A Memorable Flag Raising Ceremony

Every Memorial Day, Hospice Buffalo organizes a beautiful Flag Raising ceremony for the staff, patients and family members to commemorate all the veterans who sacrificed their lives for our freedom. Commander Tony Deaville and his Student Cadets from WNY Maritime Charter School honor us with their presence. This year’s ceremony was truly touching and unforgettable -- when they arrived, Cadet Mitchell Landon mentioned that his grandfather was a veteran patient in our Hospice Inpatient Unit! We hope you enjoy Mitchell’s story...

The morning of May 25th, 2017, I arose to a full arrangement of thoughts in my mind. Thoughts of anxiety, excitement and maybe even a shred of disbelief -- the Western New York Maritime Charter School Honor Guard Cadets, Audie Nyari, Salem Nyari, Andre Hillman and myself, will be visiting Hospice Buffalo for their Flag Raising Ceremony and presenting the national ensign to the veterans of our great nation.

Forwarding to later that morning as we walked into the building, we were greeted by a group of joyous hospice team members. My grandfather, Walter Kuppinger, had been recently transferred to the Hospice Buffalo facility and was an Air Force Veteran of the Korean War. I've always held a passion for the United States military and I hoped to one day serve in the United States Navy. He inspired me to join the JROTC program at Maritime by the military memories he shared with me.

While preparing for the ceremony, those memories were all I could think about. I saw him being wheeled into the room by one of the nurses; I walked up to him, shook his hand and thanked him for his service. He was not in the greatest state of health at the time, but nevertheless, I was grateful that he wanted to witness the ceremony. At the conclusion of the event, one of the nurses let me wheel my grandfather back to his room. As we were walking, a tear came over my eye, not of sadness, but of joy. The reason was that even though he didn’t have long for this world, my grandfather and I made memories that would not only last forever with me, but resonate with those after me as well.

The care of Hospice was nothing less than extraordinary. My grandfather seemed comfortable in their care. Their staff was friendly and really went the extra mile to tend to every need my grandfather had during his final days. Our family is very thankful for all the dedicated staff that makes hospice a calm and comforting environment. Unfortunately, on the afternoon of May 31st, he passed away, leaving behind a legacy that will never be forgotten. Thank you Hospice Buffalo and all the staff of this wonderful organization.

Sincerely,
Mitchell Landon, Cadet Petty Officer Third Class
Navy JROTC
WNY Maritime Charter School