

MARY OF
EXETER

DM 32



PDSA DICKIN MEDAL
MARY OF EXETER
DM 32

“For outstanding endurance on War Service in spite of wounds.”

Date of Award: November 1945





MARY OF EXETER'S STORY

Espionage has always gone hand in hand with conflict. During World War II, carrier pigeons were crucial weapons in the spy's armoury and few distinguished themselves more notably than the *'Indestructible Pigeon'*, Mary of Exeter, (Pigeon No. NURP 40. WCE 249).

Owned by bootmaker and pigeon breeder Cecil *'Charlie'* Brewer, Mary of Exeter joined the National Pigeon Service in the 1940s. Her role was to provide critical intelligence to the Allies by delivering top secret messages from behind enemy lines.



**“SHE MANAGED
TO MAKE IT
THROUGH
DESPITE THE
HAWK’S ATTACK.”**




Mary of Exeter completed four successful missions from France and, remarkably, managed to survive three German attempts to stop her delivering essential intelligence. Returning home from one mission, she was found to have suffered wounds to her neck and breast. The enemy kept specially trained hawks to attack carrier pigeons and she managed to make it through despite a hawk attack.

Having recovered from her injuries, she returned to action two months later. Hawks were not the only method used to stop pigeons – they would shoot them as well. She returned from that mission with a missing wing tip and three shotgun pellets in her body. Nursed back to health by her owner, she once again returned to action following test flights.

On her final mission, Mary of Exeter made it home with not just a vital message, but shrapnel injuries to her neck. The neck injury was so severe that Charlie Brewer had to make a bespoke collar to help hold her head up and she was officially retired from service.





MARY OF EXETER
AWARDED DICKIN MEDAL
FOR OUTSTANDING WAR SERVICE
1940 - 1945

If that wasn't remarkable enough, while recuperating and enjoying her retirement her loft was bombed by the Luftwaffe. Many pigeons perished, but Mary survived.

She was awarded the PDSA Dickin Medal in 1945. Her citation read: "*For outstanding endurance on War Service in spite of wounds.*"

Unsurprisingly, her story captured the world's imagination and in 2018 the Exeter Civic Society unveiled a Blue Plaque in her honour at the site of Charlie Brewer's pigeon loft. The first of its kind in the UK, it celebrates the '*partnership of a heroic animal and its owner*'.



THE PDSA DICKIN MEDAL

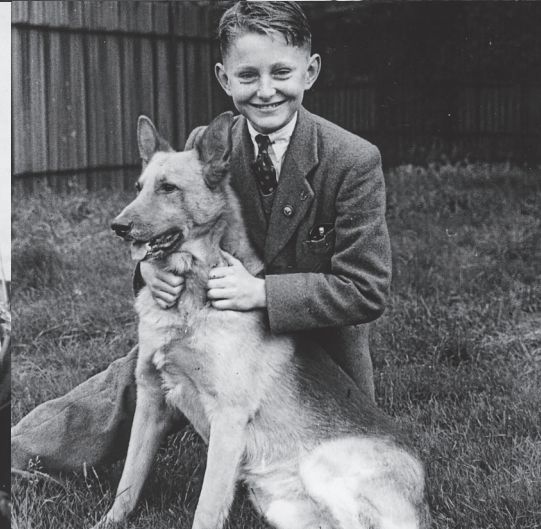
The close relationship between humans and animals is rarely more profound than in times of conflict. Throughout history, animals have stood alongside humans in action and shown incredible bravery and devotion to duty when confronted with the horrors of war.

Our founder, Maria Dickin, CBE, introduced the PDSA Dickin Medal on 2 December 1943, at the height of World War II.

A tireless campaigner for animal welfare, Maria Dickin was determined to raise the status of animals in society and improve their care. The Medal was instituted to recognise outstanding acts of gallantry and devotion to duty displayed by animals serving with the Armed Forces or Civil Defence units in any theatre of war, throughout the world.

Regarded worldwide as the animals' Victoria Cross, the PDSA Dickin Medal is as inspirational and relevant today as it was 75 years ago. It is a fitting tribute to the gallant animals *'who also served'* and whose remarkable contributions helped save countless lives.

The highest honour any animal can receive, the Medal stands as testament to the Diligent, Resolute, Fearless, and Relentless qualities shown by animals in action.







