

## **A Walk in Their Boots - After Action Report - Veterans Program – 2016**

November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016

37 veterans from WWII to current day attended and registered at Saturday's event. Another 28 veterans registered on Sunday. 2 additional veterans have come forward since the event telling me that they too were there making the total for the two days on-site registration 67!

After only registering 9 total the year before and then "recruiting" 10 additional veterans between the end of the 2015 event to the beginning of the 2016 event, we now have over 90 registered veterans from WWII to current day on the Walk in Their Boots mailing list.

Give or take, 81 veterans attended the 2016 event. I think we should be very pleased. Borderview Christian Church provided the staffing, equipment and hosting support for our first annual Veteran Hospitality area! We served 150 grilled hot dogs, with condiments of mustard, ketchup and onions, potato chips, coffee, hot chocolate, sweet tea or water. There was also a contribution of personal from a local scout and his mother who assisted with preparing the site and food on Sunday morning.

Donations from Jonathan Street of the Elizabethton Edward Jones Investments, Mike Barnett of Big Johns Closeouts, Chic-fil-a of Elizabethton, Ingles Grocery of Elizabethton, Walmart of Elizabethton and Food City of Elizabethton were received to enable this to happen. Additional necessities were purchased by Joel Norris of Borderview or myself to make up any shortfalls or needs resulting in no cost for the event.

Each veteran was provided a custom prepared name-tag or handwritten all-service name-tag in recognition of their military service which I prepared and printed at home. Veteran registration on site was managed by volunteers from the Boy Scout Post 240, volunteers from Borderview Christian Church and by Vietnam Veteran Larry Bowers who gave up his entire Sunday to assist with Veteran Registration. 5 of the pre-printed tags were not collected meaning that 20 of the 25 which did register before the event did attend.

6 veterans, 2 from WWII, one from the Korean Era, one from Cold War, one from Vietnam and one from a combined service of the Cold War, Vietnam and Desert Shield/Storm were part of the speaking program. Each veteran spoke on average about 20 minutes. The speakers were:

- M/Sgt Harvey Tester - U.S. Air Force - U.S. Army - National Guard - 33 Years in Service
- AMM3/c Earl Ellis - U.S. Navy - WWII - USS Yorktown - Torpedo Squadron VT-9 - Avenger
- L/Cpl Kelly W. Greene - U.S.M.C. - Cold War Era - Rifleman
- Captain Larry Bowers - U.S. Army - Platoon Leader - 1st Infantry Division - Vietnam
- Spec/4 Peter Voigt - U.S. Army - 53rd Infantry Regiment - Medical Company - Korean Era
- LTJG Duard B. Walker - U.S. Navy - USS Newberry APA 158 - Landing Force Officer

A few weeks prior to the event, all pre-registered and recruited veterans on the mailing list at that point were mailed an invitation and an event line card. I covered the cost of the mailing supplies, printing and postage. In 2017, I will not be able to cover the cost of mailing the invitations and will make best use of any email address provided to keep the cost of mailing the invitation as low as possible. It is with great hope that a sponsor for our mailing cost be acquired along with our 501(c)3 filing. I think it best that we pursue this as soon as practically possible.

Eric P. Montgomery Veteran Program Liaison