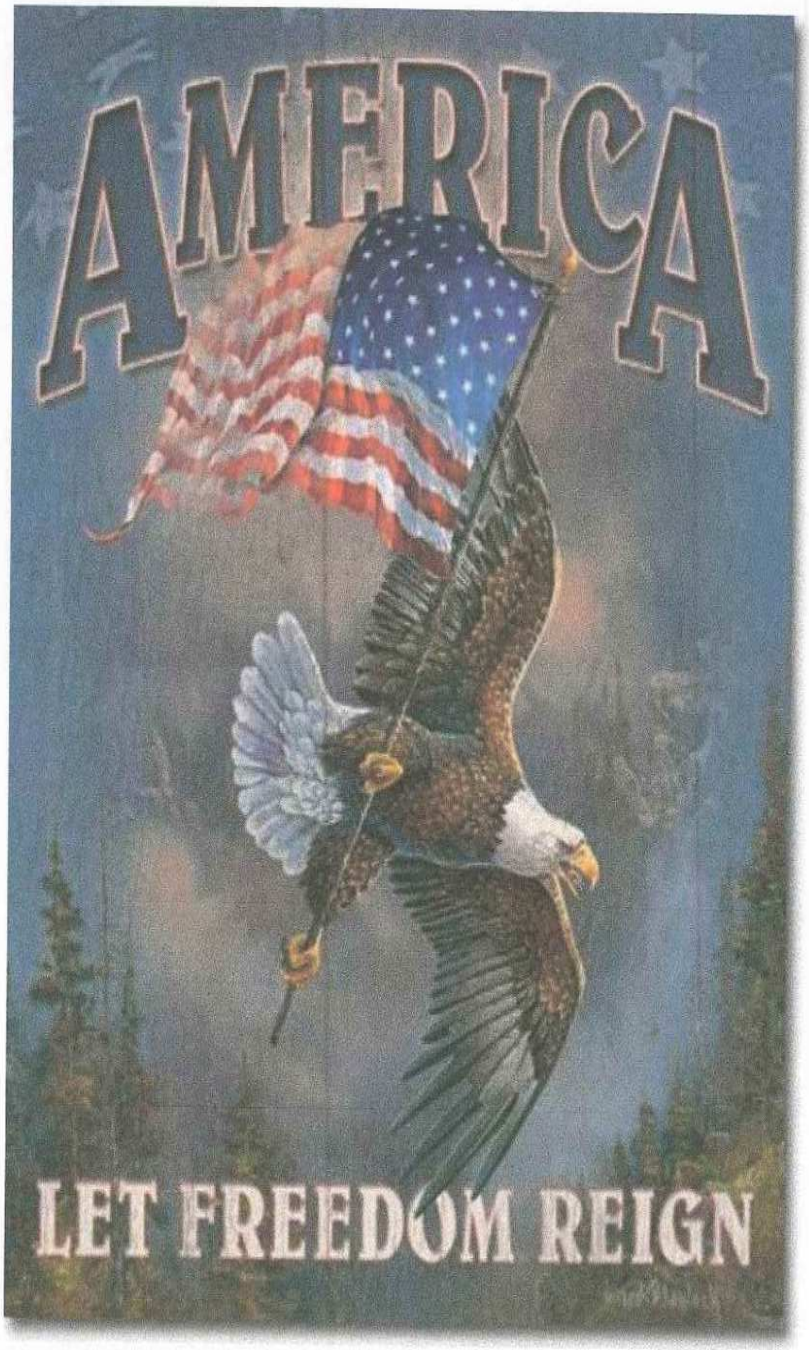
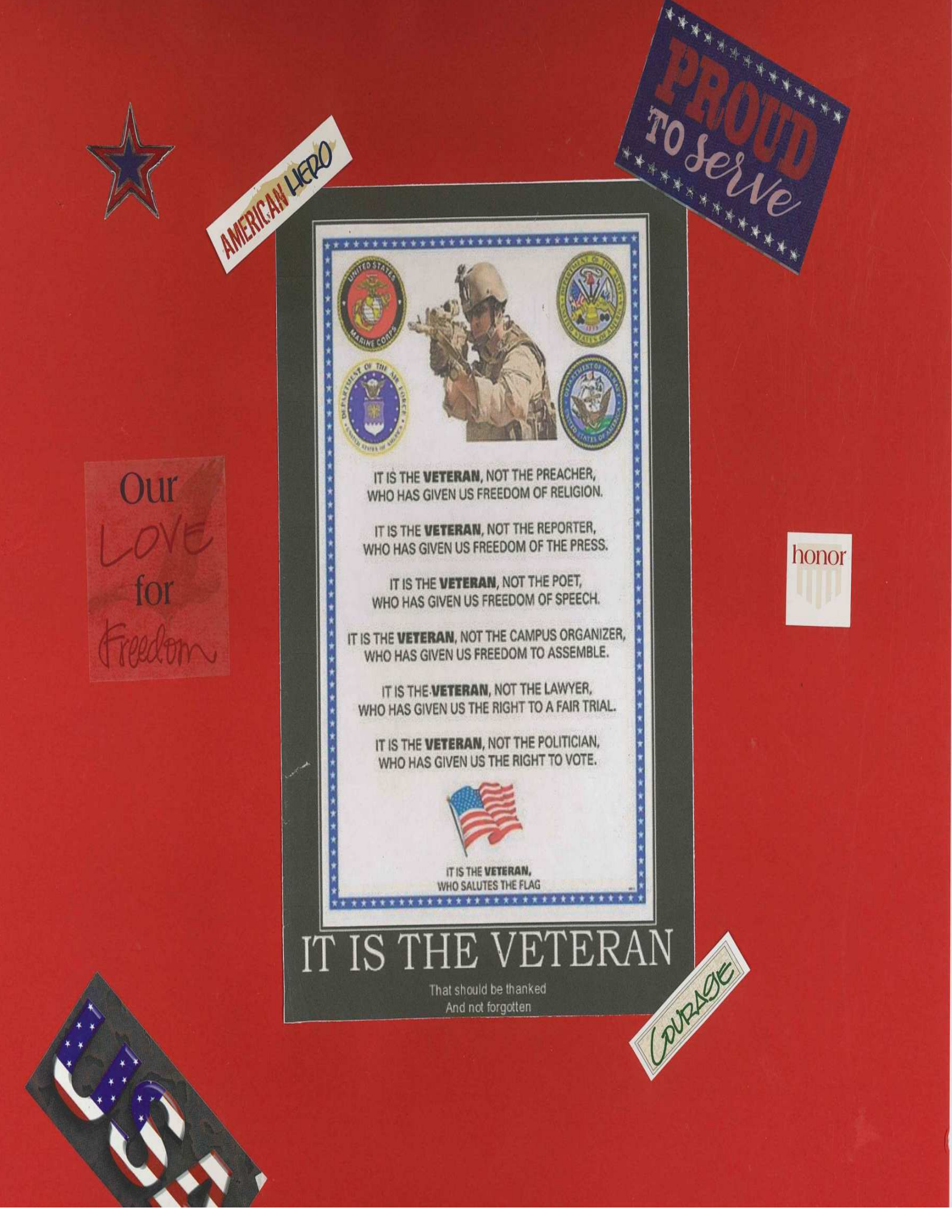

AMERICA
LET FREEDOM REIGN


PROUD
TO serve
AMERICAN HERO
Our
LOVE
for
Freedom
honor
COURAGE
IT IS THE VETERAN, NOT THE PREACHER,
WHO HAS GIVEN US FREEDOM OF RELIGION.
IT IS THE VETERAN, NOT THE REPORTER,
WHO HAS GIVEN US FREEDOM OF THE PRESS.
IT IS THE VETERAN, NOT THE POET,
WHO HAS GIVEN US FREEDOM OF SPEECH.
IT IS THE VETERAN, NOT THE CAMPUS ORGANIZER,
WHO HAS GIVEN US FREEDOM TO ASSEMBLE.
IT IS THE VETERAN, NOT THE LAWYER,
WHO HAS GIVEN US THE RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL.
IT IS THE VETERAN, NOT THE POLITICIAN,
WHO HAS GIVEN US THE RIGHT TO VOTE.
IT IS THE VETERAN,
WHO SALUTES THE FLAG
IT IS THE VETERAN
That should be thanked
And not forgotten
USA

American Legion Post 241 to hold open house April 13

The American Legion Post 241 in Angleton is planning an open house on April 13 to celebrate the Centennial of the American Legion and also the 90th Anniversary of the local post.

The open house will include other community posts with displays of their history and programs. There will be free hot dogs and hamburgers and all the trimmings provided by some of our sponsors, including HEB, BASF and Dow Chemical.

There will be static displays of military equipment and other displays along with programs by local JROTC from Brazoswood High School, and also our local Sea Cadets.

Opening Ceremonies will start at 11 a.m. and will close at 3 p.m. There will be door prizes given throughout the day with performances by the JROTC and the Sea Cadets.

The post home is located at 1021 S. Velasco in Angleton.

Post 241, named for Charles Dixon, who served and was considered killed in action in World War I, currently has approximately 110 members plus over 30 members in the affiliated American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion.

Among those whose lives have been touched by Post 241 are Boys State participants, oratorical scholarship recipients, and many families of our community. The post also supports patriotic programs at local schools and sponsors the county Veterans Day Parade every year.

"The American Legion Family of Angleton is excited to share both the legacy and the vision of our organization," Post 241 Adjutant Glen Moody said. "We've done a lot of good and intend to keep doing it for a second century."

Charles Dixon Post 241, located in Angleton, was chartered on July 8, 1929. The organization as a whole traces its roots to March 15-17, 1919, in Paris, France, in the aftermath of World War I.

The American Legion was federally chartered on Sept. 16, 1919.

Since then, it has grown to more than 13,000 posts around the world and more than 2.2 million wartime-veteran members.

Throughout its first century, the American Legion built a legacy on such accomplishments as leading the way to create the U.S. Flag Code, helping to start the Veterans Administration, drafting and getting passed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, now the GI Bill, which transformed America in the second half of the 20th Century, and including, acceptance of Agent Orange exposure as service-connected.

Today, the American Legion has nearly 3,000 accredited service officers worldwide who assist veterans with their benefits claims and other concerns.

THE AMERICAN LEGION
1919 100 Years 2019

American Legion Post 241
is planning a celebration of the Legion's 100th anniversary

April 13, 11am - 3pm
at Post 241, 1021 S. Hwy. 288B, Angleton

OPEN HOUSE

Free hamburgers, hotdogs, door prizes, military and American Legion displays and MORE!

Bring your family for a free day of food, history and fun!



Tuesday, April 2, 2019 • Vol. 106, No. 33 © 2019 • Published in Clute, Texas

Angleton Chapter to celebrate Legion's century

Event to reach younger community members

By COURTNEY BLACKANN
courtney.blackann@thefacts.com

ANGLETON — This year the esteemed military club, the American Legion, celebrates 100 years since it was first chartered by Congress in 1919 as a "patriotic veterans organization devoted to mutual helpfulness," according to the organization's website.

Angleton's chapter, American Legion Post 241, will help honor the anniversary by having an event April 13 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. which is open to the general public.

The celebration will feature food, drinks, displays by the local fire department and area-military organizations and include lots of history, fun and comradery, according to Chairman of the House Committee Andy Smith. H-E-B, BASF and Dow Chemical Co. were instrumental in supporting the event through donations such as hamburgers, hot dogs, water and more, he added.

Post 241 has a special anniversary of its own this year as it was first chartered in Danbury in November 1928 and then in Angleton in July 1929; 90 years of community outreach and veteran support.

"We've long been active in the community," Andy Smith said. Smith has been a Legion member for the past decade was formerly a Navy Second Class Petty Officer where he worked from 1965-69 as an aviation fire control technician.

Now Andy Smith gets to be involved in many of the local chapter's projects. He said Post 241 contributes to an annual student scholarship, sending local students to learn about government through the Boys State program or actively taking part in outreach for community residents.

When it was first established, Post 241 had 48 members. The veterans were mostly from World War I, Andy Smith said. Since then, the chapter has been involved in various forms of community service and extension of support to other military families.

"Anytime vets come to us, whether it be money or health reasons, we try to help them," Andy Smith said.

And outreach is one of the reasons this upcoming event is so special, American Legion Auxiliary President Jan Smith said.

"We want people to know what we do for the community," Jan Smith said. She said younger members of the community don't realize some of the fun events Post 241 hosts.

For example, every Friday, the band Lowell & Debbie come to Post 241 where people enjoy dancing and an open bar, Jan Smith said. The event is a good fundraiser for the Legion chapter and it's open to anyone who wants to come by, Jan Smith said.

The 100th-anniversary party is another way to enlighten the community and bring awareness to the Legion's role, hopefully encouraging interest from a younger generation, Jan Smith said.



COURTNEY BLACKANN/The Facts

American Legion Post 241 member and retired Navy veteran Andy Smith shows the Angleton chapter's original State Charter Monday afternoon at 1021 South Velasco Street. Smith has been a member of the Legion for the last decade.

Younger veterans need to sustain Legion legacy

OUR VIEWPOINT

Our Viewpoint reflects the majority opinion of The Facts editorial board, which includes Yvonne Mintz, Michael Morris, Alec Woolsey and Rene Schwartz.

In preparation for its century of service to the nation's veterans, the American Legion in 2012 launched a campaign to return its ranks to 3 million former service members.

The 100th-anniversary milestone arrived this year, and the organization proved unable to reverse its trend of declining membership. Instead of climbing, the Legion now has fewer than 2 million members as those who served in World War II and the Korean Conflict continue to pass, and many of those who saw action in Vietnam close in on their 70s.

American Legion Post 241 in Angleton will host a 100th-anniversary celebration for the organization from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. The post is celebrating its own milestone, marking 90 years since being chartered in Angleton in July 1929.

Without more veterans stepping forward to continue the important missions of the American Legion, however, events like this year's anniversary celebrations might soon be farewell parties.

More than 600 American veterans of World War II die daily, and that group of former service members made up the bulk of Legion membership. Veterans of more recent conflicts, including Operation Desert Storm and the War on Terror, are far fewer in number than the draft-fueled mass mobilizations of the fights against fascism and the spread of communism.

What would be lost with the diminishing membership of the American Legion extends well beyond its advocacy for veterans.

The Legion each year presents Boys State, a program dedicated to promoting leadership which draws about 20,000 participants at the state and national level annually. Boys State alumni include former President Bill Clinton, newsman Tom Brokaw and basketball legend Michael Jordan.

For more than 70 years, it has sponsored an annual speech and essay contest that teaches the history of our nation's laws, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.

The Legion's auxiliary provides similar leadership programs for young women.

The American Legion baseball program for teenagers covers all 50 states, Canada and Puerto Rico and includes more than 5,400 teams and roughly 65,000 children.

More than 12,000 local Legion posts are mainstays of their communities, providing scholarships and support services to veterans and their families. Nationwide, Legion members contributed almost 4 million volunteer hours in 2018.

The American Legion is part of the fabric of our communities and nation, one that could unravel without a new wave of members to carry on its missions of service. Anyone who ever has worn an American uniform has a good chance of being eligible for membership and contributing to support their fellow veterans and their hometowns.

Saturday's anniversary celebration is a good way to learn about this history of the American Legion and the important role it plays for all Americans. The Legion's legacy is one worthy of continuing.

This editorial was written by Michael Morris, managing editor of The Facts.



MADDY McCARTY/The Facts

Donald Parker holds a banner of "Hometown Hero" Brewster Borg and leads American Legion members in prayer before hanging the banner Tuesday in the median of Veterans Memorial Parkway in Lake Jackson. Before he died, Borg's dream was to have the road filled with banners like his own, attendees said.

CELEBRATE THE LEGION

Post 241 will host a 100th anniversary event from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at its post, 1021 S. Velasco St. in Angleton. The public is invited. The American Legion Post 241 will also mark 90 years since being chartered in 1929.

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

To learn whether you are eligible to join the American Legion, visit www.legion.org/membership/faq.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

1919 100 Years 2019

VETERANS STILL SERVING AMERICA

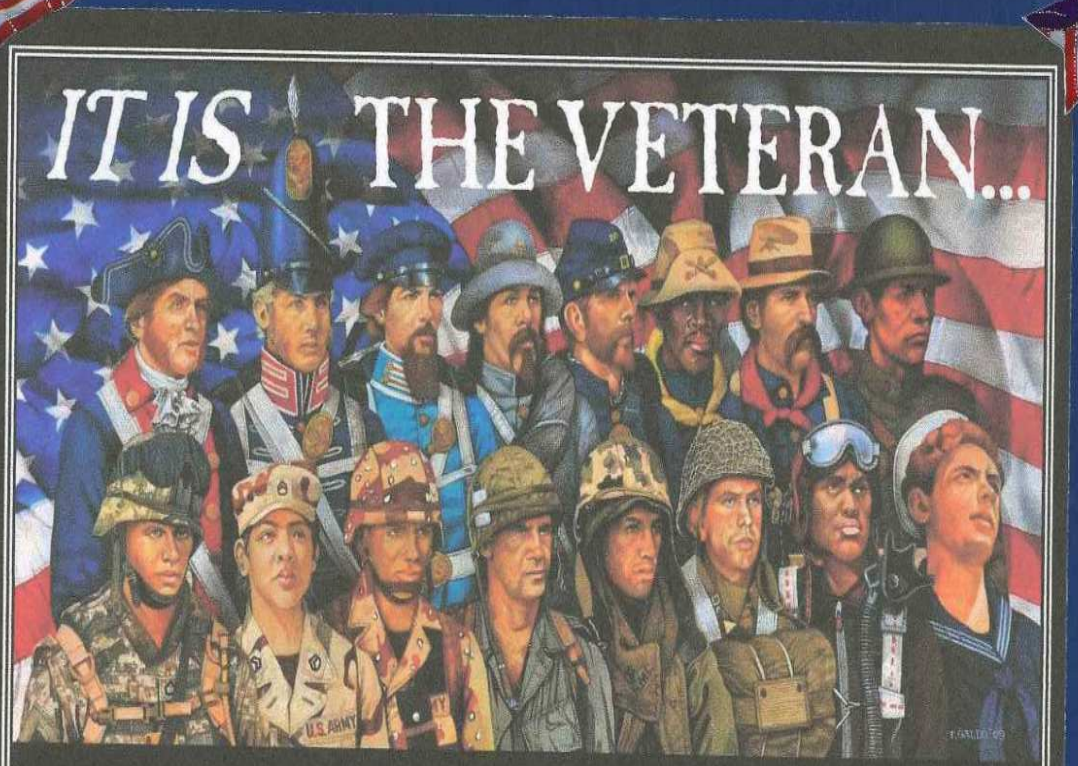
Brazoria County

Veteran Day Parade

1998-2018

John Jasso

thank you

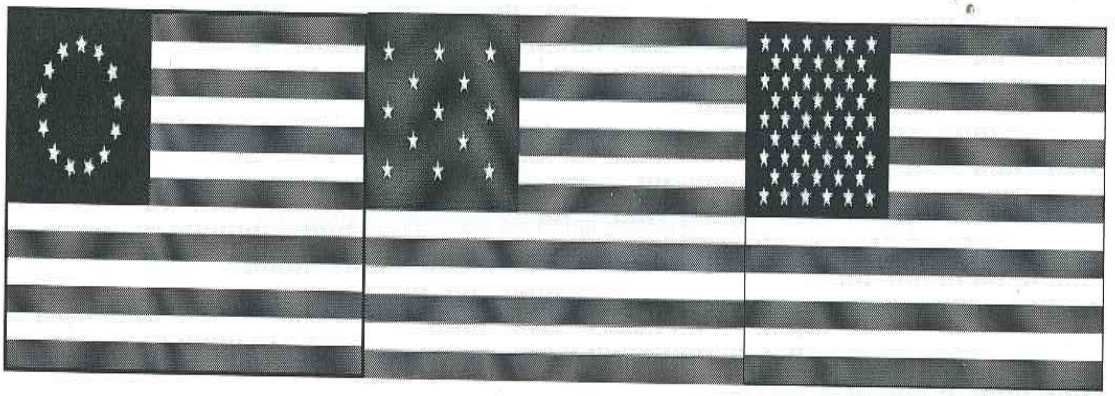


It Is The Veteran... It is the VETERAN, not the PREACHER, who has given us FREEDOM OF RELIGION. It is the VETERAN, not the REPORTER, who has given us FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. It is the VETERAN, not the POET, who has given us FREEDOM OF SPEECH. It is the VETERAN, not the CAMPUS ORGANIZER, who has given us FREEDOM TO ASSEMBLE. It is the VETERAN, not the LAWYER, who has given us the RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL. It is the VETERAN, not the POLITICIAN, who has given us the RIGHT TO VOTE.

