

Bridge Street event salutes Medal of Honor recipients

By PAMELA RAMEY

Staff writer

pamela.ramey@htimes.com

Medal of Honor recipients received a warm welcome Aug. 28 at Bridge Street Town Center — both from the audience and from Mother Nature.

As temperatures soared into the upper 90s, and the heat index topped 100 degrees, a crowd of approximately 1,000 people gathered at the center's courtyard to recognize 23 former Soldiers for their outstanding service to this country. Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger, known for his heroic landing of US Airways Flight 1549 in the Hudson River in January 2009, was one of the honorees in attendance.

Medal recipients and their families assembled at the Westin before proceeding to the courtyard, where they were met with cheers, flags, signs, applause and patriotic music provided by the Huntsville High School Concert Band and Color Guard. A military flyover and missing man salute honoring posthumously awarded and deceased recipients was included in the ceremony.

After the event, the honorees were escorted by police to the Davidson Center for a ceremonial black-tie dinner. Spectators along the route waved flags and saluted the heroes as they passed by.

The Medal of Honor is the highest award that can be bestowed on military personnel. It is awarded for valor in action "above and beyond the call of duty" against an enemy force. Due to the nature of its criteria, it is often awarded posthumously.

The public event and the dinner were sponsored by the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation. The Congressional Medal of Honor

Foundation was founded by the

Congressional Medal of Honor Society, which consists exclusively of the living Medal of Honor recipients. According to its website, the foundation is a non-profit organization that educates and raises awareness in the American public about the Medal of Honor and what it represents by promoting the values of courage, sacrifice, selfless service and patriotism through outreach, education and example.

This year's recipients who attended the gala included Roger Donlon, Don Ballard, Peter Lemon, Thomas Norris, Hershel Williams, Harold Fritz, Sammy Davis, Ronald Rosser, Jon Cavaiani, Joe Jackson, Richard Pittman, James Taylor, Richard Simanek, Patrick Brady, James Fleming, Robert Modrzejewski, George Day, Robert Patterson, James Livingston, Jack Jacobs, Leo Thorsness, James Sprayberry and Charles Coolidge.



Photo by Pamela Ramey

REMEMBRANCE— The niece of Medal of Honor deceased recipient Cecil Bolton participates in the procession.

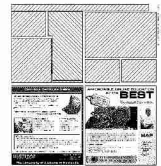




Photo by Pamela Ramey

THANK YOU—Medal of Honor recipients wave to the crowd Aug. 28 at Bridge Street Town Center.