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Deceased Vietnam veteran honored at construction site



PHOTO BY EVAN WILLIAMS

More than 450 construction workers building the new Lee Memorial Health Systems hospital on Metro and Daniels parkways stopped for a moment before work last week to honor a war veteran who had recently died.

BY EVAN WILLIAMS
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Three days after Veteran's Day, Thursday, Nov. 15, at sunrise, the over 450 construction workers building the new Lee Memorial Health Systems hospital on Metro Parkway and Daniels Parkway stopped for a moment, after their morning stretching exercises, and listened as foreman Doc Holladay asked for their attention.

"I just thought Veteran's Day kind of came and went," he said, "It came to my mind, forefront, when Wednesday I found out about (Bud Lennon) dyeing. He was a great guy...I'd like it if everyone could give him a hand."

Over a beer at The Hideaway in downtown Fort Myers the night before, Holladay had toasted his deceased friend there, too — a U.S. Marine Corps Veteran who served as a medic, and died in his sleep before sunrise Wednesday, Nov. 14. Lennon had been a good friend of Holladay's older brother Scott when they grew up in Illinois and they had both heard the stories about riding on helicopters into "hot zones:" the landings under fire, the number of times he was so scared he would pee his pants, the helicopters riddled with bullets.

"My memories of Bud go back to being the younger brother, and most of the older kids picked on me," he said. "Bud was one of the one's that didn't."

Holladay said his older friend had flown these dangerous missions routinely, during his tours, and helped rescue more than 29 wounded soldiers.

"Can you imagine how many families

that is?" he asked.

His friend's death, he said, illuminated what his own experience of this Veteran's Day was.

"The day went on like any other," he said.

Others feel the same. Pat Fredericks, owner of Wise Guys Subs and Stuff in downtown Fort Myers, was born in 1942. His father served in WWII and he served in the Marines from 1961-65, stationed at Camp Le Juene in North Carolina.

"I closed on Veteran's Day and a lot of people gave me hell, you know?" Fredericks said. "But to me it's important...For some reason, that Second Generation of WWII veterans took it a lot more seriously. It's just a change in times."

Maybe it was because the general population was rationed during WWII, Fredericks theorized, and so they felt more a part of the war.

"Now people take that for granted," he said.


Holladay agrees.

"We take it for granted that we can stop at the gas station and buy gas," he said. "I don't care how expensive it is, we can get it."


Arthur Canty "Bud" Lennon was buried at the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery on Monday, Nov. 19, in Elwood, Illinois.

He is survived by his wife of 20 years, Rebecca; four children, Ashley Conner, Michael Lennon, Caitlin Lennon and Clair Lennon; his mother, Jean Lennon; one sister, Dinah Archambeault; and one brother, John Lennon; one nephew, and several nieces.

Preceded in death by his father, Arthur T. Lennon (1988); sister, Elizabeth Lennon (1973). ■



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