PDSA

For

Gallantry

WE ALSO
SERVE

PDSA DICKIN MEDAL ROLL OF HONOUR

WINKIE - DM 1

NEHU.40.NS.1

Date of award: **2 December 1943**

"For delivering a message under exceptionally difficult conditions and so contributing to the rescue of an aircrew while serving with the RAF in February 1942."

TYKE - DM 2

(also known as George)

No.1263 MEPS 43

Date of award: **2 December 1943**

"For delivering a message under exceptionally difficult conditions and so contributing to the rescue of an aircrew, while serving with the RAF in the Mediterranean in June 1943."

WHITE VISION - DM 3

SURP.41.L.30.89

Date of award: **2 December 1943**

"For delivering a message under exceptionally difficult conditions and so contributing to the rescue of an air crew while serving with the RAF in October 1943."

BEACH COMBER - DM 4

NPS.41.NS.4230

Date of award: **6 March 1944**

"For bringing the first news to this country of the landing at Dieppe, under hazardous conditions in September 1942, while serving with the Canadian Army."

BOB - DM 5

6th Royal West Kent Regiment

Date of award: **24 March 1944**

"For constant devotion to duty with special mention of patrol work at Green Hill, North Africa, while serving with the 6th Battalion Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment."

GUSTAV - DM 6

NPS.42.31066

Date of award: **1 September 1944**

"For delivering the first message from the Normandy beaches from a ship off the beachhead while serving with the RAF on 6 June 1944."

PADDY - DM 7

NPS.43.9451

Date of award: **1 September 1944**

"For the best recorded time with a message from the Normandy Operations, while serving with the RAF in June 1944."

BEAUTY - DM 8

PDSA Animal Rescue Squad

serving with Civil Defence

Date of award: **12 January 1945**

"For being the pioneer dog in locating buried air-raid victims while serving with a PDSA Animal Rescue Squad."

JET - DM 9

MAP serving with Civil Defence

Date of award: **12 January 1945**

"For being responsible for the rescue of persons trapped under blitzed buildings while serving with the London Civil Defence Services."

IRMA - DM 10

MAP serving with Civil Defence

Date of award: **12 January 1945**

"For being responsible for the rescue of persons trapped under blitzed buildings while serving with the London Civil Defences."

ROB - DM 11

War Dog no. 471/322

Special Air Service

Date of award: **22 January 1945**

"Took part in landings during the North African Campaign with an infantry unit and later served with a Special Air Unit in Italy as patrol and guard on small detachments lying-up in enemy territory. His presence with these parties saved many of them from discovery and subsequent capture or destruction. Rob made over 20 parachute descents."

THORN - DM 12

MAP serving with Civil Defence

Date of award: **2 March 1945**

"For locating air-raid casualties in spite of thick smoke in a burning building."

KENLEY LASS - DM 13

NURP.36.JH.190

Date of award: **March 1945**

"For being the first pigeon to be used with success for secret communications from an agent in enemy-occupied France while serving with the NPS in October 1940."

COMMANDO - DM 14

NURP.38.EGU.242

Date of award: **March 1945**

"For successfully delivering messages from agents in occupied France on three occasions: twice under exceptionally adverse conditions, while serving with the NPS in 1942."

FLYING DUTCHMAN - DM 15

NPS.42.NS.44802

Date of award: **March 1945**

"For successfully delivering messages from agents in Holland on three occasions. Missing on fourth mission, while serving with the RAF in 1944."

ROYAL BLUE - DM 16

NURP.40.GVIS.453

Date of award: **March 1945**

"For being the first pigeon in this war to deliver a message from a forced-landed aircraft on the Continent while serving with the RAF in October 1940."

DUTCH COAST - DM 17

NURP.41.A.2164

Date of award: **March 1945**

"For delivering an SOS from a ditched aircrew close to the enemy coast 288 miles distance in 7½ hours, under unfavourable conditions, while serving with the RAF in April 1942."

NAVY BLUE - DM 18

NPS.41.NS.2862

Date of award: **March 1945**

"For delivering an important message from a Raiding Party on the West Coast of France, although injured, while serving with the RAF in June 1944."

RIFLEMAN KHAN - DM 19War Dog no. 147. 6th Battalion
Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)Date of award: **27 March 1945**

"For rescuing L/Cpl. Muldoon from drowning under heavy shellfire at the assault of Walcheren, November 1944, while serving with the 6th Cameronians (SR)."

