

Not Forgotten - Area memorial is dedicated to Korean War veterans

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The wind and cold served as gentle reminders of terrible times for Korean War veterans as they gathered Saturday at the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery to dedicate a monument to those lost more than five decades ago.

The damp 50 degrees was gentle compared to what these veterans endured in what is often called the forgotten war.

"If it was about 80 degrees colder and raining, you would know what it was like being in Korea," said Marvin Dunn, president of the Gen. Walton H. Walker chapter of the Korean War Veterans Association.

Several veterans nodded knowingly, responding in unison to Dunn's comment, "You got that right," they said to no one in particular.

The chapter created the monument to commemorate their fallen, captured or missing brothers and to honor the survivors, many of whom still carry the scars of battle.

The final events marking the 50th anniversary of the end of the Korean War will be held Tuesday. The war to prevent communist forces in North Korea from taking over the southern half of the country began in June 1950 and ended July 27, 1953.

The United States, North Korea and China signed an armistice that ended the war but failed to bring about a permanent peace. Korea remains divided.

More than 33,500 U.S. service members died in battle during the conflict, according to a Secretary of Defense Web site. More than 7,000 became prisoners of war, the site said.

About 100 people, including veterans and their family members, attended Saturday's two-hour ceremony. Among the speakers were Arlington Mayor Robert Cluck; U.S. Rep. Martin Frost, D-Arlington; his wife, Army Maj. Gen. Kathryn Frost, who commands the Army and Air Force Exchange Service in Dallas; and retired Army Gen. Will Latham.

Latham, who served in the conflict with Gen. Walton H. Walker, for whom the post was named, was the featured speaker.

In his brief comments, Latham told the audience that he remembers clearly his time in Korea but that the American public, still reeling from World War II, was never really engaged in the Korean War.

"The blazing heat, the bone-chilling cold, the mass killings and the pungent odor of kimchi, we will never forget, and the public should not forget," Latham said.

Kimchi is a fermented cabbage dish that was frequently eaten in Korea. Latham mentioned it with a wrinkled nose as though a pot of it was sitting on the podium with him. His fellow veterans nodded in acknowledgement.

Tad McIntosh attended the ceremony with his sons, 9-year-old Crayton and 7-year-old Ike. McIntosh, a Dallas resident, served in Korea, but 40 years after his father-in-law, Bill Rowlett.

"I brought them here to see the history of what their grandfather went through," McIntosh said. A graduate of West Point and a former Army Ranger, McIntosh said he can only imagine what Korea was like when his father-in-law was there.

"I thank God I didn't have to serve then," he said.

Rowlett is not a member of the 3-year-old war veterans organization but said he plans to join. He used only one word to describe Saturday's event: "heartwarming."

The simple granite monument is not completed because the plaque with the chapter's name did not arrive in time. The plaque will sit atop the 3-foot-tall monument. Its front is engraved with the seal of the United States, the seals of each military branch, and an outline of Texas above the words "Freedom is not Free."

Federal, state offices observe Veterans Day

Federal and state offices, post offices and banks will be closed Tuesday in observance of Veterans Day.

It will be business as usual at Tarrant County and Fort Worth city offices and area public schools. Tarrant County Commissioners Court and the Fort Worth City Council will meet as scheduled.

City offices and agencies will be closed in Aledo and Lakeside. They will be open in Azle, Benbrook, Burleson, Crowley, Edgecliff Village, Everman, Forest Hill, Lake Worth, River Oaks, Sansom Park, Westworth Village and White Settlement.

Garbage, recyclables and yard trimmings will be collected as scheduled.

Post offices will be closed. There will be no delivery except for Express Mail.

The Fort Worth Transportation Authority, including the Trinity Railway Express, will operate a normal schedule.

The Fort Worth Herd will be on the move.

ONLINE: For information on the Korean War, visit the Secretary of Defense's Korean War Commemoration Web site at korea50.army.mil.

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