PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

We are already halfway through April and the countdown begins for DC. Hope whoever is going booked their rooms.

Our Candlelight Vigil is coming up in a couple weeks. This is a very important Event to honor the fallen soldiers from the war on Terror. We will be hosting a lot of Gold Star Families. Take the time to talk to them and welcome them to the Vigil.

Our next big event will be in June on the 25th. We will be depending on all members to sell tickets for this Event. The Scholarship Committee is busy with this years’ scholarships.

I'm looking forward to another season getting out and supporting other groups, and hopefully, we gain their support in return. This is important due to the economy and the number of events going on during the year.

Thanks,

Lou
April showers for May flowers. I hope everyone is having a great spring. As we start on a new season for bike riding, I was just thinking about the news lately.

Some of you may have noticed that candidates are already setting themselves up for the next Presidential election in 2016. There are a few who have already put their hats in the ring. I'm not one to tell anyone who to vote for and many of you are my friends, but you should all be paying attention.

We have an opportunity with the next couple of elections to make a difference and make a statement about what type of leadership we want to represent us in Washington. Going to DC gives us a chance to make our voices heard on our issues, but we have to make sure that when we use our rights and vote that we send a message. Then follow that through and let our representatives know that we want them to listen to us. One voice can make a difference, but we need to make that one voice a collective voice that will be heard.

Not everyone has the same opinion as their neighbor, but we all want the same things. We want jobs, we want security, we want a better education for our children and our children's children. We want fair wages and with that bring back America to the Super Power that we built our representation on!

Just my opinion.....

See you soon,

Iris Amoriello
aamore1357@comcast.net
Secretary
Chapter 2, NJ
MONTHLY COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHT

POW/MIA/KIA Committee

The POW/MIA/KIA Committee shall provide current information on any POW/MIA/KIA remains that have been located and or identified or returned to the Service Members Families. The committee shall also inform the Chapter of any reported deaths of current New Jersey Military Service Members or any New Jersey Veteran from any war or conflict. The POW/MIA/KIA committee shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Members. This Committee will also gather information and notify the Chapter Membership of the date/time/location of any Viewings or Funerals for all New Jersey Veterans so that the Chapter Members who so choose, may attend and pay respects for New Jersey’s Fallen Heroes.

BITS ‘N PIECES

In case some of you may be interested to know what the upcoming military birthdays are:

6/14/15  - U S ARMY BIRTHDAY (06/14/1775)
9/4/15    - U S COAST GUARD BIRTHDAY (09/04/1790)
9/18/15   - U S AIR FORCE BIRTHDAY (09/18/1947)
10/13/15  - U S NAVY BIRTHDAY (10/13/1775)
11/10/15  - U S MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY (11/10/1775)
Death certificate fee is waived for veterans

By Matt Friedman
NJ Advance Media
for South Jersey Times

The state will make death certificates for veterans available at no cost under a law signed Tuesday by Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno.

Guadagno — who is acting governor while Gov. Chris Christie is out of state attending the inauguration of Gov. Rick Scott of Florida — signed the measure (A2154) and two others during an appearance at an American Legion post in Brick.

“We take comfort knowing that our men and women in uniform are skilled, committed and willing to confront whatever is necessary, wherever it’s necessary, whenever it’s necessary, to preserve our way of life,” Guadagno said. “There will never be an adequate way to recognize and reward our veterans. Today’s bills are just a few steps — important ones — to show New Jersey’s continuing commitment to honoring our service members.”

It costs $25 to obtain a death certificate.

Now, deceased veterans’ legal representatives, estate executors or family members won’t have to pay that fee, though they still must pay for additional copies or expedited shipping.

As of 2010, there were 463,720 veterans in New Jersey, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans’ Affairs.

