

« Meet Mali. It 's an 8-year-old Belgian Malinois and a war hero . Today it has been recognized with the highest reward for gallantry an animal can get : the Dickin medal , for his bravery in Afghanistan , where he helped clear a building overrun by Taliban fighters. Britain's Armed Forces have some 500 dogs in a variety of roles , from sniffing out explosives to hunting down insurgents, despite technological advances in other aspects of military , dogs, it seems, are irreplaceable . Soldiers and dogs face the same dangers on the battlefield, and the charity which introduced the Dickin medal , says it is important to acknowledge that animals can be heroes too. In years and years, the Dickin medal has been almost exclusively awarded to dogs as a sign of their continuing importance to the modern military. When the medal was created in the WW II , among the other recipients , were 32 pigeons, 4 horses , and a ship's cat .

It is not entirely clear what Mali makes of this medal. Corporal Atlee says it was quite keen to eat it at first. But for those who owe Mali their lives it is a fitting tribute. »

Richard Leicester, BBC news.