REX - DM 20

MAP Civil Defence Rescue Dog

Date of award: **April 1945**

"For outstandingly good work in the location of casualties in burning buildings. Undaunted by smouldering debris, thick smoke, intense heat and jets of water from fire hoses, this dog displayed uncanny intelligence and outstanding determination in his efforts to follow up any scent which led him to a trapped casualty."

WILLIAM OF ORANGE - DM 21

NPS.42.NS.15125

Date of award: **May 1945**

"For delivering a message from the Arnhem Airborne Operation in record time for any single pigeon, while serving with the APS in September 1944."

RUHR EXPRESS - DM 22

NPS.43.29018

Date of award: **May 1945**

"For carrying an important message from the Ruhr Pocket in excellent time, while serving with the RAF in April 1945."

SCOTCH LASS - DM 23

NPS.42.21610

Date of award: **June 1945**

"For bringing 38 microphotographs across the North Sea in good time although injured, while serving with the RAF in Holland in September 1944."

SHEILA - DM 24Date of award: **2 July 1945**

"For assisting in the rescue of four American airmen lost on the Cheviots in a blizzard after an air crash in December 1944."

BILLY - DM 25

NU.41.HQ.4373

Date of award: **August 1945**

"For delivering a message from a force-landed bomber, while in a state of complete collapse and under exceptionally bad weather conditions, while serving with the RAF in 1942."

COLOGNE - DM 26

NURP.39.NPS.144

Date of award: **1947**

"For homing from a crashed aircraft over Cologne although seriously wounded, while serving with the RAF in 1943."

RIP - DM 27

Stray picked up by Civil Defence

Squad at Poplar, London E14

Date of award: **July 1945**

"For locating many air-raid victims during the Blitz of 1940."

MAQUIS - DM 28

NPS.NS.36392

Date of award: **October 1945**

"For bringing important messages three times from enemy-occupied country, viz: May 1943 (Amiens), February 1944 (Combined Operations) and June 1944 (French Maquis), while serving with the Special Service from the Continent."

NPS.42.NS.2780 - DM 29Date of award: **October 1945**

"For bringing important messages three times from enemy-occupied country viz: July 1942, August 1942 and April 1943, while serving with the Special Service from the Continent."

NPS.42.NS.7524 - DM 30Date of award: **October 1945**

"For bringing important messages three times from enemy-occupied country, viz: July 1942, May 1943 and July 1943, while serving with the Special Service from the Continent."

BROAD ARROW - DM 31

41.BA.2793

Date of award: **October 1945**

"For bringing important messages three times from enemy-occupied country viz: May 1943, June 1943 and August 1943, while serving with the Special Service from the Continent."

MARY OF EXETER - DM 32

NURP.40.WCE.249

Date of award: **November 1945**

"For outstanding endurance on War Service in spite of wounds."

PETER - DM 33Date of award: **November 1945**

"For locating victims trapped under blitzed buildings while serving with the MAP attached to London Civil Defence."

TOMMY - DM 34

NURP.41.DHZ.56

Date of award: **February 1946**

"For delivering a valuable message from Holland to Lancashire under difficult conditions, while serving with NPS in July 1942."

ALL ALONE - DM 35

NURP.39.SDS.39

Date of award: **February 1946**

"For delivering an important message in one day over a distance of 400 miles, while serving with the NPS in August 1943."

PRINCESS - DM 36

42.W.D.593

Date of award: **May 1946**

"Sent on special mission to Crete, this pigeon returned to her loft (RAF Alexandria) having travelled about 500 miles mostly over sea, with most valuable information. One of the finest performances in the war record of the Pigeon Service."

JUDY - DM 37Date of award: **May 1946**

"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."

MERCURY - DM 38

NURP.37.CEN.335

Date of award: **August 1946**

"For carrying out a special task involving a flight of 480 miles from Northern Denmark while serving with the Special Section, Army Pigeon Service in July 1942."

NURP.38.BPC.6 - DM 39Date of award: **August 1946**

"For three outstanding flights from France while serving with the Special Section, Army Pigeon Service, 11 July 1941, 9 September 1941, and 29 November 1941."

