

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 203

Recognizing the roles and contributions of military animals and their valiant human handlers for bravery in both war and peace, and acknowledging the importance of honoring their valor and meritorious achievements.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 10, 2025

Ms. BROWNLEY submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the roles and contributions of military animals and their valiant human handlers for bravery in both war and peace, and acknowledging the importance of honoring their valor and meritorious achievements.

Whereas the history of the United States needs to comprise the social, economic, cultural, and medical contributions made by military animals and their human handlers, and should include stories of their valor, sacrifices, and meritorious achievements made on behalf of the freedom and safety of the United States;

Whereas military animals have made significant contributions to the peace and protection of the United States and were officially recognized by the Quartermaster Corps on March 13, 1942;

Whereas military animals have served in war throughout history and contributed selfless service and bravery by recognizing their historical contributions, including—

(1) more than 2,200 years ago, African general Hannibal used elephants to carry soldiers and weapons, and since that time, while horses, pigeons, and dogs have been mostly used, a vast array of animals were put into service, including camels, mules, donkeys, and llamas, and the United States experimented with dolphins and sea lions, “Bomber bats” were even tested during World War II before the hydrogen bomb was completed;

(2) during World War I, over 8,000,000 horses and mules were killed;

(3) in 1917, the Army Signal Corps established the Signal Pigeon Corps, and at its height during World War II, the Signal Pigeon Corps consisted of 3,000 enlisted members, 150 officers, and 54,000 pigeons, two-thirds of which were deployed overseas, with the other 18,000 held in reserves;

(4) over 11,500 military working dogs were trained for the home front and warfront during World War II; and

(5) approximately 2,000 military working dogs were sent overseas in World War II, an estimated 4,000 military working dogs served in Vietnam and an estimated 5,700 military working dogs have served in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2006;

Whereas there are currently over 3,000 military working dogs in the United States today, and there is an increasing demand for these military working dogs in the United States as a result of the proven worth and success in their various service and working capacities;

Whereas, since September 11, 2001, the 341st Training Squadron of the Air Force has trained approximately 500 military working dogs annually, including 274 explosive detection dogs for the Transportation Security Administration, and, according to the Secretary of the Air Force, there are an estimated 2,000 military working dogs deployed worldwide to support the Global War on Terror, helping to safeguard military bases and activities, and to detect bombs and explosives before they inflict harm;

Whereas canines are used today to maintain peace and protection with numerous law enforcement, fire, and search and rescue agencies around the country, and are trained to patrol, apprehend fleeing criminals, and detect narcotics, explosives, weapons, and accelerants, in cases of arson, and used in crime scene evidence detection;

Whereas, according to the United States Police Canine Association, it is estimated that there are approximately 15,000 police canines working today, not including military working dogs, on the Federal, State, county, and local levels of government, in various service and working capacities;

Whereas, according to Search and Rescue Dogs of the United States (hereinafter “SARDUS”), there are approximately 2,000 certified search and rescue teams across the United States, most of them volunteers who work on the local level for police and sheriff’s departments, and include wilderness area search dogs, trailing dogs, human remains detection dogs, water search dogs, and avalanche dog teams;

Whereas the Federal Emergency Management Agency also works with SARDUS and State and local organizations as needed, including 28 national urban search and rescue

teams, 372 urban search and rescue dogs with capabilities in live find and human remains detection in a disaster environment, and 66 nationally certified State disaster K–9 search teams which respond to in-State requests to disasters or imminent threats, including extreme weather and building collapses;

Whereas the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives manages two separate and distinct canine programs including an Explosive and Accelerant Detection Canine Program and a Special Response Team Tactical Canine Program; the Explosive and Accelerant Detection Canine Program began in 1990 and has trained approximately 1,000 explosive detection canines and 280 accelerant detection canines who work both to prevent explosive incidents and to gather evidence at scenes of arson and explosive-related crimes; the Special Response Team Canine Program began in 2000 and has had 35 different tactical canine teams who participate as part of a tactical team and help apprehend violent criminals across the country;

Whereas, according to the United States Marshals Service (hereinafter “USMS”) Canine Operations Program, there are 25 K–9 teams supporting USMS missions nationwide today, working as explosive detection canines that provide explosives and firearms detection and countermeasure for USMS protective and investigative missions and supports other Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies, and tactical canines that are specifically trained for USMS enforcement missions to search and locate suspects;

Whereas, since 1943, the United Kingdom has been the only country in the world to honor animals with its inter-

national PDSA Dickin Medal, also known as “the Victoria Cross for Animals”;

Whereas animals that serve in war and peace in the United States are currently not recognized for their acts of gallantry and bravery, and do not have an official medal to honor their distinguished service;

Whereas there is increasing support for the process of a Medal of Bravery and a Distinguished Service Medal for animals and an annual event to recognize such animals who have served valiantly and bravely since World War I;

Whereas the Animals in War & Peace Medal of Bravery was instituted in 2019, and awarded to the inaugural eight recipients on November 14, 2019, at a ceremony attended by dignitaries and Members of Congress, in the District of Columbia, and since then has awarded 27 brave animals with AWP Medals of Bravery and AWP Distinguished Service Medals; and

Whereas a fifth Animals in War & Peace Medal Ceremony is planned for March 11, 2025, that will educate and raise public awareness of seven brave animals and their handlers who served the United States in times of war and peace with three AWP Distinguished Service Medals and three AWP Medals of Bravery: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes and thanks the brave American
3 service animals and their dedicated and selfless han-
4 dlers who serve the United States in both war and
5 peace; and

- 1 (2) supports the creation of an annual process
- 2 to nominate animals for the Medal of Bravery and
- 3 Distinguished Service Medal.

