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WE HONOR VETERANS

AN NHPCO NEWSLETTER FOR
WE HONOR VETERANS

WE HONOR VETERANS PARTNERS WITH STORYCORPS

In 2016, the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's We Honor Veterans program partnered with StoryCorps to launch a pilot program to record and preserve the stories of America's Veterans and their families. The pilot was created to give partner programs the ability to capture their Veteran patients' stories easily through the StoryCorps app. Recorded stories are archived at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

"StoryCorps is an amazing oral history project that has collected interviews from participants of all backgrounds into the largest single collection of human voices ever gathered," said Katherine Kemp, NHPCO Access Manager. "The app makes interviewing, recording and sharing easier than ever and we thought this would be a perfect opportunity for our partners to gather stories from Veterans, their families, caregivers and anyone who has a story to tell."

In the following article Hospice of the Chesapeake, a level four partner, shares their first experience recording with the StoryCorps app.

To learn more about the We Honor Veterans and StoryCorps collaboration and how your program can participate, please contact Katherine Kemp at kkemp@nhpco.org. Download the StoryCorps app at <https://storycorps.me/>.

SWIMMING IN MUSSOLINI'S POOL – SHARING VETERANS' STORIES WITH STORYCORPS



Charles H. Dixon shows photos from his years spent overseas serving in the Army during World War II to ABC2News digital content producer Andrea Boston. Photo by Elyzabeth Marcussen.

**Written by Elyzabeth Marcussen,
Communications Specialist, Hospice of
the Chesapeake**

Charles Dixon, 96, sat patiently as ABC2News digital content producer Andrea Boston attached a microphone to his shirt and set her camera on a tripod pointed in his direction. Dixon was in his Linthicum [Maryland] home of 60 years, his daughter, Celia, and son, Charlie, looking on with pride. This was a good place to be. A half hour delay was a blip in time compared to the time he spent serving in the Army's 1st Armored Division's 91st Field Artillery Battalion for much of World War II.

Boston flicked on the camera and asked him to tell his story. Dixon began in 1941 when his one-year draft assignment became three and a half years of dodging artillery, battling Rommel's Army in Tunisia,

bearing out a winter in Anzio, Italy, in an encampment dug into the ground, moving up a highway through a series of towns in Western Italy following the invasion of Normandy.

He ticked off bombings and battle moments as if checking off a shopping list. His voice warmed as he reminisced of traveling the Italian countryside, seeing such sights as Rome (he met the Pope, but couldn't remember which one was in at that time), swimming in Mussolini's pool (he also saw him and his girlfriend hanging from their heels at a service station in Milan) and setting up an impromptu bar in a Novara kindergarten stocked with beer and cognac he bought in town and sold to the troops who had come to rest on their journey.

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The storytelling got hard for him when he began to recount the day in 1945 when he arrived at a rest stop in a train station at Lake Como on the border of Italy and Switzerland where, "A man came up and said, 'Dixon.' And I said, 'Yeah.' And he said, 'You're going home.' "

Struggling to hold back tears, he said, "I had been over there for three and a half years."

Still struggling, he swallowed and said, "You'll have to excuse me, but I lost my mother over there, she died while I was over there. To this day I still don't know if she's gone."

The room was quiet, affording him the dignity to share his story. Moments like these are becoming rarer as our World War II veterans reach the end of their long and storied lives. That is why Hospice of the Chesapeake tagged along with Boston so that they could record his tale to share with StoryCorps.

As a partner, Hospice of the Chesapeake is working to record stories like Dixon's to share via StoryCorps on the We Honor Veterans community page (<https://storycorps.me/communities/we-honor-veterans>).

Veterans like Dixon, who gave the world more than three years of his life overseas to defeat Hitler and Mussolini, deserve so much. Using your smart phone, audio or video device to spend 45 minutes listening to amazing tales of human spirit and history is an amazing way to thank them for their service and make sure theirs is a legacy that will be heard long after they – or we – are gone.



VETERANS BOND OVER COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

Written by Katherine Kemp, Access Manager, NHPCO

December 7, 2016 marked the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. As a day to honor and remember, many organizations and We Honor Veterans partners held events to pay tribute to all Veterans, particularly those who served in WWII. I was lucky enough to attend a special event held in Welcome, North Carolina by We Honor Veterans Level 3 partner Hospice & Palliative CareCenter.



Many partners hold coffee events in their community as a way to bring Veterans together to share stories, giving them an extremely rare outlet. As a special commemoration event, Hospice and Palliative CareCenter organized an event of epic proportions. It was held at the Richard Childress Racing Museum and over 700 people were in attendance, including about 500 Veterans. What made the biggest impression was not the turnout, community collaboration or volunteers running around ensuring everyone had a seat and was taken care of – it was the comradery and the friendships that have come out of something as simple as getting together for a cup of coffee.

