

**Written Testimony for National Capital  
Memorial Advisory Commission  
Public Meeting on March 21, 2022  
by  
Theresa M. Brandon, MBA  
President of the National Services Animals Monument, Inc.**

Thank you, Chairman Mays and other members of the Commission and distinguished guests, in attendance today. I am humbled to be before you to stand in support not just for the proposed memorial, but on behalf of all animals who have served our great nation.

Since the founding of our country, service animals<sup>i</sup> such as dogs, cats, horses, mules, homing pigeons, dolphins, sea lions and others have provided vital assistance to veterans, persons with disabilities, search and rescue, military, and law enforcement. Service dogs in particular have provided assistance to those who are blind or deaf, have mobility issues, or suffer from mental or emotional ailments. These service animals have been performing essential duties and untold acts of valor alongside America's citizens and officers for centuries. These unsung heroes have served society, saved lives, and fought and died for our country. They are deserving of the highest honor and respect. Given the tremendous contributions provided by service animals and their handlers, well-documented throughout history, and falling under the broad heading of ***Service Animals and their Handlers***<sup>ii</sup>, we believe that our mission falls under the ***Commemorative Works Act*** in that our mission is to recognize the full body of contributions made by them across history.

Our corporation is so intent on celebrating these service animals that we believe a basic tenet is to inform and educate the public on the many stories of heroism throughout our history, highlighting the ***human-animal bond***. To accomplish this goal, at the center of our organization is an Education Program Committee with leadership provided by individuals with long histories of working with animals and teaching. Kathy Thistlethwaite from Norco, CA, serves as the Committee Chair. Having served on several boards associated with equines, Kathy also brings direct experience as a teacher and advisor for the Norco Junior Horsemen's Association for seven years, overseeing activities that encouraged children to explore the many facets of the horse industry. We also consider ourselves extremely fortunate to have the incomparable Nigel Allsopp as an Advisor for this committee. Nigel is an author and expert on war and service animals and has published 14 books including an international best seller, *Cry Havoc: the history of war dogs*. His expertise is called upon by the Defense Department and government agencies such as Veterans Affairs.

The composition of our Board of Directors and advisors includes:

- President, Theresa M. Brandon
- Vice President, Laurie Greenhut
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- Marketing Director, Dawn Taylor
- Education Program Chair, Kathy Thistlethwaite
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NSAM uses the expert services of COGENCY GLOBAL, Inc., in New York to ensure that we meet full registration compliance with all state requirements across the United States.

The Education Program Committee is composed of six sections covering five species. Each of these species serves alongside a handler to perform the critical functions of **safety, security** and/or **independence**.

- Equine: working and therapy
  - Horses
  - Mules
  - Donkeys
- Camelid:
  - Camels
- Avian:
  - Homing/carrier pigeons
  - Canaries
  - Raptors
- Canines: Service & Working Dogs
  - Patrol
  - Search & Rescue
- Detection (drugs and bomb material/IEDs)
- Tracking
- Sentries & Scouts
- Canines: Service
  - Seeing guide dogs
  - Hearing assistance dogs
  - Mobility assistance
  - Seizure & medical detection
  - Therapy
- Marine Animals: work w/ US Navy
  - Dolphins (assist naval divers)
  - Sea Lions (security)



## HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND

The term **human-animal bond** has been around in the scientific community for about five decades. “International and national conferences in the 1970s and 1980s and their published proceedings brought wide attention to the **human-animal bond**.”<sup>1</sup>

For the handlers who have worked with service animals in the field of law enforcement and the military, they understand the concept of the human-animal bond at bone depth. While the training process does involve the science of understanding the psychology of animal behavior, the difference between experiences in the laboratory and the field can be measured by sheer survival. Observing the training of police K9 Teams provided by the Central Indiana K9 Association, Inc., whether covering bite scenarios or scent tracking, the training focuses on how the animal will normally behave in a given situation and work to create distractions in order to desensitize the dog from outside stimuli and focus instead on the commands from the handler.

