

We Salute Their Bravery



The View
from the
C.H.U.

By The Residents, For the Residents



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★ REMEMBERING ★

THOSE WHO SERVED

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Veterans Day Celebration

On Thursday November 8th, 2018 the 6th Annual Veteran's Recognition Program was held at Allendale Correctional Institution. The event's purpose was to celebrate the military men and women who have served and protected the U.S. These service members come from all walks of life: they are parents, sons, daughters, grandparents, friends, neighbors, co-workers, volunteers, and even those who are incarcerated.

Honorable guests Lt. Colonel Adrian Priester, SC National Guard and Major Dwight Wessinger, Chaplain for the Joint Services Department, inspired everyone at this event, while paying tribute to all American veterans—living or dead. They encouraged those in attendance to never forget, or take our brothers and sisters for granted.

Every speaker at the event echoed the words of President Woodrow Wilson, "To us in America, the reflection of Armistice (Veterans) Day will be filled



MAJOR DWIGHT WESSINGER CHAPLAIN FOR THE JOINT SERVICE DEPARTMENT

with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the countries service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nation..." Veterans Day originated as Armistice Day on November 11th, 1918 when major hostilities with the Central Powers of World War I were formally ended at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

Warden McKendley Newton drove the point home by asking, "How many of you believe in heroes? Not comic book or movie heroes, but true heroes?" His voice rose as passion burned in his eyes. Gesturing toward the room full of veterans he said, "These service mem-



Lt. Colonel Adrian Priester

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bers are the TRUE heroes!" He then expounded upon the importance of the day and the symbolism of the colors of the flag of the United States of America: white for purity and innocence, red hardiness and valor, and blue vigilance, perseverance, and justice.

Major Dwight Wessinger ended the event with a moving prayer. "Help us to be mindful of the sacrifices made by our family and friends so that we may never take for granted the things they do for us. Thank you for these passionately unselfish servants who were involved in making sure that

there is freedom!" Regardless of how you may view your environment and your place in it. This Veterans Day, and every day forward, make sure you let your veterans know what their sacrifice means to you. Happy Veterans Day!

By Patrick M.



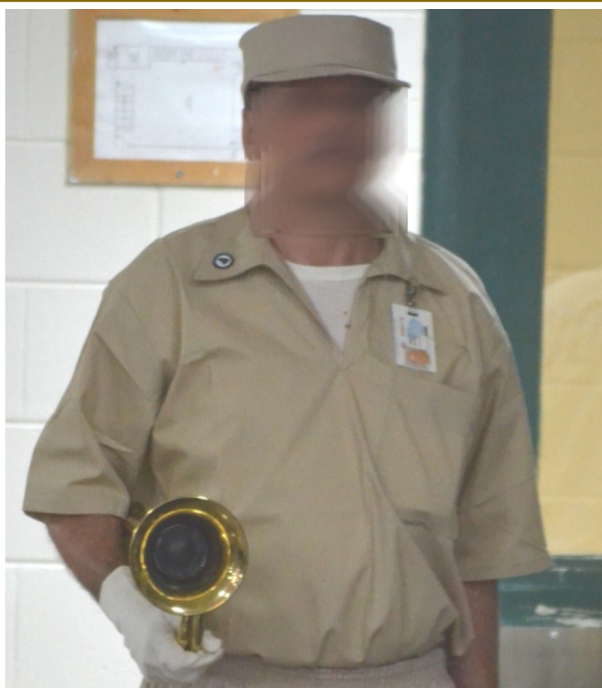
Mark B. -- A.C.I Color Guard Sergeant-at-Arms

It was a salute to service, as A.C.I. celebrated Veterans Day, paying homage and showing appreciation for the undying dedication, bravery, and selflessness of its veterans and active military. Residents practiced endlessly, through many difficulties, defeating Murphy's Law, to perfect a ceremony that will be remembered as outstanding.

