

WHAT THE



DICKIN^(s)



What is the Dickin Medal?

Various Recipients

Other Awards



Animals in War Memorial, London

Maria Dickin (1870-1951)

Maria Dickin CBE was a social reformer and an animal welfare pioneer.

In 1917 she founded the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA).

- PDSA is a British veterinary charity which provides care for sick and injured animals of the poor.
- PDSA is the UK's leading veterinary charity.



Foundation and development

During World War I, animal welfare pioneer Maria Dickin worked to improve the dreadful state of animal health in the Whitechapel area of London. She wanted to open a clinic where East Enders living in poverty could receive free treatment for their sick and injured animals. Despite widespread scepticism, she opened her free "dispensary" in a Whitechapel basement on Saturday 17 November 1917. It was an immediate success and she was soon forced to find larger premises.

Within six years, Maria Dickin had designed and equipped her first horse-drawn clinic, and soon a fleet of mobile dispensaries was established. PDSA vehicles soon became a common sight throughout the country. Eventually, PDSA's role was defined by two Acts of Parliament, in 1949 and 1956, that continue to govern its activities today.

The Dickin Medal

In 1943, the PDSA created the Dickin Medal and named it for Maria Dickin.

It was initially to honour the work of animals in World War II.

It is awarded to animals that have displayed "*conspicuous gallantry or devotion to duty while serving or associated with any branch of the Armed Forces or Civil Defence Units*".



The Dickin Medal

The Medal has been awarded 71 times since 1943 plus 1 Honorary PDSA Dickin Medal which was awarded in 2014.

The recipients:

- 34 dogs
- 32 pigeons
- 4 horses
- 1 cat



Pigeons

The first recipients of the award, in December 1943, were 3 pigeons serving with the Royal Air Force.

- White Vision
- Winkie
- Tyke

They all contributed to the recovery of air crews from ditched aircrafts during World War 2.



Australian Carrier Pigeons

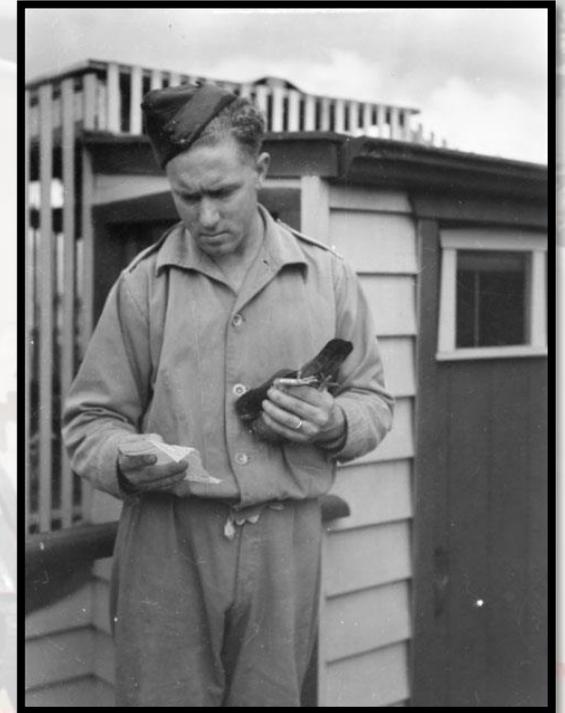
Two carrier pigeons attached to the Australian Army have received the Dickin Medal for gallantry.

Blue bar cock No. 139 Madang 12 July 1945.

Awarded for carrying a message through a severe tropical storm thereby bringing help to an army boat with a vital cargo, in danger of foundering.

Blue chequer cock No. 879 Manus Island 5th April 1944.

Awarded for carrying a message through heavy fire thereby bringing relief to a patrol surrounded and attacked by the enemy without other means of communication.



Corporal G.R. Rayner of No.3 Section (HQ) Carrier Pigeon Unit No.17 Loft, reading a message removed from the container seen on the bird's leg.

Judy of Sussex (1936 – 1950)

Judy was born in the Shanghai Dog Kennels, a boarding kennel used by English expatriates in Shanghai.

In 1936, the crew of the gunboat HMS Gnat purchased Judy to train as a gundog.

The men began to treat her like a pet and several days after her arrival, the log stated "*our chances of making her a trained gundog are very small.*"

Her time spent on the streets of Shanghai was blamed for her lack of hunting instinct, the only time that she would point in the traditional manner was when she could smell food.



Judy of Sussex (1936 – 1950)

The crew began to find the dog useful in navigating the river.

- She was able to alert them to cess boats in sufficient time to close all hatches and minimise the smell.
- She proved very able to hear incoming aircraft, providing the crew with an early warning of any attack.



In November 1936, she fell overboard into the Yangtze River. She was spotted and the ship was called to a full stop and a power boat deployed to retrieve her. The incident was recorded in the ship's log as a man overboard exercise.

On an outing to Jiujiang, one of the crew took Judy for a walk outside of the city but she ran ahead, pulling him with her. When he looked back he realised she had been pulling him away from a leopard.

Judy of Sussex (1936 – 1950)

In 1939, part of the crew, including Judy, were transferred from the Gnat to the Grasshopper. The ship was sent to Singapore after the British declared war on Germany.

In February 1942, the Battle of Singapore took place. On 13th February, the vessels were ordered to evacuate and leave Singapore. They left that evening, and travelled together heading for Djakarta via the Lingga Islands hoping that the island group it sat in could be used as a hiding place.

On 14th February, Judy indicated the approach of Japanese aircraft and the anti-aircraft gunners took up their positions in readiness. Grasshopper was hit with a single bomb.

Judy was below decks when the planes returned and Grasshopper was hit by a further two bombs. A fire spread close to an ammunition compartment and the order to abandon ship was given.



Judy of Sussex (1936 – 1950)

Boats were lowered and the crew were ferried just over a hundred yards to shore whilst the Japanese planes strafed the vessels. When they reached shore, they realised Judy was not with them. She was trapped by a falling row of lockers and was rescued by a crewman returning to the stricken vessel looking for supplies.

The survivors camped on the beach of the deserted island for a few days. Judy found a source of fresh water and protected them from snakes.

