



A day to recognize the four-legged heroes of 9-11

Moxie - a search and rescue dog of 9/11 photographed by Charlotte Dumas in her new book Retrieved which honors first responders and their dogs.
Credits: Charlotte Dumas

Jersey City, New Jersey - Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) called for a national moment of remembrance earlier this afternoon as hundreds of canine handlers, veterinarians, technicians and dogs from across the country gathered at Liberty State Park for a Working Dog Recognition Ceremony.

During that ceremony Lautenberg paused for one minute of silent prayer as the country resounded with church bells, police car sirens, and firehouse whistles - all paying tribute to the victims who lost their lives after the attack.

Finding One Another Organization and Tails of Hope Foundation, co-sponsors of the event stated more than 300 dogs worked on rescue missions at Ground Zero. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) dispatched at least 100 search and rescue dogs from states across the nation to rush to the World Trade Center and the Pentagon hoping to find survivors.

The Suffolk Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was one of the first organizations to respond to the New York Police Department's call for help. Their mobile animal hospital cared for 300 working dogs at Ground Zero and treated over 1000 cases over an eight-week period. Dogs were treated for falls, infected eyes, infected ears, and severe dehydration. Veterinarians from all over the country attended to cleansing cuts and lacerations for the canine units deployed.

Several handlers of therapy dogs attended today's event across the Hudson River from Ground Zero - many who recalled their dogs giving solace to the human rescuers who were so overcome with every visible chunk of debris covered with gray silt while they desperately tried to find survivors buried beneath the piles of melted metals and debris.

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The dogs searched through burning building materials, balanced on steel beams, and used their sense of smell - 1000 times more acute than humans - with their enormous hearts anxiously searching for survivors. Dr. John Charos, veterinarian for the Suffolk Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals dressed the feet of the rescue dogs with green booties to avoid and minimize foot and pad injuries.

Paul Fishman, the US Attorney for the District of New Jersey called today " a celebration of the American spirit."

Joey, a 14-year-old Australian shepherd attended today's ceremony with his handler Trish Cartino who had been deployed by FEMA. According to Abigail Gary of Finding One Another, most of the rescue dogs of 9/11 have died.

Dutch photographer Charlotte Dumas, 34 visited and photographed the remaining 15 FEMA deployed living dogs in her 48 page paperback called "Retrieved". The author visited nine states from Texas to Maryland to tell the dogs' stories in pictures and words. Three of the dogs died while she worked on her book.


Her poignant photographs of Kaiser, Tuff, Hoke, Red, Merlyn, Guinness, Bretagne, Tara, Moxie, Abigail, and Scout reaffirm the unwavering connection of man and dog and serves as a tribute to the first responders and their canine assistants.

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"They speak to us as a different species, and animals are greatly important for our sense of empathy and to put things into perspective," stated Dumas.

"Retrieved" can be purchased from Amazon.com

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 Cheryl Hanna, Pet Rescue Examiner
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