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# LOCAL



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Maj. Gen. Stephen Danner, state adjutant general, presents Army veteran Tom Umstadd a Silver Star certificate and banner during a brief ceremony in Gov. Jay Nixon's Capitol office Monday morning. Umstadd, was an Army soldier in Vietnam and was one of five area veterans who received the Silver Star certificate and banner as a result of incurred wounds, injuries or illness while in combat areas.

## Nixon honors 'Silver Star' veterans

By Bob Watson

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For the second year, Gov. Jay Nixon has honored some Missouri veterans for their military service — and for living with the injuries or disabilities those injuries caused.

Lawmakers authorized the "Silver Star" awards two years ago, with May 1 designated in the law as "Silver Star Families of America Day."

"Military service inherently carries with it a sense of duty and a sense of self-sacrifice," Nixon said. "The dan-

ger faced in the area of combat often means soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines ... carry home wounds or illnesses because of their service."

Monday morning, Nixon and Missouri Adjutant General Steve Danner presented "Silver Star" banners and certificates to five Jefferson City area veterans.

"From the frozen forests of Belgium and France, to the steaming jungles of Vietnam, to the sun-baked deserts of Iraq, to the desolate mountains of Afghanistan, the veterans we honor today have made that sacrifice over a period of more than 65 years on behalf of our



## Veterans:

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country, and to protect our freedom," the governor explained. "Gentlemen, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to pay this honor to you."

The five Mid-Missourians honored were:

- Herbert Kuebler, a Gasconade County native who now lives in Jefferson City, served as a combat medic in World War II.

He appreciated the honor.

"I was glad to do (my service) and I always will be," he told reporters after the ceremony. "But I wish I had never (had) to have done it."

He said military duties are different today than when he served nearly 70 years ago.

"I have no idea how much they're going through, although I know they're going through a lot," he said. "But it's something I'm proud that they're doing ... they're doing their part."

- Steven Amick, a 1965 Jefferson City High School graduate, enlisted in the Marines in October 1965 after deciding college wasn't what he wanted to do.

Deployed to Vietnam in 1966, Amick took part in a number of combat operations, but fell victim to malaria and spent 38 days in the hospital.

- Tom Umstatted, Lohman — a Monroe



Julie Smith/News Tribune

**Honorees join Gov. Jay Nixon and Maj. Gen Stephen Danner during the Silver Star ceremony on Monday. From left are Steve Amick, Tom Umstatted of Lohman, Danner, Herbert Kuebler, Nixon, Lt. Col. Mike Fayette and Maj. John Gillam.**

County native who graduated from high school in 1965, got married (his wife, Brenda, now is Cole County's circuit court clerk) and was drafted into the Army in December 1967.

He served in Vietnam and lost both legs when a North Vietnamese Army rocket landed in the center of a group of about 50 men, then exploded.

- Lt. Col. Mike Fayette, a Tennessee native, now lives in Jefferson City and works at the National Guard's Ike Skelton Training Center headquarters. During a 2005 deployment to Iraq, Fayette's vehicle was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade,

and he was burned and hit with shrapnel.

- Maj. John Gillam, a Potosi area native who now lives in Jefferson City, served deployments in both Iraq (2005) and Afghanistan (2009-10) while with the Missouri National Guard and the Army Reserve.

In Iraq, he was wounded twice, but was able to return to his unit after a period of treatment and healing.

While in Afghanistan with the Army Reserve, Gillam received a knee injury during a mortar attack.

He told reporters the War on Terror must continue.