

Lebanon locals support veterans during holiday

Hal Conte

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After 35 years of service in the army fighting in Operation Desert Storm and Operation Enduring Freedom, Charles Meck would not be defeated by a leaky roof that left water all over his daughter's bed.

But amid issues with his heart, legs and diabetes, and resulting large medical bills, Meck, a 55-year-old Jonestown resident who has been forced to depend on disability and Social Security benefits, was turned down for credit. Fortunately, he had an ally -- Jeff Mazalewski, co-owner of Jeff Maz Roofing and Handyman Services in Fredricksburg, who repaired Meck's roof free of charge Tuesday.

"When he told us he was installing the roof for us, I was completely stunned. Nobody had ever done anything that nice for us," Meck said. "I've seen discounts on meals, but nobody's gone to this extent. We were completely speechless."

As snow and the coronavirus batter Lebanon County this holiday season, volunteer organizations, businesses and individuals have continued efforts to help veterans and commemorate those who have died. But more help is needed.

"Usually during this time of year my office is flooded with people and organizations out to help veterans and their families," wrote Scott Kohr, director of Veterans Affairs in Lebanon County. "I just haven't gotten the responses like in the past because of the pandemic."

The institutions that act as anchors in the lives of many veterans, including American Legion chapters, VFW branches, and organizations such as

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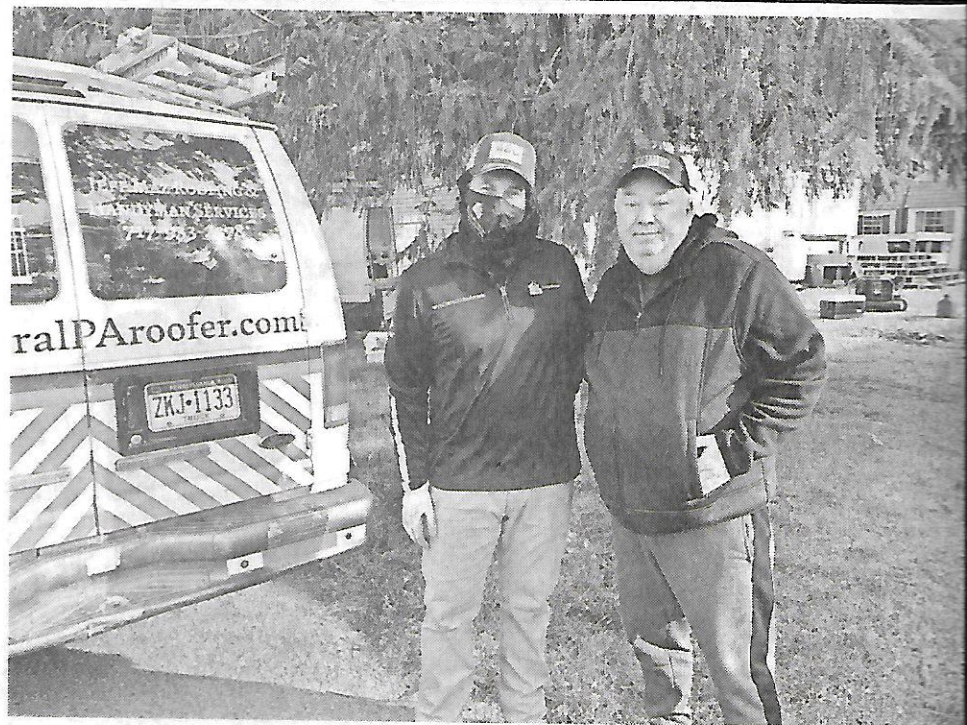
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Veterans

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Meck said that as a veteran, he did not feel entitled to but was grateful for the volunteer efforts made by organizations and businesses in the county. "I just did my job," Meck said.

Mazalewski, meanwhile, is planning to make Roofs For Veterans an annual event. "I started doing some thinking, and I said, 'this is an opportunity where I can help someone in need,'" he concluded.



Jeff Mazalewski (left), co-owner of Jeff Maz Roofing and Handyman Services in Fredricksburg, repaired the roof of Charles Meck (right), a veteran who served in Operation Desert Storm and Operation Enduring Freedom, free of charge.

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