

PATRIOTPAWS

SERVICE DOGS



Welcomes

NEW VETERAN COORDINATOR

In October 2020, **Zac Tyler** joined our staff as full-time Veteran Coordinator.

A veteran himself, Zac served a total of 7 years, first in the Army as an infantryman, and later in the Arkansas National Guard. He's a native of Arkansas and has found life in the DFW area a big adjustment to make, but says he knows he's where he's supposed to be and is honored that Patriot PAWS hired him.

The position of Veteran Coordinator is a multi-faceted job interacting with veterans from the initial application process all the way to after they have received their dog, and during every step in between.

According to Zac, "Veteran Coordinator is a liaison, a 'middleman', between the veteran and Patriot PAWS, and between Patriot PAWS and the veteran. I am their point of contact, their battle buddy, whatever they need me to be, during the time they're waiting for their dog, when they come to get their dog, as well as after they have received their dog."



Working alongside Zac is Assistant Veteran Coordinator, **Lib Anderson**. Lib, also a veteran, served as a nurse in the Air Force for 5 years. She first came to Patriot PAWS in 2014 as a volunteer, joined the staff in 2016 and became a part of the Veteran Coordinator team in 2020. "Being a veteran myself, it gives me such joy to be able to meet my fellow veterans and to help them in any way I can. The change in the veteran once they receive their dog is so heartwarming and such a joy to see. I feel extremely blessed to be part of the Patriot PAWS family and am so proud of the work we do."

Zac and Lib are assisted by a handful of volunteers, all veterans themselves. Zac explains, "It takes a veteran to understand a veteran, to speak their language, to know where they're coming from." He feels that being approachable is very important and says, "My door is always open, and my coffee pot is always on. I'm not a counselor, but I am a good listener."





MICHAEL AYRES & TANGO

Army SGT **Michael Ayres** of Oklahoma served for 5 years as a cavalry scout, including deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. A catastrophic motor vehicle accident left him confined to a wheelchair.

In 2020, Michael received service dog Tango, a male chocolate Lab. Michael would like everyone to know, “Tango has been one of the biggest blessings I’ve received on this trail to independence. He is an extension of myself. When I drop something, I no longer have to bend over and risk falling out of my wheelchair with his help. He is my battle buddy, my friend and my companion. I’d be lost without him.”



CRAIG JOHNSON & EASTON

Navy PO1 **Craig Johnson** of Texas served for 21 1/2 years as a hospital corpsman, including participation in the First Gulf War and deployment to Afghanistan. He has mobility issues as a direct result of multiple injuries sustained over the years.

In 2020, Craig received service dog Easton, a male yellow Lab. Craig reports, “Easton has helped to keep me focused and helps me a lot when we’re out in public.” Prior to receiving Easton, Craig almost never left his house, but with the help of Easton’s “reassuring personality”, they are now fishing buddies and even find joy together in Easton’s bath time.



JOHN FITZGERALD & HOWDY

Army SGT **John Fitzgerald** of Texas served for 4 years as an infantryman, designated marksman and driver, including an 18-month deployment to Iraq. He has both mobility and emotional issues.

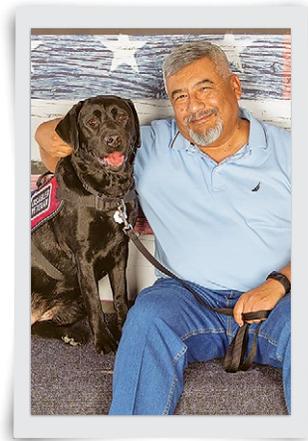
In 2020, John received service dog Howdy, a male yellow Lab. According to John, “It started with a connection, turned into a bond, which developed into a friendship that’s unbreakable. Howdy has helped me gain my life back with friends and family and let me live again in the light and not the shadows. He’s not a service dog to me, he’s my guardian angel.”



KENNETH LAWSON & FRANKLIN

Ken Lawson of Texas was both a Navy OSSN and an Army SGT with a combined service of just under 10 years, including one deployment to Iraq where he served as a cavalry scout. He has mobility issues and suffers from cognitive impairment.

In 2020, Ken received service dog Franklin, a male yellow Lab. According to Ken, “Franklin is there for me when things are really difficult. He is helping open up possibilities that I didn’t think would ever exist. I am so thankful to Patriot PAWS for the gift of Franklin and am so glad to call him my service dog and my companion.”



EDUARDO GOVEA & LADY

Ed Govea of Texas served as both a Marine SSgt infantryman and a Navy PO1 field corpsman for a combined service of 26 years, including deployments to Kuwait and Iraq. He has combat-related issues.

In 2020, Ed received service dog Lady, a female black Lab. According to Ed, “Having Lady has been a true blessing. Stress and anxiety have become the norm, first with COVID-19 and then the statewide freeze, but Lady has been at my side and has helped me cope with it all. She seems to know when I am being overwhelmed, and she comes to me, and then somehow, life gets better.”



RODRIGO MANZO & AUSTIN

Army CW2 **Rod Manzo** of Texas served for over 23 years as an automotive maintenance warrant officer, including deployments to Bosnia and Iraq. He has hand mobility problems and anxiety issues.

In 2020, Rod received service dog Austin, a male English Cream Retriever. Rod says, “I spend most of my time alone, and it comforts me to know that Austin is there. I have trouble dealing with people and being in crowded places. He picks up things I drop. I still have three surgeries pending for numbness in my hands and believe that Austin will be a great help to me during the recovery period.”



