

Because I Called | *One Volunteer's Story*

No one would blame Bob Liebrand if he rested on his laurels. The WWII veteran had already given so much of himself for others – serving his country at 18 years of age as a twice-wounded Army Infantryman and prisoner of war in Germany; and serving as his wife MaryLou's caregiver during her final illness five years ago. Samaritan's care, said the retired accountant, "was truly a life-altering experience" – one that he vowed to share.

"I must confess, I have an ongoing love affair with Samaritan Hospice that began and grew as they provided the excellent palliative care and comfort my wife needed and appreciated.... The kindness exhibited by all was beyond my expectations, and led me to become a Samaritan volunteer visitor," explained Bob.

Many patients Bob visits are fellow veterans and he feels honored to be there for those, like him, who served for us. "Veterans know that in time of war the objective, our sole purpose, is to unite as one to overcome the enemy. We looked out for, we covered, we protected and we helped each other.... Now we are faced with another enemy – illness – that has invaded so many of our buddies who desperately need our help in their most trying time of life."

While many shy away from hospice volunteering because they feel it will be too emotionally difficult, Bob finds the work joyful. "We share experiences, comradeship, and the joy, *yes the joy*, of being together." Two of his proudest volunteer activities involved veterans. A Marine, who had seen WWII combat at Guadalcanal, asked Bob to conduct his funeral service. "I am only a layman, but I did it and have never been more honored to bid final farewell to a real hero, a United States Marine."

Bob accepted Samaritan's invitation to share his veteran volunteer experiences at the launch of its Veterans' Outreach Initiative in November on the Battleship New Jersey. He even rearranged his schedule on the day of his granddaughter's wedding so he could attend both happy events.

To those considering volunteering, Bob says, "There are so many ways to volunteer with Samaritan. When you give of yourself, it will be returned tenfold. I speak from experience."

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– Volunteer Bob Liebrand



Volunteer Bob Liebrand (right) celebrates the 96th birthday of hospice patient (and lifelong Phillies fan) Nick Mase, Sr. with Nick's daughter Mary Ann Hollowell.