

Veterans...from Page 1A



Local Vietnam Veterans gathered around the bridge sign dedicated over Ivy Log Creek in their honor following the ceremony last week, to take pictures and to celebrate the occasion. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

"There's nothing more honorable for me than to be able to stand here and thank our veterans, those who have sacrificed their all," said Sen. Gooch. "Some gave their lives, some are still permanently disabled today.

"People who came back from that war weren't welcomed back like they should have been, and we're doing that today. We're welcoming you back home today, and we're thanking you for your service. Men and women all over the world served in that conflict. The people in Union County deserve to be remembered. This bridge will be dedicated in your honor and in your memory, and it will always be remembered for that."

Blairsville VVA President Mike Priven acknowledged the hardships faced by veterans returning from Vietnam, and spoke on the VVA's founding principle that "never

again will one generation of veterans abandon another."

"This event will have meaning for Vietnam Veterans for many years to come," said Priven of the dedication, offering thanks to Sen. Gooch, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris, State Rep. Stephen Allison and Gov. Deal.

Commissioner Paris in turn thanked all of the veterans present at the dedication, both for their past service and what they continue to do in the community.

"It is a great day today that we're able to recognize you and to recognize this bridge, the dedication of this bridge, the sign that will always be here and always remind, not only the Union County Vets, but all vets that come through here, reminding them that Vietnam Vets served a very important role and part in this country," said Commissioner Paris.

Veterans gathered around the sign following the ceremony, to take pictures and to celebrate the occasion. For Kenneth Floyd, who attended the event in uniform, the day will forever have a double meaning, since he was also born and raised on Ivy Log Creek.

"When I came back from Vietnam, I said, 'I fought for America one time, but I'll never do it again,'" said Floyd, reflecting on the poor treatment of returning Vietnam Veterans. "But now that America recognizes us, it makes us change our minds."

Also in attendance that day were Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley, Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce President Regina Allison and several from her staff, and Union County Sheriff Mack Mason, a Vietnam-era Veteran himself – his office provided traffic control for the occasion.

Quilts...from Page 1A

sented to U.S. Air Force veteran Kenneth Matthews who served in Operation Desert Storm among other operations. Matthews currently resides in Union County.

U.S. Army veteran Robert Trevathan was honored with the second quilt. Trevathan served two years in Vietnam and five and a half total years in the military. He now lives in Blairsville.

The third quilt was presented to U.S. Army veteran Barry Vincent who served in Vietnam and now lives in Cherry Log.

U.S. Army veteran Robert Morris was the fourth to receive his quilt. He served from 1966-1969 during Vietnam.

The youngest of all the recipients, U.S. Army veteran Dustin Murray was the next to receive his quilt. He served during the Korean War and now resides in Union County.

Following, U.S. Marine

Corps veteran John Richard Burnette, who served during Vietnam, was presented with a quilt. Burnette lives in Union County.

The seventh and eighth quilts were given to U.S. Army veteran Gary Oeder and U.S. Navy veteran Jim McAfee. Both veterans served tours in Vietnam. Oeder resides in Hiawassee while McAfee is a resident in Blairsville.

Up next, U.S. Army veteran Kirby Brown, who served during Vietnam, was presented with a quilt.

Last, but certainly not least, U.S. Army veteran Pat Phillips received his quilt. Phillips served a total of three tours during Vietnam and is now serving on the Georgia Veterans Service Board. Phillips was appointed to this position in 2004 by Gov. Sonny

Perdue and reappointed in 2013 by Gov. Nathan Deal. He and his wife live in Blairsville.

"Gentlemen, you have all served your country well and honorably, and your valor, service and sacrifice have not been forgotten," said Young. "These quilts have been presented to each of you, our true American heroes, as a tangible reminder that there are millions of Americans who understand that we are forever in your debt. Thank you all for your service to your country."

According to Young, more than 300 Quilts of Valor have been given out from the Misty Mountain Quilters to local area veterans. They hope to continue to honor as many local war veterans as possible with their quilts in the coming years.

Fugitives...

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Lazaro Oviedo

tice, Oviedo, at 5-foot-11, 158 pounds, with black hair and brown eyes, had been last seen in a white, four-door sedan with a sunroof, with an as of yet unknown white male accomplice, Lt. Osborn said.

"On Christmas Eve day, at approximately 12:30 p.m., a black male by the name of Lazaro Oviedo entered the Food Heaven Chevron Station at the Union/Towns County line, along with a white male," said Lt. Osborn. "Lazaro was a former employee there and had been terminated, and felt like he was owed money.

"The white male went in and bought a quart of oil, keeping the female attendant distracted. And while he was distracting her, Oviedo went to the back office and got the key to the safe. He got \$416 out of the safe and went to leave. The attendant attempted to stop him. He wouldn't stop, and he went behind the counter to get his alcohol permit that the county issues.

"She tried to stop him, but he grabbed her arm, pushed her out of the way, and went out the door," Lt. Osborn said.

Warrants were taken on Oviedo for robbery and simple assault, Lt. Osborn said.

"We do not know who the other male is that was with him. If anybody has any information on his whereabouts, please notify us," Lt. Osborn said. "Anyone with information, call the Union County Sheriff's Office at (706) 439-6066."