

The Christian View magazine

Matthew 5:16

Shining the Light of Christ

A Special Issue Honoring American Veterans

November, 2019



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

‘The Three Soldiers’, a bronze statue by Frederick Hart, is part of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on The National Mall in Washington, D.C. We Americans owe a great debt of gratitude to all of our current military and our veterans from every branch of service from every generation and those who made the ultimate sacrifice. This special issue of *The Christian View* magazine pays tribute to all. Thank you to everyone who has served.

Reflections

This special issue is dedicated to the brave men and women who have served in our nation's armed forces. We honor our current military, and our veterans from every generation, and those who made the ultimate sacrifice. We owe a great debt of gratitude and the utmost respect to all. If you or a family member of yours served our nation, you are deeply appreciated.

Not only is November 11 Veterans Day, but the entire month of November is National Veterans and Military Families Month.

We Americans owe our freedom to those who have served and those who are currently serving. None of us can ever fully repay the debt we owe, but, when we stand, with our right hand upon our heart, during the National Anthem or during "Taps", we remember those whose service and sacrifice have made our freedom possible.

Karen Brewer

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The Christian View magazine is evangelism journalism, including interviews with, and articles on, those who share about their lives and share their Christian faith, including: pastors, evangelists, chaplains, missionaries, singers and musicians, authors and speakers, leaders in sports, current military and veterans, artists, and many more. Also included are articles on many local organizations and ministries, local events and fundraisers, local history, and much more.

The Christian View magazine's founder and owner is journalist Karen Brewer, who gave up her career as a newspaper editor, writer, and photographer to create this publication and work full time in Christian journalism. The Pickens County native is twice a graduate of Clemson University, having earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in the Liberal Arts, with a major in English (Literature) and a minor in Writing/Journalism, and then a Master of Arts degree in English (British and American Literature). For three years while an undergraduate student, she was employed by Clemson University's News Services and University Relations (Media Relations), working in the Trustee House on campus, where she wrote Clemson press releases, articles for *Clemson World* magazine and other university publications, and a television commercial for Clemson University about its history.

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The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution and the U.S. Department of Defense Honor Mildred Brewer for Honoring Vietnam Veterans and Their Families

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

Mildred Brewer, center, a member of The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR), is pictured with Colonel Yvonne Schilz, Commemorative Partner Program Chief, and Colonel Larry Brom, Assistant Director, Plans and Operations of the United States Department of Defense Vietnam War Commemoration, as she was honored at the headquarters of the NSDAR in Washington, D.C. for her efforts in honoring Vietnam veterans and their families. Brewer organized an event by the Fort Prince George DAR Chapter in Pickens County, honoring local Vietnam veterans and family members of local servicemen killed in Vietnam.

Mildred Brewer was honored by the United States Department of Defense 50th Anniversary Vietnam War Commemoration and The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR/DAR) for honoring Vietnam veterans and their families. This award, which can be received only once in a lifetime, was presented during the DAR Continental Congress in Washington, D.C.

Because Vietnam veterans did not receive honor and recognition when they returned home from the war, as veterans from other eras were honored, the Department of Defense and its commemorative partners, including the DAR, are trying to honor as many Vietnam veterans and their families as possible, leading up to the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War.

Brewer was the Commemorative Events Committee Chair for an event, held by her DAR Chapter, the Fort Prince George Chapter in Pickens County, honoring local veterans who served during the Vietnam War era and family members of local servicemen killed in Vietnam. The Chapter recognized 138 veterans.

Prior to being honored in the nation's capital, Brewer was recognized at the South Carolina State Society Daughters of the

American Revolution (SCDAR) State Conference in Columbia and was presented a Certificate of Award by SCDAR State Regent Dianne Culbertson and Commemorative Events State Chair Lynn Shore as the Outstanding State DAR member for honoring Vietnam veterans.

The honor was unexpected, as Brewer's sole purpose for planning the veterans event was to pay tribute to veterans and their families.

"When I first learned that the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution is a Commemorative Partner with The U.S.A. Vietnam War Commemoration, I was eager to align our Fort Prince George DAR Chapter to be a partner, also," Brewer told *The Christian View* magazine. "I had two brothers and an uncle who served in Vietnam. I was grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the organization, to thank and honor the veterans for their service and sacrifice for our country."

EXTRA: Read *The Christian View* magazine's article on the veterans event and view many photos online at www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com.

Flags for Fallen Military and the Patriot Guard Riders

Honor the Memory of PFC Barrett Austin

An American Flag and A Flagpole are Installed at the Home of Austin's Parents, Curt and Yolanda Austin

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher



PFC Barrett Lyle Austin, a 2011 Pickens High School graduate, son of Curt and Yolanda Austin, brother to Summer and Jordan, husband to Heather, grandson of Don and Betty Austin and Benny and Helen Buck.

A crowd of family and friends gathered at the home of Curt and Yolanda Austin, as the organization Flags for Fallen Military, South Carolina honored the memory of their son, Private First Class Barrett Lyle Austin, with the installation of a flagpole and an American flag.

PFC Austin, at the age of 20, died in Germany on April 21, 2013, of injuries he had sustained four days earlier, when his vehicle was attacked by an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom. The 2011 Pickens High School graduate was assigned to the 4th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, in Fort Stewart, Georgia.

"On behalf of Flags for Fallen Military and the Austin Family, we would like to thank each and every one for being here today," said Mike Wilson, State Coordinator for Flags for Fallen Military,

South Carolina, who noted the heroism of Austin, in "protecting our freedoms and our rights.

"God sent him his final deployment orders," Wilson said. "We can't understand why. We don't know why. But his work on earth was done." He added that Austin had stood tall, with pride, had served his country and loved his flag, and that his family is very proud of him.

Wilson then asked Dr. David Gallamore, the Austins' Pastor, to open the ceremony in prayer.

"Let's pray together," said Gallamore. "Our Father, we bow today, and we thank you, Lord, for this great gathering for this wonderful occasion. Lord, we've come to give thanks and to celebrate Barrett and his devotion and his dedication and his sacrifice for the United States of America. What he did affects everybody here." He noted that the freedoms we enjoy are because of Austin

and many others “who gave their all so we might continue to be one nation under God. Thank you, Lord, for his service. Thank you for his family. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for what he’s done for everybody here. Thank you, Lord Jesus. As he just said a moment ago, Barrett got his deployment orders to go to heaven, and today we know, without a doubt, he is with you, and one day we’ll see him again. May this occasion remind us all how blessed we are to live in the United States of America. And I pray, every time we see that wonderful flag, we will be reminded of the sacrifice that he and others have given. I pray you’ll bless this time today. God, may we go back in our minds and hearts and remember this great man, Barrett Austin, and what he did for all of us. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.”

Members of the Pickens High School JROTC Color Guard then presented the colors, and Stephen McCrary sang the national anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner.” “That’s Why I Stand,” sung by Barry Michael, was then played on a recording.

“I’m overwhelmed by y’all being here, and we feel the love,” Curt Austin told everyone present. He thanked everyone involved and said to all gathered, “We appreciate you taking the time to come out here on this sweltering day. We miss Barrett very much, but God is good. God has been good to our family. He has blessed us.” He noted what his Pastor had said, that they know, without a doubt, that Barrett is with God and that they will see him again. “We’re thankful for that assurance,” he said.

Wilson and the Austin family then installed the flagpole, and the Color Guard presented the flag to Wilson, who then presented it to Barrett’s father on behalf of Flags for Fallen Military and a grateful nation in memory of Barrett. “May his memory and legacy never be forgotten,” said Wilson.

Curt Austin then asked Michael Millwood, a wounded warrior who served with Barrett, to come forward and help him raise the flag on the pole.

Wilson said that, with events such as this, he hopes that, when people see an American flag, they will think about what it cost – not the monetary price of the flag, but the lives of men and women who “paid for that flag, paid for our freedom, paid for us to stand here today to be able to honor them.” He then thanked all veterans in attendance at the ceremony, including Millwood. “Thank you for your service and being here today.”

Wilson thanked the Sheriff’s Office, the Pickens High School ROTC, and the Patriot Guard Riders. “Most of all,” he said, “I’d like to thank the family, for allowing us to be here today.”

He also thanked Patsy Finley and her husband, Gary, who provided the meal following the ceremony. “Her niece, Captain Kimberly Hampton, was the first female pilot to be shot down and killed in combat missions,” he said. He then asked Rev. Gallamore to close the ceremony in prayer and to bless the food.

“May we pray. Our Father, we are grateful today. We’ve been reminded, once again, of the price and the cost of freedom. Thank you for those down through the years who have been willing to pay the price. Today, we give thanks again for Barrett. These men and women who made this possible, I pray you’ll bless them. Lord Jesus, I pray you’ll remind us all, not only was there a great price paid for freedom of this nation, but the greatest price was paid on an old rugged cross by the Lord Jesus himself. So, I pray you’ll bless and touch everybody here. Thank you for those who prepared the food. I pray you’ll bless it to our bodies and then help us, Lord, to serve you. And I pray you’ll bless America. Thank you for men and women who are willing, still, to go and to do whatever is necessary to keep America free. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.”



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

Yolanda and Curt Austin stand at the flagpole with an American flag newly installed at their home in memory of their son, PFC Barrett Austin.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

The Austin family install the flagpole.

Following the ceremony, Millwood spoke to *The Christian View* magazine about Barrett. "He was a great man," he said. "I didn't know him for as long as I would have liked to, but, in the short time I did know him, he was the kind of guy who would give you the shirt off his back, without hesitation. He was very kind, and you could tell he loved being in the Army. He loved being a soldier. It was great to serve with him. He was a great guy."

After the ceremony, Curt Austin wrote, "Our family was honored and humbled by the outpouring of love shown." He thanked Mike Wilson and everyone involved with Flags for Fallen Military; India Rackley and the South Carolina Patriot Guard Riders; the Pickens High School Color Guard; the American Legion Post 52 of Easley; Dillard Funeral Home (for providing tents); Pastor David Gallamore; Stephen McCrary; Patsy and Gary Finley (for providing food); Mitzi Bowles (for providing desserts); Michael and DeAnna Millwood; Rick Hanner (music), David Lanier, Machen Harris, Ashton Lanier, Lexi Lanier, and Ashton Guin (for parking and shuttle service), the Pickens County Sheriff's Office, and Jacob, Richard, Steve, Tim, Isaac, Damion, Austin, Donnie, and Dillon (for setting up and taking down for the event). "And to my family and friends who took time, on a blistering hot Sunday afternoon, to share this time with us, I love each of you. Our family was honored and humbled by the outpouring of love shown."

EXTRA: Read this article and view many more photos online at www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

Members of the Pickens High School JROTC Color Guard bring the American flag for the flagpole as members of the American Legion Post 52 of Easley salute and Patriot Guard Riders stand in respect.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

A member of the Pickens High School JROTC presents the flag to Mike Wilson of Flags for Fallen Military.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

Wilson presents the flag to Curt Austin and the Austin family.



*Photographs by Karen Brewer,
Publisher, The Christian View magazine*

Above: Michael Millwood, who served with PFC Barrett Austin, assists Curt Austin with the American flag, installed in memory of PFC Barrett Austin.

At left: Yolanda Austin, Michael Millwood, Curt Austin, Mike Wilson, and the Austin family





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For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Romans 10:13

Pickens Community Honors SP4 Charles Johnson, Jr., First Person from Pickens County to Die in Vietnam War

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher

For the past two years, the Pickens community has gathered at Charles Johnson Memorial Park for a special ceremony to remember and honor one of their own, who was the first person from Pickens County to be killed in the Vietnam War.

U.S. Army Specialist 4 Charles Johnson, Jr., who served in the 1st Cavalry Division, First Battalion, 12th Cavalry, was 25 when he died on March 30, 1966 in the Pleiku Province of South Vietnam as part of 'Operation Lincoln', to find and destroy the enemy who had participated in the Battle of Ia Drang Valley. He was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart.

His mother, Essie Johnson, had seen all three of her sons go to war. At the time of Charles' death, his brother John Howard Johnson was in a hospital after having been wounded in a prior battle, and his brother Leroy Johnson could not be located, as he was on a mission behind enemy lines. But both brothers returned home from the war.

This year's ceremony began outside Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church prior to the walk to the park, which is on the church's property but is located at the corner of West Lee and South Catherine Streets.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

John Howard Johnson, Joyce Williams, and Bernice, Fred, and Rodney Wakefield.

