



Vol. 1 Issue 10

# 38th Parallel

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

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*SSG Robert Timmons*

Evan Rubin, U. S. Charge d'Affaires in the Republic of Korea, speaks during the Battle of the Outposts 50th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony at Camp Casey, South Korea. Soldiers from the 2nd Infantry Division stand in formation.

## Mission Complete

### Committee recruits more "partners" to program

At San Antonio, Texas, and Milwaukee, Wisc., this summer, the Korean War Commemoration Committee took another significant step towards its goal of 10,000 Commemoration Partners (CP).

At the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars national conventions in August, the committee recruited more than 600 Commemoration Partners.

Critical to the success of the commemoration, the Commemoration Partner program is a grass roots effort to get communities involved in remembering, thanking and honoring their veterans. At both conventions, the committee placed its exhibit and some of its products on display, then assisted chapter commanders and representatives in signing up to be a CP.

The key to the committee's success was the addition of a computer to directly input new applicants into the

CP database.

"Having computers there on the spot was a big help," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Rebecca Tester, who was able to put the committee's new recruits in a database on the spot. In addition to convenience, a computer serves as another benefit. Tester said that potential "recruits" can see what states, regions and chapters are partners and which ones are not.

There are now more than 6,000 commemoration partners, most of which are veteran service organizations. The World War II commemoration had 11,000 CPs in its four-year span.

With two years left in the commemoration, the future looks bright in more ways than one.

Tester said those two years gives communities and veteran service organizations in every state a chance to become a commemoration partner.



Contents in the 38th Parallel are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or the Department of Defense. Visit our web site address at <http://www.korea50.mil> to learn more about Korean War veterans.

# DoD salutes POW/MIAs

More than 8,100 Korean War veterans have not returned home. They are listed as Prisoners of War or Missing In Action.

This year's observance of POW/MIA Day was Sept. 21. Many observe such veterans by wearing name bracelets.

To get information about a name on a bracelet, send a letter to:

Defense POW/Missing  
Persons Office  
ATTN: Public Affairs  
2400 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301-2400

To find out the status of a person from a particular service, call the following services casualty offices:

**Air Force:** 1-800-531-5501

**Army:** 1-800-892-2490

**Marine Corps:** 1-800-847-1597

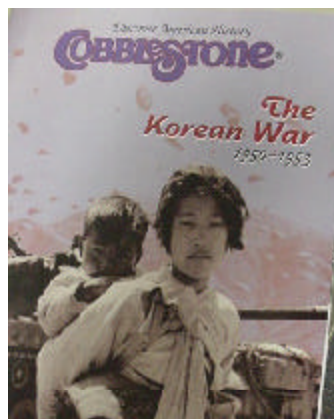
**Navy:** 1-800-443-9298



*National Archives*

## Brothers in arms

Repatriated prisoner of war Dwight E. Coxe, right, is greeted by his brother, Francis T. Coxe during Operation Big Switch. The brothers hadn't seen each other for about five years. Dwight was held captive for two years. Operation Big Switch, which occurred on July 27, 1953, was the main POW exchange following the signing of the Korean Armistice agreement.



**38th Parallel  
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## Air Force Lab Seeks Korean War-era Items

The Life Sciences Lab of Brooks Air Force Base, Texas, is asking for donations of military uniforms or equipment from the Korean and Vietnam wars. Stars and Stripes reports that the lab uses the items to help identify remains recovered from POW and MIA sites. Items are used as comparisons, which speeds up the identification process significantly. The items needed will be listed soon on the Brooks AFB Web site. Until that time, people are encouraged to call Elton Hudgins, chief of the Life Sciences laboratories directly at (210) 536-8273 or to e-mail him at [elton.hudgins@brooks.af.mil](mailto:elton.hudgins@brooks.af.mil).

The Air Force Clothing Office in Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, is collecting all of the items. Donations should be mailed to: Attention Dave Lanthorn, 311 HSW/YACL, 1901 10th Street Building 63, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio 45433-7605. Currently, there are still 1,900 MIAs unaccounted for in Vietnam and 856 crash sites in North Korea to be examined.

# Eligible veterans entitled to military funeral honors

The Department of Defense is now required to render military funeral honors to all eligible veterans.

