Blind Not Alone is the name of Timothy Hornik's website; it's also his philosophy. He began the blog in 2013, two years after he medically retired from the U.S. Army, having attained the rank of captain. "It started as a personal educational site, but since then it has evolved into a neat little community," he says.

Hornik's mission is to help dispel myths about blindness, share stories of others who have overcome barriers to achieve their own goals, and provide resources for people who are adjusting to life with a disability.

It was an adjustment he did not make easily after losing his vision during combat operations in Iraq.

Enlisting with a goal

Hornik grew up in Alsip, Illinois, and attended Viterbo University in La Crosse, Wisconsin, on an Army ROTC scholarship.

His decision was partly driven by the Army recruitment initiatives during the 1980s and '90s, which often emphasized the educational opportunities available to those who enlisted. "It was a career choice," he says.

As a freshman in 1998, Hornik expected that when he graduated in 2002, he would serve in the Army Reserve. (Members of the Army Reserve pursue civilian careers or continue their education while maintaining their readiness to serve when called.)

All was progressing according to his plan … until the morning of September 11, 2001. "I was going up to class and that's what was on the news," he recalls. "Suddenly, things got a little bit more real."

(continued on page 6)
In June, America’s VetDogs placed service dog Sully with President George H.W. Bush. We are honored by the trust President Bush and his fellow veterans place in us to help them live on their own terms.

The international board of directors of Assistance Dogs International met on our campus in Smithtown for their biannual board meeting to discuss issues related to the assistance dog industry. This is the third time we have hosted the meeting, which are held at different assistance dog schools around the world.

America’s VetDogs and its sister organization, the Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind, are accredited by both ADI and the International Guide Dog Federation, the first two assistance dog schools in the United States to receive dual accreditation.

Accreditation means that we consistently follow the highest standards for the humane and ethical treatment of dogs, maintain educational benchmarks for trainers and apprentices, and have procedures in place for consumers during the application and acceptance process, including a way for them to address any grievances.

Our involvement with ADI and the International Guide Dog Federation reflects our growing presence in the international assistance dog movement.

Increasingly, donors are becoming more sophisticated and selective in their giving as more detailed and useful information about charities has become available. America’s VetDogs is proud of its standing with charity watchdogs such as the Better Business Bureau’s Wise Giving Alliance and the Patriots Initiative.

Recently, we earned the GuideStar Gold Seal of Transparency. GuideStar is the world’s largest source of information on nonprofit organizations. In addition to financial data, it requests information about goals, strategies, capabilities, and programs.

This detailed information allows community members and potential donors the opportunity to explore organizations in depth – and then make their own decisions about which charity to support.

Now that we’ve achieved Gold status, we’re working to upgrade America’s VetDogs to Platinum, GuideStar’s highest level.

You trust us to spend your donor dollars wisely, and we want to repay that trust by being as transparent as possible.

Thank you for your support of America’s VetDogs and veterans with disabilities.

John Miller
President & Chief Executive Officer

The boards of directors for America’s VetDogs and the Guide Dog Foundation determine the overall governing policies and strategic directions of the organizations, while the staff carries out the day-to-day operations.

We are proud to welcome four new members to our boards, and we look forward to their contributions to the success of our missions.

Walter (Jay) Buckley is a managing director and senior corporate banker who was responsible for developing and managing core client relationships for the various financial institutions he worked for during the span of his career. “I’m excited to offer my services to these two organizations,” he says. “They each give so much back to the community and to those with disabilities.”

Kristen Chambers is the managing director and global head of media relations at J.P. Morgan Asset Management, with a team of public relations professionals in the United States, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa that is responsible for generating investment coverage across asset classes, supplying daily views from market strategists and investors worldwide, and providing J.P. Morgan’s view on industry-related issues and topics. “I look forward to helping the Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs with the work and investment required to maximize the reach and impact of their programs.”

(continued on page 4)
In June, America’s VetDogs placed yellow Labrador Retriever Sully with George H.W. Bush, 41st president of the United States and a World War II Navy veteran.

America’s VetDogs was recommended to the Bush family through our relationship with Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, and we worked closely with the former president’s team to determine the service dog skills that would be most beneficial to him.

