

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 33, October 25, 2016

Help Us Design the First Hero Dog Monument in Our Nation's Capital



Help Us Honor Our Hero Dogs!

Several decades ago, as you know, I embarked on a crusade to create the first permanent public tribute to the four million living disabled American veterans and all those who have died.

These courageous men and women have sacrificed so much in service to our country. They have lost limbs and organs. They have been blinded and made deaf. They have been horrifically burned. And they have suffered emotionally and psychologically.

Despite the fact that they will forever bear the scars of war for all of us to see, we as a country have, far too often, marginalized them, turned away from them and even forgotten them. They are unsung heroes.

I felt then, as I continue to do now, that it was our collective responsibility as a nation to sing their praises. And, thanks to you - my friends and fellow LIFE members -- and so many others, the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial was dedicated in a beautiful ceremony led by President Obama in Washington DC on October 5, 2014. Because of our efforts, and all those who believed in the need for this memorial, generations will come to learn about all the members of our Armed Forces who have been seriously injured in the line of duty, past and present. This memorial honors them, just as they honored us with their service and sacrifice...just as they protected our freedoms. The memorial ensures that they are unsung no more.

(continued on page 2)

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

(Continued from page 1)

And our nation's capital is the ideal setting for the memorial. Located a short walk from Congress and the White House, the memorial also serves as a daily reminder to our elected officials and policy makers that war doesn't just cost trillions of dollars. There is a human cost, one that the men and women who wage it continue to pay long after the fighting on the battlefield ends. Our elected officials and policy makers - indeed, all Americans - should also be reminded in a very vivid and tangible way that there is another group of valiant soldiers whose service and sacrifices have been marginalized and forgotten. They, too, are unsung heroes in securing our freedoms. They are America's military hero dogs.

This is why I was proud to announce at the American Humane Annual Hero Dog Awards in Los Angeles in early September that I was commissioning a permanent public tribute to the countless thousands of our four-legged American brothers and sisters who have served on the battlefield. The American Military Hero Dog Monument will honor the 2,700 dogs in active service in our Armed Forces, as well as all those who have distinguished themselves in war zones dating back to World War I. Like the memorial to disabled veterans, this monument will call Washington DC home. Our Senators and Representatives, not to mention all who work and visit the city, need to know just how much these courageous canines do for our soldiers and country. They provide comfort and companionship to our troops. They detect explosive devices and carry out life-saving tasks. They search areas that cannot be accessed by soldiers. They do sentry and scout work. And at times, they even shield soldiers from flying bullets. It is estimated that each military dog saves the lives of 150-200 service men and women.

Of course, their bravery comes at a cost. Just like with our human warriors, these dogs can get injured and killed in combat. Just like our human warriors, they can suffer emotional and psychological consequences of war. And just like our human warriors, military dogs have not been given the credit due to them for their service to our country.

Earlier this summer, we teamed up with our friends at American Humane to create the Lois Pope LIFE K-9 Medal of Courage, the highest honor that can be bestowed on a military dog. We presented the first four medals in a ceremony in the capital, at which hundreds of members of Congress and the military participated.

But I still felt more needed to be done. I felt the same way I did when I conceived of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial to honor our disabled veterans. Not wanting to "mess with success," I knew that another permanent monument was in order. To get the ball rolling, we announced at the Hero Dog Awards a national design contest, asking everyone, whether a professional or amateur artist, a sculptor or designer, a veteran or civilian, to propose a fitting design for the monument. We will announce finalists and pick a possible winner in the Spring of next year.

When it is completed, it will do more than just honor American military hero dogs. Like the memorial to disabled veterans, it will have an educational mission - in this case, to preserve, teach and perpetuate the essential roles that dogs have undertaken in service to America. It will remind us all, and generations to come, that bravery in uniform comes on both two and four legs...on both end of the leash.

For contest details, please visit www.americanhumane.org.

With Love,

Lois

Follow Lois:

