

# CAESAR THE ANZAC DOG

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HarperCollins Publishers

READING UNIT AND ACTIVITY PLAN

# CAESAR THE ANZAC DOG



Available at all good booksellers. Price: \$16.99. Published by Harper Collins.

## Overview of the Story

Written by Patricia Stroud and illustrated by Bruce Potter, this new book tells the proud story of Caesar a redcross trained bulldog and his handler 'Uncle Tom'.

Caesar's job was to rescue wounded soldiers from 'No- Man's- Land at the Battle of the Somme during the 1st World War. Patricia Stroud recalls this poignant and true story told to her by her Mother Ida who was present when the New Zealand Rifle Brigade boarded their troop ship to transport them to Egypt and the Western Front. The troops were led by their mascot, Caesar, who wore a blue ribbon on his collar given to him by Ida.

Perfect for student Anzac Day awareness, general reading and social studies, this is a true story highlighting courage and loyalty of a dog and his handler in war time. Caesar is an unsung Kiwi hero and this story highlights this little known aspect of the First World War.

## Curriculum Details

Levels: 2-4

Curriculum Area: English

Strands: Reading, Listening, Speaking, Viewing  
Writing and Presenting

### Achievement Objectives:

- Discussing language, meaning and ideas in the text
- Relating understanding to their own experiences
- Making use of visual clues to add meaning and to gain an historical overview
- Listening to and interacting with others in class and group situations to gain meaning from a narrative

### Essential Skills:

- convey and receive information, ideas and feelings
- identify, locate and gather and present information from a variety of sources and in a variety of ways.
- thinking critically, imaginatively and logically

Links to: Social Studies Time Continuity and Change

- Relationships between people and events through time

## Pre Reading To/Shared Activities

### WHAT IS ANZAC DAY ALL ABOUT?

- Find out what the students know about ANZAC Day, eg
  - what does ANZAC stand for? (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps)
  - when is it observed? (25 April)
  - why is it observed as a public holiday?
  - what special ANZAC observances take place at school or in the local district each year
- Invite a representative of your local RSA to talk to the class about what ANZAC Day means to New Zealanders and Australians.
- Using a dictionary have students find the difference between 'an observance' and 'a celebration'.
- Which word do they think best describes ANZC Day? Give reasons why.
- Can they think of any public holidays in New Zealand which are a celebration rather than an observance?

### HOW ANIMALS HELP US?

- Have groups brainstorm and list all the ways that dogs can help humans, eg
  - companionship
  - guide dogs for the blind
  - hunting, sheep and cattle dogs

## Introducing the Story

- Tell students that you/they will be reading/sharing a true story about a very brave dog called Caesar and his handler 'Uncle Tom' who helped save the lives of ANZAC soldiers during the First World War (1914-18)

### STUDY SKILLS

- Tell students that this story takes place in Egypt and in the Somme region of France.
  - using atlases, help students locate these areas
  - older students can use the scale to find the distance these places are from New Zealand

# CAESAR

## THE ANZAC DOG



### Pages 1-7

#### Meaning and Ideas

- Discuss how the boys reacted to the puppy. Share any experiences class members have had with puppies and kittens. How do they make people feel?
- What reasons can students give for the boys laughing at the name of the dog (Caesar)? What does the name mean?
- Remind students of the dates of the First World War. Calculate how many years ago this was.

### Pages 8-9

- Why would Tom salute the man who came out leading the 'funny looking dog'?
- Discuss why Caesar and other dogs of his breed were called bulldogs. Can they think of any other dogs that are bred for a particular purpose? eg hounds, setters etc.

### Pages 11-16

- What special measures were taken to make sure that the horses remained healthy and strong during the long sea voyage?
- In groups plan a daily exercise programme for the soldiers on the ship.
- Using the story and the pictures for clues, why would Ida have thought that the whole day was rather like a lovely party?
- Why was she surprised when she saw many people were crying?
- Have students discuss the feelings they would have if any of their older family members had to go to war.
- Can they identify anything in the story that makes war seem like a great adventure to the soldiers? Do we still think of war today as a great adventure.
- Point out that there was no television in those days. Discuss how TV may have changed the way we think of wars today.

### Pages 18-23

#### Meaning and Ideas

- What type of training did the soldiers get in Egypt. Why was this necessary?
- List the 'games' that Caesar played and alongside list the purpose of each of the games.
- Using the picture clues, discuss the various modes and uses of the transport vehicles illustrated. How do they differ from modern means of transport?
- Challenge students to name the qualities of the men that led Tom to say to Albert "They're the real heroes in my book."

#### Word Study

- Find the meanings of the words dressed and dressing on page 18. Use in written sentences. Talk about the way this word is most often used.
- Introduce the students to the following French names:

<i>ambulancier</i>	- an ambulance driver
<i>chien</i>	- a dog
<i>sanitaire</i>	- red cross
- Through discussion and using dictionary skills make sure students understand and can use the following words in sentences.

- <i>sniper</i>	- <i>front</i>
- <i>lorries</i>	- <i>action</i>
- <i>stretcher-bearers</i>	

### Pages 24-31

#### Conveying Meaning and Ideas

- After reading the descriptions of the terrible conditions the soldiers had to face, have students complete some of the following activities:
  - from a soldier's point of view, write a letter to your family in New Zealand describing the reality of trench warfare.
  - write a new dog handlers training schedule listing the tasks Caesar had to be trained to carry out and conditions faced.
  - record an eyewitness radio report describing a day in the life of a soldier at the front.

# CAESAR

## THE ANZAC DOG



### Pages 32-39

#### Meaning and Ideas

- Using the text and picture clues on pages 32-33, discuss how this shows that people can share the same values - even in war time. Talk about how this amazing event is both happy and sad.
  - Talk about the circumstances in which Caesar died.
- In groups, have students write a few short words they would say about Caesar as he was buried.
- Discuss the 'ethics' of using gas in warfare. Is it worse than bombs and bullets?
  - What is meant by the word coincidence? What happy coincidence happened to Tom that changed his life?

### CROSS CURRICULA CONCLUDING ACTIVITIES

#### Words that Describe

- Brainstorm and list describing words (adjectives) which celebrate the nature and the deeds of Caesar, eg, courageous, brave etc. Make into mobiles for hanging in the classroom.

#### Debate

- 'It is never right to fight a war.'

#### Investigation

- Invite a representative of your local Red Cross Society to talk to the class about the work that they do today, both in New Zealand, and overseas.

#### Health & Well-being

- Using local community health professional expertise, plan a series of lessons where your class learns basic first aid techniques. Award certificates upon completion of course.

#### Review/Social Studies

- Discuss the style of writing of the book. Does it ...
  - celebrate the life and brave deeds of Caesar and Tom?
  - tell the students enough about the horrors of war?
  - make the students aware about the terrible loss of life and senselessness of war?
  - tell why the war was fought?
- Have students list their own feelings about the story. What things do they remember most? What did they find out that they didn't know before?
- Revise the ideas about why we commemorate ANZAC day every year. After reading this book, does ANZAC day mean something more to the students than it did before? Discuss and share feelings.

#### Design

- Have groups paint/design a memorial plaque for Caesar and/or for Tom to place on the classroom wall.
- Individuals paint/design a memorial poster or write a short memorial notice for a family pet they have known well.