

PATRIOTPAWS

SERVICE DOGS



POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS: HELP WITH NAVIGATING THE MAZE

When a veteran returns from war physically injured, no one questions their need for help. In fact, the more visible the injury, the more supportive people tend to be. Post-Traumatic Stress, or PTS, though not visible, is also a wound of war and, like any wound, requires treatment. Treatment usually involves counseling and prescription medications, but these are often not enough to enable the veteran to successfully re-assimilate into the civilian world. And since the general public is usually unaware that someone has PTS, their lack of understanding often adds to the veteran's struggle with it.

While Post-Traumatic Stress is commonly referred to as a disorder (PTSD), former President George W. Bush has called for the word "disorder" to be dropped and for PTS to be recognized instead as an injury. The alarming rate of 22 veteran suicides per day in this country, attributed in part to the effects of PTS, prompted Patriot PAWS to diversify their service dog program to provide PTS dogs in addition to mobility-assistance dogs.

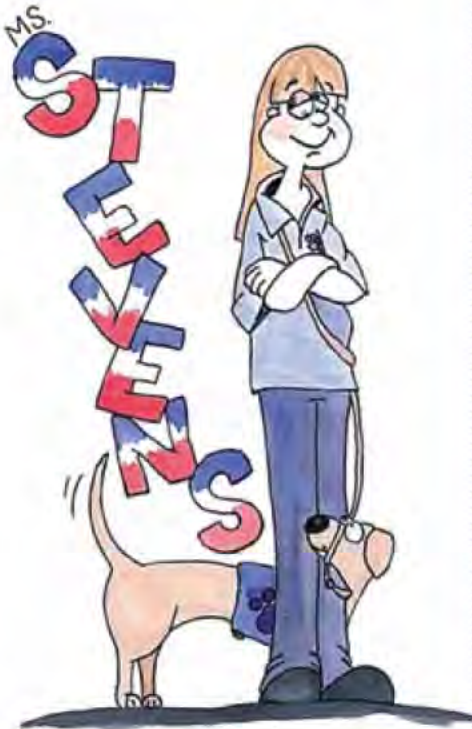
The new Patriot PAWS prison program at the Boyd Unit near Fairfield, TX is using male inmates to train rescue dogs to be PTS dogs for veterans who are certified disabled from the effects of PTS but who do not need mobility assistance. Many

people are familiar with the variety of things that mobility assistance dogs can do but still do not have a clear understanding of PTS or what a dog can do to help someone with it. By providing PTS dogs to veterans, Patriot PAWS hopes to also educate the general public about the seriousness of PTS and the need for service dogs to help those who have it navigate the maze of emotions.

A trained PTS dog can help with common PTS symptoms such as **night terrors** (the dog will wake up the person), **flashbacks** (the dog will distract the person to redirect their attention to the present), **fear of crowds** (the dog will act as a physical barrier between the person and the crowd) and **hyper-vigilance** (the dog will do a perimeter check upon entering the home or before going to bed at night to ensure that there are no intruders). Additionally, the dog is a constant source of unconditional love and emotional support, and many veterans report needing less or even no medication after receiving their dog and feeling more at ease with the world in general. A PTS dog can fill the gap that counseling and medication often leave and can sometimes even be the difference, literally, between life and death.

While nothing can fully erase the scars of war, Patriot PAWS hopes to improve the lives of veterans struggling with PTS by enabling them to regain their emotional as well as physical independence so that they may once again enjoy the quality of life that they so bravely served our country to preserve.





LETTER FROM LORI

One day a while back, I was walking out of the trainers' office when I happened to notice a small note by the door. It said, "Thank you for saving my life today."

When you receive a note from someone thanking you for saving his life, not by giving him CPR or rescuing him from a burning building, but by giving him something to do, you can't help but stop and think...what if I hadn't? What if I had said no, he has to follow the rules, when my staff asked if we could let a stranger who just walked in our door do something to help even though he hadn't been through volunteer orientation?

It's those seemingly small choices in life that turn out to be life-changing, or in this case life-saving, that make you take a step back and look at the bigger picture. That veteran needed someplace to go, something to do and people to be with, and he chose us.

