergy and a growing middle class who advocated for animal rights.[35]

In the early twentieth century, the British aristocracy was the engine for animal rights legislation. British aristocrats encouraged legislation that focused more on their own interests than the animals' interests—instances such as preventing the hunting of exotic animals— like the Bengal tiger — to the point of extinction so nobles still could go on their prestigious hunts. Landowners and nobles believed that the extinction of such ferocious beasts would rob them of the prestige they gained hunting them. Under their influence, the British Parliament did pass

[35] "House of Commons," *The Times*, April 3, 1800.

legislation like the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1849, and although it only offered light punishment in the form of a small fine for those who abused animals, it was one of the first steps in protective legislation for animals. In general however, their self-centered behavior is partly why most animal rights bills in the early nineteenth century failed.

The growth of the middle class saw more progressive animal rights legislation passed. In fact, members of the British middle class, alongside religious institutions, often formed the backbone behind powerful animal rights movements in the later half of the nineteenth century. The British middle class took center stage. They worked to prevent animal cruelty, such as bull baiting, based on arguments of morality rather than the prestige and selfish interests of aristocrats.

However, bull baiting is not Britain's only instance of animal cruelty. In London, every week during the nineteenth century, hundreds of thousands of sheep, cattle, and other farm animals marched through the streets to eventually end up at the slaughterhouse.[36] The number of horses used in heavy labor *increased* as Britain industrialized. Three hundred thousand horses lived in London in the middle of the nineteenth century. By 1900, over a million lived and worked in the city.[37] Horses and other animals of labor had increased workloads during this time. They had to now move the heavy machinery thought to have replaced them. Nevertheless, despite these conditions, Britain's treatment of animals was ahead of its time.

Out of all European and western nations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Britain's treatment of animals and dogs is exceptional. The British during this time commonly thought of themselves as unique compared to their European contemporaries, and at least in the

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[36] Richard Perren, *The Meat Trade in Britain, 1840-1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 33.
[37] F.M.L. Thompson, ed., *Horses in European Economic History: A Preliminary Canter* (Reading: The British Agricultural History Society, 1983), 59, 102.

case of animal rights, it is true. Historians Deborah Denenholz Morse and Martin Danahay have noted the Victorian obsession with animals, ranging from depicting animal figures in nineteenth-century British literature to extensive elegies for recently departed pets.[38] Furthermore, the British Empire led the world in legislation regarding the treatment of animals. British wealthy classes and the British parliament spearheaded early efforts to help improve the treatment of animals.[39] One example is the attempts to restrict hunting of more exotic animals, like the tiger, which helped these species regain their population after overhunting. While these efforts did help exotic species populations prone to overhunting, their motives were more for selfish reasons. Landowners and nobles believed that the extinction of such ferocious beasts would rob them of the prestige they gained hunting them. Organizations like the Kennel Club summarized these aristocratic attitudes towards animals. British nobles created the Kennel Club to show their prized dog breeds in a display of high-class opulence, not as a club to share their affection for their pets.[40] They passed legislation like the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1849, and although it offered light punishment in the form of a small fine, it was one of the first steps in protective legislation for animals.

Early efforts in the nineteenth century to improve animal treatment were partly due to the influence of Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection in his 1859 publication *On the Origin of Species*. As Morse and Danahay state, "The effect of Darwin's ideas was both to make the human more animal and the animal more human, destabilizing boundaries in both directions."[41] British

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[38] Deborah Denenholz Morse and Martin A. Danahay, ed., *Victorian Animal Dreams: Representations of Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture* (New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 6,7.
[39] Richard Ryder, *Animal Revolution: Changing Attitudes towards Speciesism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989), 147.
[40] Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 99.
[41] Morse and Danahay, *Victorian Animal Dreams*, 2.

people, particularly wealthier individuals who could afford the luxuries of hunting and pets, were heavily influenced by Darwin's concepts. Many early nineteenth-century animal rights activists in Britain lived in the countryside as clergy members and landowners, differing from the American rights movement, where urban areas and populations spearheaded animal sympathy movements. Conversely, in British urban centers, many middle-class communities treated animals with some of the harshest cruelties in Victorian Britain. These attitudes towards animals in the middle class eventually changed towards the end of the nineteenth century. This change, fueled by the increased incomes, is a result of the new relationship between people in the middle class with dogs. They shifted from being a tool to a companion for those with enough money to afford them.[42]

Aside from passing some of the first animal protection laws, the British Isles also contained protective measures to ensure the safety of their dog population and people. The geographical nature of Britain, as an island nation, allowed them to closely regulate the movement of animals within their borders when few other nations could. One example of this is in the Importation of Dogs Order of 1901. One of several orders that limited and regulated the transportation of dogs into the British Isles, mainly over fears of carrying diseases. For most dog owners, the Importation of Dogs Order of 1901 meant that any dog brought from outside of the British Isles would have to stay in quarantine for over six months until British officials could confirm that the canine had no disease and was safe to transport to Britain. While the primary purpose behind this law was to protect people from potentially dangerous diseases like rabies, it also protected Britain's dog population.

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[42] Ryder, *Animal Revolution*, 147.

Of course, it was possible to bypass these restrictions in certain circumstances. For example, if dogs on ships that departed from Britain did not land in any other foreign port or come into contact with any other dog from abroad, they could land free from quarantine back in Britain. Naturally, the owners of these ships, which in many cases were yachts or other pleasure crafts, had to have a license to bypass the quarantine restrictions in the first place. The few to have such licenses were part of the British upper class, further highlighting the trend of the wealthy in Britain promoting legislation that only benefitted themselves. Outside of the wealthy, British naval officers could also bypass the restrictions if the dogs were on military ships. Those not fortunate to be British naval officers or wealthy enough to afford a private vessel, had to wait for the entire six months of quarantine for their dog to enter Britain. Of course, these people importing dogs from abroad were largely not a part of the British working class either. Factory workers, farmers, and other members of the working class could not afford the more expensive costs associated with foreign dog breeds and the transportation fees required to get the dogs to Britain. [43]

To study the treatment of animals and the advancement of animal rights in Britain, what class an individual belongs to is an important indicator of how they interacted with animal rights and animals. Borrowing from one of the most important scholars on class in Britain, E.P. Thompson, "classes are based on the differences in legitimate power associated with certain positions."[44] British landed elite constituted the upper class. Unskilled laborers, ranging from farmers to laborers, comprised the poor/working class. Lastly, skilled workers, like surgeons, academics, and the like, constituted the small but growing middle class in the nineteenth century. It is in the middle class where most of the debate about animal rights and protective legislation

[43] Importation of Dogs Order, 1919, MAF 35/371, The National Archives of the UK.
[44] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Vintage Books: New York, 1963), 11.

took place in the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is also in the middle class where a coherent class identity developed. The Great Reform Bill of 1832 not only gave men within the middle class the ability to vote but also further separated the middle class from the poor working-class laborers. As historian Anna Clark shows, the middle class defined themselves "as more virtuous than either the dissolute aristocracy or the rough plebeians."[45] While not all groups within the middle class always perfectly aligned themselves with these characteristics, many of the main representatives in the debate on animal rights in Britain did.

The middle class supported a wide variety of animal rights movements and legislation in Britain during the second half of the nineteenth century. Of course, the middle class was only sometimes the impetus behind the legislative change for animals. Nobility helped pass many animal rights acts in the early nineteenth century. As previously mentioned, these acts were not all that effective in actually protecting animals, however since they focused on the benefit it could provide the rich, rather than the actual protection of animals. As the middle class grew in conjunction with the industrial revolution, they created powerful movements in an attempt to protect animals from human cruelty. The result of these middle-class movements happens in three key events. One of these is the previously mentioned Cruelty to Animals Act of 1849. The act did very little to stop forms of animal cruelty in Britain. It also was not the first piece of legislation that attempted to limit animal abuse, as in 1835, parliament passed a similar act. What the 1849 act did do was that it symbolized the shift in sentiment from previous bills where the treatment of the animal and the prevention of cruelty was an afterthought. Furthermore, it highlighted the growing involvement of the middle class in discussions based on animal rights. It

[45] Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (University of California Press, 1997), 7.

signifies the start of a change from the land-owning elite as the engine for animal rights legislation to the middle class.

This is most clearly seen in the case of John Smith, a mid-nineteenth-century animal rights activist, who formed a committee around issues of cruelty against animals in a London cattle market. The debate about a cattle market in London highlights the changing perceptions around animals. One of the key points of contention is the actual treatment of the animals. On the conditions of the market, *The Times* newspaper notes that "The suffering inflicted on the animals, the deterioration and consequent unwholesomeness of the meat, would be ample reason for suppressing the market, were there no other; but another yet remains behind. We speak of the imminent danger to life and limb run by passengers along the streets."[46] While the conditions the animals face are worth mentioning for the newspaper, the more important piece is the danger this market poses to the people. The mix of these two represents the start of the transitionary period for how people understood animal rights in Britain. It began to transform from the earlier legislation that protected animals only due to their relationship with humans. Their usefulness, or danger, to people formed the basis behind these early nineteenth-century laws. From 1849 onward, the actual morality of how people treated animals became the focal point behind similar legislation and middle-class animal rights movements.

The next major event in the timeline of the animal rights movement is the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1876. This act replaced the previous Cruelty to Animals Act and attempted to fix the issue of animal experimentation. If the Act of 1849 symbolized the start of the transition for the middle-class involvement in the animal rights movement in Britain, the 1876 Act is the result. Powerful animal rights groups and activists pushed the British Parliament to pass stricter

[46] "This Day an Attempt Will Be Made to Remove the Greatest Nuisance That Exists within the Limits of the Metropolis," *The Times*, January 9, 1849.

regulations on using animals for experiments. Under the new act, researchers and other medical professionals could petition the government to receive a license to experiment on animals. Supposedly, the government would closely monitor these experiments. Animals experimented on would have to be anesthetized and killed after the experiment to prevent suffering. Ironically, however, the ambiguity of the language within this act did not stop experimentation on animals and, in fact, increased it. It was far too easy to gain a license, and researchers had almost no accountability. The perceived failure of the 1876 act by middle-class animal rights activists culminated in the debate over vivisection on dogs in the decades before World War I. By the end of the nineteenth century, the main engine behind the animal rights movement was the British middle class.

