



Author's Afterword
Dogs Don't Cry

This is a work of fiction. All of the characters are fictional or fictionalized. The historical context is as accurate as possible. This is my chance to provide some true historical context and confess my sins of fictional license.

Abby, the Durand family, Sergeant Rousseau, his men, Carl Larson, Ab Johnson, Alice Simmons, Pete and Mary Sloan, Emily and Howard Enright and the Bartons are all fictional. Commander Dessez was 5th Regimental Surgeon of the 5th USMC Regiment; his dialogue is fictional.

The tip of the German spear ran through and destroyed Bouresches during the Battle of Belleau Wood in the Second Battle of the Marne during May and June of 1918. This is my third novel centered around that battle. All of these novels involve forgotten, nearly forgotten, and unsung heroes. I felt a need to create a story about the youngest unsung heroes of the war—the French children.

The credit for Abby goes to my border collie Abby. She would object to that statement; rather, she would insist she taught me everything I needed to know about at least one border collie—her. I take full blame for anything I got wrong. Writing from the first-dog point of view is both a challenge and sheer joy. Any time I felt stuck about what Abby would do, I would try to pose the right question to “my” Abby, who usually had the answer. Or a ball. Or her red bone. Or a suggestion that bacon is an appropriate consultation fee, quantities dependent on the amount of work involved.

While we think of search-and-rescue dogs today as being Labs, German Shepherds, and Belgian Malinois, Border Collies were among several breeds used in World War I by the Brits. They are a fascinating breed, and I hope I did them justice.

I apologize to my (distant) French cousins if I got anything wrong with respect to France and the French refugees and the *repatriés* at Evian. All of my source material is in English since I never mastered the language of my ancestors. The descriptions of the evacuations during May and June of 1918 are based on multiple memoirs of United States Marines. Those memoirs reflect sympathy for the refugees and disgust with the isolated French troops that looted homes of the

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evacuees. That was not the policy of the French Army, and the incidents were relatively few. What we might consider looting was common in European armies foraging for food over millennia. Some walked away with more than food.

The plight of French and Belgian refugees and captive populations during World War I has been largely ignored by American fiction. I found stories about the children taken hostage by Germany while reading Henry Davidson's *The American Red Cross in the Great War* (1919). I found a few other sources during an internet search. Most of the Evian children were taken to facilities farther south than Paris. The orphanage in the story is fictional.

The strafing run that killed Claire Durand is fictional. Strafing was not a common tool in the fighter pilot's "tool kit" in that war but was used on occasion. Efforts to terrorize civilians was, however, common. While the Paris air raid in this novel is fictional, German bombed Paris with Gotha bombers on and off during 1917 and early 1918. I could find no record of such bombings in June of 1918. So I did what any good fiction writer has a right to do—I made that one up. Most Americans today don't know that Germany subjected Paris to artillery and air attack in the First World War.