Rev. Isaiah Scipio, Chair of Arise from the Ashes (AFTA) welcomed everyone and thanked Griffin Ebenezer, Troop 51 Boy Scouts, and the Pickens

Lions Club for helping sponsor the event. He also thanked everyone attending the event. "I've been taught that your time is your most valuable commod-

ity, because, once you lose your time, you can't get it back," he said, thanking everyone for giving their time "in remembrance of all who bled and died for that



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

Representative Davey Hiott presented Johnson's family with an American flag that had flown over the Statehouse. Pictured are Daisy Johnson, John Howard Johnson, Fred and Bernice Wakefield, and Joyce Williams.

flag, and especially Charles Johnson, who we honor in our little community. We want to never, ever forget. Like Moses told the children of Israel, teach it to your children and your children's children, that they won't forget that it was the Lord our God who has brought us, and it is the Lord our God who will carry us home."

Rev. Charles Hendricks then gave the invocation. "Let us pray. Father, we thank you for another day, another opportunity, God, to celebrate and honor a country that's under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all. So we pray as we celebrate the flag and honor those that made the supreme sacrifice for our freedom, for our time and fellowship together. We ask you, dear God, to continue to bless us, this nation that we are so proud and so honored to have, the freedom that we have, lives that paid the price for it. We ask you to continue to bless the Johnson family, and, in honoring their loved one, we'll continue to bless those on the battlefield as we speak and those near and far. God, it's all in thy hand. Not our will or our way, but it's your will to be done in all of our lives. Keep us now, God, as we continue to celebrate and honor. In the name of the Father, Son, and the blessed Holy Spirit, this is our prayer."

Scoutmaster Perry Gravely asked everyone to rise as members of Troop 51 (Noah Elgin, Thackston Nickell, Benjamin Poore, Tyler Sowell, Jayme Styles, Timmy Williamson, and Chayton Wilson) presented the colors and led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Gravely and Assistant Scoutmaster Doug Poore then led in the singing of "This Land is Your Land."

Gravely thanked everyone for coming and called the event special for Troop 51 and the Lions Club, AFTA, and Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church. He also thanked the Johnson family. Present were Charles Johnson's brother John Howard Johnson, his brother Leroy's wife, Daisy; his sister Joyce Williams, his sister Bernice Wakefield and her husband, Fred Wakefield, and Rodney Wakefield.

Gravely then introduced the keynote speaker, State Rep. Davey Hiott, who thanked Gravely for the invitation and said it was an honor. Hiott also thanked the Boy Scouts. "Thank you for taking an interest in doing this and learning the history not only of Pickens County but this great state and this great nation," he said. He also thanked the Lions Club and Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church and the community

Hiott said that he has lived in Pickens all of his life but it wasn't until a few years ago that he learned who Charles Johnson was. "Now that I've learned who Charles Johnson was, I'll never forget who Charles Johnson was, because he's made an impact on me." After sharing Johnson's story, Hiott said, "When tough times come, you can either keep moving forward or give up." He added that our nation is free "because people like Charles Johnson and his two brothers kept moving forward and they did not give up." He asked for all veterans in attendance to stand and said, "We honor you today, and we thank you for your service. We could never thank you and many others enough. I've never served in the United States military, but I thank God for every single person that has. It tears me apart when I hear and see someone from our military being disrespected. Every time I look at a flag, I see people. Names come to my mind. My Dad, my Granddad, many of my family served in the military, and, every time I look at a flag, I see people." The flag, he said, is "about people, about a country, about freedom" that we enjoy because of our military veterans and their families.

He then asked the family of Charles Johnson who were present for the ceremony to come forward, and he presented Bernice Wakefield and the family with an American flag that had flown over the South Carolina Statehouse and said, "The state of South Carolina wants to thank you.. God bless you."



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

Scoutmaster Perry Gravely with Johnson's brothers, John Howard and Leroy, at last year's event.

Bernice Wakefield thanked Hiott and Gravely, and AFTA and the Lions Club, as well as Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church for the use of the property to honor their brother Charles with the park. "It was a loss," she said of her brother's death, "but I'm so thankful that people didn't forget." She thanked everyone for coming and added that she knows her brother is with their mother in heaven.

Gravely then read a poem, "Over the Sea," written by Leroy Johnson. The poem, he said, expressed what many returning soldiers felt when they came home from the war.

Gravely and Poore then led everyone in singing "Grand Old Flag."

Troop 51 Scouts led a parade as everyone carried small American flags and walked from the church to the park, and the Johnson family placed small flags around the monument.

The ceremony concluded with a benediction by Rev. Floyd Hendricks. "Our heavenly Father, we would like to thank you one more time for this great day, for the fellowship and the camaraderie that we have shown for each other today. We'd like to thank you, oh God, for the Johnson family, the sacrifice that they've made through all of this. And, once again, oh heavenly Father, we ask that you lead us in the right direction, go with us, and carry us through this day, we pray. Amen."

EXTRA: View more photos with this article at *The Christian View* magazine's website, www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com.

Construction Begins for Memorial Park at Library to Honor Captain Kimberly Hampton

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher



Captain Kimberly Hampton was a helicopter pilot with the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division.

Construction is in the beginning stages for the Captain Kimberly Hampton Memorial Park at the Captain Kimberly Hampton Memorial Library in Easley. 'Operation Dragonfly' is spearheaded by Jim Garrison to honor the 1994 Easley High School graduate and 1998 Presbyterian College graduate who died, at the age of 27, on January 2, 2004, when the OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter she was flying was shot down near Fallujah, Iraq. She was the first female military pilot in United States history to be shot down and killed by hostile fire. The Memorial Park will honor veterans with a Memorial Walk (with bricks that have been sold as a fundraiser), and the park will display an OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter, the same type that Hampton flew.

Earlier this year, the Captain Kimberly Hampton Memorial Golf Tournament raised funds toward Operation Dragonfly. "It is just a glorious day, and we are so proud," Kimberly's mother, Ann, told *The Christian View* magazine. "We know that Kimberly is not going to be forgotten, and I'm just 'blown away.' So many people have come together to make this happen, and we're just so proud and humbled, very humbled. We are just so thrilled and honored and humbled by Operation Dragonfly, and by the number of people who've come out." "Being the parents of an only child to die the way she did, it's tough," said Kimberly's father, Dale Hampton. "Your children aren't supposed to die before you do. The circumstances are tough. But things like this make us realize that's she's never going to be forgotten. And the way that people have surrounded us with their love and beautiful comments and allow things to be done in her honor, there are no words, absolutely no words, except thank you."

When Kimberly was in third grade, she had written for a school assignment that she wanted "to fly like a bird," her mother, Ann, told this writer in January of 2004. "Be free and independent were the qualities she was referring to," said Kimberly's father, Dale. "And that was what she ended up doing." Ann said that Kimberly preferred to be considered a soldier and a pilot who happened to be



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

Dale Hampton hugs his wife, Ann, as he speaks at the opening ceremony of the Captain Kimberly Hampton Memorial Golf Tournament.

female. "She felt that, given the opportunities, within reason, she could do anything anyone else could do."

For more information on Operation Dragonfly, contact Jim Garrison at PO Box 974, Easley, SC 29641.

EXTRA: Read *The Christian View* magazine's in-depth article on the Captain Kimberly Hampton Memorial Golf Tournament and view more than 60 photographs from the event at www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com. Also, view construction photos on *The Christian View* magazine's website.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

Ann Hampton with a model replica of the OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter that her daughter, Kimberly, flew. A real OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter will be displayed at the Captain Kimberly Hampton Memorial Park.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

Construction has begun on the Captain Kimberly Hampton Memorial Park at the Captain Kimberly Hampton Memorial Library in Easley. Operation Dragonfly is spearheaded by Jim Garrison.



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‘Rut’ Liles Monument is Dedicated in Memorial Garden at Boy Scouts Troop 51 Scout Hut in Pickens

Former Eagle Scout of Troop 51 Died in Vietnam in 1969

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher



At left: Ephriam Rutledge ‘Rut’ Liles of Pickens.

At right: Rut Liles’ sister, Mary Gravely, with Scoutmaster Perry Gravely at the Rut Liles monument in the Troop 51 Memorial Garden.

With a desire to serve his country during the time of the Vietnam War, ‘Rut’ Liles tried to enlist in the U.S. Army, but he was turned down for medical reasons. After having surgery on his legs, he tried once more to join, and he was accepted. He died on July 4, 1969, just 16 days after he began his tour of duty, when his helicopter was shot down in the Phuoc Long province of South Vietnam. He was 22.

As a monument to Liles was dedicated in the Troop 51 Memorial Garden at the Scout Hut, friends and family gathered to honor the memory of the all-American boy, the Eagle Scout of Troop 51, who had a dream to be a helicopter pilot in the U.S. Army.

The dedication ceremony began with a welcome by Scoutmaster Perry Gravely, the presentation of colors by the Boy Scouts of Troop 51, who led in the Pledge of Allegiance, and, after the flag was lowered to half-staff, the playing of “Taps.”

Will Gravely, who is the husband of Liles’ sister, Mary, and is a cousin to Perry Gravely, and a former member of Troop 51, gave the invocation, noting God’s presence among them as they remembered all who had gone before. “But we remember, especially, Rutledge Liles, who made the supreme sacrifice in service of our country 50 years ago in Vietnam. We recall his growing up years in Pickens, his achievements in scouting, and his determination to be a helicopter pilot in the U.S. military — all of that with gratitude and pride. We are comforted by recalling that he went down, doing what he wanted to be doing. Give us all grateful hearts for scout leaders and troops for shaping the lives of young people to mold character, inspire spiritual growth, grow patriotism and democratic values, and teach all of us to love and care for each other. Amen.”

Perry Gravely then shared some history on Liles, who was born Ephriam Rutledge Liles II on May 13, 1947 to Ephriam Rutledge Liles I and his wife, Mary. Gravely remembered Rut Liles from his own childhood. “I actually played golf, when I was a little kid, with Mr. Rut.” They also attended the same church, Grace United Methodist Church in Pickens.

Gravely then stated that Liles had been a Scout at Troop 51, earning the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank able to be attained, on July 11, 1961 at the age of 14. Gravely then showed Liles’ Eagle certificate, and other certificates he had received while in



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

Mildred Brewer, of the DAR, pins a lapel pin, from the Department of Defense, upon Mary Gravely.

scouting, and a letter from the then Chief Scout Executive, congratulating him on his reaching the rank of Eagle Scout. All of the documents have been kept by Liles' sister, Mary.

"He graduated from high school in 1965," Gravely said of Liles. "First, he went to the Citadel, and he tried to get into the Army when the Vietnam War started, and he was not able to get in for medical reasons, something with his legs. He came back and had surgery and was accepted, in 1969. He was a Warrant Officer in the First Cavalry Division, First Squadron, Ninth Cavalry B Troop. And I understand his whole dream in life was to fly helicopters.

"He began his tour of duty in Vietnam on June 18, 1969. It lasted a little over two weeks before he was killed, when his helicopter was shot down in the Phuoc Long Province of South Vietnam on July 4, 1969.

Gravely then held up a book, entitled *Died on the Fourth of July: Remembering the Men Who Gave Their Lives in Vietnam on America's Birthday*, written by John F. Schlatter, in which is a chapter about Rut Liles.

Assistant Scout Master Doug Poore thanked everyone for coming. "It's an honor for us Troop 51 leaders and scouts to be a part of this celebration and memorial service for 'Rut' Liles." He then shared about events that happened in July of 1969, and he noted about July 4, "Thirty one Americans died in Vietnam that day, 29 of them from hostile fire and two accidents."

Milton 'Milt' Ponder, a schoolmate of Liles', spoke to those gathered. "I am so pleased to see this great turnout and to be assured that Rut is still remembered, as always. He was just one of the most special guys. We were all at Pickens High School together. And one of my great memories is, I'd be sitting in Mrs. Mann's class – I had it early in the day – and I could look out toward the hill where Mr. Hank Bivens' house was. There was a chain-link fence that separated it from the Queen's Court area, and there was a little hole in that fence, and I'd be sitting there looking, and see Rut. He was tearing across the grass – course, he was late, as always, had his bookbag in his hand — and he was crawling through that fence, trying to get to school before they caught him as truant.

"If I was going to characterize him as one thing, it would be the all-American boy. Every one of us who grew up with him has a fantastic story about him."