Sully was sponsored by Friends of America’s VetDogs, a service group on Long Island that hosts fundraisers for VetDogs. He was named after US Airways pilot Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger, who successfully landed Flight 1549 in the Hudson River in 2009 after the plane’s engines were disabled shortly after takeoff.

Friends of America’s VetDogs has sponsored 14 puppies since 2015 and raised more than $79,000 on behalf of disabled veterans and first responders.

Valerie Cramer, our new service dog program manager, and Brad Hibbard, chief program officer, did the home training with the president and his staff at the Bush compound in Kennebunkport, Maine. “It was an amazing setting to train in,” says Cramer. “He’s a lovely man.”

Sully has been trained to retrieve items; pick up his leash if it is dropped; open doors; rest, which involves placing his head on the president’s knee (this is a calming action and a way to foster a bond between them); shake, which is how service dog handlers can allow others to interact with the dog in a controlled manner; and get assistance if required. In addition, Cramer and Hibbard discussed appropriate toys for the dog, provided a brief overview of veterinary care and grooming, and explained how to advance the dog’s basic tasks when there are changes in environment and task conditions.

By all reports, the team is doing wonderfully together. Currently, the president and Sully are working to strengthen their bond by practicing daily obedience, short sessions with tasks, and spending time together, which includes playtime.

As with any graduate of our program, we keep in touch to ensure the team is doing well. “It’s an ongoing relationship,” Cramer says.

The Guide Dog Foundation, sister organization to America’s VetDogs, has been connected to President Bush for almost 20 years.

In 1990, Bush established the “Daily Point of Light Award” to recognize those who served their communities; more than 1000 individuals received this recognition during his administration. The Points of Light Foundation was established to continue to encourage the spirit of service. The Guide Dog Foundation was named a “point of light” in December 2000.

America’s VetDogs is proud to train and provide assistance dogs for our nation’s veterans, no matter when or where they served. This placement exemplifies the pride, quality, and reputation of both the Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs.

Sully has his own Instagram account, where you can follow his adventures with President Bush (@sullyhwbush). You can also visit Sully.VetDogs.org. ★
Michael Fischer, O.D., F.A.A.O., is the chief of the optometry service at the Northport VA Medical Center in Northport, NY. He was also a member of the Medical Advisory Committee to the New York State Commission for the Blind and currently serves on the program committee of the Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs. “It’s an honor for me to join the board. Having provided care for both the visually impaired population and the veteran population during my career, I appreciate the positive impact that both guide dogs and service dogs can make in people’s lives,” he says.

Kevin Lynch is the president and chief executive officer of National Industries for the Blind (NIB) in Alexandria, VA, the nation’s largest employment resource for people who are blind. Since joining NIB in 1994, Lynch has served in a number of leadership roles, working with NIB’s network of associated nonprofit agencies to expand opportunities for meaningful employment and economic independence for people who are blind. “The Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs provide such an important service in helping people who are blind or have disabilities live more independent lives,” says Lynch. “It’s a privilege to join the boards of directors and contribute to the organizations’ future success.”

Combined Federal Campaign & Workplace Giving

Workplace giving programs are a cost-effective way for America’s VetDogs and the Guide Dog Foundation to raise funds to support their missions.

Workplace Giving

You specify the amount you want to donate and your payroll department takes care of the rest. The money comes out of your paycheck before taxes, so you still receive the tax benefits of charitable giving (your payroll department will give you a tax receipt for your records).

Depending on your company, you may also have the chance to influence how your company accomplishes its philanthropic efforts.

Many firms also offer matching gifts or other workplace giving programs. If your employer provides matching funds, we receive an added donation thanks to your participation.

Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)

The CFC is the world’s largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign. This year, it runs from September 1, 2018, to January 15, 2019. All federal civilian, postal, and military employees can use the CFC to make direct contributions to America’s VetDogs or the Guide Dog Foundation.

When you sign up for the CFC, your donation is automatically deducted from your paycheck via payroll deductions. Your contributions are tax deductible and tracked during the year, so you will have accurate records at tax time.

Be sure to check our websites and Facebook pages for reminders on how you can participate in the CFC if you work for the federal government.

State and local campaigns

America’s VetDogs and the Guide Dog Foundation also participate in similar campaigns for state and local government employees, including United Way campaigns.