A story from a police officer I knew in Texas shared an experience when he was tracking a suspect through a neighborhood immediately following an armed robbery. Jumping over fences together in pursuit of the suspect during the evening hours was tense. With his K9 at his side, they moved quickly bounding from one yard to another when suddenly his partner spun around, lunging at the man with a gun causing him to drop it before firing a shot into the back of the officer. The ability to act as a force-multiplier by a working dog with his partner has saved many an officer and the public. By capturing the armed suspect, not only was the officer able to return to his family that night, the people who lived in that neighborhood could breathe a sigh of relief, not worrying about an armed gunman breaking into their homes or assaulting them.

History books are filled with stories of the service animals that have provided, with some individual stories of heroism like MWD (Military Working Dog) Lucca. As the President of the NSAM Corporation, I want to share these stories with you because their story is still being written today and tomorrow, working side-by-side with the men and women who protect and serve our communities and country. Handlers and the service animals in law enforcement and the military build a personal bond of survival because they both rely on each other to stay alive in hostile settings. The **human-animal bond** is nearly unbreakable whether it is the animal or the human.

The transformation that occurred from training dogs normally used in a war-time setting to become seeing eye guide dogs became a movement starting with Morris Frank and his dog **Buddy**, pushing for social changes as a precursor to the ADA which was signed

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<sup>1</sup> Historical Perspectives on the Human-Animal Bond by Linda M. Hines, American Behavioral Scientist, First Published September 1, 2003



into law by President George H.W. Bush who, in his final 6 months, received an assistance dog named **Sully** bringing this transformation full circle. You will hear testimony from Valerie Cramer, Sully's handler. It should be noted that our artist of choice, Susan Bahary, of world-renown, created a life size bronze sculpture of Sully which now resides in the Bush Library in College Station, Texas. - *Susan Bahary with Sully and the bronze of Sully for the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum commissioned by America's VetDogs* – Photo Credit: James Chang/America's VetDogs

**Presented across a timeline that demonstrates their long historical involvement with mankind, the following will provide an overview of the broad and specialized service that animals have performed with their handlers and the critical impact made on our nation.**

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

The United States has a long history of wars and conflicts, especially during the past couple of centuries, where service animals played a huge part. From the Civil War, to the two World Wars, the Korean and Vietnam Conflicts, and the last war in Afghanistan, we have seen several species of animals who served our troops in a number of ways.

### **Revolutionary War**

“At the time of the Revolutionary War, there were three types of mounted commands. These included the heavy cavalry (cuirassiers), used primarily for shock effect; light cavalry (hussars), used primarily for reconnaissance, screening and liaison missions; and the dragoons, trained to fight on horseback and on foot. The traditional cavalryman in the U.S. Army has been the light dragoon.

In the beginning of the American Revolution, the Continental Army was composed of infantry with very little artillery and even less cavalry. GEN George Washington's early experience at war had given him no cavalry experience, and at first, he did not comprehend its value. ...the fledgling mounted service was not properly used until the southern campaigns near the end of the war. Washington's experience in the summer of 1776 with his command, and other volunteer horse units, caused him to realize the value of cavalry. He recommended to Congress that one or more mounted units be established in the Continental Army.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Horse Cavalry in the United States by retired LTC Allan B. Bluestone.

## **Civil War and WWI**

In the early years of American history, before mechanized vehicles became established in WWII, horses and mules were used for the movement of troops and equipment. In the case of the Cavalry, horses were a critical part of the fighting. The loss of equine life and other heroism in combat zones has been well-documented.

- Between 1,000,000 and 3,000,000 horses and mules were killed during the Civil War.
- Approximately 1,325,000 American horses and mules were used in WWI.

Considering all the animals that served in WWI, “Over 16 million animals served...[and] were used for transport, communication and companionship. In 1914, both sides had large cavalry forces. Horse and camel-mounted troops were used in the desert campaigns throughout the war, but on the Western Front, new weapons like the machine gun made cavalry charges increasingly difficult. However, animals remained a crucial part of the war effort. Horses, donkeys, mules and camels carried food, water, ammunition and medical supplies to men at the front, and dogs and pigeons carried messages. Canaries were used to detect poisonous gas, and cats and dogs were trained to hunt rats in the trenches.”<sup>3</sup>

Homing pigeons have been used by militaries throughout history. They can provide relatively secure communication on the battlefield. Unlike radio communication, which requires electrical power of some kind, the homing pigeon only needs food and water. In October of 1918, a U.S. battalion of around 200 men was trapped behind German lines and under heavy artillery, mortar, and machine gun fire. They were also under misdirected fire from their own forces. Cut off and with no way to communicate with their headquarters, they turned to Cher Ami.

