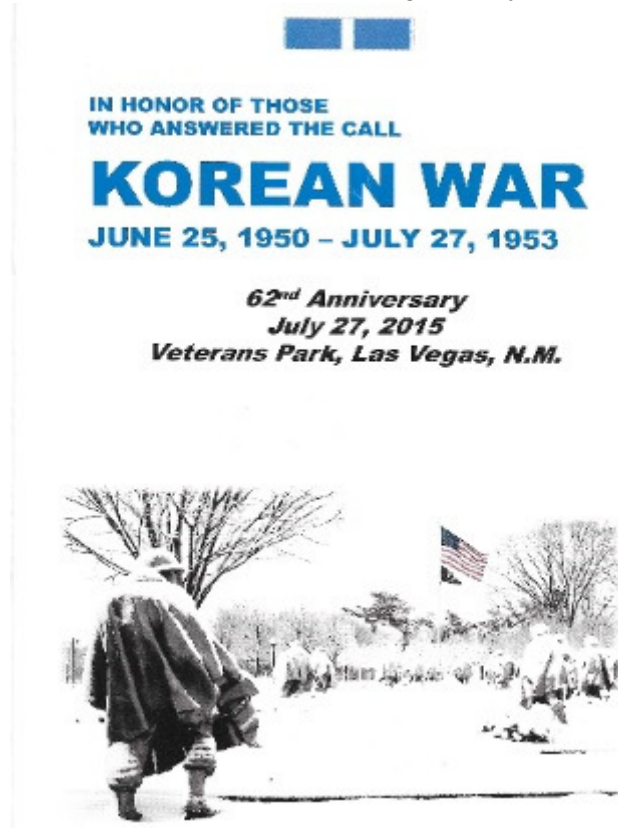


**OF REMEMBERING KOREAN WAR VETS**  
**Veterans Park, Las Vegas, NM, July 27, 2015**  
By Joe Carvalko, Keynote Speaker

Today, the 62<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Korean War Armistice, is a time to pause and draw our attention to the unbroken chain of patriots who have come forward to serve and defend us in times of war and protect us in times of peace. Let us pay special tribute to our Korean War soldiers, many who died, many left to rot in POW camps, and many who returned as veterans. On behalf of our great city, let us thank them for service to our nation, they who, in



the words of the great civil war general John A. Logan, made their breasts a barricade between our country and its foes.

We often call the Korean War the forgotten war, because it was waged between WWII and Vietnam, but on this day, July 27, we are reminded of the soldiers who fought their way across a deadly peninsula, leaving their bodies, minds and spirits on countless unnamed battlefields. Some never returned, others returned having to pick up the pieces and move on.

Sixty five years ago young men and women answered the call to protect us against communism, which at that time, was this country's greatest threat. Many of them left from that very railway station down the road.

On days like today, if you listen carefully you might hear the approaching locomotive's rumble. Back then a local brass band might have played, the station

master might have bellowed arrivals of young men returning home, some to start new lives and some to be buried in a field of white crosses, lilled and sometimes forgotten.

Rest assured that that station has not forgotten the boys turned men, some who returned 62 years ago as fragments of war..., lost limbs or shell shocked. And, neither should we.

I proudly served with dozens of G.I.s, who had served in Korea, as a young man they were my NCOs and Officers, and to a man, they showed me an inner strength, a grit. They taught me the value of hard work, respect and dedication to the mission, and importantly, a lesson every young man should learn: to never give up. They knew that first hand.

The Korean War left in its wake 36,516 GIs dead, 92,134 wounded, and 4,759, who are still missing in action. Of the 7,190 American prisoners of war, approximately 3,000 died in captivity, 43%, largely of starvation. And, as I will speak to momentarily, at least 1,000 POWs who were left behind in North Korea, after the war ended.

Most of the generations born after the Korean War do not know that on June 25, 1950, it rained hard along the invisible line separating the two Koreas. Sometime in the early morning, rumors flooded Seoul that the North Korean People's Army, had crossed the 38th parallel. Three days later, the North Korean People's Army stormed into the capital killing, wounding and capturing thousands. Let me recap three segments of the war, which I think convey the bravery that Americans warriors displayed.

