

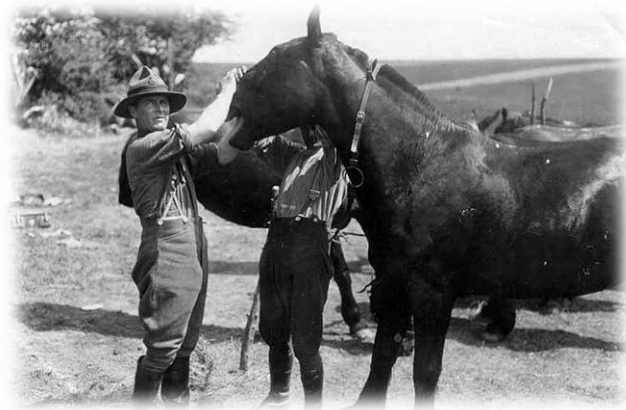
# WAR PIGEONS

The first historical mention of the pigeon being used to carry messages in wartime was in the city of Sumer in southern Mesopotamia in 2500 BC. Many pigeons in both Great Wars were awarded for their bravery and their heroism. Not many people would be aware of how many soldiers owe their lives these feathered heroes who delivered vital messages.



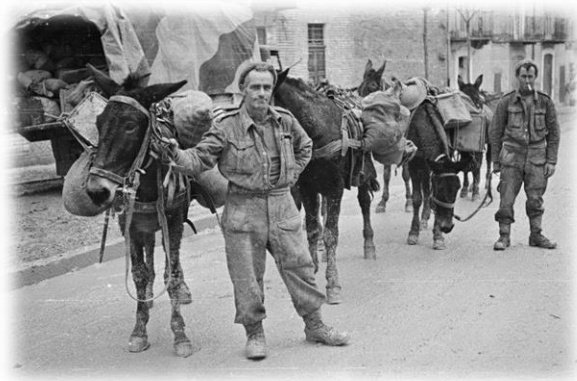
## VET CORPS

Up until the end of the Second World War, horses and other animals were a common sight on the battlefield, either as chariots of war, or as the backbone of the supply train. By the First World War New Zealand had added veterinary services to their order of battle in order to ensure these vital animals were protected from disease and treated for injury. But with the advent of mechanised warfare, the majority of service animals were retired, and the supporting veterinary corps was disbanded in 1949. The notion that the military veterinarian became obsolete is erroneous. Militaries around the globe have retained their military veterinary units, which are currently providing valuable service. Defence Force veterinary staff support combat, disaster relief and other operations.



# MULES

No one can argue that the Mules are perhaps the most under rated and appreciated animal that has served the colours. Simple put without the mule no army in the world would have been able to launch any campaign. Perhaps more mules have given the ultimate sacrifice to man than any other animal; a sad testimony is very few memorials honour them. Today special force soldiers use Mules in Kandahar to transport equipment to base camps in the mountains.





# WAR DOGS

The use of War dogs is not a new concept, well before the Romans, the Egyptians, Greeks, and Babylonians all employed fierce fighting dogs in battle. From these beginnings, dog training and employment has been continuously refined to produce a highly sophisticated and versatile extension of the soldier's own senses. It might be imagined that with the increase complexity of military operations the value of war dogs has declined. In fact, the reverse is true. Today's Military Working Dog team is a highly deployable being modular and mobile makes these teams very adaptable to many situations on a battlefield. Dogs are ideal for tasks such as tracking, detection of explosives or guarding. They are on the increase, there are more Military dogs in the New Zealand Defence Force than ever before.



# WAR HORSES

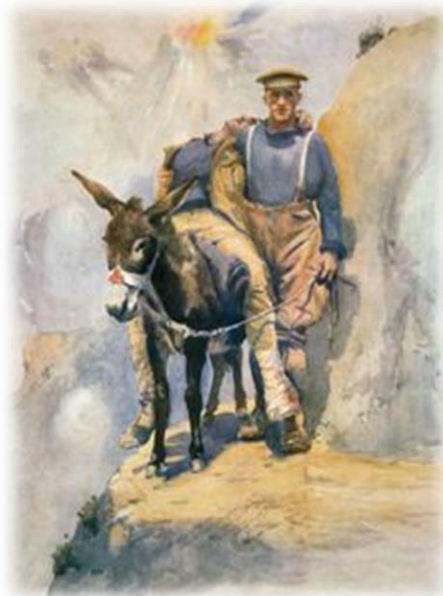
About 8,000 horses were sent to the South African War (1899–1902) also known as the Boer War), the first overseas conflict involving New Zealand soldiers. New Zealanders earned a reputation for expert horsemanship, resourcefulness, strength, speed and stamina. In WWI over 10,000 were commissioned by the Government to equip the NZ Expeditionary Force. In the Egyptian desert they joined their Australian counterparts and became the ANZAC Mounted Brigade. Lord Allenby wrote in 1926 that none of the troops he commanded during the war were better than the New Zealand mounted riflemen. In April 1916, more than 3,000 animals were sent from Egypt to France with the New Zealand Division. At the end of the war quarantine restrictions related to animal diseases prevented these animals returning home. Only four New Zealand horses came back.





