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WE HONOR VETERANS

AN NHPCO NEWSLETTER FOR
WE HONOR VETERANS

WORLD WAR II VETERAN CELEBRATES MILESTONE YEAR

Submitted by Doug Frazier, Volunteer Coordinator, Heartland Hospice

1918 was a memorable year. Woodrow Wilson was president, World War I came to an end and the influenza pandemic hit the world hard, affecting one-third of the planet's population and claiming up to 50 million lives. It was a year chalked with dates for the history books.

One date however, February 20, 1918, was extra special for the Thompson family of McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania. A baby boy by the name of John Thompson arrived and for the next century he would grow to witness historic changes in a place he proudly calls home – the United States of America.

As an African-American man, he has seen first-hand, a nation transition from the days of segregation to a day when a man of color would be president. Thompson has weathered many storms but continues with an upbeat attitude as he reflects on his soon-to-be 100 years on earth.

Thompson considers his time in the service to be a pivotal period in his life. Drafted in 1941, Thompson served in the 28th Quartermaster for four and a half years. Thompson traveled all over Europe and North Africa while in the U.S. Army and worked with Army suppliers.

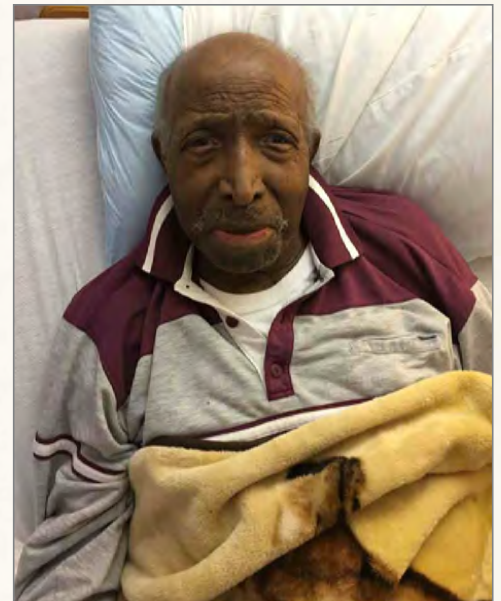
"I didn't enlist, I was drafted," Thompson said. "I served a year in the states; got my training down in south Florida and then they shipped us out to England. I spent six months in England and from England went to North Africa where I spent 13 months."

Thompson is proud of his time in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia as well as Italy, Southern France, and Germany.

"My service was all abroad," he said. "I made E-5 in a short time."

Sgt. Thompson was proud to serve and said while in the service he was treated well by his comrades. He strongly believes he is a better person as a result of his military time.

"The Army teaches you something," Thompson said. "You need to be taught to get along with people, and the military can do that."



Sgt. John Thompson

The Army Veteran strongly believes time in the military would benefit today's youth along with the re-instatement of the draft which introduced Thompson to the Army.

"The draft helps everyone be accountable," he said. "You have fools who are going to commit crimes because they don't work." Thompson believes the military is a deterrent to trouble and helps get America's youth on the right track.

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Sgt. John Thompson

WORLD WAR II VETERAN CELEBRATES MILESTONE YEAR

(Continued from page 1)

Johnson, diagnosed with prostate cancer, is now under the care of Heartland Hospice in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

As far as a piece of advice he would like to share, it would be to the men of the world. The word he would like to get out to men young and old is simple: "Check yourself out. Get checked out by a doctor once a year. It is important."

Recently, Heartland Hospice – Pittsburgh has earned We Honor Veterans Level Four status. The organization prides itself on providing exceptional care for our nation's Veterans.

Stories like Sgt. Thompson's need to be told and archived. They are an important part of our history. Heartland Hospice considers it a privilege to have this time with Sgt. Thompson and again thank him for his selfless service.

2017 WE HONOR VETERANS NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY SUMMARY

In December, 2017, We Honor Veterans staff conducted the annual partner educational and programmatic needs assessment. The survey was distributed to 2,985 WHV partners and a total of 308 assessments were completed.

The survey was designed to help the WHV team determine what resources and educational opportunities WHV partner programs view as helpful or what they are lacking, their knowledge of caring for Veterans at the end of life, their working relationship with the VA, and their experience with the WHV team, resources and website.

THE FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SURVEY:

- 95% of respondents rated their overall knowledge of caring for Veterans at the end of life "proficient" or above.
- The primary reason partners have not completed Level Four is "not enough staff to devote time."
- Educational resources WHV partners are most aware of: information on partner level requirements, resources for honoring Veterans, and information on Hospice-Veteran Partnerships (HVPs).
- Educational resources WHV partners are least aware of: HPNA Veterans training, EPEC for Veterans, and ELNEC for Veterans.
- The top areas of educational need: Veteran volunteer program/No Veteran Dies Alone, Veteran benefits from the VA, psychosocial needs of Veterans, building community partnerships such as HVPs.
- 54% of respondents either "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" that they had an excellent experience working with their local VA.
- 52% of respondents either "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" that they had an excellent relationship with the staff of their local VA facility.