TONY GUTIERREZ & SULLY

Marine GySgt **Tony Gutierrez** of Texas served for 20 years as a helicopter mechanic, including deployment to Somalia and 2 tours in Iraq. He has combat-related issues.

In 2020, Tony received service dog Sully, a male English Lab. Tony says, "Having Sully in my life has been a true blessing. He has quickly become part of the family. When I get upset and flustered, he will get in my lap and want me to focus on him. That does the trick and I calm down. I truly feel blessed having Sully in my family and beyond grateful to Patriot PAWS for accepting me into theirs."



RICHARD HAILEY & LUNA

Army SPC **Richard Hailey** of Texas served for 8 years as a heavy wheel mechanic, 6 years active duty and 2 years National Guard, including 2 tours in Iraq. He has mobility issues.

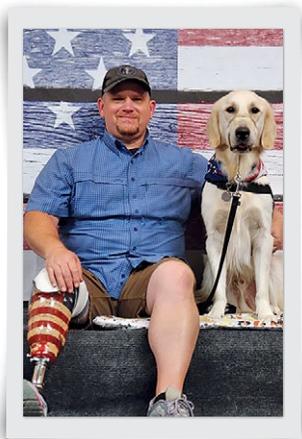
In 2020, Richard received service dog Luna, a female yellow Lab. Richard is happy to report, "Luna has been such a tremendous help to my daily life. Not only does she keep me focused while I'm in public, her constant attention and company make me feel so much better mentally and physically. Her love is so powerful. She is on constant duty and on point for anything I might need from her."



ELIZABETH HERNANDEZ & McDERMOTT

Army MAJ **Elizabeth Hernandez** of Texas served for 24 years as a logistics officer specializing in maintenance management, including deployments to Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. She has both back and knee mobility issues.

In 2020, Elizabeth received service dog McDermott, a male black Lab. Elizabeth wants everyone to know, "McDermott is truly the best thing that has happened to me since leaving the Army. His personality is the best. He is loving and playful. He knows how to comfort me and can read my body language. I am so grateful to have him."



DERRICK MEIS & GOOSE

Army CPL **Derrick Meis** of Texas served for 3 years as a combat engineer. While readying to deploy as a part of Operation Desert Storm, he was severely injured in a training accident. After multiple surgeries to try to save his right leg, it eventually had to be amputated.

In 2020, Derrick received service dog Goose, a male Golden Retriever. According to Derrick, "What a blessing for me to get Goose. He is so smart and keeps figuring out ways to train me. He has helped me in ways I didn't even know I needed help in. Goose is truly one of my best friends."



CHRISTOPHER PAYNE & DALE

Army SPC **Chris Payne** of Texas served for 6 years, including as a medic on the combat line in Iraq and at a battalion aid station in Afghanistan. He has mobility issues from a knee injury as well as post-traumatic stress issues.

In 2020, Chris received service dog Dale, a male Golden Doodle. Dale serves a dual role as Chris' service dog and therapy dog aiding Chris in his job as a mental health therapist for 22KILL, a non-profit serving veterans and first responders. Chris reports, "Dale has been a blessing to everyone. His presence brings joy, happiness and, most importantly, hope. My depression has lifted, and I have become more of my old self, positively impacting my relationships, as well as my ability to help my brothers and sisters with their demons."



JENNIFER STANLEY & JJ

Army SPC **Jennifer Stanley** of Mississippi served stateside for 2 years as an HVAC repair specialist. She has mobility issues as well as post-traumatic stress issues and suffers from severe migraines.

In 2020, Jennifer received service dog JJ, a female Golden Doodle. According to Jennifer, "JJ gives me the freedom to go out alone, so now my husband doesn't have to worry about me as much as before. And JJ is always right there with me keeping me company every time I have one of my migraines."

SPOTLIGHT

ON LORI AND RICK STEVENS

In February, Texas experienced one of its worst winter storms on record, with the Dallas area recording its second-lowest temperature ever of -2, in addition to 8+ inches of snow in some areas. The entire state was plagued with power outages, and driving conditions were hazardous for days.

In preparation, Founder and Executive Director **Lori Stevens** made the decision to stay at the Veterans House on campus for the duration so she could take care of the dogs housed in the kennels, as well as the two facility cats. Lori's son, **Rick**, also the Facility Manager, accompanied her, and together, Lori and Rick took care of a total of 14 dogs, including three 10-week-old puppies, plus the two cats, for what turned into an eight-day marathon. And to make an already bad situation worse, the kennels heating unit failed, so the dogs had to be relocated into crates in the training center.

Lori recalls, "The animals had to be taken care of, and I couldn't let my staff risk their lives trying to get here, so Rick and I just did what had to be done. But it was a l-o-o-o-n-g eight days!" Cheers to the pioneer spirit of Lori and Rick Stevens!



ELI'S CORNER

One of the many things we do to keep our pups-in-training healthy and happy is let them have time outdoors to get some fresh air and exercise. So, it occurred to me, if outdoor exercise is important to their well-being, then what about mine? And that's when I decided to get myself a personal trainer!

Her name is **Regina Bailey**, and she's also our **Kennel Manager**. Managing our busy kennels is definitely a full-time job, but somehow, Regina finds the time to take me outside for a walk when the weather is nice, something I really look forward to and enjoy. Now that I'm a senior cat, I think it's important for me to focus on staying healthy so I can continue training dogs for many more years to come...and so I can keep up with Leo!

Until next time, dear friends.

Eli



• 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
- Cash, checks and money orders by mail or in person. **Address: 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, Amazon will donate .5% of the purchase price to Patriot PAWS at no cost to you.