Let Freedom Ring!



GUIDE FOR PLANNING AND CONDUCTING A VETERAN'S DAY PARADE



The Brazoria County Veteran's Day Parade Staff.

Chairman--John Jasso Sr.
Vice Chairman--Ruben Jasso
Adjutant---Albert Esquivel
Asst. Volunteer-- Gary Olk

Steering Committee: A permanent committee composed of representative of veterans from recognized posts and veterans organizations from Brazoria County and surrounding areas.

Leadership: The committee will have a Chairman, Vice Chairman and an adjutant.

Host Committee: made up of the community that will host the parade for the current year.

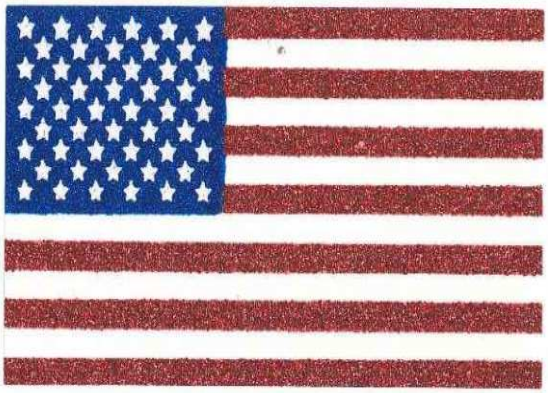
Veterans Organizations in Brazoria County:

American Legion Posts:
Alvin-Post-129
Angleton-Post-241
Angleton-Post-835
Danbury-Post-501
Lake Jackson-Post-306
West Columbia=Post-503
Pearland-Post-7109

Disabled Veterans:
Angleton Chapter-39
Pearland Chapter-195

V.F.W. Posts:

Alvin-Post-5237
Angleton-Post-10378
Clute-Post-8576
Freeport Post-4341
Sweeny Post-8551



Marine Corps League:

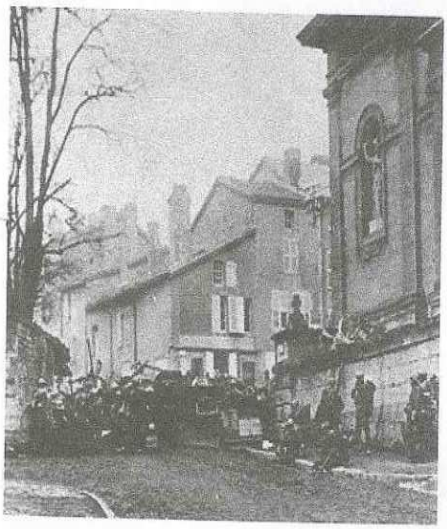
Brazoria County Detachment 982

Military Order of the Purple Heart:

Pearland Chapter-911
Angleton chapter-

History of Veterans Day

World War I – known at the time as "The Great War" - officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, in the Palace of Versailles outside the town of Versailles, France. However, fighting ceased seven months earlier when an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. For that reason, November 11, 1918, is generally regarded as the end of "the war to end all wars."



Soldiers of the 353rd Infantry near a church at Stenay, Meuse in France, wait for the end of hostilities. This photo was taken at 10:58 a.m., on November 11, 1918, two minutes before the armistice ending World War I went into effect

In November 1919, President Wilson proclaimed November 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day with the following words: "To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations..."

The original concept for the celebration was for a day observed with parades and public meetings and a brief suspension of business beginning at 11:00 a.m.

Whereas the 11th of November 1918, marked the cessation of the most destructive, sanguinary, and far reaching war in human annals and the resumption by the people of the United States of peaceful relations with other nations, which we hope may never again be severed, and

Whereas it is fitting that the recurring anniversary of this date should be commemorated with thanksgiving and prayer and exercises designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding between nations; and

Whereas the legislatures of twenty-seven of our States have already declared November 11 to be a legal holiday: Therefore be it Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), that the President of the United States is requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the officials to display the flag of the United States on all Government buildings on November 11 and inviting the people of the United States to observe the day in schools and churches, or other suitable places, with appropriate ceremonies of friendly relations with all other peoples.

11th of November in each year a legal holiday—a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as "Armistice Day." Armistice Day was primarily a day set aside to honor veterans of World War I, but in 1954, after World War II had required the greatest mobilization of soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen in the Nation's history; after American forces had fought aggression in Korea, the 83rd Congress, at the urging of the veterans service organizations, amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word "Armistice" and inserting in its place the word "Veterans." With the approval of this legislation (Public Law 380) on June 1, 1954, November 11th became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

Later that same year, on October 8th, President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued the first "Veterans Day Proclamation" (/opa/vetsday/docs/proclamation_1954.pdf) which stated: "In order to insure proper and widespread observance of this anniversary, all veterans, all veterans' organizations, and the entire citizenry will wish to join hands in the common purpose. Toward this end, I am designating the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs as Chairman of a Veterans Day National Committee, which shall include such other persons as the Chairman may select, and which will coordinate at the national level necessary planning for the observance. I am also requesting the heads of all departments and agencies of the Executive branch of the Government to assist the National Committee in every way possible."



President Eisenhower signing HR7786, changing Armistice Day to Veterans Day. From left: Alvin J. King, Wayne Richards, Arthur J. Connell, John T. Nation, Edward Rees, Richard L. Trombla, Howard W. Watts

On that same day, President Eisenhower sent a letter to the Honorable Harvey V. Higley, Administrator of Veterans' Affairs (VA) (/opa/vetsday/docs/eisenhower_letter.pdf), designating him as Chairman of the Veterans Day National Committee.

In 1958, the White House advised VA's General Counsel that the 1954 designation of the VA Administrator as Chairman of the Veterans Day National Committee applied to all subsequent VA Administrators. Since March 1989 when VA was elevated to a cabinet level department, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has servec as the committee's chairman.

The Uniform Holiday Bill (Public Law 90-363 (82 Stat. 250)) was signed on June 28 1968, and was intended to ensure three-day weekends for Federal employees by celebrating four national holidays on Mondays: Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Columbus Day. It was thought that these extended weekends would encourage travel, recreational and cultural activities and stimulate greater industrial and commercial production. Many states did not agree with this decision and continued to celebrate the holidays on their original dates.

The first Veterans Day under the new law was observed with much confusion on October 25, 1971. It was quite apparent that the commemoration of this day was a matter of historic and patriotic significance to a great number of our citizens, and so on September 20th, 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed Public Law 94-97 (89 Stat. 479), which returned the annual observance of Veterans Day to its original date of November 11, beginning in 1978. This action supported the desires of the overwhelming majority of state legislatures, all major veterans service organizations and the American people.

Veterans Day continues to be observed on November 11, regardless of what day of the week on which it falls. The restoration of the observance of Veterans Day to November 11 not only preserves the historical significance of the date, but helps focus attention on the important purpose of Veterans Day: A celebration to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

Veterans Day Facts

CONTENTS

1. When Is Veterans Day?
2. Veterans Today

Veterans Day originated as "Armistice Day" on Nov. 11, 1919, the first anniversary of the end of World War I. Congress passed a resolution in 1926 for an annual observance, and Nov. 11 became a national holiday beginning in 1938. Unlike Memorial Day, Veterans Day pays tribute to all American veterans—living or dead—but especially gives thanks to living veterans who served their country honorably during war or peacetime.

When Is Veterans Day?

- Veterans Day occurs on November 11 every year in the United States.
- In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower officially changed the name of the holiday from Armistice Day to Veterans Day.
- In 1968, the Uniform Holidays Bill was passed by Congress, which moved the celebration of Veterans Day to the fourth Monday in October. The law went into effect in 1971, but in 1975 President Gerald Ford returned Veterans Day to November 11, due to the important historical significance of the date.
- Great Britain, France, Australia and Canada also commemorate the veterans of World War I and World War II on or near November 11th: Canada has Remembrance Day, while Britain has Remembrance Sunday (the second Sunday of November).
- In Europe, Great Britain and the Commonwealth countries it is common to observe two minutes of silence at 11 a.m. every November 11.

Veterans Today

The military men and women who serve and protect the U.S. come from all walks of life; they are parents, children, grandparents, friends, neighbors and coworkers, and are an important part of their communities. Here are some facts about the veteran population of the United States:

- 16.1 million living veterans served during at least one war.
- 5.2 million veterans served in peacetime.
- 2 million veterans are women.
- 7 million veterans served during the Vietnam War.
- 5.5 million veterans served during the Persian Gulf War.
- Of the 16 million Americans who served during World War II, about 558,000 are still alive.
- 2 million veterans served during the Korean War.
- 6 million veterans served in peacetime.
- As of 2014, 2.9 million veterans received compensation for service-connected disabilities.
- As of 2014, 3 states have more than 1 million veterans among their population: California (1.8 million), Florida (1.6 million) and Texas (1.7 million).
- The VA health care system had 54 hospitals in 1930, since then it has expanded to include 171 medical centers; more than 350 outpatient, community, and outreach clinics; 126 nursing home care units; and 35 live-in care facilities for injured or disabled vets.

West Columbia

Department of Veterans Affairs

America's 20th Century Heroes



World War I Service Medal



World War II Service Medal



Korean Service Medal



Vietnam Service Medal



Southwest Asia Service Medal



Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal

Veterans Day

November 11, 1998





Times photo: Jason Banner

HONORABLE VETERANS — John Jasso, John Jerabeck and Sandy Weems show a banner promoting the Veterans Day Parade set for Nov. 11 in West Columbia. Brazoria County has 22,000 veterans the parade aims to recognize and pay tribute to.

Parade brings honor to veterans

By JASON BANNER
The Angleton Times

ANGLETON — The inaugural Brazoria County Veterans Day Parade will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 11, starting at Prosperity Bank in West Columbia and covering a 1.2 mile route.

The event is the brainchild of Angleton American Legion Post 241 Chaplain John Jasso, and he was one of three organizers who briefed the Angleton Rotary Club Monday on preparations for the groundbreaking ceremony.

"About nine months ago I started on a campaign to get Veterans Day recognized," Jasso told the Rotarians. "Last year when I asked some of the veterans if they were going to go to Houston for the parade, a lot told me no, and I asked them, 'Why?' And their reasons were, 'It's a long way, it's a big city, and nobody up there knows me. Why should I go to Houston, and why can't we have one here?' Which was a good question. And I said, 'That's true. Why can't we have one here?' "

So Jasso and his team set out to visit all 16 veterans' organizations in the county.

Each post then picked one representative to comprise the parade steerage committee, and West Columbia was selected as the first city for the event, which will rotate random locations in the coming years.

"Last year we had a parade in downtown Angleton and it was nice, it was beautiful," Jasso said. "We thank you for it. But there was something missing. There were too many of us missing. The veterans are everywhere, all over the county. Brazoria County has 22,000 veterans. They need to be recognized."

Brazoria County Veterans' Service Officer John Jerabeck added, "We'd like to thank the veterans, and also like to make them aware of all the benefits that they have available."

"Anybody that wants to participate in the parade is encouraged to do so," said Sandy Weems, chairman of the parade committee and commander of the West Columbia American Legion Post 503.

"We do have some first year expenses, so we also need to have sponsorship, and if anybody wants to chip in on that, we have various levels of sponsorship available. We're tax exempt."

AT A GLANCE

- **What:** Brazoria County Veterans Parade
- **When:** 11 a.m., Saturday
- **Where:** West Columbia, beginning at Prosperity Bank and ending at Wal-Mart

The parade will culminate at the Wal-Mart in West Columbia at 1 p.m. with a full patriotic program featuring a "Tribute to Veterans" by State Rep. Tom Uher. Clarence Sasser of Rosharon, a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, will be grand marshal of the parade.

There will be various displays of photos and military equipment, live music and refreshments.

More than 35 floats will add spirit to the pageant.

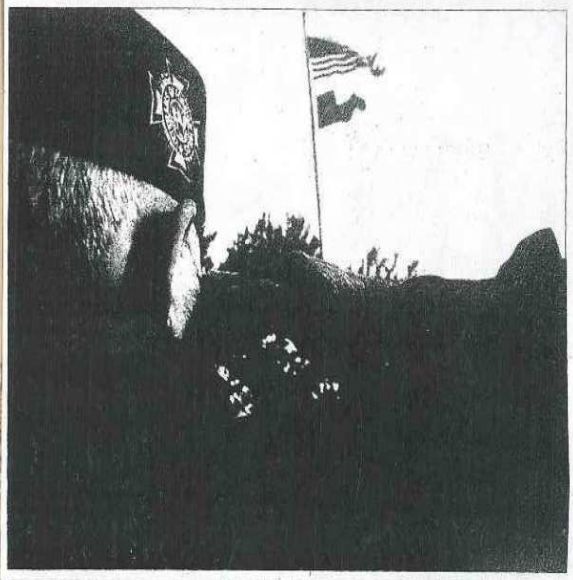
"It's not just going to be a parade; it will be an all-day event," Weems said. "The main purpose is to honor the veterans. The secondary purpose is to bring the younger people into the whole process. Let them experience a little bit of the patriotism that we hope that we have in this country, a little bit of honor in the flag."

The theme of the parade is "Marching with the Heroes." The organizers are hoping the event's success will encourage more veterans to get involved in their local organizations, and communities will become more cognizant of, and sensitive to, veterans' issues.

"We're not asking for much, it's free, we just want you to come," Jasso said. "We sent out letters throughout the community, throughout the county, inviting all the schools, all the organizations. For one day I'm asking you to stop, and come, and say, 'Thank you' to the people that gave us the freedom we have."

celebrate

Honoring veterans









Facts photos: Todd Yates and Kim Christensen

Top left: Bill Menzies, a member of VFW Post 8576 of Clute, salutes the flag during *Taps*. Top right: Color Guard member Carl Segina carries the post flag. Segina is a veteran of the Vietnam War. Above right: Robert Whittle of Freeport VFW puts an American flag on the grave of a veteran at the Gulf Prairie Cemetery in Jones Creek as Jack Todd of the American Legion of Angleton looks on. At left: Veteran Raymond Bennett, a resident at the Woodlake Nursing and Convalescent Center, accepts a flag from area veterans groups, to replace the center's stolen flag. Mark Fowler of Freeport, center, and Jack Todd of Angleton also attach a small flag to Bennett's wheelchair.

Veterans Day coverage
Page 5A

Columbia High School to host Veteran's program

In observance of Veterans Day, Columbia High School will host a Veteran's Day program at 2:30 p.m. today in the courtyard. The program will feature speakers and include performances by the Columbia High School Choir and band. Refreshments will be provided following the program and veterans and the public are invited to attend.

The Columbia High School drama department will present Emlyn Williams classic tale of murder and madness, *Night Must Fall*, on Friday and Saturday at the school auditorium. Curtain time is at 7 p.m. Tickets may be purchased at the box office on the night of the performance.

At the second annual Brazoria County Partnership membership



Chamber update

BY JANET LAUER

luncheon held recently, the Brazoria Economic Growth Team was recognized by the partnership as a business leader in Brazoria County for the group's efforts at improving the city of Brazoria over the last year.

Some of BEGT's improvements to the city include a beautification program called Adopt a Corner. They built and placed welcome signs at all city limits and the organization played a major role in several economic development projects.

Recently BEGT was awarded a grant for over $1,800 from Texas-New Mexico Power Company to purchase playground equipment for a park in Brazoria. The park is being built behind Fire Station 2 in downtown.

The park is a project of the Brazoria Lion's Club. If anyone would like to donate their time or money towards the development of this much needed park, you may do so by contacting any member of the Brazoria Lion's Club.

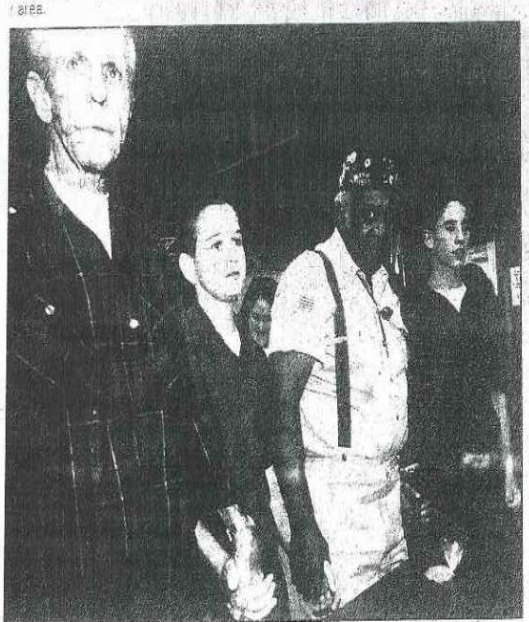
The Brazoria Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce that due to the demand of our growing chamber and community the chamber office is going to full time hours beginning this week. The new hours will be 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The chamber will now be holding its monthly general meeting and luncheons at different locations in the city.

The Dec. 1 meeting will be held at the American Legion Hall and the meal will be catered by Small Town Cafe.

Janet Lauer is the office manager of the Brazoria Chamber of Commerce.

kwise from top: The shadow of WW II veteran Raymond Soley falls on the American today afternoon. Soley was part of the color guard in a Veterans Day ceremony held by FW Post 8576; Raymond Bennett a veteran and a resident at the Woodlake Nursing escent Center receives an American flag and a salute from members of the Freeport e member from the Angleton American Legion on Veterans Day; Jerry Williamson of the n VFW Post 8266 looks on as the Clute VFW Post 8576 color guard come to attention afternoon at a Veterans Day ceremony held a the Clute VFW Post. At Right, clockwise lfred Adams of the West Brazos VFW Post 8551 salutes the flag as he says the Pledge e at West Columbia Junior High School during a Veterans Day program Wednesday; ro of Lake Jackson walks through the Angleton Cemetery with a handful of flags to terans' graves Wednesday in honor of Veterans Day; Rose Garza, a senior at Columbia chool in West Columbia, leads fellow students and audience members in the Star anner Wednesday during a Veterans Day program at the West Brazos Post 8551, locat- weeny area. Below, from left: George Bush, a visitor from the Sweeny House, Raymond eighth-grader at Columbia Christian School, W. Henderson, Jr., a member of the West V Post 8551 and Gabriel Mirabal, a tenth-grader at CCS, hold hands during the singing of Hearts an Open Door Wednesday during a Veterans Day ceremony at the VFW Post in area.









Christian school praises vets

By ALLISON POLLAN
The Facts

WEST COLUMBIA — Columbia Christian School students honored veterans at VFW Post 8551 during a program filled with singing, prayer and praise for veterans.

"It meant a lot to me to be able to be here and sing for the veterans because they've done so much for us. It's the least we can do," said junior Amy Martin. "It's like a blessing to see them be so happy to see us one day a year."

Veterans said they also were touched by the performance and the students' understanding of the country.

"It makes you proud to be an American that they think so much about the flag and their country. We're really proud of this bunch here," said Post Commander Jim Green. "A lot of people think the people forgot the veterans. Really, they haven't. I think a lot of thanks goes to the teachers. They won't let them forget it."

