

LIFE notes

LIFE prides itself on helping those in need and for being the champion for those who cannot speak but who enrich our lives and everyday make us a little more... human.

Issue 31, August 18, 2016

Hero Dogs Edition



Upcoming events

Honoring Courageous Canines

I can't imagine my life without my dogs. They give me unconditional love and ever-present companionship. They turn bad days into good and good days into wonderful. They're my best friends. That is not unusual. Humans and dogs have had a special relationship that spans the centuries.

And nowhere has that remarkable bond between dogs and people been more critical than on the battlefield. Two, three, and even more combat deployments together can truly forge a lifelong love and partnership.

This is especially true when you consider what these courageous canines have done for our troops. They guarded soldiers during the Civil War. They served as couriers during World War I. And they located enemy positions and led patrols during World War II and Vietnam; even more recently, in Iraq and Afghanistan, more than 2500 dogs worked side-by-side with our soldiers, including a legend named Cairo, who was part of the Navy Seal team that killed Osama bin Laden. In doing all of this, these four-legged heroes have saved countless thousands of American lives.

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Saturday, September 10, 2016

American Humane Association
Sixth Annual Hero Dog Awards
Sponsored by
the Lois Pope LIFE Foundation
Los Angeles, California

Tuesday, November 15

LIFE Auction and Cocktail Party
Hosted by Lois Pope
By Invitation

Friday, November 18, 2016

"Lady in Red" Gala Pre-Party
Hosted by Provident Jewelry
Jupiter Florida
By Invitation

December 3, 2016

LIFE's "Lady in Red" Gala
"Speakeasy"
Starring the Empress of Soul,
Gladys Knight
The Mar a Lago Club
By Invitation

Thursday, February 9

American Humane Association Cocktail Party
The Brazilian Court, Palm Beach
By Invitation

Wednesday, March 8

American Humane Association Luncheon
The Mar a Lago Club, Palm Beach
By Invitation

To learn more or to donate, visit
www.life-edu.org or call 561.582.8083.

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But military dogs do more than assist in combat and keep our service men and women out of harm's way. They provide our troops with companionship and when they come home, these dogs continue to save lives, helping veterans cope with Post-Traumatic Stress.

It is because these military dogs have done so much for our men and women in uniform that I wanted to honor their extraordinary feats and acts of devotion. I thought the best way to do so was to team up with American Humane Association to create the nation's very first K-9 Medal of Courage. The award will be presented each year by American Humane Association's Lois Pope LIFE Center for Military Affairs in a ceremony attended by members of Congress on Capitol Hill.

The recipients of the 2016 American Humane Lois Pope K-9 Medal of Courage are military hero dogs Isky, Matty, Fieldy, and Bond. These heroic dogs will be presented with first ever K-9 Medal of Courage on September 10th at the Hero Dog Awards Ceremony which will also be broadcast nationally on the Hallmark Channel in October.

Each of these fearless pups has an amazing story.

Military Working Dog Isky



Military Working Dog Isky, a regal German Shepherd, spent years courageously protecting American leaders and our armed forces, alongside his handler and best friend, U.S. Army Sgt. Wess Brown. For a year, the two worked side by side to safeguard four-star American generals and political personnel, from the Secretary of State in Africa to the President of the United States in Berlin. The pair was deployed to Afghanistan in July 2013, where Isky went on to save uncounted lives while serving as an explosive-detection dog. During his time stationed in the Middle East, Isky found five deadly IEDs and 10 weapon caches -

materials that could have spelt death for many, many Americans and allies. During a routine perimeter check, MWD Isky raced to a particularly spot in the area, urgently signaling for Sgt. Brown to follow. The team soon discovered that Isky had detected an IED buried nearly two feet underground - it turned out to be a 120-pound bomb, which could produce a devastating explosion. Both Sgt. Brown and Isky were struck by IEDs several times and both were injured. In the frantic moments during a combat patrol to avoid an ambush, Isky's right leg was injured in 6 places, with so much trauma and nerve damage it had to be amputated -- forcing him to retire from active military service. But even with three legs, Isky continues to offer lifesaving support to our armed forces: He now serves as Sgt. Brown's PTSD service dog. Sgt. Brown now says there isn't a moment when he doesn't feel safe with Isky by his side—just like when the two of them were serving together on the battlefield.