The National Defense Authorization Act for FY00 calls for the U.S. Armed Services to provide at least two military personnel, including one from the veteran's branch of service, to perform a funeral honors ceremony upon request.

The funeral honors ceremony will include the folding and presentation of the American flag and the playing of "Taps." However, the scarcity of buglers in the Armed Services often necessitates use of a high-quality recording instead, which is permitted under the new law.

A member of the deceased veteran's parent military service will present the flag to the next of kin.

While the Armed Services are required to render honors, they are not provided automatically. The next of kin or other appropriate person must request the funeral honors from the military through a funeral director, as required by DOD policy.

For more information, please see NAVADMIN 106/00. A toll free number is available at (877) MIL-HONR (645-4667) for funeral directors to coordinate the ceremonies. DOD has also established a Web site at <http://www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil/>.  
(*Courtesy article*)

## Nine remains recovered in North Korea

Remains believed to be those of nine American soldiers, missing in action from the Korean War, were repatriated on Aug. 21 in Japan.

The remains were flown on a U.S. Air Force aircraft from Pyongyang, North Korea, under escort of a uniformed U.S. honor guard, to Yokota Air Base, Japan, where a United Nations Command repatriation ceremony was held.

A joint U.S.-North Korean team operating in Usan and Kujang counties and along the Chong Chon River, in the Kaechon area, about 60 miles north of Pyongyang, recovered the remains during operations that began last month. The area was the site of battles between communist forces and the U.S. Army's 2nd and 25th Infantry Divisions in November 1950. During this operation, teams also surveyed a site for a base camp about 15 miles south of the Chosin

Reservoir where excavations will be conducted next month.

The two 14-person U.S. teams operating in North Korea are composed primarily of specialists from the Army's Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii (CILHI).

The Defense Department's POW/Missing Personnel Office negotiated an agreement with the North Koreans last year that led to the scheduling of this year's operations. This year's schedule of operations in North Korea is the largest yet, with ten individual operations scheduled, including some near the Chosin Reservoir.

Twenty-three operations have been conducted since 1996 in North Korea, recovering 127 sets of remains believed to be those of U.S. soldiers. Eight have been positively identified and returned to their families for burial with full military honors. (*Courtesy DoD News Service*)

### This Date in History

**Sept. 9, 1950:** Capt. Leslie E. Brown became the first Marine Corps aviator to fly a jet in combat.

**Sept. 9, 1951:** Fourth Fighter-Interceptor Wing Captains Richard S. Becker and Ralph D. Gibson became the second and third aces of the Korean War. Each shot down a MiG-15 in an air battle that pitted 28 Sabres against 70 MiGs.

**Sept. 8, 1952:** Major Frederick C. Blesse, 4th Fighter-Interceptor Wing, earned his sixth and seventh aerial kills after downing a pair of MiG-15 jet fighters.

**Sept. 7, 1951:** Cpl. Jerry K. Crump, assigned to L Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Reg., 3rd Infantry Div., earned the 80th Korean War Medal of Honor.

Pvt. Billie G. Kanell, assigned to I Company, 3rd Battalion, 35th Infantry Reg., 25th Infantry Div., became the 81st Korean War Medal of Honor recipient

The destroyer USS Barton struck a mine killing five sailors and wounding seven in the vicinity of Wonsan Harbor.

**Sept. 7, 1952:** Sgt. Don F. Porter, G Company, 3rd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Div., earned the 111th Medal of Honor of the Korean War.

**Sept. 7, 1950:** The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade withdrew from combat in the Naktong Perimeter and reassembled at Pusan to embark for the Inchon invasion.

**Aug. 31, 1950:** Far East Air Force B-29s completed air strikes on the docks and railway yards at Songjin and the industrial factory at Chinnampo.



# War-medal team continues recognizing Korean War veterans

08/23/01 - **RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN)**— Mailing almost 600 medals per day, the Air Force Personnel Center's special war-medal action team here knows there are more than 1.7 million veterans still eligible for the Korean War Service Medal, including the next of kin of deceased

vice medals to veterans from every branch of military service.

The initial 750 requests a day has slowed to about 600. The team works busily to catch up on the backlog.

"The veterans have waited 50 years for the medal and we want them to receive it as quickly as possible," said

Maj. James Waggle, chief of the recognition branch.

