

‘I Was Able to Help Them’

WWII Army Nurse one of VFW’s Oldest Members

Jul 22, 2019

Irene Hosking was a registered nurse before World War II, but when her brother survived the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, she joined the Army.

Hosking, a member of VFW Post 4005 in Corunna, Mich., said her most vivid memories from serving overseas relate to the men who lost limbs in battle.

“We did not see the wounds when they first got their wounds,” Hosking said. “But I took care of the fellows that had both legs amputated. Another one that I remember to this day, most of the muscle and the legs were gone. They were just not there anymore. And also a baseball player that lost his pitching arm.”

One patient, Hosking said, had 17 wounds.

“[I can recall] how they were able to endure the pain of getting their dressings done. Those are the things I remember the most,” Hosking said. “And I am very, very happy that I was a registered nurse. I was able to help them.”

After returning stateside, Hosking attempted to join VFW in March 1946, but at the time the organization did not allow women.

Hosking did not become a member until February 1984. In 1996, she joined the Auxiliary.

“There were two other ladies that because they could not join the VFW, they joined the Auxiliary,” Hosking said, “and when they were able to join the VFW, they joined the VFW.”

Hosking has been with Post 4005 since joining the organization and has held positions as junior vice commander, senior vice commander and adjutant, in addition to her year as Post commander from 1995-96.

“By that time, they accepted me, and I am accepted with open [arms],” said Hosking, who currently is the Post’s chaplain.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

While there is not one accomplishment that sticks out to her from her time as Post commander, she said that the Post is on the right track to become “vibrant” again.

“I have been encouraging people to be active in the county councils, the district meetings,” Hosking said. “I have not had good rapport with getting that done, but I think now we will be. We have a commander now that has been attending all of the meetings, along with me.”

In her time with the Post, Hosking said, she meets “a lot of the national figures” who attend state conventions.

“They want a picture with me because I’m a World War II nurse, and I’m still active,” Hosking said.

Throughout her VFW career, Hosking said the organization has opened a lot of doors for her.

“It’s hard to describe,” Hosking said. “It’s just something that I keep active, I keep going and at 101 years, I think it has kept my mind very active and still responsive at this time.”

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