A seed was planted that day that has bloomed into the Veterans For PAWS Corps, our new program for veterans. Under the mentorship of a volunteer who is also a veteran, we are opening up our training center every Wednesday from 9:30-2:30 to any veteran who would like to help out with chores or maintenance or the dogs or just socialize with other veterans. We're happy to be "someplace to go" because helping others is often the best way to help yourself, and helping veterans is what we're all about.

SPOTLIGHT ON VFP CORPS

Patriot PAWS is pleased to announce the formation of the Veterans For PAWS (VFP) Corps which is open to all veterans. Volunteer Keith Young, also a veteran, will act as mentor and lead the group each Wednesday from 9:30-2:30 at the Rockwall training center. Any veteran is welcome to attend to socialize with other veterans, do various volunteer tasks, play with and help care for the dogs and even learn to assist the trainers in teaching basic behaviors to the dogs. The desire of Patriot PAWS is for veterans to consider this their home-away-from-home by giving them a safe place to go to feel welcome and belong.

The idea for the VFP Corps was sparked by the unexpected appearance one afternoon of a veteran who came into the training center asking if he could do anything to help. Although protocol is to fill out an application and attend an orientation prior to volunteering, this veteran's demeanor prompted the staff to forgo protocol and give him the task of assembling several dog crates that had just arrived. A note from this same veteran was discovered later thanking Patriot PAWS for saving his life that day.

Any veteran interested in joining the VFP Corps should contact Volunteer Coordinator Jill Gamble at 972-772-3282 or vfp@patriotpaws.org.



ELI'S CORNER

Now that I have my apprentice, Leo, to help me teach feline tolerance to the dogs-in-training, I have a little more free time on my paws and am thinking of taking up golf. The annual Brotherhood of St. Andrew Charity Golf Tournament benefiting Patriot PAWS is coming up June 2, 2015 at the Buffalo Creek Golf Club in Rockwall, Texas, so maybe if I practice really hard between now and then,

I'll be ready to play in it. I don't think being my caddy was included in Leo's job description, but maybe if I ask him nicely, he'll agree, especially since there will be lots of balls to play with. If you're interested in playing, too, or being a sponsor, contact Larry O'Dell at LarryOdell200@msn.com. **Golf anyone?**

Until next time, dear friends.

Eli





VETERAN AARON MIXELL AND CHIEF

SFC Aaron Mixell of Mesquite, TX was in the Army for 20 years, 15 of which he spent deployed abroad including to Iraq where he was injured in an IED blast. Aaron suffered numerous injuries during his various deployments including being shot in both legs and injuries to his left wrist and elbow, but the most debilitating was to his right ear which has severely affected his equilibrium. He has also been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress.

Aaron found out about Patriot PAWS in a chance meeting with a PAWS puppy raiser. He applied and received service dog Chief, a male white Lab. Chief has been able to help Aaron in a number of ways including with his stability issues, night terrors and other PTS issues. Aaron says that having Chief will enable him to “finally come home emotionally” and “be a dad again” to his six children.



VETERAN BRIAN WEBER AND BELL

Army LTC Brian Weber of Commerce, TX is currently working as a physician’s assistant. He served in both Bolivia and Afghanistan. A tragic death in Brian’s family shortly before his deployment to Afghanistan compounded by his combat experiences there resulted in Brian’s diagnosis of post-traumatic stress. Seeking help with his anger issues, depression and insomnia, Brian applied to Patriot PAWS and received service dog Bell, a female Labradoodle.

Bell goes to work with Brian every day. She has a calming effect not only on him, but on his patients as well. Brian says that he no longer loses his temper, no longer feels depressed and can finally sleep, and best of all, he no longer needs to take any of his previous PTS medications. “Something was missing, and that something was Bell.”

