With visitation restrictions currently in place, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the PA Soldiers’ & Sailors’ Home (PSSH) found a creative way to let residents and staff know they are still thought of and supported in the community. A Heroes Parade was organized that allowed loved ones and friends of PSSH to maintain a safe social distance while displaying their appreciation for its veterans and those that care for them.

Led by first responders that included the Erie Police Department, and the Erie Fire Department; families, volunteers, and community supporters of PSSH created a motor parade that lined up behind the home and proceeded to the front of the buildings where they did a loop past the gazebo and around the cul-de-sac.

The vehicles, decorated with patriotic flare, and signs with messages to loved ones, were greeted on both sides by residents and staff as they passed through the front of the grounds. Residents showed their appreciation with signs of their own as they waved to participants beeping their horns and waving back.

The two-day event allowed for residents on each unit of the nursing care facility to take part in the celebration while adhering to the current safety protocols.
Commandant’s Corner

Considering the recent rise in COVID-19 cases that is happening throughout the Country, we here in Erie County finally graduated to “green” status. We have seen an upswing in activity around the area so as with the national trend, we are likely to see a rise here in Erie. As to how long that will continue remains to be seen. Please practice due diligence in maintaining 6’ social distancing, wear face coverings and ensure good hand hygiene. If we all do our part, we can beat COVID-19!

PSSH remains status quo, and we will continue to adhere to the recommendations of the CDC, as well as, Bureau of Veterans Homes as we have been doing since the COVID-19 Pandemic started. The DOH guidance on screening of all visitors continues upon entrance/exit of the facility grounds. As always, if there are any questions or concerns, please let us know.

June activities included the Heroes Parade, which was truly appreciated by everyone involved. I must say seeing the smiles and feeling the love from our veterans and their families was truly beyond amazing. Thank you everyone for bringing them together the best way possible. State Veterans’ Home week was not the “norm” this year. Thank you to our Dietary Department for providing the staff and residents with a wonderful meal and for your hard work. July activities will be decided on an as needed basis. Zoom calls will continue, as well.

I want to take a moment to let everyone know that I miss you all very much. I am doing well but look forward to coming home. Hopefully sooner than later. I need to also thank my staff at PSSH for holding down the fort. I couldn’t be prouder of the job they are doing so “Thank you! You all are amazing!”. Lastly, I wanted to take a second to say I loved my care package especially when I opened the box and found all the beautiful smiles that make my heart happy…the PSSH resident’s. I felt like I was home!

Our “Caught you Caring” employee of the month is Leslie Ruiz. You can find Leslie in Nursing on 1st shift. Leslie is an Essential part of our PSSH team. Thank you for all you do for our Veterans and the PSSH family!

One last thought...“It’s not where you are in life, but who you have by your side that matters.”
### John Porter: Personal Care Unit (PCU) Resident of the Month

John Porter is originally from Philadelphia, PA where he attended Ben Franklin High School. Mr. Porter enlisted as an Army Engineer in 1950 and served as a combat veteran in the Korean War. Upon his return from Korea, Mr. Porter worked primarily in the construction trade building factories and houses, and then as a machinist producing ball bearings for various products.

Mr. Porter married in 1956 and has six children. He has moved all around the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania before finally settling here at the PA Soldiers’ & Sailors’ Home in November of 2019. Mr. Porter has a creative side and enjoys drawing, carving, and painting.

The next time you see John Porter be sure to congratulate him on being PCU resident of the month!

### Jim Vogus: Nursing Care Unit (NCU) Resident of the Month

Jim Vogus was born in Erie, but he moved around a lot throughout his childhood due to his father’s profession. For example, he lived in State College, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Rochester. He attended the College at Brockport, State University of New York for his bachelor’s degree and Cleveland State University for his master’s degree in history. His master’s studies were interrupted by his time in the Army.

In the Army, Mr. Vogus served as a clerk at battalion headquarters. He was responsible for keeping the Basic Combat Training records during the Vietnam War. There were a lot of records.

After his service, he returned to Erie. Mr. Vogus tried teaching history in public schools but found it was not the right career for him. He worked a few office jobs and a few shop jobs afterward. Notably, he found enjoyment teaching his coworkers at Port Erie Plastics how to perform their roles.

Mr. Vogus loves researching, reading, and watching old movies. He also likes to teach adults at his church. When he was younger, his science fiction collection was even larger than it is now, and his collection of science fiction magazines stretched back to the 1930’s. He is very knowledgeable of the history of science fiction and film. His favorite part of living at the PA Soldiers’ & Sailors’ Home is that he can do most of what he likes right here. His Kindle, alone, grants him access to thousands of books, movies, and TV shows, and he has made some good friends here.
Preview of July’s Activities

NCU Activities:

Tuesday, 7/7, 2:00pm, Hungry, Hungry Hippos (Unit B)
Wednesday, 7/15, 1:30-3 pm, Unit to Unit Ice Cream Novelties Social
Wednesday, 7/22, 1:30-3pm, Unit to Unit Birthday Cupcake Social
Wednesday, 7/29, 1:30-3pm, Unit to Unit Soft Pretzel Social

PCU Activities:

Friday, 7/10, 2:00pm, BINGO (PCU Dining Room)
Wednesday, 7/15, 3:30-4:00 pm, Ice Cream Novelties (First Floor Lounge)
Wednesday, 7/22, 3:30-4:00pm, Birthday Cupcake Social (First Floor Lounge)
Wednesday, 7/29, 3:30-4:00pm, Soft Pretzel Social (First Floor Lounge)

Newsletter Info

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

Ken Vybiral
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New Residents

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

No new residents

Want to keep updated on DMVA?
Follow us on these social media platforms!

Search “Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs” on any of those sites to connect with us and see the latest news, pictures and videos from DMVA.