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Veterans Day event recognizes fading corps of World War II Veterans

(BOWIE, MD, Nov. 18, 2016) — Sixteen million men and women served in the U. S. military during World War II. Today, approximately 620,000 are still alive; 11,000 of whom live in Maryland. The window of opportunity to honor and serve them narrows every day. This is why Hospice of the Chesapeake chose to pay a special tribute to World War II Veterans during its annual Veterans Day Celebration held Friday, Nov. 11, in Boswell Hall at the Knights of Columbus in Bowie.

Around 375 people attended the event, including Veterans, active military personnel, elected officials and Hospice of the Chesapeake sponsors, staff and volunteers. Also serving in honor of Veterans was a contingency of Midshipmen from the U. S. Naval Academy, led by their Superintendent, Vice Adm. Walter E. “Ted” Carter Jr., who was the keynote speaker for the event.

Admiral Carter spoke about the debt the nation owes to the World War II Veterans, calling the name of each in attendance and asking if they could stand or wave so they could be applauded.

The World War II tributes continued as Sol Goldstein of Pikesville, a World War II Army Veteran who was assigned to the Big Red One, 1st Infantry Division, shared his firsthand accounts of the D-Day Invasion, the Battle of the Bulge and the liberation of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp. The horrors he saw in that camp changed his life, and he vowed that if ever there were a Jew in need, he would be there to help. He made good on that oath, spending the decades following the war traveling to Somalia, Lebanon, and the Soviet Union to rescue Jews and help them find a new home in Israel.

Also speaking was Steven Fenves of Rockville, a Holocaust survivor, who was liberated from Buchenwald at the age of 13. He was on death’s door when he was taken to a field hospital to be fed intravenously. He later immigrated to the United States where he served in the Army.

The event culminated with a moment of gratitude as Hospice of the Chesapeake recognized Fort George G. Meade Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Rodwell L. Forbes for his dedication to the nonprofit. Forbes, who will be retiring in 2017, has led several Honor Salutes at Hospice of the Chesapeake events and played a key role in the formation of the nonprofit's partnership with the Fort Meade community. He surprised and moved many in attendance when he shared that a Vietnam Veteran he met at the nonprofit's Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day event prompted him to seek counseling for post-traumatic stress disorder. He said was diagnosed with PTSD and bi-polar disorder and wanted to encourage active-duty and veteran military personnel to seek help. Veterans in need will not be forgotten, he said, "not on my watch."

Other highlights include Sir Andrew Motion, United Kingdom Poet Laureate from 1999 to 2009, who read his poem, "Veteran," which is a tribute to World War II Veteran father; the fifth-grade class of Hilltop Elementary School, who performed "God Bless America" and read letters of thanks to Veterans; and performances by Hospice of the Chesapeake volunteer Donna Stewart-Moore and Quintin Lyton, a Navy veteran and the director of Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling Gospel Choir.

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All photos were taken Nov. 11, 2106 at Boswell Hall – Knights of Columbus in Bowie, Maryland.



World War II Army Veteran Sol Goldstein, right, shakes hands with Army First Sgt. David Steger's son, Parker. Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Taylor DiMartino.



From left, State Sen. Edward R. Reilly talks with Veteran Bill Lovelace and World War II veterans Lucy Libby and Leo Williams before the ceremony begins. Photo by Elyzabeth Marcussen, Hospice of the Chesapeake.



The event's keynote speaker, U. S. Naval Academy Superintendent Vice Adm. Walter E. "Ted" Carter, Jr., left, poses for a picture with Midshipmen First Class Matthew Robbins. During his time at the USNA, Robbins has played an important role in the development of the Honor Salute program at Hospice of the Chesapeake, and was the master of ceremonies at last year's Veterans Day event . Photo by Elyzabeth Marcussen, Hospice of the Chesapeake.



Fort George G. Meade Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Rodwell L. Forbes, center, leads active duty and veteran military personnel in Honor Salutes to World War II Veterans, all Veterans and to those who have passed away. The salute is a signature feature of Hospice of the Chesapeake's Veteran events. Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Taylor DiMartino.



Dr. Steven Fennes of Rockville, a Holocaust survivor from Yugoslavia, shares how he was near death when he was liberated from Buchenwald at the age of 13. He later immigrated to the United States where he served in the U.S. Army, and then used the GI Bill to study engineering, eventually earning his doctorate. Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Taylor DiMartino.

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