



On the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2019 President of AWAMO Nigel Allsopp presented our ANZAC friends at Devonport Naval Base a beautiful marble plaque (30cms square) to the Director of the Naval Museum David Wright.

Nigel was in New Zealand representing UK Based Blue Cross, which bestowed New Zealand's very first Blue Cross Award for animal devotion and courage to Ceaser, a bulldog who was the first New Zealand dog to serve this country in war. He embarked with A Company, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the NZ Rifle Brigade in February 1916. He is New Zealand's first recipient of the Blue Cross Medal, an award for bravery. Whilst in New Zealand AWAMO also present the New Zealand Navy with a plaque commemorating the service of animals to the force.

The New Zealand Navy has a long tradition of having mascots on its ships and shore facilities. If you ask the average person what animal do, they associate with naval ships inevitably they will reply a cat. The Royal Navy even stated regulations that all its ships were to have a cat onboard. In addition to offering sailors this much needed companionship on long voyages, cats provided protection by ridding ships of vermin. Without the presence of cats, a crew might find their ship overrun with rats and mice that would eat into the provisions, chew through ropes and spread disease.

Maritime history of animals at sea has often be absent or marginalised in historic narratives, despite all kinds of animals were carried in ships if not as cargo as mascots or crew food source. Horses, mules and other 'military' animals crossed the sea to their battlefields whilst

pets and animal mascots, affectionately regarded as shipmates, played a significant role in bringing a ship's human community together.



Nigel presented a marble plaque to Director of Naval Museum Auckland. Note in the background photo a mascot ships cat.