When we give a veteran a service dog, that’s only the beginning of our relationship with that veteran/service dog team. Our trainers are always available to answer questions, assist with concerns and, if the need arises, provide refresher training for the team. Since this additional training takes a back-to-basics approach, we call it boot camp.

Handling a service dog in public requires a great deal of confidence in both the veteran and the dog, and sometimes, a team may find themselves a bit “off”. Going through refresher training such as they were given when they were first matched as a team can help them both get back to where they need to be. If the timing happens to coincide with a graduation, they can join the veterans just receiving their dogs who are being taught all the basics of service dog handling, or if not, they can schedule a time to come to the training center to work with the trainers on their own. Those who have opted for boot camp have found the additional training to be just what they needed.

Rod did not feel as confident as he would have liked in handling his service dog, Austin, and was concerned that it was affecting Austin’s behavior. “I felt that I couldn’t deal with it on my own.” They joined in on a graduation, and the boot camp training they received there helped Rod become more confident in his handling of Austin and helped Austin to overcome his behavior problems so they could once again successfully work together as a team.

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No veteran is ever on their own after receiving a service dog from Patriot PAWS. The day they were matched with their dog, they became a part of the Patriot PAWS family and, just like any family, we are always here for them if they need us. **It’s what families do.**
LETTER FROM LORI

It’s always hard to lose a friend, especially one who did so much for you over the years. Bill Cecil was that kind of friend.

Bill did many things in his life, including serving our country in the United States Air Force, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel, and later serving as mayor of Rockwall. He was also a long-time board member of Patriot PAWS and was instrumental in our growth, especially in assisting us in the realization of our state-of-the-art kennels facility. We would not be where we are today without his leadership.

Bill also loved our dogs, especially Jazz, our now-retired demo dog. In fact, I think he’d drop by to see her more than me! And he delighted in bringing his family by to see and play with our new puppies.

It was truly my honor to have known Bill Cecil, both professionally and personally. Bill, my friend, you will be missed!

ELI’S CORNER

Even a seasoned dog trainer like myself can use a little refresher course now and then. For the past 12 years, I’ve trained dogs here at Patriot PAWS, trained my apprentice, Leo, to become a dog trainer like myself and even trained a few people to like cats who thought they didn’t. Not like ME? Impossible!

But seriously, sometimes I sit in on trainer meetings just to make sure that I’m current on all of our methods. We use only positive reinforcement to train our dogs, so they never know anything is presented to them as a game with a never scolded or punished in any way, so their confidence in themselves and trust in humans are never compromised, only reinforced. I think we’d all benefit from treating each other that way, don’t you?

Until next time, dear friends.

Eli
JOE & KOKO

Army CW4 Joe served for 22 years, including 2 deployments to Afghanistan and one tour in the Balkans. He was an aviation maintenance technician.

At the Fall 2021 Graduation, Joe received service dog Koko, a female black Lab. Joe says, “When Patriot PAWS blessed me with Koko, it was like finding the missing puzzle piece to my family. She is such a joy to wake up to! She is very intelligent, loyal, and a hard worker. Koko has made such a positive impact in so many ways. I wish I had her long ago!”

STACY & BONNIE SUE

Army SPC Stacy served in both the Army National Guard and the Army for a total just short of 12 years, including a deployment to Iraq. She worked in transportation running supplies as a PLS machine gunner and driver.

At the Fall 2021 Graduation, Stacy received service dog Bonnie Sue, a female yellow Lab. Stacy says, “Bonnie Sue is a wonderful companion and friend. She amazes me daily at the ways she can push past my depression and anxiety to bring me back to her in the present. I’m glad Bonnie Sue chose me to rescue.”

RAMON & TINK

Army SPC Ramon served for 4 years, including a deployment to Afghanistan. He worked as a 92 Alpha supply warehouse specialist.

At the Fall 2021 Graduation, Ramon received service dog Tink, a female yellow Lab. Ramon says, “The wait was worth it. Now that my symptoms are eased, I decided to go back to school. It is challenging, but Tink calms me down. She even calmed my 10-month-old crying baby by giving her one of her dog toys and lying beside her. Tink made a huge difference in my life. Now I can enjoy and spend time with my family.”

GARY & DEREK

USMC Sgt Gary served for 8 years, including 2 tours in Vietnam, where he was shot twice. He later underwent 2 heart surgeries to mitigate the effects of Agent Orange exposure.

In 2011, Gary received his first Patriot PAWS service dog, Memphis, but sadly, Memphis passed away in early 2021. The loss of a service dog is devastating, and Patriot PAWS strives to provide another dog as soon as the veteran is ready. At the Fall 2021 Graduation, Gary received his second service dog, Derek, a male English Lab. Memphis left some big paw-prints to fill, but we’re confident that Derek will fill them well.

A very special THANK YOU to Raising Cane’s Chicken Fingers for raising $35,000 for Patriot PAWS in honor of the late actress and animal activist, Betty White. On what would have been Ms. White’s 100th birthday, Raising Cane’s launched a 2-week online fundraising campaign, making a donation itself and asking its customers to donate to Patriot PAWS, to name a puppy “Betty” after Ms. White. This is the 5th Patriot PAWS puppy sponsored by Raising Cane’s. Thank you, Founder and Co-CEO Todd Graves and Raising Cane’s customers, for sponsoring puppy Betty!
Patriot PAWS is honored to once again be selected as a non-profit partner of Carry The Load for 2022. Started as a memorial march in Dallas in 2011 by 2 veteran U.S. Navy SEALS to bring awareness to the general public about the true meaning of Memorial Day, Carry The Load has grown into a nationwide relay covering 20,000+ miles across all lower 48 states in 32 days culminating in Dallas on Memorial Day. To find out more about Carry The Load and its mission, go to www.carrytheload.org, and to reach our Patriot PAWS Carry The Load team page, scan the QR Code below.

IN MEMORIAM

Patriot PAWS Family Members:
Bill Cecil, long-time Board member
Charles Trask, Veteran
Lily, service dog of Veteran Harry Goad
Tyler, retired service dog

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

Missing any newsletters?
No worries, all of our previous issues are archived on our website. Just go to patriotpaws.org and click on News/Newsletters. You’ll see all the good news about our mission and how you help us serve our veterans.