

## Convention Highlights

Sunday, July 19, 2015

Memorial Service

### **Remembering Five Americans Who Died Serving Their Country**

The four Marines and one sailor murdered in the July 16 terrorist attack in Chattanooga, Tenn., at the Navy Operational Support Center were paid tribute during VFW's Memorial Service today. Both VFW National Chaplain Charlene Cobb and Judge Michael E. Dunlavey, a retired Army major general who presented the memorial address, mentioned the five in their remarks. A Vietnam veteran, Dunlavey said the "war on terror has been brought to our doorstep."

Cobb named all five along with their ranks and hometowns: Marines Gunnery Sgt. Thomas Sullivan, Staff Sgt. David Wyatt, Sgt. Carson Holmquist, Lance Cpl. Squire "Skip" Wells and Navy Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Randall Smith. Among them, they left behind three widows and six children.

Sullivan, a two-time Purple Heart recipient, deployed twice to Iraq. A Springfield, Mass., native, Sullivan, 40, was attempting to save one of his wounded colleagues when he was fatally shot.

Wyatt, 35, of Russellville, Ark., served two tours in Iraq (2007-2008) and one in Afghanistan (2010-11). An Eagle Scout, Wyatt was married with two children.

Holmquist, 25, of Grantsburg, Wis., logged two tours (2013-2014) in Afghanistan. He also was married and had one son.

Wells, 21, of Marietta, Ga., enlisted in 2014 but had not yet deployed overseas.

Smith, 26, of Paulding, Ohio, was married with three young daughters. He had not served overseas.

All five servicemen who sacrificed their lives in Tennessee exemplified Dunlavey's theme of "duty, honor and country." And the words he quoted from Gary Sinise—"A man doesn't die unless he is forgotten"—applied perfectly to them today. Three of the five had served multiple times in war zones, underscoring the sacrifice that Dunlavey, a VFW life member of Post 4789 in North East, Pa., emphasized in his tribute to the fallen.

Past VFW national commanders-in-chief Arthur J. Fellwock (1980-82) and Norman G. Staab (1986-87), who both died in the past year, were specifically remembered in the service.

Rev. Thomas M. Hall II, of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, delivered the invocation. Hall, a 30-year Air Force vet, noted that he first attended a VFW conference in 1969 as a state VOD winner.

**-The End-**