



PSSH Leadership

Commandant

Barb Raymond

Deputy Commandant

Beth Seibert

Director of Nursing

Kathy Wilcox

Wreaths Across America



On December 17, 2016 the Pennsylvania Soldiers' & Sailors' Home (PSSH) Veterans Memorial Cemetery was one of 1,228 locations across the country to participate in Wreaths Across America. A nationally planned event, the mission of Wreaths Across America is to remember our fallen U.S. veterans, honor those who currently serve, and to teach the value of freedom.

Prior to the ceremony approximately 50 volunteers arrived to the Veterans Memorial Cemetery mid-morning in order to place wreaths on all 1,311 graves located behind PSSH with the oldest veterans dating back to the Civil War. This is significant because at this year's recognition when a wreath was placed volunteers were encouraged to say that veteran's name aloud and take a moment to thank them for their service. While presiding over the ceremony, PSSH Volunteer Coordinator, Ken Vybiral reiterated how relevant that practice was. "In a cemetery as old as ours there's a good chance that it's been decades or even longer since some of those gravesites were visited or acknowledged."

PSSH residents, volunteers, and guests filled the Chapel for the ceremony which began at Noon with a countrywide choreographed 60 second moment of silence. The Colors were presented by the combined efforts of the Wesleyville and North East American Legion Honor Guards. Following the opening remarks and invocation a wreath was placed at the front of the Chapel to honor each branch of service and a final wreath was placed to remember those service men and women who were and who are currently P.O.W-M.I.A. The Erie – Crawford County Burial Detail concluded the ceremony with a three-volley salute and the playing of taps from bugler Gary Dunn. Wreaths Across America is scheduled to take place again on December 16th, 2017.

Commandant's Corner

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Happy New Year! I hope everyone has a happy, healthy and prosperous 2017.

Whew, we made it through the holidays. This is a very busy time for the Residents and the home. Thank you to everyone who took their time to visit with our Residents. A special thank you to Joyce Crishock for all she does to organize the "Presents for Patients" at this facility. Thank you to Ray and Lynette Chambers for orchestrating the "Presents for Marines", and thank you to everyone who donated gifts, money and their time to the Residents of the Pennsylvania Soldiers' and Sailors' Home.



Our Employee of the Month is Mark Foster from Housekeeping. Mark has been nominated numerous times. On 3/23/16 Debbie stated "Mark saw that Matt was helping Deb put a strip on one of the dishwasher doors, Mark came in to see if they needed any help. Mark assisted Matt in fixing the door". On 4/4/2016 Nick submitted a "Caught You Caring" for Mark indicating "Mark does an excellent job with his job duties, he goes above and beyond with his goals as a PSSH employee, he helps whenever help is needed. He helped with dining cleanup on Unit E d/t the floors being re-done. He treats the residents with dignity and respect and also helped with a few resident transports out of the area so we could clean the area after dinner. He is a great worker and is excellent with interactions with the residents. Thank you Mark for all you have done and will continue to do for us, the residents and PSSH. Job well done". And again received a "Caught You Caring" on 10/12/2016 "Mark Foster always does an excellent job and he always goes above and beyond at what he does". Nice job Mark, keep up the good work!

December 17th 1,250 wreaths were placed in the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home Cemetery in celebration of Wreaths Across America honoring Veterans, living and deceased, of each of the five branches of the military. Ken Vybiral presided over the ceremony, North East and Wesleyville and Post #381 American Legions were the Honor Guard presenting and retiring the colors. Rev. Ken Frails led the Invocation and the ceremony ended with Taps by Gary Dunn. Potratz Floral Shop did a beautiful job with the cut greens adorned with red, white and blue bows. A special thank you to all the volunteers, approximately 50, who laid the wreaths at each of the headstones.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support of the Veterans, Residents and staff. I encourage all of our readers to visit the Soldiers and Sailors home; we look forward to seeing you.

Barb Raymond

Ruth Loesch: NCU Resident of the Month

Ruth Loesch, an Erie native, has lived in Millcreek the majority of her life, and she loves Erie. Ruth met her husband two years after he served in the Navy and they married in 1955. Together they had two children, one son and one daughter.

Although Ruth lived her life in Erie, she spent much time traveling. From Niagara Falls to California, Ruth has many stories from her travels. Travelling is just one of Ruth's many hobbies. Before leaving her job to become a stay at home mom, Ruth worked at a Five and Dime store. Although she said she absolutely loved working at the store, she also loved being able to raise her children while her husband worked for the Millcreek police department as a detective. Ruth has always enjoyed sewing as well. At the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, her favorite hobbies include bingo and birdwatching.