They trekked across 320 kms of jungle for five weeks, heading for Sumatra to link up with the evacuating British forces. Judy survived a crocodile attack.

The crew arrived one day after the last vessel had left and subsequently became prisoners of war of the Japanese.

Judy of Sussex (1936 – 1950)

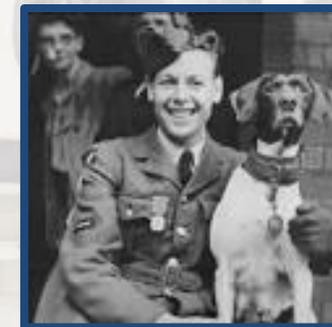
The crew were initially held in Padang, but were soon moved on.

They smuggled Judy on board the transport trucks, hidden under empty rice sacks.

After five days they arrived at the Gloegoer prisoner of war camp in Medan.

Judy met Leading Aircraftsman Frank Williams for the first time. He adopted Judy and shared his daily handful of rice.

She would go on to spend the rest of her life with Frank.



Judy of Sussex (1936 – 1950)

In the camp:

- Judy distracted the guards who were administering punishment.
- She alerted the prisoners to the approach of the guards or the presence of snakes or scorpions.
- She hunted for food and brought back rats and snakes to Williams.

She was the only animal to have been officially registered as a prisoner of war during the Second World War. Her Official POW name was 81A Gloegoer Medan.

Frank Williams intervened to protect her from being shot when she barked or growled at the guards. He promised the drunken Camp Commandant one of Judy's future puppies.

Judy had 5 puppies. One was given to the commandant, as promised, and another smuggled into the women's camp along with any food the men could spare.

Judy of Sussex (1936 – 1950)

Judy moved around with them to several more camps.

She survived the sinking of a transport ship where she also saved several passengers from drowning.

After the end of the war, Judy's life was put in danger once again. She was about to be put to death by the Japanese guards following a lice outbreak amongst the prisoners.

Williams hid the dog until the Allied forces arrived. He and others smuggled Judy back to the UK and she spent the next six months in quarantine.



Judy in quarantine

Judy of Sussex (1936 – 1950)

Judy was awarded the Dickin Medal by the PDSA.

She died in 1950 in Tanzania after travelling with Williams there to work on a groundnut food scheme.

Her Dickin Medal and collar were subsequently put on display at the Imperial War Museum in Duxford Cambridgeshire as part of 'The Animal's War' exhibition.



Judy's Dickin Medal Citation :
For magnificent courage and endurance in Japanese prison camps, which helped to maintain morale among her fellow prisoners and also for saving many lives through her intelligence and watchfulness.

Simon the Cat

Simon was found wandering the dockyards of Hong Kong in March 1948 by Ordinary Seaman George Hickinbottom, a member of the crew of the British frigate HMS Amethyst. Simon appeared to be about one year old and very undernourished and unwell.

Hickinbottom smuggled Simon on board and the cat soon became popular with the crew and officers, particularly because he was adept at catching and killing rats on the lower decks.

Simon rapidly gained a reputation for cheekiness.

- He left presents of dead rats in sailors' beds.
- He slept in the captain's cap.

The crew viewed Simon as a lucky mascot, and when the ship's commander changed, the outgoing commander left the cat for his successor, Lieutenant Commander Bernard Skinner, who took an immediate liking to the friendly animal.



Simon the Cat

Skinner's first mission in command of the *Amethyst* was to travel up the Yangtze River to Nanking and replace HMS Consort which was standing as guard ship for the British Embassy in Nanking during the Chinese Civil War.

Halfway up the river Chinese Communist gun batteries opened fire on the frigate.

One of the first rounds tore through the captain's cabin, seriously wounding Simon. Lieutenant Commander Skinner died of his wounds soon after the attack.

Amethyst remained under guard for 10 weeks, with vital supplies being withheld from the ship. On 30 July 1949 *Amethyst* slipped her chain and headed downriver in the dark, beginning a 170 km dash for freedom running the gauntlet of guns on both banks of the river.



Simon the Cat

The badly wounded cat crawled on deck, and was rushed to the medical bay, where the ship's surviving medical staff cleaned his burns, and removed four pieces of shrapnel, but he was not expected to last the night.

He did survive. After a period of recovery, Simon returned to his former duties in spite of the indifference he faced from the new captain.

While anchored in the river, the ship had become overrun with rats, and Simon took on the task of removing them with vigour, as well as raising the morale of the sailors.



Simon the Cat

Following the ship's escape from the Yangtze, Simon became an instant celebrity, lauded in British and world news.

Thousands of letters were written to him, so many that Lt. Stewart Hett was appointed "cat officer" to deal with Simon's mail.

At every port Amethyst stopped at on its route home, Simon was presented with honour, and a special welcome was made for him at Plymouth in November when the ship returned.

He was presented with the Dickin Medal in August 1949. As of 2018, Simon is the only cat to be awarded the Dickin Medal.

He was also awarded a Blue Cross medal, the Amethyst campaign medal, and the fanciful rank of 'Able Seacat' (cf. Able seaman) after disposing of a notorious rat known as "Mao Tse-tung".



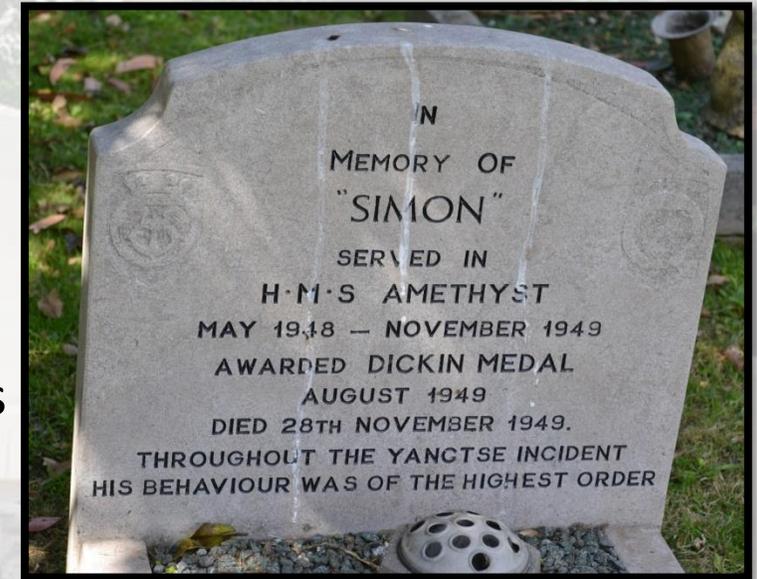
Simon the Cat

Like all animals entering the UK, Simon was immediately placed in quarantine in Surrey.