The Air Force provides the medal at no cost, on a first-come, first-served basis, to veterans who meet the criteria and apply with appropriate documentation. Criteria

for award of the Republic of Korea Korean War Service Medal was established by the Korean government.

To qualify for the medal, the veteran must meet the following criteria:

— Served in Korea, its territorial waters or airspace between June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953 for 30 consecutive days or 60 nonconsecutive days; or

— Served as a crew member of aircraft in aerial flight over Korea participating in actual combat operations, or in support of combat operations. Veterans who served in Japan, Guam, the Philippines or other countries are not eligible.

"We receive many different types of documentation that veterans provide to help us validate their service in Korea during the war," said Master Sgt.



**Korean War Service Medal**

Walter Johnson, superintendent for the team. "From (Department of Defense) Form 214s to newspaper articles pinpointing the requester's location during the war — whatever the requestor sends to us, we make every effort to validate and approve the medals for the veterans. They deserve it."

Veterans only need to send copies of their documents.

"Please don't send money," Johnson said. "The medals are free."

The Korean War Service Medal was initially offered by the Republic of Korea to U.S. Korean War veterans more than 50 years ago, but was never issued because of a law prohibiting the military from wearing medals issued by foreign governments. Congress changed the law in 1954, but by then most of the servicemembers eligible for the medal had returned home.

Additional information on how to apply for the medal can be found by contacting the Air Force Personnel Center, weekdays, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CDT at (800) 558-1404, or (210) 565-2432. The fax number is (210) 565-3118. People may also write to:

HQ AFPC/DPPPRA 550C Street West Suite 12 Randolph Air Force Base, Texas 78150-4714 or visit the AFPC Web site at <https://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/awards/>.

General information on the medal can also be found by calling (703) 604-0831, visiting the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee Web site at <https://www.korea50.mil>. (by Judy Grojean)



**Don Quinn opens a mail request for a medal.**

veterans.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Korean War, the Republic of Korea issued a medal to pay tribute to the U.S. Korean War veterans for their historic endeavors to preserve freedom of the Korea and the free world.

The Department of Defense approved the acceptance and wear of the medal on Aug. 20, 1999.

"Initially, we were inundated with requests," said Master Sgt. Alberto Salinas, AFPC's chief of the awards and decoration section.

"In the first five months, 60,000 letters flooded in," he said. "That's a lot of mail. We had so much that you couldn't even walk through the office."

Since then, AFPC officials distributed more than 83,000 Korean War Ser-

## The Veteran

It is the Veteran, not the reporter, who earned for us and protected our freedom of the press.

It is the Veteran, not the poet, who earned for us and protected our right to free speech.

It is the Veteran, not the campus organizer, who earned for us and protected our right to demonstrate peacefully.

It is the Veteran, who saluted the flag, who served beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag,  
who is pained when a protester burns the flag.

Unknown



*(Courtesy photo)*

## Commemoration 2001

At left behind the podium, Sal Poliandro, Commander of the American Legion Post 147, prepares for the 51st Anniversary of the Korean War celebration at the Joe Chillura Courthouse Square in Tampa, Fla., on June 25. The event featured eight veterans who spoke on how the war changed their lives. Each vet received a lapel pin.

Poliandro's post worked together with Tampa's Korean War Veterans Association Chapter 175. The chapter is named after 1st. Lt. Baldomero Lopez, a Medal of Honor recipient, Hispanic American and Tampa resident.



*National Archives*

## The highest honor

First Lt. Baldomero Lopez scales the sea wall at Red Beach during the Inchon Landing on Sept. 15, 1950. He dies minutes after this photo was taken. Lopez was one of several Hispanic Americans who served in the Korean War.

The Department of Defense celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15. Established in 1989, the observance looks at the diverse Hispanic cultures of American society. This year's observance is called "Paving the Way for Future Generations."

## What about the children?

In the wave of Korean War memorials being unveiled all over the country, one veteran is trying to make sure the most “untold story” of America’s servicemembers is remembered.

“The compassionate, humanitarian aid the American Armed Forces rendered the children of Korea during the war is the largest untold story of that war.” said George F. Drake, PhD., lead coordinator of the Korean War Children’s Memorial. Drake, who claims that American Armed Forces saved the lives of more than 10,000 children, says in addition to saving so many lives, the GIs helped support more than 50,000 children in hundreds of orphanages all over the country. They also donated more than \$2 million for orphanage aid during the war years from a wage of less than one hundred dollars a month. Every where one turned one found an orphanage begun or supported by military units.

