

The Christian View magazine

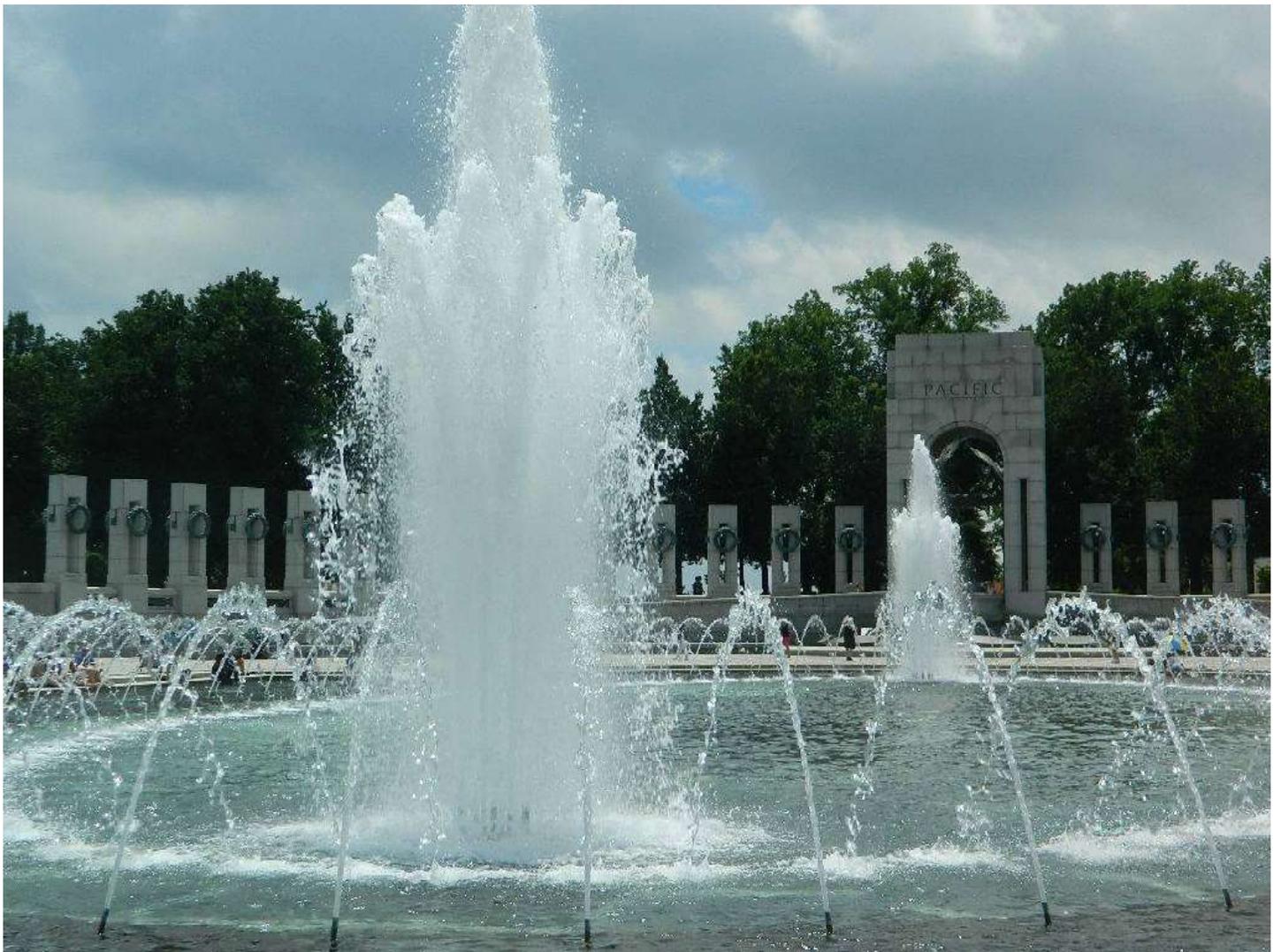
Matthew 5:16

Shining the Light of Christ

A Ministry of Christian Journalism



Special Issue: A Tribute to Veterans



Photograph by Karen Brewer, owner and Publisher, The Christian View magazine

The World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

We Owe Them All

I have written numerous articles about veterans and veterans' events over the past 23 years, first as a newspaper Editor and now as a magazine Publisher. Our veterans, our nation's heroes, are deserving. We Americans owe a great debt of gratitude to the men and women who so bravely serve and have served in our nation's armed forces. This special issue is dedicated to our current military, and to each and every veteran who returned home after serving, and to all of those men and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice in giving their lives. Their families are also owed the utmost respect and appreciation for their sacrifice. For our freedoms we hold dear in this country, we owe to those who have served and those who are now serving. We can never fully repay this debt we owe, but we can acknowledge our debt and our gratitude and our appreciation and our respect. They are owed our deepest respect and appreciation not only at certain times of the year but throughout the entire year. Every day is an appropriate time to honor and appreciate our veterans.

The Christian View magazine appreciates our veterans.

Thank you for your service and your sacrifice.



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Matthew 5:16 ~ Shining the Light of Christ

TheChristianViewMagazine.com



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Honoring Our Veterans

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‘Remember, Honor, and Teach’ is the Message of Wreaths Across America Ceremony Honoring Veterans

American Legion Post 52 Holds Wreath-Laying Ceremony at Robinson Memorial Gardens in Easley

Written by KAREN BREWER, Publisher & Editor



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Chris Robinson, President and General Manager of Robinson Funeral Homes, places a wreath at the gravesite of William Kennedy Mauldin during a Wreaths Across America ceremony the morning of Saturday, December 17, 2022. Mauldin, a Captain in the United States Air Force, flew many missions during World War II and the Korean Conflict. On February 21, 1952, while he was on an aerial reconnaissance mission searching for enemy targets in North Korea, the RF-51 Mustang he was piloting was shot down, and he was declared Missing in Action. In 1993, remains of unidentified American servicemen were returned to the United States. Captain Mauldin’s remains were positively identified in 2008 and were buried in the Veterans Garden of Honor at Robinson Memorial Gardens in Easley.

‘Remember, honor, and teach’ was the message as more than 400 wreaths were placed on veterans’ graves in the Veterans Garden of Honor at Robinson Memorial Gardens in Easley following a 10 a.m. Wreaths Across America ceremony on Saturday, December 17, 2022.

American Legion Post 52 Commander Walt Carter greeted the crowd and opened the ceremony by asking the Legion Color Guard to advance the colors.

Post 52 member Marion Summey then sang the national anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

Post 52 Chaplain Nick Vlahos then greeted the crowd and opened in prayer. “Good morning, ladies and gentle-

men. Thank you for being here on this very special occasion. Kindly join me as we open up in a word of prayer. “Dear heavenly Father, in the name of your son, Jesus, we are honored to be here today in your presence, to remember our veterans. They have given the ultimate sacrifice for this country. Many lives have been affected by the immeasurable price that they have paid. Countless moms, dads, husbands, wives, children, and other family members and friends have felt the impact as it continues to echo through the years of time. We remember them today, all of them, the fallen ones, and also the ones who endure their loss. May their ultimate sacrifice never be forgotten.

“Father, as I conclude, I would like to think that, if they were able to hear this prayer today, they would be proud that they have not been forgotten. May time never diminish or erase their gift to us as Americans. There are no words to express our gratitude. Be with each person that has been affected by this loss. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray, and everybody said—” And the crowd joined him in concluding, “Amen.”



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

American Legion Post 52 Sergeant-at-Arms Jerry Gilstrap and Post 52 member Richard Mintz



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

The flagpole at the Veterans Garden of Honor



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

American Legion Post 52 Commander Walt Carter



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

American Legion Post 52 member Marion Summey



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

American Legion Post 52 Chaplain Nick Vlahos

Carter then read and noted the significance of a POW/MIA Missing Man ceremony. “Resolution 288, adopted by the 67th American Legion National Convention, calls for performing a POW/MIA Missing Man ceremony at all official American Legion programs,” he said. “It is a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for, from all of the wars and conflicts involving the United States of America, as a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty, and a full accounting of those still missing. Let us rededicate ourselves to this vital endeavor.”

Post 52 First Vice Commander Kent Dykes then placed the POW/MIA chair cover on an empty chair and saluted.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

American Legion Post 52 First Vice Commander Kent Dykes salutes the POW/MIA empty chair.

“While we have Veterans Day in the fall and Memorial Day in the spring, our servicemen and women sacrifice their time and safety every single day of the year to preserve our freedoms,” said Carter. “In many homes across the U.S., every day there is an empty seat for one who is serving or one who has made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Each December, on National Wreaths Across America Day, our mission, to remember, honor, and teach, is carried out by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery as well as 3,400 other locations in the 50 United States, at sea, and abroad. We will now place a wreath for each branch of the service.”

Dr. Hubert Bowick, a World War II veteran, placed and saluted the wreath for the U.S. Army.

Veteran Jim Thompson placed and saluted the wreath for the U.S. Navy.

Veteran Tommy Chastain placed and saluted the wreath for the U.S. Air Force.

Veteran 1st Sergeant Donald Durham placed and saluted the wreath for the U.S. Marine Corps.

Veteran Paul Gillespie placed and saluted the wreath for the U.S. Coast Guard.

Veteran Jim Bowie placed and saluted the wreath for the U.S. Merchant Marines.

Veteran Sam Gillespie placed and saluted the wreath for the U.S. Space Force.

Veteran Kent Dykes placed and saluted the wreath for the POWs and MIAs.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Chaplain Nick Vlahos and guest speaker Brigadier General Jim Walker (front), with Dr. Hubert Bowick, Jim Thompson, Tommy Chastain, Donald Durham, Paul Gillespie, Jim Bowie, Sam Gillespie, and Kent Dykes.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

World War II veteran Dr. Hubert Bowick salutes the wreath for the U.S. Army.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Veteran Jim Thompson salutes the wreath for the U.S. Navy.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Veteran Tommy Chastain salutes the wreath for the U.S. Air Force.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Veteran Donald Durham salutes the wreath for the U.S. Marine Corps.



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Veteran Paul Gillespie salutes the wreath for the U.S. Coast Guard.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Veteran Jim Bowie salutes the wreath for the U.S. Merchant Marines.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Post 52 Finance Officer Sam Gillespie salutes the wreath for the U.S. Space Force.

Carter welcomed everyone to the event, including representatives from Robinson Funeral Home, local elected officials, and members of the Girl Scout Service Unit 31, Boy Scout Troop 37, Trail Life USA Troop South Carolina 2244, and American Legion Auxiliary Unit 43 from Fort Mill. Also represented at the event was the Fort Prince George Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, which meets in Easley.

Carter then introduced the guest speaker for the ceremony, Brigadier General Jim Walker. “He was raised in South Carolina and graduated from Clemson University with honors in May of 1976,” Carter said. “After being commissioned as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps, he enrolled in the University of South Carolina Law School and graduated with honors in 1979. He served in the Marine Corps from 1976 until 2009, when he retired after serving 33 years on active duty. General Walker has served around the world, and his last position on active duty was as senior attorney for the Marine Corps. There, he led almost 1,000 attorneys and paralegals. After retirement, he worked with Franklin Graham at Samaritan’s Purse in Boone, North Carolina for 10 years as Deputy Director of International Projects and Executive Director of Operation Heal our Patriots, a ministry for wounded veterans. General Walker moved to Easley in September, 2022. We would like to welcome him to the podium.”



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Post 52 First Vice Commander Kent Dykes places the wreath for the Prisoners of War and Missing in Action.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Post 52 First Vice Commander Kent Dykes salutes the wreath for the POW/MIA.

“Thank you all,” Walker replied to the crowd’s welcome. “It’s great to see you here today and great to be here, myself.” He added that, although he had retired 13 years ago, he put on his uniform for this ceremony in order to honor all veterans.

“Our nation, historically, has done a great job of honoring our most famous veterans,” he said. “We’ve done a great job of honoring them, because we recognize how important it is to honor and remember those veterans and teach the next generations what they did to preserve and protect our freedoms.”