Whilst in quarantine, Simon contracted a virus and died on 28 November 1949.

Hundreds, including the entire crew of HMS Amethyst, attended his funeral at the PDSA Ilford Animal Cemetery in east London.

In 1950, the writer Paul Gallico dedicated his novel *Jennie* to Simon.



Antis (1939–1953)

At the start of the Second World War, Robert Bozděch and Pierre Duval were sent on a reconnaissance mission from the French airbase at Saint-Dizier. Their plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed in no-mans land.

Bozděch helped the injured Duval to an abandoned farm house, where they found a German Shepherd puppy in the kitchen.

They knew that they had to make for the French lines at night or risk capture by the Germans. They left water and chocolate for the dog before heading off across the snow to a nearby wood. They had nearly reached the trees when they heard the dog howling. Robert went back, picked it up and put it inside his flight jacket.



Antis (1939–1953)

They made it to the cover of the trees and were found by a party of French troops who had been sent to look for them. They took the dog back to the base where Duval was sent to the hospital.

Bozděch met back up with his fellow Czech airmen in exile, who all played with the puppy. They decided to name him Antis, after their favourite aircraft in Czechoslovakia.



Antis (1939–1953)

10 May 1940, the airfield at Saint-Dizier was bombed and most of the planes were destroyed.

After moving to their third base, Bozděch decided to take Ant with him in his plane for the dog's first combat mission. Ant barely stirred, even when Bozděch was firing the guns at German fighters

The duo were reunited with a recovered Duval, who became Bozděch's pilot once again. Ant continued to fly with them.

14 June the remaining planes of their squadron were destroyed and three days later the squadron was disbanded.



Antis (1939–1953)

When France surrendered to Germany, Ant and the Czech airmen planned to travel south to Spain and then Gibraltar, from where they could fight on from the United Kingdom.

They joined the columns of refugees on the roads heading south.

They reached Blois and were directed to a train to Montpellier. Ant shot off towards the rear of the train and stopped by a cattle truck.

It was opened, revealing a woman and her two daughters. Ant had been attracted by the smell of the chocolate one of the girls was eating. She offered him a piece. When he was a pup, he waited for it to melt but now he wolfed it down excitedly.

Antis (1939–1953)

The overloaded train made slow progress, moving only 100 km in three days. They had little food and found it difficult to feed the dog.

The Czechs jumped off at one stop to attempt to milk a cow in a nearby pasture to fill a baby's bottle for the dog. They led some locals to believe they were seeking food for a baby and were supplied with milk.

They repeated this a few more times and each time they produced the bottle were given milk for the non-existent baby.

From Montpellier, they changed trains to travel to Marseille where they boarded a boat to Gibraltar. They arrived on 30 June, thirteen days after they started their journey.

Antis (1939–1953)

The trip to Gibraltar was uneventful, and once they arrived they sought to board a cargo vessel which was due to join a convoy for England. The ferry to the vessel refused to allow any dogs on board. One of the guards claimed they had refused a Colonel's dog earlier that day.

Bozděch decided to trust Ant's recall ability. The airman boarded the ferry and left Antis on shore. He boarded the cargo vessel and took a ladder down the outside of the hull to a swimming platform where he called out for Ant. The dog swam 100 metres to the ship, where Bozděch wrapped Ant in his greatcoat and smuggled him to the hold.

They spent most of the journey in the hold, where their Czech compatriots had created a sleeping area for them. The rest of the refugees spent their time on deck.

Antis (1939–1953)

Bozděch was concerned about their likelihood of survival in the event of a U-boat attack.

The first attack came two days after the convoy left Gibraltar. The accompanying destroyers spread out and dropped depth charges.

The attack seemed to subside after a few hours with man and dog staying below decks the whole time to avoid the risk of Ant's discovery.

Antis (1939–1953)

The submarine attack was followed up by an air attack. Instead of remaining below decks, Bozděch took Ant up onto the upper deck but they were not discovered in the chaos. The vessel was indirectly damaged by the action. It developed an engine fault after steaming too fast and too long.

The refugees were transferred to a cruise ship, which had been taken into war service.

The Czechs tried to smuggle Ant onto the second ship by hiding him in a kit bag but Ant pushed his head out just as they were boarding. Fortunately for Ant, the new crew seemed happy to have a dog on board and welcomed him.

The facilities on this ship were much better, The cabins remained fitted out as a cruise ship and Ant could stay in the cabin with the men.



Antis (1939–1953)

The remainder of the voyage went smoothly, until they were informed about the quarantine rules for dogs entering the United Kingdom.

Having no money for the quarantine fees, the Czechs sought once again to smuggle him – this time into the UK.

Once again, they hid Ant once again in a bag, this time mixed up with those being transferred as cargo by crane. They arrived at the docks in Liverpool on 12 July, and successfully took Ant ashore.

Bozděch and Antis joined a Czech RAF Squadron based near Liverpool.

Antis was a brave dog, Following one of the air raids, he searched for survivors despite being wounded himself.

Antis (1939–1953)

A few months later, the squadron was posted to Norfolk. Regulations prohibited Antis from flying with Bozděch.

Tired of waiting on sidelines for his 'master' to return, Antis crept on board the aircraft before it left on one of its bomber flights. He stayed hidden until they were almost over Germany.

At 16,000 feet Antis had problems breathing. The sound alerted Bozděch to his presence and they shared Bozděch's oxygen mask.

