

WWII veteran DiBacco receives state 'Remember Me' award

Cortland Acres resident Vincent DiBacco received the "Remember Me" award, which was presented by the West Virginia Health Care Association during a special ceremony at the state Capitol in Charleston.

Numerous Cortland officials, family and friends joined DiBacco for the Feb. 27 event, as did local members of our legislative delegation. Among his friends attending were Tom and Betty DiBacco, Lori Phillips, Allison Phillips, Emily Phillips, Lori DiBacco, Mr. & Mrs. John DiBacco, Michael DiBacco, Ryan DiBacco, and Kim Clevenger. Longtime friend Jim Rubenstein, the current state corrections commissioner, also attended the ceremony.

At one point 9-year-old Allison put her arm around Vincent's neck and told him how proud she was of him, and 7-year-old Ryan, after touring the Capitol building, wondered why his great-uncle's picture wasn't hanging in the halls alongside the state's past governors.

DiBacco is the fifth Cortland Acres resident to receive the



Photo by John Sibold
Vincent DiBacco, front center, received a "Remember Me" award from the West Virginia Health Care Association during a special ceremony at the West Virginia Capitol. With him are, front row Sen. David Sypolt and Patrick Kelly, CEO of the West Virginia Health Care Association; Back row left to right Sen. Bob Williams, Jim Rubenstein, Sandy DiBacco, and Delegate Randy Smith.

"Remember Me" award in the past five years. He joins Betty Swantek, Danny Ringer, Solena

Massi and Champ Sedmock.

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Check out our website at www.cortlandacres.org

DiBacco

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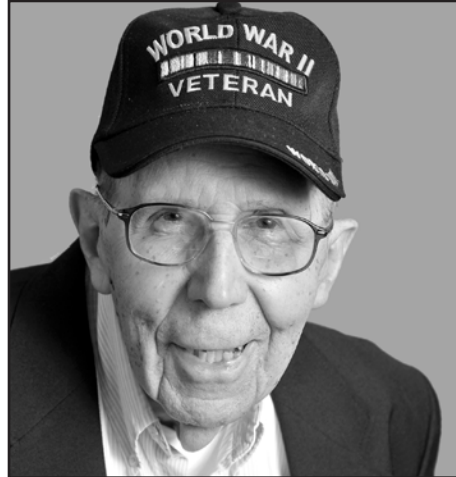
Following is the nomination submitted by Marie Grafton, Cortland's activities director.

Why did Vincent DiBacco live when so many others died? That is a frequent question asked by this Army Sergeant who was a survivor of D-Day on the Omaha Beach at Normandy.

Vincent, or "Bugs" as he is affectionately called by friends and family, said he will never forget the stench of blood from that day as the sea was so red. He watched as his best friend was no more. As he and the troops attempted to advance, they were time and again hit with all types of artillery. The Nazis held such a stronghold that the Allies could only move laterally creating much loss of life and limbs.

Vincent and the other living troops spent several harrowing days – it was like a living hell. The details of that historic day are still so very vivid in his mind that when he has shared in recent years with the boys at the Rubenstein Juvenile Center they are riveted to the bleachers and you can hear a pin drop. The staff at the Center tell about how this is the best history lesson the boys ever receive.

Vincent was raised in Thomas, and was studying at St. Charles Seminary in Baltimore, Md., for the priesthood when he felt compelled to sign up for the Army as his patriotic duty. All the carnage was very difficult for this gentle spirit, who was preparing for a peaceful occupation. After receiving a citation for a Bronze Star Medal and an honorable discharge from his medic duties following WWII, Vincent returned home and did not realize what was going on as he experienced



depression and uncertainty with his future.

So many visions from the war still ravaged his thoughts and dreams. Therefore, he bypassed his previous educational endeavors, working at his family's service station/garage pumping gas, assisting in the Varsity Sports Restaurant, and working for a cousin's grocery store. He also continued to be active in his home church St. Thomas Aquinas, where he has been an altar boy, Lector, Eucharistic Minister, and Sacristan for his church over the years. In addition, he has participated or assisted with the American Legion, Knights of Columbus, Catholic War Veterans, Catholic Youth groups, the Thomas Volunteer Fire Department, and the local nursing home volunteer group.

His church has been and still is the hub of his wheel. Even today Vincent, 91 years old, is in church when the doors are open and the weather is passable.

It was several years after World War II, when Vincent could not shake the depression that enveloped his life, that he was diagnosed with PTSD. It was a relief for this "gentle" man who was so traumatized by the sights, sounds, and smells

he experienced especially on D-Day.

In spite of all the horrors of war, Vincent continues to have a compassionate heart and a beautiful wry sense of humor. He goes to visit several Cortland Acres residents daily and is very kind and caring. Though he never married, he has many nieces and nephews and even great-nieces and nephews that he prays for by name each and every day. His life today includes lots of soul soothing classical music, plays, and cheering for WVU. There is nothing like a WVU victory to sooth the soul of a huge Mountaineer fan!

Through all the trauma of war, Vincent has remained a gentleman's gentleman, a man of presence, and someone who commands respect. His Bronze Star Medal citation states that he performed his tasks in an exceptional manner with a high degree of initiative and resourcefulness in obtaining medical supplies and administering first aid to the wounded.

Following the war he struggled with the question "Why did I live," and day by day, year by year, Vincent developed meaning and purpose to his life by nurturing a strong spiritual life and giving to others. Has his life been easy? No! Has it been worth it? Yes!