Following the initial NK onslaught, within days, President Truman, a veteran himself, ordered troops flown into the country. General Douglas MacArthur ordered the 1st Battalion, 21st Regiment, 24th Infantry Division to Suwon, Korea, to hold the line against the advancing North Korean Army. Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Brad Babcock, a contingent of four hundred and six men (406) departed from Itazuke Air Base, Japan on the morning of July 1—only six days after the North Korean invasion—to hold back the advancing NK Army!

Most of the soldiers of the Task Force were teenagers with no combat experience and only eight weeks of basic training. Only a third of the officers had combat experience from World War II. Many of them nevertheless volunteered. The soldiers were each equipped with only 120 rounds of ammunition and two days of C-rations.

After reaching their destination at Osan, a little south of Seoul, they waited until the scout spotted the North Korean caravan, which stretched as far as the eye could see. In the face of thousands of NK troops, Task Force Smith managed to hold its position for three hours.

Most of the men were able to retreat, but a number of wounded litter-borne soldiers were left behind along with an attending medic. The American wounded were later found shot to death in their litters. More than one soldier was found dead, his hands tied behind his back.

250 of Task Force Smith's force returned to the American lines before nightfall. The balance included about 60 dead, 21 wounded and 82 captured, 32 of whom died in captivity. So began, 3 years of one of the U.S.'s most brutal wars against its enemies.

The Marines invaded Inchon September 25, 1950 and then through the fall US troops pushed on to the Manchurian Border, and the Yalu River.

But, in one of the greatest surprises in military history, in mid-to late November, at the Korean northern front, as many as 300,000 Chinese poured over the frozen Yalu River, attacking and overrunning U.N. forces decimating the US 2nd Infantry Division.

The U.S. Eighth Army's retreat was the longest in US Army history. On 27 November at the Korean eastern front, a U.S. 7th Infantry Division Regimental Combat Team (3,000 soldiers) and the U.S. 1st Marine Division (12,000–15,000 marines) were unprepared for the Chinese 9th Army Group's three-pronged encirclement at the Battle of Chosin Reservoir, but many managed to escape under Air Force and X Corps support fire—albeit with some 15,000 casualties.

By November 30, the Chinese had all but expelled the U.S. Eighth Army from North Korea and by mid December had crossed the 38th parallel.

During one allied evacuation, about 193 shiploads of UN Command forces and matériel (approximately 105,000 soldiers, 98,000 civilians, 17,500 vehicles, and 350,000 tons of supplies) were evacuated to Pusan, the southern tip of Korea, where we'd started in July.

For the remainder of the Korean War the UN Command and the Chinese/ NKPA fought, but exchanged little territory; the stalemate held. Large-scale bombing of North Korea continued, and protracted armistice negotiations began 10 July 1951 at Kaesong.

The principal battles of the stalemate include the Battle of Bloody Ridge (August–September 1951; the Battle of the Punchbowl (August– September 1951), the Battle of Heartbreak Ridge (September–October 1951), the Battle of Old Baldy (June–August 1952), the Battle of White Horse (October 1952), the Battle of Triangle Hill (October–November 1952), the Battle of Hill Eerie (March–June 1952), the sieges of Outpost Harry (June 1953), the Battle of the Hook (May 1953), the Battle of Pork Chop Hill (March–July 1953), and the Battle of Kumsong (July 1953, ending the day the Armistice was signed).

I would like to read a poem about the battle for Hill 555 North of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel during the Korean War.

A cold and moon-less Christmas morn, the bugler lifted his silver horn; the chaplain led the men in prayer, that the Lord might light the souls soon bare. In communion they marched into a darkness, unable to change that in its starkness, breached the seam that unglued man, in every conflict and every land, love, hate and humanity splayed, a scorched earth of napalm laid, naked upon a frozen floor, where fields of broken bodies bore, monstrosities, brutalities folded and strewn, soldiers stilled in the yellow moon.

