

MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Speakers honor veterans' service

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By DEBBIE HALL - Bulletin Staff Writer

Honoring those who have served the nation -- now, and in the past -- and their families was the theme of several Veterans Day ceremonies on Saturday.

Somber and solemn, the services offered an opportunity to reflect, remember and consider the sacrifices of those who defend freedom.

Retired Army Lt. Col. Guy R. Mallow recounted the burial of the unknown soldier to the 140 people at the Martinsville and Henry County Veterans Day Ceremony at the National Guard Armory.

"On Nov. 11, 1921, the remains of an unknown soldier were silently buried in the National Cemetery in Arlington," Mallow said.

"That fallen soldier, whose name is known only to God, was buried on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month ... (His sacrifice) serves as a reminder to all Americans" of the cost of freedom, Mallow said.

However, as important as the past is, it also is important to honor our "present warriors," he said. Whether they "serve in the mountainous regions of Afghanistan or the burning sands of Iraq, our soldiers are world class," he said.

American soldiers, Mallow said, raise the bar in terms of compassion for their fellow men and other people around the globe.

When principles or personal freedoms are compromised anywhere in the world, U.S. soldiers accept the risk and willingly go to battle because "some principles are worth dying for," he said.

Like the unknown soldier, "that willingness to risk everything for the higher good" continues to be a foundation for those who serve in the military, he said.

Mallow, Maryland native, served in the 1st Battalion 115th Infantry, Maryland Army National Guard while attending Frostburg State University. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers through the ROTC Program in May 1984 and immediately entered active duty.

Mallow's assignments include platoon leader and staff officer, 293rd Engineer

Battalion, Baumholder, Germany, and company commander and staff officer, 37th Engineer Battalion (Corps) (Airborne), Fort Bragg, N.C.

He now is the Junior ROTC Senior Army Instructor at Bassett High School.

Also honored during the ceremony was Melvin L. Vernon of Martinsville, who was named Veteran of the Year for his accomplishments in attracting new members and finding a home for his post of the American Legion.

He was given a plaque that cited his "outstanding service to Homer Dillard Post 78 as Post Adjutant by increasing membership by 100 percent and instrumental in finding a post home."

The plaque was given by the Veteran Organizations of Martinsville-Henry County and presented by Posey Young.