



Vol. 2 Issue 7

# 38th Parallel

A publication to remember, honor and thank the Korean War Veterans

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*Tech. Sgt. Michael Dorsey*

Retired Col. Ed McMahon, a Marine Corps pilot who flew in the Korean War, was the emcee for the Musical Tribute to Korean War Veterans at Constitution Hall on July 27. The date of the concert reflected the 49th Anniversary of the signing of the Korean War Armistice. After three years, one month, and two days, combat ended in Korea as the armistice was signed in 1953 at Panmunjom. Korea remains in an armistice status without a formal peace treaty to this day. More than 2,000 veterans and their families attended the concert that included the U.S. Marine Band "President's Own" and singer Rita Coolidge.

## Committee continues to host commemoration ceremonies

Oklahoma City, Okla., will not be the last commemoration site for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee to honor its veterans.

In response to rave reviews from veterans and great support from city officials of host cities, the Committee will continue to promote regional events around the country. The next one will be in Tampa, Fla., in January 2003 followed by another in San Antonio, Texas in February.

In the meantime the Committee and the AARP have teamed up to honor Korean War veterans with a twilight

medal pin-on ceremony on Sept. 11. Veterans will receive the Republic of Korea - Korean War Service medal from a family member at the AARP National Event in San Diego.

In addition families of Korean War veterans who are missing in action will be honored on Sept. 20, POW/MIA Day, at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, HI. The remains of more than 800 unidentified Korean War service members were laid to rest there. The cemetery serves as one of the nation's two honored resting places in the Pacific. The American Military Cemetery in Manila, Philippines is the other.



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# VA Marks Korean War 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

WASHINGTON - Vice President Richard Cheney joined Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi in a special presentation on July 25 as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Korean War.

Twenty-five Korean War veterans received the Republic of Korea Korean War Service Medal. The veterans were relatives or friends of VA Central Office employees.

"In Korea were written some of the most notable moments in military history," Vice President Cheney said. "The medals presented recognize the virtues of duty, honor and service in the care of freedom."

The service medal was originally offered by the Republic of Korea in 1951 to United Nations forces serving in Korea and adjacent waters. At the time U.S. law prohibited the U.S. military from wearing medals issued by foreign governments. Congress changed that in 1954, but by then most U.S. service members eligible for the medal had returned home.

"I am pleased to recognize American soldiers who stepped forward to defend democracy no matter the personal cost," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. "The Korean government reissued the service medal to bestow gratitude and recognition on American service men and women who so richly deserve it."

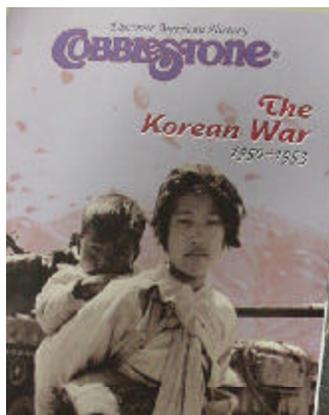
Other officials present included retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Nels Running, director of the Department of Defense 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee, and Maj. Gen. Young Han Moon, defense attaché of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea.

To wear this medal on U.S. military uniforms, U.S. military personnel must have served between the outbreak of hostilities, June 25, 1950, and the date the armistice was signed, July 27, 1953; been on permanent assignment or on temporary duty for 30 consecutive days or 60 non-consecutive days; and performed their duty within the territorial limits of Korea, in the waters

immediately adjacent to or in aerial flight over Korea participating in actual combat operations or in support of combat operations. (Courtesy VA)



The Republic of Korea - Korean War Service Medal is now available to veterans who fought in the Korean War.



38th Parallel  
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Maj. Gen. Larry Gottardi, Army Chief of Public Affairs, hands Robert Wood the proclamation which accompanied the Silver Star Wood was awarded earlier. Wood received the honor 50 years after his actions in the Korean War.

# Committee and AARP join forces in San Diego

On Sept. 11, when the nation reflects on the anniversary of terrorist attacks on the U.S., Korean War veterans in Southern California will look back on the tragedy and triumph they endured 50 years ago.

At the San Diego Convention Center, the Department of Defense 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee and the AARP will honor Korean War veterans with a twilight ceremony featuring veterans receiving the Republic of Korea Korean War Service Medal. The joint venture is an effort to make sure veterans receive a medal they deserve.

The Republic of Korea originally offered the medal in 1951 to United Nations forces serving in Korea and adjacent waters. At the time U.S. military regulations prohibited our military from wearing medals issued by foreign governments. Congress changed that in 1954, but the ROK-KWSM was not grand-fathered.