Referring to Vietnam, Ponder said, "Rut didn't have to go. He had a valid reason not to go. He had a medical condition, but he had such a strong love for this country. He was, as far as I'm concerned, the epitome of what a patriot is. He underwent surgery, he reapplied, he volunteered. He went and served this country. And when I hear people today talking down our country and talking down our military, it makes my blood 'boil', because of so many men and women like Rut Liles that made the supreme sacrifice so that we can salute that flag. So, I'm honored to be here. I'm honored to have the opportunity to memorialize my friend. Thank you."

Ben Underwood shared humorous stories from his youth with Rut as a friend, and he recalled one incident in which he and his teammates were ready to leave on the bus for an away game, and everyone was there, except for Rut. "Coach Curtis got so mad. He told one of the managers to get Rut's equipment and put it on the bus. When we came up the hill, turned left to go up where McDonalds is now, here comes Rut running down the sidewalk. We stopped. He got on the bus. Coach Curtis let him have it. He told him he wasn't going to get to play. He didn't tell him till we got over there that he brought his equipment."

Underwood shared another story from their teenage years of a trip to the beach. He couldn't understand how he didn't have the



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

Boy Scouts of Troop 51 raise the American flag at the Scout Hut.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

Senior Patrol Leader Thackston Nickell reads the poem "Fallen Soldiers" by Cathy Jo Moore.

See Rut Liles continued on page 22

Quilts of Valor Are Presented to Local Veterans

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

Robert Raines, Steven Raines, Milt Ponder, and Bill Duckworth were each presented a Quilt of Valor in Dacusville. Ponder accepted on behalf of his friends Rut Liles and John Reaves, who died in Vietnam.

Four local veterans, William Milton 'Milt' Ponder, Bill Duckworth, Steven Raines, and Robert Raines, were each awarded a Quilt of Valor at the 2019 Dacusville Farm Show.

Ronnie Hall and his wife, Linda, who is the coordinator of Quilts of Valor for Pickens and Oconee Counties, were assisted by

Betty Dounelis, a member of the Quilts of Valor program in Dacusville, for the presentations.

The first recipient was Ponder, who served in the U.S. Army and Army Reserve for 28 years, beginning in 1968. "He went to Wofford College and has a Commission in Infantry and Military

See Quilts of Valor continued on page 19



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

Ronnie Hall, far left, and his wife, Linda Hall, of Quilts of Valor, with veterans Robert Steven Raines, Robert Edward Raines, William Milton 'Milt' Ponder, and Bill Duckworth.

Milton Ponder Accepts Quilt of Valor on Behalf of Friends Rut Liles and John Reaves, Who Died in Vietnam in 1969

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher

When Milt Ponder accepted a Quilt of Valor in Dacusville, he did so on behalf of Warrant Officer Ephriam Rutledge 'Rut' Liles, his friend from Pickens High School, and Sgt. John Shepard Reaves, Jr., his friend from Wofford College, both of whom died in Vietnam in July of 1969. Ponder served in the U.S. Army and Army Reserve for 28 years, beginning in 1968.

"I want to express my sincere appreciation for this great honor," Ponder said. "I don't deserve it. I'm not worthy of it. I don't accept it on behalf of myself, but I accept this beautiful quilt in memory of two of my best friends in the world, who died in Vietnam in July of 1969. Warrant Officer 'Rut' Liles, of Pickens, was a helicopter pilot. On July 4, 1969, his aircraft was shot down. All aboard perished. Sgt John Shepard Reaves, Jr., of Gaffney, an Infantry Sergeant, was leading a night patrol, and he was killed. So, I humbly accept this great honor in their memory. Thank you."



Rut Liles



John Reaves

Quilts of Valor continued from page 18

Police," Ronnie Hall said of Ponder. "He was an officer for many years. He later served as the Military Academy Liaison Field Administrative Officer for West Point. His commendations and medals include National Defense Service Medal, three Army Commendation Medals, two Meritorious Awards, and Armed Forces Reserve Medal." Hall added that Ponder had been his Battalion commander.

Ponder accepted the quilt on behalf of two of his friends who were killed in Vietnam, Ephriam Rutledge 'Rut' Liles and John Shepard Reaves, Jr. "I want to express my sincere appreciation for this great honor," said Ponder. "I don't deserve it. I'm not worthy of it. I don't accept it on behalf of myself, but I accept this beautiful quilt in memory of two of my best friends in the world, who died in Vietnam in July of 1969. Warrant Officer 'Rut' Liles, of Pickens, was a helicopter pilot. On July 4, 1969, his aircraft was shot down. All aboard perished. Sgt John Shepard Reaves, Jr., of Gaffney, an Infantry Sergeant, was leading a night patrol, and he was killed. So, I humbly accept this great honor in their memory. Thank you."

The second recipient was Bill Duckworth, who served in the U.S. Army from 1966 to 1969. "Bill volunteered to go to Vietnam, where he served at Cam Ranh Bay for 12 months," said Hall. "He was later deployed to Korea for 12 months and was Sergeant over the motor pool. His awards include Good Conduct and Expert Rifle."

The next recipient was Robert Steven Raines, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1991 to 1998 and in the S.C. National Guard from 2001 to 2011. "During his time in the Marine Corps, he was in infantry and aviation maintenance," said Hall. "His commen-



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher,

Milt Ponder with his wife, Toni Jean Ponder.

dations and medals include the following: Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal, Palmetto Service Ribbon, Military Training Instructor Ribbon, Combat Infantryman Badge, Expert Rifle, Pistol."

Raines' father, Robert Edward Raines, was the next recipient. "He served in the United States Army from August, 1969 to February, 1972," said Hall. "He was a Field Artillery and Motor Transportation Operator in the Fifth Army. His awards include National Defense Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Rifle and Pistol Sharpshooter, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with two overseas bars.

"Each one of these gentlemen will receive a handmade card that has a special message, and they also will receive a certificate suitable for framing," said Hall.

"Gentlemen, on behalf of the Quilts of Valor Foundation, in recognition of your service and sacrifice for this nation, it is a privilege to serve honor and comfort upon you through the award of the Quilt of Valor. We may never know the depth of your sacrifice to protect and defend the United States of America. As a gesture of gratitude of a grateful nation, we award you this Quilt of Valor. Thank you for your service, and welcome home, sir."

A recording of Lee Greenwood singing "God Bless the U.S.A." was then played, as Hall asked all veterans in attendance to come forward, and many in the crowd lined up to shake each veteran's hand and to thank them for their service.

EXTRA: View many more photos with this article at www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com.



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luck Rut had of girls talking to him. "I guess we were in the 11th grade," he said. "We'd always try to talk to the ladies. I couldn't understand it. Rut would always have somebody who would want to talk to him. I couldn't understand it – till one night, I was sitting close to him, when he was introducing himself as Ephriam Rutledge Hollingsworth III. He told them that his daddy had made it in oil. As all of y'all that knew Rut know, his daddy owned the Exxon distributing place. He 'made it' in oil. Anyway, he was a good friend."

Ted Shehan, a past Mayor of Pickens who was a schoolmate of Rut's, and is part of a group of friends who get together each year on Rut's birthday, said that he was thinking back to when Rut was in the Scouts, and he thought about the Scout Law, which describes what a Scout is. "The Scout Law and one more word, I think 13 words sum up Rut Liles. He was trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent." Shehan added, "He was late. I will put that in there."

"Most of all," he said, "he was a friend. Everybody thought he was his best friend. He was just a fantastic individual."

Shehan then read aloud a letter written to him by Pickens native Joe Black from his home in Colorado. In it, Black shared that he realizes his freedom has been given to him by people like Rut Liles. "I pray that young Americans never forget that freedom is not free," he wrote. "God bless you, Rut. I know you are still with us and with all who knew and loved you. We will never forget you. Your old friend, Joe Black." Shehan noted that Black had sent, with the letter, a check in the amount of \$300 to Troop 51, as a memorial for Rut.

Perry Gravely shared a little history about the monument. "Rut was buried in the mausoleum. The Army sent this beautiful plaque. Since he was in the mausoleum, Mary's mother had a little shrine for him in the back yard. When Mary sold the house, she moved it to her cousin Tunkie (Stokes') house." Gravely was later asked if he would be interested in having the monument at the Scout Hut, where Liles had been an Eagle Scout. "I said, 'That would be fantastic,'" Gravely recalled. His nephew, Justin Gravely, loaded the monument on his truck and moved it to the Memorial Garden at the Scout Hut.

Gravely then recognized Mildred Brewer, whose brother was a classmate of Liles and who is a member of the Fort Prince George Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), which is a commemorative partner with the United States Department of Defense in honoring Vietnam veterans and their families. She presented Mary Gravely with a Certificate of Honor from the Department of Defense and an In Memory Of lapel pin. "On behalf of a grateful nation, and the Department of Defense of the United States of America, we are proud to recognize and honor, Mary, your loved one and your family for the significant sacrifice that was made in the name of freedom and democracy over the years. So, thank you for your grace and dignity and courage, for our nation is forever indebted to the ones that have lost their lives. It is a sacrifice. With our deepest respect and admiration of the family of Rut Liles, I would like to present this."

"Thank you so much for what your chapter has done," Mary Gravely told her.

Scout member and Senior Patrol Leader Thackston Nickell, a member of Grace United Methodist Church, where Liles was a member, then read a poem, "Fallen Soldiers," written by Cathy Jo Moore.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

Mary and Will Gravely at the monument to Mary's brother, Ephriam Rutledge 'Rut' Liles II. The monument is now located in the Memorial Garden at the Troop 51 Scout Hut. Rut Liles died on July 4, 1969, when his helicopter was shot down in Vietnam.

Perry Gravely and Mary Gravely then walked to the monument in the Memorial Garden, where she placed an American flag. "I want to thank everybody for coming," said Perry Gravely. "This is truly a special moment, I know, for Mary and Will, but also for Troop 51, that we have y'all here tonight. I would like to close with a benediction we have in Scouts: 'May the Great Scoutmaster of all scoutmasters be with you till we meet again.' Thank you for coming."

Following the ceremony, friends continued to share with Rut's sister their fond memories of their friend. Tim Morgan, who served for many years as Assistant Sheriff for Pickens County, told of how he had played football in his youth. "Ted Shehan was the Coach, and Rut would come help him," he said. Speaking of Liles' death in Vietnam, Morgan said, "That was the first combat death in my life. I still remember the effect it had on me."

Ponder told Mary Gravely that that coming Saturday he would be accepting a Quilt of Valor at the Dacusville Farm Show. "I'm going to accept it in memory of Rut and in memory of my college roommate, John Reaves," he said. "I'm going to accept that in memory of them."

Rut Liles was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart, as well as the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, and Vietnam Service Medal.

EXTRA: View more photos with this article online at www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com.