During the hour-long program, senior John Gibson read the essay he wrote on the flag protection amendment that won first place out of the 168 essays entered in the state contest sponsored by Citizens Flag Alliance Inc.

"I've come to this for three years and they give a lot of inspiration. I enjoy coming here because I see somebody who actually lived this," Gibson said. "If we didn't have people like them to fight for our country, we probably wouldn't be here."

Veterans Day is a reminder that our system works

Parade brings out pride

By MICHAEL WRIGHT
The Facts

WEST COLUMBIA — With a presidential election hanging in the balance and constitutional crises looming somewhere over the horizon, the Brazoria County Veterans Day parade took on special poignance as a crowd gathered to honor those who fought and served in the armed forces.

State Rep. Tom Uher, D-Bay City, said calls for recounts and threats of legal action in Florida's balloting don't pose a serious danger to democracy.

"Our forefathers, when they designed this Constitution, considered this could occur," Uher said. "Our system works."

Speaking at a ceremony at Wal-Mart when the parade ended, Uher paid tribute to the men and women who have fought to uphold the American system. He said his problem was not with those arguing over the election, but those who remained silent on Election Day.

"Those who do not vote, they trash these men," Uher said. "God probably destined us to be a world leader because what we stand for is right in God's eye."

Following Uher, Maj. Gen.



Facts photos: Natalee Hall

Above: Cpl. Horacio Rodriguez with the Marine Corps watches as balloons are released to mark the groundbreaking of the WWII memorial in Washington, D.C., during the Veterans Day program in West Columbia Saturday. Below: Medal of Honor winner Clarence Sasser of Rosharon leads the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance Saturday.



HOLIDAY/9A, 12A

Darrel McDaniel, commander of the 75th Army Division, called for a return to the values of service.

"It is veterans who must hold Americans to the ideals of service," McDaniels said. "The ideals of service must become the ideals of the American people."

The all-county parade was a first for Brazoria County and the host cities will rotate annually. Next year's parade will be in Danbury.

More than 35 floats participated in the parade, along with the Columbia High School band and other civic organizations.

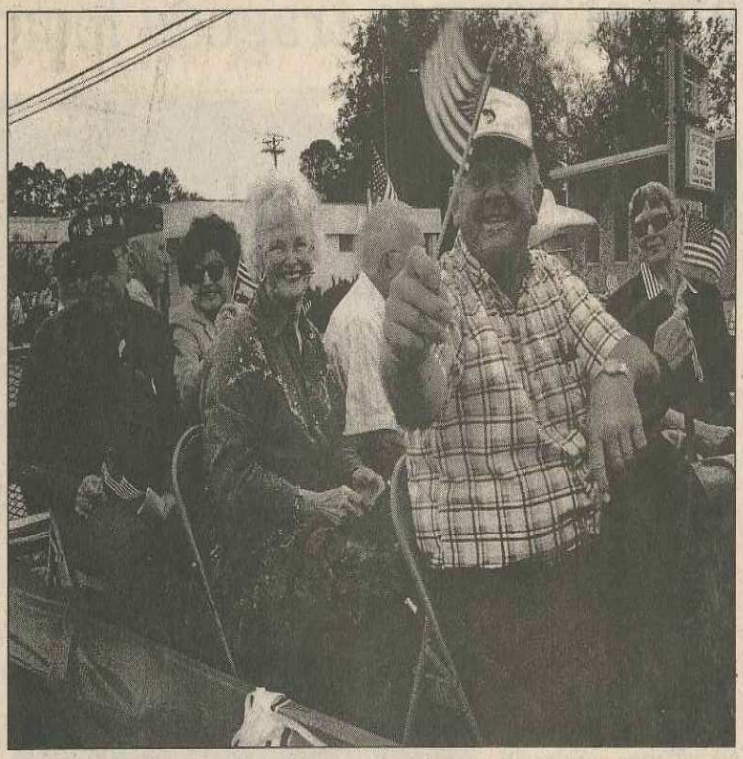
Clarence Sasser of Rosharon, who earned the Congressional Medal of Honor for his service in Vietnam, led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance opening the ceremony after the parade.

Sasser said Veterans Day will always have a special place in his heart.

See PARADE, Page 9A

America's BRAVEST







Facts photos: Natalee Hall

Angleton VFW Post 10378 member Lou Hunter places a flag on a Veteran's grave during the sunrise service at the Angleton Cemetery Saturday.

Above: Dean Wilke, right, waves a flag during the Veterans Day 2000 Parade through West Columbia Saturday. Right: Members of the West Brazos VFW Post 8551 wave to onlookers during the parade.



PARADE

■ Continued from 1A

Clarence Sasser of Rosharon, who earned the Congressional Medal of Honor for his service in Vietnam, led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance opening the ceremony after the parade.

Sasser said Veterans Day will always have a special place in his heart.

"It's a day set aside for the people to honor the veterans," said Sasser, who also served as grand marshal.

"It's a manifestation of America."

Kenny Stanford, a Columbia Christian School student who won a Veterans of Foreign Wars speech contest, delivered his winning speech to the crowd.

"The question now," he asked, "is what will we do with our freedom?

"America's future depends on what the generation of today is willing to do to preserve our freedom."




ANGLETON HIGH SCHOOL
WILDCAT BAND
ANGLETON TEXAS

















LOYALTY & STRENGTH





Freedom



STARS ★★★ AND ★★★ STRIPES














CHARLES DIXON POST 241



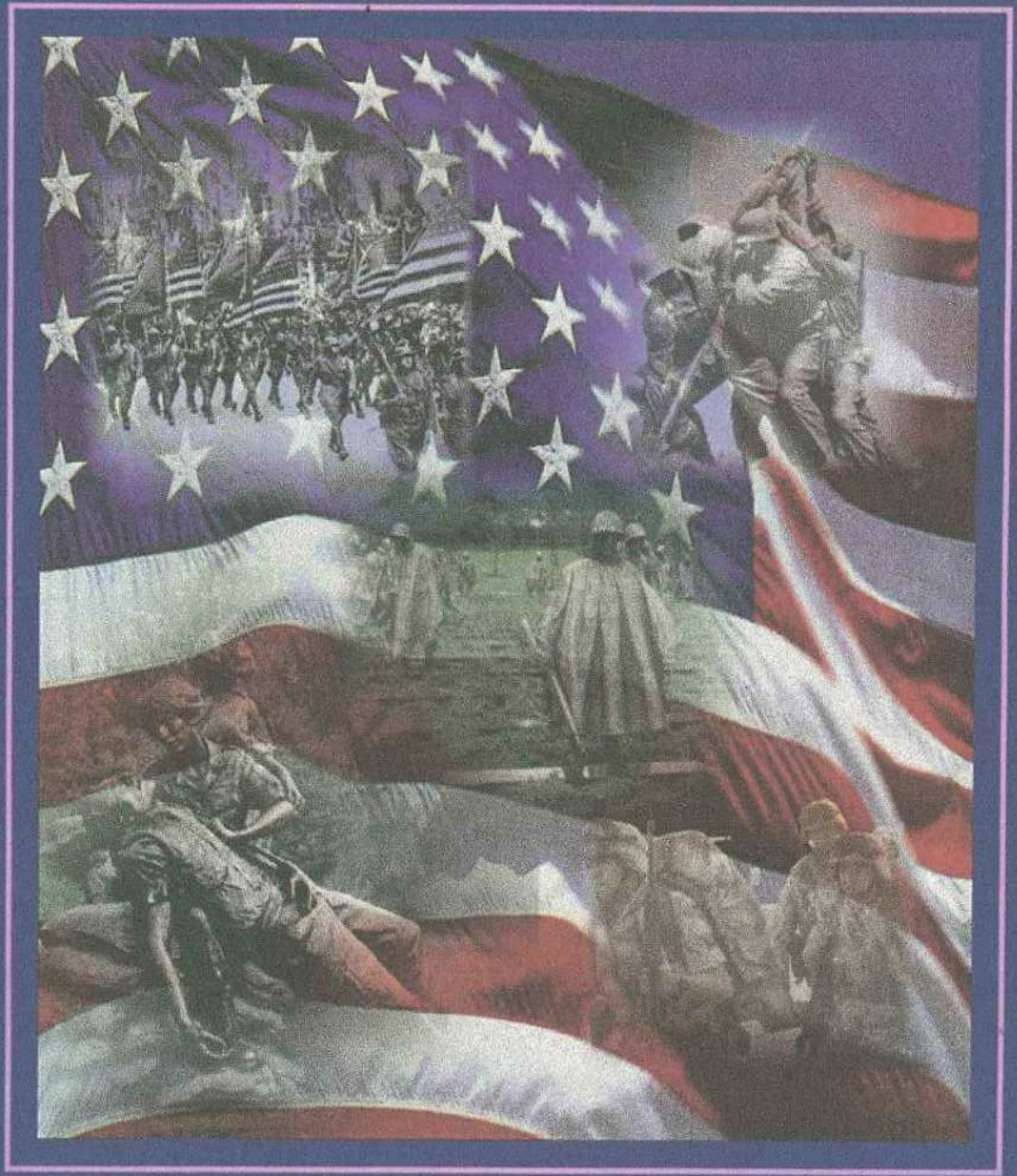




Angleton

Department of Veterans Affairs

Honoring All Who Served



Veterans Day

November 11, 1999

VETERANS DAY

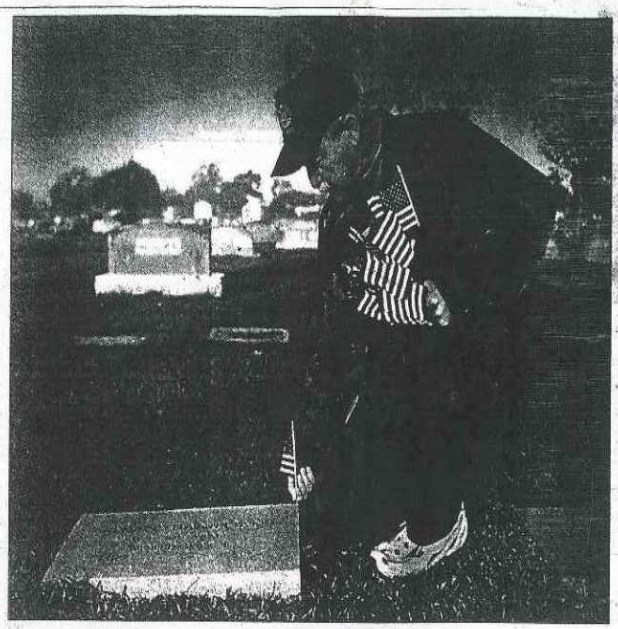
By Cheryl Dyson

On Veterans Day we honor all,
Who answered to a service call.
Soldiers young, and soldiers old,
Fought for freedom, brave and bold.
Some have lived, while others died,
And all of them deserve our pride.
We're proud of all the soldiers who,
Kept thinking of red, white and blue.
They fought for us and all our rights,
They fought through many days and nights.
And though we may not know each name,
We thank ALL veterans just the same.



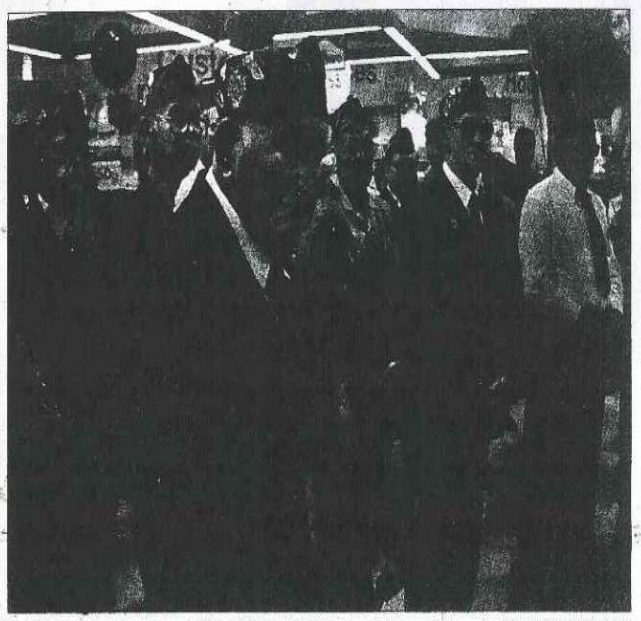
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CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: Pct. 1 Justice of the Peace Wayne DuBose places a flag on the grave of a veteran at the Angleton Cemetery during an early morning ceremony. Local veteran and history buff Earl Roberts has a little luck as he participates in the first-ever Angleton Veteran's Day Parade. Retired Air Force Staff Sergeant Steven Pousson of Angleton helps Netty Cherry, of Angleton, hold a portrait of her son James Cherry, a Green Beret who was killed in Vietnam in 1966. The portrait was on display at WalMart, along with photos of other Angleton veterans, as part of WalMart's Veteran's Day celebration. Bobbie Blanchard, of Angleton, holds flags she plans to put on the graves of veterans at the Angleton Cemetery as 7-year-old Dalton Kubecka, of Brazoria, salutes during the early morning flag raising ceremony.





For the Love of Country



Times photo: Micheal Boddy

TEARS FOR LOST FRIENDS — Angleton World War II veteran John Stefka, who served with the U.S. Navy Construction Battalion, also called The Seabees, wipes away a few tears during a poignant part of a brief ceremony inside the Angleton WalMart store after the first ever Veterans Day Parade in Angleton.

6th-graders give thanks to local vet

By **SUSAN AVERA ROTH**
Times Corresponident

ANGLETON — The cards are simple. Made from construction paper, glue and glitter, they speak volumes. They were made by sixth-graders at Middle School-East, and each one is addressed to one hometown veteran — Howard "Frog" Burnett, thanking him for his service to this country.

Peni Green said she wanted to teach her students about veterans — who they are, what they did and why this country honors them for one day each year. She never expected the overflowing of sentiment from her students.



BURNETT

She read the story about Burnett, 79, a veteran of World War II, in *The Times* Wednesday, and she re-read the article to her students on Veterans Day.

"They loved hearing about the actual incident and what happened to someone," she said. The story told how Burnett was shot down over Bulgaria during his 32nd mission flying as a tail gunner during the bombing of oil refineries along the Danube River. Five of his crewmen died in that mission, and Burnett was captured and kept as a prisoner of war for seven months.

"I talked to them about thanking our veterans," Green said.

She then held a moment of silence in front of the classroom flag for the students to think about the soldiers, war and to be thankful that the veterans served their country.

"Then I let them go with construction paper, markers and colors. I told them they could thank Mr. Burnett or someone they knew who had served, and they came up with beautiful cards to honor Mr. Burnett," she said.

■ see **cards,** page 9A

Veterans honored with parade

By **KARIN BERGSTRESSER**
The Angleton Times

ANGLETON — For the first time ever, Angleton honored its war heroes with a Veterans Day parade, Thursday.

Starting close to City Hall, the Angleton High School Wildcat Band led the parade down Velasco Street to WalMart. Veterans followed in cars, decorated with American flags for the occasion.

City Administrator Ruth Hertel and council member Larry Buehler represented the city, although Hertel said that the city "gave them a parade permit, but WalMart put the whole thing up."

"So many of us, including myself, do not realize what these men did to protect our country," said Buehler. "We need this day each year to keep them in our hearts and minds."

Most of the veterans are now older men with graying hair and mustaches. But as young men they were sent to North Africa, Italy, Korea and Vietnam. We meet the fortunate ones, who have the privilege of growing old. Some of their comrades never came home.

Netty Cherry is still grieving her son James Lynn Cherry, who was killed in Vietnam in 1966.

"It was a sad day," she said. "It brought back a lot of memories. I still miss him. The pain does not go away that quickly."

Her youngest son served in Korea as a paratrooper. In Vietnam he was a staff sergeant, in charge of distributing food among the Vietnamese people. He was only going for four months, but he never made it back.

"It was so useless for those boys to die," said Cherry. "Jimmy Lynn was still in his twenties, and a father of three."

In spite of reviving painful memories, she is grateful for the day.

"It makes you feel good that people still care."

In her eyes, the veterans are "a special bunch of boys."

"They knew how I felt, and they know they are appreciated," Cherry said.

For Roy Willis the service is an opportunity to mature. He was 20 years old when he was sent to Thailand in 1971 to support the airplanes flying over North Vietnam.

"I consider myself growing up during that year," he said. "I learned to appreciate America, and I think I am a better person right now because of it."

Vernon Cochran served in Korea in the early '50s. When he returned home, he was met by his wife and a set of eight-months-old twin daughters.

Cochran is now the commander of VFW Post 10378 in Angleton.

■ see **parade,** page 9A

parade

■ Continued from page 1A

In 1998-99 he was honored Post Commander of an All State Team.

He, along with other veterans, hope that WalMart has started a tradition with a yearly parade.

Angleton store manager Ivora Thompson takes it into consideration.

"This is a great event," he said. "Lots of times we do not appreciate them (veterans), we forget who served in the community."

For now WalMart is raising money for a W.W. II memorial in Washington DC. Through raffles and hotdog sales, they hope to come up with the $40 million needed to complete the project.

On Veterans Day, the store served red, white and blue cake and punch to customers. On tables were photo displays of the people who served — first as young people when they joined the service juxtaposed to a more up-to-date shot of them.

The veterans continued to attend different events throughout the day.

On Thursday, the American Legion Hall on 1021 S. Hwy. 288-B will serve a spaghetti dinner 11a.m.-1p.m. to raise funds for different local projects.



Times photos by Micheal Boddy

to place flags on the graves of about 200 veterans. Confederate flags were placed on the 25 or so graves belonging to veterans of the Civil War.

"It's a special significance to veterans," Roberts explained of the traditional flag presentations at the cemetery. "We pay homage to our fallen comrades. It's a matter of respect."

Around 50 people turned out for the early morning events, sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, American Legion and Marine Corps League posts in Angleton.

■ ■ ■

LAKE JACKSON — More than 100 balloons sailed into a clear Lake Jackson sky Thursday as veterans and other community members who released them looked heavenward.

The group of veterans, students and other citizens gathered at the Texas Dow Employees Credit Union Thursday for a Veterans Day tribute they called Hallowed Halls of Honor.

The color of the balloons, which flew away to God Bless America playing in the background, were different colors - each representing a different U.S. war or military campaign.

"The balloons are in honor of veterans who served in these campaigns, to recognize them that they have risen above, not just being a citizen but a soldier," said John May, commander of the Veterans of Foreign War Post 6266. "It's symbolic, but it also has a lot of personal meaning for every person that was here."

The balloons carried messages inside that read "this represents a veteran who has served the United States of America," said May, a Vietnam-era veteran who served in Korea.

Thursday's ceremony, sponsored by the VFW post, also included the symbolic lowering of the colors, where flags are lowered to symbolize a mourning nation.

And near the end, each VFW post member present stepped forward for a roll call of sorts, where they described their military records.

One by one, they talked of Normandy, Vietnam, Italy, Korea and other spots where they put their lives on the line responding to their nation's call.

The ceremony, the third Veterans Day tribute put on by the post, is meant first to honor veterans, May said. But it is also meant to serve as a reminder that patriotism and unity are important, he said.

"We have to maintain a strong veterans group. We have to maintain a strong patriotism if we're going to maintain our freedom," May said.

Among the group of more than 100 assembled for the ceremony Thursday morning were a class of Brazosport Christian School 8th graders and their teacher. The students were asked to release the white balloons, which honor WWI veterans.

"I want our students to appreciate the sacrifice of our veterans in providing a free country for us to live in and especially to worship God," said English teacher Carolyn Nicholson.

The students also traveled to the Veterans Administration Hospital in Houston Thursday, where they talked to veterans and read essays they had prepared.

