

'I Was Able to Help Them'

A VFW Post in Michigan celebrated its oldest member in April, a 105-year-old former Army nurse who remains active in VFW

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Irene Hosking was 24 years old when she joined the Army Nurse Corps more than 80 years ago. Her brother — two years her junior — survived the attack on Pearl Harbor. That pivotal moment provided the impetus for Hosking's enlistment on May 15, 1942.

She met her husband, Louis W.A. Hosking, while based at Fort Custer, Michigan (now Fort McCoy). They would eventually have one son, Howard.

Growing up in Hurley, Wisconsin, Hosking attended Milwaukee Wisconsin School of Nursing, where she graduated as a registered nurse on Feb. 8, 1940.

As an Army nurse in 1942, Hosking found herself in Australia caring for the wounded. She clearly remembers tending to those with severe amputations. One was a baseball player who lost his pitching arm. Another GI had 17 wounds.

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

After returning home, Hosking tried to join a VFW Post, but at that time, women were not allowed membership in the organization. In 1984, she joined VFW Post 4005 in Corunna, Michigan, and became Post commander in 1995.

Hosking also was the first female commander of Michigan's Shiawassee VFW County Council. She has held a multitude of other positions within VFW since then. In 1996, Hosking became a member of the Post Auxiliary.

At 105, Hosking regularly attends Post meetings as a Life member as well as VFW County Council meetings. Her daughter-in-law, Cathy, said Hosking tries to also attend state

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meetings when those are held close to home.

To celebrate Hosking and her 105th birthday, VFW Post 4005 was to host an open house in her honor on April 22, just two days after her birthday.

Post Commander Fred Blair said Hosking was the Post chaplain for 25 years, stepping down just last year. In April, she conducted the installation of the new Post officers.

Blair said Hosking keeps him in line and lets him know if he makes any mistakes.

“I joke she is nothing but a thorn in my butt ... because she is my rose,” Blair said. “I recently gave her half a dozen roses — one for every year she has had to put up with me as Post commander.”

For her big celebration, Hosking requested no gifts, but instead asked for contributions to the Post, the VFW National Home for Children, or other causes.

Hosking shared her secret to longevity: no smoking, no drinking and everything else in moderation.

With 105 years of living under her belt, Hosking has simple, but sage advice when it comes to living the best life: “I always try to be nice to everyone. I treat everyone I meet like I have known them a long time.”

This article is featured in the June/July 2023 issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Janie Dyhouse](#), senior editor for VFW magazine.