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A SALUTE TO FREEDOM | Sergeant Stubby: Four-Legged Hero of World War I

In the summer of 1917, a stray pit bull mix fell into the ranks of the 102nd Infantry Regiment while they trained at Yale University. Christened “Stubby” for his short stature, the friendly stray became the regiment’s constant companion, participating in drills and learning how to salute.

When the 102nd shipped out that following October, Private J. Robert Conroy smuggled Stubby onto the ship. After being discovered by the commanding officer, a salute from Stubby convinced the officer to let the canine remain as the unit’s unofficial mascot.

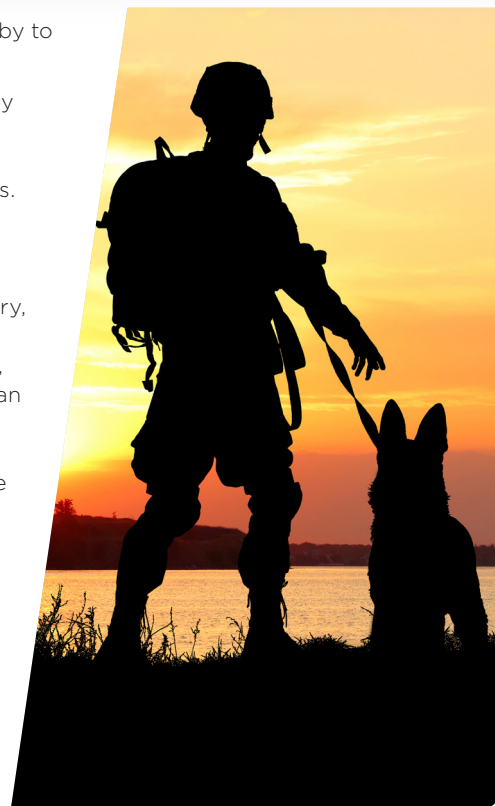
It wasn’t long before Stubby proved himself to be more than a one-trick pit bull. After surviving a poison gas attack, Stubby became very sensitive to the chemical. Early one morning, Stubby began running through the trenches, barking and giving soldiers enough time to put on their — and Stubby’s — gas masks and fight off a German attack.

The fearless Stubby became an expert at finding wounded soldiers. During one patrol, Stubby even found a German spy hiding in the bushes and mapping American positions. Impressed, the

commanding officer “promoted” Stubby to sergeant right then.

During his 18 months in Europe, Stubby participated in 17 battles, receiving numerous medals and becoming the subject of countless newspaper stories. Sergeant Stubby returned home with Conroy as a hero. He shook hands — paws? — with three presidents, led hundreds of parades across the country, stayed in elite hotels, and received lifetime memberships from the YMCA, the American Legion, and the American Red Cross. When Conroy enrolled in law school at Georgetown University, Stubby also became the mascot of the football team.

After Stubby passed away, his body was preserved. Conroy donated him and his many medals to the Smithsonian Institution, where he remains today as part of the WWI exhibit, titled “The Price of Freedom.” Not too shabby for a stray from Connecticut.



NEWSLETTER

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FINDING PEACE

“Peace is not an absence of war. It is a virtue; a state of mind; a disposition for benevolence, confidence, and justice.”

– Baruch Spinoza

This was the favorite quote of a former legal assistant, Lola Murrell. A few of you may remember Lola from when she worked at our front desk. Medical issues forced her to leave some time ago, and Lola passed away a few months back. Recently, I found myself reflecting on the amazing impact she left on our office.

In 2012, Lola had just received her post-baccalaureate certificate in paralegal studies from Old Dominion University, but she didn’t have any experience in the field. At the time, I needed someone to work our front desk as a legal assistant, and a friend was quick to recommend Lola.

“She’s a brilliant woman,” he insisted. “I know her well, and I know she’ll do a great job for you.”

