

MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Kanode named veteran of year

Sunday, November 13, 2005

By MICKEY POWELL - Bulletin Staff Writer

Charles E. Kanode was surprised and speechless when other former soldiers honored him as "Martinsville/Henry County Veteran of the Year" on Saturday.

Accepting the award during a Veterans Day ceremony at the National Guard Armory in Martinsville, Kanode could not think of the right words to say.

He said afterward, however, that "it's a great honor for me to be awarded from among all of my (local military) comrades."

A 22-year Army veteran, Kanode retired in 1970 as a chief warrant officer. Only three years into his service he was promoted to master sergeant and then appointed warrant officer at age 22, making him one of the youngest warrant officers in the Army, according to Lee Smith, commander of VFW Post 2820 in Bassett, who nominated Kanode for the award.

Kanode, 76, received air medals, eight service medals for tours in Korea and Vietnam, the Army Commendation Medal, the Good Conduct Medal and Armed Forces Reserve medals. Upon retiring, he received the Legion of Merit for outstanding service.

He is a life member of the Disabled American Veterans and has been a VFW member for more than 35 years. He also was involved in founding the Henry Fire Department. Kanode and other DAV and VFW members are heroes because they remain in service to the nation, said retired Lt. Col. David King, the keynote speaker at the ceremony.

"As long as I can ... I won't ever let anyone forget you for what you did" to preserve democracy, said King, now senior instructor for the Army JROTC at Martinsville High School.

"We pray that this country will never forget their sacrifices and their service," said the Rev. Philip Waltz of Wesley Memorial Methodist Church

King noted that when people are in public places such as shopping malls, they often pass veterans and armed forces members not in uniform without realizing it. But he can spot them easily.

"They walk with great pride" for the military, their country and their role in helping the military protect their country, he said. Yet they are not arrogant with their pride, he added.

King traveled with JROTC cadets from Martinsville, Magna Vista and Bassett high schools to take part in the D-Day Memorial services in Bedford on Friday. There, he was complimented on the professionalism that the cadets showed.

It made him feel that "our future is in good hands" with the young people in today's military, he said.

Saturday's ceremony also honored soldiers who are thought to be prisoners of war or missing in action.

It featured a three-volley salute by the Martinsville JROTC and a performance of taps by the Martinsville-Henry County Honor Guard. The Magna Vista JROTC presented and retired the colors.

Retired Henry County sheriff James Rogers, a veteran, introduced the veterans honor guard.

He said the guard is available to perform military funerals for all honorably discharged veterans in the area.