

MEDIA RELEASE
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Promoting
Responsible
Dog
Ownership



Dogs NSW honours combat canines on Anzac Day

This Anzac Day, **Dogs NSW** reminds us of the valuable role trained dogs played working beside our soldiers in times of war, such as in Vietnam. Canines in combat provided outstanding help to our soldiers by acting as sentries, trackers, and bomb detectors. They also aided the morale of Australian soldiers as close and loyal companions.

Labradors were trained in Australia, and sent overseas to work with our soldiers during the Vietnam War. They served full-time as vital members of the team. On many occasions they saved their handler's lives by detecting mines buried under tracks or detecting trip-wires.

"It's no surprise that Labs played a big role in past battles. They're such calm and loyal animals, and that means they are well suited to almost every role, be it a family pet or as a workmate. They would have taken good care of their handlers and kept them company, especially important given the amount of grief soldiers can feel in times of war.", said veterinarian and **Dogs NSW** spokesperson **Dr Peter Higgins**.

Dogs that served in Vietnam were not permitted to return to Australia, and were left with expatriates and their families living in South Vietnam.

Today, MWDs (Military Working Dogs) serve for a maximum of four months before returning to Australia. MWDs have proved particularly useful in peacekeeping missions in Timor and Bougainville Island. German Shepherd Dogs are commonly used today for their intelligent, dependable, and predictable temperaments.

"Dogs can be the 'unsung heroes' of Anzac Day, though their contribution to past military efforts abroad are worth recognising", believes **Dr Higgins**.

Dogs NSW 2008 registration statistics indicated Labrador Retrievers to be the most popular breed of dog in Australia, having a strong reputation as household pets and as working dogs.

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For further information, images or interviews, contact:
Tomas Ganderton or Dr Peter Higgins
Media Liaison
0401 927 653 or 0410 67 63 65
TomasGanderton@dogsnsw.org.au

DOGS NSW is located at:
The Bill Spilstead Complex for Canine Affairs,
44 Luddenham Road,
Erskine Park,
NSW 2759