Memorial Day Observance Honors Fallen, Evokes Pride

Long before Lawrence Riddles, MD, became Senior Medical Director at LVH–Schuylkill, he was supervising care in the midst of natural disasters and combat zones for the Department of Defense.

Riddles, who spent a month short of 35 years in the U.S. Air Force, served as bearer of the American flag at our fifth annual Memorial Day Observance. The ceremony was held live at LVH–Cedar Crest and simulcast to locations throughout the health network. Riddles joined colleagues who served in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard in the flag-bearing ceremony during a rendition of The Star-Spangled Banner by the U.S. Air Force Brass in Blue. Five other veterans took part in the Laying of the Wreaths on the Memorial Table to honor the fallen.

"Memorial Day is unlike other days where we honor those who served our country, in that we’re paying tribute specifically to those who paid the ultimate price in defense of our country," Riddles says. "It really gives one pause to stop and think about their sacrifice. That deep commitment of those who gave their lives is the reason for many of the blessings we’re able to enjoy today."

Riddles’ own military commitment was rather amazing. In September 2005, he coordinated emergency care and evacuation plans during Hurricane Katrina as commander of the 375th Medical Group at Scott Air Force Base. He spent more than two weeks sleeping on granite floors at New Orleans International Airport while helping to create a makeshift hospital there in preparation for the evacuation of thousands of people displaced by the storm.

He became Command Surgeon for the United States Transportation Command in 2007 and used his expertise to direct similar patient movement efforts amid widespread rubble and chaos following earthquakes in Turkey (1999), Haiti (2010) and the Japan earthquake and tsunami (2011).

Riddles’ combat experience includes him being the youngest air transport hospital commander in an active combat zone during the Gulf War. In the latter stages of his military career, he coordinated the safe transport of injured soldiers, sailors, airmen Marines and Coastguardsmen out of Iraq and Afghanistan to hospitals in Germany and the U.S.

Riddles looks back on all of it with deep humility. "It’s been an honor and a pleasure to have served under the U.S. flag in different parts of the world," he says.

continued on page 2
Here are the other colleagues who participated in LVHN’s Memorial Day Observance alongside Riddles.

**FLAG BEARERS**
- **American flag** – Lawrence Riddles, MD, Air Force, Senior Medical Director, LVH–Schuylkill
- **Army** – Kevin Kriese, MD, LVPG Ear, Nose and Throat–17th Street
- **Marine Corps** – Samuel Platia, Administrator, LVPG Pediatrics
- **Navy** – Charles Worrell, MD, LVPG Emergency Medicine
- **Air Force** – Madalyn Schaefgen, MD, LVPG Family Medicine–Cetronia Road
- **Coast Guard** – Michael LaPearl, Operations Supervisor, Cetronia Emergency Management

**LAYING OF THE WREATHS ON THE MEMORIAL TABLE**
- **Army** – William Thornton, LVH–Pocono Security
- **Marine Corps** – Katie Blum, Collaborative Coordinator, AllSpire
- **Navy** – Douglas McPeek, Senior Network and Communications Analyst
- **Air Force** – Madhavi Capoccia, DO, LVPG Family Medicine–Cetronia Road
- **Coast Guard** – Michael LaPearl, Operations Supervisor, Cetronia Emergency Management
- **Benediction** – Enrique Amponsah, Battalion Chaplain, U.S. Army Reserves

A very special guest at the event was Dan Deysher, a 95-year-old U.S. Navy World War II veteran who sounded “Taps” during the observance. Deysher was a Musician First Class assigned to the battleship USS Pennsylvania out of Pearl Harbor. He served three of his six years in Navy in the Pacific Theatre on gun watch and as a stretcher bearer.

A resident of Hellertown, Deysher has sounded Taps at more than 3,700 military funerals over the last 33 years. He also sounded Taps at Pearl Harbor last Dec. 7 at the 75th anniversary of the infamous attack. On Memorial Day, he will be among 51 buglers sounding Taps between Nisky Hill Cemetery and Memorial Cemetery in Bethlehem in honor of veterans laid to rest without a final tribute. Joining him in the bugling tribute will be his son, his granddaughter and his great granddaughter.