I was allowed a few words with one of our very own residents, someone who exemplifies strength, courage, valor, sacrifice and diligence—Mr. Mark B.. Thirty years after serving in the Marine Corps, our 55 year old ACI Color Guard Sgt. of Arms, with energy pervading his gestures and eyes, shared his experiences and explained what Veterans Day means to him.

Our veteran began by giving me an understanding of the Color Guard, which honors veterans and displays respect for military service and fallen soldiers. With a stern posture he shared what P.O.W.'s, the military, and the American flag mean to him—service to one nation under God, and an illustration of his belief in equality, love, sacrifice, and individual service.

His experience with Marine Aircraft Group 29 Helicopter Squadron as a medic in a Sea Air and Rescue unit have become his fondest memories. He not only remembers the gun smoke as he quali-



fied as an expert with a Colt 45 and an M-16 - A1 Service Rifle, it also led to a love story that he will never forget.

He has a code to live by, which includes respect, honor, protection, and the ability to perform under intense pressure. Everything we experience in life affects us in one way or another. Mr. Mark B.'s military experience gave him friends and an eternal band of brothers. "The marines are the largest family in the world."

We salute our very own Sgt. of Arms, Mark B., and many other vets for their dedication and the price they paid to be here. Ask yourself—what price have you paid, or what price are you willing to pay to be here? It all begins in sacrifice. Semper Fi!

~John Moore Jr.



Robert H.'s Veteran Speech

This is a speech given by Robert H. to commemorate his military service. It was delivered during the Veterans Day celebration at ACL.

First, I would like to say, welcome to all of our guests. Thank you for choosing to spend your Veterans Day here with us at Allendale. I also want to thank all of the administration for the work they did in ensuring we could come together to honor our fallen brothers and sisters, as well as to celebrate the privilege of being a veteran.

When I discover that the person I am talking to is a vet, one of the first questions I ask him is, "What's your recruiter story?" If he is hard-pressed to share something that should be produced by the team at National Lampoon's then I immediately question his integrity. That said, allow me to share my recruiter story.

So, there I am in the recruiter's office and he is rattling off, line by line, a list of jobs I qualify for—93% of which I can't even begin to guess what they are. My father was an Apache pilot during Desert Storm and his voice is on repeat in the background of my mind. "Son, don't pick a MOS (Military Occupation Specialty) that has no application outside the Army." Before the recruiter can finish reading the list, I interrupt and ask what computer jobs I qualify for. He reads off eight or so specialties, all of which sound like Greek, then turns the computer screen around and tells me to read the job descriptions while he uses the "latrine." By the time he gets back I've made my decision—25N—whatever that is. It was just confusing enough to convince me that it had to be important. I had all but thrown a dart in the dark!

The recruiter says, "Ok, that will require a security clearance which you will be screened for at Military Entrance Pro-



Robert H.

cessing Station or MEPS, and it also qualifies you for Airborne School. Want to see some videos?" Very few things are better suited to blind a young man's rational thinking than a lethal combination of rock music and danger. Click, he presses play—hard rock music comes booming out of the speakers. The screen comes alive, C-5s are dropping tanks, Humvees, and artillery pieces. C-17s are flying in formation, dropping endless lines of paratroopers. There are night vision shots with hundreds of tracers darting across the sky. There are small unit tactics and guys riding four-wheelers. My eyes are as big as dinner plates! With my heart beating the walls of my chest cavity down, I turn to my recruiter and say, "OH YEAH BABY! SIGN ME UP!"

Fast forward, eight to ten months later I am sitting in a pack shed at Fort Benning with quarter inch thick nylon webbing wrapped between my legs, ratcheted down with about thirty pounds of torque, crushing everything that makes me a man. As the minutes turn into hours, this torture device called a parachute harness gives me my first understanding of why so many people curse their recruiters!

I was privileged to serve with the kind of men and women that make America the greatest country in the world! I was privileged to spend over six years serving with the 4th Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division. I was honored to receive world-class training that separates me from non-veterans. From all this I have learned a great truth. To be able to serve in the United States military is a privilege. There are many opportunities in life that only become available to us if we make the right choices leading up to that opportunity.