In 1998 the Republic of Korea renewed its original offer of the medal to U.S. military personnel and on Aug. 20, 1999, the Defense Department approved the acceptance and wear of the medal. Approximately 1.8 million U.S. veterans of the Korean War are eligible to receive it. Deceased veterans' next of kin may also apply for the medal.

Family members of the Korean War veterans will pin the foreign service medal on those who are participating in the ceremony. The ceremony is a prelude to AARP's three-day national event that begins Sept. 12 where a formal tribute at the San Diego Convention center opens the annual national convention.

The ceremony is free and open to the public. For more information visit the DoD 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee web site at [www.korea50.mil](http://www.korea50.mil). Also, visit the AARP web site at [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org).

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## Army Lab wants DNA samples

The DNA the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory uses to aid in their identification of unaccounted for service members is Mitochondrial DNA (MtDNA). It is only passed along the maternal line.

This genetic material will be used to help determine the identity of remains recovered from Korea.

Family members who do not have a DNA sample on file are encouraged to do so by contacting the appropriate branch below:

### U.S. Army

Casualty and Memorial Affairs  
Operations Center 1-800-892-2490

### U.S. Marine Corps

Casualty Branch 1-800-847-1597

### U.S. State Department (for civilian unaccounted-for): 202-736-4988

### U.S. Navy

Missing Person Section (POW-MIA Affairs) 1-800-443-9298

### U.S. Air Force

Missing Persons Branch 1-800-531-5501  
Mortuary Affairs 1-800-531-5803

For more information contact Ginger Couden Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory, at (808) 448-8903 ext. 109.

## 2002 Commemoration Events

**Disabled American Veterans  
National Convention**  
Dallas, Texas, Aug. 9-14

**AMVETS  
National Convention**  
Louisville, Ky., Aug. 10-17

**American Legion  
National Convention**  
Charlotte, N.C., Aug. 23-29

**Veterans of Foreign Wars  
National Convention**  
Nashville, Tenn., Aug. 24-30

**AARP ROK-KWSM  
Presentation ceremony**  
San Diego Convention Center  
San Diego, Calif., Sept. 11

**Air Power Day**  
Osan Air Base  
Osan, Republic of Korea  
Sept. 14

**POW/MIA  
Commemoration Ceremony**  
National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl)  
Honolulu, HI Sept. 20

**Joint Service  
Regional Commemoration**  
Tampa, Fla.  
January 2003\*

**Joint Service  
Regional Commemoration**  
San Antonio, Texas  
February 2003\*

**Joint Service  
Regional Commemoration**  
Detroit, MI  
March 2003\*

**Armistice Day Ceremony**  
Washington, D.C.  
July 27, 2003  
\*date to be determined

# Around the country



Pete Sturmberg, happy to receive his Republic of Korea Korean War Service Medal, shown here with Representative Mark Foley (R-Fla). The Committee wants all veterans or families of fallen Korean War veterans to receive the medal during the three year commemoration period. *(Courtesy photo)*

From left, John Nicholson, Jim Diers, Bob Graham, Rich Dominiak, Dean Castelli and Fred Schrumn from the Lansing Veterans Memorial Ceremonial Honor Guard in Calument City, Ill., perform in an Irish Parade dressed in uniforms reflecting those draped on the statues of the Korean War Veterans Memorial on the Mall in Washington, D.C. The group routinely wears this outfit in Commemoration events. *(Courtesy photo)*



While visiting her cousin, Capt. John Turner, a budget analyst at Headquarters Marine Corps at Henderson Hall in Arlington, Va., Pamela Walencewicz of Newport Beach, Calif. was so excited at taking pictures on the Mall that she exposed the same roll of film twice. After taking the picture of the Lincoln Memorial, Walencewicz then took a picture of the Korean War Veterans Memorial.

# “On A Cold and Hellish Day...”

By Sgt. Maj. Gary G. Beylickjian  
(Ret.)

Served with Heavy Machinegun Platoon, H-Co., 7<sup>th</sup> Inf. Regt., 3<sup>rd</sup> Inf. Div, during the years 1951, 1952, 1953, two tours with the same organization and platoon.

He carried no rifle, fired no shots and led no men in combat, yet he was, in many ways, one of the most important soldiers serving on the front lines of Korea.

His weapon was an olive-drab bag hung over his shoulder. Most of us who lived and fought on the front lines never knew his name (soldiers back then didn't wear nametags); he didn't say his name, and we didn't ask.

