



Volume 16 • Issue 06

VVA Chapter 12 ♦ Newsletter

June 2016

**FLAG DAY
JUNE 14**



**Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 12
PO Box 276, Allenhurst, NJ 07711**

'For those who fought for it, Freedom has a special flavor the protected will never know.'



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Dan Higgins, Alternate Delegate

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Presidents Message

May 7, every year, is New Jersey's Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day, where at 11:00am at your Memorial in Holmdel, we all come together to remember our departed brothers and sisters who have given their all. Also on this day, our Chapter held its annual dinner dance and installation that marked 34 years as a Chapter of VVA. As always, it was every well attended by members, family, and friends. Thanks to all who sold and supported our Ad Journal. It was unbelievable in size. Thanks to all who helped make it successful.

On May 15 the Chapter partnered with Chapter 721 and held a Town Hall Meeting on Agent Orange and other herbicides, along with Contamination from burn pits, at VFW2179 in Port Monmouth, which was every successful . Thanks to the panel of speakers, Michael Eckstein from the State Council, Herb Worthington, Past National Agent Orange Committee Chairman , Paul Sutton, Chapter 12, Bob Hopkins, also Chapter 12, and Frank Arminio, 2nd Vice President State Council .

As always, on Memorial Day, since 1982, we gathered for breakfast at 8:45, then on to Spring Lake for their annual Memorial Day Parade. Due to the weather conditions the Parade only was canceled. At 11:00, over 250 people showed up for the Memorial Service and wreath presentation.

The Colonel



UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENTS

The next Chapter meeting will be on Wednesday, June 1, 2016 at 7:30PM. Location is at VFW 2226, 210 Norwood Ave., Oakhurst, NJ.

June 11, War Dogs Memorial Rededication (see flyer)

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Rich Brandon June 1st

Tony Corbella, June 4th

Janet Aitken, June 6th

Rich Magovern, June 7th

Jeffery Weiss, June 24th

Anyone born in June ?? Please let me know so I can put it here!!

If you wish to post a birthday or anniversary please submit the info by the 20th of the month for the next month's news letter.



The United States War Dogs Association

*Cordially invites you to
Attend the 10 - Year Anniversary
Rededication ceremony for the*

*United States War Dogs Memorial
State Of New Jersey*

Saturday, June 11, 2016

11:00 AM

To be held at the:

*New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial
1 Memorial Lane*

Holmdel, New Jersey 07733

Exit 116, Garden State Parkway

(On the Grounds of the PNC Bank Arts Center)

NJVVV - 732-335-0033

USWDA - 609-747-9340

National POW/MIA Remembrance Act of 2015 signed into law
Vietnam Veterans of America -Legislative Update
May 3, 2016

On April 29, 2016, The President of the United States signed into law the National POW/MIA Remembrance Act of 2015. This new law was introduced in the house (H.R. 1760) by Congressman Stephen Lynch (MA-8) and companion bill in the Senate (S.885) by Senator Elizabeth Warren (MA). The new law reads as follows:

One Hundred Fourteenth Congress of the United States of America
AT THE SECOND SESSION

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Monday, the fourth day of January, two thousand and sixteen

An Act

To direct the Architect of the Capitol to place in the United States Capitol a chair honoring American Prisoners of War/Missing in Action.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ``National POW/MIA Remembrance Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) In recent years, commemorative chairs honoring American Prisoners of War/Missing in Action have been placed in prominent locations across the United States.

(2) The United States Capitol is an appropriate location to place a commemorative chair honoring American Prisoners of War/Missing in Action.

SEC. 3. PLACEMENT OF A CHAIR IN UNITED STATES CAPITOL HONORING AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR/MISSING IN ACTION.

(a) Obtaining Chair.--The Architect of the Capitol shall enter into an agreement to obtain a chair featuring the logo of the National League of POW/MIA Families under such terms and conditions as the Architect considers appropriate and consistent with applicable law.

(b) Placement.--Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Architect shall place the chair obtained under subsection (a) in a suitable permanent location in the United States Capitol.

SEC. 4. FUNDING.

(a) Donations.--The Architect of the Capitol may--

(1) enter into an agreement with any organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of that Code to solicit private donations to carry out the purposes of this Act; and

(2) accept donations of funds, property, and services to carry out the purposes of this Act.