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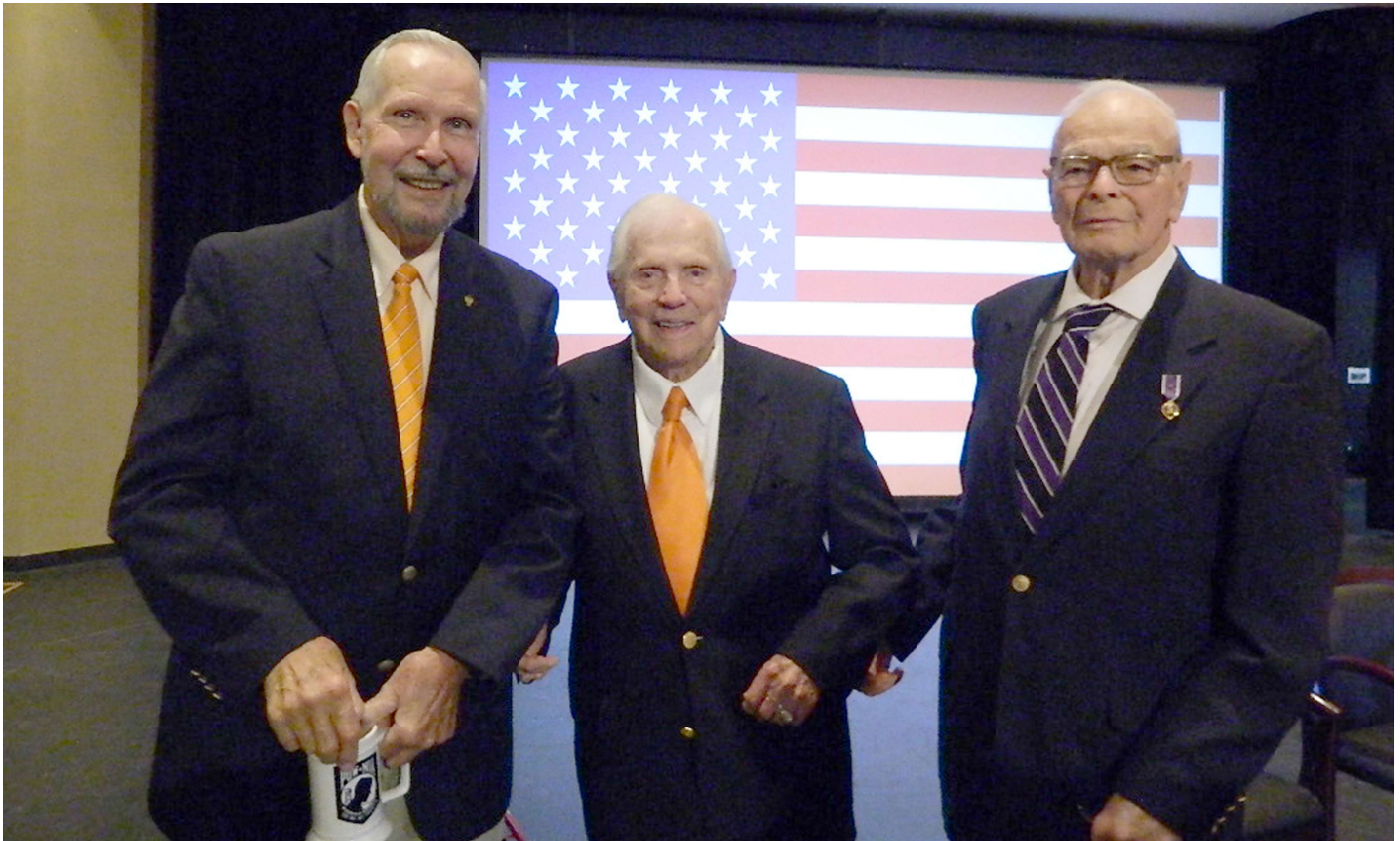
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Honoring Former Prisoners of War with Ties to Clemson: Col. Bill Austin, Col. Ben Skardon, First Lt. Bill Funchess

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

Colonel Bill Austin, Colonel Ben Skardon, and First Lieutenant Bill Funchess on stage at Clemson University's Tillman Hall Auditorium, where they shared about their experiences as prisoners of war. The event was presented by Clemson University's Air Force ROTC as a POW/MIA Recognition Ceremony.

Three former Prisoners of War from three separate wars – World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War – are part of the Clemson family, and each is a man of valor.

U.S. Army Colonel (retired) Beverly 'Ben' N. Skardon (now age 102), a survivor of World War II's Bataan Death March and a survivor of 1,255 days as a prisoner of war held in Japanese POW camps (beginning April 9, 1942), completed his 12th year walking in the Bataan Memorial Death March in New Mexico in March of this year. He is the oldest participant and the only survivor of the Bataan Death March to ever walk in the Memorial Death March. He walks in memory of his fellow soldiers and Clemson graduates Otis Morgan and Henry Leitner, who helped save Skardon's life but did not survive to make it home. After his military career, Skardon, a member of Clemson's Class of 1938, returned to Clemson, where he taught English from 1964 until his retirement in 1985. The Walterboro native lives in Clemson.

U.S. Army First Lieutenant (retired) William 'Bill' Funchess (now age 91), who was captured on November 4, 1950, survived 1,038 days as a prisoner of the Chinese Army during the Korean War, after everyone in his platoon was either killed or captured. After his release, the member of the Class of 1948 returned to Clemson, where he earned a Master's degree in agronomy and worked for the Clemson Extension Service for three decades. He has written a book, entitled *Korea POW: A Thousand Days of Torment*. The Orangeburg native lives in Clemson.

U.S. Air Force Colonel (retired) William Renwick 'Bill' Austin II (who will turn 82 in December) was an F-4 Phantom II pilot who survived 1,986 days as a prisoner of the North Vietnamese after his plane was shot down on his 81st combat flight over North Vietnam on October 7, 1967. After his release in 1973, he continued serving in the Air Force and then the member of the Class of 1959 returned to Clemson to



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

U.S. Army Colonel (retired) Ben Skardon with Clemson University U.S. Air Force ROTC cadet and President of Tiger Brotherhood Chase McCathern at Clemson University's celebration of Skardon's 100th birthday.

lead the Air Force ROTC, from 1985 until he retired in 1988. The Simpsonville native lives in Seneca.

On September 20, 2019, Pickens County recognized POW/MIA Recognition Day, a national observance on the third Friday of each September, by flying the POW/MIA flag at the county's administration building and courthouse along with the American and South Carolina flags at half-staff.

During their October 7, 2019 meeting, in recognition of the recent POW/MIA Recognition Day, Pickens County Council approved a resolution honoring Skardon, Funchess, and Austin, and all American men and women who were held as prisoners of war or who are missing in action. As the resolution states, the freedoms we enjoy "are not free but come at a cost by patriots throughout our history, including sacrifices by those service members who were taken as prisoners of war." The resolution "commends them for their valor and determination during unspeakable hardship throughout their captivity."

The previous October, the three decorated veterans spoke before a crowd of all ages, including current Clemson ROTC

cadets and local citizens, inside Tillman Hall Auditorium on the campus of their alma mater, Clemson University, where they shared of their experiences as prisoners of war and shared how their faith sustained them throughout that time.

When Clemson University held a grand celebration in honor of Skardon's 100th birthday, U.S. Air Force ROTC cadet Chase McCathern, President of Tiger Brotherhood, announced that more than 150 donors had given to Clemson students and faculty in honor of Skardon's birthday, and he presented Skardon, who had attended Clemson College as a cadet from 1935 to 1938, when it was an all-male military school, with a framed photograph of Clemson's Scroll of Honor from the perspective of a student – Skardon – sitting on a special reflection stone.

EXTRA: Read *The Christian View* magazine's article and view more photographs from the Tillman Hall event, and read *The Christian View* magazine's in-depth article on Skardon's birthday celebration at Clemson University and view more than 50 photographs at www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com.

Pickens County's Veterans Parade in Liberty Honors Men and Women Who Have Served Our Nation

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

U.S. Army First Lieutenant Bill Funchess, a prisoner of war for 1,038 days during the Korean War, and Pickens County Veterans Affairs Officer Sherry Harris (U.S. Army, Desert Storm and Iraq) smile for the camera at Pickens County's first Veterans Parade the afternoon of Sunday, November 11, 2018 in Liberty. This year's Veterans Parade, scheduled for Sunday, November 10, 2019 at 3:00 p.m., will begin on West Main Street at the Pickens County Performing Arts Center and will be followed by the second annual 'A Salute to Veterans' Show inside the Pickens County Performing Arts Center.

The second annual Pickens County Veterans Parade will be held on Sunday, November 10, 2019, beginning at The Pickens County Performing Arts Center on West Main Street in Liberty. As has been advertised in *The Christian View* magazine (www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com) since early spring, the parade will begin at 3:00 p.m. on November 10 and will be followed by 'A Salute to Veterans' Show inside the Performing Arts Center at 4:00 p.m. Come show support for our veterans and thank them for their service.

The 2018 Parade included the Liberty High School Marching Band, the Liberty High School Army JROTC, the Easley and Pickens American Legion Posts, the Patriot Guard Riders, U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham, and many veterans, and was emceed by Pickens County Council Chair Roy Costner.

EXTRA: View many more photographs of the 2018 Pickens County Veterans Parade and A Salute to Veterans Show by visiting *The Christian View* magazine's website at www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com.

Former Prisoner of War First Lt. Bill Funchess of Clemson is presented The Order of the Palmetto at Pickens County's 'A Salute to Veterans' Show at the Performing Arts Center

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

South Carolina State Representatives Davey Hiott (center) and Gary Clary (right) from Pickens County are pictured presenting former prisoner of war Army First Lieutenant Bill Funchess of Clemson with The Order of the Palmetto, the state's highest civilian honor, at the 2018 Salute to Veterans Show held at the Pickens County Performing Arts Center. This year's Salute to Veterans Show is scheduled for Sunday, November 10, 2019.

Pickens County's Salute to Veterans Show is scheduled for Sunday, November 10 inside the Pickens County Performing Arts Center in Liberty at 4:00 p.m., following the Veterans Parade.

Last year's excellent show honoring veteran heroes included local, state, and national elected officials: members of Pickens County Council as well as Liberty Mayor Brian Petersen, Pickens Mayor David Owens. State Rep. Davey Hiott, State Rep. Gary Clary, and U.S. Congressman Jeff Duncan. Also participating in the special event were the Liberty High School JROTC; Dr. Amber James, Assistant Professor of Music at Southern Wesleyan University; Southern Wesleyan University Concert Choir; Rev. Seth Buckley; and

Pickens County Tourism Director Jay Pitts.

Hiott and Clary, along with Pickens County Council Chair Roy Costner and Council members on stage, presented The Order of the Palmetto, the state's highest civilian honor, to U.S. Army First Lieutenant (retired) Bill Funchess, who survived being a prisoner of war for 1,038 days during the Korean War.

Read the article on pages 24-25 about former prisoners of war U.S. Army Colonel (retired) Ben Skardon, Funchess, and U.S. Air Force Colonel (retired) Bill Austin.

EXTRA: Read the article and view many more photographs of the 2018 Salute to Veterans Show by visiting www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com.

Members of The American Legion Pickens Post 11 Dedicate War Memorial Wall and Flagpole at Legion Hut

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

Members of the American Legion Pickens Post 11 have dedicated a new War Memorial at the Legion Hut.

The American Legion Pickens Post 11 has dedicated their flagpole and a War Memorial Wall at the Legion Hut, located at 185 Hagood Street.

The special ceremony began with the posting of colors by members of the Pickens High School JROTC Color Guard, and then a welcome from Post Commander Terry Gromlovits.

“Comrades, this day is sacred for the almost visible presence of those who have gone before us,” he read. “We honor the memory of those who gave their lives in the service of our country and for those others who have dropped their burdens by the wayside of life and are gone to their eternal rest. May the ceremonies of today deepen our reverence for our departed friends and comrades. Let us renew our pledge and loyalty to our country and its flag. Let us resolve by word and deed by emphasis of the privilege and the duty of patriotism.”

Post Chaplain Gary Parsons read a poem, written by Marion Mahoney, entitled, “Those Honored Dead.”

He then prayed, “Dear heavenly Father, we want to thank you for this day. Lord, we do lift up all the service members throughout our great wars, all our wars present and all our past wars, as they gave the ultimate sacrifice, giving their life for each and every one of us, for their country. And we honor them today, Lord. Again, we do this because of what you’ve done for us. You gave your life up for us and, Lord, we praise your name. We ask these things in Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.”

Following “Taps”, Gromlovits dedicated the Wall in the name of Post 11, South Carolina Department of the American Legion. “I dedicate this structure to the purpose of our Post and with it I dedicate this Post to the faithful service of our nation, of its people, and the memory of its heroic dead. I dedicate this memorial to the memory of those who fell in the service to our country. I dedicate it in the name of those who offered their lives so justice, freedom, and democracy might serve us and the victorious ideals for the peoples of this world. The lives of those who have made the supreme sacrifice are glorious before us. Their deeds are inspirational. And, as they served America in time of war, yielding their last full measure of devotion, may we serve America in time of peace. I dedicate this monument to them, and, with it, I dedicate this Post to the faithful service of our country and the preservation of the memories of those who have died, that liberty might live.”

War monuments that were elsewhere on the property have been moved to the Wall, and additional monuments will be added, to represent all wars. Memorial bricks will be available for purchase, for anyone wishing to have a brick with the name of a family member or friend who served in the armed forces.

“We are going to make a Memorial Garden area,” Gromlovits told *The Christian View* magazine. “We’re going to have all of the monuments there, and we’re going to have a bench, where anyone can sit and pray.”

EXTRA: Read this article and additional Legion articles with many more photos at www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com.

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Lieutenant Clebe McClary speaks in Chapel Service as Southern Wesleyan University Honors Veterans

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher

First Lieutenant Patrick Cleburne ‘Clebe’ McClary, III, U.S. Marine Corps (retired) was the special speaker for Southern Wesleyan University’s chapel service saluting veterans and current military.

