



Veterans Affairs
Canada

Anciens Combattants
Canada

Veterans' Week November 5–11, 2011

Tales of Animals in War



Archway of Remembrance

Each year, the Remembrance Clubhouse members meet to talk about remembrance. This year, they gathered in Ottawa to explore the Peace Tower in the Parliament Buildings. “It is an architectural landmark in Canada but it is also a memorial,” said Squeaker the pigeon, whose coop is in Ottawa.

“We learned today that a decision was made in 1917 to build a tower as a memorial to the Canadians who fought in the First World War,” Simone the cat said.

“There are lots of symbols of remembrance inside the Tower, but Squeaker made the coolest

discovery,” Gandy the dog said. “He was flying through the doorway when we heard a loud squawk. We turned and he was pointing with his wings at a magnificent stone arch carved with images of animals!”

“Yes, it’s awesome!” Squeaker agreed. “It’s a memorial to animals who served in war, just like our relatives!” It has carved images of carrier pigeons and a reindeer, pack mule, horse and dog. The words THE HUMBLE BEASTS THAT SERVED AND DIED are inscribed below. There are also images of canaries in a cage and mice above the words THE TUNNELLERS’ FRIENDS.

“Animals served in wars in a variety of roles such as transporting supplies, delivering messages, helping the wounded or just being a soldier’s companion,” said Ellie the elephant.

In the First World War, soldiers spent a lot of

time in trenches and underground. Canaries and mice are described as their “friends” because they could detect poison gas in tunnels. Also, soldiers could not use lanterns at night because the enemy would see them, so glow worms were used to read messages and maps because they give off a soft blue-green light.

“Thousands of animals contributed in times of war. We feel proud and thankful that they helped save lives. This arched memorial is a unique way to remember them all,” said Bonfire Jr. the horse.

Walking home from the Peace Tower, the animals paused along the Rideau Canal to have one of Ottawa’s famous beaver tail pastries. “Our paws and wings are tired after such a long day of discovery,” Win the bear reflected. “But we are excited to go back to Squeaker’s coop and design our own Archway of Remembrance!” Why don’t you and your classmates design one too around your classroom door? What a great way to remember!



Remembrance Clubhouse Family Tree

Canadians all have different family backgrounds. Here are our brave ancestors.
Do you know yours?



During the First World War, my relative **Bonfire** was the best friend of a Canadian doctor and poet named John McCrae. Bonfire carried the doctor to the battlefield. Sadly, Dr. McCrae died in 1918. Bonfire proudly took part in his military funeral procession.



John McCrae on Bonfire.

Courtesy of Guelph Museums, McCrae House



My relative **Beachcomber** was a carrier pigeon during the Second World War. He delivered important messages for Canadian soldiers. The messages were rolled up and put in a container attached to his leg. He received the Dickin Medal for his courage. He was no chicken!



Beachcomber being presented with his Dickin Medal.

Britain's Peoples Dispensary for Sick Animals.



My relative was a bear cub. She was adopted as a mascot by a soldier from Winnipeg during the First World War. He named her **Winnie**! But it was too dangerous on the battlefield for her, so she went to the London Zoo. While there, she inspired an author to write a story . . . Winnie the Pooh!



Harry Colebourn and Winnie in 1914.

Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Colebourn, D. Harry Collection, No. N10467

During the Second World War, my relative **Sergeant Gander** was a mascot in Hong Kong. One night, a grenade was thrown at some Canadian soldiers. Gander knew it was dangerous. He took it and ran away. Sadly, the grenade exploded and Gander died. He received the Dickin Medal.



Gander with the Royal Rifles of Canada departing for Hong Kong in 1941.

Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association



My relative **Bandoola** served during the Second World War in Burma, Asia. He and other elephants moved logs to build bridges. They also carried people across rivers and towed army trucks stuck in the mud. I will always remember Bandoola!



First World War elephant.

Illustrated War News, February 9, 1916.



Able Seaman Simon and crew from the HMS Amethyst.

Britain's Peoples Dispensary for Sick Animals



My relative **Simon** served on a British warship in 1949. The ship was attacked in China and stranded for three months. Many sailors were hurt. Simon was hurt too but kept catching rats, which saved precious food. He also comforted the wounded men. Simon was presented with the Dickin Medal for his bravery. What a cool cat!

Loveable Mascots



Private P.T. Leachman with the donkey mascot of the Saskatoon Light Infantry.

DND ARMY 23177 and DVA 519-16

or teams. In the military, animal mascots often serve as pets to provide fun and friendship.

Many animals have served as mascots onboard Canadian ships. Playful dogs like Rags and Jeannie sailed during the Second World War. Cats and even Muncher the rabbit also had their “sea paws!” They provided comfort to sailors. Other animals, like Mike, the Saint Bernard, preferred dry land. He was the mascot of the Algonquin Regiment during the Second World War.

Mascots come in various shapes and sizes. A donkey served as the mascot of the Saskatoon Light Infantry in Sicily in 1943. Batisse the goat, representing the *Royal 22^e Régiment*, patrols the Citadelle, in Québec City. Today, the Canadian Army’s mascot is Juno, a cuddly life-size teddy bear.