For that (in honor of the veterans and remembering the children), Drake is doing his part to help build a childrens memorial, In the shape of a traditional Buddhist Pavilion, the memorial will symbolize the shelter the GIs rendered the lost, homeless, ill, hungry and traumatized children the GIs encountered everywhere in that war torn country. It is to be built in Bellingham, Washington where Drake currently lives. The memorial will be built in Korea and shipped to Bellingham for installation. It will be dedicated on July 27, 2003, the date the armistice was signed.

The GI involvement with the children had the full support of the folks back home. Throughout American cities and towns there were campaigns for aid for the orphans often held in response to a letter from a home-town boy asking for donations for the children his unit was helping. Material aid sent to the troops to help the children amounted to well over one thousand tons of packages of toys, new and used clothes, tools, medicines, food and school supplies from family, friends, neighbors, former classmates and co-workers.

For more information visit the web site at [www.koreanchildren.org](http://www.koreanchildren.org). (Courtesy Korean War Children’s Memorial)

## September observes POW/MIA Day

### Did you know...

In the September 3rd issue of the Army, Navy , Air Force and Marine Corps Times an insert titled “Modern Heroes in Action” tells stories of 24 servicemembers of uncommon valor. Five of the 24 stories involve Korean War veterans. They include the following:

**Lt. Thomas Hudner**  
**Ensign Jesse Brown**  
**Lt. Gen. Ray Davis**  
**Col. Ralph Parr**  
**Col. Robinson Risner**

## Armed Forces Retirement Homes for Veterans

The U.S. Naval Home (USNH) in Gulfport, Miss. and the U.S. Soldiers’ and Airmen’s Home (USSAH) in Washington, DC are model retirement centers for veterans. Veterans are eligible to become a resident if their active duty service in the military was at least 50 percent enlisted, warrant officer, or limited duty officer and who are:

- veterans with 20 or more years of active duty service and are at least 60 years old
- veterans unable to earn a livelihood due to a service-connected disability
- veterans unable to earn a livelihood due to non service-connected disability, and who served in a war theater or received hostile fire pay
- female veterans who served prior to 1948
- Coast Guard veterans who had service during wartime while the Coast Guard was operated as part of the Navy who meet one of the aforementioned criteria.

For more information, visit <http://www.afrh.com/> , email [USSAH11@erols.com](mailto:USSAH11@erols.com) , or call the USNH at 1-800-332-3527 or the USSAH at 1-800-422-9988.



# Korean War: The first war for the Air Force

One day after the North Korean Army invasion of South Korea, the Air Force spearheaded the evacuation of U. S. civilians, and the following day by engaged enemy planes in the war's first aerial battle. For the remainder of the war, the Air Force provided the air superiority that was so vital to ground operations, with the F-86 Sabre ultimately achieving a 10-1 kill ratio over the enemy MiG-15.

The U.S. Air Force also conducted extensive bombing raids, and their transport aircraft played crucial roles in delivering supplies, moving combat troops and evacuating the wounded. More than 241,000 Air Force members served in the Far East Theater of Operations: There were 1,198 battle-related deaths and 926 of these remain unrecovered or unidentified. Four airmen received the Medal of Honor:

**Maj. Louis Joseph Sebill** *F-51 pilot*

**Capt. John Springer Walsmley Jr.** *B-26 pilot*

**Maj. George Andrew Davis Jr.** *F-86 pilot*

**Maj. Charles Joseph Loring** *F-80 pilot*

Three years after it became a separate service on Sept. 18, 1947, the Air Force fought its first war. The Committee recognizes all Korean War veterans on its 54<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## Did you know...

Flying a F-82G Twin Mustang in a defensive mission over Kimpo Airfield, Lieutenant William G. "Skeeter" Hudson, 68th Fighter (All-Weather) Squadron, destroyed a Yak-7U fighter and was officially credited with the first aerial victory of the Korean War on June 27, 1950. Lieutenant Carl Fraser occupied the second cockpit as copilot.