Following patriotic music by SWU’s University Singers, McClary delivered an inspirational message in the auditorium of Newton Hobson Chapel on SWU’s campus.

In March of 1968, while serving during the Vietnam War as a platoon leader in the First Reconnaissance Battalion, McClary was wounded and lost his left eye and left arm when his unit was attacked by the Viet Cong, yet he continued to lead those under his command.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

Lt. Clebe McClary speaking in chapel.

Today, the South Carolina native is a sought-after speaker, sharing his life’s story and his Christian faith. A patch covers his left eye, and he delivers a message with the acronym PATCH: Positive Attitude That Characterizes Hope. He has spoken in every state in the United States and in more than 30 countries.

He has authored, with Diane Barker, a book about his life, entitled *Living Proof*, with a foreword by the late Tom Landry, original Head Coach of the Dallas Cowboys.

He and his wife, Deanna, live in Pawleys Island, in the Lowcountry of South Carolina.

EXTRA: Read this article and view additional photos from the event on *The Christian View* magazine’s website, www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

Bob and Irene Bolin with Lt. Clebe McClary.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

Dr. Bob and Harriet Nash with Lt. Clebe McClary.

Southern Wesleyan University's New Military Monument Pays Tribute to Members of our Nation's Armed Forces

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

Command Sergeant Major Dr. Robert 'Bob' Nash, U.S. Army (retired), and Professor Emeritus, points to the name of his father, Robert Nash, Sr. on a plaque at the Southern Wesleyan University Military Monument. His own name and the names of several family members who served in the Armed Forces are upon plaques.

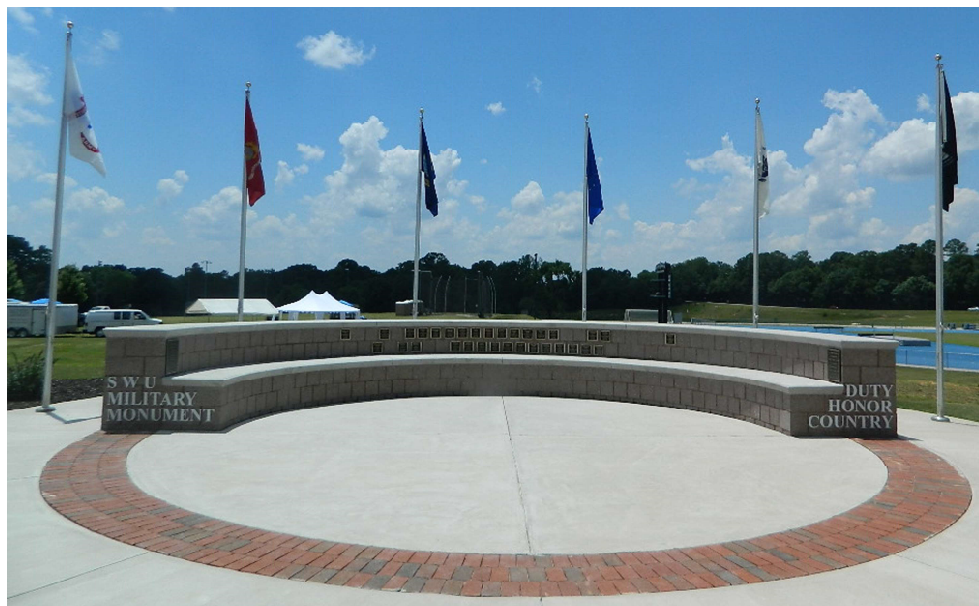
"Duty, Honor, Country." So reads the Southern Wesleyan University Military Monument that pays tribute to members of our nation's armed forces.

The idea for the monument came from Command Sergeant Major (retired) Robert 'Bob' Nash, a Class of 1961 graduate and a retired SWU professor, who told *The Christian View* magazine that the purpose for the monument is two-fold. "What we wanted to do here on this campus was create a military monument that would tie the community into the university, have plaques mounted on the monument for alumni, friends, anyone from the community, to bring them together," he said, adding, "and the community extends out to even other states. And then the second goal was to teach the

younger generation a little bit about military culture, so that people understand what the military is all about."

SWU alumni, faculty, or staff who wish to honor a family member or friend who has served or who is currently serving may purchase a bronze plaque with their name. Contact SWU's Office of Advancement at 864-644-5006 or visit www.swu.edu/giving/military-monument.

"The only thing that we ask is that they provide documentation that they've had military service, and eventually we'll need more information, because we're going to create a directory of all those on the monument, with their picture and a little bit about their service," said Nash.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

"This is a perpetual care structure," he said. "It has nighttime lights. We fly the branch flags at special events, and then we take those down and put all American flags up there."

The SWU Military Monument is at the main entrance to the university, beside the Sheriff National Guard Memorial Flag Plaza, which is named for the late Colonel Jimmy D. Sheriff, and his wife, G. Anne Sheriff.

EXTRA: Read this article and view more photos online at *The Christian View* magazine's website, www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com.

Veterans Begin Walk Across the State of South Carolina to Raise Awareness for South Carolina Arrows for Heroes

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher

To raise awareness for South Carolina Arrows for Heroes, a non-profit organization that helps veterans heal through archery, veterans Greg Quarles (President and Executive Director) and Ross Alewine are walking across the state, from the mountains to the coast, followed in a van driven by fellow veteran Jared Vernon, with Quarles' dog, Bachelor, inside.

Their first day began in Pickens County, from atop Sassafras Mountain, the state's highest point, and they stopped to visit the Veterans Affairs Office, accompanied there from Pickens High School by members of the JROTC. "I was really impressed and inspired that they did that," Quarles said of the students. "It meant a lot," he said, adding that he was also honored that everyone else came.

Quarles told *The Christian View* magazine that the reason for the walk is "to raise money to be able to buy equipment for the veteran community, so that I can teach them the sport and art of archery, of adaptive archery if they have injuries, to give them purpose and mission and camaraderie." The Purple Heart recipient and retired US Army Airborne Ranger had been shot and also had multiple spine fusions to be able to walk and have feeling in his arms, he said. The support of family and friends got him through, after his injuries, and he wants to help other veterans on their own road to recovery.

They had planned to finish their walk at Patriots Point on September 11, Patriot Day, but, because of evacuations due to the threat of Hurricane Dorian, the walk was suspended at midpoint. They plan to finish the walk to the coast in November.

EXTRA: Read this article and view more photos on *The Christian View* magazine's website.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

Greg Quarles, his dog, Bachelor, VA Officer Sherry Harris, and Ross Alewine.

Right: State Senator Rex Rice with Quarles, Bachelor, Alewine, and Vernon.

Below left: Quarles and Bachelor

Below right: Pickens County's Acting Administrator Ken Roper with Quarles and Bachelor



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

Clemson University Military and Veteran Engagement Welcomes Veterans From South Carolina Arrows for Heroes at Clemson University's Scroll of Honor Memorial Park

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

Jared Vernon, Ross Alewine, and Greg Quarles of South Carolina Arrows for Heroes with Brennan Beck, Director of Clemson University's Military and Veteran Engagement, at the Scroll of Honor Memorial Park.

"Our injuries don't make who we are. We make who we are." So spoke U.S. Army Sergeant First Class (retired) Greg Quarles, Executive Director of Arrows for Heroes and founder and President of South Carolina Arrows for Heroes, before a crowd of well-wishers at Clemson University's Scroll of Honor Memorial Park on the second day of his across-the-state walk with U.S. Army Staff Sergeant (retired) Ross Alewine. (They began the day before, from atop Sassafras Mountain. Read the article on the previous page about their first day and their stop at the Veterans Affairs Office in Pickens.) Fellow veteran Jared Vernon drives the support vehicle behind them, with Quarles' Certified Therapy Support Dog, Bachelor, an American Staffordshire (Amstaff) Terrier rescue.

The purpose of the Adapt and Overcome Trek across South Carolina by the decorated Army veterans and award-winning athletes is to raise awareness and funds for Arrows for Heroes, which teaches archery to veterans, especially those recovering from injuries. They have experienced firsthand recovery from their own combat wounds and have competed in Warrior Games and Valor Games. Quarles is a retired U.S. Army Ranger who served for more than 20 years with eight combat deployments and had multiple surgeries for injuries. Alewine, also, underwent many surgeries due to injuries from his multiple deployments, and he found adaptive sports while recovering at the Warrior Transition Battalion in Virginia. Both are Purple Heart recipients.

The Clemson visit was arranged by U.S. Army Sergeant (retired) Brennan Beck, Director of Clemson University's Military and Veteran Engagement, who told *The Christian View* magazine that he had

met Quarles last year at Vantage Point Foundation in Charleston, which helps post 9-11 veterans transition to civilian life. As Quarles' peer mentor, Beck was impressed, he said, by "his resilience and the challenges he has overcome and his heart for helping veterans." The two kept in touch, and, when Quarles told Beck about the walk and his wish to stop at Clemson, Beck said, "Let's make that happen."

Beck introduced the three to everyone gathered, and then he told his fellow veterans, "We appreciate you three men and what you are doing."

Alewine thanked everyone for coming. "You're out here to see us, but it's a lot bigger than us," he said. "We're doing this, not to get recognition for us, but to bring awareness for other veterans. I'd say all three of us were in spots where we didn't want to do anything, or get off the couch. We were all beat up pretty bad. And we're going to finish. Any veterans you know, tell them to reach out to us, to get outdoors and get moving. Thank you for being here."

"Support the veterans in your lives, your family and friends," said Vernon. "Some of them are dealing with things that maybe you can't even see." He added that, knowing what Quarles and Alewine have been through, he is inspired by their walk.

"I first want to thank each and every one of you for coming out and supporting us and the vets," said Quarles. "Without you, we couldn't do what we're doing, to reach out and help our fellow

See Arrows for Heroes continued on page 35

Honoring Their Service Ride

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher

For the past two years, military members and spouses have been welcomed to the Gilbert Track and Field Complex on the campus of Southern Wesleyan University for a special ceremony and meet and greet prior to their police and motorcycle escort to Keowee Key for rest and relaxation. It has provided an opportunity for the community to show appreciation and thank them for their service.

This year's guests included United States Special Operations Command Marines based at Camp LeJeune and Wounded Warriors of all military branches.

EXTRA: Read *The Christian View* magazine's articles about the Honoring The Service Ride special ceremonies and view hundreds of photographs at www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

Willis Misner, Marine Corps League of Pickens County, with Marine Melvin Rodas and wife, Kristen.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

Beckett Emerson, Seth King, Grady Turner, Bryce Emerson wave their American flags.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

Sammy Little, Wayne Scruggs, Craig Bayliff, and Willis Misner of the Marine Corps League of Pickens County.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

Above: Veteran Len Kirkpatrick, a member of the Clemson chapter of the Christian Motorcyclists Association, part of the motorcycle escort. At left: Veteran Glenn Seward and his wife, Jennie; their daughter-in-law, Julia Nash Seward; Harriet Nash; and her husband, veteran Dr. Bob Nash at the 2019 event.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, *The Christian View* magazine
Guests and their spouses before their escort to Keowee Key.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, *The Christian View* magazine
Upstate Legends Jeep Club provided jeeps for transporting the guests.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, *The Christian View* magazine
The motorcycle escort of the 2019 Honoring Their Service Ride.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher
Veteran Dr. Paul Prichard

Arrows for Heroes continued from page 33

veterans.” He said that South Carolina is the most patriotic state. “We’ve seen that firsthand in the 30 something miles we’ve walked so far in the last two days.

“We’re doing this to raise money, so that we can buy adaptive equipment and regular equipment for veterans, to be able to teach them the art and sport of archery.” He said that the President of the national organization Arrows for Heroes is a Vietnam veteran, who was injured in service and also has Parkinson’s disease, a nervous system disorder. “A sports recreation therapist at the V.A. took him one day to shoot archery, and it took the ‘shake’ out,” said Quarles. Once he realized he could shoot, he wanted to start the organization.

“Once I got injured in the line of duty and had multiple surgeries,” Quarles said, “I thought my life was over. Everything that I had worked so hard for, and the person that I was, was gone, I felt like.” After his surgeries, he met with a physical therapist and an occupational therapist and a sports recreation therapist, who

showed him how he could cycle again, with adaptive equipment. “I said, ‘I can’t. I’ve had spine surgeries. I have vertigo. I can’t ride an upright bike,’ They were like, ‘Here’s a recumbent.’ That opened my eyes to the whole realm of adaptive sports, not just archery—that came later.”