Let me repeat one of the cold statistics of the Korean War, 4,759, are still missing in action. 3,000 POWs died in captivity, 43%, largely of starvation. 1,000 POWs were left behind, abandoned by the U.S. government.

Some POWs, I believe, were left behind, after the Armistice, and never returned, because getting them back would have disrupted the politics of war. As that flag above us reads: You Are Not Forgotten.

Years after the war ended, I pursued the whereabouts of what happened to POWs that were not repatriated after the war, and had the honor of listening to many first hand accounts of what happened leading up to and while these men were inhumanly imprisoned.

During the November 1950 Chinese onslaught , thousands of soldiers were wounded, died, listed MIA, and captured. Among them, Corporal Roger Dumas, who was listed as MIA. A year after the Armistice, the Pentagon sent a letter to his parents declaring that he was presumed, dead.

Twenty five years later his Bob Dumas, Roger's brother was visiting the archives in Washington DC and ran across a Congressional Resolution that passed in 1957 asking for an accounting of 450 unaccounted for POWs— listing his brother Corporal Dumas among them. How could Roger Dumas have been MIA if he was listed as a POW in the resolution? The following year the brother discovered an Army intelligence report, dated April 24, 1953, which disclosed a summary of an interrogation at Panmunjom, of Cecil V. Preston, a repatriated POW:

“Private Dumas was alive but in poor physical condition in Camp 5.” Several other statements have been received from repatriated prisoners of war, and Private Dumas was captured and held in Camp 5 at Pyoktang, North Korea. These statements are not in agreement as to the date on which Private Dumas is supposed to have died, but are agreed that he was held in Camp No. 5. Since only one man by the name of Dumas was reported MIA in Korea, there appears little chance of mistake in identification.”

Bob requested that the Army provide the last known whereabouts of the men who apparently had some information concerning his brother. The Army refused. He interviewed witnesses whom remembered his brother and able to describe him physically. Bob then found Roger's name in a dozen different documents, from U.S. Congressional records and UN investigations to International Red Cross accounts. He found his brother in photos of soldiers in what appeared as a group event and another where a group of GIs were playing volleyball in a POW camp. Although CIA photo analysis would someday conclude that the picture was not that of Dumas, his brother never had any doubt.

On the strength of this evidence, Bob petitioned the U.S. Army Board for the Correction of Military Records. He requested that they amend the presumptive death and MIA status of Roger Dumas to POW. It refused to hear the case. In the early 80s, I took on the case to Federal Court, suing the President of the U.S. and the Secretary of the Army, for an accounting.

Over the next several years the government, Army, Justice Department and the CIA, fought tooth and nail to prevent any information about what happened to Dumas (refusing to declassify records, and threatening witnesses), and it became clear that he was not the only soldier, that had been listed MIA, but in fact there were other POWs, alive that had not been repatriated. At trial we produced a witness from Camp 5, one who, through his efforts saved Duma's life, by packing a gaping wound in his side, with a maggot poultice, and through his testimony and other documents (IRC) we proved that Dumas was alive in Camp 5. The court ordered the ABCMR to change the soldier's status from MIA to POW. They resisted for almost a year and finally capitulated.

But, why Dumas and a significant number of others were not returned remained a mystery.

But, for all the thousands of documents I read in preparing for the Dumas case, and for all the witnesses I interviewed, nothing was more revealing than a coincidental 1985 meeting with Ambassador U. Alexis Johnson, from the U.S. State Department at a joint meeting between the National Security Administration and American Bar Association. The ambassador's host introduced him by saying that he was a chief negotiator along with Henry Kissinger at the Paris talks that eventually extricated the U.S. from Vietnam. and had been a negotiator at Panmunjon in 1953 to negotiate the Korean War Armistice.

After his talk about China and U.S. strategic interests, he said that he had another appointment and made an abrupt exit. I left, too, and cornered him in the lobby of the hotel. While he waited for his car to come, I introduced myself and told him in a nutshell what the Dumas case concerned. He listened intently. I asked why so many POWs were not returned.