Harriet Ritvo is the first historian to write about the development of protective attitudes in Britain and is one of the most influential scholars in the field of animal history. Her work, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age,* is later joined by other notable historians, like John MacKenzie and Richard Ryder, who also have written histories of animals at their center instead of their use as tools for humans.[47] Ritvo introduced the significance of historical analyses of animals through her studies on animal-human relationships. Her work argues that animals became symbols of status and power throughout Britain. Furthermore, Ritvo believes the wealthy and influential aristocrats in British society helped to influence legislation concerning animals in Britain during the nineteenth century. She points to their unique relationship with their pets as the primary reason behind their support for protective legislation. For scholars of British animal history, Ritvo's work became the benchmark.

[47] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 1-44..

Ritvo denied Darwin's impact on early human-animal relations. She states that while Darwin may have "transformed the relation between human beings and other animals in principle," the "egalitarianism he had suggested by including human-kind among the beasts had little practical effect."[48] She emphasized the idea that animals were important symbols for class and social structures within Britain, focusing on the landed elites' perceptions of animals. An aristocratic group, The British Kennel Club, for example, demonstrated how people understood their class through the selection of dog breeds.[49] Hunting, pet shows, cattle breeding, and scientific studies on rabies all show how the domination and exploitation of animals characterized the human-animal relationship in nineteenth-century Britain.[50]

For many historians studying this period, the major influencers in the development of animal protection legislation were the British upper class, particularly the aristocracy. Their obsession with animals coincided with the desire to conserve rarer foreign species abroad — primarily so that they may be able to hunt them — led to Britain developing some of the world's first legislation designed to protect dogs and other animals. But while the British aristocracy did, in fact, play a large role in developing such legislation, most notably concerning the protection of animals they considered as pets, they were not the only influencers who helped to alter perceptions of animals. Members of the British clergy and middle class advocated for the protection of animals based on arguments of morality and humane treatment. For example, the one to eventually end the practice of bull baiting in 1835 under the Cruelty to Animals Act, Joseph Pease, was one of the first Quakers to have a seat in Parliament.[51]

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[48] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 41.
[49] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 100.
[50] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 4, 6.
[51] Vaughan Monamy, *Animal Experimentation: A Guide to the Issues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 19-21.

More important for the development of animal rights within Britain is the growth of the middle class. Victorian-era animal historians have noted the influence of the middle class on the animal rights movement but point to the progressivist nature as to why people within the middle class fought for the humane treatment of animals. What is left out with such sweeping analyses of an entire class is a more nuanced understanding of why these people supported animal rights, which is more than their broadly stereotypical liberalistic nature of the time. As incomes rose and more families within Britain joined the middle class due to the industrial revolution, their ability to afford luxuries grew. One such luxury is the ability to own a dog. Not as a tool to aid in their job, but as a pet. Such ownership was something only the aristocracy could afford beforehand. Unlike British aristocrats, who mostly paraded their dogs around in pageants and emphasized the importance of breeds, middle-class individuals formed tighter companionships with their animals. These new relationships encouraged participation in the fight against animal cruelty. The fondness people have for dogs, and other pets are most clearly illustrated in the annual reports of one of the multiple animal rights groups of the nineteenth century, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. In their 1860 report of animal cruelty in the country, for example, they note that accusations of animal cruelty against dogs and cats were about 2 percent of the total convictions; they appeared in over 13 percent of the reports.[52]

Despite the attempts of the clergy and middle class, as Morse and Danahay have pointed out, a majority of Britain's population had no interest in changing their attitudes towards animals. Middle-class individuals, such as doctors, disregarded and even actively fought against passing protection legislation. Meanwhile, members of the British working class regarded the animal rights situation with apathy, largely due to the role that animals played in their daily lives.

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[52] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate,* 141.

Farmers utilized dogs as a source of labor and less as a pet. These perceptions around dogs would stay the same in the working class until World War I, when the interactions between people and dogs during the conflict changed the way middle and working-class people regarded canines and other animals. The war caused a change in the common perception of dogs for everyday people, as they finally entered into the debate raging in the middle and upper classes over the protection of dogs.

Conversely, for upper-class individuals such as aristocrats, the war did little to change how they perceived dogs. This is most clearly laid out in the 1916 book *Kennel Aristocrats*, a collection of canine owners with pedigree dogs. Similarly to the Kennel Club, *Kennel Aristocrats* is a celebration of dog breeding and a representative of upper-class British opulence. Breeds depicted within the various editions of the book are celebrated for their foreignness, rarity, and unique traits. The first edition of *Kennel Aristocrats* appeared in 1916, in the middle of World War I. During the height of the war, when many ordinary British men were drafted into the war, *Kennel Aristocrats* discussed the issues within the pedigree dog community, showing a remarkable detachment from the war during a period when the course of the conflict dictated almost all aspects of British life. In fact, the only mention of the conflict throughout the entire book is in a selection discussing Great Danes. In this selection, *Kennel Aristocrats* lamented the increased costs associated with maintaining a larger breed, such as a Great Dane, due to the rise in food prices as a result of World War I.[53] These attitudes toward dogs have existed in Britain since the nineteenth century. British aristocracy's lackadaisical attitude towards issues that do not directly affect or benefit themselves carried over into the animal rights debates of the late nineteenth century.

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[53] *Kennel Aristocrats: Articles of the Various Breeds by Well Known Fanciers and a Directory of All Owners of Pedigree Dogs, with the Dogs They Possess* (London: William Glass and Co., 1916), 125.

The Development of Animal Rights in Nineteenth Century Britain

Frances Power Cobbe was one of the earliest proponents and influencers of the movement to stop the experimentation of animals in Britain. She not only founded the National Anti-Vivisection Society (NAVS) in 1875 but also was one of the leading activists in the British women's suffrage movement.[54] Cobbe was born in Ireland in 1822 to a historically influential clergy family. Her father's clerical life shaped her ethical stance, setting a precedent for future members of the British clergy to engage with and debate against animal cruelty and the vivisection of dogs based on arguments of morality. Vivisection, in Britain, as well as in the rest of the industrialized world in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, developed in part due to the advances in medicine. New medical tools and practices emphasized research to understand human biology and the effects of medicines and diseases. These developments in the field of medicine influenced the increase of clinical trials and, most importantly, experimentation. Initially, Britain experimented on other humans. However, this quickly came under scrutiny and objections under grounds of morality. The following selection for experimentation would then be animals, allowing doctors and other medical researchers easily acquirable subjects to study, train, and test their new medical procedures, techniques, and surgical tools. Cobbe and other animal rights proponents took up the cause to protect animals from vivisection, believing both human and animal experimentation was immoral.

Although some of the findings that came out of vivisection experiments did benefit the advancement of medicine and the understanding of biology, these studies cared little about the welfare of the animal. Researchers often forced animals to face conditions akin to some of the worst kinds of torture. One of the most notable medical researchers in the nineteenth century and

[54] The National Anti-Vivisection Society still operates today in Britain, changing its name to Animal Defenders International, and works to help stop animal cruelty worldwide.

practitioner of vivisection, Charles Bell, was a surgeon who helped lay the foundation for our modern understanding of how the nervous system works. Born in 1774 as a son of a Scottish clergyman and a part of a small but growing British middle class, Bell went on to enroll at the University of Edinburgh, where he studied medicine and anatomy and eventually entered the medical field at the start of the nineteenth century. In a now infamous experiment, Bell exposed a rabbit's spinal cords so that he had direct access to the nervous system of the animal. He then proceeded to *touch* various parts of the spinal cord, with some probes eliciting muscle convulsions while others seemingly caused no effect.[55] Through this experiment, Bell discovered the differences between motor and sensory nerves and became one of the biggest names in the study of anatomy, earning the Royal Medal — a prestigious award gifted by the British monarch for individuals who have advanced humanity's natural knowledge. Experiments similar to Bell's occurred throughout Britain in the nineteenth century, with most of the general populace relatively unaware, and most groups attempting to stop animal cruelty focused on sports rather than experimentation. The success of Bell's vivisection experiments helped lay the precedent for animal tests in Britain that would continue throughout the nineteenth century, setting the foundation for the debate between the medical community and those like Cobbe, who sought to protect these animals.

Cobbe's love for animals stemmed partly from the companionship she formed with her dog, Hajjin. Cobbe greatly cared for Hajjin, and when her friend ran away and became lost on the streets of London, Cobbe searched tirelessly for her. Eventually, Hajjin appeared several days later in the Lost Dogs Home in Holloway, returning to an owner who was so distressed by the event and elated upon reuniting with her dog. She arranged a professional photoshoot with Hajjin

[55] Charles Bell and Alexander Shaw. "Idea of a New of the Brian," *Journal of Anatomy and Physiology*, 3 (1868): 147-182.

as the star. Unlike modern animal photoshoots, Victorian-era photography had many challenges and issues that required photographers to overcome in order to have a quality picture. The nature of cameras in the nineteenth century meant long exposure time and heavy, cumbersome equipment. This meant that taking a picture of an animal like Hajjin was exceedingly difficult, as the dog had to sit motionless for extended periods for the long exposure camera to take a proper photo. As anyone with any experience with dogs might understand, this was next to impossible for people in the Victorian era, and most pictures of dogs had them as stuffed specimens. Hajjin was not stuffed, and Cobbe went through the painstaking process of commemorating her furry companion forever.[56] Expensive pictures, such as the one taken by Cobbe of Hajjin, are only possible for those as wealthy as the middle class. Cobbe thought of Hajjin as a pet rather than as a tool, representing similar thoughts of middle-class individuals throughout Britain who would go on to support animal rights throughout the country.

In the late nineteenth century, Cobbe, and other animal rights activists fought against lesser-known instances of animal cruelty, like vivisection. Through the pressure Cobbe and the NAVS were able to put on the British government, Parliament formed a royal commission to investigate the extent and cruelty surrounding vivisection. They released their findings early in 1876 to the public. They argued that the reports of the cruelty of vivisection were greatly exaggerated. The benefits of vivisection are too great to ignore to outlaw the practice completely. *The Times* notes the important advances made by researchers like Charles Bell through the practice of vivisection. They say that vivisection yielded "great discoveries," and that "Sir Charles Bells' discovery of the compound function of the spinal nerves" laid the foundation for medical knowledge as they knew it.[57] They also cited the subservient status of animals and the

[56] Susan Hamilton, "Hajjin: 'Photographed from Life,'" *Victorian Review* 40, no. 1 (2014): 28-31.
[57] "Vivisection: The Lancet in a Notice of the Report," *The Times*, February 19, 1876.

medical advances that supposedly owed their discovery solely to vivisection as reasons against banning the practice. Yet, the commission believed that animal experimentation requires some regulation for the country to maintain its honorable status as the main actor in the fight for animal rights and prevent potential abuse in the future.