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Brigadier General Jim Walker, speaker for the Wreaths Across America ceremony

“But, in America today, there are about 16.5 million veterans. And, for those veterans, and many of those who went before us, who just did their duty, there was nothing really special, perhaps nothing overly heroic, men and women who just answered the call of their nation. For all of those veterans, there’s really nothing quite that fancy. Only their service, their sacrifice, is marked by just a simple gravestone, much like what you see here at Robinsons’ cemetery today, where it is a very simple gravestone, a marble marker, a bronze plaque on top of it. In fact, in most of the American cemeteries, our national cemeteries, it’s a simple white marker -- in most cases, a cross or a Star of David -- just a simple white marker honoring all those who just answered the call and did their duty.

“I’ve been up at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and I’ve seen the national cemetery there, where you just see row after row of those white markers for soldiers from both the North and the South who fought in that battle.

“I’ve also stood at Normandy, overlooking the beach at Normandy and seeing just row after row after row of those white markers marking the graves of members of the Greatest Generation who fought at Normandy but never came home.

“And I’ve been at Arlington National Cemetery, outside of D.C., many times. I’ve walked the hills of that cemetery,

and you look, and, again, you see just, with precision, row after row marking the passage of a veteran. In fact, from my last three years in the Pentagon, I was on the outside ring of the Pentagon, and my office window looked out directly at Arlington National Cemetery. It was only about 300 yards away from my window. So, literally, probably for 100 times a day, I would look out at those perfect rows of white markers at Arlington Cemetery. And, for a Marine on active duty, I can tell you that was always a humbling experience, to think about the service and sacrifice of all those veterans, to think about what they did, both to gain and maintain our freedom. And I’d look at those rows, and it’s easy to be just taken in by the perfect symmetry, just those perfect rows up and down the hills. But, what I would always try to do, instead, when I’d look at the national cemeteries and these simple white markers, instead of seeing all of the markers, I’d try to picture the face of one veteran. I’d try to picture that face of one veteran and think what that veteran did. He answered the call of the nation. He simply did his duty, ‘no muss, no fuss.’ And I’d try to remember that face, because I want to honor him, I want to remember him, and I want to teach others about that service and sacrifice.

“And that’s what is great about this organization called Wreaths Across America. Today, we’ll lay wreaths here, but, also, it’s being done at over 3,000 cemeteries across America, ‘to honor, to remember, and to teach.’

“For many here today, when you pick up your wreath, you’ll be placing that wreath on the gravesite of a loved one or a family member, and that’s a solemn duty for everyone.

“For the rest, as you pick up a wreath, and you walk down these rows of graves, and you see the simple markers, just that piece of granite, bronze engraving, they all look the same, instead of just seeing those markers, I ask you to picture the face of one veteran. Picture that face and honor him or her. Picture that face of one veteran and remember.

“And, when you leave here today, go teach. Teach your children, teach your grandchildren, teach your neighbors about the sacrifices that veteran has made to preserve and protect our nation and to guarantee that we have the freedoms that we enjoy today. We owe that to our veterans.”

Members of the American Legion Post 52 Honor Guard then gave a rifle salute.

Post 52 member Sam Gillespie then played “Taps” on the bugle.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine
Sam Gillespie, of American Legion Post 52, plays “Taps” on the bugle.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine
American Legion Post 52 Commander Walt Carter, World War II veteran Dr. Hubert Bowick, Post 52 Chaplain Nick Vlahos, and Brigadier General Jim Walker as “Taps” is played.

“Today is a day to remember our fallen veterans, those that have gone on before us,” said Carter. I found a quote by Pierre Claeysens which I thought really fit this time. ‘To be killed in war is not the worst that can happen. To be lost is not the worst that can happen. To be forgotten, that is the worst.’”

Carter expressed appreciation to those who were there to offer assistance in placing the wreaths and then gave instructions for placing the wreaths. “Place the wreath in the center of the marker, with the ribbon toward the top of the grave marker. One step back, and place your hand over your heart, or, if you’re a veteran, you may salute. Call out that person’s name, and thank them for their service. We will place the wreaths after the closing prayer.”

“Please feel free to join me in a word of prayer,” said Vlahos. “Our gracious heavenly Father, thank you so very much for this beautiful Saturday and this time of remembrance, Lord. And, Father, as our dear General Walker said, Lord, help us not to just walk away from here and just forget about this. But, Lord, help us always to remember those who are dead fought and died for this country, because, by

the grace of God, we are free today because of the price that they paid for us. And, Lord, also today around the world, we have soldiers and airmen and Navy and all members of other branches of the service, Lord, in places of conflict right now, dozens of places. We continue to ask for your protection upon them, also. And, Father, as I conclude this prayer, I say, God bless America in the name of Jesus. And everybody said –” And everyone joined him in concluding, “Amen.”

More than 400 veterans were honored with a wreath from the Worcester Wreath Company placed on their graves.

Carter told *The Christian View* magazine that he has watched the Wreaths Across America ceremony grow over the years, since first attending a ceremony through now being a part of it. “This program started 30 years ago,” he said. “A 12-year-old boy was impressed with Arlington National Cemetery, and, then, in 1992, when he was older and had a wreath company and had a surplus of wreaths, he said, ‘What can I do with them?’ And he thought about that, and that’s what started it. And, so, now, 30 years later, it’s worldwide. It’s a big deal.”



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

The gravesite of William Kennedy Mauldin in the Veterans Garden of Honor

South Carolina State Senator Rex Rice, who was in attendance for the Wreaths Across America ceremony at Robinson Memorial Gardens, as well as another ceremony in Clemson later the same day, told *The Christian View* magazine, “I think the program is amazing.” He noted that one supplier, in Maine, supplies all of the wreaths for ceremonies nationwide, and truck drivers donate their time to carry the wreaths across America.

“The thing that I really like about this program is, it makes you pause and think about the veterans that have sacrificed their times in their lives for us to have freedoms here in America, and it’s really neat to me because you bring these young people out to lay these wreaths and read the veteran’s name and thank them for their service. And, more than that, it makes you think about the members of your family and what they have done. I’ve got a distant uncle that died in the English Channel in World War II. And, so, the program itself made me go back and kind of research my family. And I think it’s great, because you’ve got these young kids that you’re bringing out here, and you’re showing them the importance of being a veteran and what it’s like to either sacrifice your time or your life for the freedoms that we have. And I think that’s probably the most unique thing about this whole program. Everybody can participate, and they can physically put their hands on a wreath and walk out of here

and thank a veteran, whether it’s a family member or somebody that you don’t know. And one of the important things they say is make sure that you mention that veteran’s name, so they’re never forgotten. I think the importance is making sure these young people and even adults doing it remember what it’s all about.”

In speaking with *The Christian View* magazine, Chris Robinson, President and General Manager of Robinson Funeral Homes, said, “I think it’s important in so many ways that we remember the veterans and remember the sacrifice they made, and some of them made the ultimate sacrifice by losing their life in the line of duty. I think it’s important to remember the military service of the veterans and especially those who paid the ultimate sacrifice and died during active duty, and it’s just very important that we remember each veteran, regardless of their accomplishments during their service, especially the way General Walker phrased that, that we need to try and put a face with each veteran when we place a wreath on their grave, and I really like the way he emphasized that each veteran is important, regardless of whether they had a stellar career. Each veteran is important, regardless of how much they accomplished during their military career. I thought General Walker did a great job. Once all of the wreaths are placed on the graves, it really is an awesome sight.”



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Hundreds of wreaths were placed on veterans’ graves at Robinson Memorial Gardens for Wreaths Across America.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

American Legion Post 52 of Easley placed a wreath upon the gravesite of Captain Kimberly Hampton in Robinson Memorial Gardens in Easley for Wreaths Across America. A ceremony was held in the Veterans Garden of Honor the morning of Saturday, December 17, 2022. Captain Kimberly Hampton, age 27 and a United States Army pilot, and the daughter of Dale and Ann Hampton, was killed on January 2, 2004, when her OH-58 Kiowa Warrior helicopter was shot down in Iraq. She was a 1994 graduate of Easley High School and a 1998 graduate of Presbyterian College.

Wreaths Across America Ceremony Honors Memory of Veterans Buried at Sunrise Cemetery in Pickens

City of Pickens and Pickens County Historical Society Hold Wreath-Laying Ceremony

Written by KAREN BREWER, Publisher & Editor



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Ron Masters, Special Events Coordinator for the Pickens County Historical Society, welcomes local citizens gathered for the Wreaths Across America ceremony at Sunrise Cemetery in Pickens.

Sixty three veterans who are buried at Sunrise Cemetery in Pickens were honored during a Wreaths Across America ceremony, held at noon on Saturday, December 17, 2022 by the City of Pickens and the Pickens County Historical Society.

Ron Masters, Special Events Coordinator for the Pickens County Historical Society, welcomed everyone who had gathered for the ceremony. “For our opening patriotic tune,” said Masters, “I will call on Mike Martin.”

After Martin played “My Country ‘Tis of Thee” on trumpet, Aaron Looper, a firefighter with the City of Pickens Fire Department, raised the American flag and the South Carolina State flag on the flagpole.



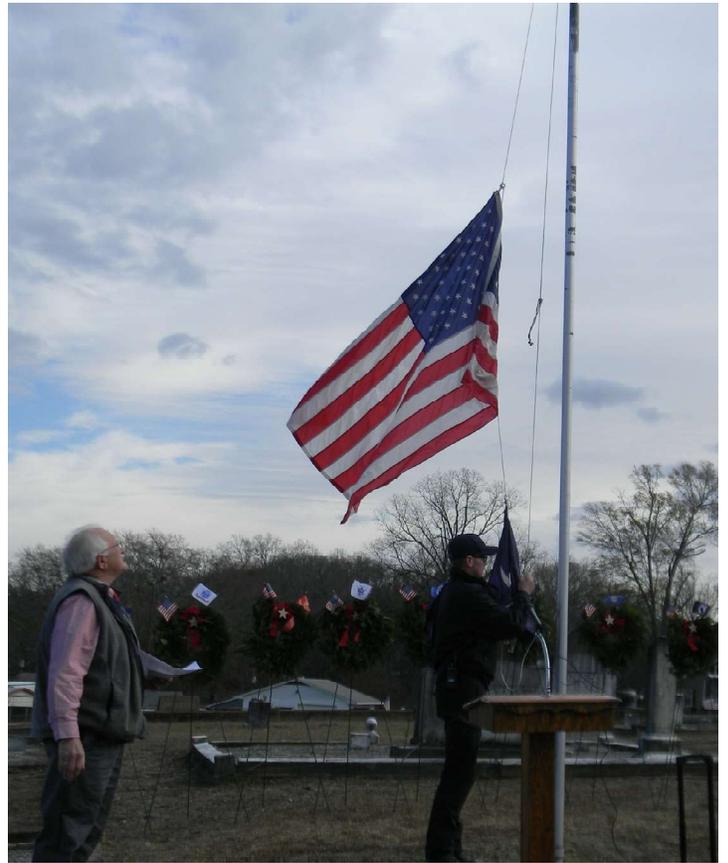
Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Mike Martin opens the ceremony with “My Country, ‘Tis of Thee.”