The two other measures that Guadagno signed designate the second full week in November as Veterans’ Education Awareness Week, and named the Route 35 bridge between Brielle and Point Pleasant Beach as the Veterans of All Wars Memorial Bridge.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Whistle-blower relief

The Veterans Affairs Department said it would offer relief to about 25 employees who faced retaliation after filing whistle-blower complaints about wrongdoing at VA hospitals and clinics nationwide. The latest actions include a doctor who was reprimanded and retired after reporting significant errors at a Maryland clinic, and a nurse manager in Washington state who was fired after refusing to alter a performance evaluation for a subordinate.

The doctor will have a negative appraisal removed, and the nurse manager will keep her job while a probe continues. — AP

Dawn spacecraft nears dwarf planet

After voyaging 2.4 billion miles through space, NASA’s Dawn spacecraft is finally on the homestretch of its journey to Ceres, the largest member of the asteroid belt and one of five dwarf planets in the solar system.

Dawn was launched in 2007 to study two very different asteroids and learn more about the building blocks of our solar system. Ceres is Dawn’s second stop; its first was Vesta, which the spacecraft circled from July 2011 to September 2012.

Now, after leaving Vesta and traveling through space for more than two years, Dawn is roughly 400,000 miles from Ceres and speeding toward it at about 450 m.p.h., with a rendezvous set for March 6.

Ceres is a dwarf planet, along with Haumea, Makemake, Pluto, and Eris. Its gravity pulls it into a spherical shape — which is one reason it was once classified as a planet.

— AP
STATE

These five bills would help out veterans

The New Jersey Legislature introduced a number of veterans affairs bills this year. Though still pending further legislative action, these measures would significantly benefit veterans and members of the military throughout the state.

Here is a rundown of just some of the bills the legislature has introduced:

1. **Allowing post-traumatic stress disorder from military service during combat to be a potential mitigating factor during sentencing by the courts**
   
   Introduced in January, the measure would authorize courts throughout the state to add post-traumatic stress as a potential mitigating factor when considering sentencing for a military service member charged with a crime, according to the legislation on the state's website.
   
   The bill is pending review by the state Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee.

2. **Establishing a "Veterans Court Pilot Program"**
   
   The bill would give veterans, statewide, accused of nonviolent crimes, the opportunity to get treatment instead of being sent to jail.
   
   The legislation was introduced in January and now awaits review by the state Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee.

3. **Establishing a task force to study issues facing members of the military returning from war**
   
   Introduced on June 9, the legislation would authorize a task force — made up of officials from various state departments — to examine data pertaining to the military service's emotional and mental impact on members of the military. The task force would then recommend measures it feels the state should take to address military members returning from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, according to the bill.
   
   The bill is pending review by the state Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee.

4. **Allowing members of the military to qualify for the resident tuition rate at county colleges, regardless of actual residency**
   
   Introduced on Dec. 11, military members with out-of-county or out-of-state addresses would qualify for the resident tuition rate at county colleges, which, according to the bill, tends to be "significantly lower than the nonresident tuition rate."
   
   The measure was recently approved by the Assembly and now awaits Senate consideration.
   
   "This is going to be a really good bill once it goes all the way through," said Assemblyman Bob Andrzejczak (D-1), who serves as chair of the Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee. "It is going to be great for veterans coming back ... they are going to greatly benefit and further their education so when they finally do get out of the military, it is going to make transitioning a lot easier for them."

5. **Providing surviving spouses and children of military personnel killed while serving, free college tuition**
   
   Introduced on Jan. 16, the bill would authorize the state to provide free undergraduate college tuition to any resident of New Jersey who is the surviving child or spouse of a member of the military killed during military service to the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rutgers University, Rowan University, or a county college, according to the legislation.
   
   The bill is pending review by the state Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee.

6. **Allowing municipalities to provide free or reduced fee beach badges to fully disabled veterans**
   
   The legislation, introduced in January and signed into law by Gov. Chris Christie at the beginning of this past summer, authorizes municipalities, by ordinance, to "provide fully disabled veterans with free or reduced fee access to beach and bathing and recreational grounds," according to the bill.
   
   Andrzejczak said: "The good thing about the veteran bills, there is always a lot of support for them. The only difficult part is financially. I have no doubt the bills will go through, but where the state is financially, the only question is when."
Diving into elite history at Navy SEAL Museum

By Jim Abbott
ORLANDO SENTINEL

It goes without saying, but I'm obviously not cut out for special warfare.