We knew only that when his services were needed, even during intense and near unbearable fighting conditions, he answered our cry for help: the haunting call—MEDIC! MEDIC!

We referred to him as “doc,” but we knew he was closer to being an angel. If ever there was a hero, unfortunately unsung, it was the man with the bag and the helmet with white crosses on it who never failed to help his fellow soldiers regardless where they were .

I looked straight into the eyes of such a hero; they were kind, comforting and confident. He knew what he was doing and did it well.

The morning of the day before Thanksgiving 1951, we were attacked by a massive force (we heard several divisions) of Communist forces near Yonchon, North Korea. Before and during the attack, our lines were riddled with enemy artillery, tank and mortar fire. As we fired on the enemy, an artillery shell found its way into our machinegun emplacement, killing and wounding.

The shell's detonation picked me up and threw me against the water-cooled machinegun we were firing and onto the ground. I remembered hearing yelling and commotion in the trench as I was pulled into the dugout. My ears were ringing, the right side of my face was wet with something and a large piece of metal had punctured my right side, just below the ribs.

Eyes still shut, I begun to rub each thumb over my fingers on both hands and wriggled the toes of each foot. So far I was whole. As I opened my eyes, only my left eye opened easily, the right side of my face had blood on it, now sticky. Not my blood, but my friend's. He lay beside me torn apart and dead.

I remember at that time telling the other members of the gun crew to man the machinegun and to continue firing; they did. No sooner did I finish the sentence I looked up to see the face of a young soldier, a medic. He wiped the blood from most of my face and neck and slowly and carefully bandaged my right side. I could still feel my skin burning from the hot shell fragment where it had gone into my body. The medic looked like a teenager. Our conversation is vivid in my memory now for more than half a century.

How old are you, I asked? “Eighteen, sir!” Am I going to make it, doc? “I like the sound of being called doc. I'm going to be a doctor, you know, when I leave the Army and use my GI bill,” he said.

How long have you been a medic? “Only 14 months, sir.” Why are you calling me sir, I'm an enlisted man?

“Well, sir, any soldier who lives and fights as the Infantry does in this hellish war, deserves admiration and respect. That's one way I can show it. Can't take the fragment out; it too deep. You'll be fine, sir. I've tagged you. You'll be taken you up to the medical bunker for evacuation.”

And I responded: “Thank you, sir!”

More calls: “Medic! Medic!” “See you around, sir, gotta go” he said. He was answering another cry for help. I never saw him again.

During lulls in fighting, a medic makes his rounds going from position to position checking up on men's health and passing out a few headache or backache pills; they were known as APCs, a combination of aspirin and two other drugs. APCs were prescribed for about every ailment in the Army you can think of, and they did the job.

But, during heated battles, a medic is constantly on the run, answering his calls. He cares for men with lost limbs, severe body and head wounds, often saving them from death on the spot. Calls come from almost every direction, and somehow, he answers them all.

How a medic managed to serve on the front lines

[Continued on Page 6](#)

## Norfolk's tribute

Republic of Korea Gen. Paik Sun Yup, commander of South Korean forces during the war, was the guest speaker at the Gen. Douglas MacArthur Foundation Korean War Symposium at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va., June 26. The two-day symposium featured topics such as background on Korea and the war, strategic coalitions, ground and air operations and the controversy between President Harry S. Truman and Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

Forever grateful for America's involvement in Korea, the general often comes to the United States to participate in Korean War commemoration activities.



*Tech. Sgt. Michael Dorsey*

## Hell Day from Page 5

of Korea is remarkable. How a young man with only a satchel, helmet and devotion can perform miracles on the field of battle is truly heroic.

Nothing is more comforting to a wounded soldier than knowing he is in safe hands. The medics ensure he is cared for — even in the midst of unbelievable fire and carnage. Just imagine the number of lives saved by 18-year-old medics who serve where death usually reigns? Heroes — indeed!

When I arrived at the MASH (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital), I was checked and readied for surgery to await my turn in the OR. It would come very soon. A captain checked on the care and condition of my wound. Good job on the dressing and the medication, he said, obviously the work of a pro.

I told the captain, I thought so too: a pro and a hero, an 18-year-old pro and hero. A youngster who liked being called “doc” and took his job very seriously — even where death dwells.

Well, “doc,” perhaps I should say, doctor, hope all is well wherever you are. And, thanks again from that Infantryman you cared for that blustery and hellish day in Korea 51 years ago.

