

UCLA Operation Mend therapy dog helps veterans open up



Veterans returning from war need all types of support. One program includes a very special therapist: a golden retriever named 'Logan,' who helps vets and their families heal.



By [Elex Michaelson](#)

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WESTWOOD LOS ANGELES (KABC) --

Veterans returning from war need all types of support. One program includes a very special therapist: a golden retriever named "Logan." Logan is helping vets and their families heal.

Logan Thomason is preparing to honor America's veterans in the best way he knows how: by showing them lots of love.

Instantly he brings a smile to the face of retired Army Specialist Paul Hoy and his family, especially Hoy's 8-year-old daughter.

Hoy was injured in an IED attack in Afghanistan. He's now part of UCLA Operation Mend, receiving medical care from doctors, and from dogs.

"They're fun, they're very calming, they soothe you," said Hoy.

Logan has his own name tag at the hospital. He's a registered therapy dog and he's helped hundreds of patients over four years.

Logan's owner says dogs can be instrumental in the healing process, especially when it comes to veterans.

"If I were to walk in by myself, they'd probably look at me and look back. He walks in and he races up to them,

puts his head in their lap and they immediately start to pet his head and they're relaxed," said Sgt. Rodger Thomason, UCLA People-Animal Connection. "I'll just sit there and say nothing for a few minutes there, and they look at me and, 'Oh, is this your dog?' So the conversation begins that way."

Thomason says vets that start out shy then open up.

"For me it's very rewarding to see somebody light up and just start talking about animals and everything else," said Thomason.

Hoy has advice for other vets.

"If you come back and you find it's difficult to cope, just reach out to people and don't let the problems overwhelm you," said Hoy.