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started promptly at 10 a.m. with an invocation by Thomas Orchanian.

North Georgia Civil Air Patrol cadets posted the colors, and the school band performed "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Guage Shumaker served as master of ceremonies, delivering a "Tribute to Veterans" address that touched on every military conflict the U.S. has been involved in since and including World War II.

"We thank you today and every day for your service," Shumaker said. "If it wasn't for the men and women of your caliber that stood before you, we would not be able to enjoy the freedom that we have today."

The band then played the "Armed Forces Medley" consisting of each service song, as veterans from the different branches in attendance stood to be recognized.

John Cone, Alyssa Sweat, Aaron Helton and Christopher Lance conducted the Quilt of Valor ceremony for veterans Frank Burdo and Wendell Murphy. Burdo is a U.S. Air

Force veteran, and Murphy, a Union County native, is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran.

"The Quilt of Valor brings a three-part message," Cone said. "First, we honor you for your service. Secondly, freedom is not free. Finally, this quilt is meant to offer comfort and to let you know that your quilt has been stitched with love, prayers and healing thoughts of home and family."

Hanna von Hof delivered a moving keynote address that included a recording of future president and then-Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's address to U.S. troops just before the D-Day invasion at Normandy, France.

"We are all here to show our support, gratitude and recognition to these heroes who have served our country," von Hof said. "The definition of a hero is a person who is admired or idolized for courage, outstanding achievements or noble qualities."

"As often is the case, heroes do not set out to be heroes. We usually find that they are ordinary people who do extraordinary things when

called upon in the name of duty."

Von Hof discussed the major military campaigns of U.S. history, from the American Revolution onward, with particular emphasis on the 1944 Invasion of Normandy that led to the initial victory against Germany and their eventual surrender less than a year later on May 7, 1945.

"Our nation has fought to defend freedom for 244 years," von Hof said. "Over those years, men and women have served our country to preserve freedom for the Americans and others around the globe."

"Many have come home from battle and many have not. Without the service of our veterans, there would be no America as we know it."

The high school senior went on to describe the American military service of her father, grandfather and great-grandfather spanning well over 100 years.

"I tell the story of my own family to remind us all on this day that it's not to recognize one type of veteran, one war or



Veterans Wendell Murphy and Frank Burdo, pictured here with their spouses, received Quilts of Valor from students in the Nov. 8 Union County Schools Veterans Day Program.

Photo by Mark Smith

one duty," von Hof said. "On this day, we are gathered to recognize the generations of heroic men and women, wives and husbands, loved ones at home and those who gave up their time, memories and families to serve our country."

Present at the event was the Missing Man Table honoring fallen, missing or imprisoned military service members, with U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Justin Smith of the Blue Ridge Army Recruiting Station delivering the address to honor those veterans who could not be there.

Fine Arts teachers Will Stafford on sax, Alicia Covington on vocals and Chris Adams on piano performed "Amazing Grace" for this year's event.

Retired U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur J. McCann III, who serves as an administrative assistant at the high school, closed out the program with the recognition of three World War II veterans.

These veterans were Ray Williams, accompanied by his wife of 75 years, Ellie; Walter Kerr, who attended with his wife Rosemary; and Virgil Elliott.

McCann also recognized two future members of the U.S. military: event emcee Guage Shumaker and Civil Air Patrol Color Guard member William Queen, both seniors at Union County High.

The North Georgia Honor Guard was to perform ceremonial firing party duties for the event, though the cold weather prevented them from doing so this year.



Members of the North Georgia Civil Air Patrol Squadron from Blairsville performed as the flag detail for the Nov. 8 Veterans Day event at the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center.

Photo by Mark Smith



Union County Schools Superintendent John Hill with his two uncles, Ronald Hill and Mike Hill, and High School Administrative Assistant Art McCann.

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She also spoke of a series of upcoming surgeries required to fix his broken arms and legs, saying he was "expected to be in hospital for a couple weeks and then has to go to rehab."

Responding to the accident involving two of his career firefighters from Station 1, Fire Chief David Dyer said at the time that he was thankful no lives were lost.

"Our thoughts and prayers go out to all involved. We wish them a speedy recovery," Dyer said.



The Union County Fire Department's 2018 Ford Expedition was totaled in the Nov. 1 crash.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Habitat for Humanity Towns Union Counties, Inc. celebrate Grand Opening of new offices and ReStore®



Habitat for Humanity Towns Union Counties, Inc. will celebrate the Grand Opening of its new offices and ReStore® on Monday, November 18, 2019, from 11 AM to 2 PM. The new building is located at 225 Wellborn Street in Blairsville, directly in front of the newly opened Skillet Café.

The celebration will include a small program, tours of the building, discussion of our mission and interaction with Habitat's staff and Board of Directors. Grilled hot dogs and soft drinks will be provided, while they last.

For more information



Habitat for Humanity volunteers have been busily preparing the new ReStore for its grand opening at the new location in Blairsville.

about Habitat for Humanity Towns Union Counties, Inc., please contact Bryan Thomas, Executive Director at 828-243-1206. NT(Nov13.222)CA