*National Archives*

Fighter pilots and fighter aircraft weren't the only people and equipment serving in Korean War. Airmen and aircraft (cargo, reconnaissance, aeromedical evacuation) in support roles also served. Three B-29 aircraft maintainers from the 307th Bomb Wing enjoy a positive moment in the Far East in 1951. They are, from left, Sgt. C.P. Bedole, Tech. Sgt. W.T. Honse and Sgt. J.A. Moss.

## KOREAN WAR FLYING ACES

*A pilot must achieve five kills to become an ace. With the exception of Lt. Guy Boldelon and Lt. Col. John Bolt, all aces (40) were Air Force.*

**Maj. Donald E. Adams** – 6.5 kills

**Col. Royal N. Baker** – 16.5 kills (3.5 kills in WWII)

**Col. Robert P. Baldwin** – 5 kills

**Capt. Richard S. Becker** – 5 kills

**Maj. Stephen L. Bettinger** – 5 kills

**Maj. Frederick Blesse** – 10 kills

**Lt. Col. (USMC) John F. Bolt** – 5 kills

**Lt. (Navy) Guy P. Bordelon** – 5 kills

**1st Lt. Henry Buttleman** – 7 kills

**Capt. Clyde A. Curtin** – 5 kills

**Maj. Richard D. Creighton** – 5 kills

**Maj. George Davis Jr.** – 14 kills (21 kills in WWII)

**Capt. Manuel J. Fernandez** – 14.5 kills

**Capt. Harold E. Fischer** – 10 kills

**Capt. Cecil G. Foster** – 9 kills

**Col. Francis Gabreski** – 6.5 kills (28 kills in WWII)

**Lt. Col. Vermont Garrison** – 10 kills (17.3 kills in WWII)

**Capt. Ralph D. Gibson** – 5 kills

**Maj. James Hagerstrom** – 8.5 kills

**Maj. James Jabara** – 15 kills

**Col. James Johnson** – 10 kills (1 kill in WWII)

**Capt. Clifford D. Jolley** – 7 kills

**Lt. Col. George L. Jones** – 6.5 kills

**1st Lt. James H. Kasler** – 6 kills

**Capt. Iven C. Kinchloe** – 5 kills

**Capt. Robert T. Latshaw** – 5 kills

**Capt. Leonard W. Lilley** – 7 kills

**Capt. Robert Love** – 6 kills

**1st Lt. James F. Low** – 9 kills

**Maj. Winton W. Marshall** – 6.5 kills

**Capt. Joseph McConnell** – 16 kills

**Capt. Lonnie R. Moore** – 10 kills

**Capt. Robert H. Moore** – 5 kills

**Capt. Dolphin D. Overton III** – 5 kills

**Capt. Ralph S. Parr Jr.** – 10 kills

**Maj. Robinson Risner** – 8 kills

**Lt. Col. George L. Ruddell** – 8 kills

**Col. Harrison Thyng** – 5 kills

**Maj. William H. Westcott** – 5 kills

**Maj. William T. Whisner** – 5.5 kills

# HONOR ROLL



Baldomero Lopez



**Rank:** First Lieutenant

**Organization:** U.S. Marine Corps, Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division (Reinforced).

**Place and date:** During Inchon invasion in Korea, Sept. 15, 1950.

**Entered service at:** Tampa, Fla.

**Birth:** 1925, Tampa, Fla.

**Citation:** For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as a Rifle Platoon Commander of Company A, First Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division (Reinforced), in action against enemy aggressor forces during the Inchon invasion in Korea on Sept. 15, 1950. With his platoon, First Lieutenant Lopez was engaged in the reduction of immediate enemy beach defenses after landing with the assault waves. Exposing himself to hostile fire, he moved forward alongside a bunker and prepared to throw a hand grenade into the next pillbox whose fire was pinning down that sector of the beach. Taken under fire by an enemy automatic weapon and hit in the right shoulder and chest as he lifted his arm to throw, he fell backward and dropped the deadly missile. After a moment, he turned and dragged his body forward in an effort to retrieve the grenade and throw it. In critical condition from pain and loss of blood, and unable to grasp the hand grenade firmly enough to hurl it, he chose to sacrifice himself rather than endanger the lives of his men and, with a sweeping motion of his wounded right arm, cradled the grenade under him and absorbed the full impact of the explosion. His exceptional courage, fortitude and devotion to duty reflect the highest credit upon Lieutenant Lopez and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

