



Elk Walt Linthacum (left), special deputy to the Kansas grand exalted ruler, gave the Elks' tribute to the American flag while a crowd (above) of more than 45 people saluted the flag as part of the sixth annual Blue Star Banner held Sunday afternoon at the Goodland Elks lodge. Photos by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Elks Lodge honors families with Blue Star Banners

By Tom Betz
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The Goodland Elks Lodge presented Blue Star Banners to families of 17 men and women serving in the armed forces Sunday afternoon.

More than 45 people gathered for the presentation, which included a special Medal of Valor that the Elks Grand Lodge had awarded to the family of Sgt. Derrick Lutters, who died in Iraq in April 2005.

Lutters' father Chuck was unable to attend, but the medal was displayed; it said it was awarded to the family of Derrick Lutters for their "supreme sacrifice."

Another special presentation was a "St. Rita" medallion to be given to Army

Sgt. First Class Todd Michael Nelson, who was wounded in Iraq and is in the "Wounded Warriors in Transition" area of the burn center at Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio, Texas.

Ron Barkley, Elks Americanism chair, and retired high school teacher, said St. Rita is the patron of healing of wounds, and the medallion came from the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church.

Elks Exalted Ruler Steve Riebel said it was the sixth Blue Star Banner program the Goodland lodge has done since the program was reactivated by the American Legion after the invasion of Iraq.

Elks Secretary Zona Price said the lodge had given out 102 banners

in the past five years and the ones handed out Sunday brought the total to nearly 120. She said the number does not match the number of people serving, because some families will receive a banner for the parents and one for the spouse or grandparents. She said some of the families get banners with more than one blue star when they have more than one member in the service.

Barkley said it was fitting for the Elks to be part of the Blue Star program because patriotism is an important part of being an Elk. He said Price had been the first in Kansas to start a Blue Star program.

He said the Blue Star Banner program dates back to World War

II and was continued through World War II. He said for some reason, the program was not continued during the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Members of the 170th Maintenance Company of the Kansas Army National Guard presented the colors, and Walt Linthacum, special deputy to the grand exalted ruler for the state of Kansas, gave the Elks tribute to the flag. Patriotic musical selections were sung by Devin and Danny Mangus.

Bill Selby, commander of the Goodland Veterans of Foreign Wars Post, talked about his Army years.

"I joined the Army at 18," Selby said, "and got a free 3,500-mile cruise to Korea."

He said when he was on that U.S.

Navy transport, he met a sailor from Kansas who gave him some good advice.

"He said to always get the top bunk in case some of the others were seasick," Selby said.

He said coming back from Korea, he was thrilled to see the Golden Gate Bridge.

Selby said boot camp was quite a transition from civilian life.

"You learn that you are not in charge, and that your buddies and you are responsible for each other," he said. "You are one, but serve on a team and have to work together to succeed."

Selby, who went into the Army 57 years ago, said that Korea and Vietnam are the "forgotten wars."

He said more than 57,000 lost their

lives during the Korea war and more than 58,000 in Vietnam.

"If you go to the Vietnam Wall in Washington, you are a better man than I if you can't shed a tear," he said. "It is up to us to keep the memories alive."

Selby said families shared the sacrifice when someone goes to serve, and children often suffer the most when a parent is gone.

"It is not just the heroes in the service," Selby said. "It is their families who go through it with them. Sometimes it is hard to come back to civilian life. Those memories will be with you for a lifetime."

"Freedom isn't free. I can guarantee you that."

Exalted Ruler presents banners to fourteen families of servicemen

Ron Barkley, Goodland Elks Americanism chair, read the names as Exalted Ruler Steve Riebel handed Blue Star Banners to the parents and wives of servicemen who were present:

- 2nd Lt. Nicholas Armstrong, with the U.S. Army in Afghanistan. Grandparents Merle and Donna Armstrong of Edson were present.

- Senior Airman Christopher T. Bloom, stationed at Hill Air Force Base, Ogden, Utah, but just returned from Iraq. Grandmother Juanita Bloom of Goodland received a banner for parents Ty and Peggy Bloom of Broomfield, Colo.

- Capt. Timothy Button, Army National Guard 287th Sustainment Brigade, Wichita. Parents Tom and Kathy Button of Oakley were unable to attend.

