

# Tales of Animals in War



## A Day at the Museum

“Arf! Hey everyone,” woofed Gandy the dog. “Here I am with my Remembrance Clubhouse friends for a tour of a local military museum as part of our annual reunion. We chose to explore this interesting place to learn more about our country’s military history and remembrance. Military museums are definitely pretty cool. They help honour the experiences of the brave Canadians who have served in uniform during times of war, conflict and peace.”

“Exactly,” Win the bear happily growled. “It was amazing to be able to explore and sometimes even touch the many items that are on display. It was kind of like walking through a door into the past because each object tells a different story. What a great way to learn about history! This is something very important in our Remembrance Clubhouse, as we all have animal relatives who helped humans serving in the military over the years.”

“There was just so much to learn,” purred Simone the cat. “We explored the museum looking at all of the different historical artifacts. Then we decided we would split up

and each pick an object that we thought was especially interesting. And now we are going to share our findings with each other—and with you!”

“Museum artifacts, by the way, are special items that relate to the past. They can be so many different kinds of neat things,” neighed Bonfire Jr. the horse. “Seeing these sorts of objects can help us make a connection with what happened many years ago and better understand the experiences and sacrifices of those who served in the military. They were just so brave—some of them even received special medals for their courageous acts.”

“We definitely found some very cool artifacts,” trumpeted Ellie the elephant. “We all seemed to be especially interested in what people wore during wars and peace support missions, whether it was uniforms, headgear, combat boots or lifejackets. Serving in the military can be very dangerous so people—and even animals—put on different equipment to try to protect themselves.”

“But people also need to be able to have a bit of relaxation,” squawked Squeaker the pigeon.

“Serving in uniform can be extremely stressful and Canadians have found ways to try to have fun, wherever they may have been. Some of the museum artifacts revealed that unexpected side of military life, including some sports equipment that our soldiers used in war zones! It made my feathers ruffle a bit just seeing that.”

“It sure is interesting to get together to share the cool items we discovered at this place,” barked Gandy. “But there is also a whole lot more fascinating history like this to be found all across Canada. There are military museums from coast to coast to coast, and also online. Where could you go to learn more about our country’s proud military heritage and remember the many brave Canadians who have served?”



## The proud blue beret

Hi, I'm Win the bear. I saw a display in the museum about Canadian peacekeepers and found something very cool—a colourful blue beret! Peacekeepers are soldiers who go to other countries that need help to stop fighting and violence. A beret is a distinctive hat worn by many members of the military.



One of the first big peacekeeping missions was established in 1956 by the United Nations (UN) and Canada played a leading role in this idea. Lester B. Pearson (who would later become the Prime Minister of our country) suggested that an international force go to Egypt and help calm a tense confrontation there that was threatening to expand into a major war. For his great idea, he would be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Canadian troops would also take part in this new UN effort. But a question soon arose—how could people tell the peacekeepers apart from the soldiers who were actually fighting one another? Military uniforms could look a lot alike but it was decided to have the UN peacekeepers wear a bright blue helmet or hat to make it easy to quickly recognize them. The blue beret I found in the museum was actually worn by a Canadian soldier who served

in Egypt. It is so neat to hold a piece of history in your paw!

Canada has taken part in dozens of multinational peace support efforts over the years and some of our peacekeepers are still in Egypt today. I am so proud that Canada has this amazing tradition of serving for peace.



Canadian peacekeepers have continued to wear the blue beret, like these soldiers in Mali in 2019.  
Photo: Department of National Defence

## Tricking the eye with camouflage

Hi everyone, I'm Ellie. Being an elephant, I am so big that people can usually find me quite easily. But when I was exploring the museum exhibit about Canada's mission in Afghanistan, I learned something about how NOT to be seen.

Canadian Armed Forces members served in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014. It was very dangerous and sadly about



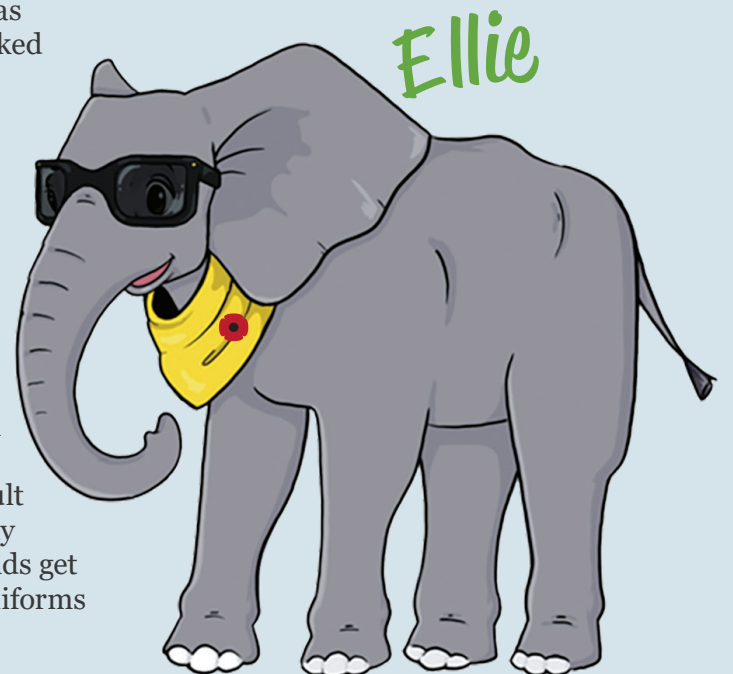
Canadian soldier in his camouflage uniform with children in Afghanistan.  
Photo: Department of National Defence

