

'It's Honestly a Pleasure'

A VFW Post in Virginia has spent years honoring older veterans confined to local hospice care in the area by spotlighting their service and listening to their stories

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For more than a decade, VFW Post 7059 members in Farmville, Virginia, have devoted themselves to honoring all veterans spending their twilight years within the confines of local hospice care.

Unwilling to let their predecessors sit in obscurity, Post 7059 members in 2013 began visiting The Woodland, a local hospice housing several veterans, where they have since hosted a ceremony spotlighting each member's service on Veterans Day.

"A speech is given to thank the veterans for all they have done, and to let them know they are not forgotten," said Dean Lord, past commander of Post 7059 and an avid volunteer. "Each veteran is personally given a salute, a U.S. flag and a poppy. Our Post members then stay and listen to these veterans tell us their stories."

Despite strict regulations brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Post 7059 members have not only continued to visit The Woodland every Veterans Day, but they have found other ways to honor their aging predecessors.

In 2021, Lord, then Post commander, joined his fellow Post members in teaming with a hospice program ran and operated by the Centra Southside Medical Center in Farmville. Through the program We Honor Vets, VFW members such as Lord serve as volunteers in bringing comfort to aging veterans through compassionate listening and a respectful acknowledgment of their service.

"When a veteran under hospice care is identified, a team is sent out to meet with the veteran and present them with a pin and a certificate of appreciation," Lord said of the We Honor Vets program. "We also listen to their stories. Some of the ones I've heard have been about

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World War II battles in France, battles in the Pacific and battles fought during the Korean War. It's honestly a pleasure listening to the recounting of conflicts from these heroes."

Lord added that Post 7059 members have continued to gather in hopes of planning ways to be more active in the recognition and pinning process held by the We Honor Vets program.

Along with the Post's eldest member, Joe Baldwin, 96, a WWII, Korea and Vietnam veteran, many members also have engaged the younger generation of veterans in the area about joining the cause.

"Most of our Post consists of Vietnam-era veterans, and we are encouraging younger veterans to participate and continue our traditions," Lord said. "We must always look to the future, but never forget the past. These recipients at hospices are a great resource into past events and we, today, can learn a lot from them."

This article is featured in the 2023 September issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Ismael Rodriguez, Jr.](#), senior writer for VFW magazine.