



Press Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BraveHearts GOES GLOBAL WITH INAUGURAL TRAIL TO ZERO NORMANDY RIDE AHEAD OF D-DAY ANNIVERSARY

For the first time, BraveHearts will bring its 20-mile horseback ride to France in order to act against Veteran suicide

Normandy, France and Harvard, IL (April 2023) – Vive La France! BraveHearts—the largest equine-assisted services program for Veterans in the United States—today announced that Trail to Zero, Ride to End Veteran Suicide, is going international. The acclaimed organization will host two rides on Friday, June 2, in Deauville and Saturday, June 3, on Utah Beach, Normandy, right before the 79th anniversary of D-Day.

BraveHearts has hosted 20-mile rides in major cities across the U.S. over the last seven years in an effort to reduce the number of Veterans who died by suicide each day and shine a light on how horses can help heal Veterans. Now, BraveHearts is bringing Trail to Zero to France in partnership with the American foundation, Horses & Humans Research Foundation, as well as the international non-profit, Racing to Relate.

Together, these like-minded horsemanship partners will increase awareness of the powerful impact of equine-assisted services. The ride will also bring awareness to the suicide epidemic in the U.S., France, and the United Kingdom. Six U.S. Veterans from BraveHearts will be joined by Veterans from HorseBack UK to embark on this 20km ride.

According to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, approximately 20 Veterans and active service members take their own lives each day.

BraveHearts, a 501c3 non-profit and Professional Association for Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) Premier Accredited Center in the U.S., offers equine-assisted services to provide emotional, cognitive, social, and physical benefits to Veterans, all at no cost to Veterans. The Veterans at BraveHearts report significant benefits including increased self-esteem, self-worth, trust for others, and community integration, along with decreased depression, anxiety, post-traumatic disorder symptoms, and suicidal ideations.

“We know horses have the power to reach Veterans and help them wherever they are in their healing process. Horses are a keen species—they are brilliant at reading intention, meeting us in the moment, and helping us discover our greatness,” said Meggan Hill-McQueeney, President/COO of BraveHearts. “Horsemanship is often the key to learning critical life lessons and skills, such as mindfulness and finding trust again in another species and ourselves. When horses and Veterans come together, a special exchange begins in which real relationship and inner soul work occurs.”

On May 31, 2023, the Horses & Humans Research Foundation will host a powerful international symposium in conjunction with Trail to Zero at the Longines International Equestrian Centre in Deauville entitled “The Universal Language of The Horse.” Presented in an innovative format while bringing research from the lab to the arena, the engaging symposium will feature a number of live, interactive demonstrations with practitioners and horses, including Veterans working with retired racehorses.

Racing To Relate will assist with coordinating all of these events to connect the community, local military, and Veteran organizations, and facilitate support from key representatives in the world of equine-assisted services and the Thoroughbred industry. Trail to Zero horses will be carefully selected from the stables of French N°1 polo player, Pierre Henri Ngoumou, including horses from a variety of backgrounds from horse racing to show competition and leisure. “It is a privilege and an honor to help bring Veterans from the United Kingdom (HorseBack UK) and across France to join Trail to Zero Normandy. The international impact of this event will be considerable,” said Jennifer Barker, CEO of Racing To Relate.

These events are made possible due to the support of the local Normandy Horse Council, the towns of Deauville and Sainte-Marie-du-Mont (Utah Beach), the International Equestrian Complex Longines-Deauville, local affiliates, and most importantly generous donors.

BraveHearts’ mission is to offer its successful brand of equine-assisted services to every Veteran in need. For more information or to support, please visit braveheartsridding.org.

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Photo Credit: BraveHearts

BraveHearts' Trail to Zero in Time Square in NYC, NY during ride in October 2022.