(b) Costs.--All costs incurred in carrying out the purposes of this Act shall be paid for with private donations received under subsection (a).

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Vice President of the United States and President of the Senate.

Department of Veterans Affairs Claims Clinic For Veterans; Dependents and Survivors

WHERE: Trenton Vets Center
934 Parkway Avenue #201
Ewing, NJ 08618

WHEN: *Wednesday, June 22*, 2016/noon -'PM

Who should come? Veteran, Service members and dependents of who are interested and eligible to receive VA benefits and entitlements

- • This is a great opportunity to get information about your, VA benefits and entitlements, submit a claim for benefits, or receive information about the status of your pending VA claim • •

This event is open to the public

For more information contact Jennifer Myers at jennifef.mvers6@va.gov or 973-297-3384

For mass distribution.

Spina Bifida

From: Fred Urban
Date: May 13, 2016 4:17:42 PM
Subject: Spina Bifida
To: Dennis Beauregard <vva12p@verizon.net>

Dennis, please circulate.

Taken from the VFW Action Corps Weekly:

Changes to Spina Bifida Program: This week, VA implemented changes to health care and services it covers for certain children of Vietnam War and Korean DMZ veterans born with spina bifida. Starting this week, Spina Bifida Program beneficiaries are eligible to receive homemaker or home health aide services that provide assistance with daily living activities or instrumental activities of daily living that have therapeutic value. VA has also made changes to the list of health care services that require preauthorization. For more information on these changes, contact the Spina Bifida Health Care Benefits Program General Information at 888-820-1756. You can also read more at: <http://www.va.gov/purchasedcare/programs/dependents/spinabifida/>.



PRESS RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans of America

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 17, 2016

No. 16-11

Contact:
Mokie Porter
301-585-4000

Vietnam Veterans of America, National Institute of Corrections Release New Publication on Veterans Treatment Courts

(Washington, D.C.) – “When troops return home from a combat zone, they are forever changed, even if they have never suffered a physical injury or wound,” said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA). “Far too many of these newly minted veterans get caught up in the criminal justice system, with their past service dismissed, and their future options sadly diminished.”

“Today, however,” Rowan noted, “Veterans Treatment Courts offer hope to these men and women that had been unavailable to veterans of previous wars and conflicts.” First established by Judge Robert Russell in 2008, these courts now number over 300. Vietnam veteran Patrick Welch, of VVA Chapter 77 in Erie County, New York, continues to play an integral role in the Buffalo Veterans Court. Along with Judge Russell, he has overseen the evolution of this court into what is now a national model. Said Welch, “the Veterans Treatment Court model represents the most profound change in the attitude of our criminal justice system towards veterans in the history of this country.”

Today, the National Institute of Corrections will release *Veterans Treatment Courts: A Second Chance for Vets Who Have Lost Their Way*, a publication based on a series of interviews that explore the topic of these diversionary courts. Conceived by Greg Crawford, corrections program specialist for the National Institute of Corrections, a division of the federal Bureau of Prisons, this publication is written and edited by Bernard Edelman, deputy director for policy and government affairs for VVA, with the assistance of Dr. Tom Berger, executive director of VVA’s Veterans Health Council.

Veterans Treatment Courts: A Second Chance for Vets Who Have Lost Their Way tells the story of those who have been intimately involved in the founding and the operation of these courts, the veterans, judges, veterans advocates, and treatment professionals who are engaged in the fight to ensure a second chance for vets who find themselves caught up in the criminal justice system. To learn more about veterans’ initiatives at the NIC, visit the National Institute of Corrections at www.nicic.gov/veterans.

Vietnam Veterans of America is the nation’s only congressionally chartered veterans’ service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. In keeping with its founding principle, “Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another,” VVA aggressively advocates for all veterans.

House votes to expand benefits for Vietnam 'Blue Water Navy' vets

Patricia Kime, Military Times 3:42 p.m. EDT May 19, 2016

Veterans who served on Navy ships off Vietnam and have diseases linked to Agent Orange were buoyed Thursday by House passage of a measure that could expand their Veterans Affairs benefits. An amendment added to the House Military Construction and Veterans Affairs funding bill would require the department to presume these veterans were exposed to the toxic herbicide and provide health care and compensation if they are sick as a result.

The initiative still must pass the Senate before it becomes law, but it marks a major step forward for a cause that has languished in Congress and at the VA for years.

