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Liberty University

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Liberty honors soldiers, vets on Military Appreciation Day

November 07, 2007 | Mitzi Bible

Military uniforms could be seen across campus on Wednesday as Liberty students, faculty and guests who have served or are currently serving in the military dressed the part.

The LU community got a chance to pay their respects at morning convocation as LU Chancellor Jerry Falwell Jr. recognized past and present military personnel and those with family members in the military.

“Our goal is to raise the awareness of and appreciation for all those who have served in the armed forces,” he said.

Other events on campus included recruiters, representatives from the D-Day Memorial in Bedford, a climbing wall in the DeMoss parking lot sponsored by the Virginia Army National Guard and a pull-up challenge by the Marines in DeMoss Hall. A panel discussion was held in the afternoon, and members of the military fielded questions about the war in Iraq and the issues facing Christian servicemen. An informational meeting and luncheon for those interested in becoming military chaplains is planned for noon to 1:30 p.m. Thursday in Campus North.

Also, a recently formed campus group, Students Behind Our Soldiers, is offering students, faculty and staff a chance to write letters to troops and to patients in veterans hospitals and to donate items for care packages to be sent to troops overseas. Senior Amanda Forth, the group’s president and founder, said there are 75 residential LU students who have fought in Iraq.

“The amount of students here that have actually been over there is crazy,” she said. “There are a lot of students here who have served our country.”

Also recognized at convocation was Charles “Buster” Shaeff, who was featured in a video presentation of the Operation Overlord D-Day invasion shown at the opening of the service. Shaeff received a standing ovation.

The chancellor also presented a Special Military Appreciation Award to Board of Trustees member Dr. David Rhodenhizer in recognition of his commitment and service to LU and the nation’s military. The Sounds of Liberty also performed a patriotic song with a multi-media presentation.

The speaker was evangelist Tim Lee, another member of the Board of Trustees. Lee was injured in the Vietnam War in 1971 when he stepped on a land mine. He lost both his legs.

Lee talked about the state of America today and the need to support the U.S. military.

“I’ve never seen such division as we’re seeing today, such hatred ... We’ve lost the wall of courage and the fortitude to fight and to win a war. Nobody likes war — I know something about the horrors of war — but I want to tell you today, as I’ve said literally thousands of times across this great nation, that there are some things worth living for, there are some things worth fighting for, and there are some things worth dying for. And America is worth dying for.”

He shared his testimony, how he was saved as a child but ran away from his Christian roots as a teenager.

“I ran and I ran and I ran, until March 8, 1971, when the running was over,” he said.

He shared the details of that day in Vietnam when his life literally blew up in front of him, how he wasn’t expected to live and the 13 major operations he underwent.

Now God has used him for 29 years to preach the word across the country. Because of his powerful testimony, for example, the man who was on the Medivac helicopter crew that day in Vietnam ended up giving his heart to Jesus.

He said he can truly say the past 36-plus years have been the “happiest years of my life. ... You say, ‘But Tim you’re in a wheelchair and your legs are gone.’ I’m in a ‘wheel’ chair,” he said, “but now today I’m in the ‘will’ of God and that makes all the difference in the world.”

For more information on campus projects to support the troops, contact senior Amanda Forth, president and founder of Students Behind Our Soldiers, at ajforth@liberty.edu. For more on Tim Lee’s ministry visit www.timlee.org.