If you are uncertain how to name us as your preference for your donation, or if you’d like to establish a workplace giving campaign in your office, please call us at 631-930-9050 (or 866-282-8045).

America’s VetDogs and the Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind rely on your generosity to help us change the lives of people with disabilities.

New Board Members

(continued from page 2)
Team MTSI was a major sponsor this year.

**Anchors Aweigh**
America’s VetDogs was invited to join Fleet Week at the Intrepid Air, Sea & Space Museum in Manhattan during the weekend of Memorial Day 2018. Fleet Week honors members of the Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard. We were one of the most popular tents, thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of our puppy raisers, volunteers, and graduates … and, of course, our puppies.

**8th Annual**
**Annapolis/Kent Island Run & Dog Walk**
Kent Island, Maryland – Sunday, April 22, 2018

More than 360 people registered for our annual run and dog walk in Maryland, which grossed over $58,000. Retired Army Staff Sergeant Becca Ubert and her service dog were our guests of honor. Deana Stone and Camden, the WBAL-TV puppy with a purpose, also made an appearance.

For 2019, we’re expanding the event, which will mark our ninth year in Maryland. The America’s VetDogs Run & Dog Walk, hosted by The Avenue at White Marsh, is planned for Sunday, April 28, 2019, in Baltimore, Maryland.

The event kick-off is Friday, October 19, when The Avenue at White Marsh hosts a “Yappy Hour.” You can learn more about the kick-off at bit.ly/MDRun2019. Keep checking Race4Vets.VetDogs.org for information about the 2019 run, and start training now!

**“Bark in the Park” at Camden Yards**
America’s VetDogs and NBC station partner WBAL-TV in Baltimore joined the Baltimore Orioles for the team’s first official “Bark in the Park” program at Camden Yards. As a part of this promotion, Camden, the WBAL-TV puppy with a purpose, along with Brady, the NBC 10 Boston puppy with a purpose, watched batting practice for both teams and met players and coaches. Later, VetDogs President & CEO John Miller threw out the honorary first pitch.
Hornik graduated in 2002 with his bachelor’s degree and was immediately commissioned as a second lieutenant in the regular Army, not the Army Reserve. His mindset had changed too. “When I took my oath,” he says, “my intention was to stay in beyond my required period of service.”

He attended basic officer training at Fort Bliss in Texas, before being transferred to Fort Benning in Georgia. Then, Hornik and his wife, who was also a soldier, were assigned to Korea, where he served with the 2nd Infantry Division as an air defense officer.

“Korea was a good tour,” he says. “I got in a lot of training.”

Iraq

In September 2004, Hornik was deployed with the 1st Cavalry Division to Baghdad, Iraq. Two months into his tour, as his unit was preparing to end the day’s patrol, the Iraqi National Guard requested security support as it prepared to infiltrate a mosque.

Hornik maneuvered his Bradley (an infantry fighting vehicle) to take the place of another that had been damaged in an IED explosion earlier that day. However, instead of sitting in the turret, he was exposed, using binoculars to try and find a sniper who had wounded a fellow soldier when the unit arrived on the scene.

The sniper found him first. Hornik was shot in the temple, which severed the optic nerve in his left eye. The bullet then exited through his right eye. He recalls that he did not lose consciousness but remembers the instant he lost his vision.

Acceptance

Although he had been trained in the use of a white mobility cane, Hornik refused to use it, especially while he was still in the Army. He recalls thinking: “Hell no, I’m never going to use a cane on active duty.” In fact, he says he once offered it to one of his commanding officers.

In 2010, however, “I picked up the cane with the intent of using it,” but, as he puts it, “Canes are so slow.” Eventually, he came to accept that there were some things he could no longer do and realized it was OK to ask for help. It was then he started to explore how a guide dog could have a positive impact on his life.

Hornik is active in the Blinded Veterans Association (BVA), and gained a further understanding of guide dogs after speaking with fellow blind veterans.

At a BVA convention he was able to “test-drive” a dog. He laughs: “I realized what a [guide] dog was like,
Each year, more than 400 puppies join the programs of America’s VetDogs and the Guide Dog Foundation. Their ultimate goal? To become guide or service dogs for individuals across the country who have visual, hearing, emotional, or other physical disabilities. These special dogs provide enhanced mobility, a renewed sense of pride and self-reliance, and make ordinary moments extraordinary.

