

War Dogs Find Advocate in Vietnam Veteran

A veteran who was saved by a dog during combat wants canine soldiers honored with a national monument.

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John Burnam just wants to give credit where credit's due.

The Vietnam War veteran says a dog saved his life during battle. Now Burnam honors war dogs like the one who alerted him to incoming machine gun fire by traveling the country to advocate for a national war dog monument.

Looks like Burnam may get his wish. Legislation included in the House's 2008 defense authorization bill would establish a national memorial at Fort Belvoir, Va.

"We aren't equating them to humans, but we are saying ... there are families that have grandkids as a result of these dogs being deployed," says Burnam, author of "Dog Tags of Courage: Combat Infantrymen and War Dog Heroes in Vietnam," in an interview with the Los Angeles Times.

The Vietnam Dog Handler Association estimates that dogs serving as sentries and booby-trap detectors saved 10,000 soldiers' lives during the Vietnam War.

If passed, the bill, which is waiting to be heard in the Senate, could be signed into law as early as November.