GIJOE - DM 40

USA.43.SC.6390

Date of award: **August 1946**

"This bird is credited with making the most outstanding flight by a US Army Pigeon in World War II. Making the 20-mile flight from British 10th Army HQ, in the same number of minutes, it brought a message which arrived just in time to save the lives of at least one hundred Allied soldiers from being bombed by their own planes."

DD.43.T.139 - DM 41

(Australian Army Signal Corps)

Date of award: **February 1947**

"During a heavy tropical storm this bird was released from Army Boat 1402 which had foundered on Wadou Beach in the Huon Gulf. Homing 40 miles to Madang it brought a message which enabled a rescue ship to be sent in time to salvage the craft and its valuable cargo of stores and ammunition."

DD.43.Q.879 - DM 42

(Australian Army Signal Corps)

Date of award: **February 1947**

"During an attack by Japanese on a US Marine patrol on Manus Island, pigeons were released to warn headquarters of an impending enemy counter-attack. Two were shot down but DD.43 despite heavy fire directed at it reached HQ with the result that enemy concentrations were bombed and the patrol extricated."

PUNCH - DM 43Date of award: **November 1946**

"These dogs saved the lives of two British officers in Israel by attacking an armed terrorist who was stealing up on them unawares and thus warning them of their danger. Punch sustained four bullet wounds and Judy a long graze down her back."

JUDY - DM 44Date of award: **November 1946**

"These dogs saved the lives of two British officers in Israel by attacking an armed terrorist who was stealing up on them unawares and thus warning them of their danger. Punch sustained four bullet wounds and Judy a long graze down her back."

DUKE OF NORMANDY**- DM 45**

NURP.41.SBC.219

Date of award: **8 January 1947**

"For being the first bird to arrive with a message from Paratroops of 21st Army Group behind enemy lines on D Day, 6 June 1944, while serving with APS."

NURP.43.CC.1418 - DM 46Date of award: **8 January 1947**

"For the fastest flight with message from 6th Airborne Div. Normandy, 7 June 1944, while serving with APS."

RICKY - DM 47Date of award: **29 March 1947**

"This dog was engaged in cleaning the verges of the canal bank at Nederveert, Holland. He found all the mines but during the operation one exploded. Ricky was wounded in the head but remained calm and kept working. Had he become excited he would have been a danger to the rest of the section working nearby."

BRIAN - DM 48Date of award: **29 March 1947**

"This patrol dog was attached to a Parachute Battalion of the 13th Batt. Airborne Division. He landed in Normandy with them and, having done the requisite number of jumps, became a fully qualified Paratrooper."

UPSTART - DM 49Date of award: **11 April 1947**

"While on patrol duty in Bethnal Green a flying bomb exploded within 75 yards, showering both horse and rider with broken glass and debris. Upstart was completely unperturbed and remained quietly on duty with his rider controlling the traffic, until the incident had been dealt with."

REGAL - DM 50Date of award: **11 April 1947**

"Was twice in burning stables caused by explosive incendiaries at Muswell Hill. Although receiving minor injuries, being covered by debris and close to the flames, this horse showed no signs of panic."

OLGA - DM 51Date of award: **11 April 1947**

"On duty when a flying bomb demolished four houses in Tooting and a plate-glass window crashed immediately in front of her. Olga, after bolting for 100 yards, returned to the scene of the accident and remained on duty with her rider controlling the traffic and assisting rescue organisations."

ANTIS - DM 52Date of award: **28 January 1949**

"Owned by a Czech airman, this dog served with him in the French Air Force and RAF from 1940 to 1945, both in North Africa and England. Returning to Czechoslovakia after the war, he substantially helped his master's escape across the frontier when, after the death of Jan Masaryk, he had to flee from the Communists."

TICH - DM 53Date of award: **1 July 1949**

"For loyalty, courage and devotion to duty under hazardous conditions of war from 1941 to 1945, while serving with the 1st King's Rifle Corps in North Africa and Italy."

SIMON - DM 54Date of award: **Posthumously on 1949**

"Served on HMS Amethyst during the Yangtze Incident, disposing of many rats though wounded by shell blast. Throughout the incident his behaviour was of the highest order, although the blast was capable of making a hole over a foot in diameter in a steel plate."

GANDER - DM 55

Mascot of the Royal Rifles of Canada

Date of award: **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. Without Gander's intervention many more lives would have been lost in the assault."

APPOLLO - DM 56

New York Police dog representing all the Search and Rescue dogs at Ground Zero and the Pentagon.

