



THE  
**HOUSEHOLD**  
Cavalry  
MUSEUM

Horse Guards, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2AX



In this week's podcast, the third in the series, I'm going to recount some stories about our animals – and they are not all horses...

### **It's a dog's life in the Household Cavalry**

The Army's love of mascots and pets is shared by the Household Cavalry, and includes a Newfoundland dog called Duke who attached himself to The Blues during the Peninsula War of 1808-1814. Duke was used by the Regiment during the advance through Spain to flush out rats from deserted farmhouses, prior to the ruins being occupied as bivouacs. Somewhat unkindly, given his rattling duties, the dog was repeatedly traded-in with locals in return for free wine. Nonetheless, Duke always managed to re-join his comrades, returned with the Regiment to England and became something of a hero: his portrait still hangs in the Officers House of Household Cavalry Regiment at Bulford.

Another Blues dog, Spot, belonged to Captain William Tyrwhitt Drake and was present at the Battle of Waterloo; he was also memorialised with a painting, by William Henry Davis, painted on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1816, which hangs in the Mess at Hyde Park Barracks.

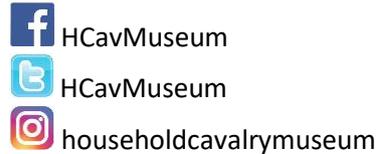
That is not, however, the end of doggie tales of The Blues and Royals, for there exists in the reserve collection of the Household Cavalry Museum at Combermere Barracks an engraved silver dog collar, embellished with medal ribbons, which attests to the existence of Bob, a mongrel dog who served with The Blues before, during and after the 2nd Boer War. The collar's engravings, in addition to his name, a royal crown and the words 'Royal Horse Guards', list the engagements at which Bob was present: 'Wittebergen', 'Diamond Hill', 'Johannesburg', 'Driefontein, Paardeberg' and 'Relief of Kimberley' and the medal ribbons on the collar include the Distinguished Service Medal, King Edward VII's Coronation Medal, The Queen's South Africa Medal, The King's South Africa Medal and the Long Service Medal.

As you will hear later in this podcast, Army animals are not supposed to be awarded medals. Clearly, cavalry officers had no fear in thumbing their noses at the War Office when it came to medals, for adjacent to an oil painting in the Museum of Bob is a photograph of Scout, an Irish terrier bitch who attached herself to the Royals as a puppy in Durban in November 1899 and served with the Regiment for the whole of the 2nd Boer War. In the photograph, she is shown wearing The Queen's South Africa Medal with six bars and The King's South Africa Medal with two bars. Scout was a gallant dog and always in the thick of the fighting, where she used her bark and teeth to good effect. Sadly, when the Regiment was posted to India in 1904, she did not survive the heat.



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### The 'bear' necessities...

Other than a small collection of photographs and an eyewitness letter, little is now known about a brown bear called Philip, who belonged to Captain Sir Herbert Naylor-Leyland Bt of the 2nd Life Guards who served with the Regiment from 1882 to 1891. Philip was not a regimental mascot but must have had the status of a regimental pet, for it is clear from the photographs that he was housed with the Regiment and had a 2nd Life Guard soldier, Corporal Bert Grainger, to look after him.

An eyewitness letter from a Mr Harrod states that Corporal Grainger and Philip would often give wrestling displays – this is evidenced by a contemporary photograph – and that when war broke out in 1914, Philip, who had long outlived his owner, was dispatched to London Zoo.

Meanwhile, not to be outdone by their regimental rivals, the 1st Life Guards had a stuffed bear in the entrance hall of the Officers House at Regent's Park Barracks and The Blues at Combermere Barracks, Windsor, had a live bear with its own handler about both of which, beyond a coloured engraving, nothing is now known.

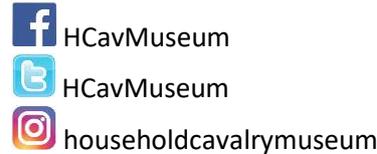
But these three bears were not by any means the full extent of the Household Cavalry's official pets in the mid- to late-nineteenth century which included a monkey called Jack, who held the rank of Corporal of Horse and wore a specially made Life Guard tunic.

Jack was officially the property of the 2nd Life Guards' Assistant Surgeon, Dr Frank Buckland, a noted naturalist, author and collector of wild animals, who served with the Regiment from 1854 to 1863. Short of stature, bigger around the chest than he was in height, bearded Frank Buckland was also noted for consuming any cooked animal, hence the title of his biography by Richard Girling, *The Man Who Ate The Zoo* (2016). Although, with the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914, Philip was consigned to London Zoo – Jack had probably been consumed long since by his owner.