He said that as the armistice approached, the North Koreans were increasingly agitated over the UN's unwillingness to force the 40,000 North Korean POWs and defectors to return to North Korea. Unlike the end of many conflicts, the Korean soldiers on both sides had families on both sides of the DMZ. Given a choice, and to the chagrin of the North Koreans, many of their soldiers desired to remain in the South.

What he did not say, but which I knew, although not putting two and two together, is that in June 1953, while there were major battles in progress, but a month before the Armistice, was to be signed, ROK President, Syngman Rhee took it upon himself to order the gates to several South Korean POW camps opened. 25,000 North Koreans "escaped" into South Korea.

The ambassador went on to say, that when Big Switch, the final repatriation of U.S. soldiers came in August-September 1953, the North Koreans retaliated and refused to release hundreds

of U.S. soldiers. The UN and the U.S. did all they could taking the negotiation route, but short of opening hostilities again, the subject was best left up to the post war negotiators.

As his car arrived he said. "It was an awful thing we did to those boys."

I stood there stunned that he would reveal to me so matter of fact, as if it were a matter of common knowledge, something I could not get anybody to talk about for several years, here in the US or in my travels to Korea and my visits with the Ministry of Defense.

Thereafter I reported my conversation to my congressman and asked him to investigate. After several months, his investigators said that the ambassador could not recall speaking to me that night.

Then, in 1996, about 11 years later, documents found, in the Eisenhower Presidential Library, and obtained by the House National Security subcommittee on Military Personnel, indicated that upwards of 900 soldiers were left behind in North Korea, after the war. Five months after the war, on December 22, 1953, Army Secretary Stevens met with President Eisenhower and told him the Defense Department had the names of 610 Army and over 300 Air Force POWs, who may still be alive and being held by the North Koreans.

I believe that the nearly 1,000 Americans were hostages in held retaliation.

According to some, the Eisenhower documents suggest that although that administration was concerned about the possibility that it had abandoned POWs, it did not make the issue public for fear of a nuclear confrontation with Russia or China. I believe that it was politically expedient, because Eisenhower had promised to bring the war to a close, and making an issue over 1,000 POWs would certainly have scuttled the Armistice, and the war would have continued to be fought.

In anticipation of this day I challenged myself to remember my first parade, WWII had just ended, when I stood next to my mother watching men in uniform 4, 8 and 16 across, three times as tall as I, marching down Main Street, echoes of brass bands playing in the distance, people cheering, clapping each time the skeleton of a new regiment crossed our path. I remember troops passing who'd fought in the Spanish American War, 1899, dozens of companies who'd fought in World War I, 1918, and then a few of the wounded from WWII, and those that were then serving in the home front. Among those in the crowd were parents and grandparents, brothers, sisters, veterans and veterans to be, and those that would perish in the unfinished business of wars yet named: the Cold War, Korea, Vietnam, the first Iraq War, of a second Iraq War and Afghanistan.

Thinking about those days comes hard for me and I know many of you, time gradually erasing the details of what GIs experience, often lost in the scores of flag waving parades and somber memorials, during the course of our lifetimes.

But, what cannot be erased for each of us, is the toll of lives lost in war, is the sorrows of families who lost a child, a husband, a brother,... a friend. So, it is binding upon us who are secure in life, liberty, happiness and ... property that we must do everything in our power to prevent war—as our nation sprints into the future.

Sadly, rather than the number of wars shrinking, the number is increasing. Yet, for all the resources modern nations exploit, few are committed to counterbalancing, in inspiration, advocacy, people or money-- a non-violent war against war.

Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world - indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Many of you who stand before us today have changed the world by your sacrifices.

But the present reality is that we have veterans, many whom need our help. Remember that long after the battle ends, long after our heroes come home, whether from the Cold War, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq or Afghanistan, we must not forget what these men and women endured, we must strive to locate the missing, strive to help veterans who ask for it, and at every conceivable opportunity, urge our elected officials to do the same. Not by saluting once a year, but by fighting for you and your families every day.

We thank all of our veterans from all of our wars – not just for their service to this country, but for reminding us why America is and always will be a great nation.

God bless you. God bless our veterans and our men and women in uniform. And God bless these United States of America. Thank you very much.