Date of award: **5 March 2002**

"For tireless courage and unstinting devotion to duty during the search and rescue operation at Ground Zero and the Pentagon following the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September 2001."

ROSELLE - DM 57

Guide dog

Date of award: **5 March 2002**

"For remaining loyally at the side of his owner, Michael Hingson, during their escape from the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001."

SALTY - DM 58

Guide dog

Date of award: **5 March 2002**

"For remaining loyally at the side of his owner, Omar Rivera, during their escape from the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001."

SAM - DM 59

Royal Army Veterinary Corps dog
Date of award: **Posthumously on 14 January 2003**

"For outstanding gallantry in April 1998 while assigned to the Royal Canadian Regiment in Drvar during the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina."

BUSTER - DM 60

Royal Army Veterinary Corps dog
Date of award: **9 December 2003**

"For outstanding gallantry in March 2003 while assigned to the Duke of Wellington's Regiment in Safwan, Southern Iraq."

LUCKY - DM 61

RAF Police anti-terrorist tracker dog – RAF no. 3610 AD
Date of award: **Posthumously on 6 February 2007**

"For the outstanding gallantry and devotion to duty of the RAF Police anti-terrorist tracker dog team, comprising Bobbie, Jasper, Lassie and Lucky, while attached to the Civil Police and several British Army regiments including the Coldstream Guards, 2nd Battalion Royal Scots Guards and the Gurkhas during the Malaya Campaign."

SADIE - DM 62

Royal Army Veterinary Corps Arms and Explosives Search dog

Date of award: **6 February 2007**

"For outstanding gallantry and devotion to duty while assigned to the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Light Infantry during conflict in Afghanistan in 2005."

TREO - DM 63

Royal Army Veterinary Corps Arms and Explosives Search dog

Date of award: **24 February 2010**

"For outstanding gallantry and devotion to duty while assigned to the Royal Irish Regiment during conflict in Afghanistan in 2008."

THEO - DM 64

Royal Army Veterinary Corps Arms and Explosives Search dog.

Date of award: **Posthumously on 25 October 2012**

"For outstanding gallantry and devotion to duty while deployed with 104 Military Working Dog (MWD) Squadron during conflict in Afghanistan in September 2010 – March 2011."

SASHA - DM 65

Royal Army Veterinary Corps Search dog

Date of award: **Posthumously on 21 May 2014**

"For outstanding gallantry and devotion to duty while assigned to 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, in Afghanistan 2008."

DIESEL - DM 66

French Police Dog and member of RAID (Research, Assistance, Intervention and Deterrence)

Date of award: **Posthumously on 28 December 2015**

"For his courage and devotion, Paris 18 November 2015."

LUCCA - DM 67

Retired United States Marine Corps Search and Rescue Dog

Date of award: **5 April 2016**

"For tireless service to the military communities of the United States of America and coalition partners from 2006 to 2012."

SGT. RECKLESS - DM 68

United States Marine Corps

Date of award: **Posthumously on 27 July 2016**

"For attention to duty, devotion and loyalty to the United States Marine Corps."

MALI - DM 69

Royal Army Veterinary Corps

Date of award: **17 November 2017**

"For tireless bravery and devotion to duty during an operation in Afghanistan with the British Military in 2012."

CHIPS - DM 70

US Army

Date of award: **Posthumously on 15 January 2018**

"For bravery and devotion to duty during the US Army's invasion of Sicily on 10 July 1943."

KUGA - DM 71

Date of award: **Posthumously on 26 October 2018**

"For unstinting bravery and life-saving devotion to his handler and his unit, while on patrol with Operation Slipper in Afghanistan, 2011."

ABBREVIATIONS

APS

Allied Pigeon Service

NEHU

North of England Homing Union

NPS

National Pigeon Service

NURP

National Union of Racing Pigeons

HONORARY

WARRIOR

Canadian Cavalry

Date of award: **Posthumously on 2 September 2014**

"Warrior and General Jack Seely commanded three regiments of the Canadian Cavalry, leading the charge at some of the bloodiest and most infamous battles of World War I. Warrior's Honorary PDSA Dickin Medal was awarded on behalf of all animals that served in the Great War."

**“THE CLOSE
RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN HUMANS
AND ANIMALS
IS RARELY MORE
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THAN IN TIMES
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