Cher Ami was their last homing pigeon. They wrote a message asking their forces to cease-fire before they were wiped out by the friendly fire. Cher Ami took off with the desperate message. But the Germans shot him out of the sky. Though he was severely wounded, he managed to take off again and fly the 25 miles back to headquarters. He had lost a leg and an eye and was shot through the breast. Subsequently, he was awarded Croix de Guerre by the French army. A tried-and-true strategy, homing pigeons were used a great deal during the next World War.

## **1939-45: World War II**

During WWII and afterwards, we began seeing a greater use of working dogs. Americans were eager to aid the war effort. In fact, individual families were encouraged to allow their pets to join the service and were returned if they survived. The dogs were trained for guard and patrol duty and more than 11,000 dogs ended up serving with the Army

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/15-animals-that-went-to-war>

and Marine Corps. One such dog named **Chips**, served in the U.S. Army during World War II. Chips took part in Allied campaigns in North Africa, Italy, France and elsewhere in Europe.

Chips, an American family pet, was enlisted and spent 3½ years in the Army. During one particular foray, an Italian machine-gun crew had U.S. forces pinned down on a beach in Sicily. Chips broke from his handler and charged the enemy's hut. A shot rang out. Moments later, a soldier appeared, with Chips at his throat. Three more soldiers followed, hands in the air. Despite injuries, Chips did not stop. Later that day his keen sense of smell detected enemy soldiers in the area, who also were captured. Clearly there was a very strong bond between the troops and this dog as they fought the enemy.

While dogs and horses primarily served with the US Army which covered the European Theater, the Navy often welcomed **cats** aboard ships to help with rodent control and similarly in barracks and military field offices. A good ratter could help preserve the food and helped in preventing the spread of diseases, and kept rats or mice from chewing through ropes and wiring.

### **1950-53: Korean War**

The United States Marine Corps has endured few firefights as savage as the Battle for Outpost Vegas in the waning months of the Korean War. More than 500 mortar and artillery rounds per minute deluged the mountaintop ridge where the 5th Marines Rifle Platoon attempted to repel a Chinese assault. There was so much smoke from the barrage of ordnance used, that little could be seen except one specific hero's silhouette. A horse known as **SGT Reckless**, traveled alone on 51 round trips through rice paddies and scaling a 45-degree incline to deliver nearly 9,000 pounds of ammunition from the supply point to the gun teams. The platoon knew their heroic compatriot was no ordinary Marine—and it wasn't just because she was a horse.

### **1955-75: Vietnam War**

Dogs in Vietnam were used for many different purposes. They used their keen senses to find dangers like ambushes, booby traps, and tripwires. They were also used to set up ambushes, find downed pilots and runaway ambushers, caches of weapons, food, ammunition, and guard the perimeter of military bases.<sup>4</sup>

In Vietnam, the Army used small highly-trained units usually consisting of five men and a **Labrador Retriever** called a "Combat Tracker Team" (CTT). The purpose of CTT was to reestablish contact with the enemy by conducting reconnaissance.

About 4,000 dogs were deployed over the course of the war. On July 1, 1965, the Marine base at Da Nang lost multiple aircraft when the base was overrun. In response, forty dogs and handlers went to Vietnam on a 120-day temporary trial duty. 198

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<sup>4</sup> Lemish, Micahel G. Forever Forward: K-9 Operations in Vietnam. China: Schiffer Publishing, 2009.

Dubbed “Project Top Dog 45,” the trial was deemed a success. From this success came the first Marine war dogs since World War II. Marines from the 3d Marine Division were selected to join the 1st Marine Provisional Dog Platoon. 199 After training, dogs were sent to bases all over Vietnam. As years went by their role expanded.<sup>5</sup>

### **1959 – today: Dolphins and Sea Lions trained by US Navy**

When the U.S. Navy needs to locate an object underwater, it calls on unusual allies: the **dolphins and sea lions** of the Navy Marine Mammal Program. Navy dolphins and sea lions can find undersea objects faster and better than human divers and undersea vehicles. They carry out missions that protect and support Navy Sailors, ships, and bases. The Navy put their detection skills to use in three types of missions.

