

Stapleford - Nachingwea Link

“For magnificent courage” - a canine heroine

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JUDY, a pure bred English Pointer, born in 1936 in Shanghai, China, had an extraordinary life, marked by disaster, extreme courage and faithfulness. She was the only animal officially recognised as a prisoner of war, was awarded the Dickin Medal - the 'animal VC' - and now lies in a grave in Nachingwea, Tanzania.

She is famous, but her grave site is damaged and in danger of being lost. This story is intended to raise support for the restoration of her grave, and surplus funds being put toward educational projects in Nachingwea.

Judy was adopted as the mascot for the gunboat HMS Grasshopper which, in February 1942, was torpedoed and sunk with heavy losses. Judy and the surviving crew members were marooned on an island off Sumatra where her ability to sniff out fresh water saved all their lives.



IN MEMORY OF
JUDY DM CANINE VC
BREED ENGLISH POINTER
BORN SHANGHAI FEBRUARY 1936, DIED
FEBRUARY 1950
WOUNDED 14th FEBRUARY 1942
BOMBED AND SUNK HMS GRASSHOPPER LINGGA
ARCHIPELAGO FEBRUARY 14th 1942. TORPEDOED
SS VAN WAERWIJCK MALACCA STRAIT JUNE 1942
1943
JAPANESE PRISONER OF WAR MARCH 1943 -
AUGUST 1945
CHINA CEYLON JAVA ENGLAND EGYPT
BURMA SINGAPORE MALAYA SUMATRA E. AFRICA
THEY ALSO SERVED

*Judy's Grave in Nachingwea in 1950
and the original inscription*

The survivors, including Judy, were eventually captured by Japanese forces and were put into a forced labour camp under brutal conditions. Judy devoted herself to fellow POW, Frank Williams, whose side she was said never to have left. She protected Williams and his colleagues by distracting the guards when they beat the prisoners; the Japanese guards responded by trying to shoot her on several occasions. However, Frank Williams persuaded the camp commandant to officially register her as a prisoner of war by presenting him with one of Judy's new pups; this secured a modicum of official protection for her. She was the only animal to have been registered as a POW (POW81A). After two

years as a prisoner, surviving wounds from gunshots, alligator bites, attacks from wild dogs and a Sumatran tiger, Judy and her fellow prisoners were liberated after the Japanese surrender in 1945.



The Dickin Medal, the animals' Victoria Cross

Williams smuggled her aboard a ship heading for Britain where she endured the standard six month quarantine. Upon her release in May 1946, she was awarded the Dickin Medal. Her citation read: "For magnificent courage and endurance in Japanese prison camps, which helped to maintain morale among her fellow prisoners and also for saving many lives through her intelligence and watchfulness." She and Williams spent next year visiting relatives of POWs who hadn't survived the camps.

In 1947 Frank Williams emigrated to Nachingwea in Tanzania, taking his adored wartime companion with him. After two years Judy died on 17 February 1950. Her body was wrapped in a Royal Air Force jacket and laid in a simple wooden coffin. But her memory lived on in the hearts of those who knew her.



Judy's grave today

Her master spent two months building a memorial in her memory. After Williams' death in 2006, Judy's medal was donated to the London based People's Dispensary for Sick Animals, a veterinary charity, which in turn arranged that the medal and her collar went on display at the Imperial War Museum. A biography 'The Judy Story: The Dog With Six Lives' by Varley and James was published in 1973.