Many partners offered comments on specific areas of need including an increase in local support and resources to build and strengthen community partnerships. There is also a desire to learn more about PTSD and caring for caregivers. Partners expressed that the WHV program should focus on strengthening the resources and educational offerings available.

"We want to thank all the partner programs who participated in the educational and programmatic needs assessment. The survey results and comments will help guide us in planning for future educational opportunities, resources, and initiatives."

- Katherine Kemp, NHPCO Inclusion Manager

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT!

Did you miss the free webinar on Vietnam Veterans - *Warriors: Their Relationship to Death and Dying* – presented on February 21st by Dr. Ed Tick of [Soldier's Heart](#)? If you were not able to attend the webinar live, the audio, slides and handouts are available on the WHV website under [Education Offerings](#).

NEW PARTNER TOOL AVAILABLE

There is now a handy comparison chart available on the [Practical Resources](#) page that breaks down the Medicare Hospice Benefit, VA-Paid Hospice and Concurrent Care. [CLICK HERE to access](#).

WEBINARS AVAILABLE ON-DEMAND!

Did you miss the recent VA webinar *ELNEC – for Veterans: Cultural and Spiritual Considerations in Palliative Care*? Great news – this along with other webinars are now available for free on the [WHV Webinars Page](#). Other topics include:

- LGBT Veterans and End of Life Considerations
- Moral Injury: Invisible Wounds of Combat
- Evidence-based interventions for treating dyspnea in advanced disease
- Caring for Vietnam Veterans with Serious Illness
- Delirium in Palliative and Hospice Care

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Will you be attending NHPCO's [Management and Leadership Conference & Advocacy Intensive](#) or are you still on the fence about registering? We are happy to announce that Deborah Grassman and [Opus Peace](#) will be presenting a session on Tuesday, April 24th titled *Soul Injury: Liberating Unmourned Loss and Unforgiven*. There will also be a special We Honor Veterans breakfast event during the conference, a wonderful opportunity to meet and greet with other partners and the Opus Peace team as well. You won't want to miss it!

DOWNLOAD your copy of the *We Honor Veterans 2017 Annual Report* now!

NHPCO INVITES YOU TO OUR 2018

MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE & ADVOCACY INTENSIVE

WASHINGTON DC

PRECONFERENCE: APRIL 21-22 | MAIN CONFERENCE: APRIL 23-24 | ADVOCACY INTENSIVE: APRIL 25

WE HONOR VETERANS PARTNERS IN ACTION!

OUR SHINING STAR – VETERAN VOLUNTEER – GIL CALAC

Submitted by Yakima Memorial Hospice DBA Virginia Mason Memorial Hospice

Gil has volunteered on a weekly basis for our hospice patients since 2012. In addition to his work with our Veterans, he helps us provide better patient care for our Native American residents. Much of Yakima County in Washington State is on the Yakama Indian Reservation. Gil is from the Paiute tribe and helps us recognize and better understand the differences between and within our Native American tribes and the Veterans we serve.

Gil accomplishes this by providing annual staff in-services on working with Veterans and with Native Americans for our hospice, palliative care and home health teams. He also serves on our We Honor Veterans committee, which meets monthly. Gil is our “go-to” person when we need information or assistance in providing the best possible services for our home care and hospital patients.



Gil Calac (center)

Gil works tirelessly for all Veterans, helping them navigate the VA system and tracking down DD214's and procuring American flags for funeral services. In Washington State, Gil was instrumental in gaining recognition for his fellow Vietnam soldiers. He accomplished this by assisting in the passage of Washington State House Bill 1319, in 2013 establishing March 30th as the official Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. All state and local public entities are required to fly the National League of Families' POW/MIA flag at their main building. Gil stated, "... this will help put away our guilt, shame, the grief and despair, and heal from the animosity Veterans faced when they returned home." Special recognition pins were designed for our Vietnam Veterans. We distribute these pins to all of our Vietnam home care and hospital patients and/or their families.

He is our Shining Star!

DATES TO REMEMBER

Our next Quarterly Partner Networking Call will be on March 21, 2-3:30pm (EST). [CLICK HERE](#) to register!

Did you know that you can listen to past call recordings and get notes to see what was discussed? [CLICK HERE](#) to see what you missed!

March 21st from
2:00 - 3:30 EST

EARN YOUR STARS

Already a We Honor Veterans partner program? We know that your organization is committed to providing Veteran-centric care to the Veteran patients you serve each and every day. If your program is ready to move up through the levels to increase your ability to serve your Veteran patients, [contact us](#) today. You can learn about the different [We Honor Veteran partner levels here](#).

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Are you part of a non-hospice organization that would like to join the mission to provide support for Veterans in your community? [Contact us to learn how you can become a Community Partner](#).

SPONSORSHIPS

Interested in learning how you can support the We Honor Veterans program beyond becoming a partner? Individuals or organizations interested in sponsorship opportunities can contact Sarah Meltzer at smeltzer@nationalhospicefoundation.org or 703-837-3149.

FIND US ON TWITTER!



@WeHonorVeterans



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