A special oxygen mask was created using a standard pilot's mask, cut about and modified to fit his long and slender snout. It had a special set of straps and extra fastenings latching onto his collar. Antis didn't like wearing it but would as long as Bozděch did too. He was permitted to continue to fly, took part in about 30 missions and became a mascot for the squadron.



Antis (1939–1953)

Wounded repeatedly in action, shot, facing crash-landings and parachute bailouts, Ant was eventually grounded due to injury.

Even then he refused to abandon his duty, waiting patiently beside the runway for his master's return from every sortie.



© Damien Lewis

Antis (1939–1953)

After the war Bozděch returned to Czechoslovakia and worked at the Ministry of Defence. He married and had a son. He wrote and published books.

Bozděch had to flee Czechoslovakia again in 1948 due to growing persecution by the communists. Antis helped him and several others to escape to West Germany by guiding them around searchlights and the field of fire of a fixed machine gun. Bozděch returned to the UK, where he re-joined the RAF and married again.

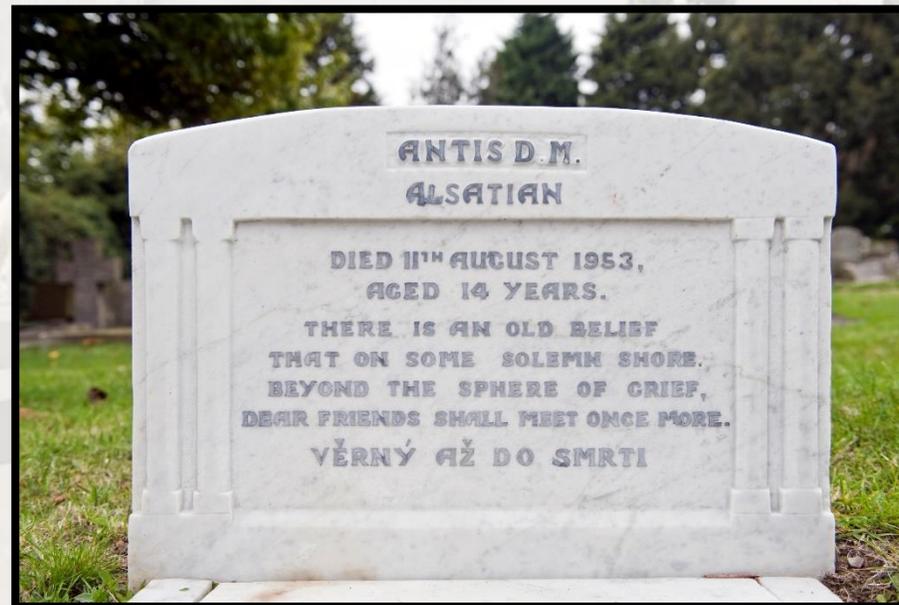


Antis (1939–1953)

Antis was awarded the Dickin Medal in 1949. Antis continued to live with Bozděch. He died aged 14.

Bozděch became a British national in 1951 and never returned to his homeland.

He was posthumously promoted to the rank of colonel.



Gander the Newfoundland



The awarding of the medal was revived in 2000 to honour Gander, a Newfoundland dog, who saved infantrymen during the Battle of Lye Mun on Hong Kong Island in December 1941.

Gander was mascot for the Royal Rifles, a regiment of the Canadian Army stationed at the Gander International Airport during the early part of World War II.



Gander the Newfoundland

In 1941, the 1st Battalion were sent to Hong Kong to defend the island from the Japanese. The men promoted Gander to the rank of “Sergeant” and took him on their mission.

Rifleman Fred Kelly was responsible for taking care of Gander. During his time in Hong Kong, Kelly let Gander take long cold showers to help deal with the immense heat. According to Kelly, Gander was also a fan of beer.

During the Battle of Hong Kong, Gander helped fight the Japanese invaders on three occasions. He charged at any Japanese soldier who made the mistake of getting too close to the Canadian troops and tackled them.

“He growled and ran at the enemy soldiers, biting at their heels,” Rifleman Reginald Law recalled. Most battles took place at night and Gander’s black fur made him hard to see.

As a result, instead of shooting him, the Japanese hightailed it out of there to escape Gander’s wrath.

Later on, the Japanese interrogated Canadian prisoners of war about “Black Beast,” fearing that the Allies were training ferocious animals for warfare.

Gander the Newfoundland

On December 19th just after midnight, the Battle of Lye Mun broke out. Gander fought off the Japanese as he always did, until a grenade was thrown near a group of injured Canadians.

Gander picked up the grenade with his mouth and tore off with it. The grenade exploded and Gander was killed, but in doing so he had saved the lives of the seven soldiers.



The Dickin Medal was awarded posthumously on 27 October 2000.

“For saving the lives of Canadian infantrymen during the Battle of Lye Mun on Hong Kong Island in December 1941. On three documented occasions Gander, the Newfoundland mascot of the Royal Rifles of Canada engaged the enemy as his regiment joined the Winnipeg Grenadiers, members of Battalion Headquarters ‘C’ Force and other Commonwealth troops in their courageous defence of the Island.

Beauty

Beauty was honoured for helping to locate buried air raid victims while serving with a PDSA Rescue Squad during World War Two.

The wire hair fox terrier received the Dickin Medal in 1945.



Rip

1945

Mongrel Rip received the Dickin Medal for locating many victims of the air-raids during the Blitz.



Regal, Olga, and Upstart

There have been five equine recipients of the Dickin Medal since its creation in 1943.

The first three were British horses Regal, Olga, and Upstart and were selected primarily as a way to honour the entire mounted police force instead of singling out any particular deed.

Olga, Upstart and Regal are buried at the Metropolitan Police Mounted Training Establishment at Thames Ditton which also displays their medals in a museum.



Left to right: Olga, Regal and Upstart with their handlers at the Dickin Medal ceremony in 1947.