“Members from both sides of the aisle have been fighting to make sure these sailors get the health care they need,” said amendment sponsor Rep. Chris Gibson, R-N.Y. “We will never turn our backs on our service men and women.”

VA already has presumed that sailors and Marines who served on ships on inland waterways in Vietnam faced the same risks as those who served on the ground and provide them benefits if they have one of several diseases linked to herbicide exposure, including Parkinson's disease, diabetes and peripheral neuropathy.

MILITARYTIMES

VA urged to favor veterans on toxic exposure claims

But VA does not consider “blue water veterans” to have been directly exposed to the herbicide and therefore are ineligible for benefits.

Advocacy groups and legislators say a VA policy that excludes bays and harbors from the definition of “inland” is unfair, and, they add, studies indicate that service members may have been exposed when the ships they were assigned to used distilled contaminated sea water for bathing and drinking.

“These personnel were heavily exposed to this toxin through shipboard water systems that drew Agent Orange-affected waters through filtration systems,” said retired Navy Cmdr. John Wells, Military-Veterans Advocacy executive director. “Although they may never have been on land where the toxin was sprayed, they were still exposed through eating, drinking and bathing.”

The Institute of Medicine released a study in 2011 saying there is not enough information to determine whether these veterans were exposed to Agent Orange.

Despite the research gap, Wells said many of the estimated surviving 90,000 sailors and Marines who served are sick and dying from Agent Orange-related diseases.

“There is incontrovertible, scientific proof of this exposure, but the Department of Veterans Affairs has been reticent about restoring benefits, even in light of recent court cases,” Wells wrote in a recent press release.

Open and view the photos, they are great.

Michael Mc Mahon

May 22 (9
days ago)

Rob,

I took pictures during the **Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day** ceremony on May 7th, and posted an album on-line. I thought you may like to share the link in this month's BITW. The event was presided over by NJ Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno, Brigadier General Michael L. Cunniff, and Major General (Ret.) Clark W. Martin Chairman of the NJ VVMF.

The album can be found at: <https://mgmcmahon.smugmug.com/NJ-Vietnam-Veterans-Memorial/NJ-VVMF-Remembrance-Day-May-7/>

Clicking on the first picture will enlarge it to full screen and have an arrow to scroll through the album, or you can scan down the page to see them all.

Take care,

ROLLING THUNDER

Rolling Thunder's monument-shaking roar starts with aging vets in a NJ garage

Artie Muller, a Vietnam veteran and founder of Rolling Thunder Inc., stands beside his 1992 Harley-Davidson FXRS Low Rider in Neshanic Station, N.J. Muller helps organize the annual Memorial Day weekend rally in Washington.

Ricky Carioti/The Washington Post
Artie Muller, a Vietnam veteran and founder of Rolling Thunder Inc., stands beside his 1992 Harley-Davidson FXRS Low Rider in Neshanic Station, N.J. Muller helps organize the annual Memorial Day weekend rally in Washington.

NESHANIC STATION, N.J. — One of the world's largest motorcycle rallies — a monument-shaking ritual called Rolling Thunder that takes over the National Mall each Memorial Day weekend — spends the rest of the year here, packed in the garage of a tidy colonial-style house in central New Jersey.

On Wednesday, jammed between a bag of Scotts Grass Seed and a toddler's bicycle, were stacks of POW banners, American flags, black T-shirts, biker patches, vest pins and the other accoutrements of the annual Harley howl of patriotism and warrior brotherhood that will dominate Washington for the 29th year in a row.

These are the traffic cones, two-way radios and bales of Costco toilet paper that will guide, aid and comfort hundreds of thousands of bikers from across the country on their annual four-hour, four-abreast roll from the Pentagon, across Arlington Memorial Bridge, around the Capitol and back to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

"I haven't been able to get my car in here since January," said Elaine Muller, the grandmother (please don't ask her age) who runs the office side of Rolling Thunder Inc

But not for long. It was packing time, four days before Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter will blow the boat horn that unleashes a few million horsepower of leather-vested POW-MIA advocacy onto the streets of D.C.

A 20-foot U-Haul truck was backing toward the garage, and most of the Rolling Thunder executive board was in the driveway waving directions at the side mirrors: the president, a high school building engineer and the treasurer, who recently retired after 31 years in the meat department of the local Acme supermarket.

