

VFW Post Commander Max Carter remembered

By Laura Mancuso
IVN Staff

On Dec. 3 a celebration of life was held for Max Carter, WWII veteran and former post commander of the Veteran of Foreign Wars, Post 5995 of the Illinois Valley.

A full house with veterans and friends gathered at Sportsman Tavern to honor and reminisce about what a great man Carter was.

"His smile, personality and his stories, I just loved Max, he was my little guy, so full of life," said his friend Holly Warner who helped organize the celebration of life.

His friends had many kind words to say about Carter, but they also were still upset about how he died.

On Nov. 14, 2016 Carter was struck and killed by a hit-and-run driver. This is still an active investigation and family and friends are urging anyone with information to please call the Oregon State Police Major Crimes Section at 541-776-6111.

"I call the state trooper all the time to see if they have any information about the hit-and-run," said Lisa Bond, a friend of Carters for the last 15 years. When asked what she will miss most about Max she said, "My chubbies." (Carter always gave her an endearing pinch on her cheek every time he saw her.) She expressed how she hopes someone will be brave enough to come forward with information.

"He was a helluva nice guy; he did not deserve to get run over," said longtime friend Marvin Haney, 89, fellow WWII veteran.

Many of his veteran friends sat around a table remembering Carter.

"He was alive, animated, and brilliant in his life and the kindest, gentlest man I ever knew. I loved transporting Max; he told me about his life during and after the war," said De Spellman driver and volunteer coordinator for the Department of Veteran Affairs' American Eagle Van. "Everyone liked Max and he loved to have fun."

"He fell in love with the area," said Dave Cameron, 20-year friend and veteran when asked what brought Carter to the area. Apparently Carter was a miner and was known for driving around a "worn-out green International Jeep" with his mining equipment in it.

Old photographs of Carter were passed around and then, with tears in everyone's eyes, Mr. Smith, an anonymous friend, veteran, and donor to the event, led the group in a toast to Carter. Next, Smith and a group of veterans left to spread his ashes in an undisclosed location that was special to Carter.

"Happy, cheery, smiley, loveable, I will miss his smile and laugh the most," said Sue Bee Grissom, a friend who met Carter in 1998 when she teasingly tried to run him over with her motorcycle in a parking lot. Grissom remembered Carter paying her and her daughter "handsomely" when they removed blackberry bushes at his home. Grissom expressed remorse for never taking Carter for a promised ride on her motorcycle.

"He always had a good attitude," said Brenda O'Neal who met Carter in the '90s



(Photo by Laura Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Veteran Ron Hiler (left) and Deb Cladwell-Miller look at photos from the past of Max Carter at his celebration of life Saturday, Dec. 3.

when she owned Ivy's Roadhouse. She often played gin rummy with Carter and she stayed good friends with him; speaking to him once a week on the phone. "He was so witty, funny and clever. He had gone to college and that was something different for someone of his age."

"He was a good man; put his life on the


line for his country, he was well-liked by the community. I hope the person(s) responsible for his death are made to pay, in full," said veteran Ron Hiler.

According to Hiler, Carter always had a saying when giving a toast, "Babalucci Gabbalucci, down the hatch!"

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