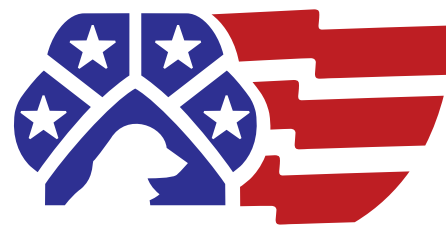


PATRIOTPAWS

SERVICE DOGS



Jazz @ DFWNational Cemetery

9-11: TEN YEARS LATER

As the United States marked the ten-year anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, reflection on the decade that followed reminded us just how much our lives changed that day. Just as "The Greatest Generation" remembers the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, we all remember where we were when we first heard the terrible news. As one-by-one the horrific events of that day unfolded, each of us ran through a range of emotions from disbelief to horror to fear to anger and ultimately, to sadness, sadness for all of those innocent lives lost and sadness for the loss of our own sense of security. In the span of those few short hours, we were catapulted into a new world where even our homeland was not safe from those who wanted to do us harm. Our way of life and way of thinking had changed forever.

We were at war. Young men and women in uniform were deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq, places many of us had only vaguely even heard of, to root out those responsible for the attacks and quell the rising tide of terrorism. Long years of war have seen both victories and setbacks with many lives lost and many other lives irreparably damaged in the pursuit. Those who survive to come home to their loved ones bear the scars of war, some visible and some not. The price of defending our freedom is high, and it is those brave few who pay the price for all of us.

John F. Kennedy challenged us in his inaugural speech to "...ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." President Kennedy's words are as valid today as they were in 1961, and our men and women in uniform have taken his challenge to heart. The times have changed, the face of the enemy has changed, but our desire for freedom has remained constant. Those who would take that freedom from us to destroy our great nation underestimate us. The U.S. Military represents 235 years of freedom won by and preserved with the blood of countless of our citizens who rose to the call whenever our nation was threatened. Every one of our troops "over there" today is there by choice and is willing to lay down their life to preserve the hard-won freedom that we so cherish.

So what can you do for your country? Make a donation or volunteer your time to help a fellow American in need by helping Patriot PAWS help our disabled veterans. And the next time you see a U.S. service person or veteran, go up to them and thank them for their service. We owe them much more than we can ever repay, but a sincere "thank you" is a good start.

PATRIOT PAWS

SERVICE DOGS



LETTER FROM LORI

People ask me all the time: "After training those dogs for so long, how can you just give them up?" Quite simply, it's not easy.

Most of our dogs come to us as puppies, so watching them grow and learn and transform from puddle-making puppy to fully-trained service dog is an awesome thing. It takes anywhere from eighteen months to two years to make this transformation, but the end result is a remarkable dog who will live his life in joyous service to a disabled veteran. I say joyous because our dogs are trained with love and positive reinforcement, and their work is presented to them as a game. They willingly perform their duties and receive treats and praise in return. All dogs want to love and be loved, so when ours are finally paired with their person, it's life-transforming for them as well as for the veteran. The two become as one with the dog becoming an extension of his human's body performing those tasks which that body can no longer do. As I said, it's an awesome thing.

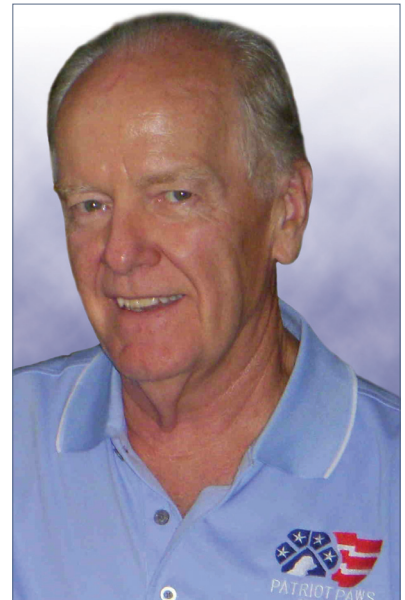
So how do I give up our dogs? I look at that dog and that veteran and know that each is exactly where they are supposed to be...with each other. There typically isn't a dry eye in the house when a veteran leaves with a dog. We know we'll see them again, but it just won't be the same. He won't be our dog any longer. But that's OK. That's why we do what we do. It's not easy, but it's worth it.

