

VERY SPECIAL SNACKS

Veteran-founded Bil-Jac partners with America's VetDogs to generate funding for service dogs

By DONNA BOYLE SCHWARTZ



Joe Worley, public speaker and veteran's relations liaison, America's VetDogs, and his service dog, Galaxie

Pet parents can be real pushovers, always looking for reasons to reward their dogs with tasty treats. Now, those special snacks can help veterans and first responders live more independent lives through an innovative partnership between premium pet food manufacturer Bil-Jac and America's VetDogs, a national not-for-profit organization that helps train and provide highly skilled guide and service dogs.

Ohio-based Bil-Jac was founded in 1947 by brothers Bill and Jack Kelly, who started the company when they returned from serving in the Army in World War II. The founders, now deceased, were committed to providing an all-natural, superior dog food that would fill a gap in the pet food market by using the highest quality and freshest ingredients available. And because of the business being founded and owned by veterans, the partnership with America's VetDogs was a natural fit, according to Jim Kelly, executive vice president of Bil-Jac and son of founder Bill Kelly.

"Bil-Jac has proudly partnered with America's VetDogs since 2010," Kelly says. "When we were asked if we were interested in partnering with America's

VetDogs... by making a special treat to support their mission, we immediately knew this would be a good fit for us. Because of our founders' history, working with an organization that serves the military community as well as dogs allows us to support what we value.

"We're honored for the opportunity to help those who have served," Kelly adds. "These men and women proudly make tremendous personal sacrifices for the good of our country, and we're grateful to give something back."

America's VetDogs is dedicated to helping veterans and first responders live with dignity and independence. The organization trains and places service dogs with those with physical disabilities, provides guide dogs for individuals who are blind or have low vision, supplies service dogs to help mitigate the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder, trains hearing dogs for those who have lost their hearing, and brings facility dogs to military and VA hospitals as part of the rehabilitation process.

Bil-Jac developed a dedicated, branded line of treats specially for America's VetDogs and has donated more than half a million dollars from sales of the products in just the past five years; popularity and sales continue to increase every year, according to Kelly, who runs the company along with his brothers, president and CEO Bill Kelly, and co-owner Ray Kelly. The treats are made from real chicken and specially formulated to help keep a dog's skin and coat soft and shiny.

"Dog parents have trusted us with the health of their four-footed family members for over 70 years," Jim Kelly explains. "We give back in our communities in a lot of ways, but we were looking for one cause we could really get behind. Partnering with America's VetDogs was the opportunity that felt like a natural extension of Bil-Jac. We have been thrilled to hear dog parents tell us how much they love the treats. Their dogs are excited to eat them, and they like that the treats provide support for veterans with disabilities. Both dogs and dog parents get something they both love with America's VetDogs Treats."

America's VetDogs provides specialized

Purchases help provide assistance dogs to disabled veterans

AMERICA'S VETDOGS EST. 2003

Soft & Moist Dog Treats

Skin & Coat Formula Made with Real Chicken!

Actual Size

NET WT. 10 OZ (283g)

Bil-Jac

The branded line has donated more than a half million dollars to America's VetDogs.

assistance dogs to all disabled veterans, active-duty service members, and first responders at no charge to the individual, providing them with support for daily activities, enhanced mobility, and renewed independence. "With a service dog from America's VetDogs by their side, a hero is never alone," notes Kelly. "VetDogs teams each student with the dog that's right for them—and the power of their bond makes ordinary moments extraordinary. Crossing the street independently becomes a moment of liberation. Traveling alone becomes a welcome adventure. Embracing new experiences becomes an everyday occurrence. With help from a service dog trained specifically for their unique challenges, every day becomes more possible."

Kelly says Bil-Jac continues to expand the distribution of the America's VetDogs treats. "It is our hope that we continue this partnership for many years to come, because that means we will be helping veterans do more of what they love to do, with the help of their amazing service dogs," he says. "We know that would make Bill and Jack Kelly very proud."