



VIETNAM: Gathering offered chance to heal

FROM PAGE 5

fireworks. It was a day when he had a vision he will never forget. That day, he said God sent him to be with his new brothers in Vietnam.

"In their eyes, you could see everything: fear, hate, confusion," Gamble said. "And, most of all, the fatigue of combat."

Gamble, now of Indianapolis, was among a handful of veterans who helped spearhead the annual tradition about 17 years ago. For their "golden anniversary," the veterans decided to move the reunion from Fort Lauderdale to the greater Fort Hood area.

The gathering acts as an opportunity for those who served to heal, according to Gamble. In their reunion, he said, veterans of the Vietnam War soothe internal wounds that have lingered decades after their time overseas.

"Through this reconnection, we were able to help each other through a lot of problems — a lot of guys couldn't get through the horrors of war," Gamble said. "It's nice to have a therapist, but sometimes, the best therapy is to have a soldier you can talk to who was there beside you."

Retired Lt. Gen. Pete Taylor, a Vietnam veteran and former III Corps and Fort Hood commander, urged the dozens there to possess their memories of service in pride.

"All of you have memories. We'd never have made it without each other," Taylor said in a speech recalling several memories of his service. "We all did what our country asked us to do. You have nothing to be ashamed of."

Taylor held a copy of a memoir



MATT PAYNE | HERALD

A map detailing the activity of the U.S. Army in Vietnam was displayed at Saturday's reunion of veterans.

Gen. John Rogers Galvin published in 2015, called "Fighting the Cold War: A Soldier's Memoir." He and Galvin served alongside each other in Vietnam and knew one another before Galvin died three years ago.

In grim remembrance, Taylor told those before him how he and Galvin would unzip body bags of fallen soldiers after they were retrieved from battlefields.

The bodies would always be returned to their base, Taylor said, and the officers would have to unzip the bag and look at the deceased.

One day, he was told why. "The reason I want us to do this is because I don't want us to ever forget what this is all about," Taylor said, quoting Galvin.

Retired Sgt. Dan Houmes said he has a book bursting with names of veterans he's reconnected with over the years, which he amassed from a variety of resources, such as alumni directories

and contacting churches.

Following the labor of reaching out to dozens of veterans and finding about 100 names, Houmes said the annual communion has developed into something special.

"We have probably, out of that hundred, had about 60 guys come at some point. Some came one time, and that was it," Houmes said. "But over the past 17 years, this has become more of a family reunion than an Army reunion."

John Eckhardt, 72, of Endicott, New York worked as an artillery forward observer back in the day.

"We just did our duty. It wasn't fun but we just did our duty and that's the way it was," Eckhardt said.

The veterans also toured Fort Hood during their time here, and visited their old unit, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, which is now outfitted with Abrams tanks is part of the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team.

VOICES

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longer and longer each year, and really saves us nothing. Indeed, if its whole purpose

is to conserve energy, it's failing miserably, especially with what it costs to air-condition in Texas heat. And it costs me more than just my electricity; it's costing me an hour of beauty rest.

You all do have the right of it in that Daylight Saving Time does mark summer closing in, though. She isn't even stealthy about it. She's butting in wherever she can, trying to make herself felt whenever she can.

I've had to put my air conditioning on more than once, only to breathe a sigh of relief when temperatures dropped to something approaching more seasonal a couple of days later.

But summer isn't through. Oh, no, not by a long shot. It's only a matter of time before she shoots her laser beams of heat into our atmosphere (yeah, wrong word, I'm a columnist, not a weathergirl), and we can begin to sweat off all our winter weight just by sitting on our sofas while we passively watch the Weather Channel.

Daylight Saving Time marks the beginning of the end — of sleep, of lower electricity and gas bills, of cooler temperatures. It's the end of normal.

And then, round about August ... I will hear your plaintive cries to the universe begging for release from summer's scorching, fiery grasp. And I shall forgive you. For at that point we shall all be in complete agreement.

STEPHANIE RATTS GRISSOM is a Herald correspondent.

KIDS: 10 students honored for various community achievements

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nearly 300 Christmas books to at-risk children through the Communities in Schools program. The first grader has volunteered more than 180 hours over the last five months.

Clements/Parsons Elementary's MaKenzie Hays has participated in many clubs, including Salt-n-Light, Kids Care Club, and Choir. During Christmas, MaKenzie went with Kids Care Club to the nursing home to sing. MaKenzie strives to excellence in academics, and she is a positive role model for those around her. If you need a helping hand, MaKenzie will be one of the first to respond.

