

VETERAN'S DAY

11 / 7 / 2014

Hello World!

Our "Graham Vets" group will be meeting on the 20th for our annual recognition of Veteran's Day.

The meetings are simple and only once per month. Even though we desire to meet at least twice, so far it is not possible. But we have new hope. In the last 12-months we have all new Wardens. One is a Veteran and supports our group? Another Warden, while not a veteran, has proven his word in supporting our group's activities and success.

In fact this next meeting is extended almost 3-hours! Three times a year (CHRISTMAS, July 4th, Memorial Day and Veteran's Day) we are permitted to have a "meal" together during the meeting. It's the same chow all inmates get for that day, but usually there is a little extra provided to get double portions. The Kitchen Supervisors have also shown their support when they prep the weekly menu. By serving Chicken, burgers or fish patty rather than bologne sandwiches, or Texas hash, or hot dogs.

sandwiches, or

Now all those don't "sound" bad, but trust me these don't even reach convenience store quality. While burgers are one of the better meals it has a high percentage of soy and very bland. And while double portions sound great, in prison a normal meal portion is about the amount you'd feed a 10-year old.

Don't get me wrong, I am grateful for what we do get. And looking forward to our veteran's meal together. We can relax and eat casually, not rushed. And we can have decent conversations. The chow hall is regimented, cold and someones always yelling to keep quiet, eat and get out quick.

Anyway, our new Chaplain is also a veteran. Eight years Army and Gulf War vet. So between him and the Wardens we have a renewed hope to move this group forward in the next year.

During this meal we also hold a flag ceremony, posting the colors, and each branch will sing their song. Air Force has dropped to about 4-members so we'll have to help them out a little.

We will also do a reading. No, not a palm reader... There will be 5 to 8 short readings about Veteran's Day and we will

also stand in silent reflection as the names of all those Killed In Action (KIA) are read. They are the names listed since our last meeting with a ceremony.

12/12/14 - UPDATE

Our Veteran's Day meeting was the best one I've attended in over 3-years here. Two Wardens dropped in and one shared his own story as a Marine during the Gulf War.

He also gave his word that a veterans specific counseling group would be started. Nothing on that yet, but 20-men signed up to attend. For our December 16th meeting the V.A. rep, Mr. Rolando Vasquez, from St. Louis is scheduled to be here. I'll ask if his office can contribute to this effort. As things happen slowly in prison I will wait until after the holidays to begin asking the Chaplain, Coordinator and Warden to follow-up.

Have a blessed holiday season with your loved ones. Make it count... forgive grievances...

Tom D. Cribley
(David)