- **Mission #1: Mine Detection (Dolphins Only)** - Unexploded mines can inflict great damage to ships, even decades after being laid, but are difficult to detect using sonar technology. Dolphins have biological sonar that detects mines faster and better than sonar invented by humans. Although most mines still contain explosives, they pose little danger to dolphins. Mines detonate by sensing the magnetic presence (disturbance) of steel ships. Marine animals cannot trigger them. Mine-hunting dolphins can find mines tethered to the seafloor, resting on the bottom, or fully buried in sediment. The animals drop marker buoys near found mines for human divers to recover and disable.
- **Mission #2: Intruder Defense (Dolphins and Sea Lions)** - Like security dogs, marine mammals can detect trespassers sneaking into forbidden areas. The Navy’s dolphins and sea lions guard underwater areas like piers, harbors, and ship channels against intruders. They patrol the waters looking for divers and undersea vehicles that could plant weapons or spy on Navy bases. Dolphins and sea lions swim swiftly and stealthily compared to human divers. A marine mammal can identify and tag an enemy swimmer before the person realizes the animal is even there. Marine mammals cannot tell the difference between friendly and enemy divers. They are trained to detect any swimmers in an area.
- **Mission #3: Object Recovery (Sea Lions Only)** - The Navy’s sea lions find practice mines and targets that ships and aircraft test in the ocean. Recovering test equipment saves money and allows reuse. Sea lions work faster and safer than human divers or undersea vehicles. Training mines and targets contain tracking pingers. Sea lions search by listening for tones the pingers produce. Once near a target, sea lions use their low-light vision to pinpoint the object’s location. When a sea lion finds a mine or target, it snaps a recovery line onto an attachment point on the object. Human handlers lift the object to the surface using a winch aboard the boat.

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<sup>5</sup> Burnam, John C. A Soldier’s Best Friend: Scout Dogs and Their Handlers in the Vietnam War. New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2003.

## **2001-21: Afghanistan War**

During later conflicts, **canines** became more entrenched with a single handler with the role of protecting military units in hostile territory. **MWD Lucca** served with the Marines in Afghanistan and Iraq. Working side-by-side with her handlers, she cleared the path through improvised explosive devices (IEDs) for 400 units of Marines without a single loss of life. In 2012, Lucca and her handler CPL Juan Rodriguez were leading a patrol in Afghanistan off-leash ahead of the Marines patrol to search for explosives. She located one IED, but during the search, a second, undetected explosive detonated. The explosion injured her front left leg and burned her upper torso; the injuries led to the amputation of Lucca's left front leg. I had the honor of attending her memorial service in July 2021, at the beautiful Michigan War Dog Memorial in Lyon, MI. The presence of hundreds of military veterans and civilians was a testament to the valiant service by Lucca and a demonstration of their high regard for such bravery.

***"The capability they [the dogs] bring to the fight cannot be replicated by man or machine, by all measures of performance, their yield outperforms any asset we have in our industry. Our Army would be remiss if we failed to invest more in this incredibly valuable resource."*** - Gen. David Petraeus, commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

## **2001 - Search and Rescue (SAR) dogs used at 9/11 ground zero**

When the World Trade Center collapsed on September 11, 2001, nearly 10,000 emergency rescue workers joined in the efforts to help. More than 300 of those heroes were dogs. We remember and honor the **Hero Dogs of 9/11** along with the countless people who had their lives irrevocably changed by man's best friend. From search and rescue dogs to comfort dogs to bomb detection dogs, these canines' stories of courage and healing are a long-lasting legacy that must never be forgotten.<sup>6</sup>

Working alongside their handlers, the four-legged heroes worked tirelessly climbing huge piles of debris while fires still smoldered. The search for signs of life or human remains was mentally and physically taxing on the dogs, as the search dogs began to get discouraged and lose their drive to search. Aware of the importance of morale in these dogs and to keep their motivation high, their handlers would stage a "mock find" so the dog could feel successful.<sup>7</sup> In addition to the mental and emotional drain on these dogs, they were also susceptible to cuts on their feet from all of the broken glass and sharp pieces throughout the field of damage.