That was apparent before I even reached the front door of the National Navy SEAL Museum (navysealmuseum.org), an inspiring tribute to the history, skills and ongoing mission of the Navy's elite special operations force.

The museum — along State Road A1A North on Hutchinson Island, east of downtown Fort Pierce, Fla. — chronicles the Navy's sea, air and land teams from their origin in World War II to heroic modern-day assignments such as the killing of Osama bin Laden and the rescue of Capt. Richard Phillips after his freighter was captured by Somali pirates.

On the lawn outside the museum, an array of military watercraft is displayed. I shook my head in wonder at the courage required to board a SEAL Delivery Vehicle. It's a clausrophobic, hollow metal tube that is filled with water and submerged, so that SEALs in frogman gear can pilot it to shore through shallow water.

If someone put me inside it on dry land, I'm pretty sure I'd freak out.

Inside the museum, a pull-up bar is accompanied by a sign: "How many pull-ups can you do? Can you be a Navy SEAL?" A few brave souls put their names and pull-up total (all in single digits) on the white board. (Sorry, my total is classified information.)

Two galleries feature artifacts and interactive exhibits of Navy SEAL contributions in World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam. There's recognition of the Underwater Demolition Teams that assisted with splashdowns of NASA space missions from the advent of the space program through the Apollo moon flights.

I lingered longest in the room featuring a Desert Storm-era Humvee and Light Tactical All Terrain Vehicle. If you've wondered what it would be like to be photographed by a drone, you can find out here.

The most somber exhibits are two pieces of steel removed from the World Trade Center after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Looking at the enormous bolts on the steel beam from the Trade Center's South Tower on the museum lawn, it's hard not to marvel at the enormity of the destruction on Sept. 11, 2001.

Likewise, the skill and sacrifice of the SEALs are memorably showcased in a short film presented on the deck of an 82-foot Mark V Operations Craft.

A fitting salute to a truly elite force.
WHAT IS A VETERAN?

A “Veteran” – whether on active duty, discharged, retired, or reserve-is someone who, at one point of their life, wrote a blank check made payable to “The United States of America” for an amount “up to and including his or her life”.

That is Honor. And there are way too many people in this country today who no longer understand that fact.

Pride Runs Deep

POW MIA
“We Will Never Forget”

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Rolling Thunder ®, Inc. Mission Statement

Rolling Thunder ®, Inc.’s major function is to publicize the POW/MIA issue. To educate the public of the fact that many American prisoners of war were left behind after all past wars. To help correct the past and to protect the future veterans from being left behind should they become Prisoners Of War/Missing In Action. We are committed to helping American veterans from all wars. Rolling Thunder is a non-profit organization and everyone donates his or her time because they believe in the POW/MIA issue.
Rolling Thunder® NJ 2

2015 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

24 January  Chapter 2 NJ Annual Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser
Knights of Columbus Hall, Forked River, NJ

22 March  Chapter 2 NJ Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser
Knights of Columbus Hall, Forked River, NJ

25 April  Chapter 2 NJ Annual Candlelight Vigil
Toms River Armory, Toms River, NJ

21-25 May  Run to the Wall DC

27 June  Country Western BBQ

9-12 July  Cross the Border Run Canada

TBA August  Benjamin Moore Scholarship Run

20 September  Chapter 2 NJ Freedom Ride
Warinanco Park, Roselle, NJ

11 November  Veteran’s Day LB Harley to Holmdel & Night Fundraiser
Long Branch, NJ (Benefits RTNJ2 Scholarship Fund)

TBA December  Chapter 2 NJ Christmas Party

TBA December  Toy Drive (A.R.M.S.)

Also, events not on the calendar yet: Chapter 3 NJ Freedom Ride or
Chapter 2 Staten Island Ride

Event (in red) is mandatory.
All events are credited towards Rolling Thunder’s minimum requirements to remain a member in good standing.