Local veterans get a helping hand with request for records

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EAST GOSHEN — During Friday's visit to 55-plus Active Adult Community Hershey's Mill, Chester County Recorder of Deeds Chris Pielli ensured that three dozen U.S. Veterans recorded their discharge documents and received Chester County veteran discount ID cards.

The service was provided free of charge to vets during the occasional off-site event, with the service also available during regular business hours in the West Chester office.

The process safeguards veterans' documents in case of loss, misplacement or natural disaster so as to prevent the interruption or discontinuation of benefits for vets or their families.

Don Eill lives at Hershey's Mill, is an Army veteran and was pleased to take advantage of the service.

"During the Vietnam War, you don't get a lot of respect," Eill said. "Now you do and I'm taking advantage of that."

"Years ago, they didn't say, 'Thank you for your service.'"

West Chester resident Jim Salvas was taking photos and asking questions at Friday's event.

"I learned something today," Salvas, a Vietnam vet, said. "I'm qualified for more benefits than I thought I was."

To promote recording and safeguarding the veterans' documents, issue a county photo ID card, and a membership in the discount program with over 100 participating local businesses, was offered.

A release issued by the Recorder of Deeds reads: "After recordation, any hard copies containing sensitive information are destroyed and the digital images of these important documents are kept in a secure database on our server. This ensures that only the serviceperson, his or her immediate family, or authorized military personnel or veterans’ agencies will have access to these recorded documents. Military discharges are the only documents we maintain that are not made a part of the public record."

Pielli is also a U.S. veteran. He is running as a Democrat to fill retiring Rep. Dianne Herrin's seat as state representative in the 156th District against Republican Heidi VanderWaal.

"It's an honor to serve my fellow veterans," he said. "It is rewarding to help those who have given so much."
The vets took advantage of what Pielli said was "one-stop shopping." The Veterans' Administration, the Veterans Multi-Service Center of Coatesville and a representative from U.S. Congresswoman and veteran Chrissy Houlahan's office were available to answer questions and offer services.

Kenneth Marx is an Afghanistant Army veteran and Hershey's Mill resident.

"They know I'm here," he said.

Marine veteran Rich Corbit was able to walk to the event and was thankful for the convenience. He has just moved to Chester County and was ensuring that he is registered locally.

Pielli urged all vets needing assistance with discharge records to visit his office at 313 W. Market St., Suite 3302, West Chester or call (610) 344-6330. You may also email VeteransID@chesco.org.

"When veterans record their discharge with us, they are protecting it in case of loss," Pielli said. "All they have to do is contact us and within 24 hours we can give them a certified copy of their discharge documents, which is accepted by the Veterans' Administration and the Department of Defense."

Bill Rettew | Reporter
Bill Rettew is a 20-year veteran reporter who enjoys being the eyes and ears of the community. As a staff writer for the Daily Local News, he covers events, politics and the people of the Greater West Chester Area. The Chester County native's favorite part of his beat is the weekly Sunday column, "Small talk."