

2016

Veteran's Flag Day Rural Retreat, VA June 10-12, 2016

Rural Retreat, VA (June 20, 2016) - On June 10-12, 63 participants from around the nation took part in SemperMax Support Fund's first annual Veteran's Flag Day for Remembrance and Celebration on a small farm in Rural Retreat. Participants included wounded, ill, injured veterans and their families as well as local community members.



Families hailed from as far away as HI, MN, DC, and NC and as close as Wytheville, Marion, and Rural Retreat, VA. Outdoor adventure - living life to its fullest and togetherness were the themes of the weekend. Participants enjoyed camping, fishing, archery (courtesy of Cabelas and Muskets, Bows, and Stuff), campfire stories, local food and music (courtesy of Nate Montgomery, Bud Pollard, and Robbie DeBord). "Today we celebrate the American Flag, all it stands for, and those here who defended her, many of us here sacrificed a great deal to do so," said Tim Maxwell, wounded veteran and founder of SemperMax Support Fund, during the Flag Ceremony conducted by VFW Post 4667 out of Marion. "And we remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice. We remember why it's important we take a stand, why we vote, speak up, and continue to find purpose and to make a difference."

SemperMax Support Fund is not new to veteran and family care, but they are new to Rural Retreat. Established in 2009 in Northern Virginia, SemperMax Support Fund moved along with its founders Tim and Shannon Maxwell to Rural Retreat, VA on July 1, 2015 to continue its 12-year legacy of shared healing and advocacy that began when Tim was wounded in Iraq in 2004.

"With a reported 22 veterans committing suicide each day, we wanted to expand operations to a tranquil location where veterans who were needing to find purpose and connection could come," said Maxwell. "Warriors don't want help, but they want to help, and we need help. We have many projects here at the farm. Eventually, we'd like to build cabins for veterans to stay in up on the mountain. Veteran's Flag Day was to bring them together, show them possibilities, and to remind them they are worth the effort."

Participants expressed they left the weekend's event with a sense of renewal. Smiles were abundant. Many have talked about coming back to the farm for the 4th of July and throughout the year, but definitely for next year's Veteran's Flag Day in June 2017.

"We often have visitors," said Shannon Maxwell, Tim's wife of 27 years. "Tim is an inspiration. Veterans come and see what he is doing despite his challenges and pitch in. The difference in them from the day they arrive to the day they leave is remarkable. There is something healing about being here and working hard in whatever capacity they are able."

The Maxwells hope the event will grow year to year with more community involvement.

About Flag Day:

President Woodrow Wilson donned June 14 as Flag Day in May 1916, stating, "It is the anniversary of the day upon which the flag of the United States was adopted by the Congress as the emblem of the Union." In his proclamation, he stated it should "be given special significance as a day of renewal and reminder...to give significant expression to our thoughtful love of America, our comprehension of the great mission of liberty and justice to which we have devoted ourselves as a people, and...our determination to make it greater and purer with each generation,...in which we shall stand with united hearts."

About the Veteran's Flag Day Event:

Veteran families understand all too well the sacrifices offered to uphold America's tenets and to protect its people. SemperMax works to support wounded, ill, and injured veterans and their families and gold star families throughout the lifecycle of recovery. The Veteran's Flag Day event honors those who paid the price of liberty to various extent and form, and celebrates their courage with a show of unity and resources so they know they are not alone.