



The Australian War Animal Memorial Organisation (AWAMO) is a not for profit charity that raises awareness of the deeds and sacrifices that animals have made in warfare. On the 21st July 2017 AWAMO in cooperation with the people of Pozieres, AWAMO proudly opened the first war animal memorial on the Western Front. This memorial recognised all animals from all Nations that were involved in the Great War.

Pozieres was the scene of some of the most bitter and costly fighting for Australian troops in WWI. The battle was also the place of untold losses in animal life. It is estimated that over 9 million serving animals perished or were wounded in the Great War. We should never forget that not only two legged but four legged diggers served this nation and still continue to do so today. These animals have demonstrated true valour and an enduring partnership with humans and they will now be honoured with this beautiful new memorial and rose

The memorial concept was designed by Nigel Allsopp. The concept and lay out is as follows: Upon approaching the memorial site to the right is a wooden sign denoting the memorial. The sign reading *WWI War Animal Memorial* denotes it is for all animals regardless of side they served on. To the left of this entrance is a statue of St Francis- Patron Saint of all animals. Beneath this sculpture is a stone of remembrance for the *Australian Army Veterinary Corps* who saved and cared for thousands of war animals. Either side of Saint Francis are two standard roses- one called Rosie the other Sniff. These were named on behalf of Dr Harry Cooper and Dr Brendan Nelsons favourite dogs.

Proceeding towards the main centre monument to the left and right are the first of four cast iron seats. The first two seats are called "*Autumn Leaves*" - the winter of war.

Next on the left is the *New Zealand war animal memorial*. So often have the ANZAC fought alongside, AWAMO could not have imagined a war animal memorial without our close allies being represented.

Directly opposite this then was the appropriate place for the war animal memorial *for all Nations*. No matter what side they served they did so with no malice.

The second two seats along the walk way are called the "*Tree of Life*". These latter two seats lead to the main monument dedicated to Australian War animals and called "*Emerging Spirit*". Within this wonderful horses mane can be seen a mule, donkey, pigeon and dog- all part of the war animal story. The internationally renowned Artist *Susan Bahary* produced the two main sculptures; I want to thank her for bringing the story and life into the memorial that the war animals deserve.

Finally to the right and left of this are two more rose standards called "Bernard and Barry". One to honour the Mayor of Pozieres Bernard Delattre and the second to honour Barry Garcey whom without both these men's support and generosity the memorial would not have had a home.

Finally the three plinths are surrounded by purple war animal roses (The Charles de Gaulle rose). Duplicates of these roses can be brought in Australia from Treloar Roses.

Several hundred people attended including VIPs , locals and Australian tourists that were lucky enough to encounter the opening whilst on a tour of the Somme battlefields.

The ceremony commenced at 1000 hrs on a beautiful clear day with a Bagpiper playing several melody's as people took their seats. The MC for the event Major who did an outstanding job, commenced with an opening address and welcome followed by the Mayor of Pozieres welcome in French. VIP speakers Dr Brendan Nelson and Dr Harry Cooper told touching stories of war victims both human and animal which brought may a tear to the crowd's eyes. The ADF Veterinarian Major Kendall Crocker talked of the people who cared and looked after the war animals- the various Veterinary Corps who saved many thousands of especially horses lives. Then came my turn to talk, thanking all I could that made history this day and remembered the war animals via this monument for generations to come.

National Anthems were sung then all four memorials were unveiled separately, then blessed by the Padres. This was followed by the reading of the war animal Poem reading Wreaths were then formally laid by VIPs from Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, France, Belgium, India, the United States and Canada. Remaining wreaths were then laid, these came from dozens of societies that support AWAMO such as the Qld and National Donkey, Percheron, Clydesdale, RAAF MWDs, Light Horse and pigeon associations. So numerous were the local and Australian schools that made wreaths and sent them it is not possible to list them all, but I thank each and everyone. These wreaths were all spectacular and filmed around the world by TV crews present. Then finally the Ode was read out for war animals

followed by the trumpet sound of the last post with a minute's silence. Again the British Army supplied the Trumpeter.



Main Australian memorial



New Zealand war animal memorial



War animal memorial for all Nations



VIPs and speakers at the opening were Dr Brendan Nelson, Dr Harry Cooper, Pozieres Mayor Bernard Delattre, Mr and Mrs Barry Gracey Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur and Nigel Allsopp President of AWAMO.

A war animal memorial could not have been opened without animals being present. I would like to thank the Royal Army Veterinary Corps (RAVC) who supplied 20 Military Working Dog (MWD) handlers to the event. They also loaned Cpl Young the ADF dog handler present an MWD for the day. Ian Grey Vice President of Redland RSL had made several contacts which resulted in local Horses and Donkeys being on parade. And of course many re-enactors and visitors brought their pets along.





The beautiful purple poppy horse rug, each poppy was handmade by individuals from across the world. AWAMO was sent poppies from schools, widow and ladies clubs, individuals and groups. All of these were hand sewn onto the rug by Wendy Harrison an AWAMO Director. An Australian school made four poppy neck bands that we hung around the donkeys and heavy horse.



President of AWAMO Nigel Allsopp with WWI local French army re-enactor with his pigeons. Right: Dr Nelson with Cpl Young and Major Crocker.



Some of the dog handlers from the RAVC and USA Re-enactors



In the foreground is St Francis patron saint of Animals, he looks over the memorial to the Veterinary members who looked after the war animals. Wreaths came from far and wide 75 in total. At the end of the ceremony all wreaths will be displayed at Tommy's Museum at Pozieres. On the right Major Kendall Crocker Veterinary Officer ADF and Major Ann Jacob Veterinary Officer Belgium Defence Force, open the memorial to Veterinary staff who saved the lives of thousands of war animals on the Western Front.



All four memorials were blessed by Brigadier (Rtd) Monsignor John Butler- Principal Chaplain OAM ADF and NZDF Padre, Rev Denise Ferguson and assisted by Vice President of Redland RSL Mr Ian Grey holding the holy water in an original WWI helmet.



At the end of the ceremony a spectacular display of 100 pigeons were let loose from a WWI French pigeon service re-enactor team complete with heavy horses.

There are many people that make such an event possible. I humbly thank you all for your time, passion and commitment. Together we have made a lasting memorial to honour the winged and four legged soldiers of WWI.



Nigel Allsopp

ANZAC of the year 2017