Mascots, real or stuffed, always rally the troops! Does your school have a mascot?

My relative Winnie was a loveable mascot for a group of Canadian soldiers during the First World War. Mascots represent groups



Movers and Shakers

Did you know that many animals, like my ancestor Bandoola, have transported supplies during wartime in areas where vehicles couldn’t travel over rough terrain?

In the First World War, horses often transported soldiers and cannons into battle. Donkeys and mules carried supplies in mountainous Italy and in the jungles of Asia during the Second World War.

Sometimes, they even gave tired soldiers a ride! Reindeer and camels did the same in the snowy Arctic and the arid desert.

Elephants, strong and smart like me, carried supplies and helped to build roads and camps in the jungles of Burma during the Second World War.

Brave beasts always pull their weight!



Pack horses transporting ammunition for the Canadian Field Artillery, April 1917.

LAC PA-001231

Diggers and Sniffers



Mine Detection Dogs Fanny and Alex

Canadian Landmine Foundation

Have you ever heard the expression, “an animal is a man’s best friend?” When war breaks out, it’s not just men and women who head off to the battlefields. Animals often go with them. Over the years, animals have helped Canada’s soldiers in many different ways.

Like my relative Gander, other animals have saved lives during wartime. In the First World War, mice and canaries would help the soldiers who were digging tunnels by warning them when they smelled dangerous gases. German shepherds, like my canine friends Fanny and Alex, are very good sniffers. They worked with Canada’s army in Afghanistan to find roadside bombs, explosive landmines and missing soldiers.

An animal’s nose always knows!

Did You Know?



Joe the Crow and friend in 1950.

Crowsnest magazine photo courtesy of CFB Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum

More than 26,000 Canadians took part in the Korean War between 1950 and 1953. These included many brave sailors who served on destroyers off the Korean coast. Several of these ships had animal mascots, including Alice the dog on the HMCS *Cayuga*. A Canadian sailor had rescued the stray pup from drowning and she quickly became a friend for the men. And sailors back then might even have come across “Joe the Crow,” the mascot of the naval training base HMCS *Cornwallis* in Nova Scotia.

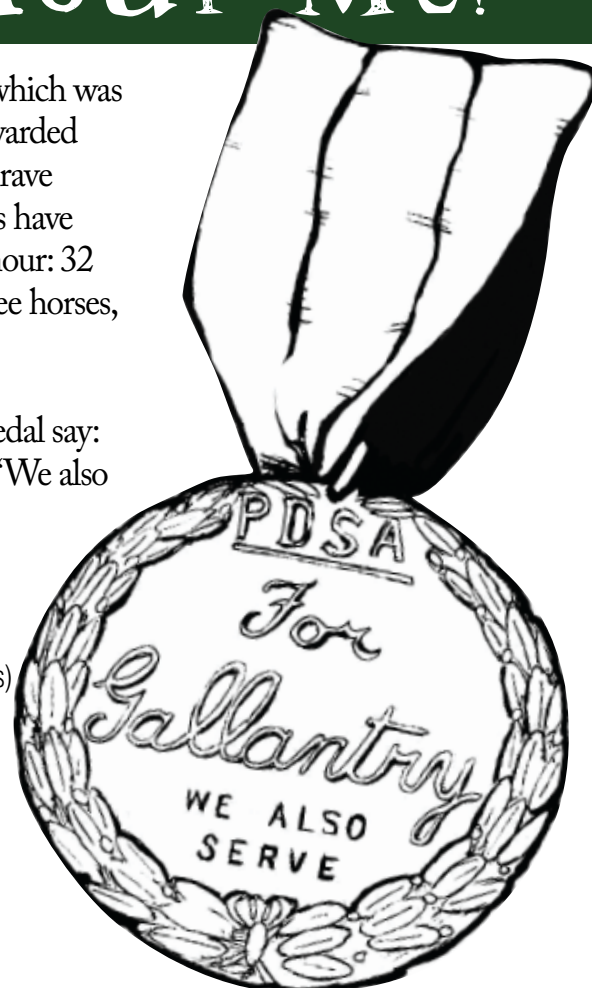
Colour Me!

The Dickin Medal, which was created in 1943, is awarded to animals for their brave acts. Only 63 animals have ever received the honour: 32 pigeons, 27 dogs, three horses, and one cat.

The words on the medal say: “For Gallantry” and “We also Serve.”

The ribbon is striped:

- green
(for water and the naval forces)
- dark brown
(for earth and the land forces)
- pale blue
(for air and the air forces)





Delivering the News

Want to know why a pigeon like me was up there at the very top of the carving in the Peace Tower? In times before cell phones, texting and Facebook, carrier pigeons delivered important information because they were so good at finding their way from one place to another. Soldiers would attach notes to the pigeons and then

release them to fly back to their coops.

