

An Eventful Life



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Egypt Equine Aid - helping horses, donkeys, mules (and lions)

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Jill and Lia the lion cub - an unusual rescue case for Egypt Equine Aid

Australian couple Warren and Jill Barton first visited Egypt in December 2013 to volunteer with a horse rescue service, little knowing that the experience would change their lives. Neither of them had qualifications in veterinary work - Warren is a builder and Jill has a background in Pathology - but both wanted to help the equine community in Egypt in any way they could

The plight of the horses and donkeys they helped to treat during that time had a lasting impact in them, their plans for a semi retired life in Australia were put on hold and they decided to return to Egypt in 2014 when 'Egypt Equine Aid' was born

The name speaks for itself - the charitable organisation they have founded aims to help the horses, donkeys and mules of Egypt but they have also adopted the motto "Lest we forget" to reflect the fact that many of the horses in Egypt are descendants of Australia's war horses. Nearly 10,000 Australian horses were left behind in Egypt after the First World War and Jill and Warren are hoping that Australian horse lovers will help support the work of Egypt Equine Aid

"Those same outstanding qualities seen in the 'Walers' can still be seen in the horses living in Egypt today; we would ask that people not forget these animals still living and working in one of the harshest environments in the world" says Jill

Their mission is reflected in the logo they created which includes a mare and foal to represent the descendants of the Australian war horses, the Pyramids as the enigmatic symbol of Egypt and the colouring representing the sandy deserts of this land.

Their first step was to source stables and a villa that they could work from in Abu Sier, an area about 20 minutes away from the Great Giza pyramids on the edge of the desert. It is an area with a large population of working horses and donkeys and not too far for the horses that work at the pyramids to be brought by their owners. Here they have 10 inpatient boxes, six outside yards and a treatment area where three grooms and a full time vet are based.

Each week, Egypt Equine Aid has between three and 10 inpatients to look after and treats around 30-50 outpatients with treatments ranging from simple things like worming to caring for horses and donkeys with massive wounds. Education is another focus with the organisation also trying to educate the Egyptian owners in regard to parasite control and basic animal care.



Before and after - the treatment for Bondoc

Many cases would no doubt shock readers in our part of the world and, although some horses cannot be helped and have to be euthanised, many can be returned to full health and are able to work again or are found new owners.

One case was Bondoc who came to Egypt Equine Aid from the Delta area, approximately 80 kilometres away; following a cart accident he had a huge rip across his sheath area but after treatment and castration he was able to return to full work. You can follow stories of many of the patients that are brought to Egypt Equine Aid on their [Facebook page](#) - some pictures may be a bit confronting but it is humbling to see how many equines can be rehabilitated thanks to this fantastic work.

As well as the equine patients, Warren and Jill have helped a four legged animal of a different kind and one not usually brought up around horses - Lia, the lioness.



Egypt has a huge black market in exotic animals and Lia, just weeks old was on her way to Saudi (in a suitcase) when found and confiscated - Lia's siblings were not so lucky. A kind family heard about Lia and decided to help save her but, while they managed to find a sanctuary in South Africa willing to give her a home and were willing to cover all of the expenses to get her there, it was going to take three months to organise the paperwork.

During that time Lia needed a safe place to live so Jill, who had some experience with lions during a previous time in South Africa, stepped in to help

"Convincing Warren took a little time but as usual I got my way and we went to meet Lia!" says Jill "Looking after her was an amazing experience. At first we brought her into the house for exercise but she soon grew bored with that and I started walking her in the desert behind our shelter. Those three months were such a special experience for all of us"



Being hand raised by humans was Lia's lease of life but also meant that she could not be released into the wild. This bond meant that she would gravitate towards humans, probably resulting in being shot, either by opportunist poachers or farmers, who understandably would believe her to be dangerous. However in late November Jill personally took Lia to her new home in South Africa where she will safely spend her life at the Jukarni Wildlife Sanctuary.

"Lia and I soon bonded with each other and I realised that the journey and bonding with her new pride would be much less traumatic for her if I delivered her personally. She now has a wonderful place to live and a pack mate called Elsa"

"One of our vets will soon be training with a wildlife vet in South Africa, as I'm sure Lia will not be the last wildlife to come through Egypt Equine Aid"

Although Lia may be an unusual addition to the normal work of Egypt Equine Aid, their everyday work is essential to help ease the suffering of horses, donkeys and mules in Egypt. We're sure that many of our readers would love to know more about and support their work - please consider donating to this amazing organisation and help spread the word. You can find out more on their [Facebook page](#)

