



Above: Richard Crook is Emergency Rescue manager with Best Friends Animal Sanctuary; the biggest animal shelter in the US. Richard set out on a special quest this spring and we were happy to assist when the request for logistic support reached the PAWS Team. Above: Richard with PAWS' Barbara and Margaret. Above R: Mama & Boris, in the care of a private security team who kept the dogs safe, while waiting for Richard to fly in. We know shelters in the US have their own serious problems with unwanted pets, but Mama and Boris were different. They belonged to a young soldier who died on Christmas Day and, after the request for help in retrieving this young soldier's canine pals reached Best Friends it became Richard's challenge to get into Iraq and bring the dogs back to the Peter's grieving family. Take some time to celebrate a successful rescue and spare a thought for the other young soldiers, befriended by friendly companion animals with no way of bringing them to safety. Below; Photos L-R: Richard at our shelter with PAWS' Linette & our resident rescues; with Sabre at our shelter; Meeting Senator Levin's staff on arrival in Washington DC, who provided the first toys and treats the dogs had ever had; At Baghdad airport about to board the flight to freedom en route to Missouri and a walk in the woods on the long road trip to a new home with Peter's family.





Richard flew thousand of miles because Sgt. Peter Neesley's story touched him and the Best Friends team so deeply. Below, Peter with Boris shortly before he died. Richard brings Mama and Boris back to Peter's grieving family. After he died, "Still grieving, the family decided that they would honour Peter's wishes and try to bring the dogs home to Michigan. 'To have something that they can hold and touch and care for that Peter cared about, that's the whole thing," said Julie Dean, his aunt. In an email to PAWS. Peter's sister Carey also thanked the PAWS team for our small part in getting two special dogs home. In memory of Peter Neesley, a special man. Photos below, Peter caring for Mama and Boris in Iraq. He was just 28 years old and on his third tour of duty when he lost his life in Baghdad on December 25th 2007.



Above: Peter with Mama and Boris in Iraq. His last wish was to get the dogs home to his family. Thanks to superb team work, Peter's last wish was fulfilled. Below Rich with Carey & the dogs.



Dear Barbara,

We want to extend our deepest gratitude to you and your organization for helping to bring Mama and Boris home to us. Thank you for being so gracious to Rich Crook and Best Friends Society. Both PAWS and Best Friends do so many wonderful things. We are so deeply moved by the kindness and compassion everyone has shown to Mama and Boris and us. I know you had asked us for a statement to put under a picture on a plaque for Peter. That is such a generous offer and we are honored, as would Peter be. We have been struggling with the statement. But we think maybe something simple like "When I come home, I'm bringing the dogs with me." This was the statement Peter made a few days before he died. We felt maybe that sums it all up. We are honored by your efforts and passion. When you do get the plaque up, we would love to have a picture of it. We are making a scrapbook of everything and it would mean a lot to us. Again thank you from the very bottom of our hearts.

Carey Neesley for Peter's Family