

Veterans Honored at Khaki Quilter Ceremony

The Khaki Quilters chapter of the Quilting Guild of The Villages gave six handmade quilts to veterans to thank them for their service.

By MADDIE CUTLER
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There is no such thing as too much giving for the Khaki Quilters.

The quilting chapter, which meets Tuesdays at Eisenhower Recreation Center, gave six handmade quilts to veterans this week to honor them for their service.

The donation brought the number of quilts the chapter has given through the Quilts of Valor organization to 29.

The six men who received their quilts each expressed their gratitude to the Khaki Quilters.

John Johnson, Floyd Dopp, Robert Hammer, Samuel Brown, Steve Crawford and Richard H. Goolby stood together, each holding a new, personalized quilt.

Hammer spoke to the small audience of family and friends. "I'm honored to be here with you other guys," he said.

Hammer has volunteered as a guardian on honor flights, and he said the emotions are overwhelming for veterans when strangers thank them for their service.

"My safety fluctuated day to day out in the field," he said. "It was something I expected. But for my bride of eight weeks, and the people who stayed behind,



Maddie Cutler / Daily Sun

Sheila Robbins, with the Khaki Quilters, stands with the six veterans who were honored with Quilts of Valor on Jan. 15.

they had it tougher than I ever did. Because they don't know what's happening to you."

Dopp agreed with him, saying when he was active duty, there were hours of boredom

broken up by seconds of terror.

The quilts are handmade for each veteran to thank them for these sacrifices, with no two looking alike.

Each layer of the quilt holds meaning, too. Sheila Robbins, a member of the Khaki Quilters, explained the meaning of the quilts.

"The colorful patchwork on top represents the diversity of our country and communities," the Village of Fernandina resident said. "The center batting keeps the wearer warm and represents comfort and healing."

The backing stands for the strength of the recipient and the support of their families, Robbins said.

"Each stitch that holds the

quilt together represents the gratitude of its creator," she said. "And sometimes their tears."

Goolby's quilt was slightly different than the others. His was called a memory quilt, with different images representing

his service sewn into the quilt.

The memory quilt was to honor the 50th anniversary of his military unit's deployment.

After the veterans received their quilts, attendees shook their hands and thanked them for their service.