Parliament now faced a difficult decision. On one side, animal rights activists like Cobbe heavily criticized and pressured the British government to take action against animal cruelty. On the other, the supposed medical benefits many members of parliament still believed in were too great to lose. Some even believed that it was ignorant to take the words of the activists over that of trained professionals. One politician, William Edward Forster, commented that "it was unreasonable to propose that members of the Medical Profession, who had set up a number of institutions, guaranteeing that they were fit to deal with even infant life, should be assumed to be unfit to have the handling of animal life entrusted to their skill and care."[58] Despite many members of parliament arguing against vivisection, activist pressure from the British middle class led parliament to pass the act. Alongside the royal commission's findings, and the desire to appear morally superior, Parliament passed the Cruelty Against Animals Act of 1876.

The new law did not signify the end of vivisection in Britain however. In 1875, the British medical field conducted upwards of 300 vivisection experiments, a notable number but minuscule compared to figures only a decade later. The increase in vivisection experiments is largely due to the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1876, passed only a month after the founding of the NAVS. While the name and a brief reading of the Act might suggest a solution to the NAVS's woes concerning vivisection, it had the opposite effect. The Act provided some legislative protection for animals, allowing people throughout Britain to be prosecuted for animal cruelty

[58] United Kingdom, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 231 (1876).

cases. However, it allowed researchers to gain licenses for vivisection experiments. Furthermore, the British government paid little heed to whom they gave these licenses and failed to enforce accountability properly. Many members of Parliament disagreed about passing a law to restrict vivisection but were more or less forced to by animal rights activists. As such, the law had multiple loopholes for researchers to get around the new government regulations. Furthermore, the bill now also allowed medical professionals to argue that the government had legally approved their practice through these licenses.[59] This new justification the medical community in Britain obtained through the Act of 1876 directly correlated with the increase of vivisection experiments, an abject failure of the Act's original purpose. But to many throughout Britain, the act was believed to have solved the issues surrounding vivisection.

Cobbe and the NAVS contested the Act when they published *The Modern Rack* in 1889, an important book in the fight for animal rights, arguing against the practice of vivisection for moralistic, religious, and practical reasons. In it, Cobbe directly challenged the idea put forth by many doctors, surgeons, and other researchers arguing for the continuation of vivisection. Proponents of vivisection argued that it is not even worthwhile to dispute morality — considering the atrocities happening across the world — of experimentation on dogs and animals when the advancements in the field of science are so great. To this, Cobbe states that "one offense does not exculpate another, even if both are on the same level."[60] The cruelties inflicted upon people by each other in the nineteenth century should not prevent people from trying to stop cruelties occurring to animals. Furthermore, Cobbe counters against the notion that one would be hypocritical if they supported animal rights if they themselves ate animals saying that

[59] The History of the NAVS, National Anti-Vivisection Society, July 24, 2012, https://www.navs.org.uk/about_us/24/0/299/.
[60] Frances Power Cobbe, *The Modern Rack: Papers on Vivisection* (London: Sonnenschein, 1889), 9.

the conditions for creatures like cattle, and the conditions where they are killed for meat, are vastly different from that of experimentation. Compared to animal experimentation, cattle and other farm animals do not suffer to the same degree that comes with vivisection experiments.[61] These arguments, which throughout Cobbe's book are linked to religious messaging, are part of the broader clerical movement in Britain to stop vivisection.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the vivisection issue again rose to the level of the national government. Yet, unlike the movement to stop vivisection and experiments by groups like the NAVS in 1875, these movements focused on preventing experimentation on dogs. The House of Commons opened a debate about a bill to protect dogs from the potential dangers of vivisection. The most notable supporters were members of the clergy such as the Archbishop of York, and many prominent middle-class activists. In a petition drafted by the National Canine Defence League, the landed elite, clergy, and representatives of the middle class came together in a rare case of aristocratic involvement in order to support legislation in favor of protecting dogs from experimentation. They gathered over 40 signatories from influential members of British society in support.[62] Outside of the coalition of aristocrats and clergy in the National Canine Defense League, members of the church in Britain argued for the bill through the direct use of religion. In a publication by the London and Provincial Anti-Vivisection Society, the Archbishop of Canterbury argued, "The true principle of morals is to have nothing whatever to do with that which is shown to be necessarily productive of evil."[63] By stating that it is more Christian to support animal rights and oppose animal cruelty, people who support vivisection contradict the same religious beliefs they likely follow. Members of the clergy argue that

[61] Cobbe, *The Modern Rack*, 10.
[62] Vivisection: Dog Protection Bills, 1905-1925, HO 45/12529, The National Archives of the UK.
[63] Vivisection: Dog Protection Bills, 1905-1925, HO 45/12529, The National Archives of the UK.

Christianity means to sacrifice yourself for the betterment of others. Meanwhile, to engage in vivisection is to "sacrifice others for self." Meaning that the exploitation and experimentation on dogs largely only benefit the one conducting the test at the expense of the animals' suffering.

The bill also generated supporters from the Humanitarian League, whose primary purpose is preventing suffering "on any sentient being." They promoted the rights of all disadvantaged people and encouraged the development of social programs to aid those in need. They were some of the first to support the development of a public health care system in Britain, advocated for the reduction in military armaments, believed in the fairer treatment for people subjugated in the British colonies, and fought for the amendment of the British Poor Laws. Despite their moniker, the "Humanitarian League," they even considered animal cruelty to be a core issue during that time that needed resolution. They advocated for animal protection laws, not just for dogs, but also for all animals, domestic and wild. Furthermore, they believed in the immorality of animal bloodsports oftentimes enjoyed by poor, working-class people. Henry Stephen's Salt, the man who founded the Humanitarian League, remarks on the working class' apathy towards animal rights, stating:

> The saddest fact of all is that our class-supremacy is so largely and directly based on class-degradation, and that the society of to-day, in its frenzied hunt for wealth, has so completely lost sight of that old Roman adage— "One man's profit is another man's ruin." It is the simple truth that our ordinary, average, well-to-do Englishmen, through no individual fault or special hard-heartedness of their own, but through the callous indifferentism of the society of which they are a product and a part, are in great measure, fed, clothed, sheltered, and amused by a long-continued series of human *and* animal suffering.[64]

While the debates about animal cruelty in sports had circulated around the British government for well over a century by this point and outlawed, many working-class people in Britain did not know about the cruelty to dogs, partly because many thought animal cruelties was solved with

[64] Henry Salt, *Humanitarianism: Its General Principles and Progress* (Westminster Review, 1891), 17.

the Animals Act of 1876.[65] This did not stop the Humanitarian League and other anti-vivisection supporters from pressuring parliament to outlaw experimentation.

One of these important figures is Emilie Augusta Louise Lind af Hageby, commonly called "Lizzy." In a similar fashion to a previous animal right activist heavyweight, Frances Power Cobbe, Lizzy Hageby was a staunch feminist and significant character in the 1900s anti-vivisection movement. Born in Jönköping as a relative of the Swedish monarchy, she might appear to be a member or at least share some of the same ideals as the landed aristocracy in Britain. Yet, her actions are more representative of the middle classes during this time. In fact, comparing Hageby with other animal rights activists like Cobbe highlights animal rights activists' common traits, particularly the correlation between the British feminist movement and anti-vivisectionists. Her father, rather than earning an income through his relationship with the monarchy, earned his living as a lawyer. Furthermore, Hageby's immigration to Britain from Sweden separated her from the aristocracy's lifestyle. Her ability to gain an education at the London School of Medicine for Women was funded by her father's middle-class income as a lawyer. Hageby's desire to educate herself stemmed from the anti-vivisection beliefs she gained during her time in Sweden. She used the connections she gained through her education to visit other colleges throughout Britain to observe the experiments they did on animals. Hageby eventually published her diary in 1904 alongside her classmate and friend, L.K. Sohartau, making *The Shambles of Science* a book central to the vivisection debate, and created a national outrage over the experimentation on dogs referred to as the “Brown Dog Affair.”

[65] Vivisection: Dog Protection Bills, 1905-1925, HO 45/12529, The National Archives of the UK.

FIGURE 1: A postcard by the National Canine Defense League petitioning against the practice of vivisection. 1905. Courtesy of Mary Evans Picture Library.

Hageby recounts, in vivid detail, the horrors of vivisection she observed through her travels. The lectures she attended taught her much about the techniques and practices of vivisection and little else. Particularly important in understanding the vivisection debate is her recounting of the experiments performed on a dog. In her diary, she notes the cruel treatment a brown dog had to endure as an unfortunate subject of vivisection:

> The abdomen has been opened, the muscles cut through, vessels cut and ligatured, the peritoneum opened, the intestines pulled over to the right side, the kidney exposed, isolated, and then placed in an oncometer; the neck has been cut open, the external jugular vein isolated and a cannula tied in, the carotid artery has also been exposed. The animal's head is covered with a cloth. There is a faint whining sound which we first think comes from some other dog operated upon in another room. But as the whining grows louder and more piteous, and the animal struggles so that the cotton wool moves to and fro.[66]

[66] Lind af Hageby and L.K. Schartau, *The Shambles of Science: Extracts from the Diary of Two Students of Physiology* (self-published, Hageby and Schartau, 1904), 81-82.

This was one of three experiments this dog had to endure as a tool in medical lectures. When Hageby's retelling of the gruesome experiment reached the ears of the public, the movement to ban vivisection gained momentum.

