



ABOVE: Col. Hank Andrews, 377th Air Base Wing commander, delivers his remarks at a ceremony honoring veterans at the Baloon Fiesta Park Oct. 3.

BELOW: Master Sgt. Michael Bender with the Wings of Blue parachute team lands at the park.



Photo by Jim Teet

A salute to veterans

Robert E. O'Malley, Marine, earned MOH in WWII
Raymond G. Murphy, Marine, earned MOH in Korea

BY CLOVER HATCHER
Nucleus photojournalist

Sunday, there was a Salute to Veterans at the Balloon Fiesta Park. Veterans were escorted by Marine Junior ROTC students from Rio Rancho High School to balloon pilots who were eager to take them in the air as a way of thanking them for their service. The Wings of Blue parachute team from the Air Force Academy landed on the field, and TEAM KIRTLAND members carried their state flags on stage. Col. Hank Andrews, 377th Air Base Wing commander, thanked veterans for their service and the community for their support.

Lawrence Cunningham, father of pararescueman Jason who died in Afghanistan, spoke about the sacrifices that are made for freedom.

The event also included civil war era music provided by the New Mexico Fife and Drum Corps, dressed in Civil War costumes, and the 44th Army Band Saxophone Quartet. Congresswoman Heather Wilson introduced Susan Morrisette from Winslow, Maine who exhibited the Heart of America Quilt. Two Medal of Honor recipients, former Marines Robert E. O'Malley and Raymond G. Murphy earned their medals in WWII and Korea, respectively. They received photo essay books signed by Tony Hillerman.

Photo by Dennis Carlson

Background by Clover Hatcher



Photo by Damian Bohannon

ABOVE: The New Mexico Drum and Fife Corps from Albuquerque plays the national anthem.

ABOVE RIGHT: Annette Atencio displays a new addition of the Heart of America Quilt. Ms. Atencio coordinates Operation Pencil Box, which donates school supplies to students at schools near Tikrit, Iraq. Her brother, Army Sgt. Gabe Medina, was deployed to Iraq with the 835th Corps Support Battalion, and returned in July.

LEFT: A salute to veterans.

RIGHT: The Veteran's Honor Guard salutes the flag.



Photo by Damian Bohannon



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