■ ■ ■

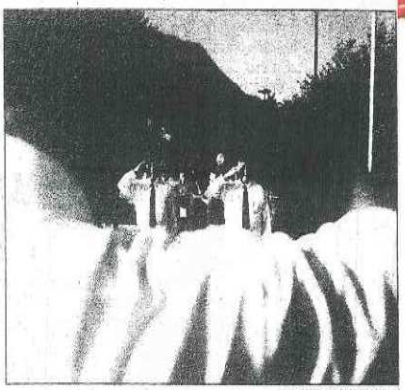
WEST COLUMBIA — The wars are over for the time being, but all of America's heroes have not been forgotten. And veterans and other community leaders of West Columbia are spreading word of all those who paid for

See VETERANS, Page 9A



Facts photo: Kim Christensen

Veterans from the VFW Post 10378 wave as they pass by during the Veterans Day Parade down 288B in Angleton Thursday morning.



Facts photo: Todd Yates

Walter Lee and P.C. Miller, of The Lake Jackson VFW Post 6266, salutes during the playing of *Taps* Thursday at a Veterans Day celebration held at the Texas Dow Employees Credit Union in Lake Jackson.



Facts photo: Kim Christensen

Shelby Sanford, 3, of Angleton, waves her flag and watches the Veterans Day parade go by on 288B in Angleton Thursday.



Facts photo: Todd Yates

World War II veteran Dean Laughlin of America Legion Post 503 attends a Veterans Day Celebration at the Columbia Historical Museum in West Columbia Thursday.



Facts photo: Todd Yates

Vietnam veteran Wayne DuBose places American flags on veterans graves during Veterans Day celebration Thursday at the Angleton Cemetery.

ted across Brazoria County



Brazoria County home, many who bear deep physical or mental scars from their days of service.

Their numbers are significant enough to outnumber the population of Angleton — or those of Clute and Freeport combined.

They are deeply concerned with many hot-button issues, including the flag amendment, national defense, veterans' benefits and welfare, and an updated count of prisoners of war, Angleton veteran Earl Roberts told a crowd Thursday.

Local Marines celebrate birthday

Page 7A

And their history is long and significant. Brazoria County's last surviving World War I veteran, George Clark, died two years ago. Former county court-at-law judge Garvin Germany recalled in a eulogy that Clark actually had to lie about his age to serve his country. Clark went on to serve in World War II and Korea as well.

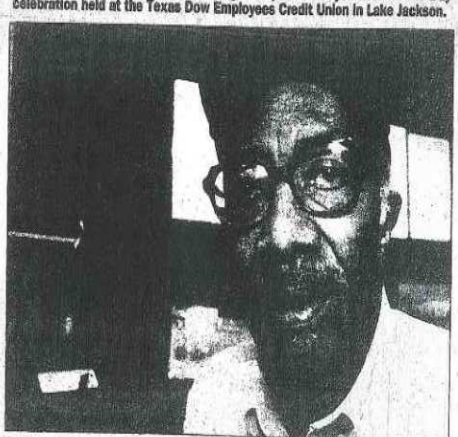
"Who are veterans? Veterans are from all walks of life. I personally know many here in Angleton... Joe King, our sheriff, Judge (James) Blackstock, County Judge John Willy, just to name a few," Roberts told a crowd at an Angleton Chamber of Commerce luncheon

Roberts said the sacrifices made by American veterans are numerous and many cope with special needs others may never encounter.

Many were drafted into the service and lost their jobs or had to halt their college education. Some saw their homes divided or separated as a result of their participation in a war. Some veterans suffered severe physical injuries or psychological damage. Some lost their limbs. Others lost their lives.



World War II veteran Otis Taylor, vice commander of the Lake Jackson VFW Post 6266, salutes during the playing of *Taps* Thursday at a Veterans Day celebration held at the Texas Dow Employees Credit Union in Lake Jackson.



World War II veteran Virgil Richardson, a former Tuskegee Airman, stands in front of a display in his honor at the Columbia Historical Museum in West Columbia Thursday during a Veterans Day celebration at the museum.

Roberts, who was stationed in Germany during his five years in the Air Force, said he experiences his own psychological problems as a result of his days in the service. Having worked around weapons of mass destruction, Roberts told the crowd, he has experienced nightmares of flash fires deep below the earth.

While many veterans need assistance, the sad reality is the Veterans Administration operates on a limited budget, which the federal government cannot afford to boost.

As a result, veterans' benefits and welfare are major concerns of those who have made sacrifices for their country, Roberts said. Many veterans, upon returning from the service, find it difficult to rejoin the job market. "As employers, it pays to hire veterans," he said.

National defense also is a key concern because it has been, and continues to be a crucial component to preserving Americans' freedoms. "If we did not have the veterans who risked their lives around the world, would we enjoy these freedoms?" Roberts said.

Veterans also care deeply about POWs and MIAs, he said, and want a count of those missing in action. The flag amendment is another deep concern, he said, noting that veterans are "very sentimental" about the American flag.

Roberts was among those veterans and supporters who gathered Thursday morning at Veterans Memorial Park near the county courthouse to lower the flags to half-staff, then went to the Angleton Cemetery

See VETERANS, Page 3A

PROUD OF BEING A 'NAKED WARRIOR'



Times photos: Micheal Boddy

A LITTLE SLICE OF HISTORY — Joseph Singleton of Angleton served on an Underwater Demolition Team during World War II. The early UDTs are now credited with being the beginning of the elite Navy SEALS.

Naval unit forerunner of SEALS

By LINDA WINDER
The Angleton Times

ANGLETON — Like many who served in World War II, Joe Singleton never liked to talk very much about those years.

When they returned from overseas, they were busy starting careers, raising families, getting on with their lives.

"No one talked about it because there were too many hard stories, too much bad stuff," Singleton said.

Profiles of the Community

But as he grows older, the 81-year-old Singleton looks back with pride on his work with the Underwater Demolition Team (UDT) a forerunner of today's Navy SEALS.

Five years ago his family got to learning about the UDT role in the war. Last year for Father's Day his children presented him with a large silver buckle with the motto "The Only Easy Day Was Yesterday — UDT Special Forces." He has proudly worn it every day since then.

As a young man, he worked as a carpenter on the coast of Mississippi, helping build air bases and army camps. He joined the Navy Dec. 10, 1941, right after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

"I was close to being drafted so I chose the Navy," he said. "I had seen those Army camps and didn't like them. I knew there would be warm meals on the ships."

He spent most of the war years as a seaman in the South Pacific. One day the Navy asked for volunteers for a special unit, a UDT team. He and two fellow seamen volunteered.

"I wanted a new experience," he said. "I thought I could swim okay and this would be something interesting."

He found out quickly that he didn't really know much about swimming. The men were trained to go long distances, swimming all day long.

"We were shown how to float some of that time, how to never touch bottom," Singleton said.

While physical strength was important, endurance counted more. At the time, Singleton said

■ see **warriors** page 8A

Warriors

■ Continued from page 1A

he was 6-feet tall and only weighed 132 pounds.

Their job was to swim into enemy territory, do reconnaissance work on the beaches to see what obstacles were there and what water depth and conditions were. When they returned to the ship, others analyzed their reports and decisions were made on how to then approach the beach.

Many times that meant the UDT team was sent back in to blast out the obstacles.

While it sounds dangerous, Singleton said it was not that bad.

"We had it a lot easier than the people going in on those landing crafts," he said. "When they unloaded on those beaches, they were wide open. The only thing they could see to shoot us was the tops of our heads. I never got shot at in the water."

Handling explosive underwater was not that bad, he said.

"A lot of people think you have to be far away but with what we were using, getting 50 yards away was enough," he said.

UDT units were called the Naked Warriors because they worked with so little equipment. Each man had only swim trunks, fins, a knife, a face mask, and a bag of explosives.

Some assignments were much more dangerous than others.

"The UDT units in Europe had it much worse than we did in the Pacific," he said. "It was terrible. We lost some men but over there it was maybe 50 percent."

The men were told they could "volunteer out" at any time.

"I don't remember anyone quitting," he said. "I had no gripes with it."

According to estimates, about 3,500 served in the UDT units.

His was assigned to clear beaches in Japan, making channels for heavy equipment landcraft but after the Atomic bomb was dropped, the units weren't needed and were disbanded.

"Then when Korea came they had to rebuild," he said. "That's when the military realized how badly they needed groups like us. From there, it was Vietnam and a major boost for the use of the SEALS."

Today he is very proud of the work done by the Special Forces SEALS and even prouder that the UDT and BUDS (explosive specialists) are recognized as being the forerunners of the SEALS.

"It makes you feel good to have been in the beginning of something that is a real force today," he said. "We could not have done what they do today. People may be the same but we did not have the equipment they have."

He's kept up with the work of the SEALS, noting how they were the ones in the Pacific to pick up the astronauts splashing down as they returned from the first space flights.



Courtesy Photo

Above, UDT 17 — Joe Singleton (third from right in back row) poses for a photo with his underwater diving team on Maui during World War II.



Courtesy Photo

Left, ALL WORK AND SOME PLAY — Joe Singleton (highlighted in photo) has fun with other UDT members on Okinawa after the island was taken during World War II. Singleton's UDT team made several missions to open up channels for landcraft at Okinawa.

One of his most prized possessions is a video on the history of the SEALS that Emma Lou O'Bannon of the Angleton Library helped him find.

"Watching that brought back lots of memories," he said. "They show a lot of old footage of how we were put out and picked up. They give a lot of recognition to the early groups like the UDTs and BUDs."

The tape, "Complete History of the U.S. Navy Seals," calls the training done for today's SEALS the most enduring training in the military.

Familiar faces on the video are former SEALS Rudy from the television show "Survivors" and Wisconsin governor Jessie Ventura.

Singleton's UDT group was promised hazardous pay for their work but never got it.

"Ours was an experimental, a secret organization at first," he said. "The parachutists got their pay but we didn't."

However, he says, he is not bitter about that or anything else about the service.

"The VA helped me go to college after the war. I get a lot of help with my medication through the VA today," he said. "I don't have any problem with the service. We did what we had to do back then."

While he's not happy with most of the representatives in Washington today (except for Rep. Ron Paul), he says veterans are getting a little more respect for what they did.

Singleton moved to Angleton in 1957, spending most of his time in construction and trucking while he and his wife raised seven kids.

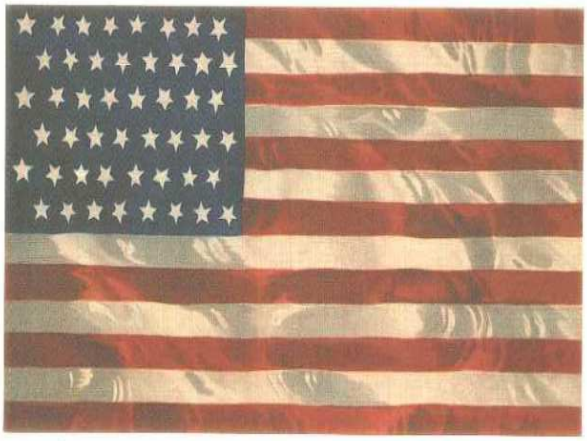
"I don't like publicity but I'm willing to speak out now if it will encourage some of these young guys to go into the service today," he said. "It doesn't matter what branch. Any of the Armed Forces will be good for them. It will be an experience they will never forget. I haven't forgotten mine."

■ The Angleton Times *is interested in doing a variety of stories spotlighting different people in the community of all ages. If you have any suggestions for stories, please contact Linda Winder at 849-8581 or newsroom@angletontimes.com.* The Times *will be publishing a profile feature weekly.*


ANGLETON TEX. 38








ANGLETON



MAKING AMERICA PROUD



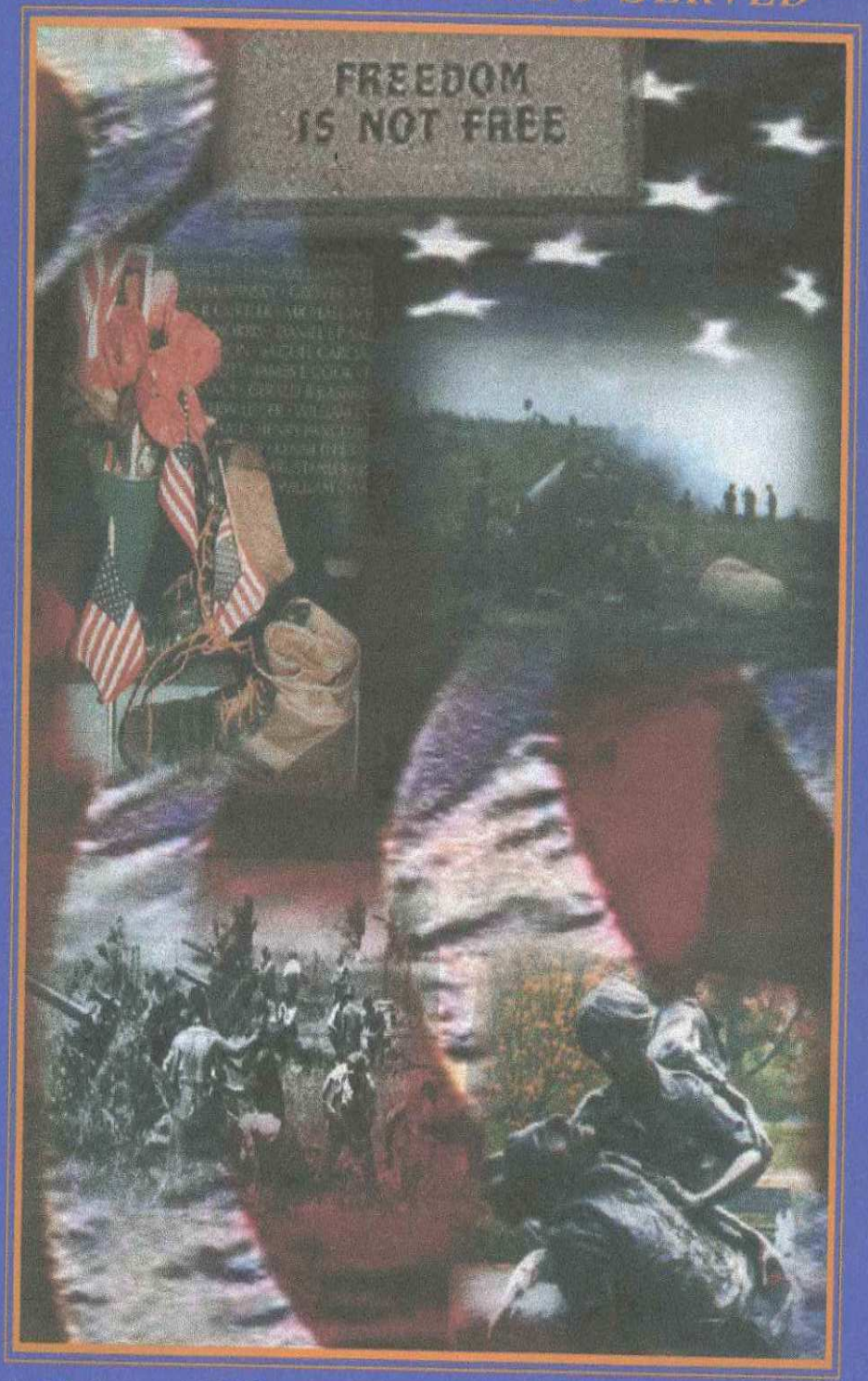


BOUND BY HONOR

Danbury

Department of Veterans Affairs

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED



VETERANS DAY

November 11, 2000

Danbury to host Veterans Day parade

By SCOTT MAHON
The Angleton Times

ANGLETON — The city of Danbury and American Legion Post #501 will host the third annual Brazoria County Veterans Day parade Sunday.

The parade will begin at the American Legion sports complex in Danbury at 2:30 p.m. and will follow Main Street to the Danbury High School football stadium.

Leading the parade this year will be the Brazoria County Sheriff's Department Honor Guard.

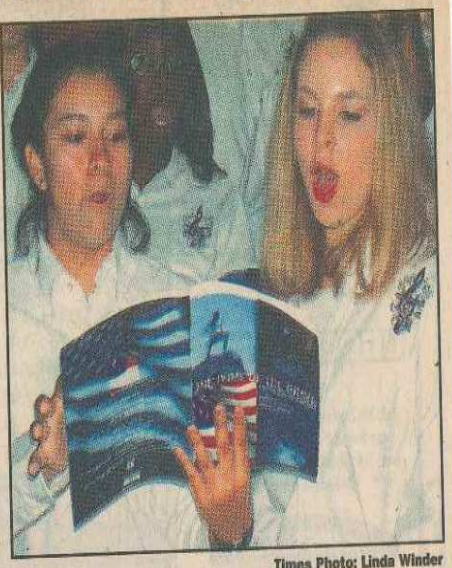
Pete Keillor of Danbury will be this year's grand marshall. Keillor was a World War II fighter pilot.

Dan Gallo, a disc jockey with KILT 100.3 in Houston, will be this year's celebrity grand marshall.

The parade will include floats, vintage cars, ROTC units and Girl Scout and Boy Scout units from all over Brazoria County.

A replica of the Christopher Columbus'

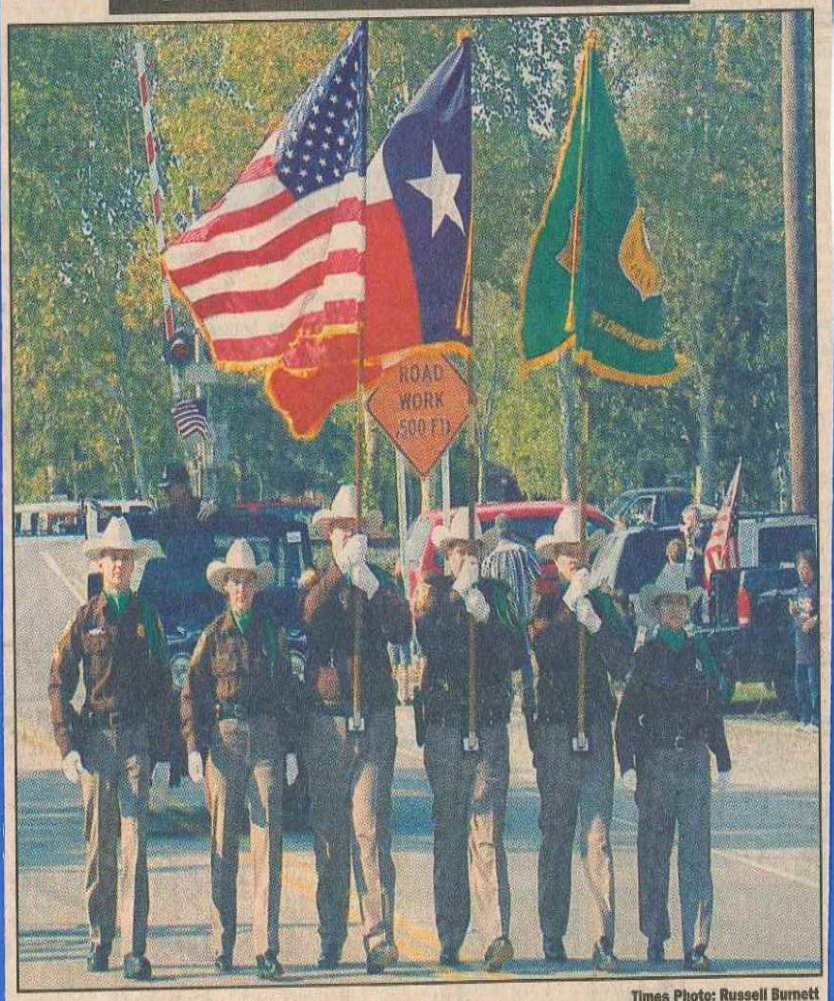
■ see **parade** page 7A



Times Photo: Linda Winder

HOME OF THE BRAVE — From left, Angleton High School choir students Maria Alvarado, Janetha Davis and Stacey Kohutek sing some patriotic music during a spaghetti supper Nov. 3 at the high school.