Warrior – Canadian Corps Cavalry

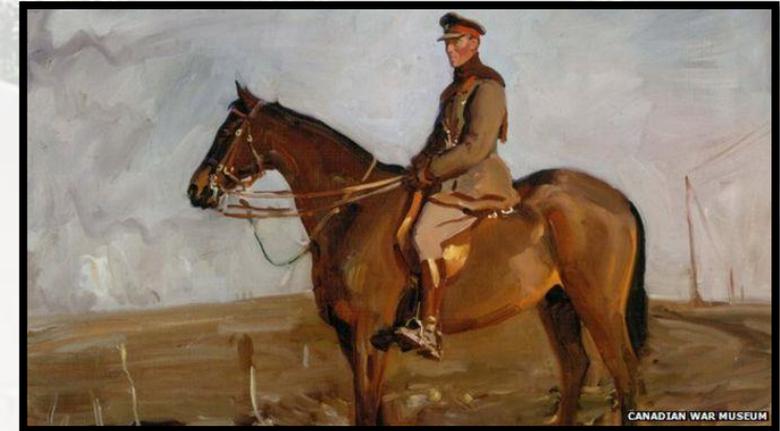
The Honorary Dickin Medal was awarded to warhorse Warrior to honour all the animals that served in the First World War. Their contribution predates the institution of the Dickin Medal.

The Honorary PDSA Dickin Medal is an award designed to recognise the role that ALL animals played during this time.

Warrior was the warhorse of General Jack Seely, and served with him on the Western Front throughout the war, from 1914 to 1918.

Warrior survived the war, dying in 1941 at the age of 33.

An obituary was printed in The Times, and Warrior features in a statue of Seely at Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight.



Warrior and Seely are depicted on a painting by Alfred Munnings in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Reckless – US Marine Corps

Sergeant Reckless served as an ammunition carrier horse for the United States Marine Corps during the Korean War and was given the Dickin Medal for "her bravery and devotion to duty", noting that she had been wounded in battle twice and in particular her service during the Battle for Outpost Vegas in 1953 when she made 51 trips in one day, hauling ammunition up to the combat zone and bringing wounded soldiers back down.



Sergeant Reckless

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ylo3ZfA9da0>

3minutes 36seconds

September 11

In early 2002, the medal was given in honour of three dogs for their role responding to the September 11 attacks.

Salty and Roselle – Labrador Guide dogs

Date of Award: 5 March 2002

“For remaining loyally at the side of their blind owners, courageously leading them down more than 70 floors of the World Trade Center and to a place of safety following the terrorist attack on New York on 11 September 2001.”



September 11

Appollo – German Shepherd

Date of Award: 5 March 2002

NYPD dog Appollo received the PDSA Dickin Medal on behalf of all the Search and Rescue dogs at Ground Zero and the Pentagon following the terrorist attack on 11 September 2001.

“For tireless courage in the service of humanity during the search and rescue operations in New York and Washington on and after 11 September 2001.” Faithful to words of command and undaunted by the task, the dogs’ work and unstinting devotion to duty stand as a testament to those lost or injured.”



September 11

Trakr was a German Shepherd who answered the call for action that fateful day with his Canadian police officer and handler, James Symington.

The duo is credited with finding the last remaining survivor from the World Trade Center after she had been trapped for 26 hours.

Trakr was named one of history's most heroic animals by Time magazine.



Sam

Sam was a German Shepherd with Royal Army Veterinary Corps, a part of the peacekeeping force in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

While patrolling in the town of Drvar in 1998, the patrol came under fire from a gunman who then ran into a bar. Sam chased him and brought him down.

Six days later, a mob of rioters armed with crowbars, clubs and stones surrounded a compound where about 50 Serbs were taking refuge. Sam's team managed to force their way into the compound and they held off the rioters until reinforcements arrived.

Sam retired from service two years later, at the age of 10 and died from natural causes soon afterwards. He was posthumously awarded the Dickin Medal in 2003.



*59th animal to receive the award
and
1st army dog to receive it since 1944.*

Buster

Buster served with the Duke of Wellington's Regiment.

In March 2003, arms and explosives search dog Buster found an arsenal of weapons and explosives hidden behind a false wall in a property linked with an extremist group in Iraq.

The springer spaniel is thought to be responsible for saving the lives of service personnel and civilians.

December 2003 awarded the Dickin Medal.



Diesel

Diesel was a seven-year-old Belgian Malinois RAID assault dog employed by the anti-terrorist unit of the French National Police.

On 18 November 2015, Diesel was killed in a shootout with suspected terrorists in the Saint-Denis area of Paris, while searching for suspects involved in the November 2015 Paris attacks.

Diesel was saluted for her bravery by the Paris police chiefs *'that dog almost certainly saved her handler's life during the raid.'*



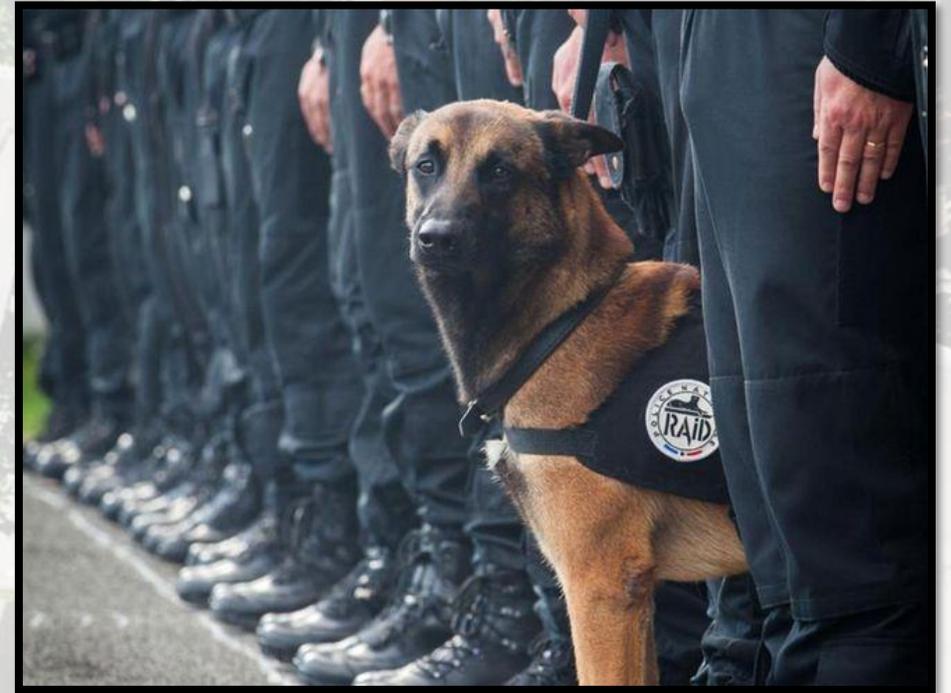
Diesel

Tributes to Diesel on social media were extensive.