Hageby's work brought enough attention to vivisection that Parliament once again formed another royal commission in 1906. Unlike the last royal commission on vivisection in 1876, the new commission supported the anti-vivisectionist movement. They concluded that the Act of 1876 was not enough to protect animals from vivisection. The commission specifically cites Hageby's book *The Shambles of Science* as the key reason the 1876 Act was inadequate in its intended role. They argue that many of the experiments described in Hageby's book provided no real benefit to the scientific community and could not be justified under the provisions of the Act. Few vivisection practitioners actually followed the restrictions of the Act. The commission also notes that anesthesia, which is required by law to use on animals to numb pain, was actually sparsely used. Some textbooks that taught vivisection even mentioned that light anesthesia was better for the experiment. When the commission spoke to the researchers for their thoughts on the matter, most argued that Hageby must not have fully comprehended the experiments she viewed.[67]

On a similar vein to the arguments surrounding vivisection in 1876, medical professionals and research organizations like the British Medical Association argued against passing an animal rights bill to protect dogs from experiments. One of the main arguments groups like the British Medical Association gave was that, for most animals, the biological differences in their anatomy made them unsuitable as subjects for experimentation. Dogs and

[67] "Royal Commission on Vivisection (Continued)," *The British Medical Journal* 2, no. 2442 (October 19, 1907): 1079.

their organs, on the other hand, "resemble in many respects those of human beings."[68] The British Medical Associate justified their actions by believing that the dogs used in these experiments receive little to no pain thanks to the recent introduction of anesthetics, narcotics, and other methods to dull the experience of pain for the animal. More importantly, the Association cites dogs' availability for scientific research. They argue that the dogs they took for experimentation were "without any useful purpose" for humanity and that they would have died in the lethal chamber regardless of their actions.[69]

There is some truth to these words, as during the early twentieth century in Britain, tens of thousands of dogs lived in shelters, taken off of the street. Stray dogs became such an issue within some counties of Britain that in early 1908, the county councils Kent and Middlesex took their efforts to control dog populations one step further than simply collecting stray dogs. They added the requirement that owners must be able to keep their dogs under control by either keeping them in a secure enclosure, tied via collar and chain or thoroughly under the control of the owner's commands. Any dog that fails to be controlled in one of these three conditions will be treated as a stray dog and disposed of as a result. The efforts to control dogs in this manner were mainly to prevent dogs from harassing sheep in some of the more rural areas of these counties. The Commissioner of Police for the Kent County Council, W.B. Prosser, noted, "the mischief aimed at by the order is the worrying of sheep by dogs at night. This is not a very common offence except in the rural parts of the county, and it was felt that it would not be fair to insist on every dog in the Council's area being put into a lead after sunset." Such attempts targeted dog owners as a potential cause for the amounts of strays within Britain, hoping to

[68] Vivisection: Dog Protection Bills, 1905-1925, HO 45/12529, The National Archives of the UK.
[69] Vivisection: Dog Protection Bills, 1905-1925, HO 45/12529, The National Archives of the UK.

reduce the number of dogs taken into British kennels.[70] Nevertheless, the issue of stray dogs in Britain persisted as pro-vivisection groups continued to argue against legislation preventing experimentation on dogs.

By passing the bill, they argued, dog owners would be condemning their own pets and the dogs necessary for agriculturalists to diseases that otherwise would have been solved due to experimentation. Should the dog die in these experiments, at least their death serves to relieve the "suffering of mankind" and their own species. That is why, should the government outlaw experiments on dogs, the advance of physiology and the medical field as a whole in Britain would suffer. In contrast, the dogs die in the streets or the lethal chamber without contributing anything to science.[71] Furthermore, medical professionals use the history and limited success of vivisection as a reason behind its continuation. Stephen Paget, a doctor writing the historical importance of vivisection, believes that "the experimental method, alike in the past and in the present, has been the chief way of advance."[72] Paget celebrates the advances made by previous researchers and practitioners of vivisection like Charles Bell and argues that the development of anesthetics makes similar experiments to Bell's less cruel to the animal and more moral overall.

Despite attempts to stop the bill outlawing vivisection on dogs by doctors and other groups in favor of the experimentation of dogs, the bill to prohibit experiments upon dogs eventually passed in 1908. Under the new law, it became a crime to perform any test on a dog, with or without anesthetics, that would cause them "pain or disease." Failure to abide by this law results in the perpetrator taking a ten-pound fine on the first offense and a fifty-pound fine on a repeat offense. Today, this would amount to around £1,000 and £7,000, respectively. The bill did

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[70] Police Dogs Accompanying Constables on Beats, 1908-1937, MEPO 2-2910, The National Archives of the UK.
[71] Vivisection: Dog Protection Bills, 1905-1925, HO 45/12529, The National Archives of the UK.
[72] Stephen Paget, "Hospital Clinics and Medical Progress: What we owe to Experiments on Animals," *The Hospital*, December 19, 1903.

not entirely outlaw experimentation on dogs, but it required researchers to use needles if they had to puncture a dog's skin and the required sedatives to numb pain. If the dog showed visible signs of pain due to the experiment, the researcher is obligated to euthanize the canine to minimize suffering.[73] Furthermore, the act fixed the issues with the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1876, and actually enforced and regulated the practice of vivisection. Despite the progress made in preventing harsh experiments, it did not stop the practice, in large part due to the political apathy of the British working class, who only became interested in the treatment of dogs after their shared experiences with them in World War I. The complete outlawing of all experiments on dogs would only occur several decades later, after the Great War, with the expansion of the law to include all animal testing not happening until over 50 years later in 1986 under the Animals Scientific Procedures Act.

Conclusion

For the animal rights movement in the early twentieth century, the most crucial development is the growth of the middle class. Throughout most of human history, dogs primarily served as animals of labor except for a select few. This is why the first pieces of legislation that protected animals focused on preserving them for hunting. As British society shifted in the latter half of the nineteenth century, people like Francis Power Cobbe formed bonds with their companions vastly different from the British aristocracy. They neither perceived dogs as tools like many in the working class did nor as an opportunity to display wealth and prestige as an aristocrat often would. Her bond with her dog Hajjin, for example, shows the new relationship people like Cobbe maintained with their pets. The new interactions and bonds people in the middle class shared with dogs directly led to the development of animal rights

[73] Vivisection: Dog Protection Bills, 1905-1925, HO 45/12529, The National Archives of the UK.

activist groups. The people who formed these groups, like Cobbe, Hageby, and the Humanitarian League, supported other progressive movements like the British feminist and anti-imperialist movements. These similarities highlight the new perception of animals in these middle-class circles. Like colonial subjects of the British Empire and women, animals too were subjected to and exploited. Many people in the middle class viewed preventing the abuse of their furry companions as the morally just thing to do, alongside opposing imperialism and supporting women's rights.

The end of the Brown Dog Affair symbolized the victory of middle-class animal rights activists in changing the perception of dogs within their own class. Medical professionals who formed the strongest defense supporting the practice of vivisection lost. The outrage generated by Hageby's work, *The Shambles of Science*, resonated mostly with other people in the middle-class. Their victories largely came in the form of legislation and the progression of political protection for animals. However, the same could not be said for changing the social and cultural perceptions the rest of the people in Britain had.

Indeed, decades before the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, the middle-class' involvement in the animal rights debate saw great strides in protecting dogs and other animals from cruelties. Nevertheless, even in the debate around canine vivisection, animal rights groups could not entirely abolish the practice. In part due to working-class apathy on the subject. As the middle class in Britain developed, so too did the way that they perceived dogs. But for the working class, dogs as pets were a luxury and for them only served to be used as tools. The working class in Britain would only get involved in animal rights after the Great War. Their perceptions of dogs, altered by their interactions with them in the conflict, laid the foundation for

how we understand our relationship with dogs today. This working-class story is the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: THE DOGS OF WAR: THE BRITISH ARMY AND CANINE INTERACTIONS DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

In the tumultuous final years of the Great War in 1918, a fire broke out in a village in northern France that threatened to engulf the makeshift stables commonwealth soldiers erected. Due to the severity of the increasing flames, several horses — who had, by that point, actively fought in a majority of the conflict — faced imminent incineration. Staff Sergeant Foster Johnson, and two other privates who were close by, rushed into the inferno in an attempt to save their animal companions. While the soldiers successfully retrieved three of the four horses, one of them was too terrified and could not be moved. One of the soldiers, Private John Henry Cole, traversed into the fire on four different attempts to save the animal, but could not recover the horse and suffered severe burns in the process. Their efforts to save their equestrian companions resulted in the British First Army commending them for their "Acts of Courage."[74]

Their actions represented a divide between the soldiers who fought on the front lines and the upper echelon of the British military staff. Frontline soldiers who fought on the Western Front in World War I, like Sergeant Johnson, put their lives at risk constantly. The ever-present threat of death fighting in and around the fields of northern France led to the development of bonds unique to those who have fought in a war. Even in more recent instances, such as the Vietnam and Afghanistan wars, veterans discuss how the relationships they have built with their fellow soldiers in the crucible of conflict are special, mainly as a result of the shared threat of death, and how soldiers must place their lives in their comrade's hands. In the Great War, soldiers who worked closely with animals also experienced the creation of these bonds, which —

[74] Horne, General Sir H.S., "Routine Orders" No. 345. Headquarters, First Army: Army Printing and Stationary Services, June 2, 1918 (LAC) RG 9 III-C-11 Volume 4589, Folder 2 File 3, "First Army Routine Orders From 2nd July 1917 to 7th November 1918," DMDR.

while the animals may have had human emotions projected onto them — resulted in the actions of people like Sergeant Johnson risking their lives to save their trusty animal companion.

Most of those who fought in World War I, human and animal alike, were unwilling participants in one of the Earth's deadliest conflicts. Indeed, dogs and other animals served as valuable companions for many shell-shocked soldiers, but their lives still had less value than their human counterparts. While animal rights organizations participated in the war to help supply the front lines with veterinarians to help save wounded animals, the cruel nature of combat created the circumstances for the armies on the western Front to perform surgeries to enhance the dogs' combat capabilities. In one such case, veterinarians surgically cut dogs' vocal cords so they could not make noise that would expose the soldier's position. Other body modifications even became normalized after World War I, such as cropping a dog's ears and partially removing its tail, as soldiers who interacted with these dogs during the Great War popularized them back home in Britain once the war ended.[75]

The use of dogs in warfare is nothing new for Europeans. The Spanish, for example, used the large mastiff breeds of dogs in their conquests of the Americas. However, this was the last major conflict dogs played a crucial role in until the First World War. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, multiple European countries rediscovered the value dogs had in their modernizing armies. In 1884, Germany opened the world's first military school that specialized in training dogs for war. Conversely, the British opened their first military dog school amid World War I in Shoeburyness in 1916. By the end of World War I, around 75,000 trained military dogs served on the battlefield.[76] The German army, which had the largest number of

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[75] Susan D Jones and Peter A Koolmees, *A Concise History of Veterinary Medicine* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), 239.
[76] Susan D Jones and Peter A Koolmees, *A Concise History of Veterinary Medicine* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), 239.

dogs in their active service, at approximately 30,000, believed that trained dogs saved approximately 3,000 lives by employing dogs to find injured soldiers. Dogs, and other animals drafted for war, suffered greatly for causes they did not fully understand. But for the soldiers who interacted with them daily, their heroism and the human-animal bonds they created vastly changed the perception of the common, working-class soldier that worked with them. Many within the upper echelon of the British army perceived dogs as a valuable resource that could contribute to the effectiveness of their army. In contrast, the average frontline soldier who interacted with these militarized dogs formed valuable bonds that changed their previous conceptions they held about dogs more closely resembling the perceptions of people in the middle-class.