He was right. From day one, Lola did great work. She could look at a massive stack of medical records, understand exactly what she was seeing, and know what information she needed for our cases. A real whiz at Microsoft Excel, Lola even developed the system for recording, storing, accessing, and tracking our client intake that we still use today. All the while, Lola put a dedication to justice in everything she did.

Lola was an integral part of our team, making her departure that much harder. One day, I was called from my office; someone said Lola wasn’t looking well. By the time I reached the front desk, Lola couldn’t respond. We called 911, and though



it only took emergency response five minutes to reach us, in those five minutes I saw Lola go from a fully functioning person to basically a vegetable.

Racing her to the emergency room, we soon learned Lola had suffered a massive stroke. She survived, but she faced a long road. She was forced to leave the office, though we kept her on the insurance plan as long as we could, partly to help out and partly to hold onto our own hope that maybe, by some miracle, she’d be able to come back.

WE REMEMBER LOLA MURRELL

Of course, Lola never took her place at our front desk again, but she didn’t give up. Lola worked really hard, rehabilitating herself to regain her ability to communicate and get around with less assistance. Her husband really jumped into action, helping her however he could. Though times were tough, they grew closer as Lola strove to recover fully.

Unfortunately, two years after the first stroke, Lola suffered from another massive stroke. I was devastated to learn she didn’t pull through, and she passed away on December 10 of last year.

After she passed, I was honored to be invited to a get-together in her honor, where I had the opportunity to meet many of her close friends and family and learn more about her life and spirit. I didn’t know until then how long she’d dreamed of becoming a paralegal or how much being hired at our office meant to her.

If it hadn’t been for this medical issue, I know, without a doubt, that Lola would still be in the office today. Lola was that good at her job, and we’ve never been able to find someone who could replace her passion, skill, and work ethic. We still feel scars from her loss, but when times get tough, I remember Lola’s favorite quote and honor her memory by working hard to ensure this law practice continues to be a force for benevolence, confidence, and justice — to bring our clients at least a tiny taste of peace.

Rest in peace, Lola. You are dearly missed.

– Joseph Miller



Declutter Your Kitchen

Streamline Your Space to Maximize Efficiency

you have space to work, you make much less of a mess. Open counters will also keep you from having to move items around constantly.

Next, eliminate or stow away rarely used or seasonal items. While that custom pineapple slicer might seem cool, how often are you really using it? Items like these should be stored somewhere with extra space; the kitchen is likely not that place. Take it out when you need it, and put it back when you are done.

Drawer dividers are great for keeping utensils separated by size or function. If something comes from a distinct place, it is easier to remember where it goes back after being washed. It also makes it much easier to find the next time you need it. Dividers are especially useful for

keeping sharp items from accidentally poking you.

As far as food goes, make sure you are labeling and dating things to avoid pileups in the pantry or fridge. If you can easily tell how long food has been hanging out, you are much more likely to throw it out when it has reached its expiration date. I promise you, you'll never eat those 6-month-old crackers. They belong in the trash.

These few simple suggestions will have your kitchen running much smoother in no time. You will be shocked at how many things in your kitchen are just wasting space. Once you have pared down to the essentials, keeping the kitchen organized will be much less daunting.

DID YOU KNOW...?

THE NURSE CASE MANAGER AND YOUR CHOICE OF PROVIDERS

In Virginia, your workers' compensation nurse case manager is the person who is supposed to act as the liaison between the insurance company, your health care providers, and you. It is her job to help schedule appointments,

communicate with your doctor, and get clarification about your course of treatment.

But what she does not do is control your treatment. She does not get to decide what facilities you will be treated at or what specialists you are to be referred to.



Those decisions are entirely within the province and control of your authorized treating physician. The nurse case manager might try to direct your treatment to facilities or providers that the insurance company likes, or who are in their network. If those desires run counter to your doctor's orders, then too bad.

In short, the nurse case manager is not allowed to manage your care. That is the job of your doctor.