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

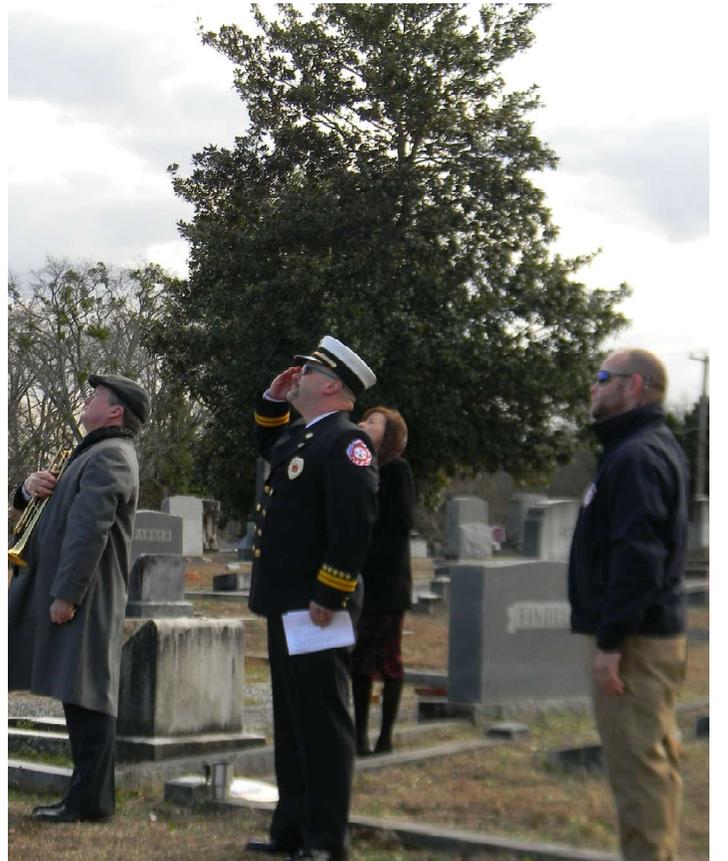
Aaron Looper, a firefighter with the City of Pickens Fire Department, raises the American flag and the South Carolina State flag (above, at right, and below).



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Rev. Brandon Wimpey, Pastor of Elljean Baptist Church, opens the ceremony in prayer.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Rev. Brandon Wimpey, Pastor of Elljean Baptist Church, opened in prayer. “Let us pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we come to you today to, first of all, thank you, thank you for these precious people that have served and were willing to give their life. God, we thank you so much for their service to this country. As your word teaches so many times, there is no greater love than a man who is willing to lay down his life for his brother or a friend. God, we understand by these servicemen willing to go, willing to serve, they were willing to do that, and today, God, we just thank you for that. God, as we think of these 63 individuals who served so faithfully, God, we are challenged to carry on their legacy, to let our families know as it is Christmas time, as we celebrate around the Christmas tree or around the dinner table, God, let us be faithful to continue to share what they have done to make it possible for us to be here. God, as we have the freedoms to stand here today and to celebrate, it’s for men and women who are willing to fight and serve. God, as we think about Christmas, we also think about the precious gift of Jesus. We celebrate, knowing that He came and lived and died for each one that is here today, and we praise you for that, God. But we also thank you for our city. We thank you for Pickens County, the mass number of individuals in this county that were willing to go and serve and fight. As we even think about the name of our city, God, we praise you for the great heritage that we have here in knowing and the roots that we have in celebrating our veterans. God, we pray that we al-

ways are a city that serves, that serves others, and we do that by looking back and reminding our families, our friends, and our loved ones about the great men and women who served before us. God, we ask you, keep us safe today. And, God, you continue to use this city to be a lighthouse all across this world. We thank you for our leadership. We thank you for them. We pray that you keep them safe. Hold them tight, and let us stand behind them in unity as they serve this community. God, we love you, and we praise you. In Jesus’ precious, holy name, Amen.”

Masters then introduced the event’s speaker, Rodney Crenshaw, of the City of Pickens Fire Department.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Rodney Crenshaw, of the Pickens Fire Department, speaks at the Wreaths Across America ceremony.

“It’s an honor to be able to come and speak this afternoon about Wreaths Across America,” said Crenshaw. “All across the country today, in over 3,000 memorial sites, people are gathering to honor those that have served and those that have given their all for our country. We’re proud to be Americans. We’re made up of many people from many different areas and walks of life, all kinds of colors and backgrounds and nationalities. But we have the opportunity to come as one and honor those and honor our country for what we have available to us today. There are many here that have served in war, many that have served in peacetime, but, nonetheless, they’ve paid a price. They’ve offered themselves to give, to help, so that we have the ability to come and do this in peace.

“We, as a country, have the opportunity to vote for our leaders. We have the opportunity to question our leaders. There are so many people across this world that do not have that opportunity. And, so, we are grateful for those that have served, those that have given their all. So, I want to give a round of applause to those that are with us today that have served, both on the hallowed ground and that are standing with us.

“For those that have never been a part of this kind of ceremony, which includes me, I want to tell you what it’s about. Again, it’s about the opportunity to remember those that have given it all. We’ve lost sight in this country, it seems, of what it’s cost. And, so, I want to encourage everyone just to take a moment to think about what we’ve been blessed with and the opportunities that we have before us. We each have the opportunity to rise and fall as we so choose. If you want to be a fireman, if you want to be a preacher, even if you want to be a policeman, you have the opportunity to do that. If you want to be someone that works in a factory, you have the opportunity to do that. And there’s nothing wrong with that, because it takes us all. Many times, I’ve had people tell me, ‘Thank you for what you do. Thank you for what you do.’ You know what? Thank you for what you do. Because it takes all of us in this country to make the world go around. And, so, we want to stop right now and say thank you to those that have served. Thank you for Wreaths Across America and what this symbolizes.”

“The veterans’ graves here are each marked with a flag of the United States,” said Masters. “And, now, we ask that relatives of these veterans come take a wreath and place it on the gravesite. Say the veteran’s name aloud and thank them for their service to our country. All community attendees should join by placing a wreath and saying the veteran’s name aloud.”

Mike Martin closed the ceremony with the playing of “Taps.”

“On behalf of the City of Pickens and the Pickens County Historical Society, we thank you for coming out today,” Masters told the crowd. “Thank you.”

Members of the community, the Historical Society, the Fort Prince George Chapter of the DAR, and Girl Scouts placed wreaths on veterans’ graves, which had been marked earlier with small American flags by members of the Historical Society.

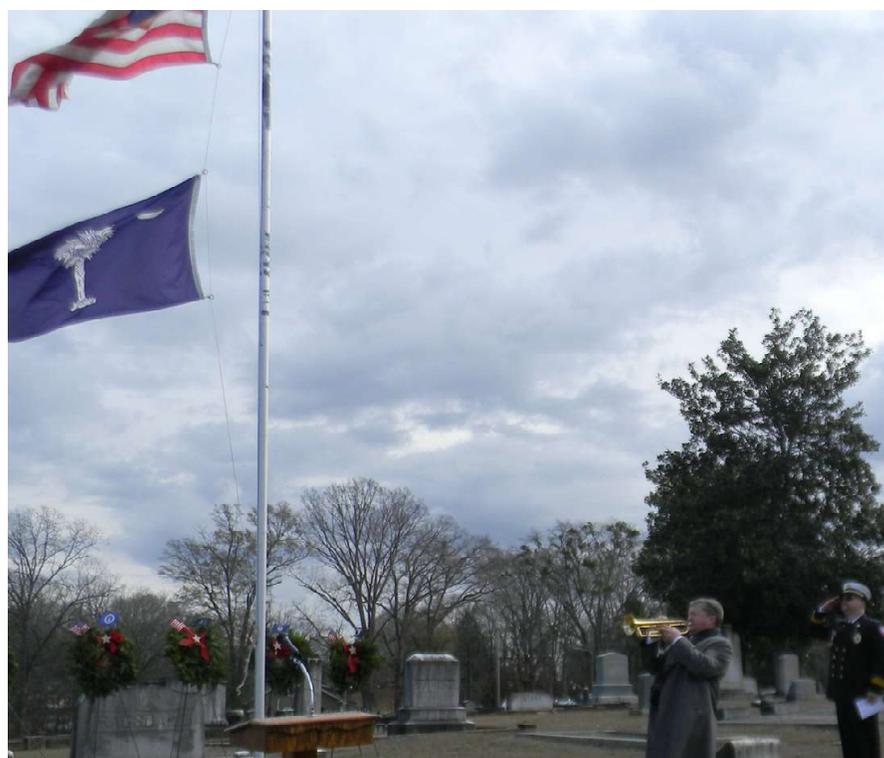
Masters expressed to *The Christian View* magazine why he wanted to be involved. “I wanted to do my little part to show respect and admiration for the veterans,” he said. “So many of them gave some. Some gave all. And it’s just my little part, some kind of contribution.”

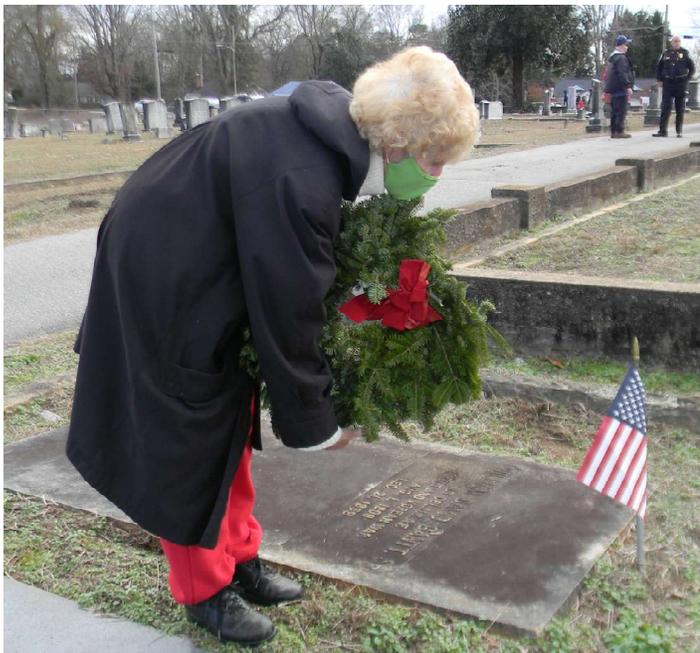
South Carolina State Rep. Davey Hiott, of Pickens, told *The Christian View* magazine, “It’s one of the most important things we could do, to honor our veterans. Our community has always been very strong in honoring our veterans and doing all they can to remember them, and this is just another instance where we can do that. I’m proud to be a part of it, and I’m excited this many people showed up on a cold day.”



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

Davey Hiott, above, places his hand upon his heart as Mike Martin, at right, plays “Taps” and Rodney Crenshaw salutes.





Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Mildred Brewer, Chief Archivist for the Pickens County Historical Society and Vice Regent for the Fort Prince George Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, places a wreath upon a veteran's grave at Sunrise Cemetery for Wreaths Across America on December 17, 2022.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Lynn Fisher places a wreath upon a veteran's grave at Sunrise Cemetery in Pickens for Wreaths Across America. A ceremony was held by the Pickens County Historical Society and the City of Pickens on Saturday, December 17, 2022. Sunrise Cemetery is owned by the City of Pickens.



Remembering Barrett Austin

Private First Class Barrett Austin, the son of Curt and Yolanda Austin, and a 2011 Pickens High School graduate, died, at age 20, on April 21, 2013 in Germany of injuries he sustained four days earlier, when his vehicle was attacked by an improvised explosive device (IED) in Afghanistan.

Although there was no Wreaths Across America ceremony held at Hillcrest Memorial Park in Pickens, the cemetery where PFC Barrett Austin is buried, Marion Summey, a member of the American Legion Post 52 of Easley and a fellow church member of the Austin family, placed a wreath at Barrett Austin's gravesite on Saturday, December 17, 2022 (the day of the official Wreaths Across America ceremonies held nationwide), in remembrance of Barrett.

Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

DAR Honors Local World War II Veterans

Written by KAREN BREWER, Publisher & Editor

The Fort Prince George Chapter of The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), joining with a grateful nation, has been honoring local World War II veterans by presenting each of them with a Certificate of Appreciation “in recognition of valor, service, and sacrifice during World War II.”

According to the National World War II Museum, more than 16 million Americans served in our nation’s armed forces during World War II. (Of those, 407,316 were killed, and 671,278 were wounded.) Only about 167,000 World War II veterans are living today in the United States, and about 2,100 of those are in South Carolina.

Local World War II veterans who have been honored by the Fort Prince George Chapter have included:

George Boney, of Pickens, U.S. Army Air Corps and U.S. Air Force, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events.

Joseph B. Cocke, of Clemson, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Carolyn Nations, Regent, and Ann Warmuth, Chair of Service for Veterans.

