

WE HONOR VETERANS CELEBRATES 6 YEARS

In September 2010, the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization in collaboration with the Department of Veteran Affairs launched *We Honor Veterans* to address the growing need for Veteran-centered care, especially as the need for access to hospice and palliative care by the aging Veterans population was growing.

Today, more than 4,200 hospice and community-based healthcare organizations across the United States are committed to understanding and addressing the unique needs of Veterans with advanced illness as WHV partners. WHV has successfully grown to include the involvement of over half of the hospice community nationwide and has extended its efforts to include non-hospice community health care providers.

It is our duty and honor to serve those who have served us at their most vulnerable time. NHPCO's *We Honor Veterans* is committed to fulfilling our mission to serve these men and women with the dignity they deserve. Below are some highlights from the past year:

We Honor Veterans delivers Award of Excellence

To celebrate *We Honor Veterans* 5th year anniversary, NHPCO awarded a special 'Award of Excellence' to recognize the extraordinary investment, commitment and achievement of a hospice organization that provided quality end-of-life care to Veterans and their families. The winning organization, Kindred Hospice, formally Gentiva Hospice of Evansville/Jasper, was recognized during a special celebratory event held at NHPCO's 16th Clinical Team Conference and Pediatric Intensive in Grapevine, Texas. <http://www.wehonorveterans.org/we-honor-veterans-program-awards-gentiva-hospice-evansville-extraordinary-practices>

Briefing on Capitol Hill Sharing the Work of We Honor Veterans

The Hospice Action Network hosted a Congressional briefing on the *We Honor Veterans* program on Thursday, October 22, 2015 in the Senate Visitors Center at the U.S. Capitol. The briefing shared the significant impact and success of *We Honor Veterans* with nearly 100 Congressional staff members.

The briefing featured Thomas Edes from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, David Benhoff, an Operation Iraqi/Enduring Freedom Veteran who serves Veterans through the *We Honor Veterans* initiative, and Jonathan Keyserling, senior vice president for health policy at NHPCO.

PARTNER STORIES

Capt. Epstein

Submitted by: Audrey Waters, MJHS Hospice and Palliative Care, New York, NY

Herbert Epstein is a retired Captain, WWII Veteran at Normandy and is one of the liberators of Buchenwald. He's also an MJHS Hospice and Palliative Care patient who was recently honored for his incredible service to this country.

A member of the 512th Division 1st Army, Capt. Epstein was in heavy maintenance and was stationed in France, Brussels and Germany. When he and his fellow soldiers reached Buchenwald, Epstein says dead bodies were stacked in such high piles, they looked like wood from a distance. This devastating sight is one that he'll never forget and one of the many reasons why he says that "old age is a blessing."

A blessing because he is fortunate to have a loving wife and family. Herbert married before the war, returned to a loving wife and built a family. The captain has children, grandchildren and is awaiting the birth of his first great-grandchild.

Epstein was drafted by the Army in 1943, a year after he graduated from Brooklyn

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In addition to the Congressional briefing, HAN continues to partner with several members of Congress to hold Honor Ceremonies and Ceremonies of Remembrance for the Veterans receiving hospice care. These powerful ceremonies allow hospice providers, policymakers and community leaders to thank Veterans for their service, and have provided much-deserved recognition and honor to Veterans in their final days.



NHPCO Staff Welcomed Honor Flight to Washington

NHPCO was honored to be a part of a very large crowd of service men and women, children's choirs, and spectators with welcome signs that were awaiting to cheer on 30 plus "Rosie the Riveters" as they stepped off the plane. When they saw the crowd awaiting them, many of the women, brought to DC on

their very own Honor Flight, exited their wheelchairs and embraced the cheering fans.

We Honor Veterans received an Honorable Mention in this year's VHA Community Partnership Challenge

The WHV program was recognized for its efforts in partnering with community hospices and received an Honorable Mention in this year's Veterans Health Administration Community Partnership Challenge. This contest highlights successful partnerships in local communities that serve Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

We Honor Veterans announces new Advocacy Toolkit Partner Resource

In collaboration with the Hospice Action Network, WHV developed an Advocacy Toolkit that will enable our partners to reach out to their Members of Congress, state and local officials to get them involved in veteran-centric activities. The toolkit was debuted at the Hospice Action Network's Advocacy Intensive in July to a session filled with *We Honor Veterans* Partners. By sharing their best practices, partners were able to hear how to successfully hold an event as well as exchange stories and give updates on different programs and projects across the country. Many partners discussed what the program has done for their organization and discussed projects and events that have been successful in their communities.

The toolkit can be found at www.wehonorveterans.org/advocacy-toolkit.

Law School and had started his career as a practicing attorney. Following his military service, he married Celeste (pictured in the red sweater) in 1964.

Together they had four children. As a civilian, Epstein took his family to Brussels, Paris and Normandy—they stopped at many cemeteries and paid their respects to fallen heroes of different nationalities and backgrounds. And, for many years, Capt. Epstein stayed in touch with men from his company - a connection that was very important to him.

Traveling to our Veterans Submitted by Lisa Marcolongo, The Elizabeth Hospice

Forty veterans residing at senior living facilities that served during WWII, Korea, Vietnam and peacetime were recognized for their military service by The Elizabeth Hospice staff, volunteers and members of VFW Post 4089 in Temecula. The guest speaker was Sgt. Maj. David Barragan, USMC Retired. The ceremony also included a reflective time to remember those who died in active military service in recognition of Memorial Day.

A WWII veteran recited two poems he wrote about WWII and read the names of seven friends who died in combat with him including their hometown, when and where they died. He says he thinks of them every day. He helped us remember the true meaning of Memorial Day.



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