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Don't be discouraged though, because often there is more than one road that leads to that self-same opportunity. Have a vision, set goals, and make the necessary sacrifices to bring that dream into reality.

I dream of the chance to once again serve in the greatest military in the world. If not, I dream of graduating from the University of Michigan with a combined M.D., PhD. in neurology and biophysics. Greatness is everywhere, so never limit yourself to a single prospect. The Army instilled in me a certain tenacity that says, "I will never accept defeat, and I will never quit!" It is with this warrior mindset that I encourage each of us

to continue moving forward, in pursuit of our American dreams.

~ Robert H.



Lt. Colonel Adrian Priester



The Lt. Colonel giving Words of Wisdom in his Key Note Speech.

It was a great pleasure to interview the keynote speaker of ACI's Veterans Day Celebration, Lt. Colonel Adrian Priester, SC National Guard. I was intrigued by his charismatic personality and inviting smile as he shared his life experience in military service. His 30-year Army career was sparked by the prompting of his father, also an Army man. His career began as a military policeman. After graduating from officer's school he turned to Aviation, where he discovered his calling.

After initial testing deemed that he was suited to the high-stress environment of attack flying, he found himself in the cockpits of Apache helicopters. Yet, his enormous frame wouldn't allow him to squeeze into the tight confines day after day. This led him to Blackhawk helicopters, where a special seat was installed to accommodate him. As he spoke it was obvious that he was born to fly, his hands gripping an imaginary joystick, as though the chopper and his body were now one.

"The helicopter's body should never leave the ground." He explained, commenting on the improbable likelihood of thousands of pounds of metal lifting off in controlled flight. Navy veteran Gwyneth Saunders, a freelance reporter for *The Bluffton Sun* weighed in, "A helicopter beats the air into submission!"

His 480 combat hours in the cockpit of Blackhawks put him in contact with a wide variety of service members, yet his greatest esteem is for the Special-Ops forces. "My respect for Special-Ops, and how they bring all of the complex elements of a mission into a cohesive whole is truly astounding," he said, wide-eyed in wonder as his mind traveled to top secret missions of his past. Some of those missions took place during his 18 month tour of Iraq. He was exposed to an entirely different culture as he was stationed in such hotspots as Irr, Babylon, and Tikrit. It was during this time that he faced the most disturbing day of his military career. His face clouded as he re-

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Resident Veteran Program Leader Treffle B. presenting a painting created by Resident Ken N..

counted that memorable day. “Victims—men, women, and children—were exhumed from mass graves as the men charged with war crimes stood there watching in shackles.”

Once his tour was over he returned to South Carolina, where he was born and raised, to serve as Commander of the National Guard 351 Aviation Support Battalion. His primary duty as Commander is to provide emergency relief support, as he did this year as Hurricane Michael battered our coasts. He spoke of how flooding and water damage could have been far worse if the state had endured a direct hit. He displayed precise knowledge of the state’s topography, which allows him to prepare for emergencies and deploy soldiers and resources to the areas within the highest threat level.

His service to our country has produced an unselfish and passionate servant. His experience as a soldier produced a flexible man whose greatest challenge is adapting to changes in leadership. As inmates we can relate to this skill as we deal with ever-changing staff and administrators within SCDC. He advised, “You have to pick your battles. You won’t win every battle, and you’re not supposed to. I’ve learned far more from my losses than my wins.”

Surprisingly, this wasn’t his first visit to ACI; he played basketball here several times with his church ten years ago. The environment was far different back then, before the introduction of the Character-Based program. He enjoyed interacting with inmates and always sought to share hope and inspiration during his visits. When then Associate Warden Newton informed him of the Veterans Day Celebration that honors the role ACI inmates played in our country’s fight for freedom, he jumped at the chance to serve as the keynote speaker. He was honored to share his experience with fellow veterans and “learn of their commonalities and differences. Through this education

comes our growth.”

It was obvious that his passion hasn’t waned in his many years of service. Following the celebration he encouraged veterans to apply for waivers upon release that would allow them to serve again despite felonies on their record. He was clearly solution-oriented as he focused not on their past mistakes, but instead on the vast opportunities available in their future.

