



PRESS RELEASE

FRANKLIN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Save-A-Vet, Save-A-Pet Program Matches Rescue Dog with Local Veteran

December 19, 2018 – Chambersburg, PA – Franklin County Veterans Affairs recently presented a local veteran with a trained service dog through the Operation Save-A-Vet, Save-A-Pet program. The program is dedicated to helping Franklin County veterans with service-connected disabilities lead happier, healthier and more productive lives through the assistance and companionship of a service dog.

“We are proud to be able to connect service dogs with Franklin County veterans in need of support through the Operation Save-A-Vet, Save-A-Pet program,” said Commissioner and Chairman Dave Keller.

Veterans Affairs Director Justin Slep presented Charlie Martin with an Operation Save-A-Vet, Save-A-Pet Certificate of Completion and transferred Abbey, a three year old chocolate labrador retriever, to his care. Mr. Martin was born in 1932 and joined the Army in 1950 at the age of 18. He is a veteran of the Korean Conflict and Peacetime. He served in the army for 3 years and was stationed in Korea and Japan where he earned the Army of Occupation Medal.

“Mr. Martin served his country honorably and we thank him for his service,” said Mr. Slep.

Operation Save-A-Vet, Save-A-Pet dogs come from local rescues and shelters. They are required to complete a year-long, three phase training program that includes dog and veteran training together as a team during the last phase. Program trainer Helen Carlson was in attendance for the presentation. Regarding the rigors of the training she commented, “Once you see the teams together, it’s all worthwhile.” Four rescue-dogs-turned-service-dogs have been matched with local veterans since the program began.

Commissioner Bob Thomas highlighted recent news regarding former President George H. W. Bush's service dog, Sully. He noted that, prior to starting Operation Save-A-Vet, Save-A-Pet, Mr. Slep toured other service dog programs. One of those programs was at the Maryland Correctional Institute in Hagerstown where Sully was trained. "It's neat to have that local connection," he said.

“We are grateful to the many service organizations, businesses, and generous individuals who have donated to this wonderful program,” said Commissioner Bob Ziobrowski.

Operation Save-A-Vet, Save-A-Pet is made possible in part by a grant from the Pennsylvania Veterans’ Trust Fund and private donations. If you would like to donate to support this worthy cause, please contact the Franklin County Department of Veterans Affairs at 717-263-4326.



Pictured, left to right: Commissioner Bob Ziobrowski, Veterans Affairs Director Justin Slep, Mr. Charlie Martin, Commissioner Bob Thomas, Trainer Helen Carlson



Pictured: Operation Save-A-Vet, Save-A-Pet service dog - Abbey

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