

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 63 September 20, 2019

Courageous K9 Edition



Dear Friends:

There are many people who say that Washington DC has gone to the dogs. This was certainly true the other day at the annual ceremony on Capitol Hill for the Lois Pope K9 Medal of Courage, which are presented by our partners at American Humane. In fact, honoring courageous canines who have served in the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, or Coast Guard was a wonderful way to bring people together - Democrats, Republicans, and Independents...civilians, military and veterans. I was truly heartened and honored that our dear friends U.S. Reps Lois Frankel and Donna Shalala took time out from pressing Congressional matters to come and surprise me with a few words of tribute, as well as to note the importance of these medals.

And, indeed, they are important - after all, human soldiers who serve with valor and distinction, and who are injured in combat are awarded Purple Hearts and other medals - rightfully so. But until the creation of these medals, dogs who sniffed out bombs, who fought our enemies, and who protected soldiers from bullets just went right back to the front lines to do their jobs.

Upcoming events

October 5, 2019

2019 Hero Dog Awards Gala
Beverly Hills California

November 12, 2019

"Made for Each Other" Premiere
The Breakers Palm Beach
By Invitation Only
6:30 pm

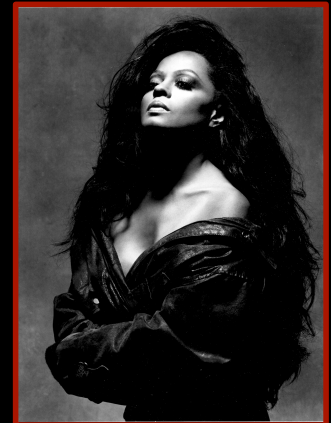
January 3, 2020

LIFE's 26th Annual Lady in Red Gala
The Breakers Palm Beach
By Invitation Only
6:00 pm

Get ready for a supreme evening at
LIFE's 26th Annual *"Lady in Red" Gala*
Starring the One-and-Only
Diana Ross

Friday, January 3, 2020
The Breakers, Palm Beach

For information or to request an invitation ,
please call 561.582.8083 or email life@life-edu.org.



(Dear Friends continued)

Consider the case of a young woman named Megan Leavey. She was a Marine Corporal assigned as a Military K9 handler and paired with a German Shepherd named Rex. Together they served two deployments to Iraq. During the second tour, in Ramadi in 2006, they were both injured by an IED, an improvised explosive device.

Megan was quickly awarded the Purple Heart and the Navy and Marines Achievement Medal with a "V" device, a special decoration that honors valor in combat. Rex continued with his bomb-sniffing duties for several more years until facial palsy finally ended his military career. But why was Rex not awarded the Purple Heart at the exact same time as Megan?

Stories like this are the reason I decided to create the K9 Medal of Courage – to ensure that dogs who put their lives on the line on the front lines are never forgotten, and their valiant service on the battlefield is never marginalized.

At the ceremony in Washington, we fulfilled that goal by conferring the 2019 Lois Pope K9 Medal of Courage on four military working dogs, showing again that there are heroes on both ends of the leash:

Troll, a brave 12-year-old Dutch Shepherd who, paired with his handler, then-Air Force Staff Sergeant Robert Wilson, conducted 89 combat missions, logging 1,240 hours, supporting United States Army and Special Operations units outside the wire. Among his most noteworthy actions, Troll provided the necessary cover to allow for the rapid evacuation of the critically injured soldier from the battlefield - while under enemy fire.

Sgt. Yeager, a 13-year-old black Lab who honorably performed three combat tours, involving more than 100 patrols in Iraq and Afghanistan as an Improvised Explosive Detection Dog with the United States Marine Corps. During one mission, he suffered shrapnel wounds from an IED that caused him to lose part of his ear. Today, he is an ambassador for the Project K-9 Hero Foundation.

K-9 Niko is a 10-year-old Dutch Shepherd who worked all over Afghanistan protecting foreign and U.S. dignitaries, embassy personnel including the U.S. Ambassador, and visiting U.S. Presidential and Secretary of State details from 2012 to 2016 - never leaving the country until he retired. During his career, he assisted with route clearance for advance teams, open area and house-to-house sweeps prior to high-level meetings.

Emmie served with the U.S. Marine Corps during Operation Enduring Freedom. This 12-year-old black Lab completed three tours in Afghanistan as an IED Detector Dog. She worked primarily off-leash along roadways with a different handler for each of her three tours. Now back at home, she continues to serve - as a therapy and companion dog to her owner's autistic son.

They may have been just ordinary dogs at one time but what these four dogs - and so many others - have done for our country is extraordinary.

Love,

Lois

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