

Assembly Resolution No. 1619

BY: M. of A. Manktelow

RECOGNIZING May 21-27, 2026, as Military Animal Appreciation Week, and to honor these animals for their service

WHEREAS, A generally overlooked part of our armed forces are the military animals which stand with and alongside our brave, enlisted men and women; and

WHEREAS, Some of these courageous military animals include dogs, dolphins, rats, mules, donkeys, and pigeons; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to recognize May 21-27, 2026, as Military Animal Appreciation Week, and to honor these animals for their service; and

WHEREAS, Military canines are the most widely used military animal; dogs have served in combat alongside United States soldiers during every major conflict since the birth of our Nation; dogs were mostly used as message carriers and sentries during the first few conflicts, however, these days, they are trained to perform a wide-range of highly-specialized tasks; and

WHEREAS, Modern military dogs are trained to sniff out bombs and drugs, track people, and even attack when necessary; there are about 2,500 war dogs in service today, with about 700 serving at any given time overseas; and

WHEREAS, The United States military branches use marine mammals in a variety of ways; overseen by the Navy Marine Mammal Program, dolphins use their evolved sonar to detect underwater mines; and

WHEREAS, Due to their exceptional underwater vision, the Navy Marine Mammal Program also uses sea lions to find potential enemy swimmers near piers and ships and draw attention to them; and

WHEREAS, The United States has their own specialized military animal programs; in 2012, Army officials developed the Rugged Automated Training System (RATS) to see how well the rodents could find bombs; the use of rats could have several advantages, including their small size which would allow them to sneak into tiny spaces where larger animals and people cannot; and

WHEREAS, United States service members have used a variety of pack animals in remote areas, including mules and donkeys; the practice is especially common with elite Special Operations troops, who frequently operate in small groups away from larger units which would provide logistical support; and

WHEREAS, In 2001, the United States Marine Corps revived the horsemanship skills which were once a key part of the nation's armed

forces, but were cast aside when tanks and armored vehicles replaced them; Special Forces soldiers rode horses to fight alongside tribesmen in rugged terrain without roads in Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, During World War I and World War II, the Army trained tens of thousands of birds at the Pigeon Breeding and Training Center at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, to deliver messages and conduct overhead reconnaissance of battlefields; and

WHEREAS, It is appropriate for this Legislative Body to commend these animals and to recognize their contributions by Military Animal Appreciation Week, honoring the past and present animals for their valuable service and protection; they truly deserve to be remembered by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to recognize May 21-27, 2026, as Military Animal Appreciation Week, and to honor these animals for their service.