

## Military Order of the Purple Heart-Chapter 572 Sierra Vista

From MOPH National:

National Korean War Veterans  
Armistice Day

On 27 July, National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day.

We pause to honor the 1.8 million American men and women who served and sacrificed so that a people they had never met would know the blessings of liberty and security. Sixty-Five years ago, despite the nation's continued weariness from World War II, America's armed forces were again called upon to help defend against the tide of imperialism - this time in the form of Communism. Slogging through mud, crossing endless mountain ridges, battling bitter cold and snow, and enduring heavy enemy fire in a three-year fight against the North Koreans and Chinese, nearly 37,000 Americans gave their last full measure of devotion, pushing the invading armies back across the 38th parallel. After three years of a bloody and frustrating war, on July 27, 1953, the United States, the People's Republic of China, North Korea, and South Korea agreed to an armistice that brought the Korean War to an end, even if it was an unsatisfactory stalemate.

The Korean War is often referred to as "The Forgotten War." That is because Congress never issued a declaration of war, and President Truman never referred to Korea as a war-he called it a "police action." Today, Americans can look at Korea, Vietnam, even Iraq and Afghanistan and recognize all of these as wars. But in the 1950's no precedent existed for acknowledging a military conflict as a war in the absence of a formal declaration. Moreover, when the war first broke out, most Americans feared that America's involvement would result in the same type of rationing and full mobilization that had characterized the Second World War. When that failed to occur, most Americans turned back to their own lives within a few months, ignoring the conflict raging half a world away. About one-fourth of Korean War veterans also served in World War II and many went on to serve in the Vietnam War. Perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of Korean War veterans is their silence. It's been noted that veterans of both World War II and the Vietnam War came back to talk about what they did, but Korean War veterans just came home and tried to pick up their old lives and forget their wartime experiences.

As we pause this day to salute the men and women who fought to defend the Korean people, we should also reflect on the open and prosperous society that is their enduring legacy. The Republic of Korea has risen from occupation and ruin to become one of the world's most vibrant democracies and the friendship between our two nations -- forged in war and fortified by common ideals -- remains as strong as ever. This progress was not an accident. It reminds us that liberty and democracy do not come easily; we must win them, tend to them constantly, and defend them without fail. As we mark this anniversary of the Korean War Armistice, let us show the full care and support of a grateful Nation to every service member who fought on freedom's frontier.