*(Editor's note: Sgt. Maj. Gary G. Beylickjian (Ret.) works at the Army's Office of the Chief of Public Affairs and publishes a monthly newsletter regarding Army Public Affairs professionals.)*



## Fallen hero

Major League Baseball great Ted Williams, considered the “greatest hitter who ever lived” recently passed away. A Marine Corps pilot during the Korean War whose wing man was future astronaut John Glenn, Williams flew 58 missions from 1952-1953.



Tech. Sgt. Michael Dorsey

### This Date in History

**Aug. 10, 1950:** The Air Force Reserve's 452nd Light Bombardment Wing and 437th Troop Carrier Wing was recalled to active duty.

US and Australian warplanes conducted large scale bombing missions on transportation and communications targets in North Korea.

The US Army activated the IX Corps at Fort Sheridan, Ill., and ordered it to Korea. President Harry S. Truman raised the authorized strength of the Army to 1,081,000. The Army involuntarily recalled 7,862 captains and lieutenants to report in September and October because of inadequate response to the request for volunteers.

The first Marine helicopter rescue of a downed pilot was successfully made by VMO-6.

**Aug. 9, 1952:** The 1st Marine Division defended against a Chinese attack in the vicinity of Bunker Hill. This was the first significant U.S. Marine ground action in western Korea since the Inchon-Seoul campaign. The Marine position on Hill 58 changed hands five times during the next two days. Eventually the Chinese managed to gain control of this outpost.

**Aug. 9, 1951:** The 1st Marine Air Wing was awarded the Army Distinguished Unit Citation for outstanding performance of duty and extraordinary heroism during the period from Nov. 22, to Dec. 14, 1950 in support of X Corps in the Chosin/Changjin Reservoir campaign and the evacuation from northeast Korea.

**Aug. 8, 1950:** As part of Task Force Kean in the first American counter attack of the war, the leading 35th Infantry Regiment of the 25th Infantry Division had advanced to its initial objective, the high ground just north of Munchon-ni. The regiment was then ordered to hold until the 5th Regimental Combat Team could come up on the left.

**Aug. 7, 1950:** General Walton Walker launched Task Force Kean against the North Korean 6th Division to seize the Chinju Pass and establish a new line along the Nam River.

Three regiments, the Army's 35th Infantry and 5th Regimental Combat Team and the 5th Marines, attacked abreast against an estimated 7,500 enemy troops. Unknown to the Eight Army planners was the presence of the North Korean 83rd Motorized Regiment of the 105th Armored Division supporting the

6th Division with T-34 tanks.

**Aug. 6, 1950:** Private First Class William Thompson, M Company, 3rd Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, earned the fourth Medal of Honor of the Korean War, the first African American to earn the nation's highest military award

**Aug. 4, 1950:** Fleet Air Wing 6 was established in Tokyo, Japan, under the acting command of Capt. John C. Alderman. The wing was assigned operational control over all US and British patrol squadrons in the Japan-Korea area. Eighth Army established a defensive line along the Naktong River just 50 miles short of the sea. Journalists labeled this line as the Pusan Perimeter.

**Aug. 3, 1950:** Congress removed the existing limitations on the size of the Army. The Army issued an involuntary recall of 30,000 enlisted men, mostly from the Volunteer and Inactive Reserve, to report in September.

**Aug. 2, 1950:** The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, hastily organized from 1st Marine Division units on the West Coast, landed in Korea.

# HONOR ROLL

## Clifton T. Speicher

**Rank:** Corporal

**Organization:** U.S. Army, Company F, 223d Infantry Regiment, 40th Infantry Division.

**Place and date:** Near Minarigol, Korea, June 14, 1952.

**Entered service at:** Gray, Pa.

**Birth:** 1931, Gray, Pa.

**General Order No.:** 65, Aug. 19, 1953.

**Citation:** Corporal Clifton T. Speicher, Infantry, United States Army, a member of Company F, 223d Infantry Regiment, 40th Infantry Division, distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and indomitable courage above and beyond the call of duty in action against the enemy near Minarigol, Korea on 14 June 1952. While participating in an assault to secure a key terrain feature, Cpl. Speicher's squad was pinned down by withering small-arms mortar, and machinegun fire. Although already wounded he left the comparative safety of his position, and made a daring charge against the machinegun emplacement. Within 10 yards of the goal, he was again wounded by small-arms fire but continued on, entered the bunker, killed two hostile soldiers with his rifle, a third with his bayonet, and silenced the machinegun. Inspired by this incredible display of valor, the men quickly moved up and completed the mission. Dazed and shaken, he walked to the foot of the hill where he collapsed and died.

