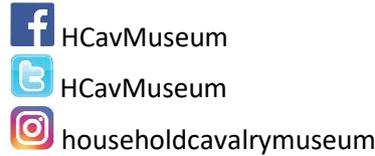




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Horse Guards, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2AX



HOUSEHOLD CAVALRY MUSEUM COLLECTION

No: 4

A SILVER DOG COLLAR

Hello, and welcome back to the Household Cavalry Museum's video podcasts. In last week's video I told you about two rare swords in the museum's reserve collection – this week I am going to talk about a silver dog collar that is also in the reserve collection at Combermere Barracks, Windsor, but is nonetheless available to view.

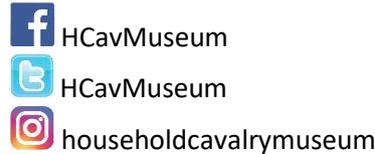
In the 12 months from December 1899 to November 1900, the Household Cavalry was engaged in the Second Boer War. As with the suppression of the Urabi Revolt in Egypt in 1882, our regiments deployed to South Africa in a joint formation, known once again as the Household Cavalry Composite Regiment. This comprised three Squadrons, each provided by the 1st and 2nd Life Guards and the Royal Horse Guards.

Although Queen Victoria had been opposed to the Household Cavalry's deployment in Egypt, this time she thoroughly approved and showed her approval by breaking her holiday at Balmoral and travelling down to Windsor to bid her Household Cavalry farewell.



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When the Composite Regiment returned a year later, The Queen was once again at Windsor to welcome them.

What is not recorded is if, at this time, the dog-loving Victoria met *Bob*. He was a mongrel who had attached himself to The Blues Squadron whilst in South Africa and returned with them to England. *Bob*, who was named after Lord Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief in South Africa, was not, however, the first dog to have served with The Blues, which had acquired a stray Newfoundlander during the Peninsular War of 1813. The name he was given was *Duke* – presumably in honour of the commander-in-chief in the Peninsular, the Duke of Wellington.

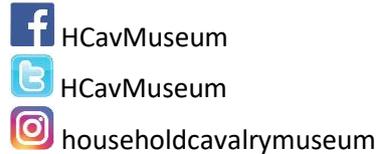
The Blues kennels also included *Spot*, a pooch belonging to Captain William Tyrwhitt Drake, who was present at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, and, a year later was, immortalised in oils by William Henry Davis.

Meanwhile, back to *Bob*, who after the Boer War continued his service with The Blues in England. The dog was, in fact, so highly valued that the officers of The Blues had commissioned for him an engraved silver dog collar, embellished with medal ribbons.



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The collar's engravings, in addition to his name, include a royal crown, the Regiment's title and, further round the collar, there is engraved a list of the engagements in South Africa at which Bob was present: 'Wittebergen', 'Diamond Hill' – at which, in a rare event, the regiment charged the enemy - 'Johannesburg', 'Driefontein, Paardeberg' and 'Relief of Kimberley'. The collar is also inset with medal ribbons including – in breach of War Office regulations – 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. Clearly the officers of The Blues had no fear in thumbing their noses at the War Office when it came to the award of medals to their dog.

Along with the collar, now in the reserve collection of the Household Cavalry Museum at Combermere Barracks, is an oil painting of *Bob* with horse B56. Clearly, in 1900 it was far from being a dog's life in the Household Cavalry – if you were dog.

Next week I am going to stay with the animal kingdom and will be taking a look at a couple of very remarkable horses.