



WE HONOR VETERANS

Aspirus Comfort Care and Hospice Services Wausau, NM: Level Four Partner

Aspirus Comfort Care and Hospice Services notice Veterans in a different way. They acknowledge there is more to a Veteran's story and help pave the way for that story if they are willing to or needing to share.

Aspirus Comfort Care and Hospice Services organized attendance for a Veteran's two sons, his wife, grandchildren and friends to be present at his home for a pinning ceremony recognizing and honoring his service in the military. He looked very handsome and seemed rather spry of spirit compared to days past. After the small ceremony, the Veteran shared his stories about Vietnam, of his survival and his humble gift of life to persist and thrive. While the stories had been told to the family before, this event brought alive a spirit in a man who had lived a rich life. This moment offered a time for gathering and laughter. It allowed the Veteran to share stories of times that were hard but healed, as well as stories of times that were joyous and treasured.

Another man who retired with full benefits from the Marine Corps had an album put together for all to see pictures of his service. A military collection of commendation papers, transfers and promotions, helped guide memory and life recollection for this man and his family.

When a family came into the hospice house they were welcomed with a certificate of Veteran appreciation. That certificate gave conversation, and validation to a family of how much his life did matter, and was noticed. There is a change in a person's eyes when they reminisce about war. There is a shift in their countenance of their speech. These stories of war and peace are sacred and not always freely shared. "The difference in our care is now we know to notice."

There is also Jack and Val. Jack never missed a Veterans Day. He always wore his dress blues and proudly attended Veterans Day recognition. Jack came to be in hospice care and at the hospice house in October. A small group assembled to provide a Veteran's day service ceremony at the hospice house. When it came time for the ceremony Jack came out fully dressed in his service uniform in a wheel chair being pushed by his beloved wife Val. It was extremely moving and inspiring. Many were in awe of this man and his humble, dignified presence. What an honor to be with a Veteran on Veterans Day. Jack attended many Veterans Day celebrations, and Aspirus Comfort Care and Hospice Services was honored to provide the ceremony for his last celebration. "He touched us all deeper than words can express...note of thanks to Jack for quiet teaching and service with dignity and selflessness."

Often Veterans are so honored to be remembered that they are willing to keep certificates of recognition in a place of prominence at their funeral ritual. Veterans "come to life" and raise their chest high to be pinned with the American flag in tribute and thanks for their service.

It matters to be remembered. It matters to acknowledge the sacrifices, and it is never too late to welcome someone who stood for America's freedom, home.

Submitted by: Amy Kitsemel