

**TIMELINE ALBUM**



# HARVEY

## Yankee War Dog

By Timothy R. Brookes

Students of the Civil War are occasionally reminded that some of the

notable participants in that conflict weren't of the human species.

References to these four-legged veterans are tantalizingly incomplete.

Official records are almost universally silent, and only the letters and

recollections of their human comrades, embellished by

extraordinarily rare photographs, preserve their individual histories.

One canine "volunteer" who attracted considerable notice during his service was Harvey, a bulldog who went to war with the 104<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry in the late summer of 1862.



Harvey was taken to Vick's Studio in Alliance, Ohio, probably about the time the regiment was mustered out of the service to have his carte de visite photograph taken. *Author's collection.*



Harvey, who apparently had a taste for music, posed with the 104<sup>th</sup>'s coronet band. It seems likely that this photograph was made at Cleveland, Tennessee, in May 1864 and that the cameraman was Thomas Sweeny of Cleveland, Ohio. *Western Reserve Historical Society.*

The 104<sup>th</sup> was recruited in Northeast Ohio. The small town of Wellsville, in Columbiana County, provided the recruits for what was to become Company F. The company was home, according to the regimental historian, to “an undue proportion of ‘toughs’ and ‘deadbeats,’” as well as Harvey and another dog, “that became the pets of the regiment.” Harvey was “an aristocrat,” with more time in the army than most of his regularly enlisted companions. He came to the regiment with First Sergeant Daniel M. Stearns, who earlier had served nearly fourteen months in the Eighth Pennsylvania Reserves. Harvey had accompanied his master’s Pennsylvania outfit to the Virginia Peninsula and, according to one source, was wounded there. By November 1862 Sergeant Stearns had been promoted to second lieutenant, and Harvey was sporting a collar with a brass plate bearing the legend: “I am Lieutenant D.M. Stearns’ dog; whose dog are you?”

Harvey and the men of the 104<sup>th</sup> spent a long year marching the dusty (or muddy) roads of Kentucky and East Tennessee, compared by many in the unit to Washington’s winter camp at Valley Forge.

On February 14, 1864, Captain William Jordan of Company K wrote home to his children describing

the various pets accumulated by the regiment. Harvey and another dog named Colonel were described as “veteran soldier dogs” who “go in any of the tents that they want and lay down at night or stand with the sentinels on guard.” A third dog, Teaser, had been acquired early in 1864 by other enlisted men. Teaser or Colonel may have been “the blue pup” referred to in Private Nelson A. Penney’s 1886 regimental history. It is not surprising that some referred to the unit as the “Barking Dog Regiment.”

Lieutenant Colonel Oscar Sterl was the proud owner of a pet squirrel that had the run of the camp and would even “nibble at the ears” of Harvey and Colonel. Teaser, ignoring the squirrel’s status as a pet, attacked it and was only stopped by Harvey’s intervention. He carefully grabbed the squirrel in his mouth and carried it to safety. The rescue proved unavailing, as the squirrel died of fright shortly after being released. Other mascots included two raccoons and another squirrel who was kept secured by a tiny chain.

During the summer of 1864, the regiment participated in the Atlanta campaign. Near Kennesaw Mountain, Harvey was wounded and captured. The next day, still defiant, he was



returned under a flag of truce. From that point on Harvey was the most honored pet in the regiment. On November 18, 1864, Private Adam Weaver of Company I wrote to his brother in Ohio that “Old Harvey” had paid him a visit while on picket duty. Weaver speculated that perhaps he smelled more like a dog than the boys of Company F. Weaver also recounted that during the soldiers’ campfire sing-alongs, Harvey would bark and move side to side. “My idea is that the noise hurts his ears,” Weaver explained, “as it does mine!”

Less than two weeks later, Harvey survived the bloody battle of Franklin, Tennessee, where the 104<sup>th</sup> held a crucial position. Harvey was present with Company F throughout the slaughter of the Confederate assaulting columns. Protected by their hastily constructed earthworks, the 104<sup>th</sup> still suffered sixty casualties, nearly one-fifth of those present. The regiment captured eleven enemy battle flags.

When members of the 104<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry gathered for the obligatory group photograph at their 1886 reunion, they placed Harvey’s picture in the front row. *Massillon Museum.*

Harvey’s part in the subsequent Battle of Nashville is unknown, but casualties in the 104<sup>th</sup>’s brigade were extremely light. His original owner, Lieutenant Stearns, had less luck than most. While serving as an aide to Brigadier General James Reilly, he was severely injured when his horse fell in jumping the Confederate entrenchments. In January 1865 the 104<sup>th</sup> was transferred to North Carolina. During this trip Harvey and the regiment lost a companion, when the blue pup “tumbled off the train” near Cincinnati. By early summer the war was over, and the men of the 104<sup>th</sup> had returned to their homes.

Harvey’s subsequent career is lost to history. Lieutenant Stearns finished the war as a captain of Company F. He was granted a pension for his Nashville injury and eventually became insane, resulting in his confinement in the Northern Ohio Insane Asylum, where he died in 1890. Although not much past middle age at the time of his death, there is no doubt that he had survived by many years the Yankee war dog who joined the army with him. TL

