

NEW YORK POST

NEW LEASH ON LIFE

By JULIA SZABO

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Last Sunday, there was a stirring celebration of war dogs at Westchester's Hartsdale Pet Cemetery, home to the War Dog Memorial, which was built in 1923 to honor the 7,000 four-footed heroes who served in World War I. To honor those K-9s, as well as today's military dogs, the memorial was decorated with a ceremonial wreath of red, white and blue flowers .

On hand - and paw - for the event were volunteers with adoptable dogs from the Shelter Pet Alliance (shelterpetalliance.org), and representatives for The Tower of Hope, which provides service dogs to combat-wounded veterans.

To honor canine veterans on Independence Day, outfit your own dog with a handsome collar and matching leash designed to pay tribute to America's Armed Forces. Aspen Pet's new "America's Legacy" collection offers four camouflage styles, each with a "Dawg Tag" and the official insignia of the Army, Navy, Air Force or Marine Corps. They go on sale Tuesday, with a portion of the proceeds donated to the nonprofit US War Dogs Association (aspenpet.com).

Patria Pet's equally patriotic dog collar sports an American flag pattern (\$9.95, patriapet.com).

Another way to wave the flag this July 4th is by adopting an American pit bull terrier from your local animal shelter. During the First World War, the pit was an official K-9 mascot, representing our country on propaganda posters. Fans of the pit bull include Al Gunderson - once an Air Force sentry-dog handler in Vietnam, now a retired police officer and sergeant at arms of the US War Dogs Association, who named his rescued pit Spunky - and "The Love Guru" star Mike Myers, who recently adopted a pit from New York's Animal Haven shelter.

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