"This is when the f-bombs usually start flying," said Nancy Regg, the event's national spokeswoman, who takes calls from reporters between stops on her job delivering dry cleaning.

"We're not professional event planners, but we have been doing this so long we get it done somehow every year," Muller said, standing before stacks of neatly labeled plastic crates: "Parking Staff Bandanas"; "Pentagon Table 8"; "Sunday Color Guard."

Behind the wheel of the truck is her husband of 48 years, Artie Muller, the longtime guiding force behind Rolling Thunder. He climbed down from the cab with the bent stiffness of a 71-year-old who jumped out of too many helicopters as an infantry sergeant in Vietnam.

A onetime mechanic at the nearby Exxon Mobil Corp. headquarters, he retired at 51 with severe peripheral neuropathy he attributes to Agent Orange exposure. His exquisitely maintained 1992 Harley-Davidson FXRS Low Rider (88,000 miles, original clutch) carries a handicapped license plate. His patch-covered riding vest bristles with sharp metal studs to keep grateful vets from slapping his painful shoulder. "It was agony before I figured out about the studs," he said.

Artie Muller helped load the tents, cases of juice, stacks of chairs, boxes of Rolling Thunder CDs by country singer Rockie Lynne. But periodically, he limped down to his basement office, a vet cave of POW posters, Vietnam maps and stacked paperwork.

On the wall are copies of legislation Rolling Thunder has pushed in Congress, including a signed copy of S. 528, the National POW/MIA Recognition Act of 1997: "To require the display of the POW/MIA flag on various occasions and on in various locations." There are photos of Muller with former president George W. Bush on the White House driveway, with Bush in the Oval Office, a letter of appreciation from Bush.

"President Bush was very good to us," he said.

Other White Houses, Muller said, not so much. President Barack Obama poked his head into a White House meeting, but nothing more, according to Muller. He used the b-word to dismiss one former and perhaps future occupant of 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.: Hillary Clinton. "Kiss the country goodbye if she gets into office," he declared.

Muller doesn't do email, or text, so all the last-minute fires he needed to put out were announced with another ring of his landline. The Pentagon wanted to bill him with an unexpected \$11,000 surcharge for Pentagon security related to Carter's participation. There was a snag closing some of the highway ramps in Virginia.

And then there was Trump.

"Donald Trump's a smart man, but he must have a couple of dumb guys working for him," said Muller, running a hand through his brushed-back gray hair.

The presumptive Republican presidential nominee had agreed to come speak at the event's Sunday rally. But he had just found out that Trump's staff thought the appearance was Monday. Trump would make it Sunday, they promised.

Muller supports Trump in spite of the New York billionaire's disparaging remarks about POWs — "I like people that weren't captured" Trump said as a dig at Sen. John McCain, (R-Ariz., a former POW in Vietnam.

"It doesn't bother me," he said. "I don't think he meant it."

The phone rang again. It was his 8-year-old grandson, Gavin, who will ride in his first Rolling Thunder on Sunday on the back of Muller's bike. Right next to the "Jane Fonda: American Traitor" patches is the huge Lionel train set Muller and Gavin are building together.

"Okay, I love you Butchie," Muller cooed into the phone. "I got your helmet in the truck."

Elaine Muller remembers when their own sons rode in their first Rolling Thunder and packing for the event meant little more than loading the kids into her husband's Ford Bronco on the morning of the ride.

"We never expected it to last this long," she said.

It was in the mid-1980s that Artie Muller picked up a pamphlet at the Vietnam Veterans of America that accused the U.S. government of ignoring servicemen still living as captives in Southeast Asia.

"I couldn't believe what I was reading, but I did my own research," he said. "They were abandoned."

He began giving out POW flags. In 1987, when he was thinking of organizing a march in Washington, he met Ray Manzo, a like-minded Vietnam vet who thought a massing of motorcycles would have more impact.

"If we have 5,000 vans and pickups and cars come down to D.C., people are just going to say it's a traffic jam," Artie Muller said. "If we bring 5,000 motorcycles, they are there for a reason."

In the fall of 1987, a letter from Manzo appeared in the back of Outlaw Biker magazine, calling for riders to descend on Washington the Sunday before Memorial Day. He talked the Defense Department into letting them stage at the Pentagon parking lot and persuaded D.C. police and the National Park Service to let them rumble over the Memorial Bridge and around the National Mall. Manzo knew it would be an awesome sight. If anyone showed up.