ABOVE PHOTOS BY DONNA DICKSSON



VETERAN JERRY OWENS

SSgt Jerry Owens served in the USAF for 20 years in various locations including the Philippines and Korea. He worked as Security Police and also as a K9 Handler working drug-detection dogs and explosive-detection dogs. During the last 5 years of his service, Jerry also worked as a reserve police officer with the Colorado Springs PD. After retiring from the USAF, he officially joined the Colorado Springs PD where he worked another 25 years before retiring again.

Jerry and his wife Nancy currently reside in Rockwall, TX. They became puppy raisers for Patriot PAWS, but Jerry decided that he wanted to do more, so he came out of retirement to join the PAWS staff as a dog trainer. According to Jerry, “By being a puppy raiser, I realized how much veterans need service dogs. I came back from my service with all my limbs and without any permanent disabilities, and I wanted to do more for those who weren’t as lucky.” Welcome Jerry!

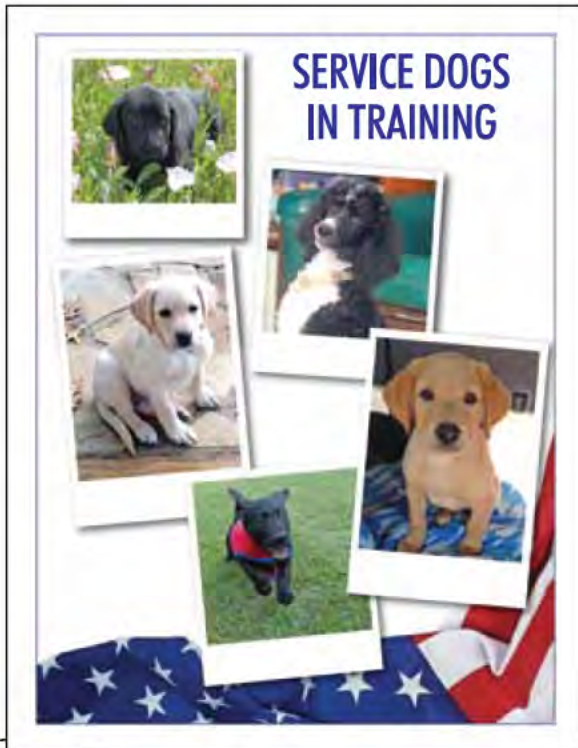
**WWII VETERAN
“BOOTS”**

Patriot PAWS supporter Virginia Downs of Templeton, California graciously shared this photo with us of her family’s German Shepherd, Boots, who served 18 months in the U.S. Army in WWII. During his service to his country, Boots had both the tip of his tail and the tip of one ear shot off, but he survived, and after returning home, Boots then served his family as watch dog for Virginia’s baby son.

Patriot PAWS salutes Boots and all of the other four-legged veterans of all U.S. wars who bravely served alongside their two-legged counterparts in defense of our country. May you never be forgotten.



“THE BEST WAY TO FIND YOURSELF IS TO LOSE YOURSELF
IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS.” – GANDHI



IN MEMORIAM

Veteran Recipient D.J. Taylor

Donald J. (D.J.) Taylor of Fort Worth, Texas, retired from the United States Marine Corps after 33 ½ years of service. He served in Vietnam where he was wounded and was a POW three times. He received many awards during his long career and was proud to have served his country.

Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal.
— Author Unknown

PLEASE DONATE TODAY

- We accept all major credit cards on our website
- Cash, checks and money orders by mail or in person
- Smartphone App—Download it from your phone's Internet browser at www.patriotpaws.givemodo.com

ALSO CONSIDER:

- Setting up a recurring donation
- Honoring or memorializing someone with a donation
- Matching your employee's donation
- Pledging for a 3-year period
- Becoming a PAWS ambassador
- Conducting a fundraiser
- Volunteering or becoming a puppy raiser
- If you are a Federal employee, you may make donations using our CFC# 35710
- Every time you shop at www.smile.amazon.com, Amazon will donate .5% of the purchase price to Patriot PAWS at no cost to you.

**SCAN THIS QR CODE AND
FOLLOW US ON TWITTER.
SHARE AND TWEET OFTEN!**

254 Ranch Trail
Rockwall, TX 75032
972-772-3282
501(c)(3) since 2006

