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FLAGS: tears mark solemn ceremony

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the start of the summer season with pools open, people picnicking and attending sports events, there was a crowd at Patriots Park to hear the challenge of retired war correspondent Joe Galloway to "cherish the gift of life" and Mayor Rick Murphrey to declare"we are the caretakers of what they fought for."

This year marked the 50th anniversary of the start of the Vietnam War and the city used the occasion to honor those veterans. There wasn't a dry eye in the crowd when dozens of Vietnam veterans from the area were called to stand in front of the memorials as the mayor and Galloway placed a red, white and blue wreath in front of the memorial and Bugler Paul Fulton played taps as soldiers saluted.

"We wanted to give them the welcome home they deserved,' 'said both the mayor and Main Street Director Jan Harris

Galloway didn't talk about his experiences Monday. Instead he shared a story he read recently about an African American man from Dallas and a white man from Charlotte. The two served in the same platoon during the war and even with racial tension ended up becoming friends.

"There are no atheists in foxholes, we all cover each others backs and we all bleed red," he said, adding, "each death in the war is huge and personal."

He said that "every day is a day to thank those veterans who died for their sacrifices made that we survived. You live every day with those sacrifices," said Galloway, a decorated journalist and author who covered and photographed wars for 43 years and served on combat duty in Vietnam in 2005-2006. As American Legion Post 155 Commander Curtis Thrift read the final roll call, the names of the war dead on four memorial plaques, local veterans placed white roses at the four monuments to World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

Galloway stood with the local survivors of the Vietnam war as Bugler Paul Fulton played "Taps" and the Kings Mountain Police Department Honor Guard retired the colors.

"Kings Mountain has always answered the call to defend and secure our freedom at all cost," said the mayor in his welcome. "Today we honor that same spirit and hope that led to the founding of this great nation. They fought for freedom, secured and defended with honor, loyalty and personal courage. Freedom does not come without a price, some have given the ultimate sacrifice.'

The mayor added,"The



A group of Vietnam veterans from Kings Mountain, above, are pictured in front of the four memorials to Kings Mountain area men who died in World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the start of the Vietnam War and the city in a "welcome home" ceremony honored them at Memorial Day services.

Kings Mountain men we honor today put on their country's uniform and placed service to their country above all, we are a grateful community."

Vietnam veteran Jim Medlin presented the impressive "Toast to the Red, White and Blue," emphasizing the blood shed by brave heroes, and KMPD Chief Melvin Proctor prayed the invocation. " Margaret Woodard, her daughter Molora and Molora's daughter Sophia Kellstrom sang "The Na-tional Anthem." Piper Jane Gulden played "Amazing Grace" and a prelude and postlude of patriotic numbers. Assistant Fire Chief Jamie Black led the Pledge of Allegiance.



Vietnam veterans Abraham Ruff, left, and Richard Bolin salute the soldiers from Kings Mountain who died in the Vietnam War after placing white roses at the Vietnam War Vet-**Photos by DAVE BLANTON** erans Memorial at Patriots Park Monday morning.

FAMED: war correspondent a popular speaker

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special consultant to the Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Commemoration project run by the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He is also permanent consultant to Ken Burns' Florentine Films project to make a documentary history of the Vietnam War for broadcast in 2016 on PBS.

Vietnam and also covered the 1971 India-Pakistan War and a half a dozen other combat operations.

The highly touted 2002 war movie "We Were Soldiers" starring Mel Gibson was based off the book "We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young" co-written by Galloway and a Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Hal Moore.

During the course of 15 working as a consultant on ing for the Knight-Ridder

film," said Galloway, who attended Kings Mountain's service with his wife Dr. Gracie Liem Lim Suan Tzu, a nurse practitioner. "There's so many angles that have to be shot from and so many retakes -- a very laborious process."

Galloway spent a career covering the war zones America sent its young men Galloway talked about and women to, mostly workring to the overall instability of the region.

Galloway, who moved to nearby Concord about three years, is in high demand as a public speaker who can talk about the war experience of America's fighting troops better than most.

"I sometimes think I work harder in retirement than I did before I retired," he half-joked in an interview before his talk Monday at

Baccalaureate

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the singing of "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee." Tico Crocker will lead the Litany and Symphonic Chorale Seniors will sing "Sing Me to Heaven." Amontae Perkins, Collin Foster and Sarah Scism will read scripture passages and the congregation will join in singing "Be Thou My Vi-

sion" and "Step by Step" after the sermon. Shawn Adams will give the benedictional prayer.

"Pomp and Circumstance" will be played by Cathy Holland to usher the seniors into and from the auditorium. Sarah E. Fulton is directing the music for the service.

years of foreign postings - including assignments in Japan, Indonesia, India, Singapore and thee years as UPI bureau chief in Moscow in the former Soviet Union -Galloway served four tours as a war correspondent in

the film.

"It was an interesting experience and I enjoyed having a hand in it, working as a consultant for the film. But a lot of people don't realize that it takes a lot of time (on set) to get three minutes of newspaper chain.

He retired in 2006 from covering wars full time after several stints reporting on the second Iraq war.

"Out of all the wars I've covered that was the scariest one," Galloway said, referPatriots Park.

"Actually, it keeps me young," said Galloway, who's 73 and about to embark on a busy summer helping to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the start of the Vietnam War.

Standing against trafficking

Taking a stand against June 12 from 6-9 p.m. and human trafficking, an abolitionist seminar will be hosted by East Gold Wesleyan Church, 701 E. Gold St., with the presentation on

community training on June 13 from 9-12 noon. Purchase of a training/resource manual is optional. The training program is free.

