



Veteran credits VA with not only saving his life, but also his caregiver's life

PHOENIX -- Most Phoenicians will remember June 20, 2017 as just another record-breaking temperature. The Valley topped out at 119 degrees – enough to ground planes at Sky Harbor International Airport, but for one Phoenix Veteran, it was Christmas in June.

Michael Nash, a Cold War-era Army Veteran, was two years into his battle with a failing liver when he received the phone call from the Phoenix VA.

“The day VA called to tell me they had a liver donor was the hottest day in Arizona,” Nash said. “The planes weren’t takin’ off, so I thought to myself ‘I’m a goner.’ But, sure enough, I received a call at 3 in the afternoon. They said there was a vehicle on the way to pick me, my wife and our dog up to take us to the airport.”

Phoenix VA was able to acquire a plane capable of withstanding the heat to transport Nash and his wife Linda to Nashville, Tennessee for an emergency liver transplant.

“They got me to Nashville,” Nash said. “When I woke up I had a new liver, but unfortunately, my wife became very sick.”

Linda Nash was Michael’s caregiver and the stress took its toll. Linda explained she was so physically exhausted from the years of providing for her husband that she was unable to use her legs and spent a month in Nashville recovering.

“I thank VA for taking care of my wife and getting her home from Nashville,” Nash said. “What greater honor than to have a country care enough to save your life and your wife’s?”

Linda said her husband has improved dramatically since receiving the liver transplant in June dropping from 280 to 250 pounds. She said her husband would have roughly 15 liters of fluid drained from his body every week because his liver no longer operated.

“His color was so terrible,” she explained. “We had friends from back east who visited us before the operation, and they told me they were afraid they had their last conversation with him. But when he picked me up after my return from Nashville, he walked toward me, and honestly, I didn’t recognize him. The change was that dramatic.” Nash credits the Phoenix and Nashville VA with saving his life. He said he was offered the opportunity to receive care in the community closer to his home, but after a few visits he decided he would rather travel the extra distance to receive care at the Phoenix VA.

“I would have to get pumped twice a week,” Nash said. “The radiology department staff at the Phoenix VA made me feel so welcome. They know my wife and I by our first name and even bought me a cupcake on my birthday. When you’re sick you’re vulnerable, scared and hurting, but they made me feel safe.”

Nash said he will continue receiving care from the VA, but added he now lives a normal life – swimming three times a week and helping lessen the burden of everyday chores from his wife.

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