

CHAPTERS & COUNCILS

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CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT: WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA



Capt. Mike Covell, USN (Ret), right, president of the Western North Carolina Chapter, conducts a pinning ceremony for a veteran in hospice care at Four Seasons Compassion for Life.

Honoring Veterans in Hospice Care

In the spring of 2014, my chapter found out about a program called We Honor Veterans (WHV), which forms community partnerships to care for and honor veterans in hospice care and VA hospitals. We contacted a local hospice organization, Four Seasons Compassion for Life, to tell them about WHV. Unbeknownst to us, their leadership recently had become aware of the program and wanted help implementing it in western North Carolina.

We formed a partnership, and chapter members got certified as Four Seasons volunteers so we could perform “pinning ceremonies” to thank veterans in hospice care for their service and honor them.

Along with framed certificates personalized with a veteran’s name and branch of service, Four Seasons provided blankets and pins with WHV’s insignia. We provided service-specific pins and held the first pinning ceremony in November 2014.

Since then, the program has expanded from Henderson County to almost all of western North Carolina. Currently, 13

chapter members participate in pinnings. I’m now a board member of the Four Seasons Compassion for Life Foundation and chair its WHV committee.

Most important, more than 350 veterans in the community have been honored and thanked for their service to the nation through pinning ceremonies.

“We are grateful for MOAA’s partnership in honoring veterans in our hospice care,” says Loretta Shelton, executive director of Four Seasons. “It is even more important when you realize how many of the veterans receiving pinning ceremonies share that it is the first time they have been thanked for their service.”

I’m passionate about the program and strongly encourage every MOAA chapter to contact their local hospice to create a program or participate in an existing one. The financial cost is minimal — you’ll only have to provide the pins — but the rewards are truly priceless. ■■■

— *By Capt. John Knapp, USN (Ret),
former president of the Western North
Carolina Chapter*