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<sup>6</sup> Front Page News, "Remembering the Hero Dogs of 9/11" By Brandy Arnold, Posted on Sep 8, 2021

<sup>7</sup> "Remembering the Four-Legged Heroes of the 9/11 Rescue and Recovery" by 9/11 Memorial Staff



## INDEPENDENCE

In terms of supporting independence for their human charges, the value of these service animals through assistance and support is immeasurable. Providing therapy to veterans who have suffered from a physical, mental or emotional trauma from combat, horses and dogs can serve in ways we cannot always fulfill with other methods. Individuals who have lost the enjoyment of a major life activity, such as seeing or hearing or mobility, can oftentimes find relief through the use of an assistance animal. Parents of children with seizures can find relief from the 24/7 overwatch by a dog trained to sense and react to an oncoming seizure whether it is to alert adults close by to help, as well protect the child from serious injury by positioning their bodies to cushion the throes of a seizure, not to mention the calming effect on the child experiencing a seizure. Today we will hear from Raylene Lewis with a story about her son Kyler and the positive impact of his service dog **Sammy**.

### **1928 - "Buddy" the first seeing eye dog**

From the history page of The Seeing Eye: "In 1927, a young man named Morris Frank read an article about dogs being trained as guides for blinded veterans of World War I. Frustrated by his own lack of mobility as a blind person, he was inspired to write its author for help. Dorothy Harrison Eustis was an American training German shepherd police dogs in Switzerland, and when she received Morris Frank's letter, she agreed to help him. He promised he would return to the United States and spread the word about these wonderful dogs.

On June 11, 1928, having completed instruction in Switzerland, he arrived in New York City, proving the ability of his dog, **Buddy**, by navigating a dangerous street crossing before throngs of news reporters. His one-word telegram to Mrs. Eustis told the entire story: "Success." The Seeing Eye was born with the dream of making the entire world accessible to people who are blind." Together, Morris Frank and Dorothy Harrison Eustis co-founded The Seeing Eye. Eustis served as the first president and Frank was the first managing director.

The oldest existing guide dog school in the world, it continues its role as a pioneer in the guide dog movement and has played an integral part in shaping public policy guaranteeing access and accommodation to people who use service animals."

Morris Frank and The Seeing Eye were integral to the movement of accommodation well before the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. President George HW Bush signed into law the ADA and later benefited from this with the assistance of Sully.

### **1969 - Therapeutic horse riding recognized in North America**

Equine-assisted psychotherapy (EAP) incorporates horses into the therapeutic process. People engage in activities such as grooming, feeding, and leading a horse while being supervised by a mental health professional. EAP is often not the sole form of treatment, but rather a complementary therapeutic service to be used in partnership with more

traditional treatment. It brings people outdoors and offers an opportunity to use all senses while learning and processing through emotional challenges. Missy Craft, an equine specialist, will share first-hand the Healing Power of Animals.

According to anxiety expert Dr. Robin Zasio, horses bring the following unique elements to the therapy process.

- Non-judgmental and unbiased: Having the horse present may offer a sense of peace, as they only will react to the client's behavior and emotions with no threat of bias or any judgment of their emotional experience.
- Feedback and Mirroring: Horses are keen observers and are vigilant and sensitive to movement and emotion. They often mirror a client's behavior or emotions.
- Managing Vulnerability: As clients might find themselves vulnerable when trying to open up about emotional challenges, past experiences, or life transitions, the horse can offer a reference point to use for processing.

## **ADDITIONAL POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS BY ANIMALS FOR AMERICA**

Although both projects were short-lived, man has often turned to animals for their participation in our country's advancements.

### **Pre-civil War era, 1856-1857: Camels joined the US Army**

The U.S. Army decided to explore the use of **camels** in the American Southwest. In 1855, the U.S. Congress funded an unusual experiment: the importation of camels in order to test their fitness for military purposes in the Southwest. Camels, it was presumed, would fare much better than horses and mules in the desert's punishing climate and terrain, and therefore could be used to transport supplies to frontier forts more quickly.

