

## War Dogs – A Tribute

On Memorial Day and at other times of the year when we honor those who have faithfully and courageously served and defended our country, I cannot help but reflect upon those unsung heroes who have valiantly and devotedly fought side by side with our military personnel - our dogs of war. Their valor, loyalty and devotion have for too long remained unacknowledged.

These dogs that have served our country have been rarely publicly appreciated, recognized, or received medals or any other award for their duty. There are some war dog memorials – probably the best known ones at March Air Force Base in California and the Infantry School in Fort Benning, Georgia. Other war dog memorials include: the Naval Facility at Guam, the Alfred M. Gray Marine Corps Research Center in Quantico, Virginia and the Alabama War Dogs Memorial at the USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park in Mobile, Alabama. Unfortunately, the honor of and recognition for the work these dogs have done are limited in light of the fact that these dogs have saved countless lives.

Since ancient times, dogs have bravely served alongside humans during combat. Throughout the history of warfare, from the times of the Egyptians, Greeks and Persians, during the Roman Empire, throughout the Civil War and World Wars I & II, through Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War and currently in Iraq and Afghanistan, dogs have actively served at the sides of their masters. Serving as messengers, sentries, protectors, guides, mascots and detectors of bomb and other explosives, they have sacrificed their own lives to save their masters. They have also brought companionship, healing and comfort to the injured and infirm.

When remembering those who have faithfully served our country, keep in mind our canine companions and fellow “soldiers”. They are deserving of our praise, appreciation and respect.