Charles Cruickshank, of Clemson, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Martha Hannah, Co-Chair of Commemorative Events.

Raymond Dawkins, of Pickens, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events.

Curtis Henderson, of Easley, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Carolyn Nations, Regent.

John Holcombe, of Easley, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events.

Joe Jones, of Clemson, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Carolyn Nations, Regent.

Harold Koeplin, of Clemson, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events.

Lawrence Kolze, of Clemson, U.S. Navy, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events.

Earl Lindsey, of Clemson, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events.

John B. McIntyre, of Easley, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events.

Joseph E. Miller, U.S. Navy, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by the Fort Prince George Chapter given to him by his son, Bill Miller, U.S. Air Force retired.

James Pace, of Pickens, U.S. Navy, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events.

Harold Petzold, of Clemson, U.S. Marine Corps, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Martha Hannah, Co-Chair of Commemorative Events.

Lester Porter, of Easley, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events.

William ‘Bill’ Rainey, of Clemson, U.S. Navy, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events.

William C. ‘Billy’ Singleton, of Pickens, U.S. Navy, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events.

Robert Sinnott, of Clemson, U.S. Marine Corps, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Martha Hannah, Co-Chair of Commemorative Events.

‘Ben’ Skardon, of Clemson, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Carolyn Nations, Regent, and Ann Warmuth, Chair of Service for Veterans.

J.W. Smith, of Liberty, U.S. Navy, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Carolyn Nations, Regent.

Herbert Wagner, of Salem, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Carolyn Nations, Regent, and Ann Warmuth, Chair of Service for Veterans.

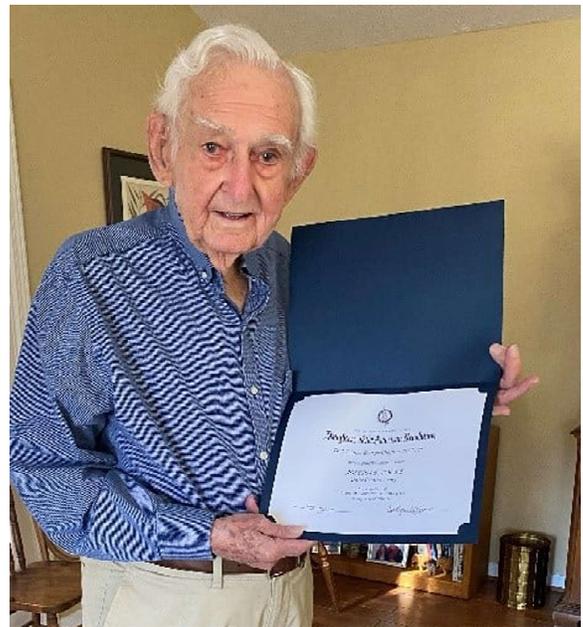
Sidney Whitlock, of Liberty, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Carolyn Nations, Regent.

Edward Ziegler, of Clemson, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events.

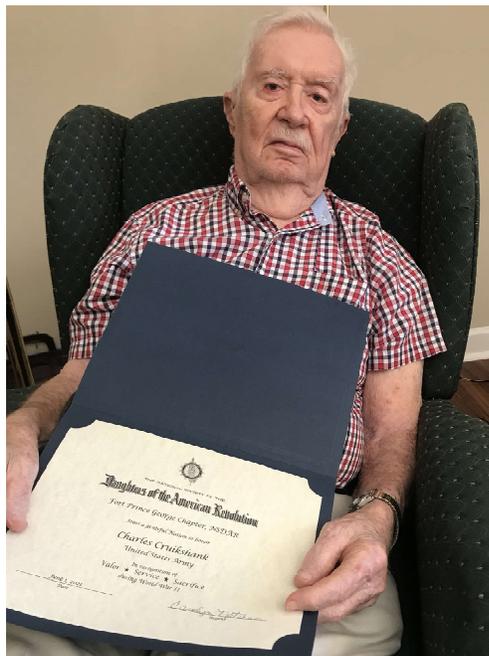


*Photograph by Mildred Brewer,
Fort Prince George Chapter DAR*

World War II veteran George Boney, of Pickens, U.S. Army Air Corps and US Air Force, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



World War II veteran Joseph B. Cocke, of Clemson, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Carolyn Nations, Regent, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR, and Ann Warmuth, Chair of Service to Veterans, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



*Photograph by Martha Hannah,
Fort Prince George Chapter DAR*

World War II veteran Charles Cruickshank, of Clemson, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Martha Hannah, Co-Chair of Commemorative Events, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



*Photograph by Carolyn Nations,
Fort Prince George Chapter DAR*

World War II veteran Raymond Dawkins, of Pickens, U.S. Army (pictured with his wife, Margaret), was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



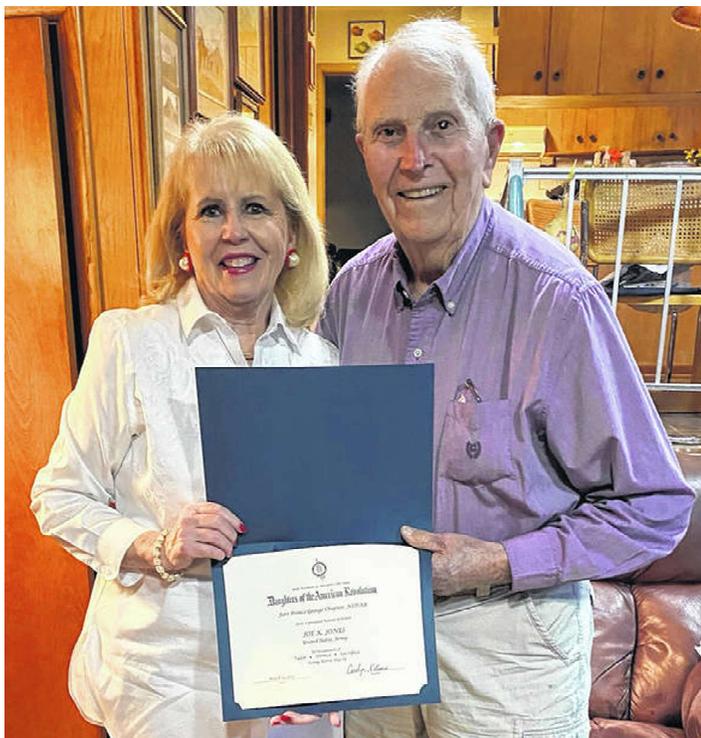
*Photograph by Carolyn Nations,
Fort Prince George Chapter DAR*

World War II veteran Curtis Henderson, of Easley, U.S. Army (pictured with his wife, Charlotte), was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Carolyn Nations, Regent, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



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

World War II veteran John Holcombe, of Easley, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



World War II veteran Joe Jones, of Clemson, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Carolyn Nations, Regent, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



*Photograph by Martha Hannah,
Fort Prince George Chapter DAR*

World War II veteran Harold Koeplin, of Clemson, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



*Photograph by Martha Hannah,
Fort Prince George Chapter DAR*

World War II veteran Lawrence Kolze, of Clemson, U.S. Navy, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR. Also pictured is his wife, Barbara.



*Photograph by Martha Hannah,
Fort Prince George Chapter DAR*

World War II veteran Earl Lindsey, of Clemson, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



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

World War II veteran John B. McIntyre, of Easley, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



World War II veteran Joseph E. Miller, U.S. Navy, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Carolyn Nations, Regent, and Ann Warmuth, Chair of Service for Veterans, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR, and he was given the certificate by his son, Bill Miller, who is retired from the U.S. Air Force.



*Photograph by Carolyn Nations,
Fort Prince George Chapter DAR*

World War II veteran James Pace, of Pickens, U.S. Navy, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



*Photograph by Martha Hannah,
Fort Prince George Chapter DAR*

World War II veteran Harold Petzold, of Clemson, U.S. Marine Corps, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Martha Hannah, Co-Chair of Commemorative Events, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



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

World War II veteran Lester Porter, of Easley, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



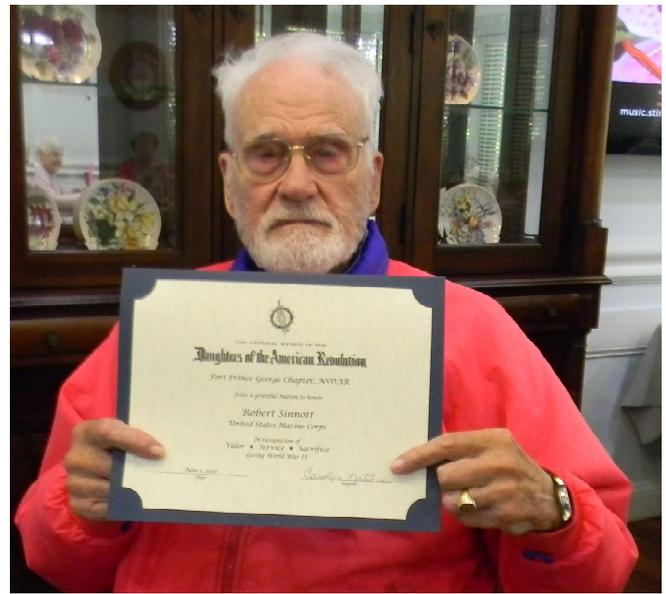
*Photograph by Martha Hannah,
Fort Prince George Chapter DAR*

World War II veteran William 'Bill' Rainey, of Clemson, U.S. Navy, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



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

World War II veteran William C. ‘Billy’ Singleton, of Pickens, U.S. Navy, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



*Photograph by Martha Hannah,
 Fort Prince George Chapter DAR*

World War II veteran Robert Sinnott, of Clemson, U.S. Marine Corps, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Martha Hannah, Co-Chair of Commemorative Events, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



World War II veteran Beverly ‘Ben’ Skardon, of Clemson, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Carolyn Nations, Regent, and Ann Warmuth, Chair of Service for Veterans, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



World War II veteran J.W. Smith, of Liberty, U.S. Navy, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Carolyn Nations, Regent, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR. He is pictured with his son, Roger Smith, daughter-in-law, Karen Smith, son-in-law, Ken Simpson, and daughter, Linda Simpson.



World War II veteran Herbert Wagner, of Salem, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Carolyn Nations, Regent, and Ann Warmuth, Chair of Service for Veterans, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



World War II veteran Sidney Whitlock, of Liberty, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Carolyn Nations, Regent, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



*Photograph by Martha Hannah,
Fort Prince George Chapter DAR*

World War II veteran Edward Ziegler, of Clemson, U.S. Army, was presented a DAR Certificate of Appreciation by Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent and Chair of Commemorative Events, Fort Prince George Chapter DAR.



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

The World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

World War II Veteran Raymond Dawkins, of Pickens, is Awarded the French Legion of Honor

Dawkins is Honored for Risking His Life to Help Liberate France

Written by KAREN BREWER, Publisher & Editor



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

World War II veteran Raymond Dawkins, left, wears on his lapel the French Legion of Honor medal pinned by Consul General of France in Atlanta Vincent Hommeril, right.

A 96-year-old World War II veteran, Raymond E. Dawkins, of Pickens, has been awarded the French Legion of Honor medal, which is the highest decoration bestowed by France and honors outstanding service to the French Republic. The Legion of Honor was first established by Napoleon Bonaparte more than 200 years ago, in 1802. Former French President Jacques Chirac established a policy to honor, with the insignia of Knight of the Legion of Honor, American World War II veterans who risked their lives on French soil in helping to liberate France.

One of Dawkins' sons-in-law, Baron Shuler, who is married to Dawkins' oldest daughter, Glenda, and who studies military history, welcomed everyone to the ceremony, which was held in All Saints' Hall at Dawkins' church, Pickens Presbyterian Church. "We are here to support and to show some love for our honoree, Tech Sergeant Raymond

E. Dawkins, United States Army, World War II, otherwise known as Granddaddy, Dad, Ray," he said.

Shuler then introduced family members. "Of course, Raymond's wife of 71 years, the lovely Margaret Dawkins.