FOR THOSE WHO SERVED



Times Photo: Russell Burnett

Members of the Brazoria County Sheriff's Department Honor Guard led the Veterans' Day Parade in downtown Danbury Sunday afternoon. Hundreds of people watched the parade, which was hosted by the city and American Legion Post #501.

parade

■ Continued from page 1A

ship, the Santa Maria, furnished by the Knights of Columbus, will also be in the parade.

"There will be free refreshments after the parade furnished by the Angleton and Alvin WalMart stores," said Alvin veteran Larry Townsend. "A program will be held at the high school football stadium following the parade. Judge Wayne Dubose, who is also a two-time Vietnam veteran, will be the featured speaker. Steve Pousson will also be awarded the Silver Rose Medal for his service in Vietnam."

Brazoria County's 2001 Fair Queen, Amanda Morrison, will also attend the ceremonies.

Brazoria County Veteran's Service Officer John Jerabeck said a sunrise service will also be held early Sunday morning at the Angleton cemetery.

"We've also asked churches in the area to reflect on the meaning of veteran's day Sunday morning," Jerabeck said. "Since it is recognized that the end of World War I took place at 11 a.m. on Nov. 11, we've asked local churches to take a moment during their service on Sunday morning at exactly 11 a.m. to reflect on the meaning of Veterans Day."

Brazoria County Commissioners also signed an official proclamation on Oct. 23 proclaiming the week of Nov. 11 - 17 as Veterans Week.

"Whereas, Veterans Day 2001 is a day set aside to honor the millions of Americans who so proudly and honorably served this great nation in uniform during periods of conflict and challenge, at home and in the farthest corners of the world, and whereas it is also a day to support and recognize the many service men and women who are currently serving here and abroad, and whereas we must work hard to instill in our young people an appreciation of the courage and valor demonstrated by those who have risked their lives to protect our country and the freedoms we so often take for granted, and whereas veterans of all ages continue to play a key role in the growth of our nation, the Brazoria County Commissioners' Court hereby proclaims the week of Nov. 11 - 17 as Veterans Week," the proclamation read.

Veterans Day, or Armistice Day, officially received its name in 1926 through a Congressional resolution. It became a national holiday 12 years later.

If the idealistic hope had been realized that World War I was "the war to end all wars", Nov. 11 might still be called Armistice Day - it is universally recognized that World War I ended on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

However, after World War II and Korea, Congress was requested to make Armistice Day an occasion to honor those who have served America in all wars. In 1954, President Eisenhower signed a bill proclaiming Nov. 11 as Veterans Day.

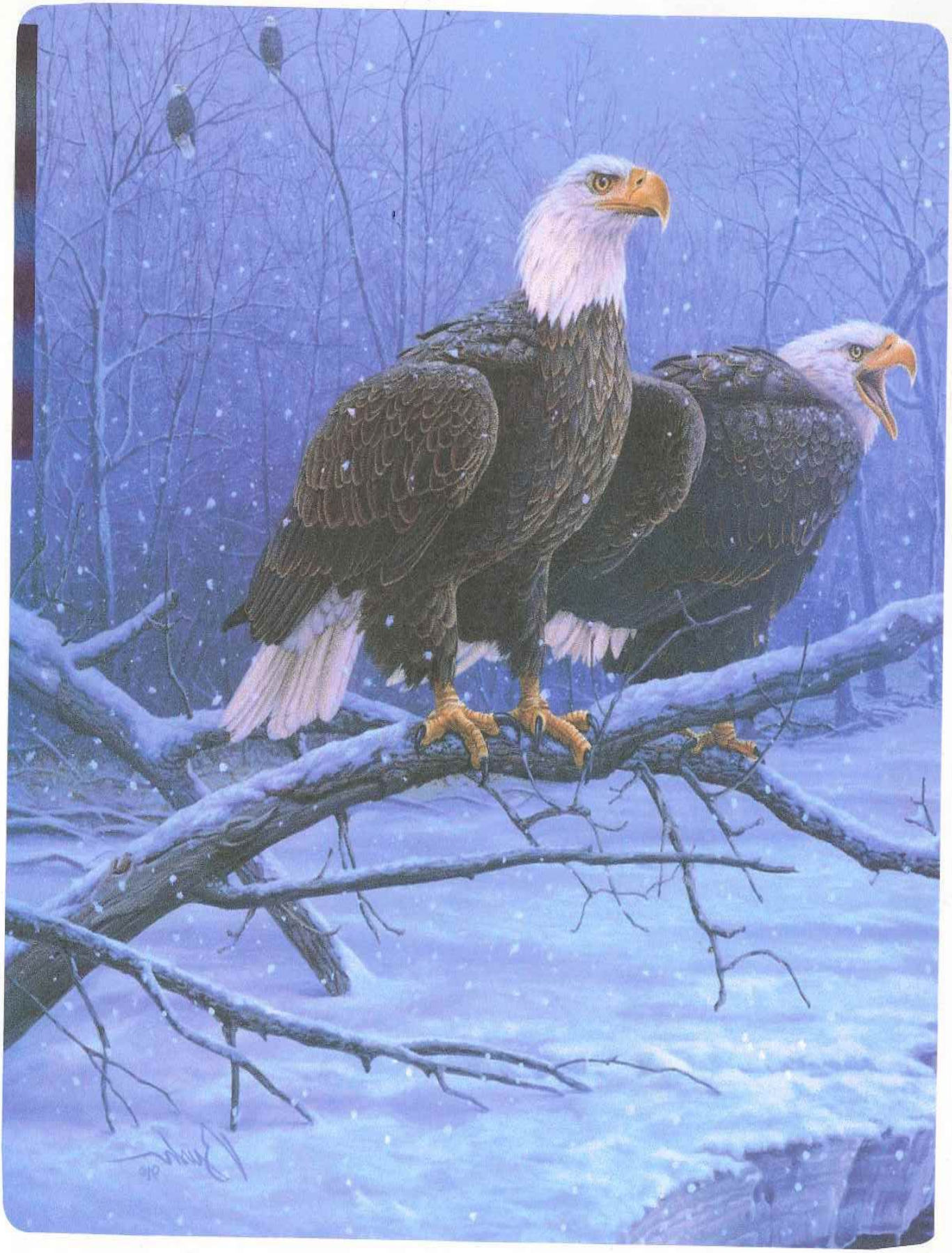
A law passed in 1968 changed the national commemoration of Veterans Day to the fourth Monday in October. It became apparent, however, that Nov. 11 was a date of historic significance to many Americans and in 1978, Congress returned the observance to its traditional date.

The focal point for national ceremonies for Veterans Day continues to be the memorial amphitheater built around the Tomb of the Unknowns at the Arlington National Cemetery.

At 11 a.m. on Nov. 11, a combined color guard representing all military services executes "Present Arms" at the tomb and the nation's tribute to its war dead is symbolized by the laying of a presidential wreath.



America the Beautiful



Standing tall and proud



Facts photo: Todd Yates

Students of Charlie Brown Intermediate School in West Columbia recite the pledge of allegiance during a flag presentation ceremony Friday at the school. The ceremony was held in honor of Veterans Day.

Salute

CONTINUED FROM COVER

VFW members stood in the drizzling rain to raise the flag and then lower it to half-staff as the somber melody of "Taps" echoed through the school grounds. Following the flag-raising was a 21-gun salute, which seemed a favorite among the campers.

"The guns were pretty neat," 7-year-old Christopher Warren said. "They're really loud, though."

Ten-year-old Bodie Windsor found the ceremony especially meaningful because of his great-grandfathers' and grandfather's military service.

"The 21-gun salute shows the honor of soldiers," he said.

Beyond the show of the ceremony, VFW members explained the deep-seated meaning behind each ritual.

The 21 rounds discharged during the display stand for the sum of the numbers in the year 1776, while the triangular shape of the folded flag is meant to resemble the three-cornered hat worn by revolutionaries under George Washington.

"Children today need to know more about patriotism," VFW member Glen Moody said. "This is our chance to show the community how we do a memorial service."

Moody said Tuesday's ceremony was just like those the VFW performs at military burials for any veteran who requests it. But the 21-gun salute was a special addition.

"What we do at most any ceremony is fold the flag over the coffin and present it to the widow or mother," he said.

Hudgins said the moment when the flag is given to the family is by far the most solemn and sacred part of the ceremony.

Hudgins said the children of his generation, who grew up in the midst of an active military draft, lived with the knowledge that they might one day also have to make that sacrifice.

"Every time we're asked to come out to a school, we come out," he said. "We think we may create nationalism in the kids, like we grew up with."

Meredith Amos is a reporter for The Facts. Contact her at (979) 237-0150.

Comrades reunited

Veterans share WWII memories

By VELDA HUNTER
The Facts

TODAY'S EVENTS/8A

Jack Singleton remembers it as if it were yesterday.

Sitting with fellow comrade Leonard Vaught, he pulls out a photograph album and a World War II wartime book. Inside is a sketch of a two-story house in the southern France town of Valence where he and Vaught were captured by German soldiers. The two were among two squads that retreated to the house that would soon be surrounded by German soldiers.

Josiah Hall of Lake Jackson was never a prisoner of war, but he, too, experienced the victory, defeat and the days in between while serving in the Navy as a gunners mate. In fact, all four of Hall's brothers served during World War II, and against odds, all five came back to the United States alive.

Today citizens across the United States are paying tribute to veterans like Hall, Singleton and Vaught who have served in both times of peace and war.

Though battlegrounds today more likely serve as memorial sites, times endured by America's heroes have not been forgotten. On Veterans Day, flags will fly, soldiers will salute and some will share their stories.

See VETERANS, Page 8A



Facts photo: Kim Christensen

Jack Singleton, left, and Leonard Vaught enjoy a laugh while going through old scrapbooks of Singleton's days in the Army Friday in West Columbia. Both were Army POWs at the same time in World War II.

Just about every man and woman who has served for the U.S. armed forces has a story to tell.

Josiah Hall has war memories, too. Although Hall said he doesn't often think of those memories, his World War II experience is unique in one way: He is one of five brothers who served in the war. All five brothers served in the Navy and all five returned to the United States alive.

From oldest to youngest, Daniel Ray was a chief petty officer; Charles Ralph and Myrl Reed, both carpenter's mates; A.B., a sheet metal worker, and Josiah, a gunner's mate. At age 17, Hall entered the Navy in 1943, about a year after his older brothers left for war. During the war, the brothers never saw each other because they were stationed at different locations, with the exception of two, who were stationed together.

"It was hard for my parents. But we were fortunate that we all came home," Hall said. "I thought it was something everybody should do. I thought they couldn't win the war without me."

During his three years served during WWII, Hall was stationed in Africa and France, among other places. When he left France, Hall said he was headed to Iwojima but he was fortunate enough to be called elsewhere.

Hall was a gunner's mate in the Navy's landing forces. It was difficult creating memorable stories there, because they didn't spend much time together.

About 28 years after Hall was discharged from the Navy, he received special commendation for his loyal service during the war.

■ ■ ■

Wartime was difficult for Hall, Vaught and Singleton, but now each can look back on those times and see the fruits of their labor.

Neither of the three said they regret their wartime experiences.

"I take it it was a job we needed to do, and I'm a firm believer that when a boy turns 18 he should go to the military for at least two years," Hall said.

"The wars got every other Hall generation."

From flag-raising ceremonies and the playing of "Taps" to parades and patriotic programs, the day comes as a reminder of battles fought, won and lost.

Although America is at peace today, the nation will pay tribute to all the Halls, Vaughts and Singletons who fought for freedom.

VETERANS

Continued from 1A

■ ■ ■

It was August 1944 and the United States was at war with Germany. Today, Vaught can look back on those days with ease, but it wasn't always that way.

Vaught, who was a rifleman, recalls his Army infantry capturing a hill in France. He waited at a French farmhouse at the hill's base, on the U.S. side, to guide a lost squad. Another squad that directed artillery fire was already inside the house. Singleton was a sergeant of that group.

"At 2:30 a.m., we heard rifle fire. Germans were everywhere shooting. They weren't having much luck, then they stopped right in front of the house," Singleton said, adding the truck in front of the house was filled with soldiers.

"Then an infantryman stepped out the house and killed everyone except the driver of the vehicle."

The lone driver took off running, but Singleton and Vaught caught him. Unfortunately, the two whose path had crossed for the first time at that French farm house were later captured themselves.

"Our lost squad did not appear and we were quickly overwhelmed by German tanks and infantry," Vaught recalled.

"Jack and I began our POW (prisoner of war) period with approximately eight walking prisoners, pushing our seriously wounded in wheelbarrows, deeper into the German-held line."

The two were prisoners together for about two weeks before being separated. As a POW, Vaught served time at three German POW camps and worked on a German farm. But Singleton spent all his time at a prison camp.

He remembers riding in a boxcar for prisoners while being transported to the camp.

"There were about 25 that escaped from one. Then they started locking them," Singleton said. "I spent about 13 days in the boxcar and all we got was two bowls of soup ... We were scared to death when we went through Berlin because of all the bombing."

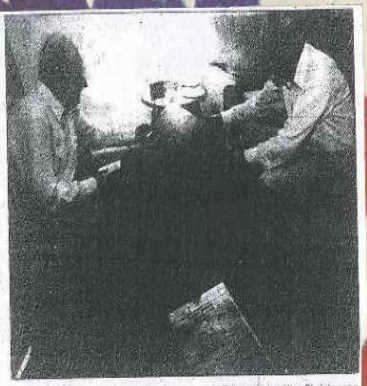
The camp was no better, Singleton said, adding the Red Cross would send boxes of food, but the Germans would take an ax and slice through anything that was perishable. That would make the food spoil, preventing the prisoners from accumulating any food. Before the Red Cross boxes arrived, there was no food; neither was there a shower, bed or change of clothes, Singleton said. Singleton's wife, Bobbie, said her husband was extremely happy when he found a used toothbrush.

Vaught also shared boxcar moments. He recalled the cars being crowded with POWs. And there were no bathroom facilities, with the exception of a stack of hay in the middle of the car. He also spent time as a POW dumping septic tanks into shallow ditches until it became solid, so it could be used in German gardens. "Sometimes it would still be wet," Vaught said.

Both men were liberated in the mid-1940s, not knowing that their paths would cross once again in Brazoria County.

"About 25 years later, w were playing bridge wit Leonard and his wife an three other couples Singleton said.

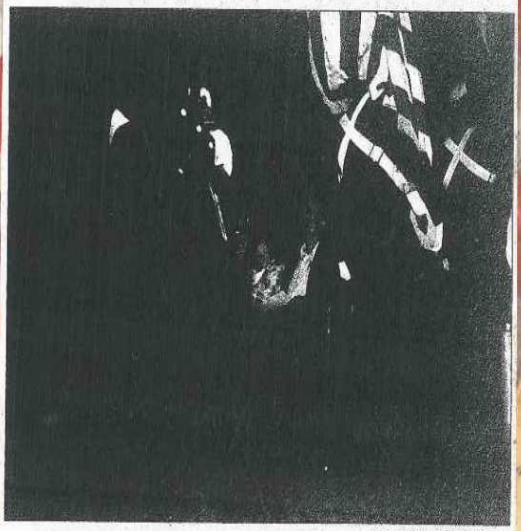
"We knew we wer POWs, so we got to talkir and I pulled out my boo And he recognized tl drawing of the hous Come to find out he w one of the other men ca tured."



Facts photo: Kim Christensen

Leonard Vaught passes a scrapbook to Jack Singleton as they discuss wartime in the Army at Singleton's home in West Columbia Friday. Both were POWs during World War II, but were unaware until recently they were captured together in Germany.

Commemorating Veterans Day



Facts photo: Kim Christensen

The Alvin ROTC walk past a veteran after posting of the colors during the "2000 Alvin High School Veterans" program at the school Friday.





Facts photos: Natalee Hall

Above: Dustin Campbell, a kindergartner at the Early Childhood Campus in Angleton, performs during the Veterans Day Program at the school Friday. Left: Michael Cates, a kindergartner at the school, participates in a Veterans Day parade. Cates wore his father's Coast Guard hat and a small uniform for the program.

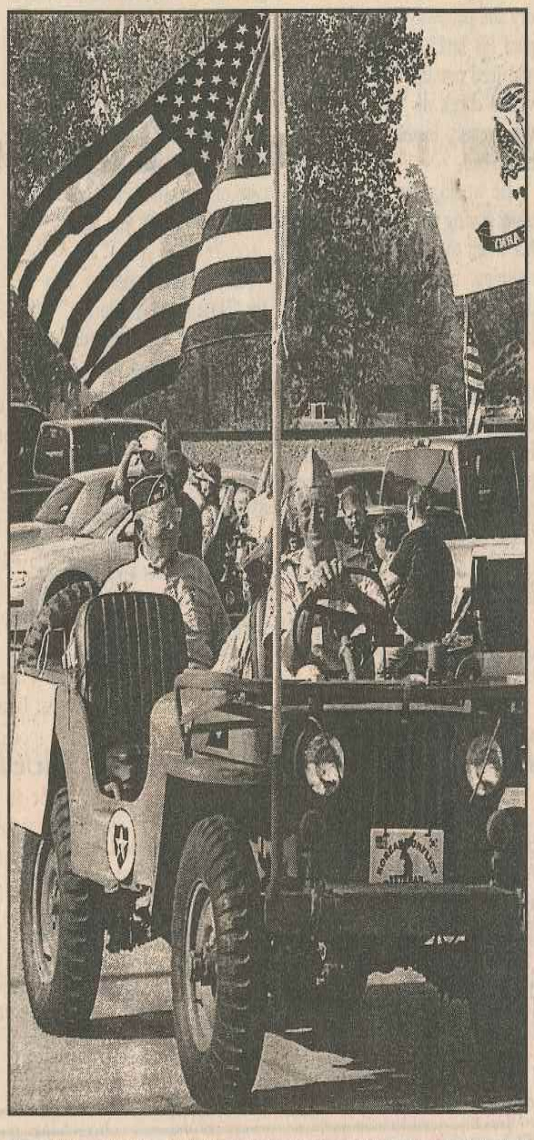
Celebrating Veterans' Day

For those who served their country

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP, Participants in the Veterans' Day Parade at Danbury rode through town to the football stadium. Hundreds lined the streets for what was called the largest county parade in years.

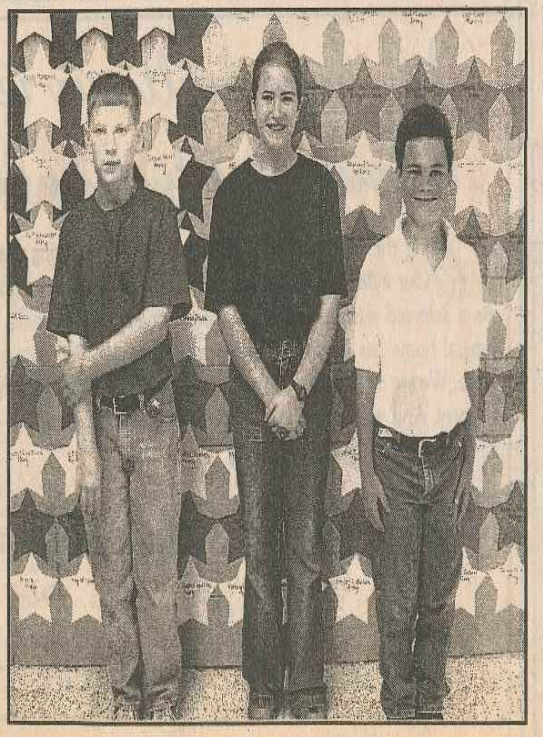
Times photos: Russell Burnett







STARS — The fifth grade at Southside presented a program entitled "Let's Hear It For America," On Monday they invited veterans to come and join so they could honor them. All of the students were encouraged to send in names of veterans in their families and Mrs. Silva assembled the names and made a flag as a tribute to all veterans and members of the armed forces. Pictured with the flag are fifth graders Danny Bernardi, Megan Garwood and Jamal Howington.







