



K9S FOR WARRIORS

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DOG TALES

K9s' Most Tail-Wagging News Source  Warrior Update 115, May 2019



Putting Veteran Suicide into Perspective

At the start of Military Appreciation Month, we unveiled a digital billboard on the side of a busy interstate so we could literally illustrate the mounting issue of veteran suicide. This roadway sign wasn't just a memorandum of those we've already lost. This giant, digital suicide counter is meant to be a somber call to action. We chose US Interstate 95 – one of the busiest highways in all of the Eastern United States – to make an impassioned plea to all the passersby making their routine, daily trips, enjoying the freedoms we sometimes take for granted. At the unveiling, the sign read 3,000 veteran suicides this year. **These deaths were preventable.** That's why we are asking that you join us and others who are fighting to help those struggling with PTSD, TBI, or MST. We ask that you really look at this poignant reminder and feel uncomfortable, just like we do, so you will

be compelled to help us combat and prevent this tragic epidemic. With your help, we can continue to save our veterans' lives and empower them to successfully reintegrate into civilian society. Thank you. ■

Rory Diamond
Chief Executive Officer, K9s For Warriors

1,000 Dogs Rescued – 534 Warrior Graduates

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Appreciating Our Military by Keeping Them Alive

May is Military Appreciation Month, which is one of K9s For Warriors' favorite months. Our organization was founded on showing appreciation every day for our military by taking care of them when they come home. As we enjoy celebrating our service members this month, we also have a responsibility to shed light on the dark side of military service.

While we see what our service members do to keep our great nation free, we don't always see what they suffer from as a result. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a silent killer. It's responsible for an average of 20 suicides in our military hero population per day. That's why this month we revealed a digital board in our hometown of Jacksonville, Fla. which will be updated weekly with the number of veteran suicides that have taken place since the beginning of this year. By the end of May, there will be an estimated 3,020 veteran suicides. That's unacceptable, and these heroes considering the horror of suicide shouldn't have to suffer in silence.

The digital board is designed with individual dog tags to remind us all of the individual, meaningful lives suicide is claiming. It's meant to spark a conversation about this tragic number by literally bringing it to the forefront of what we see every day as we go about our lives. It's meant to encourage all of us to recognize this national travesty, to ensure we keep fighting it. As Americans who appreciate our military every day, we hope you'll stand with us to help keep alive those who help keep us free. ■

To DONATE go to www.k9sforwarriors.org
Thanks for your continued support!

2019

May

National Military Appreciation Month

- 12th:** Mother's Day
- 16th:** *Graduation, 6pm*
- 18th:** Armed Forces Day
- 27th:** Memorial Day

June

- 6th:** D-Day
- 14th:** U.S. Flag Day
- 16th:** Father's Day
- 20th:** *Graduation, 6pm*
- 27th:** PTSD Awareness Day

July

- 4th:** Independence Day
- 18th:** *Graduation, 6pm*

Training Center & Vet Tech Center – Almost Finished!

We're seeing the finishing touches on our new construction! Since January, we've been excitedly waiting for the unveiling of our new buildings, an indoor training facility and a vet tech center.

The training facility is a 1,600 sq. ft space dedicated to keeping our dogs learning, despite any adverse weather conditions. Scheduled to be completed in the first week of June, we're looking forward to this climate-controlled facility – just in time for Florida's summer heat.



Our new vet tech office will give our dedicated staff the space needed for dog observation. When a new dog joins our program, they are quarantined for a 10-day period to ensure they have all their life-saving vaccinations. To keep the veterinary staff close, we're building a 7-bay kennel area next to their offices, which will give them quick access while at the same time keeping our more veteran dogs separate. Here at K9s for Warriors, we're amazed at the growth we're capable of with the help of our donors! ■

Gold Family Campus Update

This May, not only are we recognizing Military Appreciation Month, but the Gold Family Campus is also celebrating the one-year anniversary of running our first class! Additionally, so far this year we've held three remedial classes. These classes help our graduates prepare for recertification and help them with any issues that might have arisen since originally graduating the program. We also just graduated our second class of the year. This is exciting because all of the dogs paired in the class were trained and cared for on our campus, rather than our headquarters, Camp K9. It's a testament to the growth our supporters have helped us achieve in making this campus fully operational. K9s For Warriors' future looks brighter every day! ■



Rescue Puppy Feature – Part 2

In the last issue of Dog Tales, we introduced you to rescue puppy Marmaduke, who is being raised by one of our caring volunteer puppy raisers. Since then, Marmaduke, who turned 1 in April, has made even more progress in his journey to becoming a Service Dog. This handsome pup continues to build his confidence thanks to the love, patience and guidance of his raiser, Kathy.

How does Kathy do it? "In everything, I set him up for success," she says. "We go through short periods of training – 15 to 20 minutes."

These short periods help Marmaduke win small victories and not get overwhelmed. For most rescue dogs, these short training periods are some of the building blocks to prepare them for formal Service Dog training.

"We go through all the commands at home and in public locations. And we always leave training on a positive note," said Kathy.

Ending training positively helps motivate dogs for the next training session. They are like people in that sense; they want to know they're doing a good job! Kathy says that now, "he trusts me." Therefore, she can push his boundaries a little more as he understands that the things that seemed so scary before, really aren't scary things.

He's gotten over his fear of the car and the vacuum cleaner, but there's something new that he's not sure what to make of yet... the garden hose! Maybe as summer progresses and the weather gets hotter, he'll learn it can be his friend! Will Marmaduke be ready to enter the kennel and meet his formal K9 trainer by the next issue of Dog Tales? We hope you'll stay subscribed to find out! He is only beginning his journey to save a veteran! ■