Special guests at the observance also included U.S. Air Force Major Timothy Page and Junior ROTC Cadets from Dieruff High School, who performed a ceremonial flag folding, handing off the flag to Chaplain Amponsah.

EMS Has a Place to Call Its Own

Emergency medical services (EMS) teams now have a place to hang their hats, fill out a report or grab a coffee with the opening of a new EMS lounge at LVH–Schuylkill E. Norwegian Street. Pre-hospital providers joined colleagues this week – which is EMS Week – to dedicate the new area adjacent to the new emergency room.

“Our community depends on emergency medical services providers to be there when the unthinkable happens,” says Larry Riddles, MD, LVH–Schuylkill Senior Medical Director. “And your job is getting tougher and tougher. We hope this is a place where you can unwind and relax a bit after a call or transport to the hospital.”

Members of regional EMS squads attended the brief session. The new EMS lounge has a sofa, tables and chairs, a television and light snacks available for crews as they come in and out of the hospital.

Riddles invited the ambulance squad members and LVH–Schuylkill colleagues in attendance to join him in the ribbon cutting that marked the official opening of the EMS lounge.
Thanking Our EMS Partners

National EMS Week is a time for us to pause and thank EMS members for their courage, skill and determination in delivering care in a pre-hospital setting. This year, EMS Week gave us the opportunity to thank EMS squad members directly with a BBQ picnic. LVH–Schuylkill colleagues welcomed EMS squads to a tent-covered BBQ on Wednesday near our third floor main entrance.

“It’s always a great warm welcome here at Schuylkill,” says Shawn Silvoy, LVHN EMS Inter-facility Liaison. “The whole team did a fantastic job, and the feedback from the EMS providers has been terrific. They really appreciate what you did and were particularly pleased that managers took the time to visit and thank the crews.”

Crews enjoyed hamburgers, hot dogs and other picnic fare. LVHN also published a print ad in recognition of EMS Week. The ad features an EMS provider from Schuylkill, Hazleton, Pocono and the Lehigh Valley.

LVHN thanks our EMS providers. Our community depends on them to be there when help is needed most, no matter the time of day. They are the everyday heroes who unfailingly rise to the occasion.

Lehigh Valley Children’s Hospital Turns 5

Five years ago this week, Lehigh Valley Children’s Hospital opened its doors for the first time. Since then, thousands of families have come through its doors seeking top-quality specialty care for their growing children.

To mark the occasion, Children’s Hospital had a 5th birthday celebration in the lobby of LVH–Cedar Crest’s Jaindl Pavilion. Colleagues and community members stopped by to color a birthday mural, read about some of the children we’ve helped over the years and enjoy birthday cake.

Everyone got in on the celebration. Nurses and physicians were spotted coloring our birthday mural. Local students enjoyed cake pops and party favors that included a Children’s Hospital coloring book and journal. And everyone got a lesson on the gift of good health by reading the personal stories of our youngest patients.
Memorial Honors Colleague, Veteran and Innovator

Bruce Bobo Jr. was one of those people who may not be the easiest to get to know at first. Then once he warmed up to you, you were golden.

“There were many sides to Bruce depending on the situation,” says Audio/Visual (AV) Media Services Expert Michael Cirocco, who worked with Bobo for most of the 14 years he spent at LVHN as a Subject Matter Expert. “Once you were included in his circle of friends, he became a very fun-loving, caring person. He went out of his way for people, and often helped people who didn’t even know he was helping them.”

Bobo, a U.S. Army veteran, passed away in October at age 53 after a battle with cancer. He left a wife, Donna, son, Gregory, daughter, Emily, and many friends who remember him warmly.

FOREVER REMEMBERED

On May 24, Bobo was honored with a memorial bench at the Veterans Healing Garden in the LVH–17th Street campus courtyard. He was recommended for the bench by LVHN President and Chief Executive Officer Brian Nester, DO, MBA, FACOEP, in recognition of his service to our country and contributions to our health network.

