



# *ANIMALS OF WAR*



In Great Britain, Remembrance (or Armistice Day) is observed by a tribute of silence on the 11th hour, on the 11th day, of the 11th month, when hostilities of the Great War ended. The Great War was followed by the Second World War - a conflict that resulted in the deaths of up to 60 million people.

This month the Learning Curve are remembering the huge sacrifices made by thousands of animals during the First and Second World Wars.

The 'Animals in War' Memorial in London's Hyde Park is inscribed with the words 'They had no choice,' yet they unreservedly applied their strength, perseverance, loyalty and intelligence in a way that influenced the course and success of the British and Allied war effort.

Please read on to discover some of their incredible stories, with information about the PDSA Dickin Medal, the Animals in War Memorial and the history behind the purple poppy.



*Lest We Forget*

# Animal Stories



## Dogs

The dog's innate qualities of intelligence and devotion were valued and used by the forces in conflicts throughout the century. Among their many duties, these faithful animals ran messages, laid telegraph wires, detected mines, dug out bomb victims and acted as guard or patrol dogs. Many battled on despite

horrific wounds and in terrifying circumstances to the limit of their endurance, showing indomitable courage and supreme loyalty to their handlers.

## Rob a War Dog

Rob, a Collie (War Dog No. 471/332 Special Air Service) was awarded the PDSA Dickin medal on 22nd January 1945. Citation: "Took part in landings during 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."



## Pigeons

More than 100,000 pigeons served Britain in the First World War and 200,000 in World War II. They performed heroically and saved thousands of lives by carrying vital messages, sometimes over long

distances, when other methods of communication were impossible. Flying at the rate of a mile a minute from the front line, from behind enemy lines or from ships or aeroplanes, these gallant birds would struggle on through all weathers, even when severely wounded and exhausted, in order to carry their vital messages home.

### GI Joe, Pigeon

GI Joe, Pigeon – USA43SC6390, was awarded the PDSA Dickin medal in August 1946. The citation reads: “This bird is credited with making the most outstanding flight by a USA 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 100 Allied soldiers from being bombed by their own planes.”



## Horses, Mules and Donkeys



Eight million horses and countless mules and donkeys died in the First World War. They were used to transport ammunition and supplies to the front and many died, not only from the horrors of shellfire but also in terrible weather and

appalling conditions. Mules were found to have tremendous stamina in extreme climates and over the most difficult terrain, serving courageously in the freezing mud on the Western Front and later at Monte Cassino in World War II. Equally they toiled unflinchingly in the oppressive heat of Burma, Eritrea and Tunisia. There are many inspiring and often tragic stories of the great devotion and loyalty shown between horses, mules and donkeys and their masters during some of the bloodiest conflicts of the 20th century.

### Upstart the Police Horse

Upstart was a police horse awarded the PDSA Dickin medal on 11th April 1947. The citation reads: "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 traffic, etc., until the incident had been dealt with."



In this picture, Upstart is on the right with two other PDSA Dickin medal winners, Olga and Regal.

## The Dickin Medal



The PDSA Dickin Medal was instituted in 1943 in the United Kingdom by Maria Dickin to honour the work of animals in World War II. It is a bronze medallion, bearing the words "For Gallantry" and "We Also Serve" within a laurel wreath, carried on a ribbon of striped green, dark brown, and pale blue. 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 award is commonly referred to as "the animals' Victoria Cross".

Maria Dickin was the founder of the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA), a British veterinary charity. She established the award for any animal displaying conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty whilst serving with British Empire armed forces or civil emergency services. The medal was awarded 54 times between 1943 and 1949 – to 32 pigeons, 18 dogs, 3 horses, and a ship's cat – to acknowledge actions of gallantry or devotion during the Second World War and subsequent conflicts.

The awarding of the medal was revived in 2000. In December 2007, 12 former recipients buried at the PDSA Animal Cemetery in Ilford, Essex, were afforded full military honours.