Spotlight On Ray Collins

Veteran Raymond Collins (U.S. Army 1959-1962, 144th SIG. BN., 4th ARMRD DIV Germany) is Patriot PAWS' longest-serving volunteer. After retiring from a 35-year career at Lucent Technologies, Ray was searching for somewhere close to home to volunteer some of his time. In 2007, he came across an organization named Patriot PAWS that trains service dogs for disabled veterans, and his search ended. Ray's love of country and love of dogs were a perfect fit.

Over the past four years, Ray has done a little bit of everything for Patriot PAWS from cleaning floors to handyman repairs to his present position of Veteran Coordinator. Ray also keeps all the computers at the training center up and running.

Ray and his wife Barbara and their Golden Retriever Libby are an important part of the Patriot PAWS family, so for all that you do, Ray, thanks! We love you!



ELI'S CORNER

Since our last newsletter, many of you have asked about my background... where I am from, what my previous work experience is, how I came to work for Patriot PAWS...and people say cats are curious! Let's just say that I prefer to keep my past to myself.

I will say, however, that I was "found" in a dog house asleep with two dogs who had been kind enough to put me up overnight. I was between jobs at the time. For some reason, the dogs' people thought that was strange and called Lori Stevens to ask if she would like to have a cat who thought he was a dog. Now really! Lori interviewed me and offered me a job as a dog trainer, so here I am. It's really a pretty good gig including room and board, medical benefits and lots of nice people and dogs to work with.

My tenure here at Patriot PAWS has been interesting to say the least. I was asked to assist one of the other trainers with furthering her education by letting her train me...HER train ME? I was gracious, though, and let her think

that she had taught me to wave at her in return for a treat. And another trainer was attempting to train a duck and asked me to sit in on some of the sessions. So what are they going to ask me to do next, train a mouse? Come to think of it, that could be tasty, I mean challenging.

I truly appreciated all the positive feedback that I received from my inaugural article and am happy that I was given the go-ahead to continue my foray into writing. The journalism experience will look good on my resume.

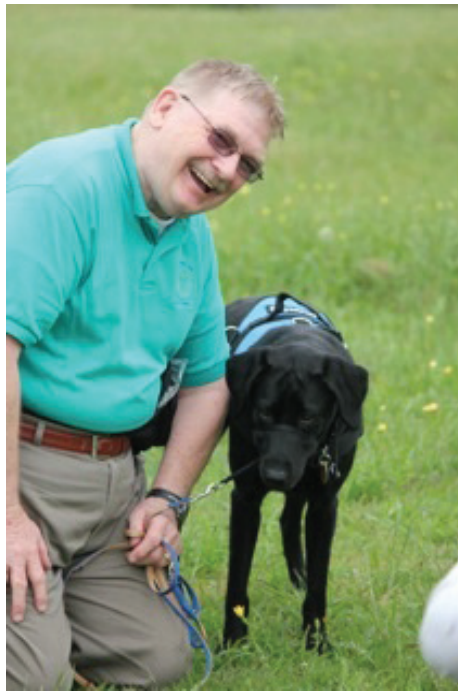
So until next time, dear friends, Happy Holidays to all and to all a good nap!





VETERAN TOM TAVTIGIAN & HOPE

Army Staff Sergeant Tom Tavgigian was serving in Iraq when the heavy truck that he was riding in rolled over an IED buried in the sand and exploded. He sustained major head, neck, back and shoulder injuries, underwent multiple surgeries and is facing more surgeries in the future including a spinal fusion. He also suffers from PTSD. Tom now works in the Wounded Warriors Unit at Ft. Riley, Kansas. After feeling stressed most days and having difficulty getting around and doing many everyday things, Tom decided that a service dog would improve his quality of life and applied to Patriot PAWS for help. Tom's help came in the form of a black Lab named Hope whom he received in May, 2011. Hope has brought back a measure of normalcy to Tom's life. With Hope's help, Tom is now more relaxed and independent and can do the things he wants and needs to do. Quite simply, Hope has given Tom hope, and there is no better ending to a disabled veteran/service dog story than that.



