American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

An honorable pledge from veterans in Tulsa

11/9/2017

Before the ceremony at Tech Ops – Tulsa started, Scott Chisum, an American Airlines material logistics specialist and Air Force veteran, stood holding the Spartan Sword. It has a dull metal blade and a wooden handle. It is a symbol that has the power to save the lives of veterans.

The Spartan Sword is made from 25 pounds of steel salvaged from the ruins of the World Trade Center following the Sept. 11 terror attacks. But it is the message that accompanies the sword that is a call for all veterans who are returning from the battlefield — to turn to a battle buddy if the thought of suicide ever arises.

Those gathered for the ceremony participated in the Spartan Pledge:

I will not take my own life by my own hand until I talk to my battle buddy first. My mission is to find a mission to help my warfighter family.

“Pledges are important to military members,” Scott explained after the ceremony. “We take one when we join the military, and again with this ceremony. It’s a very powerful thing that saves lives.”

Veterans commit suicide at a 50 percent higher rate than those who did not serve in the military, according to a study from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The sword and its pledge are measures to help prevent veteran suicide, with veterans being encouraged to stand for their fellow service members in times of despair.

The sword was created by Danny Prince, a retired New York City firefighter and U.S. Navy veteran, and Steve Danyluk, a retired Marine lieutenant colonel. Both wanted to do something meaningful with the mangled steel from the twin towers. Working with another veteran in McKinney, Texas, they produced the Spartan Sword in 2015. They coupled it with Iraq veteran Boon Cutler’s original Spartan Pledge.

American flew the sword to Tulsa from New York City for the special ceremony held at the maintenance base Nov. 3, and transported it to Disabled American Veterans (DAV) 5K the following day.

Through the Community Relations Regional Council at Tech Ops – Tulsa, American was the local $25,000 presenting sponsor of the 5K for the second year in a row. Team members walked, ran and rolled (on their motorcycles), raising nearly $10,000 and ranking 2nd place in overall fundraising. Gin McGlothlin, staff assistant, Tech Ops – Tulsa, was honored as the top individual fundraiser at the event, with $3,147 raised.

“The Tulsa team has always gone above and beyond for veterans, and these events are no different. I’m incredibly proud of what they do in support of our military,” said Erik Olund, managing director, Tech Ops – Tulsa.