ABOVE — An exhausted crew from Golden Corral served free buffets to 211 veterans Monday evening. DAV officer James Wolfe collected donations for disabled veterans.

LEFT — Golden Corral manager Jeannette Maler presented an American Legion buckle to Post #241 commander Ferris Lenamond.

Golden Corral to honor veterans with free buffet

Special to The Times

ANGLETON — Veteran's Day happens just one day a year, but the United States military serves the American people seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Military service means many things — its not only bravery under fire and fighting for freedom, but it's also missed birthdays and Christmas celebrations, night duty when your spouse works during the day and a lot ore.

Realizing there are hundreds of thousands of unsung heroes that we as a nation need to thank, Golden Corral is hosting "Military Appreciation Night" on the Monday following Veteran's Day.

On November 12 from 5-9 p.m. at the Golden Corral at 1227 N. Velasco, Angleton, retired and active members of the U.S. military are invited to enjoy a free dinner buffet.

"We realize that sufficient appreciation is not paid to the activities our men and women in all branches of the service undertake on a daily basis." said Jeannette Maler, manager of Golden Corral. "This meal is just our way of saying thank you for all you do."

A key aspect of this celebration is the presence of members of the Post 39 local chapter of the Disabled American veterans (DAV). Representatives will have a presence at the event to distribute literature, sign up new members and accept donations in support of the DAV.

"We're not only thrilled with the opportunity to be on hand for this special day, but we're also excited to hear that a company like Golden Corral cares enough to thank us for time and effort we dedicated to the service throughout the years," said John Boone, of the Post 39 of the DAV.

AT A GLANCE

- **What:** Free buffet at Golden Corral
- **When:** Nov. 12, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- **Where:** 1227 South Velasco

Every day, thousands of brave men and women are serving and protecting the United States and its citizens," said Ted Fowler, president and CEO of Golden Corral. "Military Appreciation Night is Golden Corral's way of honoring the hundreds of thousands of unsung heroes that we as a nation need to thank."

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV), which represents 2.3 million disabled veterans, is a nonprofit organization founded in 1920 and chartered by Congress in 1932. The DAV is dedicated to one, single purpose: building better lives for our nation's disabled veterans and their families. Not a government agency, the DAV's national organization receives no government funds. Its nationwide network of services — free of charge to all veterans and members of their families — is totally supported by membership dues and contributions from the American public.

Founded in 1973, Golden Corral Corporation is a privately-held company headquartered in Raleigh, N.C. the first restaurant was located in Fayetteville and today there are 343 franchised Golden Corrals and 119 company-operated units in 40 states.

Danbury parade honors local veterans

By CARLOS ARMINTOR
The Facts

DANBURY — The city's population almost doubled Sunday as hundreds of people lined up along Main Street waving flags as a part of the third annual Brazoria County Veterans Day Parade.

Pete Keillor, the grand marshal of the parade, said Sunday's event the drew the biggest crowd since the parade began in 1999.

"I never expected this number of people," Keillor said. "I think a lot of people were surprised."

KILT radio's Dan Gallo, the celebrity grand marshal of the parade, said he was surprised the number of people who attended the event.

"I was impressed with the size of the parade and the size of the crowd," Gallo said. "I didn't expect to see a crowd this size in a small town."

Danbury Mayor Jeff Lege said the big turnout should not be surprising at this time in our nation.

"People are looking for a way to show their patriotism in light of recent events," Lege said. "I had a feeling because of the events it would multiply the number of people. That's good."

The procession began on Main Street at the American Legion baseball fields and marched to Panther Drive and then to Humber Stadium where a commencement ceremony was held.

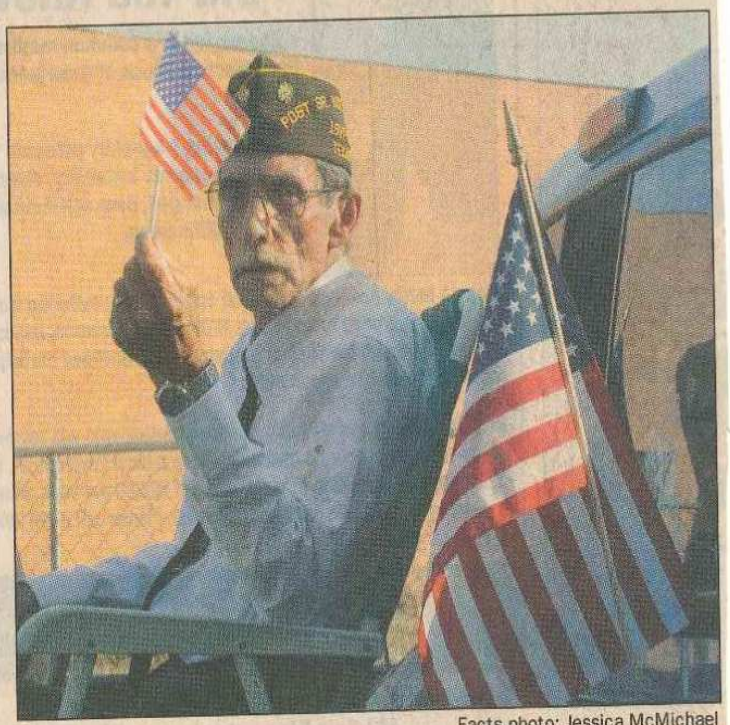
At the commencement ceremony, Lege said he wanted to personally thank veterans because without them Americans would not enjoy the freedoms they do today.

Veteran Lloyd Lyons of Alvin, who served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War, said he was appreciative of the recognition and the show of support as the members of the procession marched past him.

"It makes you feel like what you did was worth it," Lyons said. "I didn't get this when I came home. It just makes you feel good inside when you see something like this."

When Charles Bruce, a World War II veteran, saw the procession march by, he said he began to reflect on his days in the service.

"I've always given Harry Truman the fact that I'm still alive," Bruce said. "If not for him I would have been in the invasion of Japan. I feel like I've been blessed to live in this country."

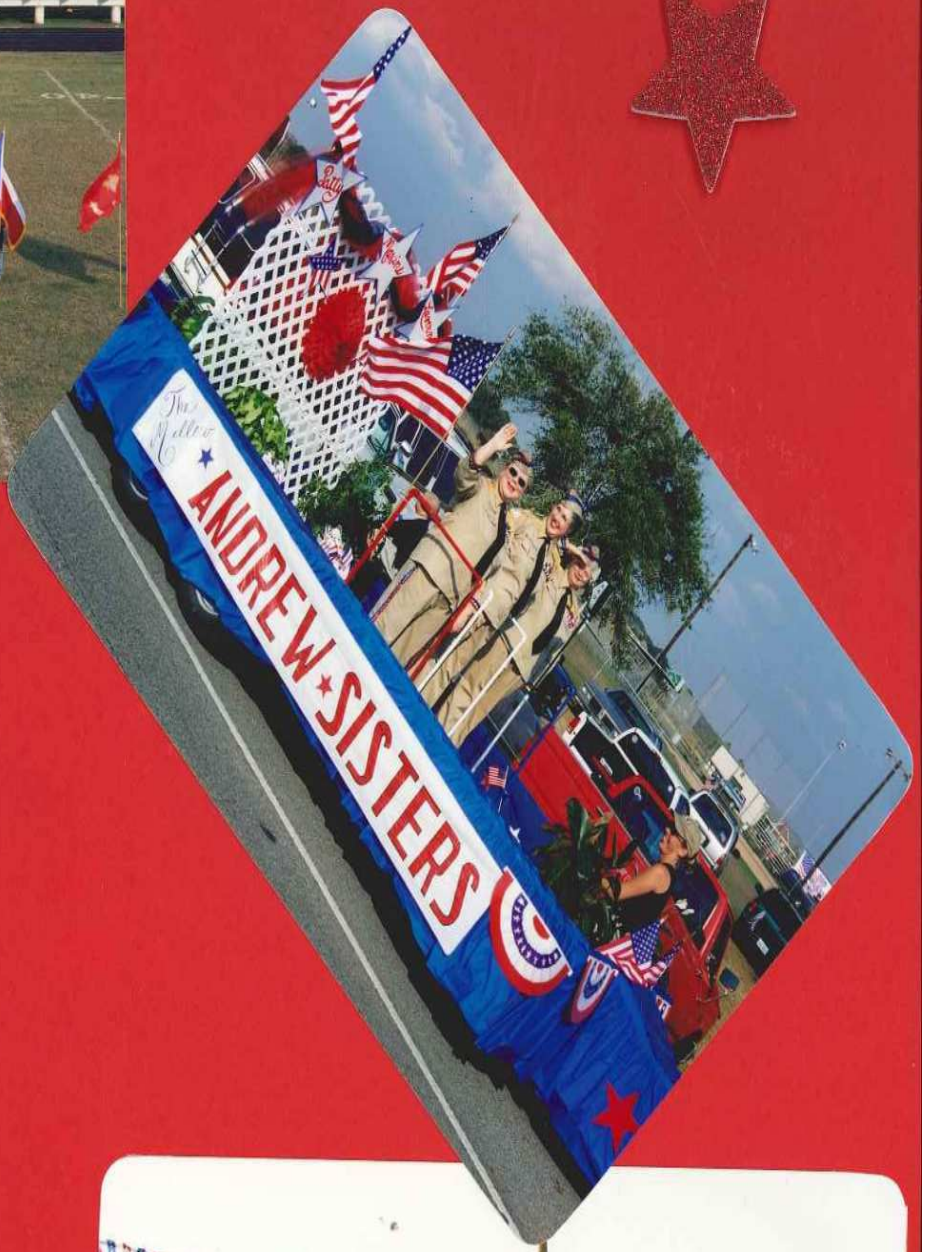


Facts photo: Jessica McMichael

World War II veteran Cecil Sandefer participates in the Veterans Day parade in Danbury on Sunday. The parade was held exactly two months from the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Veterans Day, also known as Armistice Day, was officially recognized by Congress in 1926 and recognizes the end of World War I.



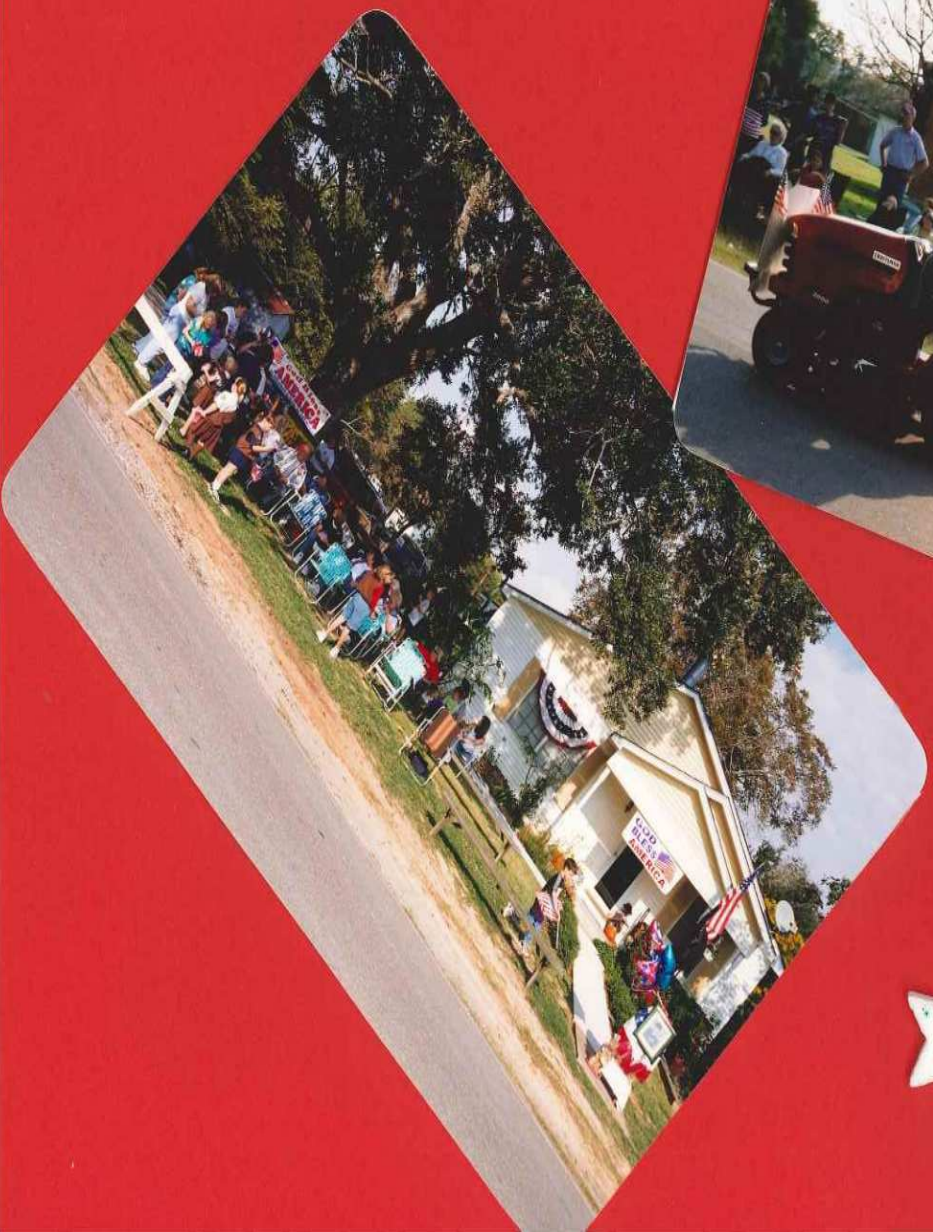

ANDREW SISTERS



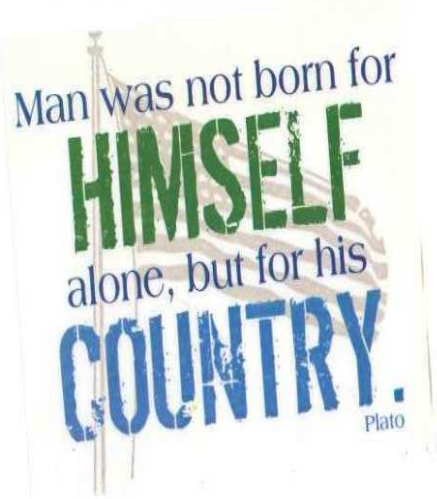



WEST BRAZOS VFW POST 8551
&
LADIES AUXILIARY








Man was not born for
HIMSELF
alone, but for his
COUNTRY.
Plato






GOD BLESS OUR VETERANS







Red White & Blue



Lake Jackson





Why Do Celebrate Veterans Day?



Veterans Day is a day for Americans to respect and thank our veterans. Veterans Day is a day for Americans to coax the courage and yield of every single United State veterans, both male and female. A few Americans don't have the foggiest idea about the reason we salute our veterans every year on Nov. 11. It is basic that all Americans know the significance and history of this day so we can respect our servicemen and ladies appropriately.

Veterans Day 2001

In times of crisis THEY were there



Facts photos: Amber Novak

Haskell Nix, 81, of Clute holds his WWII dogtags. He served on the USS Tennessee for the U.S. Navy during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Below: Nix's WWII Liberty Card and Pearl Harbor Survivor's license plate.

By MICHAEL WRIGHT
The Facts

CLUTE — If you're looking for a veteran to thank today, try Haskell Nix.

The 81-year-old Clute man was in the middle of Pearl Harbor in a three-man boat when the first Japanese planes flew overhead on Dec. 7, 1941.

Nix's first thought was that he was watching a drill from nearby Hickham Air Field.

"I just didn't think it would be Japan," the Navy veteran said. "It didn't take long to realize what was happening. The ships began blowing up."

During the attack, Nix was all but helpless, as the Japanese caught American forces completely unprepared.

"I stayed right in that boat until the attack was over," he said.

When the Japanese left, Haskell went back to the USS Tennessee, a battleship that had been heavily damaged, but not sunk during the attack.

"There was one right behind us, and one right next to us that sunk," Nix said. "The Oklahoma was just stern up."

Nix's next task was the worst assignment the military offers.

"We were assigned to try to get people out of the water, those that had been killed," he said, choking up almost 60 years later. "They were drowned, most of them. Somebody had to pull them out of the water.

"Sometimes all the skin would fall off of them."

After Pearl Harbor, Nix went with the

See VETERAN, Page 8A

VETERAN

Continued from 1A

Tennessee to the West Coast as the ship was repaired, but he was soon transferred to the USS Massachusetts where he spent the remainder of the war.

In 1944, his old ship, built at the end of World War I and hopelessly obsolete, got payback in what is most likely the last ship-to-ship engagement ever.

In the battle of Leyte Gulf in the Philippines, the Tennessee along with her sister ships, all survivors of Pearl Harbor, faced off against the biggest, fastest battleship in the Pacific, the Yamato.

The old battleships might have been old and slow, but there was nothing wrong with their guns, and they sent the larger ship to the bottom.

Thousands of miles away in the European Theater, Nix heard about Leyte Gulf.

"I sure did," he said. "I got a lot of satisfaction."

Nix received an honorable discharge in December 1945 and went home to East Texas.

It was there he met his wife, Mildred, and they were married Aug. 4, 1946.

"I met him in 1945, married him in 1946 and had a baby in 1947," Mildred said, then adding impishly, "more than a year later."

Nix is one of 12 children and didn't enlist in the Navy for patriotic reasons.

"I enlisted to make a living, to be honest with you," he said. "I needed something to get out and make a living."

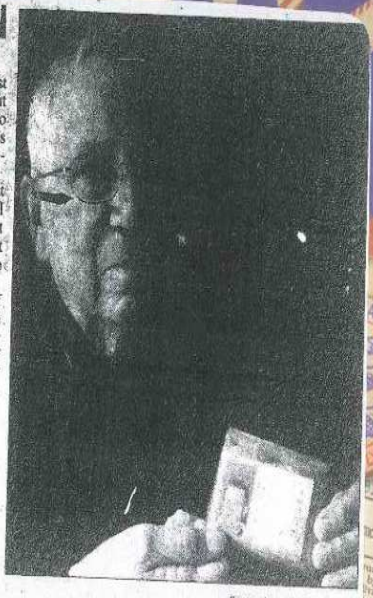
After the war, Nix tried to farm for a while.

"But then we got hungr and we had to quit," he said.

In 1951, he saw an ad for the Dow plant and came home and told Mildred they were moving.

They've been in Clute ever since, the first 32 years working for Dow and since then traveling the country and the world, from Alaska to Hawaii to New Zealand.

In his golden years, Nix has seen his country come full circle, once again the victim of a sneak attack from an enemy half a world away.



Facts photo: Amber Novak

Haskell Nix of Clute served in the U.S. Navy between 1939 and 1945. He was a survivor of the attack on Pearl Harbor, stranded for the duration of the bombing in a small three-man boat amidst the battleships.

"I feel sorry for the people that are giving us trouble right now ... because they really don't know about living in freedom."
Haskell Nix
Clute veteran

Once again American soldiers are fighting an enemy who would rather die than surrender.

Nix has seen it all before, and he sadly shook his head.

He said he's not sure the American public is ready for an extended war. "American people don't know how fortunate they are to live in a country like this," he said.

His empathy and his support is with the American soldiers and their allies, but his sympathy is with the people of Afghanistan, suffering under Taliban rule.

"I feel sorry for the people that are giving us trouble right now," he said. "I know they don't know any different. I kind of feel sorry for them because they really don't know about living in freedom. They never really had freedom."

Two heroes in Sharon's family

GUEST COLUMNIST

BY SHARON WESTLUND

Dad is my hero, but until recently he was always reticent to talk about his war experiences. Most of what I knew about his accomplishments, I read in an article commemorating the 50th anniversary of World War II.

The article "World War II Flying Aces," states that my father, Lt. Elmore P. Bullock, a Brazoria County resident, helped fight the Japanese forces as an American Flying Tiger. The article continues: "The retired Dow employee said he didn't want to be called a hero. But the U.S. government seemed to disagree.

