

*Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026*

**Message on National K–9 Veterans Day**

*March 13, 2026*

Since the dawn of our Republic 250 years ago, America's working dogs have defended our freedom on the frontlines of battle, providing crucial security, protection, and companionship to our men and women in uniform. This National K–9 Veterans Day, we celebrate these exceptional dogs for their vital role in keeping our country safe, strong, and free.

On March 13, 1942, the United States Army officially launched its War Dog Program during World War II with the creation of the Army K–9 Corps. Since then, Military Working Dogs have deployed to every major field of battle and continue to serve as integral members of our operations on land, at sea, and in the air.

To earn the title of Military Working Dog, candidates undergo rigorous training and evaluation before being assigned to specialties, including drug and explosive detection, security operations, and search-and-rescue. Their intellect, speed, temperament, acute sense of smell, and relentless drive enable these high-performing dogs to excel and execute in high-stakes missions. Their innate abilities are enhanced by an inexplicable bond and enduring partnership—of trust, loyalty, respect, and love—with their human handlers.

From General George Washington's beloved dog, who stood alongside our first Commander in Chief during the most decisive moments of the Revolutionary War; to Chips, who attacked enemy forces firing at soldiers during the invasion of Sicily and became the most decorated K–9 in World War II; to Conan, a Belgian Malinois who took part in the operation I initiated to kill ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, dogs have always played a central role in the story of the American military. Today approximately 1,600 working dogs deploy alongside their human partners in combat zones with our most prestigious military units, along our borders, and throughout the entire world.

Dogs have also contributed in extraordinary ways to our local and Federal law enforcement. Earlier this year, Bo—a police canine in Gastonia, North Carolina—heroically rescued a missing 13-year-old boy with special needs in the middle of a blizzard. For generations, Bo and other police dogs and canine troops have served with bravery and devotion, which enhance our law enforcement capabilities and the lethality of our fighting force.

Dogs are not merely faithful friends or companions; our canine cadre are guardians of our liberty too. Today I join a grateful Nation in honoring the enduring legacy, remarkable acts of heroism, and incredible contributions of America's highly skilled four-legged warriors. In the new golden age of America, the same loyalty, courage, and fighting spirit they embody are being unleashed across our Nation.

NOTE: The message referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization.

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