

Wrapped in honor



TONY BRITT/Lake City Reporter

First Sgt. Trena Dettmer, Columbia High School JROTC instructor, is hugged by students after she received a Quilt of Valor from the Lady of the Lake Quilters Guild on Wednesday morning.

Local veterans gifted Quilts of Honor in ceremony

By TONY BRITT
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While 13 local veterans were recognized for their military service on the day following Veterans Days, the reception they received was just as heartwarming, solemn and appreciative — and even more touching since they received quilts.

The 13 veterans were recipients of Quilts of Valor. They received their quilts

during a presentation hosted by the Lady of the Lake Quilters Guild during a ceremony in the First Methodist Church's Fellowship Hall on Wednesday morning. The event was attended by more than 100 people.

Following a welcome by Celeste Beck, a prayer by American Legion Post 57 Chaplain William Bell, the Columbia High School JROTC posted the colors to start the program.

Kathy Anderson, addressed the audience with information about Quilts of Valor Foundation and symbolism of the quilts, as she noted The Quilts of Valor Foundation is a civilian organization.

"... You can think of a Quilt of Valor as a quilted heart because it's quilted and it comes from our hearts," she said. "All you have to do it serve our country honorably as part of the military."

The 13 Quilts of Valor

recipients were: Larry Anderson, Robert Breyer, Trena Dettmer, Michael Hankey, Glen Healy, Patrick Humphress, Donald Klein, Jo Anne Picola, Dennis Price, Robert Shields Jr., David Smith, Stuart Thomas and Daniel Tompkins.

Columbia High JROTC cadets placed the quilts on the veterans during the entire ceremony.

QUILTS continued on 7A

QUILTS

Continued From 1A

David Smith, a US Air Force veteran, was thrilled to get his quilt.

"It just means so much," he said with a smile. "I mean these guys dedicated their service to their country and everything. I kind of accept this for the people that didn't come back. It was just an overwhelming feeling of joy to get this quilt."

1st Sgt. Trena Dettmer, US Army, works at Columbia High School as the JROTC instructor, said she was proud to get a Quilt of Valor in front of her cadets.

"It's emotional. It's an honor to even be nominated for this because I had no idea I was even nominated," she said. "It was an honor and it felt good."

As an instructor with the local JROTC program, Dettmer gets to teach students about the traditions of the military and Wednesday she was able to celebrate a civilian tradition with her students.

"I think the fact that they get to see veterans aren't forgotten and that they're still rewarded, honored and blessed that people haven't forgotten them and that they very special in the community," she said.

Dennis Price, a US Army veteran who received a flag, said he was proud to be recognized for his service.

"I'm just kind of proud that I'm recognized for the Vietnam conflict and I appreciate all the effort that people put into this and especially the talk the way they did at the beginning about what it all means," he said. "That's what was special about the quilt — the meaning behind it."

Dorothy Price, wife of Dennis Price, was happy to see the ceremony where her husband was awarded a quilt.

"It makes me feel very proud," she said.

Marjorie Gallardo, Group Leader for the Quilts of Valor Chapter in Lake City, the Lake City Lady of the Lake Quilters Guild, said during the past two days they've given out 21 Quilts of Valor. She said its the most quilts the organization has presented in a two-day period.

"Through the guild and word of mouth, people have filled-out applications and given in command and each year it continues to grow," she said of presenting the quilts. "I hoping to reach a lot more veterans so they can get their quilt."

Gallardo said she was pleased to attract more than 100 people to the presentation and the program is growing in popularity.

"It makes me feel honored that there's people want to see this happening, that the guild supports it by making these tops and that I have people who help me doing binding and I do probably 80% of the long-arming," she said. "I had a nice committee that helped me out that consisted of myself, Lisa Stephens and Kathy Anderson."



Photos by TONY BRITT/Lake City Reporter

ABOVE: A group of veterans that were presented their Quilts of Valor pose for a picture following Wednesday morning's presentation ceremony. **BELOW:** Robert Shields Jr. (center), a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, stands with family and friends after he was presented with a Quilt of Valor.