"Raymond was the oldest of eight children. There were four girls and four guys. Two of the girls are here today, his sister Barbara and her husband, Bruce, and his sister Mary Helen. Raymond had three brothers. They were all younger than him, J.T., Kenneth, and Bud. J.T. fought in World War II at the Battle of the Bulge until his feet froze. Kenneth was in the Air Force after the war, and Bud was in the National Guard. So, they all served their country.

"Raymond's daughter (and my beautiful wife) Glenda, is here today. Raymond's daughter Janet Wade and her husband, Jeff, are here. Raymond's youngest daughter, Susan, couldn't be here today.



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

Baron Shuler welcomes the audience to the ceremony.



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

Raymond Dawkins speaks to the ceremony attendees.



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

Vincent Hommeril, Consul General of France, speaks.

“The grandchildren here today are our daughter, Jessica, and her husband, Steve Shearer, United States Air Force, and great grandchildren. Our son, Major Zach Shuler, United States Air Force, is watching via Facetime. There are a bunch of nephews and nieces, relatives of Raymond’s and Margaret’s, members of Pickens Presbyterian Church who have known Raymond and Margaret for many years, members of the DAR, friends and family from the Pickens community.

“Glenda told me that there were several World War II veterans in this church who did amazing things during the war, and her generation didn’t know anything about them. They never talked about their stories. After the war, these veterans went to work, raised families, practiced their faith, and said little about their service. Raymond was like that. His daughter said that he never spoke about it.

“When I came along, as a military guy, I started asking some questions, and, over the years, Glenda and I managed to piece together his story. Raymond has amazing memories for these things, and web browsers are marvelous things, and we found out more information.”

Shuler referred to a book entitled *T-Patch to Victory: The 36th ‘Texas’ Division, France – Germany – Austria* written by Col. Vincent M. Lockhart (a copy of which was on a table at the ceremony), which tells of the 36th Infantry Division’s Landing in southern France until the end of World War II. “That book,” Shuler said, “tells where he was pretty much every day of the war when he was in France and Germany and Austria.” The patch (pictured on the cover of the book), he said, “looks like an arrowhead with a ‘T’ on it. The original unit was from Texas, so that’s the reason for the ‘T.’ We used this information to trace Raymond’s exact locations.

“The French have always been extremely grateful to America for the help and sacrifices they received from us in World War II.

“In 1949, France decided to send every state in the U.S. a decorated boxcar called a 40 and 8. It could hold 40 men or eight horses. Raymond rode in one of these for three days from Le Havre to the front. The one in South Carolina is in a museum in Bishopville. French citizens adopt U.S. cemeteries or individual graves and tend them carefully to honor the dead. There are French societies and organizations who take very seriously maintaining U.S. fallen.

“They’ve even tracked down families in the U.S. and let them know where their loved ones are located.

“They also give out medals to those living soldiers that made it home.

“Several years ago, I was made aware of the Knight of the French Legion of Honor award to serve U.S. soldiers that fought on French soil against the Germans. Raymond and I made an application for this award, and so we are here today. Not many of Raymond’s fellow soldiers are around anymore — all the more to venerate and honor those who are still with us.”

Dawkins then stepped to the podium and greeted the audience. “It’s good to see this crowd,” he said. “I never thought I could pull out this many. It’s good to see you. I thank you for coming today.” He thanked his family and added, “I want to especially thank Baron. He did most of the work getting this together.”

Dawkins then explained that he turned 18 in April of 1944, and that year he was drafted into the U.S. Army. He shared about his experience after being drafted until he arrived in France. From Fort Jackson in Columbia, he was sent to Fort Bragg in North Carolina and from there to Camp Wheeler in Macon, Georgia. He contrasted the weather in Columbia, where the temperature was extremely hot, to the weather in Macon, where it had snowed and the temperature was extremely cold.

In December of 1944, he finished basic training, where he had met soldiers from all across the United States.

He was then sent to Camp Shanks in New York. “There was a train that ran from the Camp to New York City, so we visited New York City several times,” he said. “One time up there, I saw Joe Louis, sitting at a table, reading the paper. He was still the champion then.

“After a few weeks, we were assigned to a group that was headed to Europe. One morning, we fell out before daylight and were taken down to the pier to board a ship to Europe. This was our first sighting of the Queen Mary. That’s a big boat if there ever was one.” He said that they were assigned to anti-aircraft guns on the Queen Mary. “I was assigned to a 20-mm gun along with a British soldier, who knew how to operate the gun,” he said. “That was the first one I ever saw. He was the shooter, and I was the loader.”

It took five days to cross the Atlantic Ocean, he said. “It was uneventful except for three things. I remember the

weather was real cold, the water was rough, and the waves washed up on the bough. And, luckily, I was never sea sick. We didn’t encounter any enemy aircraft, and the word was we could outrun any submarine. We made it safely across and docked on the west coast of Scotland. Then, we loaded on a troop train and shipped across the country to England. We went across England to South Hampton. We loaded and boarded smaller boats for our trip to France.”

He said that, while on a troop train, which traveled some during the night, he did not see much damage to the countryside in England, but he did see a few bombed-out buildings near South Hampton. “When we arrived at Le Havre, France,” he said, “I did see what war was all about. I had seen movies of bombed and destroyed cities, but the actual sight was a shock. I did not see a standing building in Le Havre. Rubble was waist high on all of the streets. I never did see any people there. I guess they got out. If they didn’t, they should have.

“In Le Havre, we were loaded on a train boxcar, a 40 by 8. A 40 by 8 means you could carry 40 men or eight horses in the boxcar. It didn’t have windows. I don’t think it had a place to sit down. You sat on the floor. And it was really tough finding a place to sleep at night. We left the door always open, so we could see the countryside. As I remember, France was a beautiful country, and the people always waved as we went by. They stopped once a day and fed us, and, when they did that, the local people would come out and greet us. Most of the people were housewives, children, or older men.” The people were afraid of the Germans, he said, and they were afraid that the Germans would come back. “We tried to assure them that the Germans would not come back.

“We got to Herrlisheim, France, and they assigned us to different units. I was assigned to the I Company in the 36th Infantry Division.” And that, he said, was when the war started for him.

His son-in-law then continued. “Raymond joined his unit in Herrlisheim, France and spent the rest of the war going north through France and then east across the Rhine River into Germany and then chasing the Germans that were headed to Austria, trying to get away, and that’s where he was when the war was over,” said Shuler. “The 36th Infantry Division is a very old and famous unit, and the Germans named it one of the two most feared divisions in the American Army.

“When the war was over, still in the 36th, down in Austria, he didn’t have enough points to go home. So, after awhile of guarding the local prisoner of war camp, he got assigned to the Constabulary, which was sort of like the occupation forces. He spent another year in Germany before he headed home.”

After Dawkins returned home, he attended Newberry College with assistance through the G.I. Bill program (the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act). “His schedule was he’d go to college in the daytime till the early afternoon, he’d go to a gas station and change clothes, and then head over to the Newberry Cotton Mill and work from 2:00 in the afternoon till 10:00 at night,” said Shuler.

“After he graduated, he and Margaret got married, and, after some interesting adventures, they ended up in Pickens. He worked at Singer Corporation. They raised three girls here in town. He was a big volunteer in the church. He was a beauty queen judge. He is a very funny and personable man, and he likes to talk to people. He was a pretty good golfer at one time. He taught at Tri-County Tech for many years, helping people with math and things to get them jobs at the local plants, and he always believed that everyone should have a chance. He has been a pillar in the community. He loved his beach trips with his family, golf, and riding those waves, and he’s the best grandfather ever.”

A recording of the national anthem for the United States, “The Star-Spangled Banner,” was played, and then a recording of the national anthem for France, “La Marseillaise,” was played.

Vincent Hommeril, who has served as Consul General of France in Atlanta since September of 2019, overseeing relations between the country of France and six southeastern states (Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee) then introduced himself. He thanked Dawkins’ family and friends for attending the ceremony and for showing their support and admiration for Dawkins, and he stated that he was deeply honored to bestow the French Legion of Honor upon this American World War II veteran.

“The medal is awarded on behalf of the President of the Republic of France, Emmanuel Macron,” Hommeril said.

“The National Order of the Legion of Honor was created by Emperor Napoleon in 1802 to recognize individuals who have served France or the ideals it upholds. The medal

is France’s most prestigious order, and it is bestowed on French citizens as well as foreign nationals, including veterans such as the Americans who risked their lives during World War II, fighting on French soil.

“More than 70 years ago, Mr. Dawkins risked his life for the freedom of France and Europe. France is what it is today, a free and sovereign country, thanks to the bravery of such veterans and thanks to America.

“We are now decades away from World War II, and yet we still pay homage to these veterans, to the legacy of their courage and the fight for freedom in a time of darkness and despicable ideologies that came to power in Europe.

“Today, we remember that the French-American friendship is bound in blood and that our two countries owe each other their very existence as free nations. We remember that, from the U.S. Revolutionary War to the battlefields of World War I and the beaches of Normandy, the United States and France have always stood shoulder to shoulder to defend the values of freedom and democracy. The United States and France remain close allies in addressing international threats and challenges to this day.

“Mr. Raymond Dawkins, you embody the shared French-American history. You illustrated, with your courage, the friendship and shared values that so profoundly bind our two nations.

“We are gathered here to honor you. Mr. Dawkins, you are a true hero. Your example gives us inspiration for the future, and your legacy provides a moral compass for generations to come. In recognition of your heroic actions and extraordinary accomplishments, the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, nominated you to the Legion of Honor with the rank of Knight. The French people will never forget what you helped do to restore our freedom,

“And today we also remember the ultimate sacrifice of so many of your comrades who rest on French soil. They will remain forever in our hearts.

“Before officially bestowing you with this decoration, France’s highest honor, I would like to highlight your heroic deeds in France during World War II. You entered into active service with the United States Army on August 12, 1944. After military training, you were sent to Europe on the Queen Mary, arriving at Le Havre, France, on February 1, 1945. You were then sent by troop train to the Alsace-Lorraine region, where you participated as a member of the 36th Infantry Division in the Battle of Little Bulge, as well as the battles for Haguenau, Surbourg, and Soulz, among others.

“At the war’s end, you were assigned to occupational forces, Troop C of the 12th Constabulary Squadron, and there to patrol three German towns in an armored car.

“In recognition of your service, you were awarded the Bronze Star medal, the European-African Middle Eastern Service Medal with two bronze service stars, the Combat Infantry Badge, the Occupational Medal ETO, and the World War II Victory Medal, among other awards.

“And I will now bestow the decoration.”

Hommeril then pinned the medal upon Dawkins’ jacket lapel, and the two men embraced.



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

Above: Vincent Hommeril, Consul General of France in Atlanta, pins the French Legion of Honor medal upon World War II veteran Raymond Dawkins.

At left: Hommeril and Dawkins embrace after the pinning of the medal.

Below left and right: Raymond and Margaret Dawkins with Vincent Hommeril.



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



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



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



At left: Raymond Dawkins is pictured with family members who were present for the ceremony.

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



At left: Raymond Dawkins is pictured with his two sisters.

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

At right: Raymond Dawkins is pictured with fellow World War II veteran and fellow church member George Boney.



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



Raymond Dawkins



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

Above: A table at the ceremony included Raymond Dawkins' Bronze Star and additional medals and the book 'T' Patch to Victory.

Below: Raymond and Margaret Dawkins are pictured with Mildred Brewer, Vice Regent of the Fort Prince George Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, whom they invited to the ceremony. She had previously given him a DAR Certificate of Appreciation for his service in World War II.



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



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

In Memory of Colonel Ben Skardon, World War II POW, Bataan Death March Survivor

Written by KAREN BREWER, Publisher & Editor



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, 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.

Colonel Beverly Norton 'Ben' Skardon. United States Army retired, a prisoner of war for 1,255 days, held in Japanese POW camps during World War II beginning April 9, 1942, and a survivor of the infamous Bataan Death March, passed away at the age of 104 in Clemson. A few days prior to Skardon's passing, the United States Department of the Army and the United States Department of Defense approved his honorary promotion to the rank of Brigadier General.