LIFELONG INNOVATOR

Bobo was born in Tennessee and spent his formative years in Florida. He ran his own computer business before taking a job at LVHN in 2002. Four years later, his name became familiar to colleagues when he designed and built the health network’s original telehealth videoconferencing mobile cart, dubbing it the “George cart.” Why that name?

“It’s because George Washington was the first president and this was the first telehealth videoconferencing mobile cart,” Cirocco says. “You had to know Bruce.”

Bobo’s creation remains invaluable to clinicians and patients alike. “It’s amazing how much the cart impacts patient care,” Cirocco says. Using the cart, for example, our maternal fetal medicine specialists can communicate with a special needs mother immediately at a remote outpatient site. Plus, the cart also links non-English speaking patients with an interpreter so they can communicate with their caregiver quickly and effectively.

There are more than 50 carts throughout the health network. Since Bobo’s passing, they’ve been renamed “Bruce carts” in his memory. “Bruce was such a visionary,” Cirocco says.

“He was always finding things and tinkering with them to see if there was a way it could improve patient care. He was such an asset to our health network.”

IN SERVICE OF OTHERS

Bobo was very community oriented. He was deeply involved with emergency services and amateur radio clubs around the Lehigh Valley. He helped with emergency communications during Hurricane Andrew in 1992, 9/11 in 2001 and Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

“That’s who he was – very conscious of people who needed help,” Cirocco says. “Many people here didn’t know Bruce would go above and beyond by buying DVDs and toys for kids in the hospital during Christmas, for example. That’s because he kept quiet and didn’t want everyone to know it was him doing it.”

(L-r) Director of Critical Care Pam Thomas, RN, Daryl Toback, RN, Rebecca Hillje, RN and Critical Care Clinical Coordinator Lynn Wychunas, RN, with a Bruce cart.
Colleagues Bring Life to Our Mission

It was a time of change in America. The Vietnam War continued, Richard Nixon was president and we were still sending astronauts to the moon. The Beatles had broken up just a few months earlier, but Sonny and Cher were still going strong. It was 1971.

Here at our hospitals in Pottsville, seven colleagues were just beginning their local health care careers. Some 45 years later, those seven colleagues joined 15 colleagues with 40 years of service and 25 more with 35 years of service at the Star Celebration event Tuesday evening at St. Nicholas Hall in Primrose.

“There’s nothing like celebrating hard work and service to our community,” says LVHN Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Terry Capuano, who attended the dinner. “Thank you. You should feel proud. You have so many experiences and so many stories. As long as you keep the patient at the center, we will have the health network that our patients deserve.”

Joining Capuano at the event were Lynn Turner, LVHN Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, LVH–Schuylkill President Bill Reppy, members of the LVH–Schuylkill Executive Council, as well as several Board Members of LVH–Schuylkill and LVHN Rehabilitation Center–Schuylkill.

“Thank you for your dedication,” says Reppy. “It is amazing to look at the collective years of service to our patients represented by all of you here tonight. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you for your efforts and commend you on a job well done.”

Colleagues were recognized for years of service in five-year increments from five to 45 years. The event was changed this year to a more open, social gathering, which encouraged increased interaction, talking, trading stories and reminiscing. Colleague reaction was very favorable.

Attendees enjoyed hors d’ouvres and a buffet meal as well as a special dessert prepared by our dietary team.

Among our recognized colleagues were the following:

45 YEARS
Richard Blinde, MD
Lonnie Dermo
Paul Harvey
Gloria Mitsock
Donna Palamar
Joann Reichwein-Lezzo
Charles Taronis (Retired)

40 YEARS
William Rowan
Anna Seroka
Susan Shappell
Christine Tray
Ann Whiteash

35 YEARS
Victoria Goodman
Dale Heffner
Harold Herndon
Virginia Kolibab
Gail Kupchinsky
Mary Reed
Linda Piccioni
Richard Schaeffer
Sherry McDonald (Retired)
Nancy Miske
Kathleen Moran
Judith Mulkowich
Karen Piccioni
Mary Reed
Nancy Romanot
Richard Schaeffer
Marion Smith
Melinda Spencer