"Bullock was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with OLD, Soldiers Medal and the Purple Heart."

If Bullock could pick a hero in the war, he would have picked the crew chiefs who worked on the planes.

Each chief had their own pilots and would stand in line as the planes came back to the base in formation. "They would look for their pilot, and if he wasn't there, they'd almost always be close to tears," said Bullock. And, yes, he was a hero.

I have another hero in my family. Early Sunday morning on Dec. 7, 1941, my uncle Neal Hachenberg was a gunner's mate aboard the light cruiser USS Detroit. It was anchored in Pearl Harbor, a territory of Hawaii. Fortunately, his ship escaped with minor damage.

However, the world turned upside-down with the all-out surprise attack in which 2,335 of his comrades were killed and 1,143 were wounded during the two-hour attack. Uncle Neal continued to serve in the Pacific until the end of the war.

And then, there was Sept. 11, 2001. I was at my parents' home getting ready to fly to my home in Naples, Fla. We witnessed the attack of the World Trade Center and watched in shock and horror as it collapsed. We saw the devastation of the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

In the days that followed, my father and I talked of his experiences during war like we never talked before. We talked about the obstacles that he and others had to overcome to secure the freedom of our nation; we talked about morale.

My Uncle Neal called from Wimberly to ask how we were; then he said, referring to Americans, "We are strong."

Clearly, there have been many heroes in our great nation, in past wars and now.

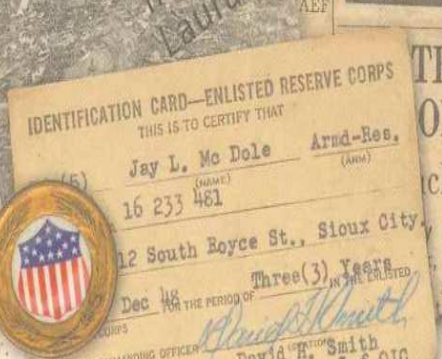
We will always remember them, and we will always be grateful. Because of these heroes, we can definitely say "Yes, we are strong."

United we stand. We will remember.

Sharon Westlund lives in Naples, Fla.









Freedom fighters

■ Annual parade honors veterans who went to war to keep us free.

By ALLISON POLLAN
The Facts

LAKE JACKSON — Hundreds of bystanders lined Lake Road on Monday for the fourth annual Veterans Day parade honoring the country's freedom.

As veterans in the parade walked or drove by the flag-waving spectators, onlookers old and young said their reason for being there was the same — to honor those who fought for their freedom.

"I came out to support the veterans," said L.D. Herron. "I think too many people forget what happened."

Harley Humphrey, a Korean War veteran who watched fellow veterans from the sidelines, said he came out to support other veterans.

"I just think we need to be all together," Humphrey said.

Children too young to comprehend the atrocities of war said they, too, came out to honor those who made their freedom possible.

"It's to honor all the people that fought and died for us ... so we remember them," said Sarah Barber, a member of Lake Jackson's Girl Scout Troop 554, whose members marched in the parade.

At the completion of the parade, the motorcycles, utility trailers and trucks carrying veterans meandered into the MacLean Park Pavilion, where free hot-dogs and sodas were provided for those who attended.

A program honoring the veterans commenced with the posting of the American and Texas flags, followed by the posting of flags for each branch of the armed services.

As applause broke out when each flag was posted, veterans from the respective branches of

See PARADE, Page 2A



Facts photo: Todd Yates

Representatives from five different breaches of the armed services bow their head during a moment of silence at Veterans Day ceremony Monday at MacLean Park in Lake Jackson.



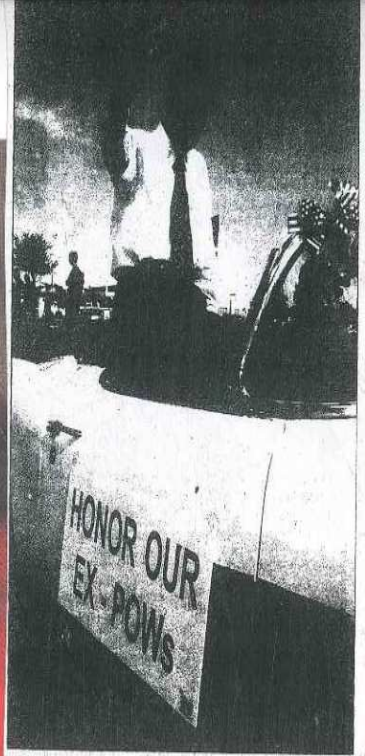
Facts photo: Todd Yates

Andy Bowling, with Brazoria Pack 503 Webelo I, salutes the American Flag with other classmates from Wild Peach Elementary School during a Veterans Day ceremony Monday.

More inside

■ American Legion's national leader says we must do for our veterans. Opinion, Page 8A

■ During ceremonies in Washington, President Bush tells veterans that war with Iraq may be necessary. Page 9A



Facts photo: Todd Yates

Lester Calhoun, who served in World War II and represents former prisoners of war, waves to the crowd as he makes his way along Lake Road in Lake Jackson during the annual Brazoria County Veterans Day parade Monday.

PARADE

■ Continued from 1A

service stood and saluted.

Kerry Magee, event coordinator and post commander for Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6266, presented a plaque to the oldest veteran in attendance, 90-year-old Harry Koester.

Koester, who still carries shrapnel in his neck he received in Normandy, said he enjoys seeing other veterans at such events.

"I like this particular ceremony," Koester said. "I like to go to anything like this."

During the program that followed the parade, five veterans spoke of their war experiences, telling stories of courage and survival.

J.E. Jack Thompson, a WWII Army veteran, told how humor helped him get through the horrors of war, including the anxiety, the cries of innocent children and the sounds of bullets whizzing by his body.

"These are only a few of the things many of us endured to keep this world free," Thompson said. "We weren't noble about it, just young men doing a duty.

"Now we are old men who know that war is man's stupidest endeavor, but sadly, sometimes necessary," Thompson said.



Facts photo: Todd Yates

Members of the Brownies and Girl Scouts march down Lake Road during the annual Brazoria County Veterans Day parade Monday in Lake Jackson. Each year the parade is hosted by a different city in

Danbury Elementary salutes the veterans

By LINDA WINDER
The Angleton Times

DANBURY — Raymond LeCompte of Danbury was pleased as he could be at a Veterans' Day program the elementary school hosted for area veterans Friday.

Several of the Korean veteran's grandchildren were on the stage.

"The kids did real good," he said. "I would have been too bashful to get out there when I was young."

Almost 40 area veterans attended the program, with many staying for a reception later.

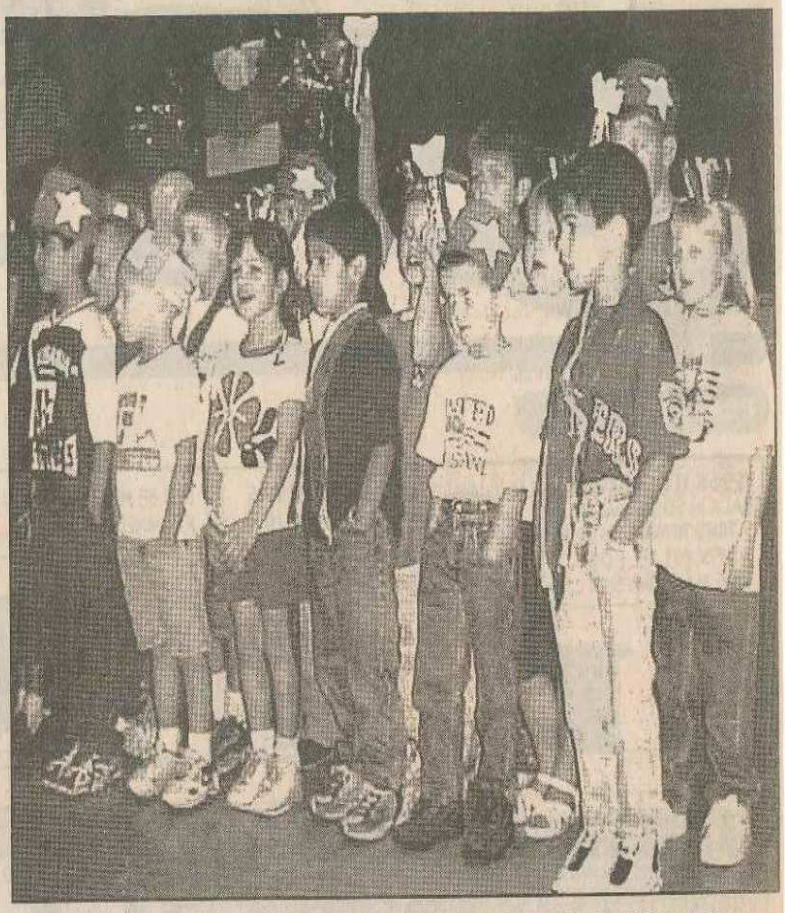
Many, such as Vincent Haechler and Gary Bogema, had grown up in Danbury and gone to school there.

This was the first Veterans' Day program that anyone could remember.

Elementary principal Gaylynn Black said the faculty hoped to have some type of celebration for veterans each year.

"The kids put on a real good show," said Ralph Lostracco, a Navy veteran of World War II. "They made me proud, seeing how good they were."





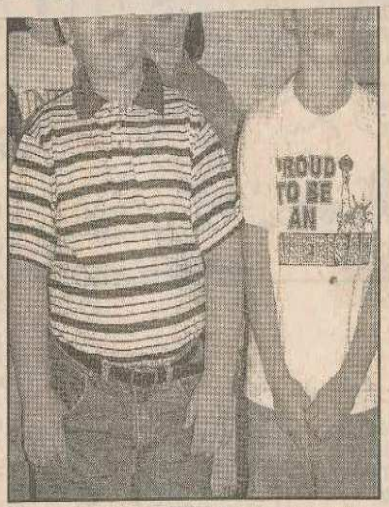
Right, John Jasso of Angleton. Above, Danbury Elementary students at the program.



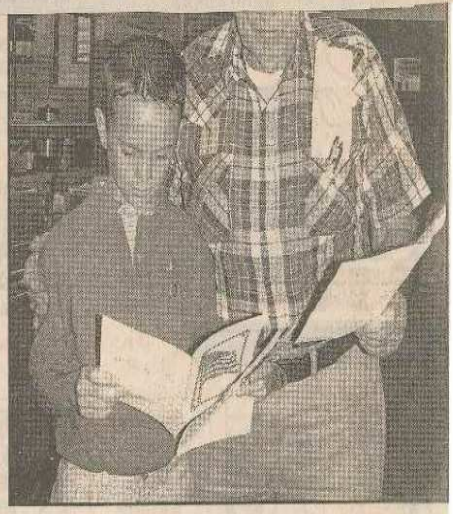
Veteran Eugene Wollam



Parent Catrina Mills



Second graders Lawton Lander, Kelly Mills



Matt Dees, WW II veteran Vincent Hechler



Lake Jackson Hosts Veteran's Parade

The Veteran's Day Parade is in its third year The first year the parade was held in West Columbia. last year in Danbury and in Lake Jackson this year.

Area residents lined Lake Road to observe the floats. members of the Military and members of law enforcement; along with some local politicians who participated. Also joining in this celebration of those who served were representatives of: The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints and the Knights of Columbus of Brazoria representing the Catholic Church. The Boy Scouts. Girl Scouts and other area organizations also participated.

"When the city was asked to participate we were more than happy to do so, many local residents have done military service and I think its great we can honor them" said Bill Yenne, Lake Jackson City Manager





"Semper Fidèles. Always Faithful"

Pictured to the left USMC reserve Josh and family of West Columbia watching the Veteran's Day Parade.

"If there is a war, I will be going back to active duty," stated Josh







Pictured above left: Ray Sollis along with Shirley and Joe Goens of the Clute VFW Post.

Above right: members of the farming community turned out in support of area veterans.

Lower left: James Purrung and members of the Freeport VFW



NOVEMBER 12, 2001

Clute, Texas 77531
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www.thefacts.com

Patriotism soars in wake of attacks on America

By MICHAEL WRIGHT
The Facts

LAKE JACKSON — Joseph May Jr. stood at attention as the red, white and blue banner was slowly raised to the top of the flag pole.

As a veteran of the United State's troops in Saudi Arabia, he is just the latest in a long line of soldiers and sailors the nation honored this weekend, as tomorrow's veterans prepare to fight in Afghanistan.

May is commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6266 in Lake Jackson. On Saturday morning, he led his post in a flag-raising ceremony at the Don Davis Chrysler dealership.

Noting the holiday was created in honor of the end of World War I, May said Armistice Day has evolved to include all who served in the military.

"Today we honor all the veterans who fought before and after World War I," May said to the crowd of about 35. "We are the more than 1 million who have died defending the United States."

As the nation prepares itself for war once again, May said, this year's holiday takes on special significance and it is especially important to remember the fighting men and women.

"Duty to their country took them from the safety of their homes and families," he said. "We are a grateful nation. Knowing that we have troops going to battle makes Veterans Day more memorable."

Jared Davidson, a Boy Scout from West Columbia, said the terrorists bombings of Sept. 11 added the surge of visible patriotism in the country.

"I thought as soon as I was old enough to serve, I would join the Army

See CEREMONY, Page 8A



Facts photo: Amber Novak

Clarence Ebey, a World War II and Korean War veteran, stands at attention Saturday with other members of Veterans of Foreign War Post 6266 during a flag ceremony at the Don Davis car dealership in Lake Jackson.

CEREMONY

■ Continued from 1A

to fight for my country," said Davidson, who is 14. "I think it shouldn't have come to the Sept. 11 attacks to regain patriotism. A lot of people just forget."

But some of the veterans at Saturday's ceremony said they think there has been a change in the public's attitude toward the military.

The divisiveness of the Vietnam War lowered the military's esteem and hurt recruiting in the '70s.

Joseph May Sr., who served in Vietnam, said that has hurt the military.

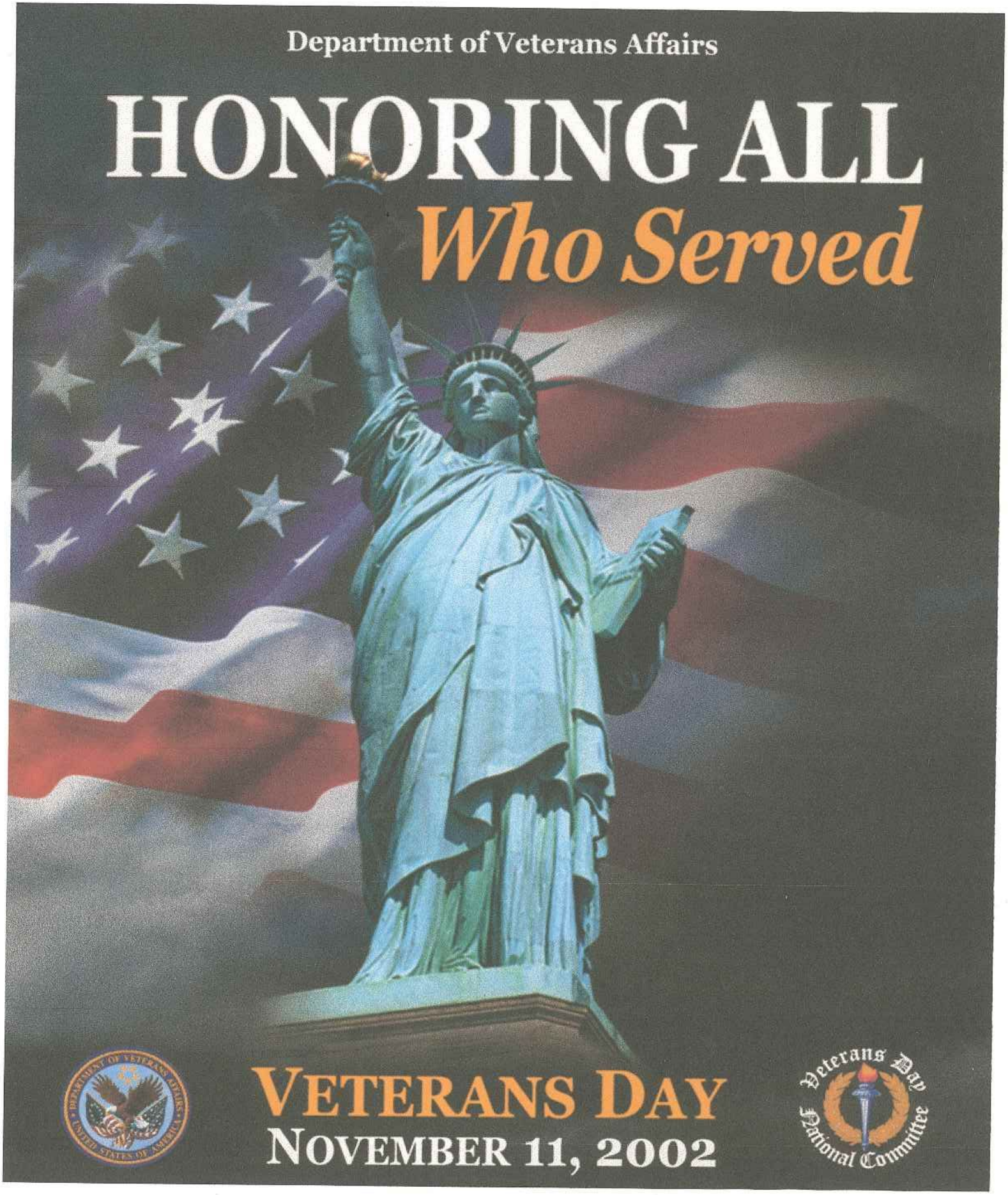
"The issue that comes up nowadays is whether the military is a career," May said. "Either the patriotism is lacking or there is more money to be made elsewhere."

But retied Army Col. Clint "Otis" Taylor said he is seeing a change. "It seems to be changing in the other direction," Taylor said.





Alvin


Department of Veterans Affairs
HONORING ALL
Who Served
VETERANS DAY
NOVEMBER 11, 2002
Veterans Day
National Committee

Alvin students told of Vietnam

By VELDA HUNTER

The Facts

ALVIN — The average soldier fighting in the Vietnam War was about 19 years old, not much older than the Alvin High School students filling the school auditorium.

But the young adults turned veterans were thousands of miles away from home, dodging bullets while being chased, said Vice Commander Daniel Smith of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7109.

"It's a lot to take on," Smith said.

Smith, a Vietnam veteran, spent time Monday telling students about the significance of Veterans Day.

"If you don't learn from the mistakes of the past, you are bound to make the same mistakes in the future," said Smith.

He spoke of the Battle of Gettysburg, where he said more lives were lost than in Vietnam. He spoke of World War I, which inspired the creation of Armistice Day in 1918 and he spoke about the Cold War, when the word espionage became more common.

Smith told them about the Korean War, which pitted communism against capitalism; and the Vietnam War, the first war from which America withdrew, Smith said.

Smith fast-forwarded to the current war on terrorism, something the students could more easily relate to after the Sept. 11 attacks.

"We are all in this, whether we want to be or not," Smith said. "9/11 put everybody in this war. This is not a war the military can win on its own.

"This is a war that is going to be won by the local community," Smith said. "We will rebuild. We will recover. We will unite."

Several times throughout Monday's Veterans Day program students and educators gave standing ovations and applause to the more than 30 veterans in audience. Everyone clapped as veterans stood when the song from their branch of service was played by the wind ensemble band.

"It was inspiring," said Joseph Slovak, who served in the U.S. Army. "It also brings back memories.

"You look around and see us old fellas, especially from World War II," Slovak said. "There are

See ALVIN, Page 2A

ALVIN

Continued from 1A

not too many of us left."

Alvin High students thanked veterans, both living and dead, by singing patriotic songs, performing dance routines and reciting poetry.

"Your selfless acts will always be appreciated," said Amanda Pena, Class of 2003 president.