Many of the middle-class animal rights activists who fought for the protection of dogs against vivisection only a few years before the war also actively participated in the war and sought to change working-class perceptions around animals. One of the most prominent animal rights activists in Britain before the war, anti-vivisectionist Lizzy Hageby, kept fighting against animal cruelty despite national attention shifting to focusing on the war against Germany. Although the outbreak of the war hampered her efforts to improve the lives of dogs and other animals, she found other methods to help disadvantaged animals. Hageby was a staunch anti-war activist and actively sought to alleviate the pain that the war had brought. She joined the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace. She used her education from Cheltenham Ladies' College in London to work in a sanatorium in France. Her desire to help the animals suffering from the conflict led her to found the Purple Cross Service. An organization that worked with the French war office to care for wounded warhorses and nurse them back to

health.[77] She would also go on to join the Red Cross organization. Hageby and other women from the middle class attempted to help all animals, human and non-human alike, that suffered from the war to display their anti-war beliefs. Furthermore, while the outbreak of the war hampered efforts to promote legislation preventing animal cruelty, women like Hageby used the war to promote their beliefs abroad to the soldiers they saved. Volunteers, like Hageby, who worked to help save lives during the war, were the main connection between the working-class and middle-class. She, alongside many others, worked tirelessly to save the lives of wounded men in temporary hospitals set up behind the front lines. Many of the wounded men present at these hospitals are only there due to the work of ambulance dogs finding them within the chaos of the war.

The relationships that working-class soldiers formed with these dogs are the main driving force behind the broader change in people's perception of dogs within British society. Previous middle-class attitudes towards dogs — reflected by their political activism and support for animal rights — had done little to change the perception of dogs within the broader working-class. Soldiers formed relationships with two different types of dogs. The first is the dog trained at canine military schools like Shoeburyness. The second, is the “uneducated” stray dog many soldiers picked up on the battlefield. While it is undoubtedly true that many soldiers formed favorable opinions of trained military dogs due to their effectiveness in their duties, a important element for the change in the perception of dogs lies in the close relationships soldiers formed with stray dogs. These strays existed since the start of trench warfare in France and easily predate the introduction of the dogs trained at Shoeburyness in 1916.

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[77] Elston, M. A. "Lind-af-Hageby, (Emilie Augusta) Louise (1878–1963), animal welfare campaigner." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.* 23 Sep. 2004.

For many historians studying nineteenth-century Europe, World War I is the climactic finish to a period of great change. For the animals that fought in these wars, the Great War was also a transition time. Military histories of the great wars fought in the nineteenth century — such as the Crimean War, the Franco-Prussian War, or the American Civil War — have discovered that animals, particularly horses, played a vital role in supporting army logistics and maneuverability. A study on the history of veterinary medicine by Susan Jones and Peter Koolmees even describes these conflicts as "Horse Wars," owing to the importance horses played in the militaries of this time.[78] The importance of horses in military conflicts carried over into World War I seen in the vast quantities of horses deployed. The British Expeditionary Force in France had, by the middle of 1917, over 350,000 horses and almost 100,000 mules in active service.[79] Conversely, the German army had, by the outbreak of the war in 1914, a horse-to-soldier ratio of about 1:3, an increase from 1:4 several decades earlier. For the German army, horses became vastly more important in the Eastern Front against Russia, where a fluid and mobile front replaced the static nature of trench warfare.[80]

While on the surface, the advancement of new technologies and military tactics seemingly rendered the use of animals in war obsolete by 1918, animals played vital roles for the armies in World War I. Horses served both as integral parts of cavalry brigades, which saw extensive use in the Arabian desert and as important logistical tools, able to navigate the hostile terrain created by constant conflict on the Western Front. Despite the advances made in automotive and other technologies that seemingly would take these animals' places, the number

[78] Susan D Jones and Peter A Koolmees, *A Concise History of Veterinary Medicine* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), 227.
[79] Martin Monestier, *Les animaux-soldats: Histoire militaire des animaux des origines a nos jours* (Paris, 1996), 49.
[80] Susan D Jones and Peter A Koolmees, *A Concise History of Veterinary Medicine* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), 232.

of animals employed in warfare *increased* rather than decreased in this period. For dogs, their ability to understand and follow human orders made them a prime candidate to replace duties deemed too costly in terms of human lives during the Great War.

Military records on the total number of dogs the British army deployed in World War I are inconsistent. However, the overall population of trained dogs on the Western front never exceeded 20,000 for the British. Combined with their later introduction to the war in 1917, compared to France and Germany, it points to fewer trained dogs deployed. Despite the British army including dogs in their army, towards the second half of the war, soldiers still formed important bonds with dogs throughout the entire course of the war. Part of these interactions with dogs on the Western Front came from Britain's allies, particularly France, who had utilized dogs since the outbreak of the war. The lessons that France learned in the early phases of the war on how to properly deploy dogs on the Western Front served as a valuable example for when Britain began to add dogs to their own armies.

The Creation of the British War Dog

It was British Lieutenant Colonel Edwin Hautonville Richardson who closely followed these developments in France. He studied the French use of dogs at the onset of the war and noted that the French believed that the most useful job they could utilize these dogs for was as ambulance dogs. Unfortunately for both the French and the dog they drafted into service, these types of roles typically ended in the dog's death without accomplishing their goal of finding and saving the wounded. They found that these dogs, even though they bore the mark of the Red Cross, became the target of enemy fire. Richardson remarked that "the enemy brutally shot them all down whenever they attempted to carry out their humanitarian work."[81] Furthermore, once

[81] Edwin Hautonville Richardson, *British War Dogs: Their Training and Psychology* (London: Skeffington & son ltd, 1920), 54.

warfare in Northern France slowed and fighting shifted into the static war of the trenches, the effectiveness of these ambulance dogs decreased further as a result of the poor conditions of many of the trench systems. It became increasingly popular to employ dogs in roles such as messenger dogs, or sentries, rather than as ambulance dogs. The ambulance dog still saw some use throughout the course of the war, however, the focus shifted towards training dogs for these other roles. The messenger dog in particular became one of the most favored jobs for dogs in the military in large part because the high casualty rate among human messengers encouraged the French military to find a less "costly" alternative.

Richardson lauded the French military's resourcefulness in developing effective jobs for canines in the military and noted that each regiment in the French army contained an attachment of dogs.[82] He remarked on the effectiveness in which these trained dogs carried out their tasks for the French army, which encouraged the British to introduce their own trained supplement of dogs into their army. Part of Richardson's desire for the British army to add canines to their army came from his visits to France, in which he studied the work done in the French Army with dogs.[83] He also studied the dogs' effectiveness with local law enforcement in Germany, who trained many dogs before the war to work with the police. This is why, once the war broke out, Germany could employ the largest number of dogs in their military since they had a large reserve of trained dogs beforehand. Richardson followed the German example and performed his own experiments with local police across Britain before the war and reinforced his belief in their effectiveness.[84] Unfortunately for Richardson, his efforts failed to convince many of those within the British army until two years into the war once the capabilities of dogs became more widely

[82] Richardson, *British War Dogs*, 49.
[83] Richardson, *British War Dogs*, 62.
[84] Richardson, *British War Dogs*, 51.

known through their Allies in the French. The late introduction of dogs into the British army and the limited interaction soldiers would have with their allies' own dogs was not enough to change a significant portion of the nation's perceptions about dogs.

Combining these trained canines with the stray dogs that wandered the Western Front provided the impetus behind why people in the working class changed their understanding of their relationship with dogs. The invasion of northern France and Belgium displaced a number of dogs who unfortunately found themselves trapped on the battlefield. The stress of combat and the threat of death quickly forged bonds between frontline soldiers and the dogs wandering the Western Front, working-class people who, beforehand, never could have afforded the maintenance associated with owning a dog like a pet — as the middle class had up till this point. The war provided the perfect opportunity for many throughout Britain to interact with dogs and form companionships that would fundamentally change how they conceptualize their relationship with dogs.

These men bonded with animals, in large part, over the similarities they shared. By the second half of the war, most of the soldiers fighting in the trenches were there due to conscription, not necessarily by choice. Once the war ended and the nation transitioned into peacetime, they would bring these notions back with them to Britain, looking to adopt new dogs or somehow trying to smuggle their battlefield stray past Britain's strict importation laws. In a similar vein to soldiers that the state drafted to fight in the war, dogs, and other militarized animals alike, had no choice but to fight in the trenches. Even then, dogs could not understand the social and political situations that brought about the Great War. Unlike their human counterparts, dogs could also not negotiate their position whatsoever. While military generals celebrated the supposed bravery of dogs on the battlefield, such as General De Maud'huy, who

celebrated the "four-legged soldiers," most in the upper echelons of the officer corps saw them as another expendable resource.[85]

This is not to say that dogs that fought in the war lost all agency when they served in the field. One of the few instances where dogs had a relative degree of freedom is found in the messenger dogs. In fact, due in large part to the dog's intelligence and capabilities, it oftentimes had the greatest impact on the course of a battle. The speed of dogs made them quicker messengers than humans, and other intellect allowed them to travel across terrain they had not traversed or seen before, unlike one of the few other animal messenger options in the messenger pigeons. A report by the British 56th Brigade shows one example of the effectiveness of these messenger dogs:

> "Both dogs reached brigade headquarters, traveling a distance as the crow flies of 4,000 yards over ground they had never seen before and over an exceptionally difficult terrain. The dog dispatched at 12:45 p.m. reached his destination under the hour, bringing in an important message, and this was the first message which was received, all visual communication having failed."[86]

These two dogs — both Airedale terriers and named Wolf and Prince — led multiple successful runs as couriers for Britain. Conversely, military technologies that would later come to inhabit this role were in their infancy, and oftentimes unreliable. Thus, for most armies on the battlefield, one of the most effective methods of communication was through trained canines. In another instance, the devastation caused by repeated German attacks at the battle of Vimy Ridge left the defender's telephones destroyed. Combined with other factors such as bad visibility — meaning that visual signaling was of no use — made the versatility of dogs invaluable. In this case, Wolf and Prince again delivered news when no other form of communication was viable.

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[85] Paul Megnin, *Les Chiens De France: Soldats De La Grande Guerre* (Paris: A. Michel, 1919), ii.
[86] Richardson, *British War Dogs*, 56.

Richardson used their success to start a push for the inclusion of more messenger dogs into the British army.[87]

Soldiers that participated in the training of these "militarized dogs" and engaged with them on the battlefield had to be attuned to the status and emotions of their canine. They needed to understand the dog's own capabilities, limitations, and needs in order for the dog to perform its task effectively. An officer who served in the British army during World War I notes the intense bonding between a dog and the person who is to be the keeper of the dog experience. He states that "Complete confidence and affection must exist between dogs and keeper, and the man whose only idea of control is by coercion and fear is quite useless."[88] He goes on to state that the most effective dog handlers throughout the war were those that treated their dog kindly, and had a natural love for animals.

