WWII Veteran's Widow Receives Long-Overdue VA Benefits

The VFW Honors Veteran of USS Indianapolis Tragedy

Jul 10, 2017

Paul Pirlot, state director of the VFW Detroit Service Office in Michigan, knew the best way to honor extraordinary WWII veteran Adelore Palmiter after his passing was by making sure his widow, Wilma Palmiter, was well cared for in the years

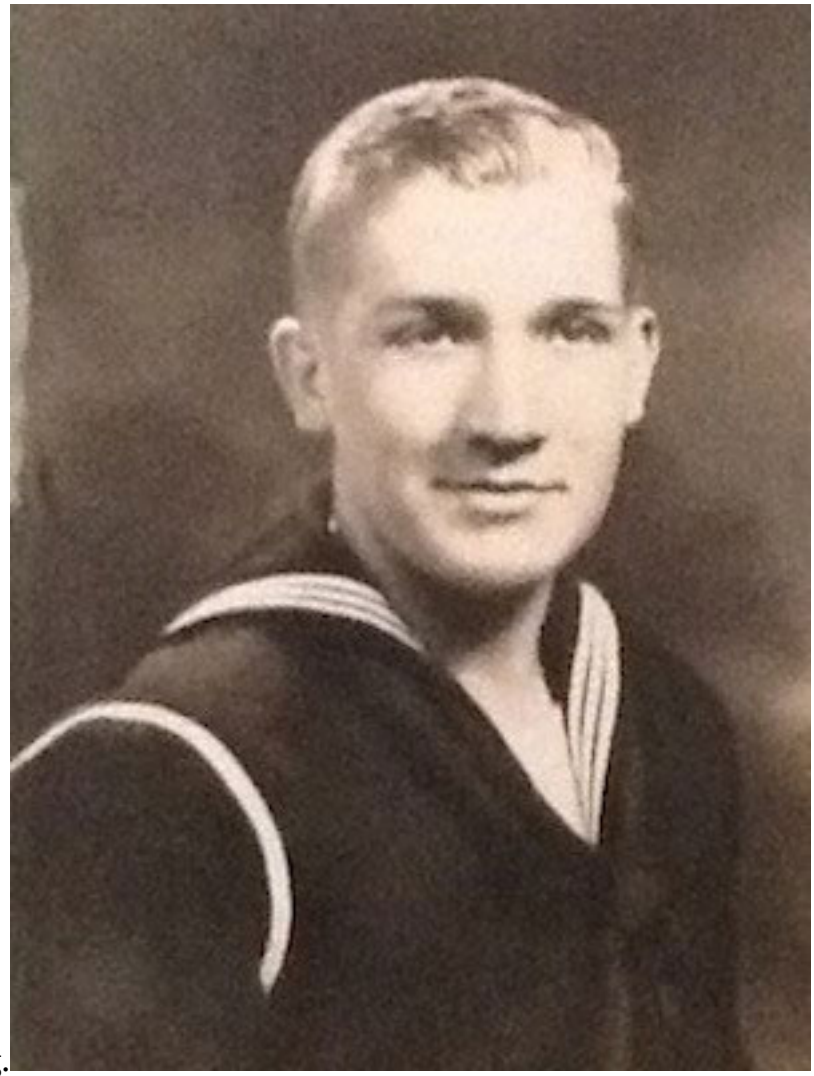
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following.

“Mr. Palmiter was a patient at the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System when we first got in touch with him. We realized he had never filed a VA claim, even though he was eligible for benefits as a WWII veteran,” explained Pirlot.

At the time of his death, Adelore Palmiter was one of only 22 survivors of one of the worst naval disasters in U.S. history.

He was only 18 years old when his ship, the USS Indianapolis, departed San Francisco for Tinian Island. Two weeks later, a Japanese submarine in the Philippine Sea torpedoed the vessel.

Only 317 of the 1,197 men onboard survived. It was the second largest loss of life of any American ship in WWII. After their ship sunk, those who lived through the subsequent four-day and five-night ordeal suffered from exposure, lack of food and water, salt poisoning and shark bites.

“Dad never spoke about what he went through,” said Connie Palmiter, Adelore's daughter. “But I later learned that even while fighting for his own life and trying to keep himself sane, he worked to be there for his friends in his lifeboat.

“Learning more about my dad’s service, I’m incredibly touched by what he did for our country and for me personally.”

Later in life, Adelore decided he would try to file a claim for VA benefits. However, the process of recalling the tragic events proved so overwhelming, he was unable to complete the process.

Pirlot said, “The second attempt was completed after we contacted him several years later. Sadly, he passed away before a decision was made.”

Realizing Adelore had a surviving widow, the VFW Department of Michigan Service Office pressed ahead.

“Several roadblocks had to be navigated. The process was not easy, and we worked with VA offices in both Detroit and Washington D.C., as well as a VA congressional liaison,” Pirlot continued.

“Everyone worked tirelessly and passionately to ensure that Mrs. Palmiter received the maximum benefits allowed by the law.”

As a result of these efforts, Wilma Palmiter was awarded monthly Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, accrued benefits and service-connected burial benefits.

“I was most surprised and amazed by the care and kindness shown by Mr. Pirlot and everyone at the VFW we came in contact with,” Connie said. “Mr. Pirlot even attended my dad’s funeral when he passed away.

“My mom is 89 years old, and she suffers from dementia. The assistance has allowed us to breathe easier. We’re very thankful.”

Learn more about the VFW's National Veterans Service (NVS) program.