



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Megan Leavey and Rex

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Corporal Megan Leavey grew up in Valley Cottage. After the tragic events of 9/11, she left college and joined the Marines. She attended boot camp at Parris Island, SC and underwent a further year of training, including Marine Combat, Military Police, and K9 training. CPL Leavey was stationed in Camp Pendleton, CA as part of the Military Police K9 section and was partnered with a Military Working Dog named Rex.

Rex E168 served from May 14, 2002 to April 6, 2012. During this time, he was stationed out of Camp Pendleton, CA. In total, Rex performed over 11,575 hours of military work. During his time at Camp Pendleton, he searched over 6,220 vehicles in random antiterrorism searches and 7,800 barracks rooms during 260 official command authorized health and comfort inspections.

Together, CPL Leavey and Rex served two tours in Iraq – Fallujah in 2005 and Ramadi in 2006. While there and throughout his service, Rex served honorably as a patrol and explosive-hunting dog. He was often in harm's way, getting caught in firefights and mortar attacks. Toward the end of their second tour together, CPL Leavey and Rex were both injured when insurgents who were watching them from rooftops as they patrolled the area detonated an IED as they walked by. CPL Leavey returned stateside with Rex to complete physical therapy. She received a Purple Heart and other combat medals for her service.

While undergoing physical therapy, CPL Leavey helped train fellow dog handlers for future deployment. She was discharged in December 2007, but was unable to take Rex home with her. Rex was prohibited from further combat tours, but was assigned several times to assist the Secret Service, protecting the President of the United States, Vice President of the United States, and member of the U.N. General Assembly. Rex's enthusiasm, initiative and loyal devotion were valued greatly.

As Rex's service came to a close, he was deemed "not adoptable." After much effort, CPL Leavey was able to get Rex back, and he spent the last 8 months of his life with his beloved handler.

CPL Leavey continued to handle K9s after her discharge, working closely with a dog named Patriot in New York City, who has since been retired and lives with her and her two cats. This hero currently works as a veterinary technician and brand ambassador for Royal Canin. The story of CPL Leavey and Rex was told in the 2017 film *Megan Leavey*, starring Kate Mara. CPL Leavey's service and love of animals is a source of inspiration for us all.