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Follow Lois:



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Military Working Dog Matty



Retired Army Specialist Brent Grommet and Military Working Dog Matty, a Czech German Shepherd, developed an unbreakable bond while stationed together in Afghanistan, serving our country as a bomb-detection team. Using his superhuman sense of smell, Matty directed his human handler to hidden IEDs (improvised explosive devices), working day and night to protect our military troops from the deadly bombs.

Specialist Grommet says Matty saved his life, and the lives of everyone in his unit, more than once. One day, they were searching in a bazaar for IEDs when their unit walked into an ambush. During the firefight they took casualties. Matty and Brent raced to clear a helicopter landing zone of IEDs while taking direct mortar fire. After they got their wounded out, Matty and Brent went back to the front line and were engaging the enemy when

they were hit with a Rocket-propelled grenade, knocking both of them unconscious and giving Brent a traumatic brain injury - one of several injuries the pair suffered together. Finally, Matty and Brent were driving in a truck that was hit by two roadside bombs. They were flown back to the United States for treatment. Although Brent had already filled out adoption paperwork, while he was having neurosurgery, Matty was wrongly given to someone else. The two friends lost track of each other. Soldier and dog were separated but they never stopped seeking each other out - and finally, with the help of American Humane, these two faithful Battle Buddies were brought back together. Now, Matty continues to offer lifesaving help to Brent. Matty helps his human companion manage the debilitating symptoms of both the visible and invisible wounds of war, bringing him a sense of security, calmness, and comfort. This courageous canine veteran has fiercely protected the soldier he loves, steadfastly standing at his side—and always having his back—both on and off of the battlefield. Matty helps his human companion manage the debilitating symptoms of both the visible and invisible wounds of war, bringing him a sense of security, calmness, and comfort. This courageous canine veteran has fiercely protected the soldier he loves, steadfastly standing at his side—and always having his back—both on and off of the battlefield.

Contract Working Dog Fieldy



CWD Fieldy, an athletic black Labrador retriever, bravely served four combat tours in Afghanistan, where he worked tirelessly to detect explosives. These deadly devices are deliberately hidden from plain view and often buried underground, waiting to detonate under the weight of a misplaced footstep. Fieldy's capable, courageous service in tracking down these often-fatal explosives saved an uncounted number of human lives. Fieldy also had a life-changing impact on one Marine in particular: his wartime comrade, U.S. Marine Corps Corporal Nick Caceres. Fieldy served alongside Cpl. Caceres, his handler, for seven months in Afghanistan. In addition to protecting Cpl. Caceres and his comrades-in-arms as an explosive-detection dog, Fieldy

offered meaningful emotional support to his human counterpart, providing him with steadfast companionship, affection, and a sense of normalcy—all the more important in combat, a time of unimaginable stress. With the help of American Humane Cpl. Caceres was reunited with Fieldy when the courageous Labrador was honorably discharged from military service. Now, this four-legged veteran who served as a warrior's best friend is serving in just one noble role: as Man's Best Friend.

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Military Working Dog Bond



Military Working Dog BOND forged a connection - an unbreakable bond - with his handler, an active-duty serviceman whose name we are not revealing for security reasons. Bond, a brave Belgian Malinois, is one of the most remarkable and hard-working military dogs imaginable. He worked more than 50 combat missions, and was deployed to Afghanistan three times. Bond put his life at risk every day, using his keen senses, strength, and agility as Multi-Purpose dog in his Special Operations unit to keep our troops safe. The number of lives he saved through his work in enemy apprehension and explosives detection is simply unknown. Still, the toll of combat affected both members of this hero dog team. Bond and his handler both found themselves grappling with anxiety. MWD Bond suffers from combat trauma, once knocking out his own teeth trying to chew himself out of his kennel during a thunderstorm. And his handler, back in the States, found himself in need of his former Battle Buddy. Today, Bond continues to offer him this unconditional support today, not as a military working dog, but simply as his best friend. With the help of American Humane he adopted Bond when the four-legged veteran retired from active military service, and said being reunited with his canine companion will help ease his reentry back into civilian life a few months from now, something that can often be a difficult and daunting transition for our veterans.

Working dogs have played an integral role in our nation's history, saving countless lives both on and off the battlefield. I hope you will join me in honoring these intrepid canines and tune in to watch them on the Hallmark Channel when the Hero Dog Awards are broadcast in October.

Love,

Lois



Follow Lois:

