

Veteran Kenneth Schlemmer honored



All wrapped up: Air Force veteran Kenneth Schlemmer happily displays the quilt presented to him by the Patriotic Quilters.
Bob Clark/Courtesy Photo Oct 17, 2019

GAYLORD — “Sometimes when we meet and interview our area’s veterans, it becomes clear that we are in the company of extraordinary people — not just as representatives of the military, but those who also do service to their community. This is true of Kenneth Schlemmer,” the local Patriotic Quilters group said in its press release about this Air Force veteran.

Kenneth Schlemmer was recently recognized by the group as they continue to honor Gaylord area veterans for their military service.

Ken was born in Chicago to Herbert and Edna Schlemmer. His next big event in life was enlisting in the Air Force during the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis and learning to fly at an Aero Club near his base. As others also did, he earned his private pilot’s license. This was during his time at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, with Flight D. He also served as a guard for the Strategic Air Command during his time in the Air Force. He mustered out as an airman first class.

Using the G.I. Bill, Ken went to college, earned a Bachelor of Science degree and became a teacher. He moved to Gaylord about 20 years ago, and with help from Dave Schuster, then the airport manager, bought his own hangar at Gaylord Regional Airport. His planes are his babies now, including an SD-1, like one at the Smithsonian, and the yellow “Fly-Baby,” designed by a NASA engineer. His hangar is called and marked “High-pockets,” just across the terminal parking lot. His earlier employer noticed that Ken’s work overalls rode high up on him when doing the plane maintenance, thus the nickname, “High Pockets.” It “stuck.” Should you notice a red and white biplane overhead in the skies, wave. It’s Ken. Ken also is included in photographs displayed on the Hall of Fame at Gaylord Regional Airport. His parents didn’t know how far or high he’d go. They did too — living to 85 and 104. He married Marian in 2001, and between them have 12 children. “Happy then, and now, with my life choices,” he said to conclude his interview.