



COMMUNITY | B1

SENIOR VOLUNTEERS HONORED AT RCBC

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INSIDE | A7

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Volunteers honor fallen veterans by planting flags at grave sites

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'A lot of those flags have faces'



(From left) Todd Epperly, the VFW district commander, Burlington County; his son Kevin Epperly, 20, of Riverside; Josh Ashton, junior post commander at VFW Post 3020 in Delran; and his daughter Adrianna, 9, of Delran, salute the grave of VFW member Thomas R. Campbell Jr. at Beverly National Cemetery on May 19. [SCOTT ANDERSON / PHOTOJOURNALIST]

On Memorial Day, local veterans remember those who made ultimate sacrifice

By Kelly Kultys
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Earl Courter's memories of serving in Vietnam never leave him, but around Memorial Day they come back even stronger. "I always remember what happened," Courter, 75, of Delran, said. "It was like yesterday when my whole platoon got wiped out. Sometimes that's rough getting over Memorial Day and

(remembering) those who passed away and you feel like survivor guilt — why am I here and they're gone." Memorial Day brings back the memory of Ferdie Tellado's classmate Reginald Stancil. "I used to run track with an individual — his name was Reggie Stancil," said Tellado, a Vietnam veteran from Bristol Township. "And he went into the service before me. He was in ROTC, became a lieutenant, See VETERANS, A6



Retired Marine Ned Cooney, left, and Navy Veteran Bill Fenimore unfurl a flag at Washington Crossing National Cemetery in Upper Makefield, Pennsylvania, to prepare for Memorial Day weekend on Thursday. [DAVE HERNANDEZ / PHOTOJOURNALIST]



SPORTS | C1

MOORESTOWN HEADED TO STATE TITLE GAME

The Quakers held off Shawnee for an 8-5 win

Shutdown ahead? Budget questions loom for NJ

By David Levinsky
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TRENTON — This may be Memorial Day weekend, but forgive New Jersey lawmakers and staffers if their attention seems fixated on a different date on the calendar: July 1. That's the start of the new fiscal year and the constitutional deadline for a balanced budget to be approved by the Legislature and signed into law by the governor. If a balanced spending plan is not law before then, much of state government will be forced to shut down. Sound familiar? It should. New Jersey's government shut down a year ago after lawmakers and then Gov. Chris Christie failed to reach a budget agreement before the deadline. It remained closed for three days before lawmakers and Christie negotiated an accord. Of course what most residents likely remember best about the three-day stalemate were photos of Christie lounging on the beach of the governor's official residence at the shuttered Island Beach State Park during the shutdown's second day. There's a new governor in office now, but angst surrounding the possibility of another shutdown has grown with every passing day, as See SHUTDOWN, A2

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VETERANS

From Page A1

went to Vietnam and within a month, he was killed. So every time Memorial Day comes around, I remember him.”

Edward Sabol, who also served in Vietnam, remembers one of his fellow soldiers on the holiday.

“Manny Favazza is one of the main guys that I was with when I was in Vietnam,” the Falls veteran said. “He’s no longer with us.”

For local veterans, the celebration of Memorial Day evokes strong memories of their fallen comrades who lost their lives in service to their country. While towns and local Veterans of Foreign Wars groups host parades and services, the veterans who attend them and participate in them carry the memories of their service and those who are no longer here.

“A lot of those flags have faces,” said Richard Bruehl, a Vietnam veteran from Bristol Borough.

The history of Memorial Day dates back to the Civil War, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans’ Affairs. In May 1868, three years after the war had ended, the Grand Army of the Republic started a “Decoration Day” where people across the country could take time to decorate the graves of those who had died in the war with flowers. That was the first year a large-scale observance was held at Arlington National Cemetery, according to the VA. The official birthplace of Memorial Day, however, was credited to Waterloo, New York, by President Lyndon Johnson and Congress in 1966, for holding a ceremony on May 5, 1866, honoring local veterans who had fought in the war.

In 1971, Congress officially declared Memorial Day a national holiday and expanded it to honor all Americans who had died in the country’s wars. It also was moved to the last Monday in May.

The day also serves as a reminder for those who have lost a military member in their family, even it it wasn’t during combat.

U.S. Air Force captain and instructor pilot Scott Craven, of Bensalem, wasn’t killed during combat, but during an automobile accident in Georgia in 2006. Still, Memorial Day serves as another reminder for his family to honor his legacy.

“It’s difficult,” his father Robert Craven, also a veteran of the Air Force, said. “We’ve all lost somebody — my son is a deceased vet.”

Craven, who serves as president of the Guardians of the National Cemetery, the official support committee for the Washington Crossing National Cemetery in Upper Makefield, spends most of Memorial Day weekend at events at the cemetery and surrounding communities. But once his work is done, he said, he’s not usually in the mood to celebrate.

“That day you don’t want me (around),” he said. “I’ll sit and go home with my family.”

Still, Craven and others said the day also reminds veterans to continue their service, especially in honor of those who passed.

“They’re our heroes,” Todd Epperly, the Burlington County District Commander for the VFW, said. “They’ve gone before us and we’re here to take care of what’s left on this side of life. And it’s very important that we remember them — they’re not forgotten and it’s a special day for veterans to do that.”