Hettie Halstead Elementary's Jessie Moore is the first student to welcome new students to her classroom and help them learn the routine, where to go to lunch and other activities. Jessie arrives at school ready and willing to learn. She greets all those around her with smile on her face and a positive attitude. Jessie enjoys reading to younger students and



Chase



Conklin



De. Gilbert



Do. Gilbert



Hayes



Kimball



Moore



Phipps



Sawyer



Smith

helping them learn their letters and numbers.

House Creek Elementary's Denver Conklin excels in academics and is currently serving as the school's student council president. Under Denver's leadership, the student council helps the campus with morning greetings to our car riders, helping them out of cars when they arrive at school and getting their day started off in a positive manner. The fifth grader is also credited with doing an excellent job serving as mistress of ceremonies for the semester award ceremonies.

House Creek Elementary's De'Ziyah Gilbert's heart is with our nation's heroes. De'Ziyah collected more than 1,000 Valentine's cards and hand deliver the cards at the Olin E. Teague Veterans Administration Medical Facility and the

Central Texas Veterans Nursing Home both in Temple. De'Ziyah has volunteered nearly 170 hours this year.

Fairview/Miss Jewell's Devan Smith happily mentors other students with reading and math. The kindergartener volunteers at his church helping set up for services and clean up afterwards. Devan also helps in Sunday school class. He is a big help with his younger siblings and enjoys helping his grandfather repair vehicles by handing him tools.

Martin Walker Elementary's Hayley Sawyer Hayley loves to volunteer in her community. She plays her violin at community events and fundraisers such as Relay for Life, Small Business Saturday as well Copperas Cove Nursing and Rehabilitation. Hayley also has raised money through her school for the American Heart Association the past

three years. She also volunteers at school events. Hayley is a straight A student and has been in the gifted and talented program since kindergarten.

Williams/Ledger Elementary's Dorianna Gilbert has raised more than \$2,000 this year to help students who have dyslexia. Her community service work was featured in the December issue of Scholastic News Magazine and also in the March issue of Highlights Children's Magazine. The third grader is contracted to author a children's book which is due in June. She has volunteered nearly 200 hours this year.

The Central Texas Youth Coalition is expected to announce its selection of Incredible Kids today. The 2019 Central Texas Incredible Kids will be honored at the 20th annual Central Texas Incredible Kids Celebration in April.



Miniature Mister Five Hills pays Ronald McDonald House utility bills

BY WENDY SLEDD
SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

TEMPLE—Many families travel far from home and spend several weeks or months to get treatment for their seriously ill or injured children at Children’s Hospital at Scott & White in Temple. It can be a long time for children to be separated from their parents and parents separated from their child. For children facing a serious medical crisis, nothing seems scarier than not having mom and dad close by for love and support. Miniature Mister Five Hills Robbie Rackley decided to make a big difference in these small children’s lives.

Robbie chose the Ronald McDonald House as his platform of service during his year long reign. He began collecting pop tabs for the charity in March, 2018 when he was crowned. The Ronald McDonald House provides a place for families to call home so they can stay close by their hospitalized child at little to no cost. He enlisted the help of his royalty family as well as family, friends, local businesses and organizations which all collected tiny pieces of aluminum. One by one they added up until the now 4-year old amassed thousands and thousands of pop tabs weighing more than 160 pounds.

Robbie and his mom, Misty Rackley, made regular visits to businesses and clubs over the past year picking up pop tabs collected.



“The goal is to help sick kids,” Misty Rackley said. “I know if Robbie was sick, I would lose my mind. When your child is sick, you lose everything.”

As Robbie prepares to crown his successor in just a few days, he and the Five Hills royalty made a trip to Temple to donate the multiple containers filled with pop tabs. One by one, they dumped them into industrial-sized garbage cans where they will be held for recycling.

As the trash cans began to reach capacity, a few stray tabs fell on the floor and Robbie scurried to pick them up.

“Oh...,” he said in excitement as his eyes widened. “There’s a

tab and there’s one. We have to get them all.”

The tabs will be sold to a metals company and the cash received in exchange will be used to pay the Ronald McDonald’s utility bills which cost approximately \$6,000 year.

Ronald McDonald House Weekend Manager Gayle Bourland, who has worked for the charity for 10 years, said Robbie’s donation of the small tabs will make a big difference.

“These tabs are free money for the House,” Bourland said, adding that anyone can collect and donate the tabs. “It doesn’t have to be a huge amount. It all makes a difference.”

COURTESY PHOTOS

Miniature Mister Five Hills Robbie Rackley gets some help pulling two wagons full of more than 160 pounds of aluminum pop tabs down the halls of the Ronald McDonald House in Temple. The donated tabs will help pay the charity’s utility bills.



The Copperas Cove Five Hills royalty pose at the Ronald McDonald House in Temple with more than 160 pounds of aluminum tabs collected for the community service project of Miniature Mister Five Hills Robbie Rackley.

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