

OLD LINE SPIRITS HONORS VETERANS WITH CAMPAIGN FOR K9S FOR WARRIORS



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Veteran-owned Old Line Spirits has supported a number of military-related philanthropic causes since its founding. This fall, the Maryland-based company has launched its latest campaign to fundraise for K9s For Warriors, the country's biggest provider of trained service dogs for veterans with PTSD. Old Line Spirits is donating \$5 from select bottles sold at participating retailers to the nonprofit through the end of 2023.

The campaign has been highlighted through product displays that hit stores in early October in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and three other states. Eligible products include the distillery's Flagship American Single Malt Whiskey and its Navy Strength American Single Malt Whiskey. Proceeds will be donated for sales through Dec. 31.

It's no surprise that K9 For Warriors is a cause near and dear to the hearts of **Old Line Spirits co-founders Mark McLaughlin and Arch Watkins**. The two met on active duty in the U.S. Navy, flying EA-6B Prowlers. They were stationed in the same reserve squadron in Maryland. The two would go on to have

differing civilian careers, though. McLaughlin got into finance, while Watkins became an engineer. The distilling world was always their real passion. "The military, though, never leaves your DNA," said McLaughlin during a recent interview with the Beverage Journal. "We got more out of the military than we ever gave, and now we are giving

back."

So, why K9 For Warriors specifically? McLaughlin was quick to answer: "They are providing an incredibly valuable service. Veteran suicide is very high. We lose between 20 and 23 veterans a day to suicide in the U.S., I believe. What they are doing is a wonderful way to combat that. With the consumer, you only have a very brief amount of time to try and communicate a message when there are so many other things competing for that consumer's attention in the store. Something like K9s for Warriors, the name alone immediately communicates 90 percent of what they are doing."

But supporting such causes does come with its share of challenges. Chief among them is the charged political climate we're all navigating as citizens. "We as a company try to be politically agnostic," McLaughlin stated. "We have our own personal views, like everybody does. But we try to keep Old Line out of the fray for anything that comes across as preachy or tries to put out views on somebody else. It's a balance that is hard to do. K9 for Warriors is not going to resonate for everybody, and that's OK. We are not trying to





shame anybody into buying a bottle. It's just us saying, 'Hey, here is an offering, and this is where some of the money is going to go to. If that resonates with you too, great!' Almost everybody loves dogs, and lots of people want to do something to help veterans."

Earlier this year, Old Line Spirits supported the Ohana 2023 Project, a team participating in the World's Toughest Row Pacific Challenge to raise funds for K9s For Warriors. Through their sponsorship and sales of a limited release Ohana bottling, Old Line Spirits raised almost \$15,000 for the project. Old Line Spirits has supported other veteran-related organizations in the past, including the Tailhook Educational Foundation and the Warrior Music Foundation.

So, how did Old Line Spirits start? In 2015,



McLaughlin and Watkins connected with the owners of Golden Distillery, a couple of

Vietnam vets looking to pass the torch. Their advice and equipment were the start of Old Line Spirits, which officially began operations in 2017. Today, the partners produce American Single Malt whiskeys and aged Caribbean rums. Old Line Spirits' products are presently available in D.C., Maryland, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Colorado.

McLaughlin concluded, "I was fortunate to be in a career in the Navy for 10 years that I loved, working with people who I loved and respected. The distillery has given me the kind of satisfaction in civilian life that I was looking for. Arch and I are making something that is ours that we are proud of. I wake up each and every morning and this is a job that I want to go do. Even though it's not flying a plane and serving my country, it really scratches a lot of the same itches in a weird way!" ■

