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THE PURPLE POPPY

Andrew Tyler (Animal Aid Director 1994 - 2016), explains a change of emphasis for our animal victims of war initiative.

When we at Animal Aid launched our purple poppy initiative - to commemorate the animal victims of war - no other organisation seemed to be addressing the issue. Our aim was to make it clear that animals used in warfare are indeed victims, not heroes. They do not give their lives; their lives are taken from them.



But too often the narrative promoted by the media has been one of animals as the valiant servants of people in violent conflict. This is precisely the opposite message to that which we intended. An equivalent situation would be if animal victims of laboratory research were to be presented as brave heroes in the service of human beings - with Animal Aid's name attached to that idea. Having said that, many of our poppy sellers have worked extraordinarily hard and with great passion on this campaign. Certainly, our message, via their work, has to a degree got through. But the dominant narrative (*animal victims of war are heroes who died for us*) is so deeply embedded that only a huge effort (costly in every way) can uproot it and lay down something that will benefit the animals. We considered the massive-effort option but decided that Animal Aid's finite resources are best used on other urgent, more productive campaigns.

We are, therefore, replacing the purple poppy with a [purple paw badge](#) that will commemorate all animal victims of human exploitation. It can be worn all year round - at special events or day to day. Rest assured that we will continue to promote our victims-not-heroes message every year in the run-up to Remembrance Sunday (but without the purple poppy), and we will continue to produce our "Animals: the hidden victims of war" booklet and other resources.

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