

# PATRIOTPAWS

SERVICE DOGS



## SAYING GOODBYE

Rhonda Phillips, DVM, better known as “Dr. Rhonda”, is a familiar face at Patriot PAWS. She oversees the veterinary medical care of every dog in training and the two facility cats, plus some of the placed service dogs as well, and she does so free of charge, generously donating her time and talents. However, this October, Dr. Rhonda will retire.

Dr. Rhonda has been a part of Patriot PAWS from the very beginning. She and Patriot PAWS Founder and Executive Director, Lori Stevens, met years ago when their young sons were in school together, and Dr. Rhonda was just starting her veterinary practice. Lori recalls, “I had wanted to be a veterinarian, but I married young and had kids and became a dog trainer instead. Rhonda was a single mom who started out her practice in her home and worked incredibly hard. She was my idol. In 2005, when I had the idea for Patriot PAWS, she encouraged me to ‘go for it’, so I did, and she’s been with me every step of the way since.”

Dr. Rhonda was an original Board member, along with Terri Stringer, currently the Patriot PAWS Assistant Executive Director. Terri also admires Dr. Rhonda. “Rhonda is one of the most caring veterinarians I have ever known. She is sensitive when she needs to be and tough when she has to be. She exudes passion for the animals and her vocation. Patriot PAWS has been blessed to have had Dr. Rhonda as our veterinarian for the past 16 years.”

Perhaps no one has worked more closely with Dr. Rhonda than Carrie Robinson, Patriot PAWS staff Vet Tech. Carrie worked with Dr. Rhonda at her practice before joining Patriot

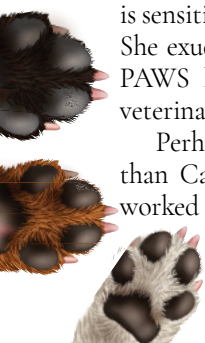


PAWS. “I am very proud of our work together. We once did 40 spays and neuters in one day volunteering at a shelter. Dr. Rhonda has been my mentor, but more importantly, my friend for 14 years. I would not be the person I am today without her. I wish everyone had a Rhonda in their life.”

For Dr. Rhonda, the decision to be a part of Patriot PAWS was easy. Her father, a Marine who served in the Korean War, taught her from an early age to give to others and make a difference. “I have been extremely blessed through working with the animals of Patriot PAWS, knowing that in a behind-the-scenes way, I am contributing to the well-being of men and women who have served in the US Military. Taking the program from just vaccines and wellness visits to a fully operational veterinary clinic with surgical and diagnostic capabilities has been a true ‘labor of love’, and I consider it one of my greatest personal successes. But now, it’s time to let a new veterinarian have the opportunity to serve and be blessed.”

Dr. Rhonda, all of your friends at Patriot PAWS, two-legged and four-legged alike, love you and wish you all the best in your well-deserved retirement.

**We’ll miss you!!**

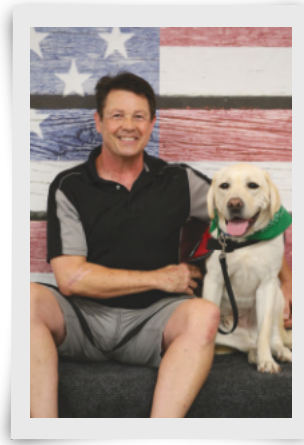




## ALVIN & RONNIE

Army SSG **Alvin** served for 8 years active duty, including two tours in Iraq, and 11 years in the Army Reserve. He was a unit supply specialist. Alvin has mobility issues due to back and shoulder surgeries.

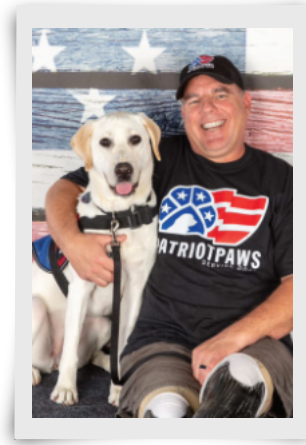
In 2021, Alvin received service dog **Ronnie**, a female yellow Lab. Alvin says, "Just to see Ronnie's happy face every morning increases my motivation and changes my day for the better. One of the things that amazed me is how quickly she adapts to every place. Ronnie is very friendly with my family and every guest we receive at home."



## BRENT & OUTLAW

USAF TSgt **Brent** served for 20 years, including two tours in Afghanistan. He worked in special operations as a flying crew chief.