Following Skardon's funeral service at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Clemson (where he was a member), he was buried, with full military honors, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church cemetery in Pendleton beside his late wife, Sara Elizabeth 'Betsy' Golden Skardon.

A day earlier, Skardon lay in honor at Clemson Memorial Park at the entrance to the Scroll of Honor.

Four years prior to his passing, Clemson University held a grand celebration to mark Skardon's 100th birthday, and a reception was held under a tent on Williamson Road, between Memorial Stadium and the Scroll of Honor. (At that time, *The Christian View* magazine presented an in-depth article on Skardon's birthday celebration, along with more than 50 photographs from the event.)

Skardon was born in Louisiana on July 14, 1917 to Rev. Alvin Skardon and Genevieve Hooper Skardon and grew up in Walterboro, South Carolina. After graduating from Walterboro High School in 1934, he attended the then all-male military school Clemson Agricultural College (now Clemson University) from 1934 until his graduation in 1938.

Skardon began active duty as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army in 1939. His four brothers, Alvin, Hooper, Steve, and Jimmy, also served in the military during World War II, and all returned home from the war.

Sandy Edge, Clemson Alumni Association President, served as Master of Ceremonies for the reception at Skardon's 100th birthday celebration and shared about Skardon's experiences during World War II. "Serving as an infantry commander in the Philippines, he led his troops through some of the fiercest and bloodiest fighting of World War II. As a prisoner of war, Colonel Skardon and others endured the brutal Bataan Death March and more than three years of captivity. Despite severe illness and inhumane conditions, he was able to survive because of the aid of fellow alumni Otis Morgan and Henry Leitner, whose names are among 491 heroes inscribed here in the Scroll of Honor, in recognition of their ultimate sacrifice in service to our country. They spoon-fed him to keep him alive and eventually traded his hidden gold Clemson ring for food."

Margaret Rose and Lydia Rose (Leitner's nieces, daughters of his sister) traveled from Aiken for Skardon's 100th birthday celebration at Clemson and spoke with *The Christian View* magazine. "Henry did not make it back from the war," said Lydia. "He almost did, but he died in Japan," said Margaret. "They were getting prisoners out, but he didn't make it."

"We had come to see Ben a month and a half ago," said Lydia. "He had come to our mother's funeral, and that was our first introduction, and then we just decided to come and talk to him, because he held so much personal information that we didn't have." "We enjoyed our visit so much," said Margaret.

"He's a remarkable person," Margaret said of Skardon. "Ben is wonderful. It's amazing to me, as much torture, as hard as it was on his body and his mental state, that by 100 he's still here. He's unbelievable, to me. And his knowledge, I appreciate that so much. He's a remarkable person."

In memory of Morgan and Leitner, who helped save his life but did not survive to make it home, Skardon walked 8.5 miles each year in the Bataan Memorial Death March at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico, beginning in 2007 at the age of 89 through 2019. The oldest participant, Skardon has been the only survivor of the Bataan Death March to participate in the memorial march.

Skardon's neighbors, Carl and Linda Voellmecke, who were present for the 100th birthday celebration, told *The Christian View* magazine that they had participated with Skardon twice in the memorial march. She said that she had struggled with walking 8.5 miles, but Skardon did not. She added that her husband would help him train by walking with him almost every day in their neighborhood. "Having a partner join in is very helpful," her husband said. "It's an honor for me to be able to do that role. I'm proud of the goals he sets for himself, and I'm really proud of the way he goes out and he just absolutely achieves it. When I walk with him in the neighborhood, he has very specific distance and time in mind when he starts. It's because of that discipline that he's living the life that he's living. He's a great inspiration for all of us." She called the birth-

day celebration a remarkable event and said, "We're so blessed to be here today. He's a very special man and is special to our family."

Skardon served in the military for 23 years, including during the Korean War, retiring in 1962 with the rank of Colonel, with two Silver Stars, four Bronze Stars, the Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman Badge, and the Prisoner of War medal among his many military decorations.

After his military career, Skardon earned a Master of Arts degree in English from the University of Georgia and, in 1964, returned to Clemson University, where he taught English until his retirement as an Associate Professor of English in 1983. The Student Alumni Council honored him in 1977 as an Alumni Master Teacher. His alma mater has presented him with many honors, including The Distinguished Service Award, The Clemson Medallion, and the dedication of the Memorial Stadium flagpole in his honor.

In his 100th year, he was presented, by South Carolina, The Order of the Palmetto, the state's highest civilian honor.

Also during Skardon's 100th year, at his special birthday celebration, U.S. Air Force ROTC cadet and President of Tiger Brotherhood Chase McCathern presented him with a framed photograph of Clemson's Scroll of Honor from the perspective of a student—Skardon—sitting on a special reflection stone. "Encircling the Scroll of Honor are several stones on which visitors may sit to reflect upon the sacrifice of those whose names are included on the Scroll," Edge said. "Tiger Brotherhood has made a donation to support a special dedication of one of those reflection stones, Colonel Ben. The selected stone is the one closest to the Skardon Flag Pole in Memorial Stadium and is between where the names of Henry Leitner and Otis Morgan appear on the Scroll of Honor. The plaque that acknowledges dedicated reflection stones will be updated, sir, with the following inscription: 'In Honor of Colonel Ben Skardon and In Memory of Henry Leitner and Otis Morgan.'"

McCathern, a senior majoring in civil engineering and from Chapin, South Carolina, spoke with *The Christian View* magazine about participating in the event. "As a student, I was very fortunate to be involved in all of this. I think that this is probably the most special thing that I've been a part of at Clemson, and I think I've been very fortunate in my time here. But, the event was one thing, and it was very special and very incredible, but what led up to the event was very, very special, in my mind. Because the people that came together and made this happen, to me are very important people, very influential people that are very busy, and they dropped everything they were doing to make this happen. So, I kind of get emotional, thinking about it, but, as a student, you can't really ask for much more out of a school than to be willing to do something like this for one of our alum. So, it was very special for me. The Colonel says he's my mentor. That's what he likes to say. This is very special to me.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Col. Ben Skardon, center, Col. Bill Austin, and First Lieutenant Bill Funchess shared the stage in 2018 at Clemson University, where they spoke about their experiences as prisoners of war. Event Facilitator Ken Scar noted, “Colonel Skardon received two Silver Stars and two Bronze Stars for valor in combat in just four months of constant battle, as he led his troops through some of the fiercest and bloodiest fighting of World War II.” Skardon said that he owed his life to Henry Leitner and Otis Morgan, and he said that his experiences as a prisoner of war had a profound influence on him and “molded and shaped my personal values, especially with regard to my appreciation of the tremendous faith, resiliency, and strength of character and the loyalty and perseverance of grassroots Americans. There are three words you might keep in mind: survival (to maintain life, to endure), loyalty (to family, to friends, to country), faith (in your fellow man and in Almighty God).” He added, “The American flag is a truly great symbol. Our national anthem is especially meaningful to those who feel the meaning of its words. It haunts me. I have trouble singing. Memories flood my mind. Tears come to my eyes. So many brave men and women are represented by our flag.”

I’ve got to dress my best when I’m around him. I only want to be my best. He’s a special guy.”

Two of Skardon’s daughters were present for the birthday celebration and spoke with *The Christian View* magazine.

“It was very nice of this many people to turn out to wish Dad a Happy Birthday,” said Charlotte ‘Cha’ Skardon Raburn. “And Clemson University did a wonderful job of putting everything together. They did a great job, as usual. It was very nice. It makes you feel good that that many people care about someone in your family.”

Beverly Skardon Hardin, who was named for her father, said that family had gathered at Edisto Beach for his birthday in July, one month prior to Clemson’s celebration. “Our family beach is Edisto Beach,” she said. “He grew up going there. And, so, we had as many of our family as could get together and had a great party and really enjoyed it. We had good food that he likes, including caramel cake. It was a good time.”

She said that the awards her father was given were a surprise for him, and she added that he will remember this celebration for a long time and will speak of it often.

Skardon, himself, had said, “This is the warmest reception I’ve ever attended. My heart overflows.”

Hardin told *The Christian View* magazine that her father’s Christian faith helped get him through the hard times. “We all grew up Episcopalian,” she said. “His father was a priest, and his brother was a priest. He’s a very spiritual person. He will tell you that the only way he survived what he went through was love of God and love of family and loyalty to the United States and his beloved Clemson.”

The words ‘Keep the Faith’ are upon a challenge coin given by Skardon to this writer and everyone in attendance at his 100th birthday celebration.

“Challenge coins are a long-standing military tradition,” Edge explained. “They have become widely recognized symbols of friendship, unity, and respect. As the name suggests, a challenge is usually associated with such coins. Colonel Skardon’s challenge to us today is a very special one. You see that the orange side of the coin features the Class of 1938 ring crest, symbolizing the bond between Colonel Skardon and his alma mater. The purple side of the coin features the Bataan Death March Memorial, signifying the eternal bond between the Colonel and those with whom he served and who saved his life. Below the image of the memorial are the words ‘Keep the Faith’, Colonel Skardon’s personal motto and his challenge to each of us.”

In Memory of First Lieutenant Bill Funchess, Who Was a Prisoner of War During the Korean War

Written by KAREN BREWER, Publisher & Editor



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

First Lieutenant Bill Funchess (Clemson Class of 1948), right, is pictured with Colonel Bill Austin (Clemson Class of 1959), left, and Colonel Ben Skardon (Clemson Class of 1938), center, inside Tillman Hall at Clemson University, 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.

First Lieutenant William ‘Bill’ Herbert Funchess, Jr., United States Army retired, a prisoner of war for 1,038 days during the Korean War, having been captured by the Chinese Army on November 4, 1950, passed away at the age of 93 at his home in Clemson.

Following his funeral service, which was held in the chapel of Duckett-Robinson Funeral Home in Central, he was buried, with full military honors, at Old Stone Church cemetery in Clemson beside his late wife, Sybil Holladay Funchess. He was a member of Clemson United Methodist Church.

He was born in Rowesville, South Carolina on November 8, 1927 to William Herbert Funchess, Sr. and Daisy Inabinet Funchess Williams. After graduating from Orangeburg High School in 1944, he attended Clemson College (now Clemson University), where he earned a Bach-

elor of Science degree in agronomy in 1948. (After his release as a POW, he earned a Master of Science degree in agronomy, worked for the Clemson Extension Service for three decades, and was an Associate Professor in the Agronomy Department.) He authored a book entitled *Korea P.O.W.: A Thousand Days of Torment*.

In October of 2018, Funchess shared the stage with fellow Clemson graduates and former prisoners of war Colonel Beverly ‘Ben’ Skardon (World War II) and Colonel Bill Austin (Vietnam) in the auditorium of Tillman Hall on the campus of their alma mater, as, before a crowd of all ages, including current Clemson ROTC cadets and local citizens, they shared about their experiences as prisoners of war and how their faith sustained them throughout that time. (*The Christian View* magazine reported on the event at that time.)

Event facilitator Ken Scar, who had invited the three men, expressed his gratitude to them for coming and told the 250 Army and Air Force cadets who were present, “Know that you’ll tell your grandkids about this. Gathered on this stage are three truly remarkable men representing three hellish wars that have become cornerstones of American history. If you take one notion out of this room today, let it be this: Vietnam, Korea, and World War II are not ancient history. These giants still live and breathe and walk the earth.

“The price these three men have paid for us, for all of us, cannot be measured,” he continued, as he spoke of their time “spent in cages, being tortured, beaten, starved, belittled, and neglected.” He added, “These men were not just prisoners of war. Often overlooked is the staggering scope of their heroism before they were captured. We cannot forget that. When we define these men, it must not be as prisoners but as warriors. Each of these men fought valiantly for our freedom in some of the fiercest battles in the history of the modern world. They willingly risked their lives for us in jungles, over mountains, and in the sky in the worst conditions imaginable, performing one act of courage after another, like the warriors they are, like the Tigers they are. These are Clemson men, through and through. Their shadow across this campus is long. What they endured for us is unimaginable. It’s unfathomable. Yet, here they sit, because one of the things these three men have in common is they are survivors. As a veteran of the Clemson family, I am indescribably proud of these three men. As an American, I am profoundly grateful for their service and sacrifice. And, as a soldier and combat veteran, I am in awe of them.”