My ancestor Beachcomber was the bird that delivered news about the raid in Dieppe, France, during the Second World War. More than 900 Canadians were killed in the difficult attack on the seaside town. A lot of carrier pigeons were also used

during the First World War. If the enemy soldiers saw a pigeon flying by, they would shoot at it because they knew it could be carrying an important message. But we pigeons are super speedy. We can fly up to 100 kilometres per hour and that's why the news usually got through! Some birds even delivered their messages after being wounded.



Royal Air Force carrier pigeon, 1942.

Imperial War Museum: The Animals War Exhibition.

Dogs and cats were messengers too, carrying information in containers around their necks in dangerous war zones. We animals always deliver!

Break the Code

Messages carried by pigeons were usually written in code in case they fell into enemy hands. Put on your thinking hats and decipher the code to read this secret message.

20 8 5 8 21 13 2 12 5
2 5 1 19 20 19 20 8 1 20
19 5 18 22 5 4 1 14 4
4 9 5 4

Hint: These words can be found carved inside the Peace Tower.
Code breaking key: A=1, B=2, C=3, etc.



Cavalry Charge!

Whoa, partner! I am going to tell you about something cool that animals like me did in wars long ago. Horses were used in cavalry units, where soldiers fought on horseback. War horses have been used for thousands of years, like when knights used to ride us in the Middle Ages!

My ancestor Bonfire knew a couple of cavalry horses during the First World War. They told him that fighting on horseback on the Western Front was very difficult because the enemy had deep trenches, machine guns, tangles of barbed wire and poison gas. Dr. McCrae used to

tell Bonfire what it was like in the South African War back in 1900. Canadian cavalry forces had been important in the wide-open spaces over there.

Imagine how courageous a horse would have to be to charge through the gunfire and



2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles on patrol in South Africa in 1902.

LAC PA-173029

explosions of a battle, with a soldier on his back shooting or swinging a sword!

Furry Friends

Purr! Cats like me and my ancestor Simon are good at offering furry comfort and a friendly ear to help people feel better. Many other kinds of animals have been special pets during times of war, keeping people company when they were far away from home. Lots of dogs have been official or unofficial pets, and other animals like ferrets, squirrels, mice and birds have also been special friends to lonely soldiers over the years. But I have to say the Canadian Forces members serving in Kandahar, Afghanistan, have a pretty unique pet, a monkey named Lucy!



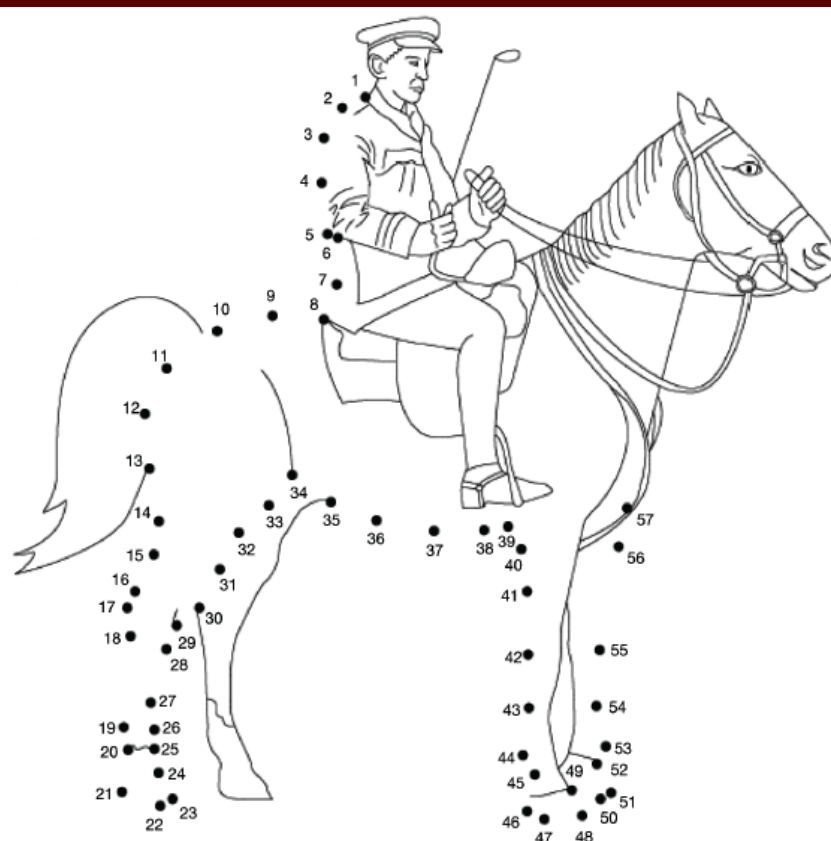
Canadian Press / Bill Gaveland

Lucy the monkey.

brave relatives. Many Canadians have served in the military and a lot of people have their own courageous family members. You know what? I think you should ask your parents or grandparents if they know of any relatives, friends or neighbours who have served in the cause of peace and freedom. Then you can learn about these real-life heroes for yourself!

We Remembrance Clubhouse animals are very proud of our

Connect the Dots!



Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae and Bonfire