



Welcome Home Brother

Written by: Mark Faust

The United States of America Vietnam War 50th Commemoration was authorized by Congress, established under the Secretary of Defense, and launched by President Obama in 2012. The Erie County Veteran Service Commission established the Erie County Vietnam War 50th Commemoration Committee in the spring of 2018 and Stein Hospice is a sponsor and partner of this initiative.

This partnership allows this committee to not only honor and thank Vietnam War veterans but all veterans for their service and sacrifice. Stein Hospice donates veteran pins which are presented to all military veterans at community veteran pinning events. In conjunction with these community veteran pinning events, Vietnam War veterans are specifically recognized with the Vietnam War Commemorative lapel pin. This pin is awarded to, ***“all living veterans who served at any time on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, regardless of location, during the period of November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975 are eligible to receive one lapel pin on behalf of a grateful nation.”*** Most significantly, this partnership allows Stein Hospice to formally award this pin to each eligible veteran patient before the veteran passes on.

I was honoring a veteran, recently admitted to Stein Hospice, at his home. After presenting him with the certificate, blanket and veteran pin, we talked about what he did in the service and when he served. During our conversation, I learned that he was eligible for the Vietnam War 50th Commemorative Lapel Pin. I explained that this was a national initiative to thank and honor the

Vietnam War veteran and I would consider it a privilege to present it to him. I asked to be excused to go out to my vehicle and get the pin and accompanying materials. He said he needed to take care of some things and to take my time. Returning to the family room, I was talking with the veteran's adult daughter when the veteran returned to the room. Upon seeing her father, his daughter gasped, raising her hand to cover her mouth. The veteran had changed from sweat pants and sweat shirt into khakis and a casual shirt. He explained that he didn't want to be awarded the pin dressed in sweats. As I placed the pin on his collar I said, "On behalf of a grateful nation, thank you for your service and sacrifice." As tears ran down his cheeks, I shook his hand, my voice breaking as I said, "Welcome home brother." His daughter rushed into his arms in tears. When we all regained our composure, the veteran said, "I have never received any thanks or even any acknowledgement for my service in the Army, let alone in Vietnam."

The Department of Veteran Affairs We Honor Veterans website states: *“Simple acts of gratitude at the end-of-life can make up for a lack of appreciation or recognition during the Veteran's lifetime, especially for those Veterans who were never welcomed home or thanked for their service.”* I am extremely proud to be a part of this effort to recognize, thank and honor veterans for their military service during their final journey.

To learn more about the Hospice Veteran Partnership and how you might assist in honoring veterans, contact our Volunteer department at 800-625-5269.

Thank You **VETERANS**

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 Reagan Bristol, DO
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STEIN HOSPICE

Mission Statement: To provide comfort, compassion and support during life's final journey.

LOCATIONS

Administrative Office Sandusky

1200 Sycamore Line
 Sandusky, Ohio 44870
 419-625-5269
 1-800-625-5269

Norwalk

257 Benedict Ave., Suite B
 Norwalk, Ohio 44857
 419-663-3222

Port Clinton

1848 E. Harbor Road
 Port Clinton, Ohio 43452
 419-732-1787

Stein Hospice Care Center
 Firelands Regional Medical
 Center South Campus
 1912 Hayes Ave., 3rd Floor
 Sandusky, Ohio
 419-558-4164
 1-866-230-7597

Tiffin

100 Madison St.
 Tiffin, Ohio 44883
 419-447-0475

Stein South

100 Liming Farm Road
 Mount Orab, Ohio 45154
 937-444-2766

EMAIL

Volunteer info: volunteers@steinhospice.org
Donor/event info: development@steinhospice.org
Referrals/questions: referralcenter@steinhospice.org
All other inquiries: steinhospice@steinhospice.org

IN TOUCH IS PUBLISHED BY:

Stein Hospice
 419-625-5269, 1-800-625-5269
 FAX 419-625-5761



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Message from Chief Executive Officer

Serving Those Who Have Served Our Country



Jan Bucholz,
Chief Executive Officer

Here at Stein Hospice, we treat every patient with the utmost dignity and respect, none more so than our nation's veterans. A number of our own staff have proudly and selflessly served in our nation's armed forces, further enhancing our own insights and heart for this special group of men and women. As such, we have long worked to develop and grow various veterans programs and services.

Stein Hospice is a Level Four member of the Hospice Veterans Partnership. Stein provides practical assistance to veterans and their families in understanding and applying for aid and other programs.

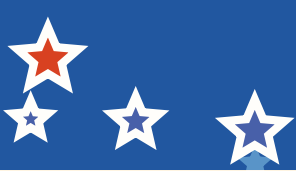
Our Veteran Program expands beyond our patients and into the community. During the month of November, in celebration of Veterans Day, our Community Relations Coordinator Sherri Bourne also coordinates our own extensive veterans program, where Stein staff and volunteers travel to honor vets with a program, a certificate listing their name and branch of service, and a special commemorative pin. In 2017, the inaugural year, we were honored to pin 462 veterans. In 2018, we had the privilege of pinning 1062 individuals. Additionally, we recognized more than 200 Vietnam veterans giving them the thank you and welcome home that so many did not initially receive. What's more, any veteran patient who receives Stein Hospice services is presented with a blanket, certificate and pin from our staff Chaplain and veterans team.

While we're thrilled to provide these heartfelt rituals and tokens, our commitment to vets and understanding of their unique challenges runs far deeper. One story jumps to mind in particular. I received a call from a nurse in the home of a veteran who had placed her in a headlock claiming she was an enemy spy sent to infiltrate his platoon. Near the end of life, some veterans can have unusual and unforeseen responses, often due to a combination of combat related trauma, stress, and age-related memory dysfunction.

Rather than fruitlessly try to convince this distraught and confused soldier his experience did not align with reality, we used compassion, palliative expertise and a well-trained volunteer corps to address this patient's needs and our staff safety quickly and humanely. Our closest veteran volunteer lived a few minutes away and rushed over; when he and two fellow vet volunteer friends entered the room, he'd wisely donned his WWII veteran hat. Quickly assessing the situation, he assumed a no nonsense "military voice", booming "Good work, soldier. We will take possession of the prisoner." The team made a show of performing a 'perimeter inspection', declaring the room secure, and posting a guard. This veteran was then able to relax and return to his bed where he soon passed away peacefully. This story gives me pride both as a healthcare administrator and as a sister--the volunteer who stepped in to helped the veteran in the story happened to be my brother. We exist to treat every veteran and every patient we meet with as much care and compassion as our own family. We're truly grateful and stand at the ready for the honor to serve you and your family members.

To volunteer at a veteran event or arrange a ceremony in your facility or community, please contact Sherri Bourne at 419-625-5269.

With love and respect,



HONORING VETERANS



Stein Hospice Pinning Team





Sandusky Office
1200 Sycamore Line
Sandusky, Ohio 44870

ph. 419-625-5269
fax 419-625-5761

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