# DONKEY

One of the most famous New Zealand Military Donkeys is Pte Richard Alexander (Dick) Henderson's Donkey used at Gallipoli to fetch wounded troops down from the front lines to a medical station on the beach. Henderson later served in France, and on 22 October 1916 was awarded the recently created Military Medal for bravery. In recent deployments to Afghanistan Special Forces used donkeys for the carriage of equipment over difficult mountainous terrain. They carried laptops and communications gear into remote mountain areas on donkeys to call in coordinated precision air strikes on enemy targets whilst riding locally purchased mounts.



# CAMEL

The Camel Corps was founded in January 1916. It attained its full strength in December that year. Four battalions were eventually formed. The 1st and 3rd were entirely Australian, the 2nd was British, and the 4th was a mix of Australians and New Zealanders. The Corps was formally disbanded in May 1919. A total of 346 of its personnel were killed in action. In late 1917 the Desert Mounted Corps had numbers totalling 6,000 camels. Today several countries still use camels to patrol desert terrain.



# MASCOT

Military Mascots have been of great moral value to soldiers from the trenches of the First World War to dogs adopted by New Zealand Forces in Afghanistan today such as ‘Gunner’. There are two types of Military Mascots those which appear particularly in Commonwealth Forces that have a significant meaning or tradition to the official history of the Regiment. These official mascots are entitled to all the services of the army, including quartering and food at public expense. The other type of mascot and more usually a dog is the unofficial mascot which many a Kiwi soldier has adopted In-situ as a companion in many wars.

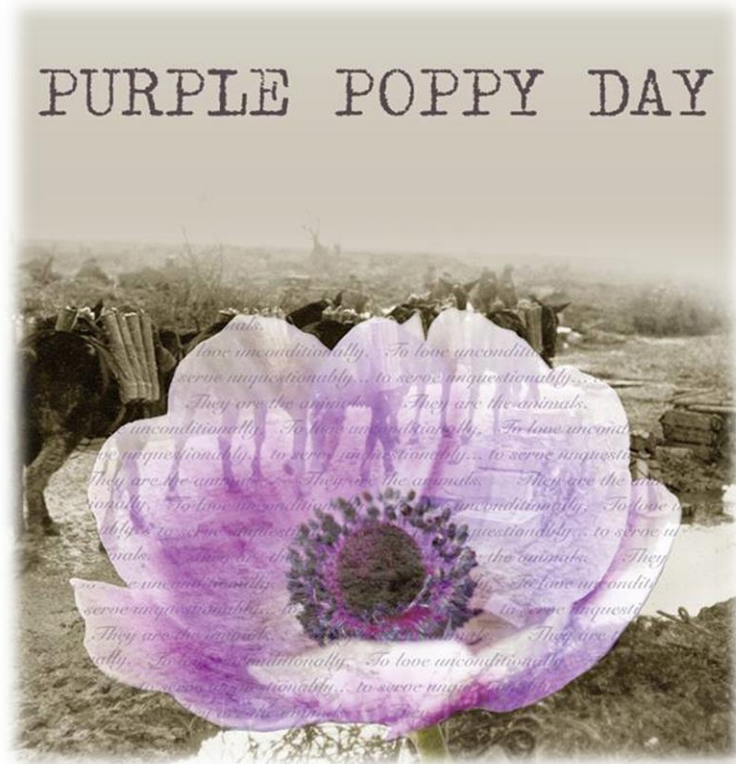




## MISCELLANEOUS ANIMALS

New Zealand Soldiers used other animals to supplement their rations. Many Kiwi troops came from the country and could milk cows or raise chickens for eggs. Cats were used by both the Navy and Army to keep the rat population down onboard ships or in the trenches. Canaries were used in the mines to warn soldiers of dangerous gas and kept spirits up alongside Nurses tending the wounded.





On the 24 February 2018 the National Army Museum at Waiouru opened New Zealand's official war animal memorial. That same day was announced to be purple poppy day- a day that all animals that have served can be recognised for their deeds and sacrifices.

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress  
can be judged by the way its animals are treated."

Mahatma Gandhi