

A Hand Up

Post in Florida helps veteran make home safe again

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The ring of a bell at VFW Post 10087 in Beverly Hills, Florida, by an elderly veteran in May led to a grand-scale, 119-hour volunteer mission by six Post members to improve his living conditions.

When the 74-year-old veteran sought help from the Post in finding a local handyman for minor domestic repairs around his trailer, its members assessed the situation and realized this was a subdued plea for more than a routine repair.

“We learned that he suffers from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and a heart condition and was living alone in a mobile home he owned,” Post 10087 Commander Bill Merryman said. “We realized there were major safety issues involved and, as a result, his living in these conditions were causing him to become severely depressed.”

The Post members also learned that more than 50 percent of the interior flooring had deteriorated, his overgrown yard had become unsafe to walk about, and the front steps to the home were a safety hazard and needed replacement.

Led by Brooks Herrold, fellow Post members Bob Myal, Paul Bianchi, Tim Walter, Charles Adler and Merryman devoted 119 hours of labor at the veteran’s home, accumulating more than 920 miles on their vehicles and providing all tools needed to complete the project.

“We went in and replaced the front stairs, all of the rotten subflooring and cleared the property around his home,” Merryman said. “We completed the first phase at the end of July, and even though we are not yet done, most of the current repairs have already improved the veteran’s living conditions and mental status.”

The project relied on Post 10087’s veterans relief fund and the Veterans Foundation to cover the materials needed for replacement, while Herrold covered the project’s liability insurance through his Beverly Hills-based construction company, KCH Construction.

“Additional funds have been raised to cover the subflooring with tile and that phase will be

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completed in September,” Merryman said. “The veteran has expressed his gratitude to Post 10087 and all those who volunteered their time and expertise to work on this project.”

Through their house committee, Merryman added that Post 10087 is often reviewing new projects in support of veterans needing a hand up. They are also in the process of taking on a female veteran’s need of a roof repair, a request that was forwarded to them by the local United Way.

“Wherever and whenever we can, we assist,” Merryman said. “We hope this inspires others to continue helping veterans whenever possible.”