Epperly helped organize the 73rd Memorial Service at Beverly National Cemetery the week before Memorial Day. The service gave those in attendance a chance to remember those who were buried in the cemetery through the placing of wreaths and honors given to Gold Star families.

Epperly, his son Kevin, 20, both of Riverside, as well as Josh Ashton, from Delran, who served in the Army, made a special stop at the grave of Thomas Campbell Jr., who



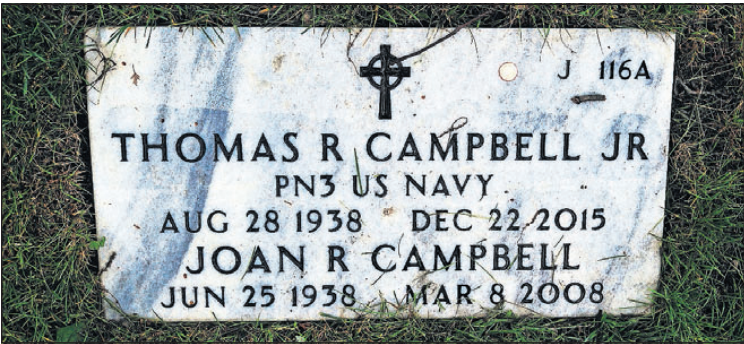
Vietnam veteran Ferdie Tellado, of Bristol Township, reflects on those he served with in Vietnam at the Delaware Valley Vietnam Veterans headquarters in Bristol Township, Pennsylvania, on Wednesday. [KIM WEIMER / STAFF PHOTOJOURNALIST]



Kevin Epperly and his father, Todd Epperly, the VFW district commander for Burlington County, roll up the VFW post’s flag at Beverly National Cemetery on May 19. [SCOTT ANDERSON / PHOTOJOURNALIST]

Panel 10W, Row 10	Ronald James Siengo	Panel 32E, Row 10
Panel 10W, Row 11	Walter Harris Sigafoos III	Panel 3W, Row 11
Panel 10W, Row 12	Harry Jennings Simmons, Jr.	Panel 17E, Row 12
Panel 10W, Row 13	Leonard F. Skoniecki, Jr.	Panel 43W, Row 13
Panel 10W, Row 14	Ralph Wentz Smith	Panel 21E, Row 14
Panel 10W, Row 15	Robert Harold Smith	Panel 14E, Row 15
Panel 10W, Row 16	Reginald Alfonso Stancil	Panel 35E, Row 16
Panel 10W, Row 17	Stanley R. Stellmach, Jr.	Panel 50E, Row 17
Panel 10W, Row 18	John William Thomas	Panel 4E, Row 18
Panel 10W, Row 19	Frank Herbert Thomas, Jr.	Panel 17E, Row 19
Panel 10W, Row 20	Rodney Gardner Thornton	Panel 11E, Row 20
Panel 10W, Row 21	Fred Rost Tice	Panel 2E, Row 21
Panel 10W, Row 22	Clifford Dale VanArtsdalen	Panel 58E, Row 22
Panel 10W, Row 23	William Charles Vasey	Panel 5W, Row 23
Panel 10W, Row 24	Ronald Lee Weaver	Panel 41 E, Row 24
Panel 10W, Row 25	Robert James Weidle	Panel 7W, Row 25
Panel 10W, Row 26	Neil William Weintraub	Panel 55W, Row 26

Tellado points to the name of a friend he served with in Vietnam at the Delaware Valley Vietnam Veterans headquarters in Bristol Township, Pennsylvania, on Wednesday. [KIM WEIMER / STAFF PHOTOJOURNALIST]



VFW member Thomas R. Campbell Jr. and his wife Joan's grave in Beverly National Cemetery, pictured on May 19. [SCOTT ANDERSON / PHOTOJOURNALIST]

died in December 2015 and was a member of the local VFW post 3020 with both Todd Epperly and Ashton.

Like Epperly, Tellado, an administrative representative of the Delaware Valley Vietnam Veterans organization, said the day is a reminder to continue to serve in the memory of those who have died.

“It’s fine celebrations, barbecues and all that, but because of that people are forgetting what the real meaning of Memorial Day is,” he said. “It’s warriors that died in combat and that’s who we’re honoring.”

Robert Craven also serves as the director for the Scott Craven Mentoring Fund, which helps provide mentoring



Retired Marine Ned Cooney, left, and Navy Veteran Bill Fenimore prepare to raise a flag on Thursday. [DAVE HERNANDEZ / PHOTOJOURNALIST]



Photographs of past members of the Delaware Valley Vietnam Veterans are on display at their headquarters in Bristol Township, Pennsylvania. [KIM WEIMER / STAFF PHOTOJOURNALIST]

programs for students at the Sallas-Mahone Elementary School near Moody Air Force Base in Georgia where his son was stationed before he passed away. Both he and Sabol said the day also gives them a chance to vocalize causes and programs that support military

members, veterans and their families so they’re not left behind.

“We have to be the voice for all those who gave the ultimate sacrifice,” Sabol said. “By doing this we remember them and make sure they’re not forgotten, what they did for us.”