

Tuesday 19 February 2013

My name is Roy B. Lloyd. I live in Manchester, Ct. I am a disabled veteran.

I feel you need to know a little bit more about me than those simple statistics, because I am one of the citizens that could be significantly affected by proposed new Veterans' legislation.

At a fairly young age, perhaps 15 or 16, I actually knew what I wanted my future to look like. I understood that for me, the path to a productive life after I completed high school would take me first to college, then to some kind of career and eventually a wonderful wife. I hoped for happy children, at least two dogs, a few cats, a really nice stone wall out in front of my white farmhouse and attached red barn. I dreamed that there would be a pond with ducks, some sheep in the fields, perhaps a cow, and there just had to be a goat.

I graduated from high school and was looking forward to going to college when patriotism took over, and for specific reasons I have long since forgotten, I walked into a United States Air Force recruitment office and enlisted.

The year was 1962, I had just turned 19 years of age and I was, so I have been told, a bright, thoughtful, decent young man who showed great promise. Soon it was basic training, classified schooling for the USAF Security Service, a first duty assignment on Okinawa, and then there was Vietnam.

Four years later in 1966 I received an honorable discharge, and the 19 year old kid who showed such great promise was now a broken, defective man. At that time there was plenty of very good help for those who came back from Vietnam missing an arm or a leg or suffered from any other type of a physical wound.

For all of us, while still very young, we were men who had aged far beyond our years. For the thousands like myself, whose wounds were not visual or physical, in terms of help or treatment there was nothing available.

It is the nature of life that each of us manages difficulties in our own special way, individually distinct from, but always similar to how other men handle adversity. For me it was a lonely path, together with but two friends, down which I faced the darkness. These friends, Mr. Dewar's and Mr. Black, and I married each other and together we slugged through the next 38 years.

Isolation is but one tool so many thousands of war victims use in order to survive the nightmares, the flashbacks, and the pure terror of the demons when they show themselves. For me it was only the residual strength of youth and my two friends that allowed for a measure of life. The will to live is strong but still can be very fragile.

The year 2001 and then 9/11 and suddenly I woke up and no longer was a young man, had kicked out my two best friends a few year earlier, was shocked to my very

core, unable to slug along anymore and I slowly descended into a new hell in which the will to survive, to live itself was no longer a mission or a goal.

Then in late 2003 when death circled round and I was very close to that proverbial life "under a bridge" along came both help and hope in the form of professional and kind men and women at the Newington VA Hospital. It was a slow go at first and in many ways it still is. I remain to this very day in treatment. Every Monday I meet with a group of Vietnam Veterans for support and comfort. Every Wednesday I see my therapist for an hour.

It took them a good four years to bring me back to just a basic place where the will to carry on and survive outweighed the will to just say farewell. It was five full years, until 2008, to win for me my deserved and documented 100% disability rating.

Last year, in June 2012, after living my entire adult life in apartments that sometime were just a single room, I bought my very first house with help from the VA. I have a fine roof to live under, decent clothing and food.

I am truly grateful for what I now do have. However, economics are economics. All those lost years did not make for an impressive account with Social Security so I now receive perhaps the smallest check that they send out monthly. My total monthly income which consists of that social security and my VA disability compensation allows me to live with the basic necessities but I do not live overly well. A play at the Hartford Stage, an event at the Bushnell, a movie, a dinner out at a restaurant, a trip perhaps to see Mickey Mouse or a beach somewhere with crashing waves and a palm tree or two, these are all either economically denied to me or can be enjoyed very infrequently if at all.

Personally property taxes make up a full one third of my monthly mortgage payment. That tax money could buy for me some small measure of social and cultural life and allow me to also have a rainy day fund.

I am now 70 years old, and I will be 71 on 09 March of this year. That is exactly fifty two years away from that young man with ambition and great promise. Those are fifty two years that were lost and for which I paid for dearly in so many ways. You should know that I never got the wife, the red barn or the kids.

In conclusion, for myself and all the other 100% disabled veterans I am asking for your support of proposed Bill 152. "An act concerning a municipal property tax exemption program for one hundred percent disabled veterans."

Thank You

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