

# Veterans reunion, warbirds return to airport

BY DAVID BELCHER

MT. VERNON LIFESTYLES EDITOR

MT. VERNON — Salute to Veterans was the name of the event Saturday at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport as part of Balloons Over Mt. Vernon & Fly-In.

However, honoring those who wore the nation's military uniform is a 365-days-of-the-year matter at the airport.

At the airport is the hall of honor — photographs of honorably discharged U.S. veterans, with their names and a summary of their military service.

During the ceremony, Chris Collins, airport manager, read the names of those added to the wall in the last year.

As a special tribute, he read the names on the wall of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Members of the Mt. Vernon American Legion Post 141 Honor Guard performed a rifle salute concluding with the playing of Taps.

Collins said from 1998 to 2012 the Little Egypt Fly-In and Veterans Reunion was held at the airport.

"We saw it as a way to help get kids interested in aviation through the Young Eagles program," Collins said. He said the reunion was set to honor veterans through "different activities including speeches and we've shown historical movies to honor our veterans. Veterans shared stories with each other to educate the younger generation."

In 2013 the event was transformed into Balloons Over Mt. Vernon. However, he said some people asked



Sentinel Photo/DAVID BELCHER

**RIFLE SALUTE** — A rifle salute by members of Mt. Vernon American Legion Post 141 Honor Guard honoring veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice was part of the Salute to Veterans Saturday at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

about the warbirds and the veterans reunion.

"This is the first year back to what it was," Collins said. "This is the first year we are going back to what people were used to seeing."

To give youngsters a feel for flying, the Young Eagles Experimental Aircraft Association offered free airplane rides on Saturday for those age 8 to 17.

In addition to the veterans photographs, contained in the airport is the Col. R.D. White Veterans Museum

which features a treasure trove of information related to veterans and military history. The museum is open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays or by appointment.

Collins said additional information on a veteran being included in the hall of honor is available by contacting him or any committee member. He said the person does not have to be from Jefferson County to be included.

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jb-18-15