158 of them lost their lives there. There was a uniform in a big display case that had been worn by one of our soldiers who served in that far-off country in Southwest Asia. It had a tan, grey and brown pattern that I thought was interesting. But I wondered why they looked like that...

The exhibit plaque explained that this is called "camouflage." It was a way for our service members to better blend into the dry, dusty landscape that often didn't have many trees or other greenery. That way, if the enemy was looking for them, they'd be harder to see.

I have heard Veterans of the Afghanistan mission talk about how challenging it was to serve there. Being in such a difficult environment was very stressful—the daily risks and sometimes watching their friends get hurt was tough. Canadians wore their uniforms

with pride and seeing this exhibit helped me picture what our service members did in Afghanistan. I thank them for helping others.



## These boots are made for walking

Woof! I'm Gandy the dog. We did not have time to see everything in the museum so I had to make a choice about the sections I wanted to explore. I was naturally drawn to the exhibit about the Defence of Hong Kong during the Second World War, where I found a simple pair of soldier's boots.



My ancestor, Sergeant Gander, was the mascot of the Royal Rifles of Canada and travelled with them from Newfoundland to the island of Hong Kong in East Asia. The soldiers sure had to go a long way but their boots eventually hit the ground in this British colony in November 1941. Only a few weeks later, Hong Kong was attacked and our troops had to go into action.

It was terrible fighting and many Canadians were killed or wounded. During one battle, Gander was with a group of soldiers when an enemy grenade was thrown at them. Gander rushed to protect his friends by carrying it away. Sadly, Gander lost his life in the effort but his heroism had saved the others. My ancestor was later honoured with the Dickin Medal, the highest award for bravery that an animal can receive. So when I look at these

worn-out combat boots, I remember the long journey the Canadian soldiers and Sergeant Gander made to help defend Hong Kong.



Gander and his soldier friends on their way to Hong Kong.  
Photo: Library and Archives Canada

## Digging into history

Coo! I'm Squeaker the pigeon. It was remarkable to fly around all those museum displays about Canadian military history. I think that if they could talk, the artifacts would all have interesting stories to share. Many objects made me curious, but one that surprised me was a simple shovel.



I am a bird so shovels sure aren't something I ever use. However, I learned that soldiers have been using shovels since ancient times to dig trenches and tunnels, and build defensive walls and forts. I also learned that the shovel I saw here was used by our soldiers during the Korean War.

More than 26,000 Canadians served in this bitter conflict that was fought in East Asia between 1950 and 1953. Our troops faced challenging terrain and weather, and were often asked to guard the front lines and go on patrols. Wherever they were, they had to be ready to take cover from attack, and shovels were vital for burrowing into the ground to avoid enemy fire.

Canadian soldiers digging in Korea in May 1951.  
Photo: Library and Archives Canada



One of the most important Canadian actions in Korea was the Battle of Kapyong in April 1951 when Canadians fought off a much larger enemy force. Digging defensive positions was key to the victory and their shovels helped save their lives. It must have been so scary but when I see the scratches on the shovel blade and handle, I think I can better understand how Canadians put their lives on the line during the Korean War.

## Safety on the high seas

Purr! It's me, Simone the cat. We kitties are quite curious and that means I find museums especially interesting. But curiosity sometimes gets us into trouble—that's why cats need to have nine lives!



Simone

My great-great-great grandfather had an adventurous life. He served on a British warship in the late 1940s. He was a cuddly, furry friend who brought the human sailors some comfort when they were far away from home. He also hunted the rats on the ship to help keep food from being ruined.

I learned from his old stories the importance of trying to stay safe at sea. My relative often talked about how his sailor friends were always ready to grab their life preservers if their ship ran into trouble. He also mentioned that military aviators wore them too, in case their planes crashed in the water. That is why my favourite museum exhibit was a life vest from a Canadian warship that served in the Gulf War.

More than 4,000 Canadians served in this tense conflict in 1990-1991 and it was an important event in our military history. Did you know that it was the first time that women in the Canadian Armed Forces served in



One of the 2021 National Capital Region banners.  
Photo: Canadian Heritage

combat roles? In fact, I saw a picture in the museum of a street banner that has been hanging in downtown Ottawa this year that shows a female sailor on one of our ships during the Gulf War. Trailblazers like her made big waves for the many more female Canadian service members who would follow. I salute them all for their courage.