In 2021, Brent received service dog **Outlaw**, a male yellow Lab. According to Brent, "With my hyper-vigilance and insomnia, I didn't feel that I had ever truly come 'home'. I avoided everybody. Outlaw gives me a sense of structure, and now I can get out and then come home and sleep all night. It's as if I have found a piece of my soul that had been missing. I am finally home, thanks to Outlaw."



## BRIAN & TALLEN

Army SFC **Brian** served for 17 years as an infantryman. In 2007, he was gravely injured in an IED blast in Iraq, resulting in the loss of both legs. Sadly, Brian's first Patriot PAWS service dog, Justice, passed away.

In 2021, Brian received service dog **Tallen**, a female yellow Lab. Brian would like everyone to know, "Having been given the opportunity to have a second placement is so awesome, and I am so grateful. Tallen gives me space from people out in public and gives me stability on my prosthetics. She has been a blessing."

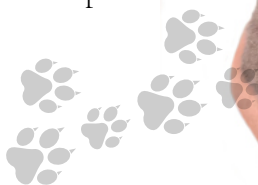
## ELI'S CORNER

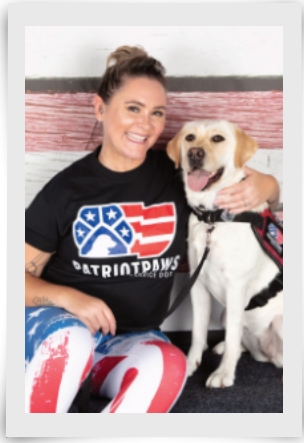
Leo and I have a great benefits package here at Patriot PAWS, including medical care by the best veterinarian ever, Dr. Rhonda! Dr. Rhonda and Carrie have their hands full taking care of all the pups in training, but whenever Leo or I need them, they're always there for us. Being cats in a dog's world isn't easy, but Dr. Rhonda always makes Leo and me feel just as important as her canine patients, treating us with a gentle hand and a soothing voice, making whatever's wrong all better.

We're going to miss you, Dr. Rhonda! Hopefully, you'll have time for a cat nap now and then in your retirement, so if you find yourself in need of a few pointers, just let us know...our expertise is always at your disposal.

Until next time, dear friends.

*Eli*

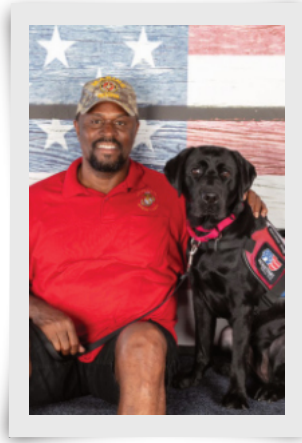




## KELLY & ALLIE

Army CPT **Kelly** served for eight years in on-ground intel in special operations, including two tours in Afghanistan. She has mobility issues from combat-related injuries.

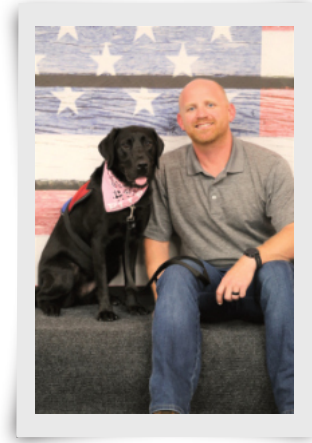
In 2021, Kelly received service dog **Allie**, a female yellow Lab. Kelly would like everyone to know, "Having Allie is such a blessing, and I'm so grateful to Patriot PAWS for such an awesome gift. Allie gives me a sense of peace, and my world is calmer and less difficult to maneuver than before I got her. She's so talented and special. I love this little girl."



## KEN & AMELIA

USMC SSgt **Ken** served for 20 years, including a tour in Iraq. He was a supply logistics manager. Ken applied for a service dog to help him with issues resulting from service-connected injuries.

In 2021, Ken received service dog **Amelia**, a female black English Lab. Ken wants all the veterans out there to know, "Prayer does work. When Patriot PAWS called me to let me know that it was time to come get my dog, I thanked God and was reminded of Genesis 1:25. Amelia is happy and playful and helps keep me calm."



## MIKE & ELLE

USMC Capt **Mike** served for four years, including deployment to Afghanistan. He was an infantry officer working in light armored recon and also served as platoon commander.

In 2021, Mike received service dog **Elle**, a female black Lab. According to Mike, "Elle is everything. She filled a gap that people can't reach, even family. She's a comfort and distraction from the stress of what's really there. Elle gives me the confidence to be honest with myself. She's my accountability partner. I'm a better person because she's with me."