By the time our interview drew to an end I had discovered a newfound respect for Lt. Colonel Priester and for the fellow veterans that shared lunch with us.

Their smiles and enthusiasm for the service they provided to maintain our country’s freedom was emphasized by the words he shared in closing. “I am never alone, no matter where I go. The relationships and camaraderie that I share with fellow vets is the gift that keeps on giving.”

On this day, as we celebrated the sacrifices of service members who served for months, years, or even eternity, there was no separation between the incarcerated and civilian service members. Veterans share a common bond that will not be bound by bars or fences. This spirit was personified by Lt. Colonel Adrian Priester, and the VFTC staff thanks him for all that he shared.

~Nathan R.



James H. - A.C.I Drill Team Leader

When I witnessed the Refocus and YOA drill teams marching on the yard, in perfect step, like a well-oiled machine, I immediately wanted to know the creative mind behind their precise drilling. I had to look no further than their stoic and dignified Drill Sargent, James H..

In the few interactions that I have had with Mr. H., I witnessed a man of composure, who seemed to exude discipline and an air of leadership with every measured step. Following the impressive performance that he led at the ACI Veterans Day Celebration, I was able to peel back the layers and discover what guides him in his mission here at ACI.

His foray into drill leadership began at Kershaw CI, before he was accepted into the Character Program here at Allendale. Upon Mr. H.'s arrival here, Kershaw's Warden Ford met with then Associate Warden Newton and Major Morris and recommended that they utilize him in whatever way they could. The result is a sixty-man Refocus drill team that drills for an hour a day, six days a week, and a thirty-man YOA drill team that drills twice a week. His crowning achievement will be on December 7th, when the YOA men are treated to a family day where they will display their drilling acumen. The pride on his face when he spoke of their development was inspirational. "This experience has helped me as a man. Guiding these young guys is what I always needed." The pain at speaking these words was obvious yet he soldiered on. "I left my son at a young age. Another man had to raise my child. This is my chance at redemption."

The transition that Mr. H. is making along with these young men is evident. "God has a way of putting these things in perspective. By working with Youthful Offenders (YOAs) and helping to eliminate their negative attitudes I help to prepare them, and myself as well, for society." At this time there is no recognition by



the parole board for the service that he is providing, nevertheless there is hope that this oversight will soon be corrected. As Mr. H. goes up for parole for the third time one wishes that the parole board could see the monumental role that he is playing in the lives of these Youthful Offenders, and straight time inmates, who have wandered from the straight and narrow path.

He shared that there was a time when he considered quitting his job as Mentor in Barnwell Unit. Yet when some of the most troubled YOAs heard of his wavering, they cornered him off and demanded answers. "They told me that people had been leaving them their entire lives. I found that I didn't want to be another in a long line of disappointments for them. That moment renewed my passion for leadership."

His belief is that the training these men receive as they perform drills will be a vital asset when they transition back into society. "They have a guy yelling at them, commanding them to alter their physical steps. Hopefully this will translate to the professional world when they receive constructive criticism and leadership from a boss."

Six days a week you will see Mr. H.'s continuing work to instill discipline and leadership. His passion for these men and the changes he hopes to compel in their lives is on display for all residents to see. When you pass him on the yard give him a wave to show your appreciation, or perhaps more appropriately, a salute.

~ Nathan R.





The View from the CHU would like to thank all of our Veterans for their service and dedication to our country. We would also like to thank the following Residents for making Allendale’s Veterans Day Celebration possible:

- Treffe B.
- Richard G.
- Michael S.
- Matthew W.
- Nathaniel C.
- Richard L.
- Kenneth B.
- Sean “Truck” G.
- Eric J.

Thank you guys for putting it all together.

ALLENDALE VETERANS PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

Bringing incarcerated veterans together to recognize them for their service to our country, educate them on possible VA benefits, and introduce them to organizations that may provide them with assistance, better ensuring their success upon release.

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