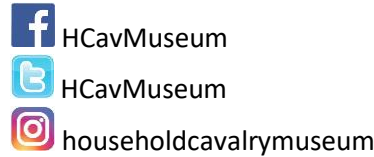




THE  
**HOUSEHOLD**  
Cavalry  
MUSEUM

Horse Guards, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2AX



## HOUSEHOLD CAVALRY MUSEUM COLLECTION

No: 5

### TWO CHARGERS

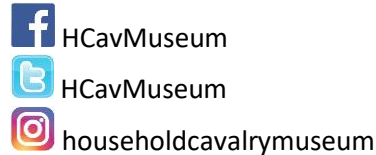
Hello, and welcome back to the Household Cavalry Museum's video podcasts. In last week's video I told you about *Bob* and his silver dog collar – I need to start this week's instalment with a correction. In last week's video, I said that *Bob* attached himself to The Blues whilst they were deployed in South Africa. My colleague, Ivor Slade, informs me that *Bob* was, in fact, already a Blues dog and sailed to the Cape with the Squadron – given that, there is also some doubt that he was named after Lord Roberts. I'm happy to make that correction and confirm that all the other facts as stated were correct!

Turning from one breed of four legged friends to another – and staying with the Household Cavalry Composite Regiment's deployment in the Second Boer War – this week I am going to start by telling you about D36 *Freddy*. Before I do so, however, it is fitting that, as we are so close to Armistice Day, we not only remember those men who died on the battlefields of South Africa, but also the other main casualty of that war: horses.



THE  
**HOUSEHOLD**  
Cavalry  
MUSEUM

Horse Guards, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2AX



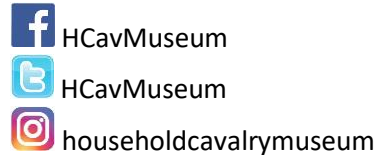
It is a chilling fact that – although only 4,000 horses initially sailed to war from England – during the Second Boer War, 300,000 British cavalry, mounted infantry, artillery and transport horses were killed or died of exhaustion, wounds and disease. They are commemorated by this monument at Port Elizabeth. The huge number of remounts, that were as a consequence required by the British Army, had to be sourced internationally and the Household Cavalry could not be picky about colour. These two hooves, belonging to *Cronje & Kruger*, and now in the museum's collection, prove that point. They were not Irish black horses, but Basuto ponies ridden by officers in The Blues' Squadron.

So, *Freddy* was one of the lucky ones – a troop horse belonging to the 2nd Life Guards, he was the only one of that Regiment's horses to survive the whole campaign; although another silver mounted hoof in the museum's collection, belonging to B36 of the 1st Life Guards, attests to the fact that he also survived from start to finish. However, for reasons that I am now coming to, it is *Freddy* who is remembered – so let's wind the clock forward to 1902 and the Royal Tournament of that year.



THE  
**HOUSEHOLD**  
Cavalry  
MUSEUM

Horse Guards, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2AX



Included in that year's show was the 2nd Life Guards Quadrille – now known as the Musical Ride – the lead horse of which was none other than *Freddy*. One of the 1902 performances was held in the presence of Queen Alexandra, whose Equerry-in-Waiting briefed her about *Freddy's* South African service. He was then asked by the beady-eyed Queen why the horse was *not* wearing a campaign medal. No one knew the answer, but Her Majesty wasn't prepared to let the matter rest there.

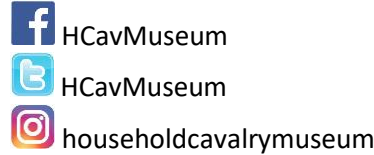
Within days, letters were flying between the office of the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, and Buckingham Palace. At first, the Field Marshal was adamant: animals did not received medals. Until it was pointed out that his own horse, *Volonel*, had three medals – the Afghan Medal with four clasps, the Afghan Star and the 1897 Jubilee Medal – which were sewn to the horse's breastplate.