## Animals in War Memorial



The Animals in War Memorial is a war memorial, in Hyde Park, London, commemorating the countless animals that have served and died under British military command

throughout history. It was designed by English sculptor David Backhouse and unveiled in November 2004 by Anne, Princess Royal.

The memorial was inspired by Jilly Cooper's book *Animals in War*, and was made possible by a specially created fund of £1.4 million from public donations of which Cooper was a co-trustee. The memorial consists of a 55ft by 58ft (16.8m by 17.7m) curved Portland stone wall: the symbolic arena of war, emblazoned with images of various struggling animals, along with two heavily laden bronze mules progressing up the stairs of the monument, and a bronze horse and bronze dog beyond it looking into the distance.



The inscriptions are in various fonts and sizes and are all uppercase. Other than the featured messages, there are several inscriptions on the rear or outside, and on the inner edges of the wings (in the gap), attributing the creators and funders.

On the face of the right wing when viewed from the front or inside

Main heading; the largest and heaviest cut inscription

*ANIMALS IN WAR*



Directly beneath the main heading

*THIS MONUMENT IS DEDICATED TO ALL THE ANIMALS THAT SERVED AND DIED ALONGSIDE BRITISH AND ALLIED FORCES IN WARS AND CAMPAIGNS THROUGHOUT TIME*

Beneath and to the right of the main heading

*THEY HAD NO CHOICE*

On the face of the left wing when viewed from the rear or outside (on the reverse of the main heading)

*Many and various animals were employed to support British and Allied Forces in wars and campaigns over the centuries and as a result millions died · From the pigeon to the elephant they all played a vital role in every region of the world in the cause of human freedom · Their contribution must never be forgotten.*





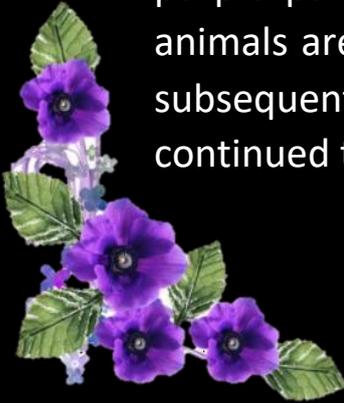
# **Purple Poppy**

To remember animal  
victims of war.

The purple poppy is a symbol of remembrance in the United Kingdom for animals that served during wartime. The symbol was created in 2006 based on the principle of the traditional red remembrance poppy for Remembrance Day.

In contemporary service, most animals in United Kingdom military service are military working dogs, particularly in the 1st Military Working Dog Regiment. Historically the greatest number of animal casualties in conflict have been horses and ponies.

The purple poppy was created in 2006 by the charity Animal Aid as a way to commemorate animals which served during conflicts as the charity viewed that they had been the forgotten victims of war. Approximately eight million horses and donkeys died during the First World War. It was created to be worn alongside red or white poppies. Animal Aid continued to sell the purple poppy with proceeds going to them until 2015 when they replaced the symbol with an enamel purple paw badge as they felt it was being misinterpreted — the animals are not "heroes" but victims. The purple poppy symbol was subsequently picked up by the Murphy's Army charity in 2016 and continued to be sold by them.





There is a specified purple poppy day in addition to Remembrance Day on 11 November where purple poppies would be worn. The date is movable, however. In 2018, in order to coincide with 100 years since the end of the First World War, 23 August was chosen as purple poppy day to coincide with the Battle of Mons. This was the date of the first battle between British and German forces during the First World War.

The purple poppy was not endorsed by The Royal British Legion, which sells the official red remembrance poppies. However they did state: "We see no conflict in wearing the red poppy next to the purple or white poppy. Many animal rights supporters also support our work. We do ask that the items are not offered alongside each other however as this would confuse the public." Some towns have included purple poppies alongside red ones in official Remembrance displays.

