



Media Release

The Hon Alan Griffin MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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TRIBUTE TO ANIMALS IN WAR UNVEILED AT WAR MEMORIAL

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, today unveiled the *Animals in war memorial*, a joint project between the Australian War Memorial and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).

"Animals have played a significant role for our forces, such as Simpson's donkey who helped rescue wounded men at Gallipoli, through to modern-day Afghanistan where explosive detection dogs are helping to protect people and places," Minister Griffin said.

The *Animals in war memorial* stands in the Sculpture Garden of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

The memorial's main feature is a large bronze horse head, an Australian War Memorial collection item and the only remaining fragment from the original *Desert Mounted Corps memorial*, which stood at Port Said in Egypt until it was destroyed during the Suez Crisis of 1956.

Mr Griffin said he was pleased to see the Australian War Memorial partner with the RSPCA to remember the role that animals have performed in wartime.

"Our soldiers have relied on the natural abilities and skills of animals. Camels transported troops and equipment across hot and dusty plains in the Middle East and North Africa, carrier pigeons delivered messages where radios and telephones wouldn't work and dogs sniffed out enemies in the jungle - all these animals and more have served alongside Australian servicemen and women," Minister Griffin said.

The RSPCA's National President, Lynne Bradshaw, said the memorial pays tribute to the faithful service animals have provided us throughout Australia's wartime history.

"Animals not only served man but offered companionship and comfort and their very presence in the darkest of times was treasured by the people they stood beside.

"This memorial honours this relationship and the RSPCA is very proud to have been involved in its development," Ms Bradshaw said.

The stories of animals in war are told in the current Australian War Memorial exhibition *A is for Animals*, which is on display until 22 July, 2009.

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