Shortly after Diesel's death, the Russian interior ministry sent a replacement puppy Dobrynya (named after the bogatyr -Dobrynya Nikitich - a stock character in medieval East Slavic legends) as a sign of solidarity with France.

On 28 December 2015, the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals announced that Diesel was to be posthumously awarded the Dickin Medal for bravery.

It will be the 68th time that the medal has been awarded.



Kuga

Apr 2007: Kuga born

Jan 2008: Began training with the Australian Special Air Service Regiment (SASR) and assigned to his handler the following year.

Jun 2010: Deployed to Afghanistan for their first tour.

Aug 2011: During the second tour, a SASR patrol was airlifted by helicopter into Khas Urozgan District in central Afghanistan, with a mission to locate a high value Taliban.

Unknown to the patrol, an ambush had been set up by the Taliban fighters.



Kuga – the first Australian dog to be awarded the Dickin Medal for animal gallantry

Kuga

Kuga's handler let Kuga off-lead to patrol ahead and scout.

While Kuga was swimming across the creek, the Taliban engaged him with automatic gun fire. Kuga left the water and charged at the shooter, grasping onto him.

The shooter then targeted Kuga directly with his rifle. Kuga was injured.

The handler provided immediate first aid, and an emergency medical evacuation was called.

Kuga's actions had alerted the Australian patrol to the ambush and prepared them to engage the insurgents.



Kuga – the first Australian dog to be awarded the Dickin Medal for animal gallantry

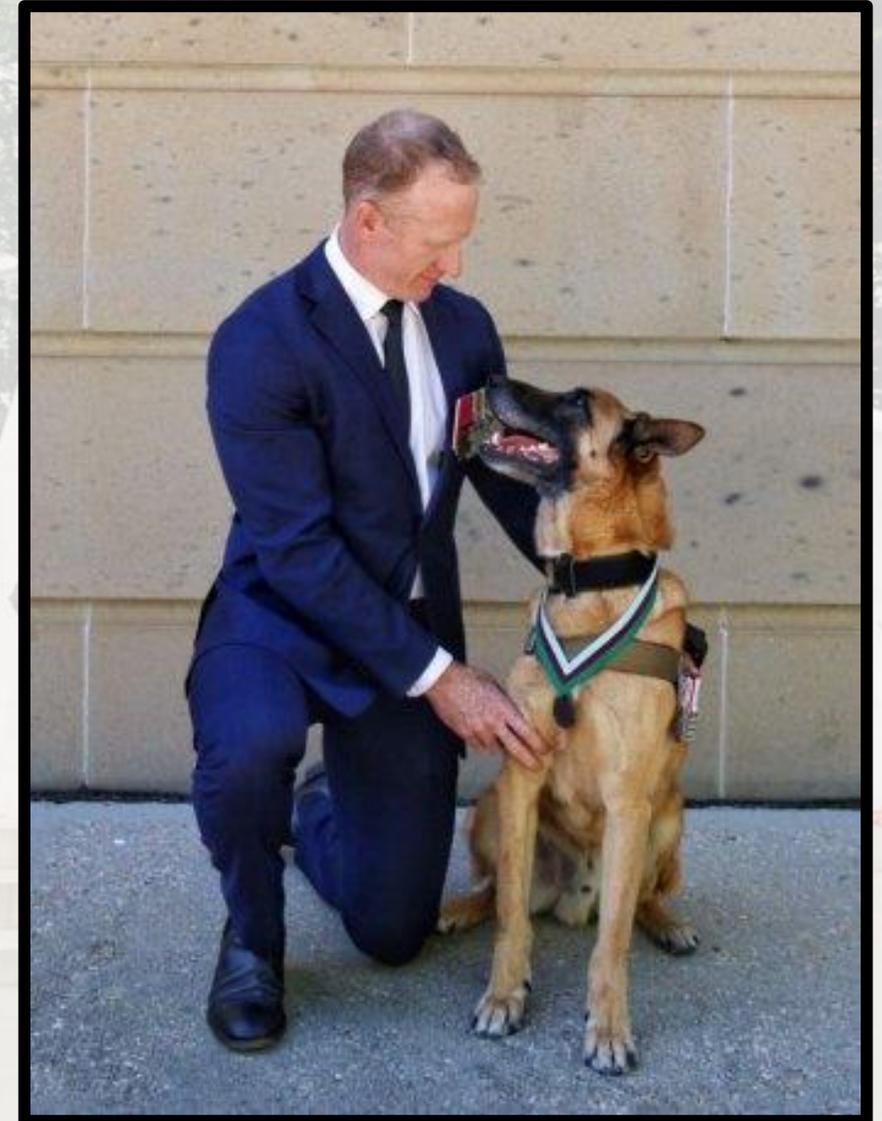
Kuga

Kuga was evacuated and treated by veterinary staff in Afghanistan, Germany, and Australia.

He died on 24 July 2012. Kuga's death is officially recorded as 'Died of Wounds'.

In 2018, Kuga was posthumously awarded the 71st Dickin Medal for bravery.

The medal was received on Kuga's behalf by a Victoria Cross recipient, Mark Donaldson VC, who was also a Special forces dog handler, along with another military dog, Odin.





AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Bamse (1937 – 1944)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZ8ohSE1OnA>

6min 16sec

Bamse (1937 – 1944)

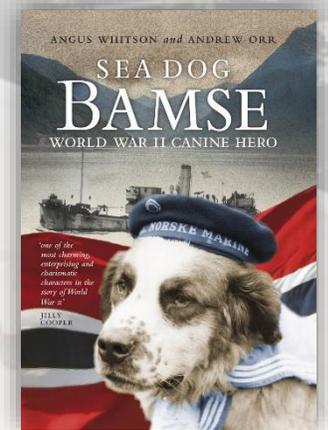
Bamse was a St Bernard dog that became a symbol of Norwegian freedom during the Second World War.