"When the bikes started coming in, I couldn't believe it," said Manzo, 67, now retired in Jacksonville, Fla. "I couldn't give a speech, I couldn't talk to the press, I was crying my eyes out." Some 3,000 riders came for that first ride. By year five, it had ballooned into a massive rally of tens of thousands, with country-music star Billy Ray Cyrus playing at the end. In 1992, Manzo handed the reins to Muller.

"It was starting to take over my life," Manzo said. "But I'm still more proud of it than anything I've ever done."

The Memorial Day ride continued to grow, and so did the mission. The group helped get a POW/MIA postage stamp approved. They lobbied for the Missing Service Personnel Act of 1993, which prohibits the Pentagon from declaring a service member killed in action without substantial evidence.

"I think Rolling Thunder was really on the cutting edge of creating a better image for motorcycle riders," said Ben Nighthorse Campbell, a Rolling Thunder regular and a former Republican U.S. senator from Colorado.

Artie Muller's year of prep begins 367 days in advance. On the Friday before Memorial Day, he hands in his permits to get dibs on the date for next year.

"There are always people who would love to take our spot," he said.

Much of the planning has hardened into routine. A Rolling Thunder volunteer keeps the same set of rooms at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City in Virginia booked three years in advance. Ordering 120 portable toilets takes little more than a fax to Don's Johns.

"The folks who run this are extremely well-organized," said Don's Johns Chief Operating Officer Rob Weghorst. "Doing events on the Mall can be a little chaotic, but these guys know where they want their units."

For Muller, the calendar is packed all year, a to-do a day: IRS filings for two nonprofits organizations; meet with Arlington, Virginia police, D.C. police, Park Service police, Pentagon police; medical trailers and bike mechanics; signing up police motorcycle groups to provide security. "There's all kinds of terrorist stuff now that I'd rather not talk about," he said.

In September, Muller sketched out his idea for the annual pin, Rolling Thunder XXIX, ready to send it to his manufacturer in Illinois. Last year's featured dog tags dangling from a cross. This time, he returned to the iconic bowed head of a POW.

The pins, hats and shirts sell for \$5 apiece, a price unchanged for three decades, and generate most of the roughly \$120,000 it takes to produce the ride each year, Muller said. On Tuesday, there will be a raffle for a 2016 Harley-Davidson Electra Glide, and the proceeds from 15,000 tickets, expected to

sell at \$10 each, go to Rolling Thunder Charities, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that provides about \$200,000 in cash aid to veterans' families a year, Muller said.

In his office, Muller flipped through a notebook with laminated documentation of the 76 veteran families who have been given \$72,000 so far this year. Mostly, the grants are a few hundred or few thousand dollars to make up missed rent payments or late utility bills. The charity pays directly to the landlords or utility companies, Elaine Muller said.

According to the philanthropy analyst Guidestar, the charity gave away more than 90 percent of its funds in 2014 and spent 3 percent on administrative costs.

The organization has one paid employee, the Mullers' daughter-in-law, who makes \$24,000 as an administrative assistant. All of their own labor is volunteer. Artie works in the basement, and Elaine goes each day to a three-room suite in an office park, where she maintains tidy files on 92 Rolling Thunder chapters around the country.

"We want to have a nice setup so someone can take all this over," Elaine Muller explained. Younger vets, including those who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, have joined the chapters, she said, and make up many of the 1,000-or-so volunteers who help staff the ride each May. But an obvious successor to the Mullers' full-time devotion to the organization hasn't emerged.

"We're all getting pretty old," she said.

Early Thursday morning, Artie Muller parked his bike in the handicapped space in front of the Flemington Coffee Shop a few miles from his house. His son, Joe Muller, pulled up in the big U-Haul truck, and a half dozen Harleys followed. It was time to ride.

The group downed eggs and coffee, then gathered in a circle in the parking lot. A white Toyota waited, not daring to honk at the group of aging, leather-clad bikers holding hands and staring down.

"Lord, please put your angels of protection around going down to D.C. for another year," prayed Rich Cox, chairman of Rolling Thunder's Florida chapter.

