

Homework 7/12/08

Harry's Medal

By Will Goddard

Harry was bored. His mum was arguing with his sister about what beauty products to buy when they went shopping; his dad was shut up in his office working. So he decided he would go down to the beach with his metal detector to see what he could find. He gathered what he needed and went out the front door. The warm air hit him like a dragon's breath. Harry strolled along gently towards the beach. It was only a five minute walk, but by the time he got there he was panting and in need of a drink. This summer was unusually hot and it was only June. The weather forecast said to expect even higher temperatures next month! He casually walked over to a drinks stall and walked away moments later with an ice-cold bottle of *Sprite* in his hand.

Once he was on the beach Harry took his metal detector out of his backpack and walked around, the occasional beep alerting him to bottle caps and coins. Harry collected lots of things from the beach with his metal detector, putting them safely in a small wooden box in his bedroom. He put all of the things he found in his bag, ready to be put into his box.

Suddenly, a shrill, insistent beeping alerted him to something under the sand. His metal detector didn't usually make this noise, just one beep to alert him to something small. Harry put his bag and the metal detector down and kicked carefully at the sand with his trainer. That didn't work so he looked around and found an old piece of driftwood to dig with. It took a few minutes to find it. It was a medal. It was a strange shape, almost starry but with only four large square points. It was actually a cross. Harry sat on the breakwater and rubbed the sand off, being careful to avoid the burgundy threads at the top of the medal. As the sand came off the medal he noticed a lion above a crown on one side. It was like a coat of arms. On the front it had the words *FOR VALOUR*.

On the back there was a date and something like an army regiment. It read:

123456 Lt H. Dunston
3RD BATTN SHROPSHIRE ARTILLERY

06
JUN
1944

He looked at it, staring hard. The beach in front of him faded and the quiet stillness gave way to loud, noisy rapid gunfire and the shouts of men coming from all directions.

June 6th 1944 (D-Day), Normandy, France:

Lieutenant Harry Dunston charged on, firing at the Germans, doing what he could to repel them. There was a gunshot, like a whip cracking and a cry of pain. Harry did not look back. He kept on going forwards, until he realised one of his regiment was gone. He looked back to see him, lying on the ground a little way behind him. A searing pain shot through his elbow. He'd been shot! He turned and saw a German soldier smiling at him from a few metres away. The German had a pistol trained on Harry's heart. "*Wünschen Sie tun, sterben langsam oder schnell? Ihrer Wahl.*" He said to Harry, who didn't know what it meant, but it didn't sound nice.

"Sehr gut, antworten Sie nicht. Ich werde nur schießen Sie! Heil Hitler!" The German said. He started to pull the trigger, but quick as a flash Harry drew his own pistol and fired. The next thing he knew the German was lying dead on the sandy ground, a bullet hole in his head.

"Harry!", came a cry from behind him. Harry looked back at his fallen team mate and ran towards him.

"Hang on James. I'm coming for you!" He called.

Once he had reached his friend, Sgt. James Montgomery, he hauled him up onto his shoulder in a fireman's lift. He ran as fast as could towards a nearby field hospital, carrying his friend, his own arm hanging uselessly at his side, shattered by a German bullet. He saw two trucks parked near each other, both bearing the swastika of the

Nazi German flag. One was empty, one was full of soldiers. Harry crouched down, laying James gently on the ground, and took out a pineapple-shaped Mills bomb from his jerkin and stood. "Take this!" he yelled, and threw the lethal hand grenade. He ducked immediately and watched as the Nazis looked around for the source of his shout and then their cries of shock when they saw the grenade. They were helpless. With a **BOOM** the small bomb exploded sending shrapnel everywhere.

Placing James back on his shoulder, Harry continued his hazardous journey across the battlefield, ducking and diving to avoid flying bullets. A few seconds later, they arrived at the field hospital. A nurse came out. "My friend needs urgent treatment, he's been badly wounded" Harry told her.

"But what about you? You look like you could do with some treatment too!" She said.

"I'm going back out there." Harry said firmly.

"But Lieutenant, you need to get that wound looked at." She said urgently.

"I'm going back out there and that is final" Harry announced.

Despite the nurses protests he walked back onto the battlefield to protect his regiment. The nurse stood there by the field hospital calling, "Harry! Harry! HARRY!"

Back in the present Harry heard someone calling his name. He looked up to see his mum coming towards him. "Harry, there you are. I've been looking all over for you. Didn't you hear me calling?"

Harry blinked hard in the evening sunlight and looked around him and then down at the medal lying in his hand. "What's that you've got there?" his mum asked.

"It's Harry's medal" Harry said quietly.

"Sorry, I didn't catch that." His mum said.

"Oh, nothing. It doesn't matter." He replied.

"Are you alright? You seem a bit peculiar. Been sitting out in this heat too long, I expect. Come on, let's get you home".

They walked home, his mother complaining about the crowds at the shops. Harry wasn't listening. He clutched Lieutenant Harry Dunston's medal tightly in his hand and whispered to himself, "Harry's medal".