

YOU'VE BEEN SPOTTED

Semper Fi Barn welcomes dozens of Memorial Day visitors

The Journal staff

CENTRAL — More than 50 people passed through the Semper Fi Barn in Central to pause for reflection on Memorial Day.

CEO and founder Tom von Kaenel opened the place of respite for veterans, where they can relax and stay at the barn for up to three days at no charge, in March.

"We've opened up the barn for everybody," he said, calling Memorial Day the "most sacred secular holiday of the year."



Semper Fi Barn founder and CEO Tom von Kaenel salutes during the playing of taps Monday in honor of Memorial Day, which he called "the most sacred secular holiday of the year."

Caleb Gilbert | The Journal

The public hung up dog tags from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday. A cookout and closing ceremony with music capped the day, which included a visit from South Carolina Department of Veterans' Affairs director of operations David Rozelle.

"It's as amazing as I expected it to be," Rozelle said of the barn. "Tom is a perfectionist."

Rozelle, who served 27 years in the U.S. Army and was injured in the Iraq invasion, did tours as an amputee. His job for the state is to, among other things, connect veterans with needed resources.

Veterans of the Korean, Vietnam, Cold, Gulf and Afghanistan wars made it to Central on Monday, von Kaenel said. The next event at the barn is scheduled for June 12, which is Women Veterans Day.

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210 W North 1st St, Seneca SC

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