

Dedication address



Lt. Col. Ted Buck, retired United States Air Force and Jefferson County Board chair, gives an address at the Jefferson County Veterans Hall of Honor dedication Sunday at the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport. RORYE O'CONNOR/REGISTER-NEWS

Hall of Honor ceremony salutes veterans

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MT. VERNON — Veterans past, present and those on active duty were commended at the dedication of the Jefferson County Veterans Hall of Honor Sunday.

A rifle salute, an aerial salute and an address by Lt. Col. Ted Buck, retired United States Air Force and Jefferson County Board chair, marked the opening of the Hall of Honor in the Koziara terminal at the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

The Hall of Honor features a wall of frames with photos and military informa-

tion of Jefferson County veterans, as well as a room with military memorabilia like uniforms on loan from the owners.

Lt. Col. R.D. White, retired U.S. Army and committee chair of the Hall of Honor, opened the dedication.

"Thank you for coming in this heat to show allegiance to the flag and contribute to the veterans," White said to the crowd of approximately 150. "A lot of the ones left are here, but we want to particularly remember the ones left over there. They're the real heroes."

White introduced Buck, saying he was

also a real hero.

"He flew in over 200 missions in Vietnam, and those weren't milk runs," White told the crowd. "A milk run is an easy mission with no real danger. These were low level, with a lot of fire. We're lucky to have him here today."

Buck said it was an honor and a privilege to speak at the Hall of Honor dedication.

"I want to thank R.D. for the opportunity and Chris Collins, the airport manager, for continuing to recognize the viable need

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for a quality airport."

Buck asked the veterans in the crowd to raise their hands and thanked them for their service and sacrifice. He also spoke about the history of the B-17, standing with the "Sentimental Journey," the B-17 visiting from the Commemorative Air Force Arizona Wing in the background.

"There were 4,700 B-17s destroyed in combat," Buck said. "There were more than 48,000 crew members of the B-17 destroyed in World War II. That is a fact we should never forget. The pilots of the B-17 wore the 50-mission crush in their hat, the white scarf that was so attractive and the khaki pants that attracted me and others to fly."

Buck said the community has a responsibility to make sure their children remember



Becky Hill looks for her father's picture and information at the Jefferson County Veterans Hall of Honor Sunday.

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the wars of the past and present and the terrorist attacks "destroying the lives of thousands of people."

"We must not forget," Buck said. "We must stand up, and we must be determined to protect our way of life."

The American Legion Post

141 Honor Guard gave a rifle salute, and Clyde Zellers flew a Navy SNJ T6 "Texan" overhead as an aerial salute.

Collins lauded the community for attending the event.

"It was wonderful to see so much of the community come out, and so many veterans," He said. "When all the hands

went up, it was amazing."

Airport commissioner Mike Ancona said he thought the events this weekend coincided nicely.

"Having the B-17 here was a nice touch to the whole weekend," Ancona said. "It sets a nice mood to the community's commitment to the veterans and those who surrendered all. It was kind of a coincidence, but we couldn't have asked for a better all-around event."

The Rev. Ralph Swarthout, chaplain of the Woodlawn Veterans Memorial, gave the invocation and benediction of the event.

After the ceremony, people like Opdyke resident Becky Hill moved to the Hall of Honor to look at the faces of Jefferson County's veterans.

Hill pointed out the frame featuring her father, Lt. Everett Dale Atkinson, USAAC, but said, "We need to be proud of all of them."