

Wear a Purple Poppy: Remembering Animals in War

AUTHOR

FIONA WHITE

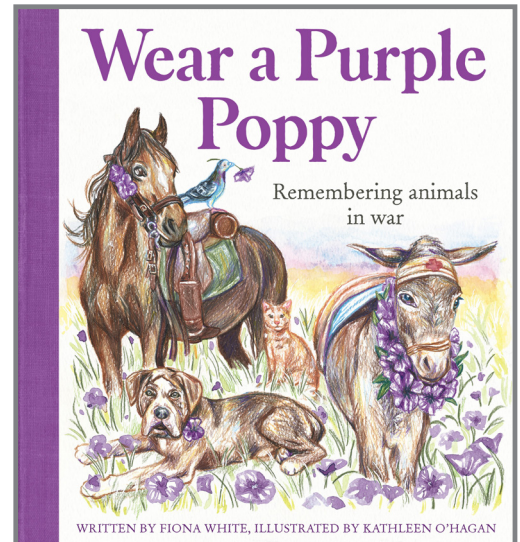
ILLUSTRATOR

KATHLEEN O'HAGAN

SCIS: 5473045

ISBN: 9780734421630

RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

Lest we forget, our four-legged diggers served too . . . This is a heart-warming, beautifully illustrated tribute to the animals that served alongside our diggers in war and peacetime. *Wear a Purple Poppy* honours their courage and dedication and captures the spirit and importance of wearing a purple poppy on the National Day for War Animals.

It is a little remembered fact that not only soldiers went to war; many animals were taken too. The purple poppy that we wear on the National Day for War Animals was created to honour animals like Simpson's donkey for their courage and fortitude, and the comfort they gave to soldiers.

Wear A Purple Poppy combines a poetic tribute with nonfiction text to inform young readers of the loyal work of these animals. From the donkeys, horses, mules and dogs to the elephants, pigeons, cats and camels who took on roles as mascots, trackers and messengers, we wear a purple poppy for you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Fiona White is a primary school teacher with a lifelong love of horses and animals. She lives in the Macedon Ranges with her two badly behaved but extremely lovable dogs. The greatest love of her childhood was her horse Nimbus; a feisty, head shy pony who survived the Ash Wednesday fires and lived to be 35 years old. *Wear a Purple Poppy: Remembering Animals in War* is her first book.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Kathleen O'Hagan is an emerging Meanjin-based artist, educator and arts worker. Her work has been displayed in numerous exhibitions and art prizes across Australia. Her debut children's book, *Colourful Memories*, was illustrated in the spare hours during her final year of school. In 2021, she completed a Bachelor of Visual Art (First Class Honours) at the Queensland College of Art and was awarded the University Medal.

She is passionate about illustration's ability to give life to unique stories, voices and histories. You will often find her tucked away in her small studio—head down at her drafting table, flipping through her art book collection, or working paint-smeared by her easel.

Find out more about her at <https://www.kathleenohaganart.com/>.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.

STUDY NOTES

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

Animals in War

- Research Australian animals (including birds) in war. [See: Australian War Animal Memorial Organisation (AWAMO) <http://awamo.org.au/>] Discuss some of the facts you have gleaned from your research.
- Research animals that have served in other countries' forces.
- This book canvasses the roles played in war by horses, mules, donkeys, camels, dogs, pigeons, elephants and cats. Research these roles and some examples of their service.
- The text mentions the role of animals, particularly dogs, as mascots in war. What kind of role do you think a mascot would have for soldiers? You might want to research other animals who served as mascots in war.
- Choose one of the animal recipients of the PDSA Dickin Medal, RSPCA Purple Cross or the Blue Cross and create an illustrated report detailing the animal's contributions and life. As a class, gather all your reports and create a tribute wall.
- Research animal war memorials. Where are they located? Why do you think those sites were chosen? Why do you think these memorials are important?
 - Use Google Earth to study then draw a bird's eye view map of the animal memorial at Pozières in France.
- Use Google Earth, or an atlas, to study the topography of Papua New Guinea and the Kokoda Track. Why do you think donkeys, mules and pigeons were so important here during World War II?
- Research the purple poppy and the National Day for War Animals. On 24 February, gather as a class and wear purple poppies (or purple poppy pins) to commemorate the day. How does the wearing of the purple poppy help animals today?
- The bravery of military animals is honoured in this book. How has society's views of the treatment of animals in military arenas changed over the years?
 - Why do you think people's views changed over time? How do you think the advances in technology have affected the use of animals in war and peace time? Research and discuss this topic.
- As well as injury and trauma experienced on front lines, animals can unfortunately suffer during war in other ways too. For example, there has been displacement and abandonment of animals during the conflict in Ukraine. As a class, research this issue and the efforts made by organisations to save these animals. Discuss how this reflects on changes in society's views over time.
 - How do you think social media influences the fate of animals affected by war today?
- The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps became known as the Anzacs after the Gallipoli Landing in 1915. Many of those soldiers then rode together in the Charge of Beersheba on horses shipped from Australia and New Zealand. Discuss why this Anzac bond remains significant today.

Australians in Overseas Conflicts

- Australian and New Zealand students might be aware of the Anzacs' desperate plight at the battle of Gallipoli, and of the Charge of the 4th Light Horse Regiment at Beersheba. Discuss these conflicts and the role played by animals within them.
- Students may not be aware of some of the other conflicts mentioned in this book, nor of the places where they occurred. Choose one of the conflicts and research it. On a map, find the location of that place, eg. Pozières.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- The book opens with a poem. Invite students to write their own poem paying tribute to animals in war.

- In the text, the author mentions that animals ‘lifted the hearts of the soldiers who . . . served alongside them’. What do you think she means by this? How do animals help people feel happy and calm in society today?
- Write a story about an animal at war that you have come across while reading.

VISUAL LITERACY

- The cover of a book is an important part of its message. *Wear a Purple Poppy* depicts a number of animals, wearing purple poppy accessories, in a field of purple poppies. What message does the cover of this book convey?
 - Design your own cover depicting an animal or animals at war.
- The endpapers depict purple poppies. This is a beautifully rendered image. Encourage students to create a similar image.
- The medium and styles employed are lead pencil, coloured pencil and Japanese watercolour. The colours used in this book are primarily sombre shades of brown, charcoal and purple. Ask students to try creating their own illustration using these mediums.
- Invite students to draw, paint or create a collage of a scene to accompany the story they wrote above. Then collect and display each student’s artwork in the classroom.
- Match the below words to the correct definition:

word	definition
crotchety	a special way of honouring someone or something important
artillery	agile, having the ability to move easily
stoic	irritable and grumpy
Walers	to move something in or out of a place in secret
nimble	lively, spirited and sometimes confrontational or argumentative
tribute	staying calm and strong, even when things are difficult
smuggled	an adverb that helps to describe something that happens or is awarded to an animal or person after they have died
feisty	named because their background dates back to the early days in the colony of New South Wales
posthumously	refers to the big guns and weapons used in wars, as well as the name for the military unit that operates those weapons

AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

DR ROBYN SHEAHAN-BRIGHT