

Veteran uses business to stay motivated, encourages other veterans to reach out if they're struggling



By: [Cierra Shipley](#)

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WACO, TX — Alan White is a Purple Heart recipient. Serving through the Vietnam War, he began his service to America at 17-years-old.

Enlisting in the Air Force first, he wanted more discipline. After 14 months, he moved to work in the U.S. Marine Corps, where he would train and handle five different dogs as a Patrol Dog and Bomb/Explosives Dog Handler. He worked at the American

Embassy in several foreign countries and ended in service with HMX-1, the Presidential Helicopter Squadron.

When you ask him why he enlisted, his response is always the same.

"It was just the thing to do," White said.

After retiring from service in 1981, he had odd jobs. He then moved to Waco and worked at the VA, where he then retired in 2016. Although, he didn't want to just quit working.

"I thought well, I don't want to be a couch potato. I want to do something. So why not do something I've already been trained to do and that's work with dogs," White said.

He decided he would train dogs and created [WhiteHaven Canine Evaluators](#).

"They're dedicated to you, and I just love them," White said. "I like to see people that have dogs have a happy home life."

White says most of the time, he's training the dog owners and in return that helps the family pup.

He loves being outside, active and keeping busy, so when the pandemic hit, White says shutting his business down for seven weeks was hard.

"Veterans who are used to being out, being very active in what they're doing and then being told to stay at home, where a mask, do this, that's tough," he said.

Instead of sitting around doing nothing, White adapted to private lessons and has had 4 COVID-19 tests throughout the year, all coming back negative.

Jenna Miller has had five sessions with White. She says homeschooling three kids is enough chaos in the house and she needed White's help with their new puppy, Buck.

"I always tell him I don't need any more disobedient things around the house, so he's really helping out with that," Miller said.

Not only does Buck look up to White, but Miller's kids enjoy learning from him as well.

"It's been a blessing for our family because I think our kids really respect him, and they get to see a true, real life hero," Miller said.

White has his own service dog named Szva. She not only keeps him company but checks on his glucose levels and alerts him when things become serious.

"I'd probably be on the edge. Thank goodness for her. She keeps me company," White said.

He stresses the importance of veterans reaching out and finding ways to cope when things get tough. For White, that battle started three years ago when his anxiety started to increase and his mental health fell.

"Seek out other veterans who have been through what they been through, because veterans understand other veterans," White said.

Especially in a pandemic, things can seem even a bit more lonely, so it's important to have a friend or even a companion like Szva.