

Veterans...from Page 1A



Veterans Daniel Atkins, Patrick Spillane and John Roberts received Quilts of Valor in the program. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

The high school and middle school band and chorus programs performed the national anthem, with signing from Kelly Helton's Sign Language class.

"Veterans Day is a special day, and we want to honor all of our veterans and thank them for their service to our country," said Hood in her opening remarks, before the band and chorus played and sang "God Bless the USA."

Hood then recognized the Union County veterans of World War I, as 2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the United States' entrance into the Great War.

UCHS senior Emmi Schakat led a Quilts of Valor ceremony as part of the Veterans Day program, and she received help from fellow

seniors Coleson Daniels, Evan Browning and Adrian Shaw.

The three veterans to receive quilts that day were:

John Roberts of the U.S. Marine Corps, who served for 21 years and in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom;

Patrick Spillane of the U.S. Navy, who participated in a number of operations in several of the world's waters from 1992 to 1996;

And Daniel Atkins of the U.S. Army, who served in Afghanistan as part of his four years of service between 2009 and 2013.

After being wrapped in their quilts, the veterans stood on the field as the band and chorus programs performed "Thank You Soldier."

UCHS senior Buddy

Viera was the guest speaker for the occasion, and he, too, welcomed everyone in attendance to the program.

"I think it's all too appropriate to begin by recognizing all our veterans, active duty service members, guardsmen and reservists of present day," said Viera. "You have gone above and beyond your citizen's duty to volunteer your lives and livelihoods, and to answer when your country called to defend the freedoms we enjoy each and every day."

Viera spoke in vivid detail about the harrowing journey of his grandfather, U.S. Army Cpl. George Viera, during World War II, as he stormed the beaches of Normandy, France, with his fellow soldiers.

The Viera family knows

well the costs of war, which must be paid to ensure that America remains the freest nation on earth.

"(My grandfather) lost both his brothers, John and Frank, my great uncles, at the Battle of the Bulge," said Viera. "This single event forever changed my family and our views of the service and service men of the United States."

"This was just my grandfather's story, for there are millions more families that have lived this same storyline, that have had to endure and live with the loss of sons, fathers, brothers, mothers, as well as daughters."

"We must not forget the many men and women that sacrifice their own life plans in the security of our country's freedom. With this, we must not forget the men and women who

gave up absolutely everything, including their own life."

The high school senior, who will be joining the U.S. Armed Forces after graduation, went on to thank those who served outside the frontlines, "for they as well stood ready to defend this nation and give up their average civilian livelihoods in the safeguard of our liberties."

Following a performance of "America the Beautiful" by the band and chorus programs, Sgt. Adam Kish with the Georgia Army National Guard performed the Missing Man Table and Honors Ceremony, to call attention to those veterans who did not return home from war.

The Georgia Army National Guard Honors Platoon fired a volley in honor of the missing, dead or imprisoned

U.S. service members, and Union County High School fine arts teachers Alicia Covington, Chris Adams and Will Stafford teamed up to perform "Amazing Grace."

Afterward, the Civil Air Patrol retired the colors and the band played "Stars and Stripes Forever," which concluded the ceremony.

Other student groups contributed to the event, such as the Union County Future Farmers of America and the BETA Club, and the Union County High School treated more than 100 veterans and their spouses to a free breakfast prior to the start of the ceremony.

As a special treat for veterans, the second-graders of Union County Schools made cards of thanks for each veteran in attendance.



Sgt. Adam Kish, a recruiter with the Georgia Army National Guard, leading the Missing Man Table and Honors Ceremony during the Nov. 10 event. Photo/Shawn Jarrard



Chorus and band students performed patriotic music at different points in the program. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Fire...continued from Page 1A

at work."

Chief Dyer said firefighters were able to save numerous items for the family.

There was a great response to this fire by the volunteers and paid firefighters, the chief said.

"We didn't let the initial fire go any further than what it did," Chief Dyer said. "There was a lot of smoke when we got there initially. It was a great response from the volunteers, all the fire stations

responded."

The eatery's Facebook page advises that the family did not get hurt and everyone is okay given the circumstances.

The Heldmans have a place to stay and have been able to salvage a few things from the house, but the house and their RV are lost. The family dog is okay and safe, so that is good news.

Understandably G&G was closed on Saturday, Nov. 11.

The eatery was expected to reopen on Monday, Nov. 13.

"Many of you have already asked what you can do to help, and we will let you know as soon as we know more about what is needed," read a statement on the G&G Facebook page. "Stay tuned to G&G Bakery and Cafe's Facebook page for updates."

"Until then, we appreciate your understanding, support, love and prayers for The Heldmans during this very difficult time."

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