What also inspired him was meeting other athletes who had similar or worse injuries than he had: “quad amputees riding upright bikes, triple amputees that are swimming the English Channel, winning gold medals at games.

“It showed me that our injuries don’t make who we are. We make who we are. Those doors might have been closed because of injuries that we had but a plethora of other doors opened. Having support from friends, family, and people like you, that support the veteran community, allows those doors to be opened and allows us to be able to do things that we might have thought we couldn’t do and that we can do now. Thank y’all so much.”

To donate, visit www.SouthCarolinaArrowsForHeroes.org.

EXTRA: Read this article and view more photos online at www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com.

World War II Veteran John Holcombe and His Wife, Rema, Married Since 1948, Share Precious Memories

By **KAREN BREWER, Publisher**

When asked how they would wish to be remembered, John Holcombe said, “as a good, honest, hardworking family man,” and his wife, Rema, said, “as a mother and a friend.”

“She’s a good cook. You can put that down,” John added, with a smile. “She feeds the young’uns on Sundays and Wednesdays.”

Rema and John’s family, including sons Wayne and David, daughters-in-law Kathy and Faye, daughter Debbie, and grandchildren and great grandchildren, have been a source of joy for the couple, who were married on September 15, 1948, 12 days following her 17th birthday.

Family get-togethers have been a tradition, and Rema has enjoyed cooking for her family.

For many years, the Holcombe family has gathered at John and Rema’s Easley, South Carolina home for Sunday dinners after church and for special occasions. Each month, Rema cooks for family in honor of family members who have birthdays that month. “David and Wayne come after church every Sunday night,” Rema added. “I have leftovers from dinner. And Wayne and David come every Wednesday night and eat supper, too.” Debbie lives in Spartanburg County but visits her parents every week and attends church with them on Sunday mornings.

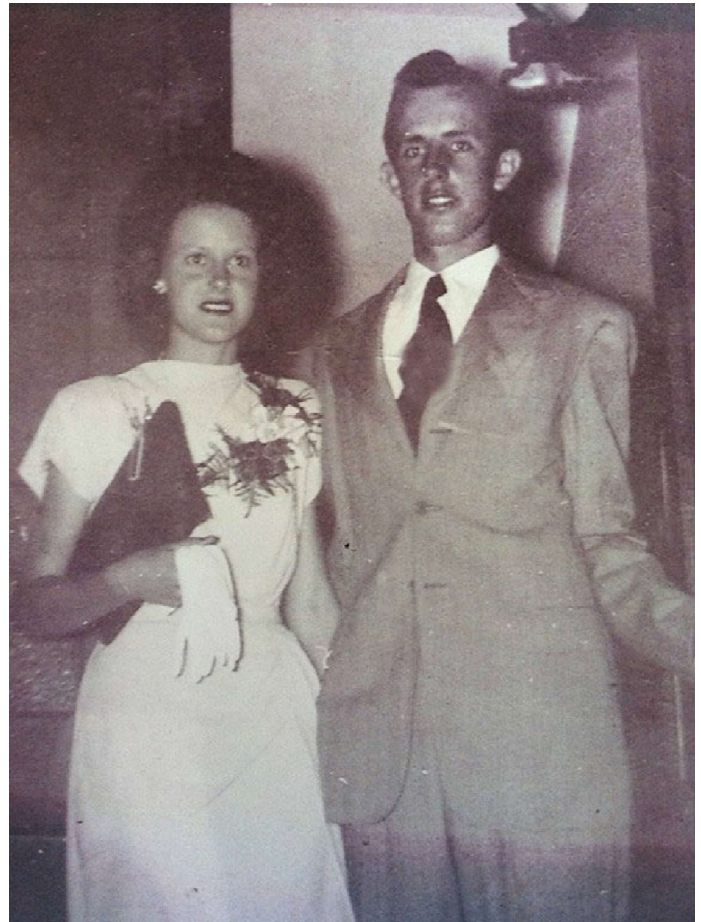
Rema has special memories of her own parents coming to John and Rema’s home, especially at Christmas to celebrate the holiday with the family.

“You’d think Christmas never would come when you were growing up, but now it comes so fast,” said John.

“Before my Daddy died,” said Rema, “they always came here on Christmas morning. And then, every Christmas after my Daddy died, Mama would get in that car and come here by herself before daylight on Christmas morning. She loved Christmas. After Wayne’s boys came along, we would get in her car and go over there on Christmas mornings to watch them open their Christmas, and then we’d come back over here and have breakfast.”

Another memory Rema has of her father was when Debbie, the only granddaughter among eight grandsons, was born. “My Daddy sent me word at the hospital that I had ruined his ball team,” Rema said, with a smile. “Eight boys were in the family, and, when Debbie was born, he thought she had ruined his ball team. And she’s the only one that played ball outside of high school. She lasted longer. We followed her around, playing ball, for years and years. Debbie played volleyball and softball. They retired her volleyball shirt at Southern Wesleyan.”

Debbie both played and coached on the collegiate and high school levels and won the National Coach of the Year Award from the National Federation of High School Coaches Association. Her first softball team experience, at her home church, Rock Springs Baptist, in her youth, was the beginning to her successful career. She played volleyball and softball as a student at Easley High School and Central Wesleyan College (now Southern Wesleyan University), and was inducted into the Hall of Fame at both schools. (SWU has retired her number 5.) Her volleyball coaching career began at T.L. Hanna High School, and then she took the reins as



Rema and John Holcombe as a young couple

Head Softball and Volleyball Coach at James F. Byrnes High School. She then served as Head Coach of the Lady Warriors volleyball and softball teams at her alma mater (SWU), where she also taught physical education as an Associate Professor and served as Sports Information Director. She then became the Head Volleyball Coach at Presbyterian College and started the school’s softball team while teaching physical education as an Associate Professor. She returned to Byrnes High, teaching physical education, while also serving as Assistant Softball Coach at Anderson College (now Anderson University). She then became Head Softball Coach for the Lady Rebels at Byrnes High, where she was awarded the honor as National Softball Coach of the Year. She has now retired from coaching but has retained her teaching position at Byrnes. Debbie was honored as the Byrnes High School Teacher of the Year in 2012, and the school yearbook was dedicated to her in 2015.

Debbie spoke fondly of her father, for whom she has a special name, ‘Diddy.’ “My Diddy is a hardworking yet easygoing man,” she said. “He takes great pride in his heritage and places importance on family loyalty. He is also a wonderful father and husband, expert gardener by growing the family fresh vegetables for over 60 years, and a generous provider for the family. Diddy loves to fish

and is quite humorous with fish tales and other anecdotes. But most importantly, he is a strong Christian who lives his beliefs by attending church regularly, blessing our food, and being a Godly role model for his family. My favorite memories of my Diddy include him hitting fly balls to me in the pasture, wrapping me in a warm blanket to put me to bed on cold winter nights, me crying and begging to go fishing with him and his buddies when I was little (I always caught the biggest and the most), camping with the family, and attending almost all of my ballgames and award ceremonies locally and all over the country. I am very blessed to have my Diddy in my life."

She also spoke fondly of her mother. "While Diddy was working, Mama was always there for us," she said. "I have no memory of a babysitter. Still, to this day, she is always home and there when we need her. My Mama makes sure everyone is fed, and she is a fabulous cook. My father passed along his love and ability for sports to me, and my Mama gave me her passion for teaching. My parents complement each other and make the perfect partners to raise a family. They not only required us to attend church, but they lived their Christian values before us daily. To this day, I always know where my parents are on Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night....Rock Springs Baptist Church."

John was born in Liberty, South Carolina on December 3, 1926, the eighth of 10 children born to John Esley Holcombe, Sr. and Della Alexander Holcombe. His eight late siblings were Etolia Holcombe McDonald, Leola Holcombe Satterfield, Jessie Mae Holcombe Garrison, Earl Holcombe, Walter Holcombe, Harold Holcombe, Bobby Holcombe, and Bessie 'Bess' Holcombe Moon, who passed away in 2016 at the age of 105. John's only remaining sibling is his younger sister, Anita Holcombe Green.

"There were 10 of us," said John. "That was a bunch. I was number eight, Anita was number nine, and Bobby was number ten. My mother had babies from the time she was 17 till she was 41 or 42, when the last one was born. That's having babies a long time. We had a good family. We got along together good. My Dad was in police work for almost 30 years. When he first married, he was the choir director at Smith Grove. After he got into his police work, he got out of church, but he finally got back in, down at Siloam."

John grew up in Liberty, Easley, and Central, and graduated from Welcome High School in Greenville at the age of 16. "Not many people have heard of Welcome High School," he said. "Welcome was on White Horse Road, and, when they built the new school, they called it Carolina High School."

Although his name now is John Esley Holcombe, Jr., and he grew up being called 'Junior', he explained that his given name at birth was Esley Napoleon Holcombe, and remained that until he was a teenager. "My mother named me Esley Napoleon, Esley after my Daddy and Napoleon after my grandfather," he said. "But, when I was about 14 or 15, and we were working in Easley, the man who sent off for my Social Security card asked my Daddy what my name was, and my Daddy told him my name was John Esley. But I liked that Esley Napoleon pretty good. My Grandpa Napoleon Alexander, he was quite a fellow."

John's sister, Anita, still refers to him by the name Junior. "That was my name in Powdersville," he said. "Everybody in Powdersville that knows me calls me Junior."

Rema was born September 3, 1931 in the Forest Acres area of Easley, one of three daughters born to the late Clyde and Inez Vaughn. She grew up attending Rock Springs Baptist Church, having joined at the age of 12. Her sister and brother-in-law, Dot and Alvin Mahaffey, are longtime members of Rock Springs, as well.

Rema's late sister, Betty Sisk, a member of Riverside Baptist Church, passed away in 2007.

"My mother's Daddy, Elferd Jennings, was a Presbyterian, and my mother's Mama, Sallie Jennings, was a Methodist," Rema said. "When they moved into the community from Anderson County, there wasn't a Methodist or Presbyterian church close, but they lived close enough to the Baptist church, and so all of the children joined Rock Springs. My Mother and Daddy both were members of Rock Springs. They started going there when they were teenagers.

"My parents were hardworking," she said. "My mother worked in the mill for 38 years on the third shift. Daddy was a farmer part of the time, and then he was in the construction business."

Rema began first grade at Concrete Primary School (in Easley but in Anderson County) and later attended Crosswell Grammar School and graduated from Easley High School.

Her family lived on the road that is now Highway 123, across from the current location of the Wal-Mart shopping center (the former location of Platt Saco Lowell), back when that land was a home place. "We were in walking distance from church," she said. "If we didn't have a way, if Mama and Daddy couldn't go, we could walk up to the church."

Rema began worshiping at Rock Springs in the 1922 sanctuary, before it was bricked up, when it was a one-room, white wooden building. "My parents didn't attend regularly when we lived so far away," she said. "But then we moved closer, and we got a car, but we lived close enough to walk when Mama and Daddy were working. My grandmother Sallie Vaughn would walk with us and go to church."

Rema was saved at the age of 12 during a revival meeting at Rock Springs and joined the church and was baptized in the spring pool in the woods. "That was the coldest water," she said.

"There were fewer than 100 members when I started going," Rema said. "The church was out in the country. There were woods all around. There were trees all of the way around the church. We had to get water out of a well. The well was where they built the parsonage and then built the church that we last came out of (the 1990 sanctuary)."

"They had some good singings," John recalled. "That whole yard would be full of young people. They raised the windows, and the women would have the fans."

John and Rema met at a third Sunday night singing held at Rock Springs in the 1922 sanctuary. "All of the Powdersville boys would get together and come to Rock Springs to see the girls," explained Rema. "That white building was small, and it was full. We were standing room only that night. I was standing in the doorway when I met him."

"A girlfriend I went with a good long while introduced me to her, and then she rolled her eyes at me a little bit," he said with laughter. "I got to going with her."

