

‘They Are Our Cornerstone’

Husband and wife lead a VFW Post and Auxiliary in Florida, and they say their partnership is a benefit to the organization

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VFW Post 4337 in Inverness, Florida, is being led by a husband-and-wife team. Post Commander Jesus (Joe) Acosta and Auxiliary President Lorinda (Lori) Acosta lead the Post and its Auxiliary in community endeavors.

A Vietnam veteran, Joe was based at Long Thanh North from 1969-1971 with the 210th Combat Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Brigade. He joined the VFW in 1977 while he was stationed in Lawton, Oklahoma.

Now in his third non-consecutive term as Post commander, Joe said having Lori serving alongside him has been the easiest term thus far.

“During our morning breakfast, we just chit-chat about how we can help each other’s organization,” said Joe, who has been married to Lori for seven years. “But we respect each other’s position. The Auxiliary is always willing to assist and lend a hand with planning, promoting and with the execution of our events. In reality, they are our cornerstone.”

Lori, who joined the VFW Auxiliary in 2020, was an EMT with the Flanders Fire Department Rescue Squad. She was one of the many who responded to the Twin Towers on Sept. 11, 2001.

As the immediate and past Post Auxiliary president, she said serving next to Joe has been nothing but positive.

“We trust each other in decision-making for the betterment of the Post and membership of both organizations,” Lori said. “If there are problems, we work together to resolve any issues. The role of the Auxiliary is to help our veterans to the best of our ability.”

Among the many Post activities, the Auxiliary support is weekly bingo, food drives, potluck

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dinners and representing the Post in the Buddy Poppy contest at the fall conference.

“In general, the Auxiliary members are here to be a helping hand whenever we can be of service,” Lori said. “Or a friendly shoulder or ear if someone just needs to vent.”

The duo channels the membership’s efforts in providing scholarships to high school students, recognizing first responders and helping needy veterans who need a hand up. Most of all, Joe said, they “delight in the camaraderie” of the VFW community.

“Members of the VFW join to mingle with people who understand them and respect those boundaries,” Joe added. “On the other hand, the people who join the VFW Auxiliary join as a tribute to their spouse or a loved one who has endowed them with the privilege of membership.”

Joe is quick to commend his wife, a two-time cancer survivor, for being an inspiration to other women who are just beginning their own cancer journeys. He said Lori plays softball and has been a bowler for 26 years, including competing twice in Reno, Nevada, in the national championship games.

“A significant milestone for our Post was the conversion to a non-smoking establishment,” Joe said. “Despite nay sayers stating otherwise, our Post is thriving and is a hub of camaraderie.”

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