Bamse was bought in Oslo by Captain Erling Hafto, the master of a Norwegian whale-catcher and was taken to sea from an early age.

At the start of the war, the whale-catcher was drafted into the Royal Norwegian Navy as a coastal patrol vessel and Bamse was enrolled as an official crew member in February 1940.

After the Nazi invasion of Norway in April 1940, the whale-catcher was part of the naval opposition to the Germans and had as one of its uses POW transport. Shortly before the capitulation of mainland Norway in June, it was one of 13 Norwegian naval vessels to escape to the UK.

It was converted to a minesweeper in Rosyth and stationed in Scotland and remained there for the rest of the war.



Bamse pronounced *Bump-sa* Norwegian for "teddy bear"

Bamse

Bamse lifted the morale of the ship's crew, and became well known to the local civilian population.

In battle, he would stand on the front gun tower of the boat, and the crew made him a special metal helmet.



Bamse

Bamse's acts of heroism:

- He saved a young lieutenant commander who had been attacked by a man wielding a knife by pushing the assailant into the sea.
- He dragged back to shore a sailor who had fallen overboard.
- He broke up fights amongst his crewmates by putting his paws on their shoulders, calming them down and then leading them back to the ship.

One of Bamse's tasks in Scotland was to round up his crew and escort them back to the ship in time for duty or curfew. To do this, he travelled on the local buses unaccompanied, and the crew bought him a bus pass which was attached to his collar.

Bamse would wander down to the bus stop at Broughty Ferry Road and take the bus down to Dundee. He would get off at the bus stop near his crew's favourite watering hole, the Bodega Bar and go in to fetch them. If he could not locate his friends he would take the bus back to base.

Bamse

From his ship's mascot, Bamse became mascot of the Royal Norwegian Navy, and then of all the Free Norwegian Forces.

An iconic photograph of him wearing a Norwegian sailor's cap was used on patriotic Easter cards and Christmas cards during the war.

The PDSA made him an official Allied Forces Mascot.

When his owner, Captain Hafto, was assigned to a different ship he wanted to take Bamse with him. But the crew loved Bamse so much they threatened mutiny if Bamse left. So Captain Hafto agreed to let Bamse continue serving on the Thorodd till the end of the war.



Bamse

Unfortunately the war lasted longer than Bamse.

Suffering from heart failure, Bamse died on the dockside at Montrose on 22 July 1944. He was buried with full military honours.

Hundreds of Norwegian sailors, Allied servicemen, schoolchildren and townsfolk from Montrose and Dundee attended his funeral.

His grave site in the sand dunes has been looked after by local people.

The Royal Norwegian Navy holds a commemorative ceremony every ten years.

Bamse

Bamse was posthumously awarded Norges Hundeorden (a special award for dogs) in 1984 for his war service.

In 2006, he was awarded the PDSA Gold Medal (known as the "animals' George Cross") for gallantry and devotion to duty, the only World War II animal to have received this honour.

In 2006, HRH The Duke of York unveiled a larger than life sized bronze statue of Bamse, made by Scottish sculptor Alan Herriot, on Montrose's Wharf Street. The Norwegian consul in Edinburgh brought greetings from Norway's king, Harald V.

In 2016 a 17 acre forest was planted in honour of Bamse in Cumbria.



Bamse

On 16 May 2009 Royal Norwegian Navy cutter MV Leikvin transported a Bamse statue from the Port of Leith, Scotland to Honningsvåg.

On 19 June 2009 schoolchildren from Honningsvåg and from Montrose unveiled the statue on the Honningsvåg harbour, in front of the museum (which tells his story in detail).

The new statue of Bamse at Honningsvåg faces south west towards Montrose, and the Scottish statue is faces north-east towards Honningsvåg.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZ8ohSE1OnA>



Purple Poppy

The purple poppy was created in 2006 by the charity Animal Aid in the UK as a way to commemorate animals which served during conflicts as the charity viewed that they had been the forgotten victims of war.

Historically the greatest number of animal casualties in conflict have been horses and ponies.



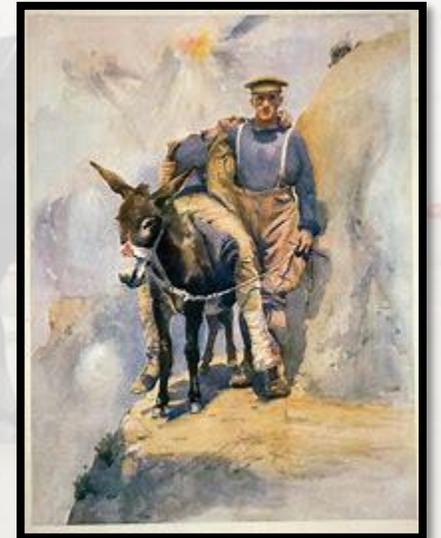
Simpson and his Donkey (s)

22 years old, English-born and a trade union activist, John (Jack) Simpson Kirkpatrick was an unlikely figure to become a national hero. Having deserted from the merchant navy in 1910, he tramped around Australia and worked in a variety of jobs.

He enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force, hoping this would get him back to England; but Private Simpson found himself at ANZAC Cove and was killed less than four weeks later.

Instructed to recover and help the wounded he undertook this work enthusiastically. Famously, he used a small donkey to carry men down from the front line, often exposing himself to fire.

The bravery of this "man with the donkey" soon became the most prominent symbol of Australian courage and tenacity on Gallipoli and was used as an enlistment tool but he was quickly forgotten after the war.



Simpson and his Donkey (s)

Simpson Kirkpatrick was never on the front line, as stretcher bearers were meant to be, carrying the most seriously wounded soldiers from where they had fallen to the beach.

Only the less seriously injured – people with eye, arm or leg wounds – could make the journey, sitting upright, on a donkey.