John had visited Rock Springs once before, as a little boy, when he rode a mule to the church one night. "My brother's wife was expecting a baby, and I was supposed to stay with her while he was working second shift," recalled John. "But another little boy and I rode that mule up to Rock Springs church. The preacher was preaching away, and I went off to sleep. When I woke up, it was thundering and lightning like you wouldn't believe. While I had been asleep, the other little boy had made arrangements for him a ride home, but I had to ride the mule home. I got on that mule and started down the road. It was a dirt road then. That mule was afraid of cars. I had been told not to get him around a car. But, when I got



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, The Christian View magazine

Rema and John Holcombe

started, here came a car down the church yard, and here came one behind me, blowing its horn. That mule went to bucking and throwing me up and down. I held around his neck, and I just hung on. I reckon the Lord took care of me that night.”

“I’ve enjoyed watching the church grow,” Rema said. “It has always been exciting, because it’s always in a growing stage. We’re always planning to build.”

She recalled when the 1959 sanctuary was built. “With that building, we had more room, and a nursery. When Wayne was little, I didn’t get to go to church regularly if the weather was bad, because they didn’t have a nursery in the 1922 building, and we had to sit out in the car. He was premature and was sick so many times. I thought he would die if he got sick, so I didn’t go if the weather was bad. When David was born, they had bricked the church up and had a nursery, but they didn’t have workers. And the nursery was right near the pulpit, and you had to get up and disturb everybody. When we were in the 1959 building, we had a nursery, and it was much better to leave your child and not have to worry about them crying.

“That’s when I started teaching Sunday School, when we moved into the 1959 building. They needed more Sunday School teachers. I taught for 43 years. I always looked forward to it. Each child was different, and you had to deal with them differently. I also taught Mission Friends for about 40 years. We had Sunbeams, and it changed to Mission Friends. I taught Training Union. I didn’t have Training Union as long as I had the others, but, at one time, I taught all three. I always worked with the children.”

Rema remembers the first service held in the 1990 sanctuary, on Easter Sunday. “We had room for everybody together,” she said.

“It was hard to leave the 1959 building. That building was special, because my children grew up in that building, and they all joined the church in that building, but I was glad to do it to have room for people.”

She felt the same way when the church family moved yet again into another new sanctuary, in May of 2004. “It was needed to be done to have room for more people,” she said.

“I remember when it was just the little white building. I’ve seen it grow. It’s amazing, when you remember where we’ve come

from and where we are now. It's hard to imagine. The people who went to church back then, the older families who really kept the church going then, I know that they would be excited now with all that's been going on. I saw a lot of changes, but the change was a joy."

The age group Rema taught in Sunday School for 43 years was the three year old age group. "Some of them say they remember me being their teacher, but a three year old doesn't remember that," she said. "Why they remember is because they came to Mission Friends and Training Union, and it was up to five years old, and they can remember more than a three year old."

John also taught Sunday School at Rock Springs, children ages seven and eight. "I taught at one time in the little folks department," he said. "They called it the primary department then," said Rema.

John recalled one little boy, in particular, he taught, who, along with his father and uncle, drowned in a boating accident. "The Sunday before, I talked with him a little bit," said John. "He loved to fish, that little boy. He was eight years old, I believe. He said, 'Yeah, we're going fishing next Saturday if it don't rain.' Well, it had come a bunch of rain and got the rivers up, but they went, anyway. They think what they were doing was catching bait at the foot of the Issaqueena Dam, and a big log must have come over and hit the boat. All three of them drowned."

"That woman lost her husband, brother, and son," said Rema.

"The little boy was only eight years old," said John. "He was a smart little boy. I loved to talk to him."

John has also been active in Rock Springs, having served as a deacon and also as an usher for many years, in three sanctuaries.

"He was an usher in the 1959 building," said Rema. "When we went to the 1990 building, they put him in the balcony as an usher, and he thinks he can't get out of that balcony." John still serves as an usher in the balcony, in the current sanctuary, which was built in 2004.

All three of John and Rema's children are members of Rock Springs, and their oldest son, Wayne, has served on staff at the church since the 1980's. "He was a mechanical engineer," said Rema. "He had knee surgery and was out of work, and he asked for something to do. He began visiting in the hospitals and helping with the church before he was on staff. I'm proud that Wayne has worked for the church, because there's not a member who enjoys that church any more than he does. He spends the biggest part of his time there. It's his job, I know, but he loves doing it. He loves every phase of it. I'm proud that he works for the church. He was premature, and he almost died. People say he lived for a reason, so I think he lived to work for the church."

John and Rema's son David, and daughters-in-law, Kathy and Faye, have also been actively involved at Rock Springs. Kathy has sung in the choir, taught young girls about missions in GA's, taught in Vacation Bible School and Training Union, taught two-year-old children in Sunday School, and has helped with camp. Faye has taught two-year-old children in Sunday School and has taught young girls in GA's with Kathy.

"Rock Springs is a part of my life, and always has been," said Rema. "It means a whole lot to me."

John and Rema still live in the same house they purchased in 1950. The home holds many years of memories for the Holcombe family. The house had been built in 1948, the same year they became husband and wife. "This is the only home the kids have known," said Rema. On a wall inside their home hangs a painting of their house. "Debbie had that picture of the place painted," said

Rema. "She said it's called 'The Homeplace.' She gave it to us for Christmas. The art teacher where she teaches painted it from just a photograph."

"She did a pretty good job, didn't she?" said John. "She's a pretty good artist to do that."

Rema explained how they came to buy their homeplace. "I was working at Greenville, and I rode with this woman named Iris Ellison, who'd come by and pick me up to go to work. She said, 'We've been looking at a place to buy.' And we were looking at this, too. One morning, we had an appointment (with the owners), and we were going to tell them that we wanted it. And she told me that they were going to go that afternoon and tell them that they wanted this place. I realized we were talking about the same place. We got here that morning, and she was going to wait till that evening, and so we got it."

The home was in the country in 1950. "Cotton fields were all over," said John. Now, Highway 153, subdivisions, and businesses abound. "It was really country then," said John, "but, boy, we've got the traffic now."

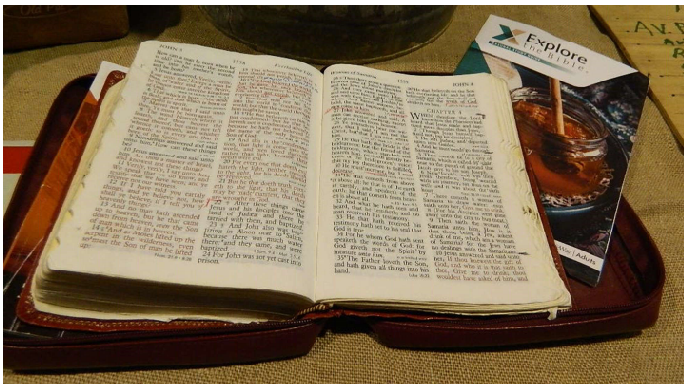
The Holcombes have seen much progress and many changes during their lives.

John has a pamphlet that lists historic events and prices of items in 1926, the year he was born. Calvin Coolidge was President. The St. Louis Cardinals won the World Series. Movies included the silent film Ben Hur. It lists the average yearly income as \$2,000 and notes that a car cost \$500 and a home \$6,500. Coffee cost \$0.30 a pound, and sugar sold for \$1.00 for 15 pounds. Eggs sold for \$0.14 a dozen, and the price for bread was \$0.08. A gallon of milk cost \$0.34, and a gallon of gas cost \$0.11. A stamp was \$0.02, and the price for a movie ticket was \$0.20. One in every six Americans owned a car. Telephones were available in American homes for \$4.00 per month. Television was invented, and NBC was founded. Robert Goddard launched the first liquid-fueled rocket. Nineteen-year-old American swimmer and Olympian Gertrude Ederle was the first woman to swim across the English Channel. Richard Byrd and Floyd Bennett were the first to fly over the North Pole. Andy Griffith, Joe Garagiola, and Ray Price were born. Rudolph Valentino and Harry Houdini died.

John said that he doesn't feel he's in his 90's. "I feel like I'm about maybe 50." He noted that his sister Bess lived to age 105. "I'd like to try to make it to about 106, if my health could be good," he said.

John said that he might have been described as 'wild' when he was growing up. "I wasn't too bad of a boy," he said. "I slipped off from school one time, though, and played hookey."

"I was at Concrete (Primary School). I don't know when it got started, but, for some years, they had a fad going on April Fool's Day. The kids would play hookey. My Daddy was at a little country store the night before, and he heard that a bunch of kids were going to play hookey. That night, at the supper table, he told me and Anita and Bobby, 'I want to tell you one thing, you'd better not play hookey.' So, the next day, I went to school, and I made up my mind I wasn't going to do it, but those boys said, 'You're chicken if you don't do it.' I didn't want to be called a chicken, so here I go with them. Do you know, there were some girls in that crowd. Some of them had their fishing poles, and this James boy had a big sack full of sandwiches, and I stayed close to him. We went out and loafed through the woods and the creeks, and they fished a little bit. A guy had stove wood stacked up to dry, and some of the boys threw some of that in the branch, but I didn't do that. But that was



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher

John Holcombe's Bible and Sunday School book, on display at his 90th birthday party.

the only thing that they did that was out of the way. We were just little country young'uns.

"In high school, I played hookey a couple of times. My mother caught up with me one time, or liked to have. During cotton picking time, we could only miss so many days in school. Well, she marked it on the calendar when I was out. When I got my report card home, she said, 'They've got you counted for more days absent than I've got on the calendar.' Those were the two days I played hookey. There were four of us. We lay down on the back of the bus. That bus driver made like he didn't know we were on the bus, and he carried us to Greenville, over to town. That was where he would go every day, and he'd stay all day over there. And we just hung around over there and rode the bus back when he came back."

John said that his parents, as well as siblings, were good influences for him. "My parents were good, and I had some sisters who kind of guided me along, to help keep me out of trouble," he said.

John entered the United States Army in 1945, trained at Camp Croft in Spartanburg, and served in the Army for nearly two years.

"We were scheduled for the invasion of Japan," he said, "but, before we got there, they dropped the bomb, and that ended the war.

"I was in the Occupation of Japan. We landed on the beaches of Nagasaki, where they had dropped the big bomb. From the beach, we loaded on an old steam-engine train in southern Japan. It was warm down there. We rode all day, till about dark, up to northern Japan, to Sasebo. It was cold up there. We stayed in some old Army barracks. They were cold. We used old orchard pots to try to keep warm that winter. We liked to have froze to death. And the bathroom was built out over the ocean and it didn't have heat. It was cold. That was a rough winter there. And then we moved to another part of Japan, to Kyushu. We stayed there in 12-man tents during the summertime. We were on the air field, where we had bombed them. There were pieces of planes all over the place. And then we moved from there up to Yokohama and stayed there a good long while. We were on Main Street in Yokohama, right on the northern part. That's where we spent a lot of time before we came home.

"We had bombed Yokohama and Tokyo like you wouldn't believe. I didn't have any idea we had bombed them like we did. There was an old Japanese woman on the street in Yokohama who had an old makeshift violin and something like a five-gallon bucket, and she'd go out there and sing, and the soldiers and everybody

would give her money. Her song was about Yokohama getting tore up. That's what the Japanese told me she was singing. That's where she made her living.

"We did a good bit of witnessing with the Army chaplain on the streets of Yokohama. I liked that guy. He was a good guy. Monday was witnessing day. We had a lot of fun doing that. We passed out pamphlets. When we were passing out those pamphlets, the older Japanese wouldn't take them, but just about all of the young Japanese would take one. And, if they took one, they'd stand there and read every bit of it before they moved.

"The Japanese were like 100 years behind us. They were poor people. But if you go over there now, you wouldn't think that. It was a disaster, but they paid a big price for the bombs hitting them, didn't they? If they hadn't pulled that sneak attack, we never would have dropped the atomic bomb."

After John returned home from service, he worked as an insurance salesman. "On my insurance route," he said, "I had a man who, with another Marine, put the flag up at Normandy. He said there were so many soldiers killed that the beach was covered with bodies. He said you could step from one body to another and never step on sand. That's how many dead soldiers were there. That was terrible."

John's nephew, the son of his sister Leola Satterfield, was killed in Hurtgen Forest in France during World War II. "He was two years older than me," he said. "He was 19 years old when he got killed."

"He was the only son she had," said Rema.

"We made five blunders in that war," said John. "And Hurtgen Forest was one of the blunders. One General wanted to go circle them and cut them off and save lives. One of them said, 'No, we're going through there and wipe them out.' Well, the Japanese were dug in. We lost several thousand right there."