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### Horsing around...

In the halcyon days before New Labour imposed 'Cool Britannia' on a gullible nation and then danced around a bonfire of harmless but enjoyable British traditions, the Royal Tournament was an annual fixture in the diaries of parents anxious to keep their offspring entertained during the long summer holidays. Founded in 1880, the Tournament was a three-week long show in which the Armed Forces of the Crown staged displays, competitions and generally opened themselves up to public inspection. Amongst the 'acts' which were featured every year were the Musical Rides or Quadrilles of various Cavalry Regiments and the Musical Drive of the Royal Horse Artillery. Until 1922, when they were amalgamated, the two Regiments of Life Guards stationed in London took it in turns to perform an elaborate Quadrille at successive Tournaments.

At the 1902 Royal Tournament, staged at the Agricultural Hall in Islington, the Salute was taken at one of the performances by the recently crowned Queen Alexandra, who was briefed by her Equerry-in-Waiting that the lead horse of the 2nd Life Guards Quadrille, Freddy, had not only served in the Second Boer War, but was the only 2nd Life Guard horse to have survived the Regiment's engagements in the conflict. In common with every member of the Royal Family, before and since, Queen Alexandra had a beady eye and, with it, she spotted that Freddy appeared not to be wearing a campaign medal; she enquired why. Although none of her Suite-in-Waiting had an answer, Her Majesty was not willing to let the matter drop and a brisk exchange of letters between Buckingham Palace and the War Office followed.

At first the Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal the 1st Earl Roberts of Kandahar VC, Colonel of the Irish Guards, was adamant: military animals did *not* receive campaign medals; although – hypocritically – his own horse, *Volonel*, had been awarded by Queen Victoria the Afghan Medal with four clasps, the Afghan Star and the 1897 Jubilee Medal.

Queen Alexandra was unimpressed by this reply, equally adamant in her determination to secure the 'gong' and continued to lobby on Freddy's behalf. Eventually, nine months later, the War Office hauled up a white flag which resulted in the following letter being dispatched to the Commanding Officer of the 2nd Life Guards at Regent's Park Barracks.

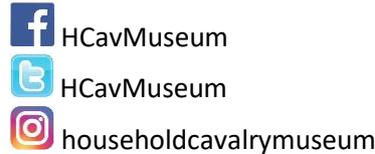
*Buckingham Palace, May 24<sup>th</sup> 1903. Dear Colonel Anstruther Thompson, I am commanded by The Queen to forward the enclosed medal, which the Commander-in-Chief has given permission to be worn by the horse which Her Majesty saw at the Tournament, which was the only one of its fellows who returned safely from the South African War, Yours sincerely, Charlotte Knollys*

On the red-blue-and-yellow striped Second Boer War medal ribbon, above the profile of Queen Victoria, are five clasps bearing the words: 'Wittenberg', 'Kimberley', 'Paarderberg', 'Driefontein' and 'Transvaal'. For Freddy, who had joined the Regiment as a four-year old in 1897, had been in every engagement fought by the Household Cavalry Composite Regiment (the temporary unit formed from the three Regiments of the Household Cavalry to serve in South Africa). Not only that but, with Corporal of Horse Stephens always in his saddle, he



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had covered one thousand seven hundred and eighty miles and had only been given forty-eight days off between December 1899, when the Composite Regiment landed in the Cape, and November 1900 when it returned to England.

Freddy's medal was immediately sent to the regimental Saddlers Shop where it was stitched onto the breastplate of his horse furniture, just below the 2nd Life Guards badge of a Royal Crown surrounded by the Battle Honours 'Peninsula' and 'Waterloo'. Thereafter, until Freddy was retired in 1905, he wore his medal on every parade and duty.

Freddy passed his retirement at Combermere Barracks, Windsor, dying there in 1911. His body was buried beneath the barracks' Square (now, sadly, built over with an accommodation block) and his medal was eventually placed on display in the Household Cavalry Museum where it can still be seen, along with Charlotte Knollys' letter and a photograph in which he is shown bearing a Corporal Major carrying one of the Regiment's Standards.

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**'NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE KNOW THIS...'**

**A weekly series of podcasts about the Regiments of the Household Cavalry  
written and recorded by  
Regimental Historian, Christopher Joll, formerly of The Life Guards**

**These anecdotes are drawn from  
Christopher Joll's recently published books:**

***The Drum Horse in the Fountain: Tales of the Heroes & Rogues in the Guards*  
&  
*Spoils of War: The Treasures, Trophies & Trivia of the British Army***

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