- Petty Officer 2nd Class Jefferson Lee Davis, Naval Weapons Unit, Yorktown, Va. Grandparents are Jim and Joyce Daniels of Goodland received a two-star banner because they have a second grandchild, Justin Wade Jacobs, at U.S. Coast Guard headquarters in Washington.

- Pvt. Daniel J. Hernandez, U.S. Army, Camp Liberty, Iraq, with 101st Airborne. His parents, Delores and Fernando Hernandez of Goodland, were present.

- Chief Warrant Officer Nathan W. Lyndon, with Army Aviation at Fort Lewis, Wash., now serving in Iraq. Grandmother Fern Hawks of Goodland was present to receive the banners for his wife, Lexi Lyndon, and parents Danny and Karen Amos of Nixa, Mo.

- Staff Sgt. Michael A. McCracken, U.S. Marines, Miramar, Calif. Mother Ruby A. McCracken received the banner.

- Pfc. Chad Niebels, U.S. Army 54th Co., 49th Group, 4th Platoon, Fort Lee, Richmond, Va. Mother Susan Adams of Kanorado received the banner.

- Sgt. 1st Class Todd Michael Nelson,

recuperating in the Wounded Warriors in Transition burn unit at Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio, Texas. Banners were presented to his wife Sara and parents Larry and Jan Nelson of Evergreen, Colo. Nelson received a special St. Rita medallion through the Elks from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church.

- Specialist Tyrel Rall, U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division, serving in Afghanistan. Parents Robert and Marilyn Rall received the banner.

- Lance Cpl. Christopher Rickman, U.S. Marines, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. Grandmother Gloria Gailey received banners on

behalf of his parents, Robert and Barbara Richman, Chelton, Conn.

- Specialist Kelly Ray Simmonds, Kansas National Guard, Camp Adder, Iraq. Parents Kelly G and Diane Simmonds of McDonald received a banner.

- Lance Cpl. Brandon Tatman, U.S. Marines, Ah Banyah, Iraq. His mother, Kayla Tatman, and grandparents, Sharon and Duane Harper, received banners.

- Pfc. Cory Yarbrough, U.S. Army, Fort Campbell, Ky. His father, Walt Yarbrough of Goodland, received a banner.

Leave food on doorstep Saturday for Genesis collection; go to family Christmas

The Genesis Food Bank collection, put off last week because of bad weather, should begin at 9 a.m. this Saturday.

Leave your food on the front porch and come on downtown from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., where Main Avenue from 11th to 12th will be filled by a Family Christmas being offered by Goodland churches.

Boy and Girl Scouts, 4-H members and adult volunteers will spread out across the city starting at 9 a.m. to pick up food for the bank. The collection was cancelled last weekend because of freezing rain

and cold wind.

Either leave bags of food on your front porch for pickup or drop it off at the Fellowship Hall of the First United Methodist Church, 1116 Sherman.

Goodland churches invite people to come to Main Street downtown from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday to enjoy a Family Christmas.

The street will be closed from 11th to 12th for the activities, said Travis Blake, pastor of the First Baptist Church.

Mr. Blake and the Rev. Jane

Rothman of Emmanuel Lutheran Church said the churches plan family activities. This is the first year for the program, and the two said they hope people come out to enjoy the fun.

Activities will include music by area choirs, including those from Grant Junior High and Goodland High School. Blake said there will be a bell choir and some smaller groups singing Christmas carols.

There will be a living Nativity Scene, crafts for the kids, a family photo booth, story hour, an inflatable carnival ride for the kids to enjoy and refreshments, he said.

Churches participating include

Word of Life, Church of the Nazarene, First United Methodist, Emmanuel Lutheran, Goodland Bible, First Christian, Calvary Gospel and First Baptist.

The Goodland Area Chamber of

Commerce Taste of Goodland will be held at the Atens Department Store on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Santa will be appear to talk to kids about what they want for Christmas.

correction

The article "Colby couple has new baby boy" on page 2 of Tuesday's edition of *The Goodland Star-News* had the grandmother's and great-grandmother's names misspelled. The grandparents are Bruce and Sharon Feikert of St. Francis, not Bruce and Sjarpm. Great-grandparents are Stan and Marilyn Martin of Goodland, not Stan and Marily. This was due to a

typo-graphical error.
☆☆☆☆
The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

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