[87] Richardson, *British War Dogs*, 56.
[88] Richardson, *British War Dogs*, 65.

FIGURE 2: Leo, the Great Dane “mascot” of the 2/6 North Staffordshires. Unattributed photograph in the supplement to 'The Graphic', 15 April 1916. Courtesy of Mary Evans Picture Library.

The inclusion of dogs into the British military did not come entirely without issues. One common problem occurred when soldiers viewed these dogs as mascots or pets of their battalions. Officers worked to try and prevent this kind of relationship from happening, as soldiers interacted with these dogs differently, and impeded the tasks they were trained to do. However, one of the greatest problems Britain had to tackle was food scarcity. While the amount may vary, a dog in the British military consumed, on average, about one and a half pounds of dog biscuits, around 4 ounces of vegetables, and 8 ounces of what was termed “condemned meat” per day. This amount of food is on the upper limit of what a dog would normally be able to eat and varies based on their role and breed. The army would not provide food for the stray dogs that soldiers adopted on the battlefield, whose food they had to supplement with their own

and by hunting mice and other rodents in the trenches, which would naturally require less food.[89].

Despite these food shortages, the British army sought to increase the number of dogs they used as a way to solve their dwindling manpower reserves. The devastation wrought by World War I meant that the capable men stationed throughout the country on guard duty needed to be withdrawn to fight in the war. Partly inspired by Richardson's research into the subject, the British government found that one of the best solutions to help fill this void in manpower was none other than dogs.[90] Not only could the British government utilize dogs as a way to replace drafted constables, but they also noticed an increase in efficiency when police patrols had a dog accompanying them. In a letter to the British Secretary of State, officers from New Scotland Yard — the center for London's police — wrote about the desire to increase the number of dogs that could accompany police patrols. The 178 dogs they employed allowed the police to find and detect vagrants and alert the officer of an approaching person. Furthermore, they note the general fear that some people display for dogs, making their patrols all the more effective. In one case, a constable surrounded a suspected thief in a greenhouse. While the constable kept watch at one of the doors, the thief attempted to escape from another exit but got caught by the constable's dog as a result of its training.[91]

The actual training process of the dogs was somewhat simple. Each dog received a variety of tests to determine if it had the ability to be a messenger, sentry, or guard dog. More often than not, dogs showed aptitude in one of these three areas. Dogs that failed to show any desire to take any initiative were given back to their source. There is a simple solution for the

[89] Employment of Guard Dogs, 1919-1944, WO 199/2537, The National Archives of the UK.
[90] Richardson, *British War Dogs*, 59.
[91] Police Dogs Accompanying Constables on Beats, 1911-1937, MEPO 2/2910.

dogs that were originally strays or showed more hostility towards their handlers. As Richardson remarked: "There was however, a convenient method of dealing with the offenders which unfortunately is not available for human beings—an excellent lethal chamber at Battersea!"[92] His statements highlight how many in the upper echelon of the British army saw dogs as nothing more than tools to win the war.

FIGURE 3: British Lieutenant Colonel Edwin Hautonville Richardson's messenger dogs training at their camp in Shoeburyness. *Animals in the Great War* (Lucinda Moore, 2017), 31.

FIGURE 4: Messenger dogs trained by jumping over barbed wire. Unattributed photograph of British War Dogs by Lt-Col E. H. Richardson, 1917. Courtesy of Mary Evans Picture Library.

[92] Richardson, *British War Dogs*, 61.

In the war, the armies on the Western Front utilized dogs in many roles. Officers utilized the speed and agility of dogs to work as messengers in the armies. Battalions found that dogs' keen sense of smell was useful in finding mines and soldiers trapped and or wounded after an attack or some other catastrophic event. Their heightened senses compared to humans made them valuable assets as guards and patrol dogs. Yet many of these dogs that the British Army employed for these skills mentioned above found themselves occupying a different role. For hundreds of thousands of soldiers on the front lines in France, they found dogs as a calming escape from the horrors of trench warfare. In fact, dogs that the British army employed in these roles routinely found themselves becoming the mascot and symbol of battalions, much to the dismay of their officers.

A publication from 1917 from a British soldier named Hector Macquarrie shows the changing perceptions that people, who are fighting on the front lines, began to have around dogs. His book, *How to Live at the Front: Tips for American Soldiers*, attempted to help acclimate the new American troops to the horrors of the war. He speaks from experience when he talks about the value that having a dog can bring to a soldier's mental health during the periods when you are stationed in the trenches. He believes that it is "a great help at the front to have some sort of pet" to keep you from being too lonely during the long nights in the trenches. "A dog" he states, "in the army gets a bit spoilt. It seems that he generally has too many masters, and as they all feed him and all make a fuss over him, he grows to regard all soldiers, especially privates, as his lords and masters."[93] Macquarrie and a large number of other soldiers who regularly interacted with dogs on the front lines recognized their value, not just as effective tools of war but also as

[93] Hector MacQuarrie, *How to Live at the Front: Tips for American Soldiers* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott company, 1917), 248.

great companions to have. In the harshness of the life-or-death environment that is war, dogs offered soldiers a gentle reprieve from combat.

Many of the new officers also desired to have the ability to have an animal companion accompany them during the war. Historically men in the British officer corps came from people within the landowning elite, like Winston Churchill — who was the First Lord of the Admiralty for a portion of World War I. As the middle class grew throughout the nineteenth century, both in size and political strength, the wealthiest among them gained eligibility into this "officer class."

The scale of World War I further created an opening for men throughout the rest of the middle class as well as some within the working class to become officers referred to as "Temporary Gentleman." In particular, many of these new middle-class officers had their own dogs to keep them company during the war. In some instances, these officers would request to have their dog shipped over from Britain to accompany them in France. In others, the officer's wife would try to send their furry companion over as a sort of surprise for their husband.[94] For the soldiers the officers commanded, they witnessed these interactions and sought out their own dog for companionship. While they could not have a dog shipped over from Britain to accompany them, they could find one of the many stray dogs stuck on the Western Front.

The Strays and the War

In the British Isles during the nineteenth century, working-class individuals' income never allowed them to own pets in the same manner found in the British aristocracy or middle class. Naturally, there are exceptions to this, as children, families, or even entire communities may find themselves bonding with a stray dog. Yet, local city governments and the British

[94] Mary Drought to Edward Marsh, March 30th, 1915 in *The Churchill Papers* (CHAR 13/49/74), Churchill Archives Centre (Cambridge), Churchill Archive.

parliament waged war against dogs who had no master. For stray dogs who found themselves caught in nineteenth-century animal shelters, few — if any — made it out through adoption. The British aristocracy, and to a lesser extent, the middle class, preferred to find their companions through British dog breeders and through the litter of their friends rather than adopting stray dogs. Prior to World War I, euthanization was the only option for caught stray dogs. These dog "shelters" became more like extermination camps for dogs within Britain. One such shelter, the Battersea Dogs Home located in South London, reportedly euthanized up to 20,000 stray dogs annually in their lethal chambers right up until the outbreak of the war.[95] As shown in the previous chapter, proponents of vivisection used such figures for their arguments against outlawing their practices.

The government justified these actions in part due to the potential threat of rabies that stray dogs might carry. The British parliament's demands to quarantine any dog imported to the British Isles further highlight their concern over the potential spread of the disease. Regulations on the importation of dogs to the British Isles, like the Importation of Dogs Order of 1901, represented a concerted effort to try and limit the spread of diseases in dogs throughout Britain. The lengthy quarantining period that canines must go through before they can enter the country was primarily to be able to find out if any of the dogs that would be imported had diseases. Of course, this did not stop the spread of rabies throughout Britain, particularly in its major cities. While fear over stray dogs carrying the deadly disease was over exaggerated, many working-class people had to deal with the potential danger that a stray dog might carry rabies. Indeed, this deadly fear over the potential spread of diseases scared many away from interacting with stray dogs across Britain. Working class concerns over the dangers that strays might pose allowed the

[95] "Experiments on Animals," *The Times*, June 4, 1910.

British government to carry out what can only be described as a mass slaughtering of the country's stray dog population. Since adoption for any stray dogs caught was not a viable option, the only realistic solution was euthanization, at least until the war broke out in 1914, and dogs became a valuable commodity for the British military.

The outbreak of the war helped to provide another method for dealing with the thousands of stray dogs caught. Richardson notes that, early on, the only source for finding dogs that could serve in the military was stray "deserted" dogs in dog homes. The sheer number of dogs in these homes allowed the British government to find and select what they deemed as the "useful breeds of dogs," such as terriers, shepherds, and other herding dogs. The British military quickly moved off of these stray dogs once another opportunity presented itself. They asked the people in Britain to gift their dogs to fight for the state. Owing, in part due to patriotic duty, but as well as the skyrocketing costs associated with feeding a dog during a period where food was scarce, meant that the British army received enough dogs to fulfill their intended goals.[96]

In fact, issues concerning food became such an issue within Britain that the British parliament considered passing a law that increased taxation on those who owned and bred dogs. Furthermore, the War Cabinet also suggested that those that owned dogs and did not gift them to the state in support of the war effort should observe a "one household, one dog" policy. These measures prompted the British Dog Owners' Defence Association to send a letter to the national government about the potential "damage" that these regulations would cause. Sent towards the end of World War I in 1918, the Association noted that dog breeding within Britain had drastically shifted due to the war. Breeders industrialized their operations and sought to breed

[96] Richardson, *British War Dogs*, 60.

dogs that were seen as more suitable for war that, at least for the breeders that were a part of the Association, could not abide by the "one household, one dog" rule.[97]

Despite the desire to increase the number of dogs in the British army, breeders within the British Isles found their job's level of difficulty increased due to the war. The establishment of a dog training school increased taxation on dog owners, as well as the use of stray dogs and gifted dogs for military needs, dried up the available market for dog breeders. The price and scarcity of food only helped to compound this issue for them to the point where the British government did not consider their trade valuable enough to avoid enlistment. One provision of the British Military Service Act of 1916 allows those with a valuable trade to avoid enlistment. In one instance, a dog breeder named John Edwards applied multiple times to an appeal tribunal to avoid losing his business. John's repeated attempts failed due to the number of other sources the British military could find adequate dogs for the army.[98]

Stray dogs played an important role on the battlefield as well. While during peacetime, their existence is shunned and hated for the possibility of the diseases that they carry, during war their companionship, and ability to hunt down vermin was readily accepted. The story of Alan Sugden summarizes the importance of the bonds formed between soldiers and these stray dogs in the trenches. William Alan Sugden was born in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, in 1890 to a large family of three sisters and six brothers. His family led a comfortable life until his father died. Following his father's death, Alan's family struggled financially. Alan worked as an engineer in Sheffield as an adult, sending most of his wages back to his mother in Rotherham. His poor financial status meant that he could not afford a pet like a dog for most of his life until World

[97] Proposed Increased Taxation on Dogs, 1918, T 172/849, The National Archives of the UK.
[98] Case Number: M5061. John Richard Edwards of 5 Midsummer Avenue, Hounslow, 1915-1922, MH 47/47/46, The National Archives of the UK.