Eventually, Lord Roberts ran up the white flag and the following letter was received by the Commanding Officer of the 2nd Life Guards: '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,



THE  
**HOUSEHOLD**  
Cavalry  
MUSEUM

Horse Guards, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2AX



which was the only one of its fellows who returned safely from the South African War, Yours sincerely, Charlotte Knollys.’ The letter also included the instruction that The Queen wished ‘the medal to be worn on the neck, hanging just below the regimental badge.’

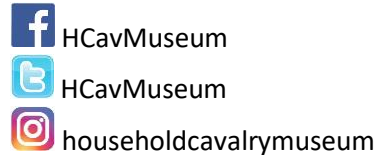
And here it is, complete with the clasps ‘Wittenberg’, ‘Kimberley’, ‘Paarderberg’, ‘Driefontein’ and ‘Transvaal’. For *Freddy*, who had joined the Regiment as a four-year old in 1897, had been in every Boer War engagement fought by the Household Cavalry Composite Regiment. Not only that but, with Corporal of Horse Stephens always in his saddle, he had covered 1,780 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. Until *Freddy* retired, sometime after 1907, he wore his medal on every parade and duty.

*Freddy* died at Combermere Barracks, Windsor, in 1911 and was buried in front of the Officer’s House (now the site of the Junior NCO’s Mess), a tree was planted on the spot (which is still there) and his medal was eventually placed on display in the Household Cavalry Museum. There it can be seen, along with Charlotte Knollys’ letter



THE  
**HOUSEHOLD**  
Cavalry  
MUSEUM

Horse Guards, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2AX



and a photograph in which he is shown bearing a Corporal Major carrying one of the Regiment's Standards.

Let's turn now to some more recent history and, in particular, to 20<sup>th</sup> July 1982. It was on the morning of that day that the Provisional IRA exploded a large, nail-filled bomb in Hyde Park just as The Queen's Life Guard – found that day by The Blues and Royals - was walking down to Horse Guards to mount the new Guard. The result was carnage. Lieutenant Anthony Daly, Squadron Corporal Major Roy Bright, Lance Corporal Jeffrey Young and Trooper Simon Tipper were killed along with seven of their black horses (*Cedric, Epaulette, Falcon, Rochester, Waterford, Yeastvite and Zara*).

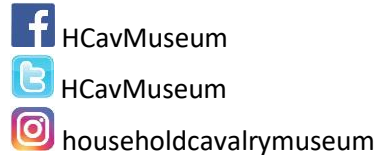
The worst injured of the cavalry 'blacks' to survive the Provisional IRA bomb, after eight hours of surgery, was *Sefton* who became a national hero, was made Horse of the Year 1982 and was placed in the British Horse Society's Hall of Fame.

Foaled in Ireland in 1963, *Sefton* for a time served as a remount with the Household Cavalry in Germany where his prodigious jumping skills put him much in demand as a hunter. As I know from personal experience, *Sefton* was not, however, an easy horse: he only liked



THE  
**HOUSEHOLD**  
Cavalry  
MUSEUM

Horse Guards, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2AX



certain riders, fortunately including me, and would buck off those who he did not like; he would only be hunted in a snaffle bit, with the reins held ‘on the buckle’ by his rider; and, once a day, when hunting with the Household Cavalry’s Weser Vale Bloodhounds, he would chose a fence – large or small, the size didn’t seem to matter – at which to refuse.

After his recovery from the PIRA bomb, *Sefton* returned to duty with The Blues and Royals in London for another three years. He was retired in 1984 and put down, aged thirty, in 1993 due to incurable lameness arising from his injuries. One of his hooves, and other memorabilia of the dreadful day that the bomb went off, are in the museum.

I hope you have found this look at some of our horses interesting. Next week I am going to be taking a look at some regimental silver. In the meantime, stay safe...