# SPOTLIGHT

## ON A TWO SERVICE DOG HOME

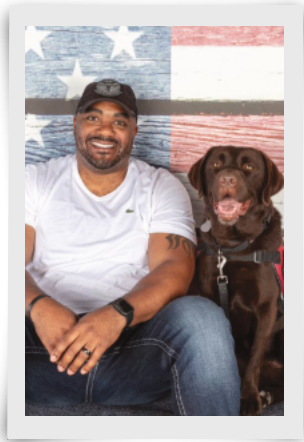
For the first time ever, Patriot PAWS has placed two service dogs in the same home. Brian and Kelly are both disabled veterans, but they are also a couple, so when the time came for them to get their dogs, all four of them went home together.

This is Brian's second service dog, but even he didn't know what to expect with two service dogs under one roof. "It is truly amazing how life-changing these dogs are," Brian reflects. "Being able to see that change in my wife is awesome."

Kelly recalls, "We had to be careful to keep our boundaries to protect our individual bond, then gradually introduce interaction with each other's dog. Having two service dogs takes a lot of extra work, but it's totally worth it! I just know how fulfilling it is for all four of us to curl up on the couch at the end of a long day."

Congratulations, Brian, Tallen, Kelly and Allie!

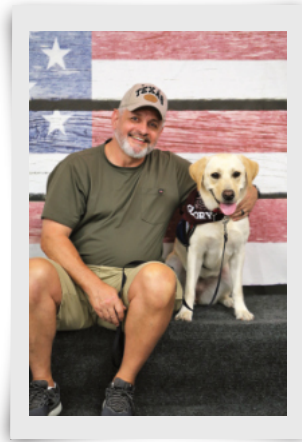




## ROD & VETTE

USAF MSgt **Rod** served for six years in security forces, including two deployments to Afghanistan. He has mobility issues as a result of multiple back surgeries.

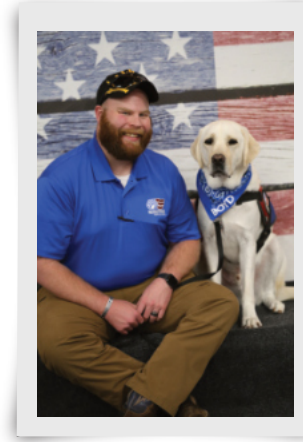
In 2021, Rod received service dog **Vette**, a male chocolate English Lab. Rod says, "I have come to see Vette as a lifeline. He is my dedicated wingman. Most of all, Vette is an assuring friend for me. He redirects my focus, and tasks that were difficult can be easy again. Vette is a daily blessing to not just me, but my family as well. I will be forever grateful."



## STAN & GLORY

**Stan** served for 20 years, four as a Sergeant in the Marine Corps, and 16 in the Navy as an HM1(FMF) hospital corpsman first class. He was severely injured in an IED blast in Afghanistan and deals daily with the effects of traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress.

In 2021, Stan received service dog **Glory**, a female yellow Lab. Stan says, "Glory gives me a reason to get going in the morning. I can talk to her about anything. She picks things up for me and wakes me from my nightmares. With Glory, everything is easier."



## ZAC & BOYD

**Zac** served for seven years, first in the Army as an infantryman, and later in the Arkansas National Guard. He is currently serving his fellow veterans as Veteran Coordinator at Patriot PAWS.

In 2021, Zac received service dog **Boyd**, a male yellow Lab. Zac would like disabled veterans to know, "Never think you're not worth one of these dogs. Because of Boyd, my kids have their dad back. My wife can see the difference in me. I wanted us to have a normal life and create good memories, and Boyd is making that possible. I may be an employee, but I'm a veteran first and know first-hand how this program changes lives."

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SERVICE DOGS

at [NorthTexasGivingDay.org](http://NorthTexasGivingDay.org)  
from 6am-midnight.

**IN MEMORIAM**

Service Dog Billy

The Patriot PAWS Family's hearts go out to Veteran Kevin Harris for the loss of his service dog, Billy.

*Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal.*

— Author Unknown

**972-772-3282**

## Consider today what you can do to help us help them...



*"The atmosphere here is unreal and reinforces the fact of how great it is to be an American veteran! What is really amazing is how the commitment of Patriot PAWS never ends. They are here forever for each veteran who receives one of their great animals..."* – Arlie Matthews, 2016 Graduate

### PLEASE DONATE TODAY

- We accept all major credit cards on our website at [www.patriotpaws.org](http://www.patriotpaws.org)
- Cash, checks and money orders by mail to:  
**254 Ranch Trail  
Rockwall, TX 75032**

### ALSO CONSIDER:

- Setting up a recurring donation
- Honoring or memorializing someone
- 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](http://www.smile.amazon.com), Amazon will donate .5% of the purchase price to Patriot PAWS at no cost to you.