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## Young and old gather to salute veterans in Taylorsville parade

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Taylorsville • Gilbert Arredondo doesn't like to talk much about his time in the Army.

He'll say he served in the infantry during the Vietnam War, and that's about it. But Arredondo, a 65-year-old Salt Lake County resident, says he attends Taylorsville's Veterans Day Parade every year and thinks about the men and women who served in the military.

"Especially the guys I miss a lot," Arredondo said, "a lot of guys that never made it back."

This year, Arredondo's granddaughter marched in the parade with the West High School Navy Junior ROTC.

The parade was a mix of veterans who last marched or staffed a post decades ago, and young people who thanked and cheered them. Schoolchildren, standing in sunny, breezy 42-degree weather, chanted "USA, USA" as veterans filed past.

Some veterans walked while others got a ride aboard vintage military vehicles such as jeeps or equipment transports, while other veterans rode and revved motorcycles along the parade route.

Jerry Whitlock, of West Valley City, drove a 1952 Dodge M37, a truck used by the military to carry equipment, in a small procession of military vehicles. Whitlock's father was in the Army during World War II, and Whitlock's three sons served in the Marine Corps, he said.



Scott Sommerdorf | The Salt Lake Tribune  
Viet Nam veteran Gilbert Arredondo makes photos at the Taylorsville Veteran's Day Parade, Wednesday, November 11, 2015.

Whitlock said he sees one similarity between the older and the younger veterans: “They’ve all got guts.”

Bill Gordon rode in a flatbed trailer with a banner from American Legion Post 112 in Millcreek. Gordon, a retired Marine Corps captain who served in Korea and Vietnam, is Post 112’s commander.

Gordon said younger veterans are not yet joining the post. “We’re damn near a senior citizens group.”

But Gordon said he was the same way when he was younger — too busy trying to raise a family and earn a living to join veterans organizations. He expects the Iraq and Afghanistan veterans to join eventually.

Prospective military personnel like Arredondo’s granddaughter played a big role in the parade.

Junior ROTC cadets from local high schools marched and carried a giant American flag along the half-mile parade route between Taylorsville’s recreation center and its City Hall.

Neil Andersen is a retired Army lieutenant colonel who now teaches junior ROTC at Taylorsville High. He has about 110 cadets in 10th through 12th grades. Each year, Andersen said, about 15 students graduate and go on to join some branch of the military.

Andersen said the Veterans Day Parade gives the cadets lessons in military logistics and American patriotism.

“Part of it is just learning to plan it,” he said, “and part of it is honoring the veterans.”

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