Funchess was awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge, two Purple Hearts, the National Defense Service Medal, the Prisoner of War Medal, and The Palmetto Cross.

“First Lieutenant Funchess should at least have a Silver Star for bravery,” said Scar, “but, to receive an award of that magnitude, the military demands an eyewitness account. Lt. Funchess led his platoon against an overwhelming enemy ambush, holding the line so the rest of their battalion, some 700 men, could slip away to fight again. He was shot through the foot and kept fighting, until he was backed up against a cliff and surrounded. Only then did he lay his weapon down and realize he was the last man standing. There were no eyewitnesses left. His entire platoon was wiped out, either killed or captured.”

Funchess spoke about his small pocket Bible he kept in his pocket while he was a POW. “I read from the Bible every day,” he said. “I was in my room with 11 other seriously wounded POWs. I always started off by reading the 23rd Psalm. After several days, I asked my men if they would like for me to read aloud to them, and, of course, they all said, ‘Yes.’ And I read a chapter or two and stopped, and they would say, ‘Read some more, Lieutenant, read some more.’ I said, ‘Okay. Keep one eye out for the guards, and I’ll read some more.’ During the course of my imprisonment, my little pocket Bible was found and confiscated twice. It was thrown on the pile of contraband. Both times, I kept my eye on the Bible while it was in that pile of contraband. When the Chinese were busy searching other people’s possessions, I casually made my way to the pile of contraband. I spotted the Bible, put my foot on it, worked it away from the pile, then just sat down as if I was totally exhausted. I picked up the Bible and slipped it in my pocket.” After telling that story, Funchess removed, from his pocket, that small pocket Bible and, with his words, “Here is the Bible,” the audience gasped and applauded.

On Veterans Day in 2018, Pickens County’s first Veterans Parade and Salute to Veterans Show was held in Liberty. (*The Christian View* magazine reported on the event at that time.) Funchess rode in a Jeep in the parade along with Pickens County Veterans Affairs Officer Sherry Harris (U.S. Army, Desert Storm and Iraq). During the Salute to Veterans Show, which was held inside the Pickens County Performing Arts Center and included Pickens County Council Chair Roy Costner, South Carolina State Rep. Davey Hiott, Rev. Seth Buckley, and U.S. Rep Jeff Duncan as speakers, Funchess was presented The Order of the Palmetto, the highest award given to a civilian in South Carolina. As Hiott presented Funchess with the award, he said, “These awards are inadequate because of the things he’s done, but I can tell you the state of South Carolina, and Pickens County, the United States Congress, and every single person out here thank you for what you’ve done and what you’ve endured, what you fought through, and the role model you still are today. We thank you. God bless you.”

Upon accepting the award, Funchess said, “I want to express my appreciation to Pickens County for honoring the veterans from all of the wars and all of the branches of the service. It’s a special honor for me, and it’s a special honor, I am sure, for all of the veterans in the audience. And, on behalf of them, I want to thank you and Pickens County.”



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, 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, which was held the afternoon of Sunday, November 11, 2018 in Liberty.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, 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 U.S. Army First Lieutenant Bill Funchess of Clemson with The Order of the Palmetto, the state’s highest civilian honor, during Pickens County’s first Salute to Veterans Show, held inside the Pickens County Performing Arts Center in Liberty on Veterans Day, Sunday, November 11, 2018.

American Legion Post 52 and Robinson Funeral Homes Hold Ceremony to Honor All Veterans: Bob Scherer, Past Commander of the American Legion Department of South Carolina, is Guest Speaker, Deceased Veterans Are Honored by Robinson Funeral Homes

Written by KAREN BREWER, Publisher & Editor

The annual Veterans Day ceremony, conducted by American Legion Post 52 of Easley at 11 a.m. on November 11, 2022, was held this year inside the chapel at Robinson Funeral Home Powdersville Road, rather than outside at Robinson Memorial Gardens, due to inclement weather. Those who gathered for the ceremony included family members of deceased veterans who had passed away in the past year and whose families were served by Robinson Funeral Homes and Robinson Memorial Gardens, as Robinson Funeral Homes each year honors those veterans with a post everlasting roll call.

Post 52 Commander Walt Carter asked everyone to rise for the posting of the colors by the Post 52 Color Guard and for the national anthem, sung by Post 52 member Marion Summey.

Dr. John Adams, Pastor of Easley First Baptist Church, then opened with prayer. “Would you please pray with me. Almighty God, precious Lord and tender spirit, as we begin this service, oh God, we ask that you prepare us by forgiving us of our sins. We come, Lord, into your presence, thanking you so much, that a holy God would be in our midst. Today, oh God, we remember those who have served our country, being willing, oh, God, to place their life on the line for us, such deep memories for those men and women and, in many cases, such deep scars that still need to be healed. May we never forget those who are willing to give their all. And, today, we remember those veterans who have now crossed over into eternity. We thank you that you walk with us through life, and you walk with us as we cross over into eternity. I have no doubt, oh God, that many families are in a state of grief. To love deeply is to grieve deeply. So, walk closely with them, and give us, oh God, the tender awareness to walk hand in hand with them, speaking when necessary, always acknowledging, always loving. And thank you, oh, God, for this institution, Robinson Funeral Homes, and this great establishment that comes here, oh God, to help



Robert ‘Bob’ Scherer

lead this service, the American Legion Post 52. Bless them, oh God. In Jesus’ name, we pray, Amen.”

Carter then emphasized the significance of remembering prisoners of war and those missing in action. “Resolution Number 288 adopted at the 67th National Convention, states that a POW/MIA empty chair is placed at all official meetings of the American Legion as a physical symbol of the many American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America. This is a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty, and a full accounting of those missing. Let us re-dedicate ourselves to this vital endeavor. Thank you.”

Post 52 First Vice Commander Kent Dykes then placed the POW/MIA chair cover on an empty chair and saluted.

Post 52 Sergeant-at-Arms Jerry Gilstrap led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

Terry Moore, a member of Easley City Council and Mayor Pro Tempore, spoke on behalf of Easley Mayor Butch Womack, who, Moore said, was unable to attend but is always supportive of veterans. Moore stated that he was honored to be there and added, "If there is any way that we could reach out to help you, in any way, just call on us. Thank you."

Post 52 Adjutant Gary Hinton thanked everyone for coming. "I want to discuss a little about the meaning of Veterans Day and why we celebrate this day," he said. "We have over 6,800 veterans that live here in Pickens County. And, when you look at the overall population of our county, which is a little over 132,000, that's not a really big piece, but it's a pretty good size chunk."

"The sad note is that we lose about 22 veterans daily due to suicide in the nation. It's a sad situation." He added that the American Legion has started meaningful training classes on how to help veterans and that there are crisis telephone numbers. "Listen to what the veteran is telling you," he said. "There are phone numbers you can call. If nothing else, you can call 9-1-1."

He said that more than 81,000 are still listed as POWs or MIAs.

And he said that veterans will always be veterans. "When you're sworn into the military service, there's no expiration date. You're still a veteran. A veteran is someone who serves our country. Veterans are a unique breed. We truly are."

"Veterans will experience some kind of issues for the remainder of their lives. Some are mental. Some are physical. Some are psychological. Some are a combination of all. And it's due to the experiences that we've had, the circumstances we've been in, the decisions that we had to make in order to keep ourselves alive and keep our comrades alive and keep our country safe."

"Veterans Day is a special day to me. It first became known as Armistice Day, ending World War I. That was the war to end all wars. And Armistice Day was November 11, 1918. Later on, after World War II, Congress changed the name to Veterans Day and made it a national holiday, and we celebrate it. We celebrate Veterans Day to remember all of those that have passed on, that bravely protected our country, whether it was during war time or peace time. We celebrate Veterans Day to show our appreciation and love for all of the 19.1 million veterans that answered the call to

serve and are still with us. There are almost 400,000 veterans that call South Carolina their home.

"As I close, I will ask you to do something very simple. When you meet a veteran, if they want to talk to you, take a few minutes and listen to them. That's all some veterans need to make their life worth living, just someone to listen to them and someone that they know has their back."

Carter then introduced the speaker for the Veterans Day event, Robert 'Bob' Scherer. "He served in the Cold War and Vietnam era from 1962 to 1966 and with two years reserve duty from 1966 to 1968. He served overseas in Turkey with the Turkish army 50 miles from the Russian border for two years. Bob has been a continuous member of the American Legion for the past 27 years and is a life member. In 2016, Bob was selected as South Carolina State Department Commander. In 2017, he was elected to serve as an alternate national executive committee man where he represented South Carolina at a national level until 2020. Bob is presently serving as a volunteer with the Agape Hospice Care doing patient care at 11th hour sitting with the veteran and family until their demise. He is presently on the Board of Directors for the Friends of Fisher House, Columbia, where he has been serving for three years. Over the past 10 years, Bob has traveled extensively throughout the state, helping our veterans and their families. Due to Bob's commitment to our veterans, he was awarded the Quilt of Valor in December of 2017. In August, 2019, the State of South Carolina awarded Bob with the South Carolina Order of the Palmetto, the highest award given to a civilian who demonstrates extraordinary lifetime achievement. Bob was presented one of the first two Freedom Lanterns for veterans by the Joyce Scott Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in November, 2021. These lanterns are to recognize and thank veterans and keep with the chapter's mission to patriotism. In 2021, Bob started the first South Carolina Department of the American Legion Lady Fast Pitch Softball Program and continues to serve as the Chairman of that committee. In June, 2022, Bob was selected as South Carolina Department Legionnaire of the Year at the State Convention. Bob currently resides in Spartanburg, South Carolina with his wife, Sherri. Everyone, please give a welcome to Bob as he comes to speak."

"Good morning," said Scherer, "and thank you for being here on this dreary day."

“I, first of all, would like to thank Commander Walter Carter from the Post 52 here in Easley and all of its members for inviting me to be their speaker. I would also like to thank Mayor Pro Tem Terry Moore for being here and all of the special guests and all of you ladies and gentlemen for being here today. I really appreciate it.”

He then read a Veterans Day speech:

When the cannons of World War I were silenced, we thought we had fought ‘the war to end all wars’, but, as history proved, we still needed our veterans.

We are here today to celebrate the strength, the courage, and dedication of our veterans, who not only wield the hammer of conflict, but also shape the world for lasting peace.

The brave actions of our veterans endure in the pages of history, but today I don’t want us only to remember the gallantry that they did on the battlefields, but we must look at the lasting legacy of the strength and the service they brought with them when they returned home.

It takes profound strength to wear this nation’s uniform, though, one day, those of us who wore this uniform will remove it, and no amount of time nor strife can ever sever the golden thread uniting veterans in an everlasting bond. Once a soldier, always a soldier.

The uniform that we once wore has changed many times over the years. What hasn’t changed has been the determination and the spiritual strength of the men and women willing to lay down their lives for this nation.

The image of the veteran has also changed over the past few years. Almost half of those serving in the military today are between 22 and 30 years of age. In the 10-year war, just a little over 3,650 days, 58,220 Americans died. During their veterans’ time in Vietnam, their strength and courage was the same as it is today. The only thing that has changed is the public’s attitude and perception of them. That generation remembers returning home to a country so divided and so misdirected by internal politics that the regular public had no interest or cared a little what our soldiers were doing for them in Vietnam. Those attitudes and misunderstandings about our veterans during the Vietnam era were unfortunate and misguided toward many members of one of the greatest generations of our heroes.

A memorial service was held in Western Township Cemetery at the gravesite honoring Sergeant Michael W. Leif, a Vietnam War hero recognized by his community by naming his home front road in his honor. A true American hero who gave his life for this country, and what a great and noble undertaking by a grateful community recognizing one of their own.

