

# Rags: Hero Dog of WWI

## A RIF GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

**Themes:** Bravery, Friendship, World War I

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

**Author:**  
Margot Theis Raven

**Illustrator:**  
Petra Brown



## TIME TO READ!



**Before reading, build background:** What does your child know about World War I? Explain that it was a war from 1914-1918 between most of the biggest countries in the world,

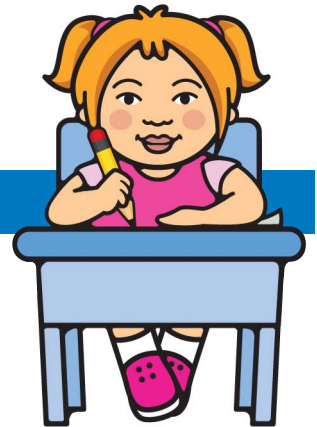
including the U.S. *Please note that this story deals with war and death; be prepared for any questions.*

**While reading, look at the pictures:** What can you tell about life during World War I based on the

pictures? How was technology different back then? Would you have wanted to live in that time?

**After reading, ask questions:**

- ◆ How was Rags a hero?
- ◆ Did he help the soldiers in other ways besides carrying messages?
- ◆ Why do you think Rags never went back to the hospital?



## RELATED ACTIVITIES

### CRACK THE CODE

Materials: paper, pencils or pens

Signalmen like Donovan used Morse code to send messages. In Morse code, dashes or dots stand for letters. Write a message to a friend and translate it into Morse code using this chart: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morse\\_code](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morse_code). Can your friend crack the code? Visit <http://morsecode.scphillips.com/jtranslator.html> to hear your message the way a signalman would have sent it.

### EDITING THE EPILOGUE

Materials: paper, pencil or pen, crayons or markers

The epilogue at the end of the book explains what happens to Rags after the story. Do you like this ending? Feel free to change history by writing your

own! Write a new epilogue to explain what happens to Rags after the story ends. Where does he go? What does he do? Does he find a new owner? Does he find ways to keep helping people after the war is over? Does he miss Donovan? Draw pictures to go with your new ending.

### TECHNOLOGY LINK

Visit [www.defense.gov/home/features/2006/working-dogs](http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2006/working-dogs) and [www.uswardogs.org](http://www.uswardogs.org) to learn more about war dogs. Go to [www.iwm.org.uk/history/15-animals-that-went-to-war](http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/15-animals-that-went-to-war) to see images of other animals active in WWI.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



### OTHER BOOKS BY THIS AUTHOR

- Night Boat to Freedom* (2008)
- Let Them Play* (2005)
- Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot* (2002)



Reading Is Fundamental