

News

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Our Town

- Fire report...page 2
- Police blotter...page 5
- Shaw's to close...page 7

Veterans remember beginning of Korean War

By ELIO GUGLIOTTI
STAFF WRITER

On the morning of June 25, 1950, the region known as "The Land of The Morning Calm" would have that tranquility destroyed when North Korean troops launched an attack on their brethren to the South in that divided nation.

"This was the beginning of a war that would last three years and one month," said Korean War veteran John Denehy, standing before the Korean War monument on Memorial Boulevard June 25.

Fifty-nine years to the day that the morning calm was shattered, as Denehy put it, Bristol veterans of the Korean War gathered in remembrance.

"We are gathered here today to honor all veterans who served in Korea, and especially those who paid the ultimate sacrifice," said Denehy.

The war claimed the lives of 33,680 Americans, Denehy said, and 103,000 Americans were wounded.

Frank Parker is a combat veteran of the Korean War, serving from 1950 to

1951 in the 24th Infantry Division of the U.S. Army. He's also one of the fortunate ones, he came out of the war physically unscathed.

"I don't know how the hell I got so lucky," said Parker, who served as the ceremony's featured speaker.

Parker landed in Korea at the end of October in 1950. He served as a "shotgun rider" bringing loads of ammunition to the front lines.

Parker said he was part of small unit of five or six men that would be separated from their rest of platoon for long stretches. Parker said, since the unit was separated from the larger platoon, he never really got the chance to grow close to many of his fellow soldiers, which made the news easier to take when someone was killed.

Even though the small unit isolated him from some of the tragedies of war, Parker witnessed his share of death. He said he lost one of his best buddies during the war. Additionally, the gunner with Parker's unit

was killed after they ran over a land mine.

The war did have a silver lining for Parker though. While he was overseas, he developed a pen pal relationship with a girl from Maine. When Parker returned home in 1951 he paid that girl a visit, and their relationship blossomed.

This August will mark the couple's 57th wedding anniversary.

Parker considered himself lucky to make it home unscathed. But, there are many soldiers from all battles that aren't so lucky, and remain unaccounted for, labeled as "Missing in Action."

To honor those soldiers MIA or prisoners of war, Mayor Art Ward led those in attendance through the table of honor ceremony where an empty seat with a place setting before it sits in memory of soldiers who aren't here.

Ward said the ceremony held a special meaning because of the remains of Sgt. 1st Class Lincoln Clifford May of Plainville were returned home recent-

ly after nearly 60 years of being missing in action.

"I think it brings us comfort that the country continues to seek and identify the remains of all those who served and ultimately from it, give a sense of closure to families," Ward said.

May was declared missing in action after a battle with the Chinese army in Korea in 1950. His remains were returned home in 1993, and DNA testing confirmed his identify earlier this year.

The DNA used came from May's nephews, city Councilor Cliff Block and Glenn Block of Bristol.

Cliff Block was named for his uncle but didn't get the chance to know him. He was born just months before his uncle went missing.

Cliff Block described his uncle's homecoming as bittersweet. "Everyone who knew and loved him, they're all gone," he said.

Funeral services were held for May last Friday, and

his remains were buried in Plainville's West Cemetery, next to his family.

Aside from the emotions of the moment, Cliff Block said his uncle's case shows that the United States is the greatest country in the world. "If you're a soldier, you're never forgotten, you're never forsaken," he said.

Comments? Email egugliotti@BristolObserver.com.

Police investigate Riverside Avenue accident

A man suffered serious injuries after a car accident on Riverside Avenue.

Police responded to an accident on Riverside Avenue shortly after 10 p.m. Saturday, June 27. Police said a man driving a Toyota Yaris east on Riverside Avenue drove off the road,

hitting a utility pole and R&R Machinery Co. located at 350 Riverside Ave.

The man was alone in the car and suffered head and internal injuries, police said. The man was taken to Hartford Hospital.

At the time of the accident police didn't release

the driver's name or his condition.

As of press time no further information was available.

Elio Gugliotti

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