

Medal saved for the nation

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A rare medal awarded to a Royal Marine who lay wounded alongside Nelson at Trafalgar has been saved for the nation by the Royal Marines Museum in Southsea, thanks to a contribution of £28,000 from the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

Image



The Naval General Service Medal with Trafalgar clasp awarded to Lieutenant Reeve

The Naval General Service Medal with Trafalgar clasp was awarded to Lieutenant Reeve in 1849. Lewis Buckle Reeve was born in East Meon, Hampshire, in 1786. Joining the Royal Marines in 1804, he was a Lieutenant of Marines on board HMS Victory, Nelson's flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar on the 21st of October 1805.

Seriously injured in the fierce battle, Lieutenant Reeve was laid next to the mortally wounded Nelson and attended to by Mr Beatty, Nelson's surgeon.

Lieutenant Reeve recovered from his wounds and went on to fight in Senegal in 1809 against the French, and served aboard HMS Minerva. He retired in 1817 and died at Douglas, the Isle of Man, aged 75 in May 1861.

The medal recently became available via an Auction House, and considerable foreign interest was shown from the outset. An eminently collectable item, with considerable additional interest because of the connection with Nelson's final moments, the Royal Marines Museum was concerned the medal would leave the country. Thanks to the support of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, who contributed £28,000, the medal was successfully purchased for £41,000. It is now proudly on show in the Museum's Trafalgar exhibition and joins the Museum's renowned collection of over 8,000 medals.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, said "The National Heritage Memorial Fund saves objects of national importance in memory of those who have given their lives for this country. This medal is a rare reminder of the role played by a Royal Marines Officer, only one of four on board Victory, alongside Lord Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar."

The Royal Marines Museum, which now includes the new and exciting The Making of the Royal Marines Commando exhibition, is open to visitors every day throughout the year, from 10am to 5pm. Fully accessible by wheelchair, further details on the Museum can be found at www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk or by calling 023 9281 9385.

Further information

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