

WWII veterans saluted

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Heritage Alliance recently hosted a special tribute to WWII veterans at Regions Bank as part of the "I'll Be Home for Christmas: The 1940s Remembered" celebration downtown on Dec. 12.

Though the number of local WWII veterans is unfortunately dwindling due to advanced age, nine men attended the presentation, including Aaron White, B. Ralph Rogers, Cecil Parson, Will Davis, James Totherow, Harold Mayfield, Alton Patrick, John Bouldin and Magness Jordan.

A number of well-known local volunteers participated in the program to show their respect for our veterans. Heritage Alliance president Jimmy Haley began the program with a welcome, followed by an opening prayer from Bill Zechman. The national anthem was performed by The Barbersharpes and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jared King.

Ruby Northcutt made the introduction which was followed by the program message from Col. Thomas B. Vaughn. The Barbersharpes then returned with a musical tribute. Videographer Mark Gribble then did video interviews with the veterans and Bruce Atnip took a group photo.

After the program a special reception was hosted by Scarlett Griffith and Treva Sparkman.

Vaughn included some of his sentiments about what Tom Brokaw aptly calls "The Greatest Generation" in a subsequent "My Turn" column in the *Southern Standard*.

"Members of 'The Greatest Generation' grew up during the Great Depression," Vaughn wrote.

"Some 16 million of them went on to service and sacrifice in World War II. Many of them fought, bled and died on far-flung battlefields in Europe and the Pacific. Over 400,000 were killed in action, or died of their wounds. Many thousands more were wounded, but survived.

"Mere numbers, however high, can never truly express the full measure of service and sacrifice made by those Americans who fought in World War II. Each of these numbers represents a real person, with real hopes and dreams. That person left behind a real family and real friends and loved ones, to go wherever our country called, with no assurance of ever seeing home again."

Vaughn says he believes it's important to recognize these men while we still can, since estimates say that around 5 million are still alive today, but those numbers are rapidly diminishing.

"I think nationally we are losing about 1,000 of them per day," Vaughn said.

Copies of the group photo were sent to each veteran along with a letter of appreciation from Haley, which read, in part:



Nine of Warren County's remaining World War II veterans attended a special presentation recognizing their service during the "I'll Be Home for Christmas" celebration in December. Pictured are, from left,

Aaron White, B. Ralph Rogers, Cecil Parson, Will Davis, James Totherow, Harold Mayfield, Alton Patrick, John Bouldin and Magness Jordan.

Photo provided

"Thank you so much for participating in our tribute to WWII veterans held on Dec. 12. We hope that you enjoyed the ceremony and that you accept this photo as part of our gratitude to the 'Greatest Generation.' It was our honor to recognize your military service and personal commitment to saving the world from tyranny. We can never say 'thank you' too many times."

Copies of the individual interview and program tapes will also be distributed to the veterans to commemorate their involvement in the celebration.

WWII veteran Magness Jordan attended the event and expressed his appreciation.

"They did a beautiful job with the recognition and what they did for us," Jordan said, "with the decorations and all that. I speak, I know, for the rest of the veterans. They appreciated it very much, at least I did, and I think they went to a lot of effort to do that."

Jordan says, like himself, most of the men are in their

80s and 90s now and there aren't many left.

"I really don't know how many there are, but they're getting kind of few and far between now," Jordan said. "So I appreciate it very, very much that they did recognize the WWII veterans."

Haley also informed veterans that as part of McMinnville's Bicentennial Celebration, Heritage Alliance is planning a huge USO Tour Show at Warren County Memorial Airport on June 26, where veterans and troops from all wars will be recognized. He then issued a personal invitation for the WWII veterans to attend.

Haley said Heritage Alliance is thankful for the support from local businesses which sponsored the event.

"We would like to thank Regions Bank, River Park Hospital and offer a special thanks to the staff of the Senior Center for their assistance and support," said Haley.

'The Cursed'

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"I like the fact it's debuting on Syfy because it will reach a huge audience in a very short time," said Bender. "And the DVD sales should start before long. I imagine Syfy will have plenty of showings because they paid a nice dollar for it."

Thornton says Syfy has plans to show "The Cursed" 35 times. He said the DVD should be released in six months.

The movie begins with the words, "Warren County, Tennessee - present day" on the screen. It then shows Thornton driving a pickup into town as the character Denny White. He stays with a friend who is played by James Marshall and says he wants to concentrate on researching his book while he's here.

It's not long before Denny finds his way to Magness Library where he meets an attractive librarian named Sarah Belmont played by Francesca Cecil. The two have an immediate chemistry and begin dating.

But their romance is interrupted by a series of murders that paralyze the town. Since the murders coincide with Denny's arrival, he is a suspect and is even arrested at one point.

However, it is soon discovered the murders are not the act of a man - but a monster which is terrorizing the community. It's not until Denny joins forces with Sheriff Lloyd Muldoon, played by Mandylor, that they are able to destroy the creature.

Or are they? The movie features an ending that leaves you guessing and perhaps even leaves the door open for a sequel. Thornton said that's a possibility, but not likely.

"We're looking at a couple of other film opportunities that we can shoot in Warren County," said Thornton.

In addition to providing some excitement during filming, Thornton says shooting "The Cursed" in Warren County injected around \$300,000 into the local economy.

Bender says he expects to return here in May to film "Into the Darkness" with Paul and Jade Moser.

"We're going to utilize some of the big caves you have in your area," said Bender. "The movie is about a group of teens who get together for a reunion. They decide to go caving, but then they get lost and then scary stuff starts to happen."