



# 'I Care About Helping Fellow Veterans'

## **Veteran Lon Smith's emotional support dog, LJ, distracts him during episodes of anxiety or depression and when he experiences flashbacks**

Oct 01, 2024

Veteran Lon Smith is #StillServing as a Life member of VFW Post 8466 in Wake Forest, North Carolina, with his emotional support dog, Lon Smith Jr. (LJ), an Imperial Shih Tzu.

Smith developed post-traumatic stress after serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom. LJ distracts Smith during episodes of anxiety or depression and when he experiences flashbacks.

Together, Smith and LJ represent the VFW and spread goodwill at events like ComiCon and Christmas and New Year's celebrations.

"I give LJ all the credit for helping me connect with the community in these special ways," Smith said.

Smith also helps organize his Post's Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy youth scholarship programs and leads fundraisers aimed at preventing veteran suicide.

"I choose to keep serving with LJ by my side because I care about helping fellow veterans in need and spreading compassion throughout the community," Smith said.

*For more information on the VFW #StillServing campaign or to tell us your story, visit [vfw.org/StillServing](https://vfw.org/StillServing).*

### **NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

406 W. 34th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64111

Office 816.756.3390  
Fax 816.968.1157

### **WASHINGTON OFFICE**

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002

Office 202.543.2239  
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org  
www.vfw.org