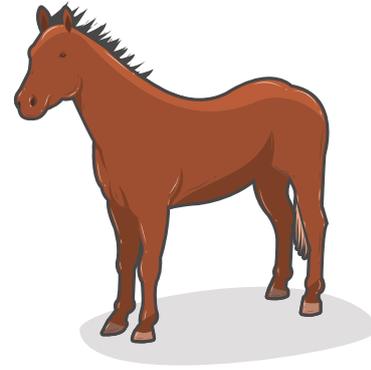


The Unsung Heroes of WW1

When we think about the champions of World War I, the brave soldiers spring to mind. But do we ever spare a thought for the animals that played a crucial role during the conflict? The work they carried out, as well as the sacrifices they made, is often left forgotten. Read on to find out about these unsung heroes.

Horses

As you might imagine, horses were used as transport during WW1. These incredibly strong and reliable creatures were even better than motor vehicles when it came to travelling through deep mud and over rough land. Horses were also used for reconnaissance (which means locating the enemy) and for carrying messengers, as well as pulling artillery, ambulances, and supply wagons. Did you know that 8 million horses died during WW1?



Dogs

Dogs also had a vital role to play in WW1. It is estimated that over 50,000 dogs were used by both sides in WW1, and different breeds had different roles. Smaller terrier dogs were used as 'ratters', which were trained to hunt and kill rats in the trenches, while bigger dogs such as German Shepherds were selected because of their strength, intelligence and loyalty. Dobermans were used because they were highly intelligent and easy to train. Their dark coat made them less noticeable to enemies. They were also good guard dogs and could bark and growl if an unknown



enemy was present in a military base. One key role of dogs during WW1 was to deliver messages, so soldiers didn't have to risk their lives running across battlefields. Mercy dogs were trained to sniff out wounded soldiers on the battlefield – they had medical supplies attached to them, so soldiers could tend to their own wounds. As a result, thousands of soldiers owed their lives to these dogs. Perhaps the most important role of the dogs, for men trapped in the horrors of the trenches, was to offer comfort and affection.

Pigeons

Surprisingly, pigeons also played a key part in WW1. Over 100,000 of them were used to carry important messages. In a modern age of mobile phones and the internet, we might think that these carrier pigeons would have been unreliable. In fact, it was an extremely effective method of communication, with 95% of the messages getting through to the desired destination. Pigeons were also used to take aerial photographs that could help to identify where the enemy was.



Questions

1. What do you think 'unsung heroes' means?

2. Look at the paragraph about 'Horses'.

What were horses used for in WW1? Tick 2 answers.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. Why were small terrier dogs called 'ratters'?

4. Fill in the table to indicate whether the statements are true or false.

The first one is done for you:

	True	False
Dogs played a vital role in WW1.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dobermans were small dogs who were difficult to train.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
German Shepherds were known for their strength.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mercy dogs could treat the wounds of soldiers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. *'Perhaps the most important role of the dogs, for men trapped in the horrors of the trenches, was to offer comfort and affection'.*

Why do you think the author believes this?

Questions

6. Look at the paragraph about 'Pigeons'. Write down 2 key roles of pigeons in WWI.

1. _____

2. _____

7. Were pigeons an effective method of communication? Justify your answer using the text.

8. This text is an information text. It tells us facts.

Write down three features that are similar to this one.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____