Vincent's commitment and contributions to his family and local community since WWII are a testament to a life that is overcoming adversity daily. Did you wonder about the nickname "Bugs"? It didn't come from Bugs Bunny, but from a nickname that evolved from Junior to June Bug to just plain ole "Bugs."

Cortland honors employees for service

A number of employees at Cortland Acres recently received awards for their years of service, including four who have been with Cortland for 30 years.

Rebecca Paugh, Victoria Pennington, Marie Grafton and Diane Polomski all hit the three-decade mark. They were among 14 employees honored during a special breakfast on April 11.

"Cortland Acres is proud to have so many longtime employees who help make Cortland the special place it is for both residents and those receiving outpatient services," Administrator Don Black said. "The dedication of the people we're honoring this year – and the entire staff at Cortland – work hard to make sure people receive the best care possible."

Cortland recognizes people on the fifth anniversaries of their start. Others honored this year include:

Beth Clevenger, 25 years;
Clarice Knotts, Diana Mullenax and Janice Skinner, 15 years;



Cortland Acres recently recognized employees for their years of service. From left to right are Director of Nursing Robin Eye, who presented awards; Diana Mullenax, administration; Beth Clevenger, assistant administrator; Jessica Knotts, CNA; Rebecca Paugh, director of social services; Raeanna Martin, CNA; Bobbi Grinnan, social worker/community relations; Christina Mallow, CNA; Diane Polomski, CNA; Clarice Knotts, housekeeping; Administrator Don Black, who presented awards; Cris Lambruno, director of environmental services, who presented awards. Not pictured are Maria Harr, CNA; Cassie Goldizen, LPN; Janice Skinner, dietary; Victoria Pennington, CNA; Marie Grafton, activities director.

Bobbi Grinnan, Jessica Knotts and Cassie Goldizen, 10 years;

Maria Harr, Christina Mallow and Raeanna Martin, 5 years.

Dedicated volunteers big part of Cortland success

Volunteers are a big part of the success of Cortland Acres, and they received special recognition during the annual Volunteer Banquet.

The evening began with a pair of special readings, "Thank You for Your Precision Gifts" by Champ Sedmock, vice president of the Resident Council, and "Gifts of Time" by Betty Bonner, secretary of the Resident Council. After the memorial candle was lit in memory of Virginia Pedicone, the blessing was given by Lois Lamont, president of the Resident Council. Paul Steedman played the guitar as entertainment.

Administrator Don Black thanked volunteers for their passion and dedication to Cortland throughout the year. Debbie Stevens, a member of the Cortland Board of Directors, added her appreciation as the keynote speaker.

The officers for the year were recognized before individual volunteers were honored. Officers are John Hedrick, president; Anne Felty, vice president; Joy Showalter, secretary; Mary Frances Good, treasurer; and Lucy Quattro, executive member.

Cindy Helmick, activity assistant, honored the "Rookie

of the Year," Kay Flanagan for her hard work, and Mary Swisher, activity assistant, thanked the Mountaineer Garden Club for its assistance as the "Outstanding Group."

Activity Assistant Linda Shupp thanked Neal Precht in the "Ministry Recognition," and Activity Assistant Sandy Kisamore honored Lexi Roth with the "Youth Recognition" award. Marie Grafton, Cortland's activity director, then presented the 2013 "Outstanding Volunteer" to Mary Frances Good. Sandy Kisamore gave the benediction to close out the special program.

'Pasta Palooza' June 20

Everyone is invited to join the Cortland Foundation for the inaugural "Pasta Palooza", Thursday, June 20, 2013 from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. in the Cortland Dining Room. Plates will be uniquely created in front of each guest by Executive Chef and Tucker County High School ProStart program instructor Brian Covell.

"We're very excited to do this unique fund-raiser for the first time," said Lois Nelson, director of the Cortland Foundation. "Chef Covell's flavorful, festive and flamboyant presentation is a true crowd pleaser, and proceeds benefit the Foundation and ProStart."

Diners will choose ingredients for their own creation from a variety of selections. **Pastas** include radiatore, whole wheat penne, rainbow rotini and tortellini.

Sauces include marinara, Alfredo, tomato basil, pesto and olive oil. **Ingredients** to add include parmesan cheese, sweet peas, mushrooms, fresh spinach, crushed garlic, roasted red peppers, diced tomatoes, red onions, artichoke hearts, fresh sweet basil, Italian parsley, fresh sage, meatballs, grilled chicken and sweet Italian sausage.

Donations appreciated. Reservations requested at 304-463-4181 or email foundation@cortlandacres.org. Walk-ins are welcome.

Vet recognition June 23

A Tucker County Military Service Reunion will be held at the Cortland Acres Pavilion on Sunday, June 23 at 2 p.m. This event will celebrate veterans from all branches and from all over the region.

"We are thrilled to be working with the Tucker County Veterans to honor military service men and women from Tucker and surrounding counties," Beth Clevenger, assistant administrator at Cortland Acres. "This is the second year for this special celebration."

The event will include a ceremony to honor all veterans in attendance, refreshments and an exhibition of military equipment. The Honey Rubenstein Juvenile Center Color Guard will present the colors to open the ceremony followed by prayer by Pastor Mike Lantz and a speaker highlighting the importance of military service.

For information on the Military Service Reunion call 304-463-4181.



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