War I. In 1913, seeking higher wages to help support his mother, Alan joined his local militia as part of the field artillery. During that same year, Alan also met his fiancee, Amy Ashby, whose father was an affluent middle-class silversmith. His correspondence throughout the war with Amy shed light on some of the close-knit relationships soldiers form with dogs whilst fighting on the front lines. These animals experience the same life-or-death situations alongside themselves, and as a result, they form extremely strong bonds with them.

It is important to note that Alan kept up a more positive facade throughout his correspondence with Amy. He was detailing the war in a — relatively — more positive outlook so as not to worry his fiancee. However, his real opinions about the war are most clearly laid out in the brief time he wrote in his diary. He frequently commented about his daily fears of death and his harsh criticisms of the men staying behind in Britain, not risking their lives for their country, and being threatened by them potentially taking away his fiancee. After witnessing someone receive a court-martialing for having sensitive information within their own diary, Alan's entries in his own journal end. Alan's records of the war, and his own experiences detailed through his journal and his correspondence with his fiance, help to show why many of these working-class soldiers create these new bonds with dogs that they otherwise normally cannot.

When the war broke out for Britain in the summer of 1914, Alan joined the war effort as one of the "Kitchener's Men." Soldiers who answered the call to arms of the King, George V, and Lord Kitchener to join the army to defend against Germany's numerically superior army. His experience in the local militia led him to become part of the Royal Garrison Artillery and receive special education to become an artillery observer, in large part due to the mathematical experience he gained through his background as an engineer. He joined the newly created 21

Siege Company and received more training in telecommunications for his job as an observer. While danger followed many jobs on the frontlines of the Western Front, the position of artillery observer was one of the most deadly. Observers were crucial to the functioning of artillery units throughout the course of the war. They had to calculate the enemy's position through the flashes of their gunfire during the night, which required knowledge of trigonometry and geometry. Due to their immense value, they often found themselves the primary target for hostile snipers. Adding onto the danger observers like Alan faced, they had to travel to high ground at night to find the enemy's locations. In most cases, this involved sneaking next to or behind enemy lines. As a result, the high mortality rate meant that there was a constant need to replenish artillery observers throughout the war. Furthermore, while observers sometimes had companions while performing their duties, due to high death rates, they often operated alone as a result of position scarcity. In a letter to Amy, Alan describes the uncertainty, danger, and loneliness that often plagued observers: “I get some very lonely watches in the night and all alone, darling, and not knowing what might come at any minute, it makes a fellow thing.”[99] One way observers who continually faced the threat of death sought to alleviate this stress was through their relationships with animals, in particular dogs.

A year after the start of the war, Alan came across a stray dog wandering the trenches of his artillery position. He writes to his fiancee, "I have a most beautiful stray black pup. He follows me about everywhere. He just missed a bullet yesterday.”[100] Alan quickly bonded with this stray dog whom he took along with him to his observation missions to keep him company. Unfortunately, this black pup — which Alan never named in his letters — died quite quickly in

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[99] W.A. Sugden to Amy Ashby, September 1st, 1915 in *Private Papers of W A Sugden: Dear Amy*, Adam Matthew, Marlborough, The First World War, http://www.firstworldwar.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Details/IWM_Documents_12614_D.

[100] Sugden to Ashby, July 7th, 1915.

his care. His letter to Amy came a week after his dog died, and in between that time, he swiftly found another stray dog wandering the battlefront. Alan finding another dog to replace the one that he lost shows how he values the companionship that a dog offers. More importantly, this relationship between man and canine served as an outlet for the immense stress Alan's position straddled upon him.

Alan named this new dog Ginger and expressed his delight when it slept with him and followed him everywhere he went, refusing to interact with anyone else. He quickly bonded with the dog and brought him along during his missions as an observer and when he was taken off duty as an observer and sent back to the artillery battery. It is unclear through Alan's correspondence what breed of dog Ginger was; however, he constantly references the dog's smaller size. Following the death of the last dog Alan bonded with, he took extreme care to make sure nothing happened to Ginger. During a bombardment by the Germans, Ginger received a splinter from the fragmentation of an artillery shell, which Alan expressed deep concern over and sought to give her medical attention.

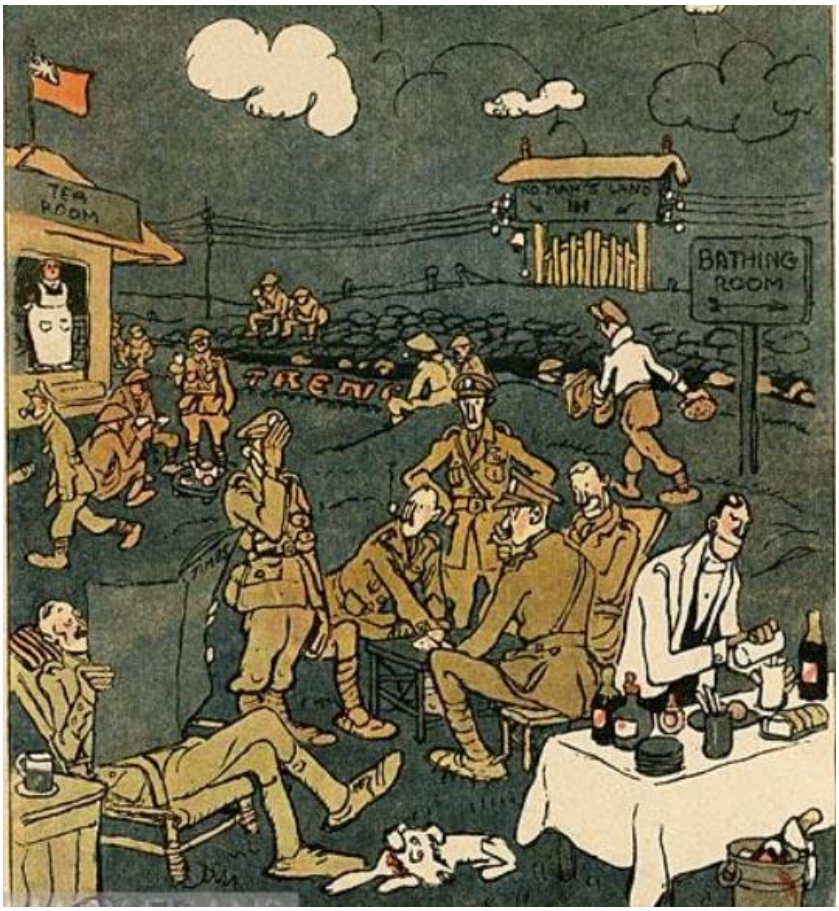

FIGURE 5: A French cartoon of their perceptions of the British troops at the front. Notably, lousing around their camp alongside their dog, leaving most of the fighting to the French. While certainly an exaggeration, smaller dogs like Ginger quickly became favorites of British troops. Gus Bofa in *La Baionnette*, 1917. Courtesy of Mary Evans Picture Library.

Ginger's popularity with Alan's comrades led them to obtaining dogs of their own. In late 1915, Alan references that Ginger recently gave birth to nine pups. Other soldiers seemingly adopted four of them, as the other five, much to Alan's dismay, he drowned.[101] He never goes into detail as for why, but it is likely that Alan's superiors wanted to limit the number of dogs — particularly newborn puppies — running around and distracting soldiers from their duties as well as potentially being another drain on their soldier's supply of food. Smaller dogs, like Ginger, can supplement their diet through hunting rodents in the trenches, but soldiers routinely fed their

[101] Sugden to Ashby, November 2nd, 1915.

dogs from their own rations. Alan frequently bragged about his dog's own hunting prowess to Amy. Ginger hunted down many of the mice and other rodents infesting the trenches, pleasing the officers of Alan's unit. For example, he boasted how Ginger caught nine rats.[102] The main benefits of a stray dog like Ginger came from its talent to kill the rodents infesting the trenches and camps alongside its ability as a calming presence throughout the war. By working as a rat-catcher, soldiers could provide enough justification to their superiors to allow them to keep their companions. There is a limit to how much one could feed their dog in this manner, which is likely why Alan had to dispose of half of his dog's newborn litter. Regardless, throughout the war, Alan made sure his companion was healthy and fed and was constantly worried about his dog's wellbeing.

In one letter, Alan wrote in 1916 about a devastating German attack, where the amount of shelling on Alan's position drastically heated the air from the number of explosions. Afterward, he remarks that a village a mile away is burning so brightly that it is lighting up the entire sky. Even though he describes the attack in devastating detail, instead of talking about his condition after the bombardment, he mentions that his dog survived the attack and triumphantly states, "I have still got my dog."[103] In his next letter, a week later, Alan discusses that he is going to try to figure out a way to bring his newfound companion home with him after the war ends.

The war would rage on for two years after Alan sent his letter about his plans to bring his dog home with him. He eventually managed to smuggle the dog back to Britain once the war ended by hiding him in his coat pocket. There, he lived out the rest of his life with Amy and his dog in a home close to his mother in Rotherham, Yorkshire. In a period of time that was remarkable for its devastation and despair, Alan's story shows how some soldiers in World War I

[102] Sugden to Ashby, February 18th, 1916.
[103] Sugden to Ashby, July 2nd, 1916.

managed to make it through in large part due to the companionship they formed with the stray dogs he encountered throughout the war. He gives a glimpse into the types of reasons why soldiers on the front line formed bonds with these stray dogs and how close a soldier and his dog became due to the life threatening situation they often find themselves in during Europe's deadliest war to date.