In 1857, the camels were used to help in surveying the 35th parallel, to create a Wagon Road to the Colorado River, some of which became part of the **famous Route 66**.

### **1860-1861: Pony Express established**

From St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California, the Pony Express could deliver a letter faster than ever before covering more than 1,800 miles in 10 days: a remarkable feat by any measure! The roughly 186 Pony Express stations were about 10 miles apart along the route. At each station, the express rider would change to a fresh horse, taking only the mail pouch with him.

During his route, a Pony Express rider would change horses 8 to 10 times. The horses were ridden at a fast trot around 10 to 15 miles per hour and at times they were driven to full gallop at speeds up to 25 miles per hour. The various types of horse ridden by riders of the Pony Express included Morgans and thoroughbreds, which were often used on the eastern end of the trail. Mustangs were often used on the western (more rugged) end of the mail route.

On June 16, 1860, about ten weeks after the Pony Express began operations, Congress authorized a bill instructing the Secretary of the Treasury to subsidize the building of a transcontinental telegraph line to connect the Missouri River and the Pacific Coast. While the lines were under construction the Pony Express operated as usual. Letters and newspapers were carried the entire length of the line from St. Joseph to Sacramento, but telegrams were carried only between the rapidly advancing wire ends.

On October 26, 1861, San Francisco was in direct contact with New York City. On that day the Pony Express was officially terminated, but it was not until November that the last letters completed their journey over the route.

## SUMMARY

The term "commemorative work" means "any statue, monument, sculpture, memorial, plaque, inscription, or other structure or landscape feature, including a garden or memorial grove, designed to perpetuate in a permanent manner the memory of an individual, group, event or other significant element of American history." Considering American history during the past two centuries, the contributions by service animals and their handlers have been such that we owe a great debt of gratitude. The National Service Animals Monument Corporation believes it is time for the United States to honor these heroes – the service animals and their handlers – with a tribute in our nation's capital, celebrating the **human-animal bond**.

The value of service animals in support of **safety, security and independence**, as well as other positive contributions have been found across history - here in America and abroad – and have shown them to be national treasures.

Other countries, such as Australia, France, the UK and New Zealand already boast War Animal Monuments to the many animals lost during major conflicts. For this reason, on behalf of the NSAM Corporation, I appeal to your collective sense of just recognition to support our bill, the **National Service Animals Memorial Act**, to create a place in Washington, DC or its environs to celebrate, honor and reflect on their service and sacrifice to our nation and all Americans.

Thank you for listening and for your serious consideration.

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<sup>i</sup> The use of the term "service animals" by the National Service Animals Monument Corporation (NSAM) is broad, across several species and refers to those who serve and have served alongside a handler. Canines who work with law enforcement are referred to either as "working dogs" or "service dogs" by individuals in that profession. Animals that specifically work with persons with disabilities are defined according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). NSAM extends the definition of "service animal" to other species that serve under arduous conditions, sometimes resulting in death when the duty is for safety or security as performed with law enforcement and/or the military. One case in point was a homing pigeon named "Cher Ami." NSAM agrees with the formal ADA description that neither service or working animals are pets. There is

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one historical caveat in that during WWII, the US military recruited family pets to serve with our military. <https://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/dogs-defense> Some were returned with a certificate of thanks for their service and a small number distinguished themselves in time of war. You will hear mention today of one named “Chips”.

Reference: **U.S. Department of Justice**, Civil Rights Division, *Disability Rights Section*, ADA for title II (State and local government services) and title III (public accommodations and commercial facilities) on September 15, 2010, in the Federal Register.

<sup>ii</sup> Further, **“A service animal must be under the control of its handler. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless the individual’s disability prevents using these devices or these devices interfere with the service animal’s safe, effective performance of tasks.** In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.” <sup>ii</sup> NSAM concurs that in almost all cases, service animals are under the direct control of a handler who directs their work whether they are a person with a disability or a K9 handler with law enforcement, or a police horse patrolling the streets of a city with its police officer. There, of course is always an exception: SGT Reckless. A famous a horse, a Marine, who served in the Korean War.