Unfortunately, many doctors are not aware of this and it sometimes becomes our job to educate them. We recently had a doctor refer our client to a testing facility that he preferred, but then actually tell the client that the nurse case manager usually chooses the facility, so testing might not end up

being done there. Wrong!!! The referral is 100 percent within the doctor's control, and the nurse case manager has no say in the matter!

It is important to be aware of this, because you can rest assured that the insurance companies have their go-to facilities and providers who will almost always say that you are capable of returning to work when you are not, or who will say that you are a faker and not really injured. The nurse case managers are given marching orders by the workers' comp insurance companies to make sure you get to these go-to facilities.

When we are on a case, we do everything possible to make sure that does not happen.



COULDA, WOULD A, SHOULD A

This is a new series of recurring articles we would like to feature from time to time. They are based on very sad calls we receive from folks who appeared to have a great case and would have been entitled to significant money, but by waiting years before calling a workers' compensation attorney (and thereby not protecting their rights or taking any action), they simply blew any chance of obtaining workers' comp benefits or a settlement. Of course we are not sharing these situations to make fun of or denigrate the unfortunate person who made this mistake, but rather to spread the word: DO NOT end up like these folks, or let anyone you know end up like them. Get on the phone and call us.

Our first story is from a man we'll call Mr. Milford. Mr. Milford was assigned to work a machine at a factory. The machine was supposed to be tagged out for safety issues, but it wasn't. One day in 2006, without realizing he was not supposed to use the machine, Mr. Milford went to do his job and as a result, one of his hands was chopped off. It could not be reattached.

As if that weren't sad enough, Mr. Milford made the mistake of not calling our office until many years after his terrible accident.

So what happened? Mr. Milford had surgery to smooth out the stump on his arm. He was fitted with a special prosthesis. And the company he worked for gave him a light-duty job he could perform with one hand.

Neither his employer nor workers' comp insurance company ever told him he was entitled to 150 weeks of compensation for the loss of his hand, which he could have received in a lump sum. Nor did they ever tell him he was entitled to negotiate a potential settlement of his medical claim based on the future lifetime cost of prosthetics and potential surgeries, which his doctor would likely say he would need over the course of his life.

Worst of all, no one ever told him that there were papers he had to file to secure an award and become entitled to his lifetime medical benefits, or to any workers' comp benefits.

So eventually, after many years in this lighter job, after all of his potential workers' comp benefits had expired, his employer — knowing he could get away with it — fired Mr. Milford. Of course, that is what prompted him to call us. Could he get any benefits now?

Now this man in his late 50s with limited skills and only one hand has to try to find a job.

He called us, and we had to give him the very sad news: because he had not protected his rights in a timely manner, there was absolutely nothing that could be done for him under workers' comp law.

If only he had called us back in 2006. Yes, maybe he would have had to return to work, but perhaps we would have obtained a decent settlement for him and he would not be so desperate now.

Joe's Monthly 'SOUL SNACKS'

It is known that an angry person does everything only to further his own prestige.

R. S. Arush

Physical cravings are like a drug coated with honey — however much more you bite into it, the more bitter and addictive it becomes.

R. Nachman

Turkey & Spinach STUFFED MUSHROOMS



What You'll Need ...

- 2 teaspoons coconut oil
- 6 large portobello mushroom caps, cleaned and gills removed
- 1 small onion, diced
- ½ pound ground turkey
- Handful of baby spinach leaves
- 6-8 grape tomatoes, sliced (roasted if preferred)
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Step by Step ...

1. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, melt coconut oil. Place the mushrooms into the skillet and let cook about 5-7 minutes until softened. Flip halfway through, then set aside.
2. In the same skillet, sauté onion until softened, about 3 minutes. Add ground turkey to the pan and break into small pieces. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and cook until done.
3. Remove turkey from heat and add baby spinach leaves. Let the turkey's heat wilt the spinach.
4. To assemble, use a small spoon and scoop the turkey and spinach filling into the caps of the mushrooms. Top with roasted or regular grape tomatoes and serve warm!

Recipe courtesy of TableForTwoBlog.com.