Although a very independent woman, Ruth is extremely family oriented. Her daughter visits routinely twice a week, and her granddaughter, Lydia, visits as often as possible. Ruth looks forward to their visits every week. Ruth's husband is currently in the Dementia and Alzheimer's unit, but she visits him as often as possible. Easy and enjoyable to talk to, Ruth Loesch is a kind soul.



Fun Fact:
The Home's Veterans Memorial Cemetery was the only location in the City of Erie to participate in Wreaths Across America this year.



January Birthdays

George Kurelowech	Jan. 1
Daryl Berlin	Jan. 3
Charles Ewing	Jan. 4
David Miller	Jan. 10
Timothy Frail	Jan. 12
William Pyott	Jan. 13
Daniel Conley	Jan. 14
Raymond Zmijewski	Jan. 14
Phillip Hoydic	Jan. 15
Leroy Lewis	Jan. 16
Ronald Lotarski	Jan. 16
Douglas Babo	Jan. 18
Retta Ellenberger	Jan. 22
Dominick Ghamo	Jan. 28
Carl Milewski	Jan. 29
James Vogus	Jan. 30

New Residents

The PA Soldiers' & Sailors' Home would like to welcome our new residents:

Michael Globosky	12/7/2016
Marie Nevitt	12/22/2016
Jack Legenzoff	1/9/2017
Edward Fisher	1/10/2017

Welcome!

Jim Michielsen: PCU Resident of the Month

Mr. Michielsen was raised Amish on a farm in Sugar Grove, PA. He began racing sailboats at the age of ten and continues to enjoy it today. He was also fascinated with aviation, which led him to enlist in the Air Force in 1960, and he still teaches gliding. He is a Presbyterian preacher and a Bishop for five counties but has been inactive for the last three years for medical reasons.

During his Air Force career, Mr. Michielsen was stationed in the Belgian Congo for two tours during its Civil War. He took time afterward to use his G.I. Bill to complete a master's degree in civil engineering from Georgia Tech. The same day he graduated, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant and received orders to report to California for pilot training. Then, he spent twelve years in Vietnam in Special Operations flying F-4 Fighter Jets as a Command Pilot. Following his time in Vietnam, Mr. Michielsen joined the Tennessee National Air Guard, where he served as an "eye in the sky" with the Air Search & Rescue. He completed a variety of missions from amber alerts to finding downed pilots in the mountains.

Around age 45, Mr. Michielsen began sketching because he needed a past time and discovered painting. One of the engineers that worked for him told him to "have a hobby that pays, not costs," which is what painting became for Mr. Michielsen. He entered the Duck Stamp in 1985 and won it. He has had a very successful art career since, saying "In terms of bingo, all cards have been bingo." He has gained national recognition and is ranked as one of the top five watercolorists in America. There are over 100 galleries dedicated to his art, and he oversees a nonprofit to ensure the galleries' employees remain in work. His painting favorite subject is wildlife, but he is invited each year to Louisville to paint the Grand National Champions. Despite his recognition, he still likes to give his art to others without charge with many paintings distributed around the Home.

Mr. Michielsen has led an interesting life thus far. When asked why he pursued what he did, he said he has been surprised by what interested him. He never expected them to be this much fun.



December Activities

AseraCare Christmas Party



Bell Choir



Reindeer Visits



Burton Funeral Home Visit



NCU Presents for Patients



ACU Presents for Patients



Mercyhurst Prep Show Choir



Iroquois High Caroling



Sight Center Christmas Party



Preview of January's Activities

Friday 1/13, 2pm, Friday the 13th Social
Saturday 1/14, 10am, Fine Art Miracles Art Class
Monday 1/16, 7:30pm, Bingo VFWA Dept. of PA
Tuesday 1/17, 10am, Crazy Knitting with Bonnie
Wednesday 1/18, 2pm, Music by Mike and Marie Miller
Thursday 1/19, 9am, Walmart Trip
Friday 1/20, 2-4pm, Veterans Expo in PCU Dining
Saturday 1/21, 10am, Bingo Luncheon at McKean VFW 740
Sunday 1/22, 2:30pm, Sunday Afternoon Movie
Monday 1/23, 2pm, Birthday Party with Music by True Country
Tuesday 1/24, 7:30pm, Craft Night
Wednesday 1/25, 4pm, Spaghetti Dinner
Thursday 1/26, 8:30am, Balloon Volleyball
Friday 1/27, 9:30am, Drawing Class with John
Saturday 1/28, 2pm, Bingo DAV/DAVA
Sunday 1/29, 2:30pm, Sunday Afternoon Movie
Monday 1/30, 2pm, Ice Cream Social
Tuesday 1/31, 2pm, Bowling



TAPS

Thomas Lydon	12/10/2016
Danny Livingston	12/15/2016
David Motherwell	12/19/2016
Howard Meadows	12/29/2016

Newsletter Info

If you have an idea or would like to contribute to the next newsletter, please contact:



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