So why did he never carry a stretcher on the peninsula?

According to some reports, both men either side of him were killed. Without a partner to carry the other end of the stretcher, he carried the injured on his back that first day.

The official version has him finding his donkey on April 26. Where the donkey came from has been the subject of ridiculous speculation – including that he smuggled it ashore in the landing boat. The most likely explanation is that it belonged to a local farmer and just took it.

Simpson and his Donkey (s)

His family called him "Jack".

Anzacs who wrote letters home referred to him as "Scotty", "Simmy", "Duffy", "Abdul" or "Murphy".

It seems the Anzacs, with far more pressing things to worry about than historical accuracy, confused the man with his donkeys.

There were at least two donkeys, possibly more.

He appears to have named the first Duffy, and the last (the one with him when he died) Murphy.

In between, there are mentions of other donkeys: Duffy II, Queen Elizabeth, Jenny and Little Jenny.

Each time one was killed, Simpson Kirkpatrick found a replacement.

Simpson and his Donkey (s)

There is a persistent myth that he was recommended for a VC, but that this was either refused or mishandled by the military bureaucracy.

However, there is no documentary evidence that such a recommendation was ever made.

The case for Simpson being awarded a VC is based on diary entries by his commanding officer that express the hope he would receive either a Distinguished Conduct Medal or VC.

However, the officer in question never made a formal recommendation for either of these medals.

Simpson's Mention in Despatches was consistent with the recognition given to other men who performed the same role at Gallipoli.

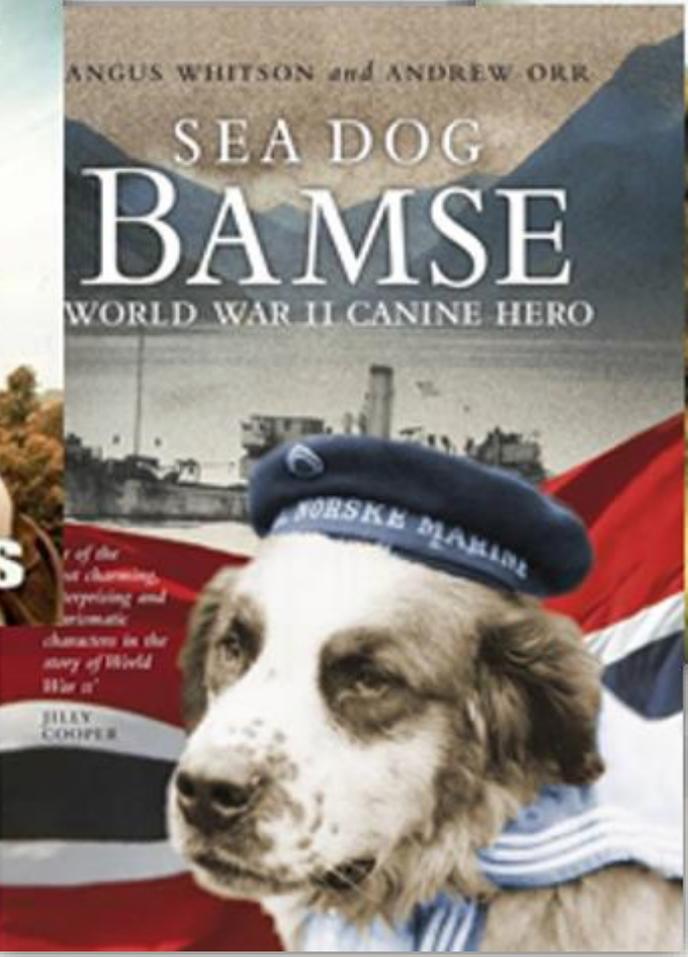
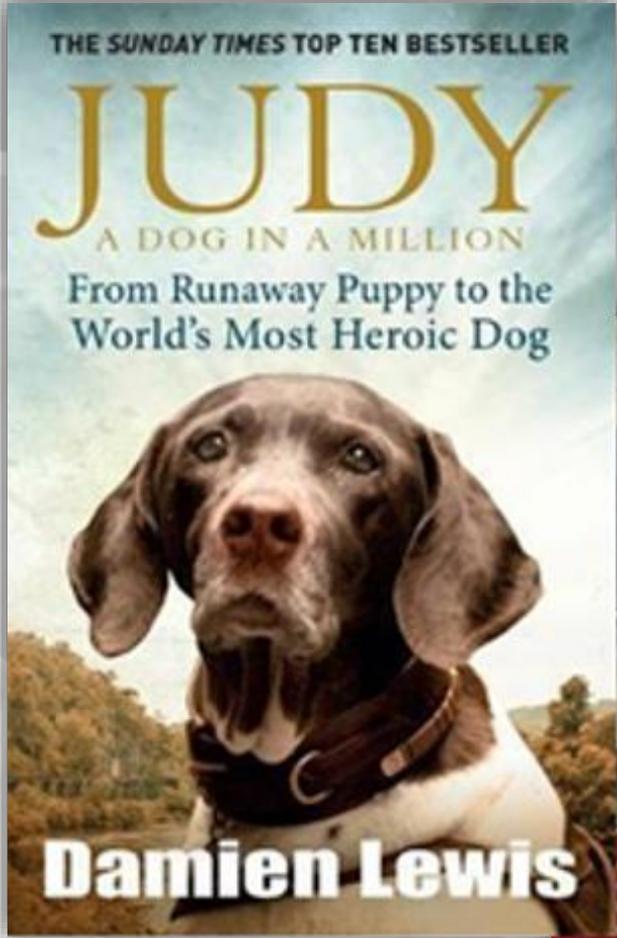
Simpson and his Donkey (s)

In April 2011, the Australian Government announced that the servicemen examined in an inquiry into "Unresolved Rec Military Gallantry and Valour".

The tribunal for this inquiry was directed to make recommendations for decorations, including the Victoria Cross.

Concluding its investigations in February 2013, the tribunal recommended that the award be made to Simpson, since his "initiative and bravery in leading his stretcher-bearers of 3rd Field Ambulance, and that bravery was recognized by the award of an MID (Mention in Despatches)"





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