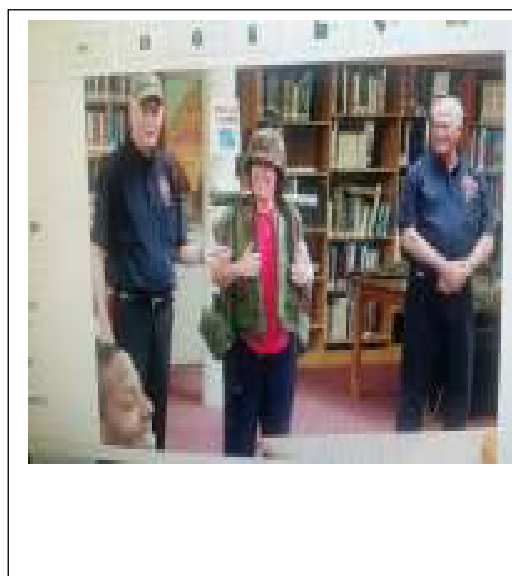
"See you at Maryland House," Muller said, referring to a rest stop on the way, and fired his engine.

"Artie, your helmet," someone called.

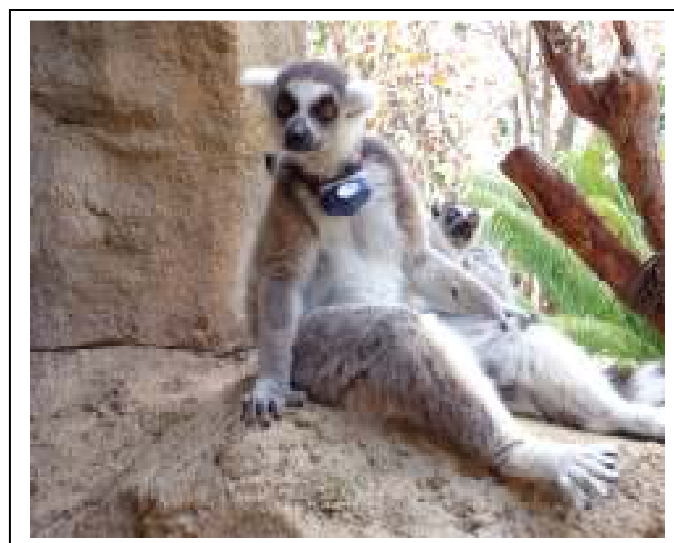
Muller donned the headgear, gave a curt nod and rolled out to take point. It was a small platoon, soon to swell in noise and number into an endless army.

A Busy Month. School Education Presentations at Manasquan, Matawan, and Keyport High Schools





Carole and I would like to thank the State Council, and Fred Urban for the cruise we won to Bermuda in the State raffle. We had a great time, and attached are a couple of pictures from the trip. (BTW, that ship, Celebrity “Anthem of the Seas”, was more like a floating city than a ship.)





Humor

Say you are an older senior citizen and can no longer take care of yourself and the government says there is no Nursing Home care available for you. So, what do you do? You opt for Medicare Plan G.

The plan gives anyone 75 or older a gun (Plan G) and one bullet. You are allowed to shoot one worthless politician. This means you will be sent to prison for the rest of your life where you will receive three meals a day, a roof over your head, central heating and air conditioning, cable TV, a library, and all the Health Care you need. Need new teeth? No problem. Need glasses? That's great. Need a hearing aid, new hip, knees, kidney, lungs, sex change, or heart? They are all covered!

As an added bonus, your kids can come and visit you at least as often as they do now! And, who will be paying for all of this? The same government that just told you they can't afford for you to go into a nursing home. And you will get rid of a useless politician while you are at it. And now, because you are a prisoner, you don't have to pay any more income taxes!

Is this a great country or what? Now that I've solved your senior financial plan, enjoy the rest of your week!

TAPS

Shore Area Vietnam Vets Called Home By The Lord

Anderson, Thomas W., 71, Middletown, Army

Franklin, Donald, 68, Howell, Army

Galese, Carmen, 67, Forked River, Navy

Kerly, Joseph, 63, Forked River, Navy

Mccarron, Leo, 75, Middletown, Army

Monkowski "Monk", Stanley, P, 69, Bradley Beach, Army

O'Keefe, Gerard, 70, Middletown, Army

Penson, Dwayne, 71, Freehold Twp., Army

Terpening, Daniel, 75, Eatontown, Army

REST IN PEACE BROTHERS