



WE HONOR VETERANS

**Mesilla Valley Hospice, Inc.**  
**Las Cruces, NM: Level Four partner**

Mesilla Valley Hospice became a Level Four partner in November of 2014. We continually find ways to honor our Veterans. We have recently become aware of the Silver Star Families of America ([www.ssfoa.org](http://www.ssfoa.org)). This non-profit organization is dedicated to honoring and supporting wounded, ill, and injured Veterans of all branches of the armed forces of the United States of America. The Silver Star Service Banner is reserved for those who have been wounded, contracted a serious illness or injury in a war zone. The Silver Star Service Flag may be flown by anyone as a symbol of honor and remembrance. May 1st is designated as National Silver



Star Service Banner Day. At Mesilla Valley Hospice we had a special flag raising ceremony to raise our SSS Flag. The woman holding the Silver Star Service Banner is Nelida Lewis. The banner she is holding



belongs to her husband Anthony Lewis III who was wounded during the Shock and Awe assault in Iraq. Anthony was unable to be with us as his health has suddenly taken a turn for the worse and he is hospitalized. There were Veterans from our community in attendance as well as Mesilla Valley staff. We also purchased a U.S. flag to be flown over the Capitol in DC in honor of the SSFOA on May 1st. That flag will be returned to us and we will raise it on another special day.

The gentleman in uniform is Auston O'Neill. He is a national bugler with the SPIRIT OF 45 organization and happened to be in town. He and his wife Bonnie have a motor home wrapped in the SPIRIT of 45 message and travel around the country to honor WWII Veterans. On August 14<sup>th</sup>, which is the 70th

anniversary of the end of WWII, he will kick off a worldwide celebration by playing Taps in the Philippines. Other buglers will follow around the world with the last one playing Taps in Hawaii hours later. His father was a WWII Veteran. He closed out our ceremony by playing Taps.

You will notice that the Mesilla Valley Hospice staff members are all wearing red. We have joined a national movement called R.E.D.

Fridays. R.E.D. stands for Remember Everyone Deployed. By wearing red we show our support for our active military until their safe return. We make red and yellow ribbons that our staff wears and we make them available for our patients and visitors. Today's active military are tomorrow's Veterans.