I met a gentleman who was held as a POW for over a year during WWII. It came as no surprise that he became humbled when I thanked him for his service, saying he was surprised that so many people were interested in his story while adjusting the Purple Heart hanging around his neck. He shared that while he still has flashbacks

and may never be able to find forgiveness, this past year has been his hardest by far. He lost his wife of 74 years and said that living without her is the toughest thing he's ever had to endure, adding that he didn't know if he would make it past Christmas. As tears started falling a few of his buddies within earshot immediately joined our conversation, offering support that could only come from a fellow Veteran. They insisted that the "lonely boys" be with each other at Christmas, one (half-jokingly) adding that he had to be alive for the next Veterans Coffee in January as they would be riding together.

These community events and activities only happen because of the loving service and dedication of our We Honor Veterans partners. Ann Gauthreaux of Hospice & Palliative CareCenter and Rowan Hospice & Palliative Care is one of the forces behind this partner program and nicely summed up the importance of their program activities:

"To say our Veteran Coffees are well attended and heartwarming would be an understatement. They have become a part of life for our region's Veterans. A place to share stories, find common ground, and enjoy comradery. The expression; 'If you build it – they will come' has never seemed more appropriate. We make sure they know about our programs and services, yet it's so much more. The coffees are a melting pot for all Veterans and things related to Veterans!"

NO VETERAN DIES ALONE: VOLUNTEER TRAINING RESOURCE MANUAL AVAILABLE

The No Veteran Dies Alone program is designed to honor Veterans and meet the needs of those who, for whatever reason, find themselves alone at the end of life. This comprehensive manual assists educators in engaging the community, especially Veteran volunteers, in improving care and providing presence, companionship, and reassurance to dying Veterans.

In the resource manual you will find information on the following important topics:

- Volunteer recruitment and retention
- Volunteer training including helpful information on PTSD, types of grief, mindfulness and self-care
- Psychosocial and Spiritual Dynamics of Death and Dying
- Competency benchmarks and evaluation methods



Click [here](#) to download the manual!

VA RESOURCES AVAILABLE

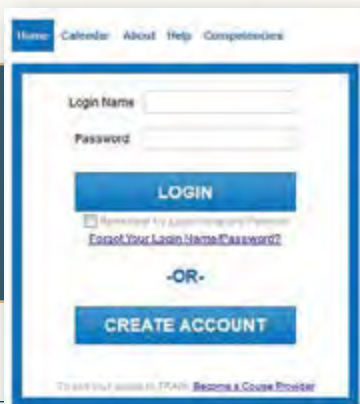
Did you know that there is a system of FREE public health trainings available? Supported by the Veterans Health Administration Employee Education System, VHA TRAIN is an internal education and training program office in the Department of Veterans Affairs. These learning programs support the development needs of health care providers with a focus on Veteran patient care.

One course of particular interest to We Honor Veterans partners is Education in Palliative and End-of-life Care, or EPEC. The mission of EPEC for Veterans is to create a standard for palliative and end-of-life care by educating physicians and other members of the interdisciplinary health care team. While the staff of We Honor Veterans partners possess knowledge of palliative and/or end-of-life care basics, there is a need for consistent training for all health care professionals caring for Veterans toward end of life.

This web-based course has been developed to address the process for identifying and communicating a Veteran's values and preferences regarding their future health care. These discussions allow the Veteran to prepare for decisions and to clarify and document, via advance directives, their values and goals of care that can be used at a time when they are no longer capable of making their own health care decisions. The process utilizes a five-step approach which includes: appropriate introduction of the topic, structured discussions of potential scenarios, documentation of preferences, periodic review and updating of the plans and directives, and conditions under which the advance directive would be implemented. The process can foster personal resolution for the Veteran, preparedness for the surrogate, and effective teamwork for the professionals.

This one (1) hour course is designed for physicians and clinical staff, psychologists, social workers, nurses, and other medical personnel interested in palliative and end-of-life care.

Go to vha.train.org to create an account and register for this and other free courses and online events.



HAVING TROUBLE CREATING AN ACCOUNT?

We've created a step-by-step guide with screenshots to help you!

[http://www.wehonorveterans.org/sites/default/files/public/VHA TRAIN How-to.pdf](http://www.wehonorveterans.org/sites/default/files/public/VHA%20TRAIN%20How-to.pdf)

DATES TO REMEMBER

The next partner networking call is Wednesday, March 15th from 2:00 – 3:30 EST. To register [click here](#) or email us at veterans@nhpco.org.

Mark your calendars for these upcoming partner networking calls:

March 15th from
2:00 – 3:30 EST

June 14th from
2:00 – 3:30 EST

September 13th from
2:00 – 3:30 EST

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!

Don't forget these upcoming dates:

March 29th & 30th –
Welcome Home Vietnam
Veterans Day

May 29th –
Memorial Day

Access WHV social media
graphics [here](#)

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.



WE HONOR VETERANS
Sponsor

MEMORIAL DAY SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS

Looking for Memorial Day social media graphics to honor and remember those who served? We've done the work for you! You can access professionally designed Facebook and Twitter graphics by visiting the [We Honor Veterans partner resources page](#). We Honor Veterans partners are encouraged to use the graphics for outreach. Don't forget to use hashtag #wehonorveterans when posting on social media.

Example of Memorial Day
Facebook and Twitter graphic.



FIND US ON TWITTER!  @WeHonorVeterans