

## STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF LD 2217

I am here to talk to you about my father, Bob O'Brian, and the quality of care that he received at the Maine Veterans Homes - first at Machias where he spent several years and then at Augusta where he lived for about two years until his death.

My dad was an army veteran who was stationed in Germany in the early 1950s. Like most veterans of his era, he returned home; got married; started and raised a family; and had a career as a civilian security guard at the Army National Guard in Bangor. The years passed. He retired; my mother passed; and my dad lived alone in his home in Bangor. As he aged, I noticed that he had increasing memory problems. He could not remember to take his meds. He needed help to get to medical appointments. He could not remember to pay bills. He became increasingly confused about most day-to-day activities.

Then one day I received a call from the Bangor Police that my father showed up at the Army National Guard for work - a job that he had retired from 10 years earlier. He found an old uniform, made himself a bagged lunch and off to work he went. I could not convince him that he no longer had this job. That ended my father's independent living situation. He was admitted to the dementia unit at Togus. I needed to find a long term assisted living facility.

My first and only choice was a Maine Veterans Home. My dad had received all his medical care from the VA and I knew that this would be a good fit for him. At the time, the Bangor location was full and the only opening was in Machias. The original plan was to place him in that facility until Bangor became available. I wanted my dad to be closer to my home. I knew it would be hard to visit him on a regular basis. However, once he arrived at the Machias Veterans Home I realized that it was the place for him. The facility was small and the staff was welcoming. My father was well cared for. To the extent possible, my father was content.

During the several years dad lived at the Maine Veterans Home in Machias, his care was exceptional. I did not have one issue or problem. All his needs were fully met. He could not have received better care anywhere else. Most of all, I did not have to worry. All of the staff went the extra mile in my father's care. They also communicated with me about any issues or problems he may have been having. I have good memories of my visits with dad during this time such as holiday meals at the Maine Veterans Home.

The day finally came when my father needed nursing home level of care and he went to the Maine Veterans Home in Augusta. That was a sad day for me because Machias had been his home for so long and he had received top quality care. Everyone at the Maine Veterans Home in Augusta were great. They all made the transition easy. Again, the quality of care was exceptional. Those last couple of years were not easy ones as my father's health steadily declined. His dementia worsened. His quality of care always remained high.

I finally received the call from the veterans home that my father's passing was imminent. My wife and I headed to Augusta. On our way, we received a call from the veterans home that we should

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We arrived in time to be there at the end. I thank the Maine Veterans Home for notifying us in time to be there for him.

I have nothing but great things to say about the Maine Veterans Homes. My father received the best of care. As I said above, I never had one issue or problem with his care over the course of several years. That is why I am asking all of you to support LD 2217. Just knowing that my father had the option of a Maine Veterans Home was a great relief to me. Seeing the exceptional care put my mind at ease. I hope that the Maine Veterans Homes get the necessary funding so present and future vets and their families know that they the best of care is available to our aging veterans.

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