Local war hero honored with medal after 66 years

By Don Reid

KINDERHOOK TOWNSHIP — After 66 years since he earned the Army Air Corps' Distinguished Flying Cross, former Capt. Al Martin had the medal pinned on him.

Martin's family worked since 2008 with former Congressman Mark Schauer and now Congressman Tim Walberg to get the medals Martin earned fly- 

honored 102 missions in P-47 Thunderbolts, most of them in Europe.

During that time he never crashed, but lost six planes to enemy fire. Martin was a member of the Caterpillar Club, an informal association of people who have successfully used a parachute to bail out of a disabled aircraft. The certificate was displayed at a Saturday family gathering with friends for the first time.

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Above, retired Capt. Al Martin receives the Distinguished Flying Cross from Col. Roger Seidel, wing commander of the Air National Guard unit based at Battle Creek, while congressman Tim Walberg looks on. (Don Reid photo)

BRANCH COUNTY COMMUNITY THEATRE

‘EXTRAORDINARY ACHIEVEMENT IN AERIAL FIGHTS’

By Don Reid

COLDWATER — On June 10, 1943, Dr. Robert Smith took his last drink of alcohol.

That was significant because he was, through a well-respected physician in Akron, Ohio, an alcoholic. He was able to stop drinking with the help of one bill Wilson, another alcoholic, and they discovered that working together, people could overcome alcoholism.

They formed a 12-step program that continues to this day to help not only alcoholics, but people addicted to anything, including drugs, sex and gambling.

There is an overwhelming amount of evidence that a 12-step program is the cure.

At right, Jackie Jonsson, Irene Grimes-Butdorf, Crystal Wals and Soozi Beecher welcome guests for a special evening. (Trinity Bird photo)

Event offers 12 steps of recovery groups

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