And today is about celebrating our heroes, coming together to honor all those who have served.

Serving in the United States has always been a noble calling. Since the first shots at Lexington and Concord were fired, and the Revolutionary War began, the American soldier has been a defender of liberty and democracy. Since the humble beginnings in 1776, the American soldier has fought and died on the battlefields here and abroad to defend our rights and our freedoms.

We are gathered here today to honor those who protect our nation and our homes.

For some, the supreme sacrifice is made on the battlefield. During World War II, approximately 400,000 Americans died in just 2,174 days. And, since that time, others from that generation have passed to that land beyond. These numbers reflect a very different reality for that generation, the greatest generation who came home from that war with a deep understanding of the horrors of war and how easily things can fall apart. That generation put in place a world order dedicated to stability and international cooperation as a means to avoid war, from NATO and the UN to the INF. This is one day that we set apart for our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and Coast Guard who have sacrificed so much and expected nothing more than thanks. They offered their lives and made sacrifices for the sake of humanity. I cannot recount all of their deeds or their valor or bravery. These are recorded in the pages of our country’s history and forever engraved upon the monuments spread throughout these United States.

Let us also remember our future generations of veterans who are serving today, writing a new history, because, today, wherever Old Glory flies at a post, base, ship, or installation at some near or far country, you can rest assured there is a soldier, airman, Marine, sailor, or Coast Guard willing to pay that ultimate sacrifice for you and for me.

And, just like every service member before them, when they do lay down their lives, the flag is draped across their coffin, symbolic of our country's appreciation. And, now, it is our responsibility to carry on for the loved ones who grieve their loss.

We should remember that Veterans Day is more than just a day off. It's more than just a line in the paper saying, 'Hey, we have a special sale.' It's a day to remember those who have served in our armed forces for our country and for our freedoms.

They served in places like Shiloh, Antietam, Andersonville, and Gettysburg. They fought and died in the blood and mud in the trenches of World War I. They served in Pearl Harbor, Bataan, North Africa, Anzio, Salerno, Normandy, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa.

They fought in the cold and misery of Pork Chop Hill and at Chosin Reservoir.

They fought in the jungle heat on the ambush trails of Vietnam; the sands of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in Desert Storm; in the cities, villages, and countryside of Iraq and in Afghanistan.

They fought on land, they fought on ships and submarines in the sea, they fought from bombers in the air, using the tools that they were provided in this new profession of war or preserving peace.

In these distant places and these harrowing times, these ordinary people from cities, towns, villages of America, and here in South Carolina, have performed extraordinary deeds.

Some of these heroes I spoke about are here with us today and some have since passed. In a few minutes, I will ask each of them to stand or wave, so you can again thank them and recognize them.

Memories of their acts of heroism must never 'fade away', just like it's been said of old soldiers. It is our task to remember what they said and what they did. We must never forget.

We gain strength from what our veterans have done. All too often, when we leave Memorial Day and Veterans Day commemorations, we take it for granted or even forget for a time all of those who have lost their lives or sacrificed so much to ensure that we have the homes we live in, the freedoms we enjoy, the privileges we have, or take for granted those men and women who are still

deployed today, away from their families and friends, who remain in harm's way. We are blessed with many privileges. Do not forget.

President Kennedy once said, 'A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers.'

Of course, today, we equally honor our servicemen and women, but the sentiment remains crystal clear. A key component of our nation's greatness lies in our ability to honor, appreciate, and to cherish, through our actions and our memories, all of those who died or served in this country.

We often hear that freedom has a price to pay and that each generation must pay that price. Today is our day to say thank you to those who, for generations, have footed the bill and who have paid so dearly and the families and friends whose lives are forever changed and to whom we owe an enormous debt.

Thank you. Two words. We say it all of the time. Sometimes, we don't even think about it when we say it. 'How are you?' 'Doing well. Thank you.' 'Can I get the door for you?' 'Thank you.' 'I hope you have a good day.' 'Thank you.' Within seconds, we have moved away from that moment and have forgotten what was said and who we said it to. So, where is the power, the emotion, in thank you? When did two words, eight letters, earn their stripes of words of gratitude, words of appreciation, words of thankfulness? It happens when we put action behind these words. It happens when we look into somebody's eyes and speak from our heart. It happens when we remember what we said and to whom we said it. It happens when we say it because we mean it and not just an automatic response. It happens when we don't plan for it, and we aren't prepared to say it, but we are stirred to say it. It happens when we let our heart speak.

A gentleman was in Washington, D.C. and visited the Vietnam Memorial and the national World War II Memorial. Walking along the Vietnam Memorial, he passed a mother sobbing with her young child in her hands, a father scratching a pencil across a paper, capturing his son's name from the Wall, a veteran in a wheelchair who's handing a Kleenex to an older gentleman, an older couple desperately searching for the name they wished was not on the Wall.

There were countless teddy bears, crosses, flags, and candles covering the ground, and he was overwhelmed. He turned and looked across the reflecting pool. But the sounds continued: the soft cry, the sniffing, a deep breath, a child's voice, a tissue pulled from the box. And, then, 'Here it is. Here it is. I found it.' His eyes burned.

He could feel his heart ache. His throat swelled and his head filled with two simple words, eight letters, and it seemed inappropriate. But he had nothing else, and, so, he repeated these words silently, and he started to walk away. He quickly whispered them. He had to let them out. He had to let them pass through the air, to swirl around the mothers, the fathers, brothers, sisters, friends, and sons and daughters, who were standing at the Wall, grieving alone. He had never meant two words more than he did that day at that time and at that place.

Therefore, emotion is met with action, gratitude collides with thankfulness, and we move into a place of thanksgiving.

John F. Kennedy said, 'As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words but to live by them.' So, it isn't enough to say it. We need to be it – grateful, thankful, appreciative. The greatest thing that you can say is thank you – two words, eight letters – but weighed with love, gratitude, humility and understanding.

Today, military groups, veterans associations, and everyday Americans make sure that we pay tribute to those who have served and sacrificed. By honoring our men and women in uniform, groups like yours help keep alive the memory of those who paid the ultimate price.

Thank you, my fellow veterans. Thank you for your service. Thank you for believing in our country, its values, and its people. Thank you for the service you have given and yet to give to your communities and to your companies. May your work, lives, and families be blessed.

I want to thank all of you who are responsible for putting on this ceremony today, reminding us to pause and honor our veterans.

President Abraham Lincoln once said, 'A nation that does not honor its heroes will not long endure.'

Now, I ask that all veterans stand or wave so that we can all say thank you, and I salute you.

God bless America, and thank you for allowing me to share with you on this Veterans Day. May you never forget what they did for you and for me and for generations to come. God bless."

Nancy Mawhinny, President of American Legion Post 52 Auxiliary, then placed a wreath in front of the podium.

Dianne Robinson, of Robinson Funeral Homes and Robinson Memorial Gardens, then called the roll, in alphabetical order, of veterans served since the previous Veterans Day by Robinson Funeral Homes and Memorial Gardens. "Family members," she said, "when your loved one's name is called, please stand to be recognized as we honor their memory." After all names were read, everyone in the chapel stood to honor them all, and, following a rifle volley, "Taps" was played on the bugle by Post 52 member Sam Gillespie.

Hinton then asked Post 52 Chaplain Nick Vlahos to conclude the program by pronouncing the benediction.

"Good morning, everybody, and God bless you for being here," said Vlahos, who asked everyone to join him in praying The Lord's Prayer (from Matthew 6:9-13).

He then read another prayer he had recently come across: *Our God, our heavenly Father, you have blessed us with brave men and women who are willing to defend our freedom. May your protection and grace surround them each day, and let your healing hand be upon those who suffer wounds and injuries. Today, still, Lord, we would ask you to comfort the families who still mourn and are left to remember the precious lives of their loved ones. Help us to honor and support them. And let us ever be mindful of each sacrifice made on behalf of the American people by our sons, daughters, husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, and friends. Amen.*

"Heavenly Father," he prayed, "we again thank you for this beautiful day, Lord, and for this special occasion. And, Father, as we dismiss, we ask your blessings upon each and every single one of us that's here, Lord. And not only for those of us here, but, Father, across America and around the world, millions of God-fearing and America-loving people, Lord, they're doing the same thing that we are today. God bless America, and thank you, Father, again, for allowing us to have this time together. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the living God we pray, and everybody said -" And the audience joined him in concluding, "Amen."

Pickens County's Annual Veterans Parade Salutes Local Men and Women Who Have Served

Written by KAREN BREWER, Publisher & Editor

Pickens County's 2022 Veterans Parade, which began in front of the Pickens County Performing Arts Center on West Main Street in Liberty, honored local men and women who have served in our nation's military.

Roy Costner (who represents the Liberty area and serves as Vice Chair of the Pickens County Council) welcomed the crowd and thanked everyone for coming to the event. He also welcomed Rep. Davey Hiott (who represents the 4th District, including the Liberty and Pickens areas, in the South Carolina House of Representatives) and thanked him for attending and showing support for local veterans. He thanked all of the veterans for their service and thanked them for being a part of the event.

Costner then introduced Liberty Mayor Erica Romo Woods, who sang the national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner."

The parade was led by the Liberty High School JROTC, and then Costner introduced all of the veterans, calling each

one by name, as they rode by in the parade, either on floats, on motorcycles, in jeeps, or in other vehicles. Parade participants included Pickens County Veterans Affairs Officer Sherry Harris (U.S. Army, Specialist 4th Class, Desert Storm and Iraq, US Army and Army Reserves 1986-2002) and Ensley Feemster, District 1 representative on Pickens County Council (S.C. Army National Guard, 1966-1988, retired as Major), and Walt Carter, Commander of the American Legion Post 52 in Easley (US Air Force, 1980-1990, US Army National Guard 1992-2004).

"Thank you so much for taking the time to come out here," Costner told the crowd of citizens as the event concluded. "Make sure you thank a veteran today and anytime that you see them." He noted that Pickens County has four Medal of Honor recipients, and he added that it is amazing "that we live in a place that has so many people who served.

"Thank them for their service," he said. "Thank you for being here."



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Roy Costner, who represents District 4, the Liberty area, on Pickens County Council, welcomes the crowd to the annual Pickens County Veterans Parade, held on West Main Street in Liberty.



Photograph by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Liberty Mayor Erica Romo Woods sings the national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner", during the 2022 Pickens County Veterans Parade, held in Liberty in front of the Pickens County Performing Arts Center.



Photographs by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor,, The Christian View magazine

In the above photos, Liberty Mayor Erica Romo Woods sings the national anthem as everyone stands at attention and salutes the American flag. Those pictured include local veterans, Pickens County Veterans' Claim Representative Melaine Ginn, Rep. Davey Hiott, and Pickens County Council Vice Chair Roy Costner.



Photographs by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Members of the Liberty High School JROTC leading the 2022 Pickens County Veterans Parade.



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

Veterans in the 2022 Pickens County Veterans Parade.



Photographs by Karen Brewer, Publisher & Editor, The Christian View magazine

Veterans in the 2022 Pickens County Veterans Parade.

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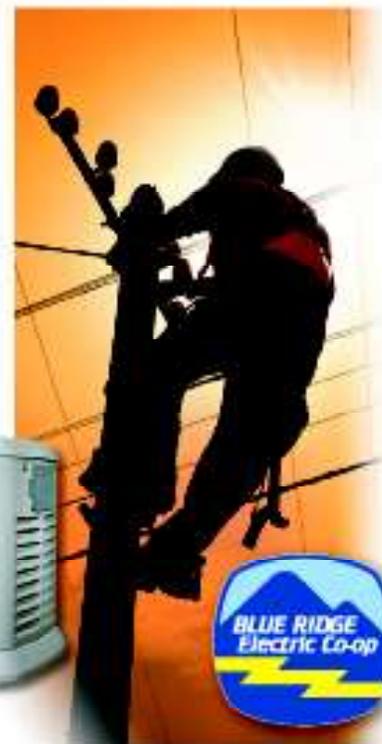
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