Conclusion

Not every soldier was as lucky as Sugden in bringing their dog across the channel. Once the war ended, thousands of soldiers sought to try and bring their furry companions back with them to Britain, similar to what happened with Sugden. However, unlike Sugden, many of them were unable to sneak their companions into Britain past their harsh importation laws. While some of these soldiers accepted defeat and tried to replace their wartime animal companion by adopting or buying a dog at home, others fought against Britain's labyrinthian system of quarantines and legislation to bring their dogs home. In almost every newspaper there would be a section dedicated to the pleas of soldiers trying to bring their dogs to Britain.[104]

Obtaining a new pet after the war also proved to be quite difficult for veterans as well. Over the course of the war, the population of dogs within Britain drastically declined. One reason behind this is that many of the professional dog breeders within Britain found themselves working in a profession that the state and economy did not value. During the war, dog breeders found it hard to sell dogs since no one wanted to take up the massive expense of feeding an animal due to food scarcity. Furthermore, the state drafted many of these dog breeders — like in the case of John Edwards — and their businesses died while they were away, unable to tend to their dogs whilst fighting in a war. Another reason behind the postwar scarcity of dogs is the war

[104] "Charities and Appeals," *The Times*, May 19, 1919.

itself. Homes for stray dogs, like Battersea, gave many of their dogs to the army for the war effort. For them, it was an easy decision. The home did not have to worry about food costs, nor euthanization, and instead could give them for a patriotic cause. Similarly, many families that owned dogs gladly responded to the states' call to gift their dogs to the military effort, in large part due to the rising food costs. But most importantly, the experiences of the soldiers fighting the war, and their interactions with dogs over the course of the conflict, resulted in a postwar rush to adopt dogs. Working class soldiers, whose money gradually pooled up whilst they fought in the war, looked for a furry companion they could call their own once they arrived back home in Britain.

Battersea in particular saw a quick transformation after the end of the war. Seen by many as essentially a "death camp" for stray dogs, the rise in popularity of dogs as a pet resulted in long queues to try and get a companion of their own from Battersea. The scarcity of available dogs for adoption following the war was so great, that thieves began to target people's dogs so that they could sell them for a large sum. Newspapers across the country warned dog owners of this danger. On dog thievery in London, *The Times* advised owners about this threat: "Still, dog-owners would be well advised to keep a close eye on their dogs, for all classes of dogs are still scarce, and consequently fetch good prices."[105] They further reported that over 50 dog owners throughout London disclosed that they lost their dog in December alone. For a period of time, police did not have to worry about stray dogs but a black market for dogs.

Yet these stories of dog thievery did not compare to the public celebration of dogs. The efforts of these dogs and the heroic deeds in newspapers published during wartime helped to change the perceptions of people who had not interacted with a dog directly during the war. For

[105] "Dog-Thieves' Ways," *The Times*, January 12, 1922.

their valiant efforts in the war, the National Canine Defense League opened a new home for sick and stray dogs in London.[106] *The Times*, following the armistice in November 1918, celebrated the heroic actions of the dogs that laid their lives down for the sake of the country. "Among the many activities of the war, it is only right that the national service of the brave dogs of Britain should receive mention." The newspaper celebrated their two years of service, and their importance to the war effort. "In conclusion it may be said that the dogs all love their work, and have ideal surroundings at their training round in the New Forest glen and glades."[107] Showing that the inclusion of dogs into the British military will not stop after the end of the First World War, and would continue for Britain's future conflicts. More interesting, however, is that *The Times* echoed many who celebrated the actions of dogs during the war. This passage highlights how people not only project their human emotions onto an animal but also shows how many of these animals have no choice but to fight for causes they will never fully understand. Still, for the soldiers they fought alongside, they were forever remembered due to the experiences they shared in the war and their constant companionships during a period where many constantly faced the threat of death.

These stressful circumstances that war places these soldiers into encouraged them to form bonds with the dogs they encounter. Studies into the psychological impact animals have on humans that they bond with show a remarkable improvement in the mental state of veterans. A 2003 study by the United States Department of Defense found that veterans that had a dog or some sort of pet they could bond with had noticeably improved quality of life. The researchers found that, for both people and animals, their blood oxytocin levels rise as they interact with one another. Oxytocin is a hormone that helps in the reduction of fear and anxiety. For soldiers who

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[106] "News in Brief," *The Times*, November 12, 1918.
[107] "Dogs in Battle," *The Times*, December 9, 1918.

fought in the stressful and life-threatening theater of World War I, interactions with animals can very well prevent a total mental collapse.[108]

Medical understanding of PTSD, or what was commonly referred to as "Shell Shock," was rather limited during this time. Genetics, laziness, and an excess of feminine qualities were all pseudo-scientific theories as to what was happening to a significant portion of the army. The ability of these drafted dogs to fulfill their intended roles as messengers and guard dogs while subsequently playing the role of battalion mascots allowed for a sort of informal treatment to prevent PTSD. While not as numerous, these dogs played an important role in the mental health of soldiers on the Western Front. Through them, soldiers were able to counteract — to some degree — the horrors of war and the stress and anxiety that it caused.[109]

The stray, messenger, ambulance, and impromptu therapy dogs among many others directly changed working-class' understanding of what their relationship with people could be like. No longer were they simply the beasts of labor, or the symbols of the affluent few. These animals were different, and following the war, the way that they interacted with people throughout Britain, changed. Stories from people like Alan Sugden, and Edwin Richardson, show the value that dogs could have in people's private lives and families, as well as their unique abilities for military use. Unfortunately for people in the working class and dogs alike, this would not be the last major conflict they were dragged into.

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[108] Susan Nance, ed., *The Historical Animal* (Syracuse University Press, 2015), 267-277.
[109] Nance, *The Historical Animal*, 277.

CONCLUSION

For animals that fought in World War I, and many other wars, it is important to remind ourselves that these conflicts that animals find themselves in are not ones of their own creation. Yet for many, they result in their own mortality. Our use of animals in modern times is a pointed example of how our moralities are more like our ancestors than we often like to admit. Even with the staggering advancement humanity has made in terms of science, technology, and — more recently — in robotics, animals, like horses and dogs, still play an important role in our militaries. Our modern understanding of the roles that dogs play in the military has its roots in World War I. Of course, the war had disastrous consequences for the people who fought in it as well. An excerpt from the *London Gazette* places the number of people who died on the Western Front alone at over 10 million. Britain itself sustained around 3 million total losses due to the war, most of which came from fighting in the trenches against Germany.[110]

The war saw two major changes for dogs in Britain. The first being that many people throughout Britain now saw dogs primarily as an animal companion, rather than a tool they could use for labor or a nuisance. Most of this change came from experiences working-class soldiers gained through their interactions with dogs in the Great War. Yet, while in the domestic sphere dogs the perception around dogs as tools changed, in the military, armies across Europe found dogs to be useful tools to replace people in dangerous jobs. Following the war, the use of dogs in military service only increased. As warfare changed from the static trench style that typified the Western Front, so too did the role that dogs played. Improvements in communication technologies made the messenger dog obsolete. However, the warfare of rapid movement seen in World War II saw a mass reintroduction into the first job humans used dogs in armies, as attack

[110] "The Extent of our Casualties," *The London Gazette*, April 10, 1910.

dogs. Infamously, in the Eastern Front — for example — Soviets experimented with using dogs to destroy tanks by training them to crawl under enemy tanks before the bomb attached to them exploded.

The necessity of a total war dramatically altered British society. While soldiers on the battlefield found and formed tight bonds with the dogs they interacted with, people in Britain seemingly moved the other way. Whether they owned them as a pet or as a form of labor, dog owners throughout the country readily gave up their dogs for service in the army once asked by the nation when the cost to maintain these creatures skyrocketed due to wartime food scarcity. Few, if any, had a genuine concern for these animals' well-being throughout the war at home in Britain. The few veterinarian services offered by volunteers like Lizzy Hageby had to focus on treating draft animals like horses ahead of dogs, due to their importance to logistical systems.

There are still many avenues available for studying the story of dogs in World War I. The countries that led the way to the reintroduction of dogs into the military were France and Germany, which paved the way for Britain. Other countries, like Belgium, similarly deployed dogs during the war, adding in their own unique “take” on what a dog could provide in a twentieth century conflict. For example, while the French — and subsequently the British — believed that the best use for dogs during the war were as messengers, the Belgians used dogs to pull smaller artillery pieces through the difficult muddy terrain of the Western Front.

On the other side of the trenches, the Germans believed that the most effective use for dogs was to use them as sentries to alert units in the trenches of enemies attempting to sneak up on them. They did this very well due to the fact that dogs' senses, particularly their hearing and smell, are vastly superior to those of humans and allows more people to rest at a certain time. Not much is understood about how these countries responded to the way that their enemies

deployed dogs. Britain was one of the first nations to develop animal rights legislation, but it was by no means the only nation to do so by the start of the Great War. Furthermore, while the war was the catalyst for people within Britain to change the ways in which they perceived dogs, it may not have been the same for the other combatants. While there are some differences across the world, people have similar notions that dogs are humanity's companions. How many of these countries came to that understanding during the twentieth century is an avenue of research with infinite possibilities.

Yet for Britain, the war unequivocally remains the fulcrum for changing human-canine relationships. Alongside many within the working-class viewing dogs as companions, preferences for breeds that exist today also have their roots in the Great War. Some of the most popular breeds in Britain in modern times, like the Bulldog and the Corgi, are smaller dogs because that is what people in Britain developed a preference for since many formed bonds with smaller stray dogs during World War I. Furthermore, one of the more popular dog breeds within the middle class prior to the war, the German Shepherd, drastically decreased in popularity in relation to the rise of anti-German sentiments developed after the outbreak of the war. This anti-German sentiment created because of World War I is why German Shepherds in Britain today are referred to as Alsatians instead.

It is possible to point to other major events, such as World War II, as catalysts for the change within Britain, as the overall number of dogs utilized by the military is higher compared to World War I, alongside a greater and more personal understanding of what dogs are capable of and what certain breeds of dogs can and cannot do. Of course, many of the precedents for how militaries deploy their dogs have their roots in the First World War, this only accounts for one half of the equation. The other half comes from the static nature of warfare unique to World War

I that saw the development of trenches. Unlike the warfare of movement seen in France in World War II, World War I trench warfare created the unique condition for stray dogs to traverse the battlefield. Of course, World War II saw similar situations, but never on the scale seen in the Great War.

The story of the modern dog in Britain is a story spanning almost a century. It began with the birth of the middle-class in Britain in the early nineteenth century, it ended violently in the crucibles of war with the working-class in World War I. This thesis, through showing how the human-canine relationship changed throughout the nineteenth century, and throughout the war, shows the transformation of British society and human perceptions of which dogs played a key role in shaping their own history. It ended with the reimaging for a whole country of what an animal's relationship to people should be, and what it could be.

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