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TOP STORY

Quilters Guild of East Texas presents 20 veterans with Quilts of Valor

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The Quilters Guild of East Texas presented 20 veterans with Quilts of Valor during a ceremony at First Christian Church on July 13. The guild awarded 20 quilts during the twentieth year of Quilts of Valor's founding.

Katecey Harrell/ Tyler Morning Telegraph

Military veterans mouthed the words of the Oath of Enlistment along with Pat Graham, Quilters Guild of East Texas Quilts of Valor coordinat these men and women served to defend freedom.



“These men and women have served in our military, taking this oath and fulfilled their duty by doing just what this oath says so that each of us can enjoy the freedoms and privileges of living in America,” Graham said during a ceremony Thursday.

The Oath states that soldiers will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and obey the orders of the President of the United States and the demands of the officers appointed over them, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

The Quilters Guild of East Texas presented 20 veterans with Quilts of Valor during the ceremony. The guild awarded 20 quilts during the 20th year of Quilts of Valor’s founding.

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Katecey Harrell/Tyler Morning Telegraph

Quilts of Valor Foundation began in 2003 when founder Catherine Roberts' had a dream after her son Nat was deployed in Iraq. According to Roberts, the dream was as vivid as real life.

“I saw a young man sitting on the side of his bed in the middle of the night, hunched over. The permeating feeling was one of utter despair. I could see his war demons clustered around, dragging him into an emotional gutter. Then, as if viewing a movie, I saw him in the next scene wrapped in a quilt. His whole demeanor changed from one of despair to one of hope and well-being. The quilt had made this dramatic change,” she said on the Quilts of Valor website.

The message of her dream was that quilts equal healing.

Tyler Connection, a small ensemble with the East Texas Men in Harmony Barbershop Chorus, performed several tunes, including the Star Spangled Banner, God Bless America and an Armed Forces song medley.

As the quartet performed, the quilters displayed their work with a parade of quilts. A sea of red, white and blue engulfed the guests as the quilters went up and down the sanctuary aisles.

The quilts were presented to each veteran, and the Vietnam veterans were awarded lapel pins.



Lanie Schrink and Rose Wilson presented the Vietnam veterans with lapel pins.

Katecey Harrell/Tyler Morning Telegraph

“We celebrated veterans who family or friends had nominated, and we awarded them a Quilt of Valor, which are handmade quilts by us, and we wrapped them in the quilt,” Guild President Sherry Gary said.

The program ended with lunch provided by local businesses, including [Stanley's Famous Pit Bar-B-Q](#), Texas Roadhouse and Aspen Creek Grill. An open microphone where veterans could share their stories or comment was available during lunch, and the veterans were asked to cut the cake for dessert.

“It’s nice to be able to tell someone who did the work that you appreciate it,” Gary said.

Military veterans who were presented with a Quilt of Valor include:

Army

Capt. Donald Knarr served from 1962 to 1965 with duty stations in Texas, Florida and Korea.

Col. Michael Hodge served from 1965 to 2004 with duty stations in Vietnam and Japan.

Sgt. William Wessels served from 1969 to 1975 with duty stations in Arkansas.

Sgt. Robert Baez served from 1976 to 1979 with duty stations in Germany, New Jersey and Kentucky.

Sgt. First Class George Munn served from 1978 to 2007 with duty stations in Germany, El Salvador, Iraq and Kuwait.

Sgt. First Class Edgar Cedeno served from 1979 to 1982 and from 1983 to 2001 with duty stations in Korea and Kuwait.

Specialist Cristina Diana-Victoria Carter served from 2002 to 2005 with duty stations in

South Korea and Georgia.

Lt. Angela Hartless served from 2011 to 2022 with duty stations in New York and South Carolina.

Specialist 4th Class Patrick Hannan served from 1984 to 1987 and 1988 to 1989 with duty stations in Italy, Germany and Panama.

Navy

2nd Class Petty Officer Penny Hannan served from 1987 to 1993 and from 1993 to 1997 with duty stations in Spain, England and Sicily.

Petty Officer, 2nd Class William Merrill served from 1968 to 1972 with duty stations in Vietnam.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Donald Self served from 1975 to 1980 and 1985 to 1992 with duty stations in Florida, Okinawa and Iceland.

Marines

Sgt. Bradley Moore served from 1988 to 1992 and 1999 to 2033 with duty stations in South Carolina, Japan and Iraq.

Gunnery Sgt. April Scarbrough served from 1996 to 2021 with duty stations in Texas, North Carolina, and Iraq.

Air Force

Senior Airman Russel Van Graham served from 1959 to 1963 with duty stations in Okinawa and Korea.

Lt. Col. Mark Medvec served from 1986 to 2008 with duty stations in Louisiana, California and Spain.

Lt. Col. Robert Schrink served from 1986 to 2006 with duty stations in Germany, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Master Sgt. Stephen Sparks served from 1989 to 2009 with duty stations in South Korea, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

Tech Sgt. Natalie Trota served from 1995 to 2015 with duty stations in Germany and Afghanistan.

Master Sgt. Michael Wilson served from 1997 to 2018 with duty stations in Saudi Arabia and Oman, Iraq and Africa.

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Multimedia reporter covering local government, Smith County and the City of Tyler with the Tyler Morning Telegraph. Texas native with a degree in Journalism and a minor in Women's and Gender Studies from UT-Arlington. Previously, reported on Limestone County with The Mexia News and The Groesbeck Journal.