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Veteran's recent suicide affects war dog advocate



USAF SSGT David Simpson and his K-9 partner MWD Robson, Patrol and Explosive Detection Dog

Photo provided by Barbara Snow By Jeff M. Hardison © June 5, 2017 at 4:07 p.m.

POLK COUNTY
– The June 1 suicide of former United States Air Force Staff Sergeant David Simpson of Mulberry affected Barbara Snow of Bronson.

Snow is the executive director U.S. War Dogs Association Chapter 2 Southern Region. She knew Simpson and his K-9 partner Robson from their work together to help veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Shock.

There is help for veterans who feel

inclined to commit suicide. The Veterans Crisis Line connects veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring United States Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call 1-800-273-8255.

The Chat connection website for veterans in crisis is

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/ChatTermsOfService.aspx>

For non-veterans and veterans alike, there is also the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Phone Number 1-800-273-8255.

The service for Simpson is scheduled for Monday, June 12, at 2 p.m. in First United Methodist Church of Lakeland, 72 Lake Morton Drive, in Lakeland.

Snow sent an email noting that United States Veterans Affairs generally estimates between 20

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and 22 American veterans commit suicide every day.

She notes that each person "... should and must remind our legislators of the USA's obligation to continually support our veterans who are fragile no matter what the cost. You can do this by phone, email, letter or visit."

Snow notes the toll from war affects many soldiers.

"The horrors of war bring exposure to inhumaneness, cruelty, death and dying in numbers and ways many of us will never experience," she noted. "We are the ones who owe them the most because we owe them our freedoms. They continue to serve valiantly while they need to in service; but when they come home the evil of PTSD selectively chooses some of them to creep into their dreams and they alone cannot remove it."

She felt the impact from the death of Simpson.

Snow noted that she felt that "our nation lost an American Hero; and I lost a warrior for U.S. WAR DOGS ASSN who supported our cause and other veteran's needs. This veteran served our country with his bomb dog in Iraq and Europe and continued to serve when he came home."

She went on to note her feelings about the loss.

"His family lost a husband, father and son," she wrote. "His dog Robson lost his DogDad, Partner, Companion and Best Friend. All are grieving including Robson who continues to look for him. His friends lost their friend. Veterans' causes lost a volunteer and advocate and the whole world lost a young and beautiful soul whose presence only enriched and gifted it."

In honor of the late SSGT David Simpson, she noted points about his service and of the service of his K-9 partner Robson.

"SSGT David Simpson and MWD Robson Patrol and Explosive Detection Dog served faithfully in the U.S. Air Force from July 27, 2007 to Feb. 11, 2014.

"They were assigned to Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany and have traveled extensively supporting U.S. and military interests and operations. MWD Robson provided thousands of hours of exceptional explosive detection and random anti-terrorism measures in the warfighting mission.

"MWD Robson was deployed to Iraq for approximately seven months in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn. During that time, he located a weapon cache and improvised explosive device materials which protected the lives of coalition forces. He searched several Iraqi polling locations with the Army ensuring Iraqi citizens had a safe place to vote. During his service to the Air Force while assigned to Spangdahlem Air Base, MWD Robson protected billions of dollars in Department of Defense assets and over fifty thousand military and civilian personnel. MWD Robson provided explosive detection for multiple distinguished visitor visits including the United States President in Rome, Italy and Lisbon, Portugal, and the United States Vice President in Beirut, Lebanon and Munich, Germany."

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