

## Terry Downes: One of England's Best

By Jack Monroe

Terry Downes was born on May 9, 1936, in London England. As a youth he started boxing in Paddington England and relocated to America with his parents. While in America, Terry decided to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. Terry continued his amateur boxing in the marines, winning the 1955 All Marine Boxing Championship as a light-welterweight.

After this accomplishment plus gaining victories over some of the best boxers in the military, Terry was acknowledged as one of the best boxers to ever come out of England.

Terry rightfully won a tryout for the 1956 Olympic Boxing Team. Terry qualified for a spot on the team representing America. When it was discovered that Terry was British, he was not allowed to represent America as a competitor in the Olympic Games.

I feel this decision was wrong, a terrible unwarranted injustice. If Terry was good enough to serve America in the marines then he should have been allowed to compete in the 1956 Olympic Games.

Terry moved back to England and on April 9, 1957, Terry made his professional boxing debut with a first round knockout win over Tony Longo. In only his third bout Terry was overmatched with future middleweight and light heavyweight champion Dick Tiger. Tiger was already a veteran of twenty seven professional bouts. Terry was stopped in the 5<sup>th</sup> round. During the bout Terry showed tremendous courage and grit and he endured himself with the fans. Terry displayed the traits that English people are famous for in and out of a boxing ring.

After the Tiger fight, Terry continued on with his professional boxing career with great success, kayoing one opponent after another.

Terry always came to fight. He was physically tough and relentless. Terry made his fights a slam bang affair always to bury his opponent under a swirl of leather. Terry really knew how to energize and excite a crowd by constantly moving forward with non-stop punching and applying the destructive force of a hurricane.

Like "General George S. Patton," Terry was trying to overcome and conquer an adversary, with one big difference; Terry did it with his "Blood and Guts."



1955 All-Marine Boxing Champions. Left to right, front row: Terry Downes, light welterweight; Chuck Whittley, light heavyweight; Jesse Barber, heavyweight; Sugar Hill, middleweight; and James Leftwich, welterweight. Second row, l. to r.: Nick LaRosa, lightweight; "Them" Kountis, light middleweight; Jack Lennon, featherweight; Basil Blackson, bantamweight; and Nick Ortiz, flyweight.



On September 30, 1958, in London Terry won the British Middleweight Title with a 13<sup>th</sup> round stoppage of Phil Edwards.

On October 11, 1960, Terry was matched with American Joey Giardello (who was to become a future world middleweight champion himself in 1963). Joey was a great fighter. He was highly skilled and fearless. Terry won the ten round decision and it secured him the start of a trilogy with reigning World Middleweight Champion Paul Pender. Paul was an excellent champion with speed of hand and foot, punching power and an accurate and devastating left jab.



The first Pender vs. Downes title bout took place in Boston, Massachusetts on January 14, 1961. Terry was constantly moving forward on the attack, while Paul was moving, punching brisk and decisive, blocking and jabbing.

The fight was stopped in the 7<sup>th</sup> round due to a severely damaged nose Terry suffered during the fight.

In their second fight, which took place in London, England on July 11, 1961, the result was different. This time Terry became the new World Middleweight Champion after Paul could not continue after nine grueling rounds.



In their third fight in Boston on April 7, 1962, Terry ran into an extremely fit Paul Pender. Paul boxed well and won a 15 round decision.

Paul Pender was a close friend of mine and he told me Terry would go into a “Machine Gun.” Paul was in awe of Terry’s ability to take punishment and compared him with a British version of Jake LaMotta.

The rest of 1962 was still a good year for Terry as he did manage to register wins over Don Fullmer, Sugar Ray Robinson, and Phil Moyer.

In 1963, Terry moved up to the Light Heavyweight division. He had three wins and one of them was over that tough American “Iron” Mike Pusateri.

On May 28, 1964, Terry defeated Ed Zaremba in Glasgow, Scotland in a 10 round bout. Terry’s next bout was against Light Heavyweight Champion Willie Pastrano on November 30, 1964 in Manchester, England for Willie’s World Light Heavyweight Title. Terry was winning up until the 11<sup>th</sup> round, when all of a sudden Pastrano put Terry on the canvas twice and the referee stopped the bout and awarded the victory to Willie on a stoppage.

This was to be Terry Downes last fight and he retired after a long and highly successful career.

In conclusion, Terry was an excellent fighter who could compete as an equal with any champion or top contender and his bold method of attacking improved his effectiveness as a fighter.