

'Proven combat commander'

Quilt of Valor presented to Col. Bill Connor

W. THOMAS SMITH JR.
Special to The T&D

COLUMBIA – Col. Bill Connor of Orangeburg was presented a hand-made quilt from the Quilts of Valor Foundation in recognition of his nearly three decades of distinguished military service.

The presentation was made during ceremonies on June 19 at First Baptist Church in Columbia.

An Orangeburg attorney and a U.S. Army Airborne-Ranger infantry officer, Connor is a former Ranger company commander who, among other posts, later served as the senior U.S. military adviser in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He currently serves as the emergency preparedness liaison officer for S.C. As such, he is the ranking representative of Army North for the Palmetto State.

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The Citadel and the University of South Carolina School of Law, and he is a distinguished honor graduate of the Army War College. In January 2019, he was elected to serve as chairman of the National Security Task Force for the gubernatorially established S.C. Floodwater Commission.

"His recognition by the

national Quilts of Valor Foundation is more than well-deserved," says retired Marine Corps Col. Steven B. Vitali, a decorated veteran of both the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and also a Quilt of Valor recipient. "Though there are lots of guys with distinguished military careers spanning two or more decades in peace and in war, the truly proven combat commanders like Bill are few and far between."

Anne Mixon, the South Carolina state coordinator for Quilts of Valor, agrees.

"Col. Connor and others like him are why we do what we do," Mixon says. "A thank you seems not enough. A beautiful quilt is a better expression of our gratitude."

Quilts of Valor was founded by Catherine Roberts during the first year of the Iraq War when her son was deployed to that country. Established as "Quilts for Soldiers," Roberts changed the name to a more-inclusive brand honoring veterans from all U.S. armed forces.

Quilts of Valor's quilting

standards are uncompromising.

"I knew a 'quilt of valor' had to be a quality-made quilt, not a 'charity quilt,'" says Roberts according to the Quilts of Valor website. "A Quilt of Valor had to be quilted, not tied, which meant hand or machine quilting. Quilts of Valor would be awarded, not just passed out like magazines or videos. A Quilt of Valor would say unequivocally, 'Thank you for your service, sacrifice, and valor.'"

Quilts of Valor's national headquarters is located in Winterset, Iowa. The organization's Palmetto State headquarters is in St. Matthews.

The presentation for Connor was made in the historic Boyce Chapel (the old sanctuary of First Baptist Church in Columbia) where the first secession convention was held Dec. 17, 1860, before being adjourned and reconvened in Charleston that same month.

For more information, visit <https://www.govf.org/>.

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