However, no great puppy ever became a great assistance dog without having an equally great name. And that’s where you come in. From now until September 4, 2018, donors have the opportunity to give a puppy its special name for life. You can honor a loved one or fallen comrade. You can name the puppy after a beloved pet, your business, organization, or school at a special discount: one puppy for a gift of $6,000; two for a gift of $11,000; or three for $15,000.

We’re on a mission to make sure all our puppies start their journey with their right paw forward by leaving our nursery with a moniker fit for the life-changing work they’ll do.

Name your puppy today and change a veteran’s life tomorrow!

If you have any questions or would like further information about this special promotion, visit PupPromo.VetDogs.org or contact Donna DeSivo at 631-930-9037; Donna@VetDogs.org.

**Heritage Society – Planned Giving**

The Heritage Society of America’s VetDogs was created to recognize and thank donors who have chosen to remember VetDogs in their wills and bequests. With thoughtful gift and estate planning, donors can maximize their charitable giving while reducing income taxes, capital gains, and/or estate taxes.

When donors become members of the Heritage Society, they have the satisfaction in knowing that their gift will benefit many generations of guide and/or service dog users. Their names will be recognized in our Heritage Society membership list, and they will receive all our publications.

To learn more about planned giving, visit PlannedGiving.GuideDog.org or call Katherine Fritz, director of development, at 631-930-9057.

**Sponsorship Opportunities**

In addition to naming a puppy, America’s VetDogs offers many other types of sponsorships and naming opportunities. Sponsors are always welcome for VetDogs fundraising events, such as our annual golf outing or one of our popular run & dog walks. Other campus naming opportunities involve permanent recognition and signage in various locations on our Smithtown, New York, headquarters.

- $1,000–1,500 Walk of Honor Commemorative Brick
- $2,500 Hospitality Sponsor
- $6,000 Puppy or Dog Sponsor
- $8,500 Class Sponsor
- $10,000 Kennel Run Sponsor
- $15,000 Graduate Sponsor
- $25,000 Fleet Sponsor
- $35,000 Training Sponsor
- $50,000 Team Sponsor

Visit Sponsor.VetDogs.org to learn more about our different sponsorship opportunities. If you have any further questions, please contact Jaime McGrade at 631-930-9054; Jaime@VetDogs.org.

**Text to Give**

America’s VetDogs has a text-to-give program, in which donors can make gifts to support the Foundation via their mobile phones.

**How to Make a Text Gift**

1. Text @VetDogs to 52014. A reply text will ask for the amount.

2. Click the link to set up your text giving account. We’ll remember your number for future gifts.

3. Manage your giving easily with text commands. (Text “support” for a full list.)
Tim Hornik (continued from page 6)

and it was, ‘Yes, please.’” Several friends and colleagues recommended the Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs to him.

Hornik was partnered with his guide dog in June 2015, coming to class with “no expectations about training.” But, he adds, “It was great.”

One of the things Hornik has noticed since he and his dog became partners is how much more he walks, and how much farther. “I explore more than just a short radius now,” he says. “I’m doing what it takes to be successful. And I’m still learning.”

Blind, not alone

Hornik has begun to take on leadership roles in the BVA after years of serving on national committees. He is also a frequent guest lecturer, speaker, and presenter on a wide variety of topics, from military history to disability issues to assistive technology.

In addition to his graduate studies, he has begun consulting for Aira, a company that uses wearable technology and human agents to provide remote assistance to individuals who are visually impaired. Ultimately, he would like to see the Department of Veterans Affairs integrate this technology as part of the VA’s blind rehabilitation services.

In his free time, Hornik enjoys recreational sports. He ran in the Boston Marathon in April, and in June, he and his tandem bicycle partner took part once again in the Dirty Kanza, a 200-mile “gravel cycling” trek through the Flint Hills of Kansas. It’s challenging, he says, because of the rough road conditions, but “I’ve gotten to see some beautiful parts of the country.”

Thanks to the support of his family and colleagues, and with the guide dog by his side, Tim Hornik has learned that he may be blind, but he is not alone. ★