VETERAN CHARLES TRASK & SUMMIT

U.S. Navy Communications Technician 2nd Class Charles Trask volunteered to serve in-country in Vietnam in 1968. Although Charles left the service physically unharmed and went on to become a Salvation Army minister, he was diagnosed 37 years later with delayed-onset PTSD and is now retired and 100% disabled. Charles became a recluse and was unable to deal with anyone or anything, including his wife Toni, until receiving Summit in May, 2011. According to Charles, "Summit has given me a reason for being." The responsibility of caring for her gets him up and out of the house. When Charles suffers from a flashback, Summit senses it and nuzzles him to redirect his attention to her, and when he has a nightmare, she licks his face to wake him up. Charles uses a cane to walk, so Summit gets the phone for him, picks up dropped items, carries notes to Toni and performs many other tasks to make his life easier. Charles must take a number of prescription medications but says that "Summit is the best medicine of all."



WOUNDED WARRIOR TORAN GAAL & YORK

York is one of Patriot PAWS' career-change dogs. She was originally placed as a service dog with a veteran who later passed away, so after spending some time back in the Rockwall area, York moved to California to work as a therapy dog. Counselor Debbie Bruton works at the VA Hospital in Palo Alto and heard about Patriot PAWS through one of her patients who had applied for a service dog. York now assists Debbie in counseling veterans. Debbie says that York provides a calming influence that helps the veterans to relax and speak more freely. York also visits the polytrauma unit and works with the physical therapist and the recreational therapist. Her presence there lifts the spirits of those who have been wounded. Debbie says that everyone who meets York wants to take her home. Even hospital employees ask to spend time with York on their breaks. So whether she's helping others to help veterans or just taking a break with a fellow hospital employee, York has truly become The Belle of Building 7.

**PATRIOT PAWS SERVICE DOGS IS LOCATED AT 254 RANCH TRAIL ROCKWALL, TEXAS 75032
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT PATRIOTPAWS.ORG
OR CALL 972.772.3282**



Maverick, service dog of Juan Amaris, passed away after a tragic accident in June. Juan and Maverick were featured in our last newsletter.

HOLIDAY GIFT CARDS ARE HERE!

Looking for a unique Holiday gift for that hard-to-buy-for person? For every \$5.00 that you donate to Patriot PAWS from now until December 12th, you can request a Holiday gift card to give to someone special to let them know that you have made a Holiday donation to Patriot PAWS in their name. Just let us know how many cards you need (up to 1 for every \$5.00 of your donation) no later than December 12th, and we will mail them to you for you to distribute. You can finish your Holiday shopping & help a disabled veteran at the same time. Give the gift that gives twice!



DONATION INFORMATION

Patriot PAWS Service Dogs is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Caring for one of the dogs-in-training can cost \$20,000 - \$30,000. Only through donations (tax deductible) and volunteers are we able to provide these dogs to disabled veterans in need

**DONATIONS CAN BE MADE AT:
WWW.PATRIOTPAWS.ORG**

We accept: PayPal, credit cards, checks and money orders (please use the enclosed envelope to mail your donation)

ALSO CONSIDER:

- SETTING UP A RECURRING DONATION
- MAKING A DONATION AS A GIFT IN SOMEONE'S HONOR OR MEMORY
- MATCHING YOUR EMPLOYEES/CLUB MEMBERS DONATIONS
- CONDUCTING A FUNDRAISER
- BECOMING AN AMBASSADOR (WE CAN SEND YOU AS MANY BROCHURES AS YOU CAN HAND OUT)
- VOLUNTEERING

DID YOU KNOW?

- 26 INMATES FROM THE PATRIOT PAWS PRISON PROGRAM HAVE BEEN RELEASED AND 13 ARE CURRENTLY WORKING IN ANIMAL RELATED FIELDS
- 68% OF THE DOGS THAT HAVE ENTERED THE PROGRAM HAVE SUCCESSFULLY GRADUATED
- AVERAGE WAIT TIME TO RECEIVE A SERVICE DOG IS 12 MONTHS
- WE HAVE PLACED 33 DOGS SINCE 2006

**ALL DONATIONS ARE
TAX DEDUCTIBLE!**

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