## Masks to help protect us

Neigh! I'm Bonfire Jr. the horse. COVID-19 has taught us a lot about the importance of wearing masks for personal safety. However, did you know that this was definitely not the first time that humans—and animals, too—have worn special masks to stay safe?

More than a century ago, my great-great-great-grandfather was a horse serving in the



A Canadian soldier and horse wearing gas masks.  
Photo: Library and Archives Canada

First World War. That conflict was extremely brutal. Armies even used poison gas against their enemies. The toxic chemicals in the air damaged the lungs and could be deadly, so gas masks were soon invented for protection.

I found a neat display in the museum that had an old gas mask from the war. Beside it was a photograph of a horse and soldier both wearing one. I imagine they must have been hard to use, but I'm glad they offered some protection—a little like how we have worn masks of our own this year to be safer.

This year is the 105<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a battle that took place at Beaumont-Hamel in France. It was there that the Newfoundland Regiment went into action on 1 July 1916 and many of the soldiers were killed or wounded. Canadian troops would also fight in the Battle of the Somme later that summer and fall, and gas masks like the one I found often had to be used.

We will remember all of our brave soldiers and animals who helped bring peace.









Bonfire Jr.

# Newspaper Activities



## Who said...?

Do you have an elephant's memory? Try to remember which Remembrance Clubhouse animal said what.

- "their shovels helped save their lives" .....   Bonfire Jr.
- "his sailor friends were always ready to grab their life preservers" .....   Ellie
- "the UN peacekeepers wear a bright blue helmet or hat" .....   Gandy
- "gas masks were soon invented for protection" .....   Simone
- "their boots eventually hit the ground" .....   Squeaker
- "to better blend into the dry, dusty landscape" .....   Win

## BREAK THE CODE

During the Korean War, soldiers used secret codes to write important messages so the enemy couldn't read them. Use the key below to "crack" the secret code.

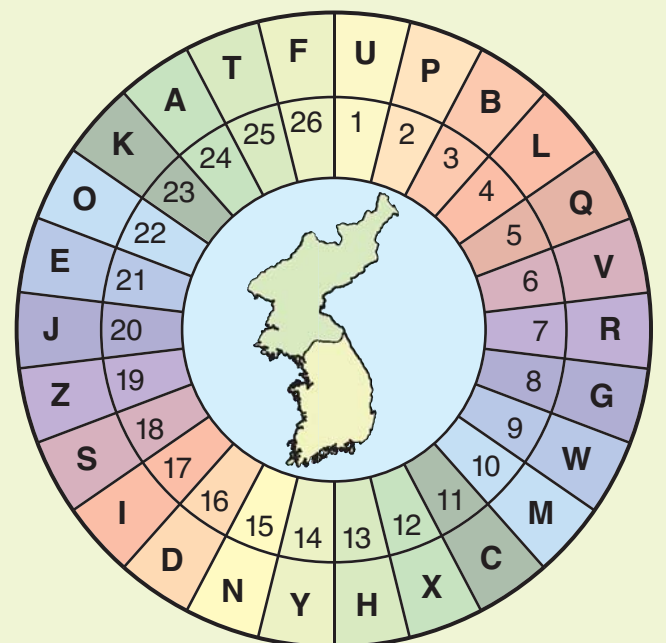
25	13	24	15	23		14	22	1
6	21	25	21	7	24	15	18	

## Word search

The following list of words are placed horizontally, vertically and diagonally, both forwards and back-to-front in the word search.

When you have spotted a word, simply circle it.

- AFGHANISTAN
- ARTIFACT
- AVIATOR
- BERET
- BOOTS
- CAMOUFLAGE
- EGYPT
- GAS MASK
- GULF WAR
- INDIGENOUS
- LIFE VEST
- MEDAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PEACEKEEPER
- SACRIFICE
- SHOVEL
- TRENCH
- TUNNEL
- VETERAN



## Did you know?

Thousands of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people have served in Canada's military over the years, but the story of Tom Cogwagee Longboat is especially amazing. He was an Onondaga from the Six Nations Grand River Reserve near Brantford, Ontario, who was a long-distance runner in the early 1900s. He even won the famous Boston Marathon!

In 1916, Longboat joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force during the First World War and his special talents would soon be put to use. Private Longboat became a dispatch carrier—a soldier who hand-

delivered important messages between units during a time before modern technology made contacting people easier. It was a very dangerous job as he would often have to run through enemy fire. He was wounded twice and was even mistakenly declared to be killed in action.

Longboat—whose Indigenous name "Cogwagee" means "all" or "everything"—indeed put it all on the line many times during the war, but luckily he survived. We will remember him, and all of the other brave Indigenous people who have served in uniform over the years.



Private Longboat in France in 1917. Photo: Library and Archives Canada



# Hey Teacher!

Want to find more learning resources about how animals have helped humans in times of war?



VISIT  
veterans.gc.ca

and SEARCH  
"Animals in war"