John was surprised one day while he was in Japan when his brother Harold, who was four years older, walked through the door of John's Army barracks. "I was sitting in the barracks one day, and he just walked in the door," he said. "He was in the Philippines the last I knew. I don't know exactly how he found out that I was there, but he found me, and he came walking in the door."

"He probably got a letter from home," said Rema. "Your Mama probably wrote him."

John recalled one Christmas time while he was serving in Japan and pulling guard duty at night. "We had a pile of lumber," he said. "We were building a barrack. The Sergeant told me, 'Somebody's stealing that lumber.' I had the night shift, the midnight shift. I was walking by myself, but I had a rifle loaded. About midnight, I was walking, and I heard a racket at the lumber pile, so I went down to the lumber pile. A really old Japanese woman had gotten a board out of the lumber pile, and she was dragging it down the street. I followed her at a distance to see where she was going. Where we had bombed their building, it was gone, but they had dug down in there and made a room, and she was going down in there with that board. They had a little fire in there, and there were children down in there. And that's where they were living, down in that. So, I just let them take it. I didn't say anything to them. She probably came back and got some more, I guess, but I hated to say anything to them. There were a lot of poor Japanese people, you wouldn't believe.

"They would come to our mess hall and, where we had dumped the stuff out in the barrels, they would go down in there with their hands and get that food and eat it. And, when we would go to the

USO Club on Main Street and come out the back, there would be a whole bunch of women, with little babies on their backs, begging for some food. That's how poor they were." He said that he would often distribute a sack full of food to them.

John said that he had many experiences from his time spent in service, "good ones and bad ones."

One good experience was reuniting with a good friend, whom he called Sarge, with whom he served overseas. "He was a good guy," said John. "I always liked him. We played ball together, over there in Japan." Every Saturday night, John attended a Gospel meeting at a Protestant church on Main Street. "I'd take him to church," John said. "One Wednesday, I think it was, he was talking with some boys. He'd go down with those boys, and they'd get drunk and come in the barracks raising Cain and carrying on. They said that Japanese stuff could really make you drunk. I said, 'Sarge, are you going with me to church on Saturday night to the Gospel meeting?' He stood there a minute. One of the guys said, 'No, he's going with us to get drunk.' Sarge said, 'No, John asked me first, so I'm going to church with him.' So, he went to church with me that night. I'd take Sarge to church with me, but he never would make a commitment, but it seemed like he enjoyed it."

John reunited with him when Sarge visited with the Holcombes in their Easley home. "He called me on the telephone," John said. "He said, 'Do you know who this is?' I said, 'Your voice sounds familiar.' He said, 'This is ol' Sarge. I'm in Greenville. We've been to the mountains, and we started back, and I got your name and telephone number.' I said, 'Well, come on out, Sarge.' He and his wife came and stayed a good long while. Sarge said, 'Let's walk down and look at your cattle.' So, we walked out there, and then we sat down at the picnic table. I said, 'Sarge, you look happy, like you might be a Christian now.' He said, 'Well, I am, now, but, when I came home, I turned out to be the meanest boy in the community.' I said, 'What?' 'Yeah,' he said, 'I started with alcohol, and then I got on drugs, and I'd steal from my own parents.' He said he lost his car, he lost his girlfriend, and one Saturday night, he said, 'I'm just going to end it all.' He wrote his parents a letter, and he told them that he loved them and he was sorry for what he had done, but he was going to end it all. He put a gun in his pocket and was walking down to the river. He was going to shoot himself and then fall in the river and they wouldn't have to bury him. It was after midnight, I think he said. As he was walking down that road, there was a light, a light that got in his eyes, and he kept walking. When he got there, he was at a preacher's house." Sarge remembered those Saturday night Gospel meetings that John had taken him to during their Army days. "He said, for some reason, he left the road and went and knocked on the door. The preacher knew him and said, 'What are you doing out on this cold night?'" The preacher had been studying for his sermon the following day, but invited Sarge in, and there, in that preacher's study, Sarge was saved that night. When the preacher took him home, his parents were on their knees, praying for him. Sarge told John that John might have had a part in his salvation.

John said that his faith has made a difference in his own life.

"I've had some close calls in my lifetime," he said. "The last close call I had was the time ice was on the ground and I was going to the barn to feed the cats. As I was walking down the path and stepped into the barn, I heard a crash behind me. A big limb had come off that oak tree and fell right down the path I was walking. I missed it by about 5 or 10 seconds, getting killed right there."

Another close call, he said, was in 1950, right after they had bought their home. The well had nearly gone dry, and he and his

brother-in-law, Alvin, had gone in the well to dig it deeper. "Rema went out the next morning and said, 'The well's caved in.' It's a wonder that thing hadn't caved in while we were working down there. Maybe the Lord took care of us. But I've had some close calls, really close calls."

They dug a new well on the other side of the house, but they no longer use the well. "One of the blessings of life is to turn the spigot on and get water," said Rema. "You don't have to worry about a well." "The bucket was always empty," said John. "You'd have to go get a bucket of water. It was good water, though."

A verse of scripture tells of the living water that Jesus gives that never fails. "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).

God's Word is important to the Holcombes. John said that he likes to read the book of John and that his favorite verse is John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Rema's favorite verse of scripture comes from I John, "God is love." "We had that in Sunday School for years," she said.

Her favorite songs include "Blessed Assurance" and "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." She added, "I guess I sang 'Jesus Loves Me' more than anything else, though, because we usually sang that about every Sunday for the three year olds."

John said that one of his favorite songs is "Nothing But the Blood," as he remembers his father, who once was a choir director, singing that song. "I heard my Dad sing that in the field when he was working. He had a beautiful voice. He had a voice between a base and a baritone. My brother said he had the prettiest voice of any man he'd ever heard. I love music. We have that good music at church, I tell you what."

When John and Rema left their own families to marry and form a family of their own, they never could have imagined all of the experiences they would share and all of the joy life would bring through all of these decades.

"My parents are the best in the world," said Wayne. "No one could have asked for a better home. They have always shown us what it means to be committed to each other and love your mate and family. They have always taken us to church and lived before us what it means to be a Christian. I have been blessed to have a dad with a sense of humor and a mom who puts others first."

"I believe my Daddy is a part of the greatest generation because of his love of God, family, and the country in which he served," said David. "I have been blessed to be a part of a family in which almost all are believers in Christ and many that have died and gone on before us. My Daddy does not stand in the middle of most issues; they are either right or wrong." He noted that his parents gave much love to their family, as well as second chances and firm discipline. "My parents never gave up on me," he said. "They always made me feel special on my birthday and at Christmas. They provided me with the opportunity to further my education. My father provided us with a good home and a chance to learn farm life. He taught me I needed to learn how to take care of the things God has given me. I couldn't have picked a better father or mother."

EXTRA: View many more photos published with this article on *The Christian View* magazine's website at www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com.

The Vietnam Moving Wall Moves Visitors, Some to Reflection, Some to Tears

By KAREN BREWER, Publisher



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, *The Christian View* magazine

Kim Blue, who served in the United States Navy during the Vietnam War, touches names upon The Vietnam Moving Wall. The names of his cousin and several friends, who were killed in Vietnam, are upon the Vietnam Wall (part of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial) in Washington, D.C. and upon this half-sized replica.

“The first gentleman I helped find a name put his hands on it, and he started crying. And that was worth it all.” Janice Matheson Holbrooks, Assistant Director of Oconee County Veterans Affairs, spoke with *The Christian View* magazine on the first day that The Vietnam Moving Wall was displayed behind Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative’s offices in Westminster, the day before the official opening. Visitors had already come, wanting to find names of friends or family members, and she gladly helped them locate the names on the half-sized replica of the original Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C., on display due to the efforts of the Oconee County Veterans Affairs Office and the Oconee County Veterans Council.

Jerry Dyar, Director of the Oconee County Veterans Affairs Office, held a 12-foot-by-18-foot American flag, which, later that afternoon, would be hung from above, inside Blue Ridge Electric’s shelter, for the duration of The Moving Wall’s five-day visit. “The Veterans Council is comprised of representatives from all 13 service organizations here in Oconee County,” Dyar told *The Christian*

View magazine. He added that Holbrooks had started the process of trying to get the Moving Wall to Oconee County three years earlier, and he noted the significance of the Wall’s visit.

“Blue Ridge Electric was kind enough to let us put it in the center of the county, in this wonderful location here, so that everybody can have easy access to it,” said Holbrooks.

“The Oconee Veterans Council and our Veterans Affairs Office, combined, brought it here, because there are a lot of folks who don’t have the opportunity to go to D.C. to see the Wall. And we were hoping that, by bringing it here, they would be able to come and see it and get some closure.”

Paul Chen and his wife, Kim, are the drivers who take the Wall to different locations around the country, from April until November each year. “It’s just an honor to be able to share it,” said Kim Chen. “If you reach one person, and it starts their healing, it makes all the difference. That’s how I feel about it, and I love being able to share it with anybody who couldn’t make it to Washington. It’s an awe-



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher, *The Christian View* magazine

Kim Blue, a Vietnam War veteran, is filled with emotion as he visits The Vietnam Moving Wall.

some experience. It really is. I love it.”

“I couldn’t think of a better way to spend my retirement,” Paul Chen told *The Christian View* magazine. “I’m no ‘couch potato’, and, when I was asked if I would do it, I ‘jumped’ at the chance. What a way to see America and meet thousands of people, lovely people, good people. It’s a labor of love.”

The Chens live in Chicago, Illinois, but The Moving Wall, he said, is based in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. “I spend most of my time up in the Upper Peninsula, working on the Wall, working on the trailer, working on the truck,” he said. “It’s a lot of fun, and it’s rewarding.”

Chen’s cap read ‘Moving Wall, Never Forget. Vietnam Veterans Memorial.’

“Never forget,” he said. “I never forget.” He has been out of the service since 1973, he said. “I was on the tail end of Vietnam. But it feels like I’m on the frontline when I drive the Wall around all over the country and bring it to Vietnam vets and their families.” Chen said that it is both humbling and rewarding to bring the names of sons and daughters to their hometown.

Mary McCullough came to see the Wall on its first day to find, for her brother, the name of Marvin Shields, who was the first and only U.S. Navy Seabee to be awarded the Medal of Honor. Shields died in Vietnam at the age of 25 in 1965, three years before McCullough’s brother, a Vietnam veteran, joined the Seabees. “The base was named for him, and he says there was a ship named after him, as well,” she said. Her husband, George, a veteran who served prior to the Vietnam War, joined her to visit the Moving Wall.

“I didn’t expect it to be this big,” she said. “I almost started crying when I saw all of the names. I graduated from high school in 1969, and it’s like my generation, and, when they were coming back from Vietnam, they were treated so horribly.”

Kim Blue, a Texas native who now lives in Fairplay, South Carolina, and a United States Navy Vietnam veteran who served

from 1962 to 1968, also came, with his wife, Debbie, to see The Moving Wall on its first day in Westminster. The names of his cousin and several friends are on the Wall. His cousin, Kenneth, he said, was killed during a raid in Saigon. “Not regular combat,” he said. “In a hotel explosion from a truck bomb.” Several of his friends from school also died in Vietnam. “One kid was a football player, and he told us he was going to join the Marine Corps. And my other friend, who was a football player, said, ‘He’ll never come home.’ And he didn’t. He said, ‘He doesn’t know how to duck, back down, or do anything.’ He was killed in Cambodia. And this other ‘kid’ is now a retired Marine Colonel.”

Blue said that he served as what he called a ‘bubble-head’, a nuclear submariner. As he looked at names on the Wall, he said, “What I noticed here, and what I really like, is they don’t put the rank. There’s no rank.”

All names are equal, as they all were called upon to serve their nation.

Although Blue is able to see some, he is legally blind, he said. He is in his 70’s and is a cancer survivor. “I’ve survived blood clots in both lungs,” he said. “But I’m doing good. The good Lord’s been good to me.”

As his hand touched names on the Wall, tears began to run down his cheek.

Each name represents a young life taken too soon. Each life represents countless family members and friends who mourn their loss.

EXTRA: Read this article in its entirety, as well as *The Christian View* magazine’s in-depth article on The Moving Wall’s opening ceremony and *The Christian View* magazine’s in-depth article on The Moving Wall’s closing ceremony, with all speakers from the events, and view nearly 250 photographs with all three articles, by visiting *The Christian View* magazine’s website at www.TheChristianViewMagazine.com.

Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative

“Never Forget”



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