Members from the Junior ROTC drill team demonstrated how well they could maneuver their rifles during a exercise where they twirled and threw their rifles to applause.

"Hopefully, one day we'll be able to fill your shoes," said Junior ROTC 1st Lieutenant Marc Caffey. "We just want to say thank you."

Alvin to host this year's Veterans Day parade

By LISA JAIMES
The Angleton Times

This year Alvin will host the annual Brazoria County Veteran's Day Celebration on Nov. 11., with the parade at 1 p.m. The parade will be led by the first woman grand marshal, Korean war veteran Mildred Meckley.

"We've got a whole day of activity," said Larry Townsend, parade county committee representative.

The celebration will begin with a reception honoring veterans at the Texas Room (round building) at the center of Alvin Community College at 9 a.m., where a continental breakfast will be served for veterans and guests. From 11 a.m. to 11:45 a.m., a multimedia presentation of patriotic music and images depicting all military branches and wars will be shown at the Theater; located next to the Child Development Center. Also, during this time a display of military equipment will take place in the courtyard.

At noon, the various groups that will participate in the parade will prepare at the Alvin Memorial Stadium. The parade will involve veterans groups, high school bands, school groups, organizations, business and Lake Jackson native Stephanie Guerrero, Miss Texas. All groups will be organized according to their city of origin.

"We'll have representation all over Brazoria County," said Townsend.

Townsend also said that women veterans will receive the recognition they deserve by having the first woman to serve as grand marshal, Mildred Meckley. Meckley served in the Air Force in the Korean war and is currently a local representative for the Salvation Army.

"If it wasn't for women in the military. We wouldn't have been as successful as we have been," Townsend said.

Parade

CONTINUED FROM COVER

The thought of the soldiers in Iraq wasn't far from anyone's mind Tuesday as they honored the soldiers of Okinawa, Da Nang and Inchon.

"They need our support," said Isaac Hernandez, 54, a Vietnam War veteran from Alvin.

England said he supports the war in Iraq and thinks the country realizes how important it is.

"It's better to fight it overseas than it is here," England said.

Hernandez said he believes the public is more firmly behind the war than it was the Vietnam War.

"I think we've gotten to a new generation now," he said. "They've seen the soldiers' efforts to keep them free."

Dickie Fox, 58, a Vietnam veteran who served 20 years in the Navy and Marine Corps, said the public is more aware of the military's mission.

"I think the sense of purpose is better understood," Fox said. "The public at large understands what we're trying to do. I think the main thing is to support the troops."

Annie Perkins, 79, of Alvin, said she was glad to see the boisterous crowd come out for the parade. Perkins' husband and brothers were veterans.

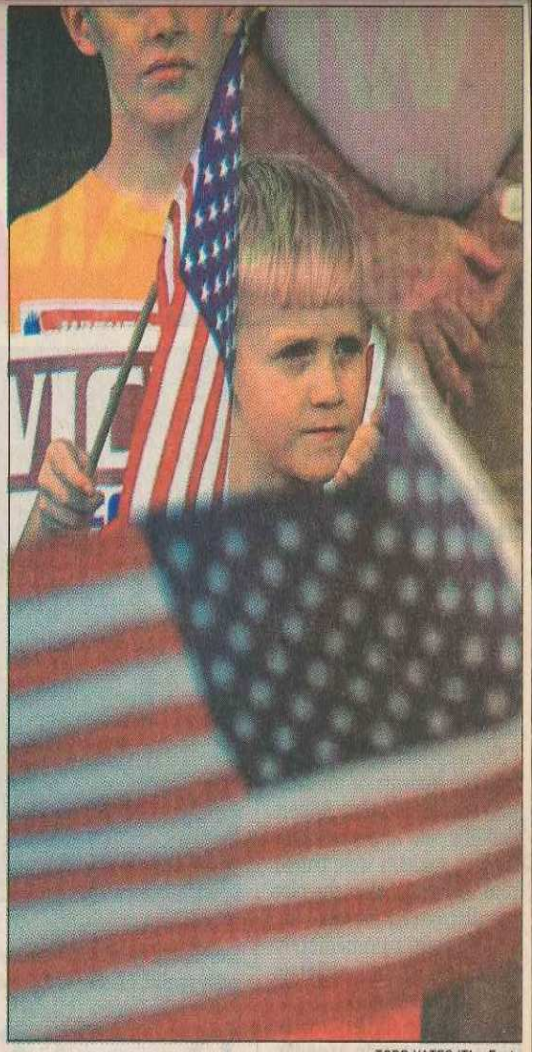
"It means a lot to me," she said. "It looks good."

World War II veteran Frank Clemens, 85, of Alvin, served five years in the Army, though he stayed in the United States for the duration. Clemens said he was thrilled to be out on the warm day to watch the parade.

"It kind of gets old sitting there and looking at the window," the recent widower said. "It looks interesting and there's a big crowd here."

Larry Townsend, who helps organize the annual parade, said the day puts him in a reflective mood.

"It's a time to reflect back on the ones that served before us, the ones that served with us and the ones that are serving now," Townsend said. "It's up to them to follow the pattern and to feel the obligation to preserve the freedoms that were handed to them."



TODD YATES/The Facts

Jace Grimes, 5, of Angleton, holds an American flag as local veterans make their way through the streets of Alvin on Tuesday.

Holiday salut



TODD YATES/The Facts

Staff members from Walt Disney Elementary School in Alvin wave American flags as participants in the county's annual Veterans Day parade make their way through the streets of Alvin on Tuesday.

Parade puts veterans in reflective mood.

By Michael Wright
mike.wright@thefacts.com

ALVIN — As hundreds gathered Tuesday to honor the veterans of past wars, the men at the center of the festivities thought more of the veterans to come.

On a Veterans Day in which President Bush told the nation the United States will "stay on the offensive," World War II veteran Charlie England worried about soldiers in Iraq.

"I'm glad that we're not having a war like we had in the 1940s," England, 85, said as the fifth annual Brazoria County March with the Veterans Parade ended in Alvin. "It looks like the war we're in now is going to be worse than the one we had then. There's no end to it."

■ See **PARADE,** Page 12A

Parade Grand Marshal Mildred Meckley, 75, of Alvin, said she was excited to be the first female honored in the parade's history.

"We've had parades and parades and parades," Meckley said. "I think it's time women were honored."

Meckley was the first female commander of American Legion Post 129 in Alvin.

Meckley, who was a weather observer for the Air Force, said she's not comfortable with women moving closer to combat.

"We were issued rifles and helmets and all that stuff," she said. "We had mock wars, but I don't think women should be in combat."

Nonetheless, Meckley takes pride in her successors' accomplishments.

"I'm very proud of the girls that have been in combat," she said.

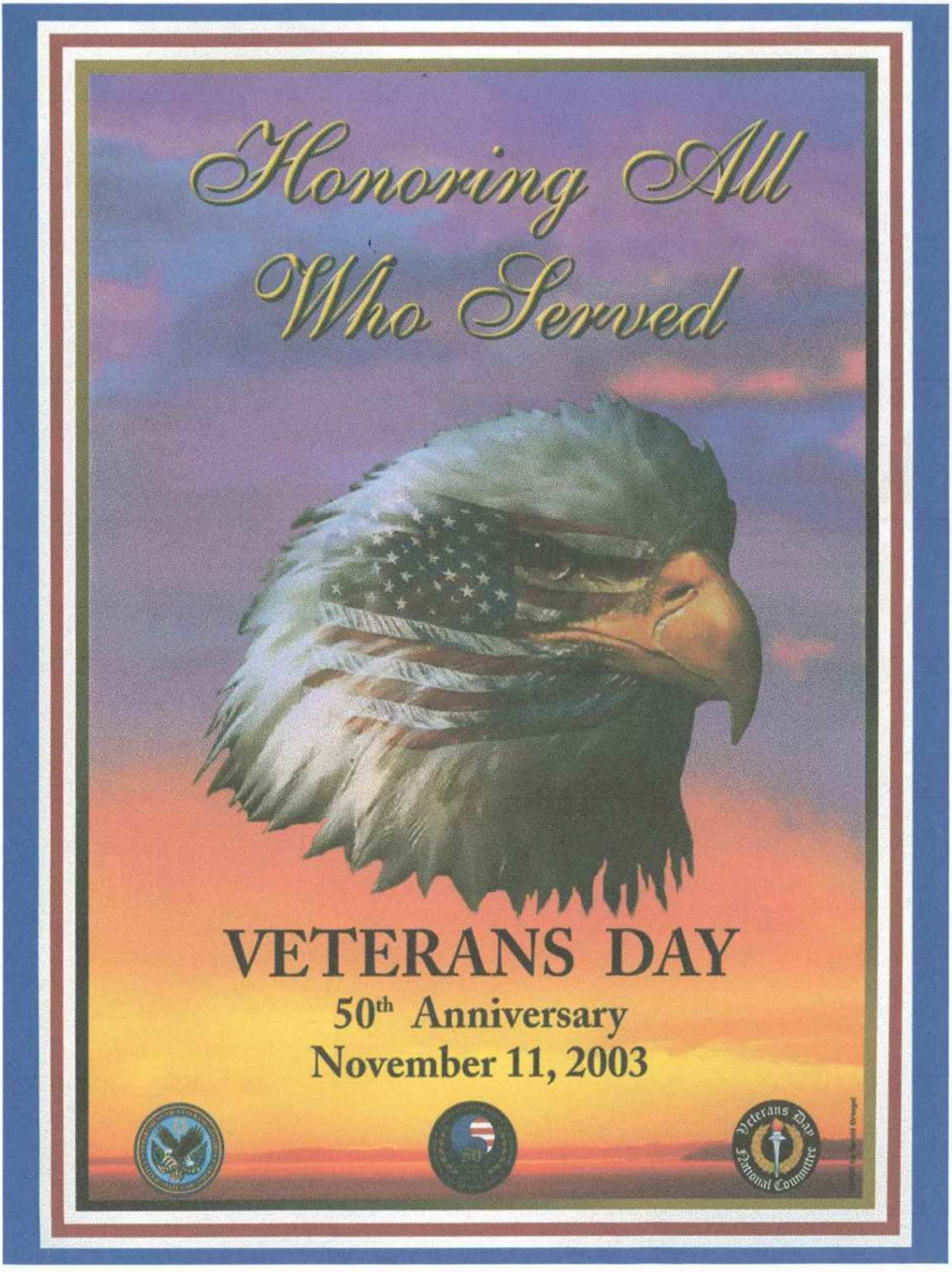
Fox, who spoke at a rally at Memorial Stadium after the parade, said the procession warmed his heart.

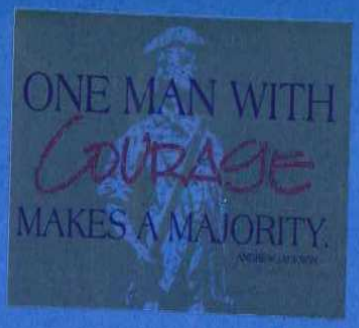
"Veterans Day means the pride and joy of having done something that was worthwhile," Fox said.

The annual parade rotates each year to a different city in the county. Next year's parade will be in Freeport and the 2005 parade is scheduled for Pearland, Townsend said.

Michael Wright is a reporter for The Facts. Contact him at (979) 237-0151.

Freeport


Honoring All
Who Served
VETERANS DAY
50th Anniversary
November 11, 2003
Veterans Day
National Committee



The Veterans

By Christopher Goodman
7th grader, St. Pius X School

As I walk down the battlefield with my family on my mind,

I am always fearful of what it is I'll find,

I take a look at the "enemy" and see they're just like me,

It makes me sad to battle them; all we both want is to be free.

None of them I'd want to kill, that'd be like killing me,

But I know what I've got to do, I've got to be free.

And now at last I'm going home, with bloodstains on my shirt, I'm not proud of what I've done, not proud of who I've hurt.

But then I realize what it was for, my country great and strong,

and when I remember America it doesn't feel so wrong.

I remember my allies dead

and the enemy too, but war cannot be a happy thing, but we all fight for you.

It can make me uncomfortable to talk about the past,

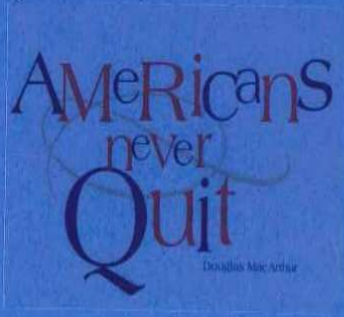
the thoughts I tried to push away, but they keep coming back.

I am grateful for the honor t'day, but I still need some rest,

a soldiers life is an unhappy one, but they fight for the best.

Remember us.







TODD YATES/The Facts

Mike Cole, 5, watches the Brazoria County Veterans Day parade move down Second Street in Freeport on Thursday.

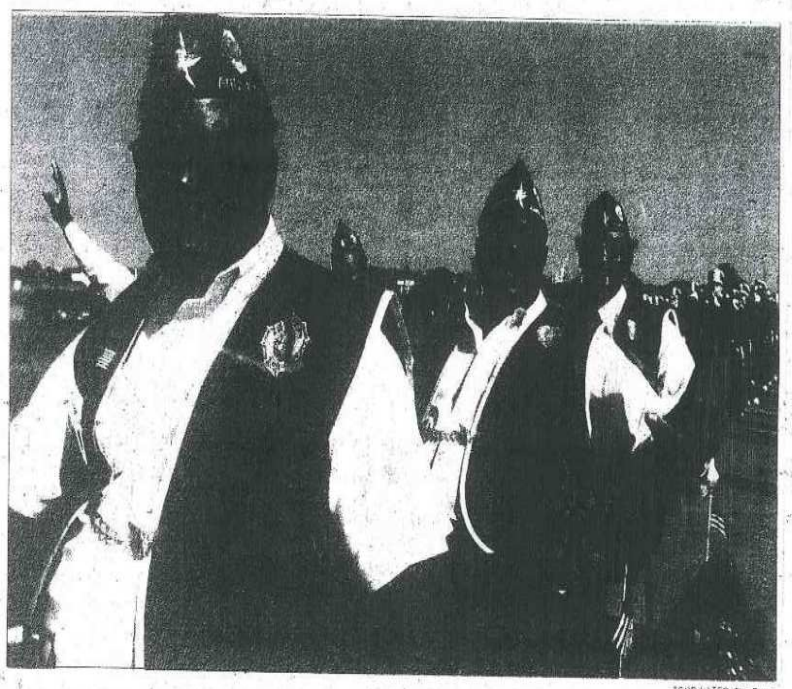
solemn Salute

America pays tribute to the strength, service and sacrifice of military veterans.



TODD YATES/The Facts

Chris Tate of Angleton covers his heart at the Brazoria County Veterans Day parade Thursday in Freeport.



TODD YATES/The Facts

Members of George Washington Carver American Legion Post 835 wave to the crowd Thursday along Second Street during Brazoria County's Veterans Day parade in Freeport.

Residents rally in recognition of veterans

By Elliott Blackburn

elliott.blackburn@thefacts.com

FREEPORT — Military craft rolled, sailed and soared over the city on a cool, and clear Thursday afternoon as residents paid tribute to area veterans.

Police estimate 400 to 500 residents boarded 70 floats for an afternoon Veterans Day parade that eased down Second Street. Veterans joined marching bands and the crew of the visiting warship USS Falcon in the long caravan of tractors, trailers and trucks, waving to and shaking hands with pockets of residents gathered in medians and along the road.

It was the culmination of seven months of planning by 17 veterans organizations, and parade co-chair Ed Garcia said the effort paid off.

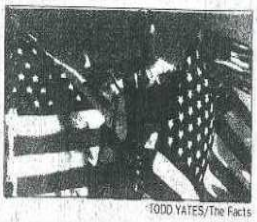
"It went well," Garcia said at a reception for the visiting Falcon crew. "We had one of the largest parades that we've had in the county."

■ See **VETERANS**, Page 7A



TODD YATES/The Facts

As the sun rises over Brazoria County, R.W. Moore of American Legion Post 241 puts out American flags on the graves of veterans Thursday at the Angleton Cemetery.



TODD YATES/The Facts

John Jones of Freeport, his bike decorated with American flags, rides in the Brazoria County Veterans Day parade Thursday in Freeport.

See Page 5A for more pictures of Veterans Day events.

Students' thanks comes from heart

By Bridie Isensee

bridie.isensee@thefacts.com

FREEPORT — A few blocks away from the countywide Veterans Day ceremony of floats, flyovers and a visiting Naval ship, elementary school students honored past and present soldiers in their own humble way.

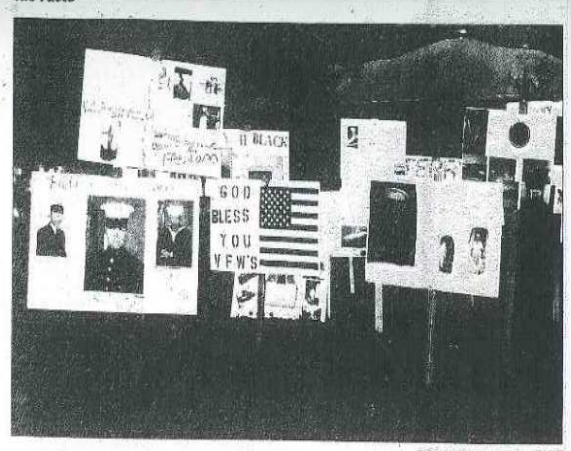
The small signs staked in front of Jane Long Elementary School paid tribute to fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers who served in the armed forces.

About 45 students participated in the school's sign ceremonies Thursday and today to commemorate Veterans Day. The students decorated signs in honor of a veteran they knew. As honorees' names were read aloud during the ceremony, the student walked up and placed the sign in the school's front lawn. Even Principal Sophia Cuona joined in and placed a sign in honor of her own family member.

Assistant Principal Randy Wuensche organized the program partly to honor his grandfather and father-in-law, who died this last year.

"We're losing a lot of veterans. I think it's an opportunity for them to know how

■ See **POSTERS**, Page 7A



BRIDIE ISENSEE/The Facts

Students at Jane Long Elementary School in Freeport honor veterans Thursday with signs they made and placed on the school lawn.

Veterans

CONTINUED FROM COVER

At its dock at Port Freeport, Lt. Commander Robert Smith showed off the Falcon to U.S. Rep. Ron Paul, R-Surfside Beach, and a handful of veterans Thursday morning. The Falcon arrived earlier this week as part of a three-day Veterans Day celebration.

Paul, a U.S. Air Force veteran, toured the battleship-gray, compact minesweeper — quarters are too tight to assemble the 54-man crew anywhere inside the ship — and discussed training issues with Smith, he said.

His office supported the request from organizers to have the warship present during Freeport's Veterans Day ceremonies as a way to help honor a group that does not receive enough attention, Paul said.

"I just think this is a tremendous boost," Paul said.

Navy veteran Bill Gatrell was glad to see the support. The country has rallied around the troops more for the current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq than it did when he served in Vietnam, he said.

That the festivities came during a U.S. military offensive in Iraq made residents more focused on the occasion this year, Gatrell said.

"It's made them more aware of the sacrifices we're going through for our freedom," Gatrell said.

Posters

CONTINUED FROM COVER

much we appreciate them," Wuensche said.

Rebekah Bullman, 5, dedicated her sign to her grandfather, Jack Bullman Sr., who served in the U.S. Coast Guard during the Korean War in 1951. Decorated with pictures of her grandfather in uniform and his ship, the poster displayed Rebekah's personal message to her "PawPaw."

> **"I think they need to know about what their grandfathers and aunts and uncles served in and the price they paid for their country."**
>
> — Hope Bullman, mother

"I thank God for my grandpa, my 'PawPaw,'" the sign read. "He takes me to the beach, plays horses with me and my sisters. He draws pictures and prays for me."

The shy kindergartner had a simple reason for making the sign.

"So that everybody can know I love PawPaw," she said.

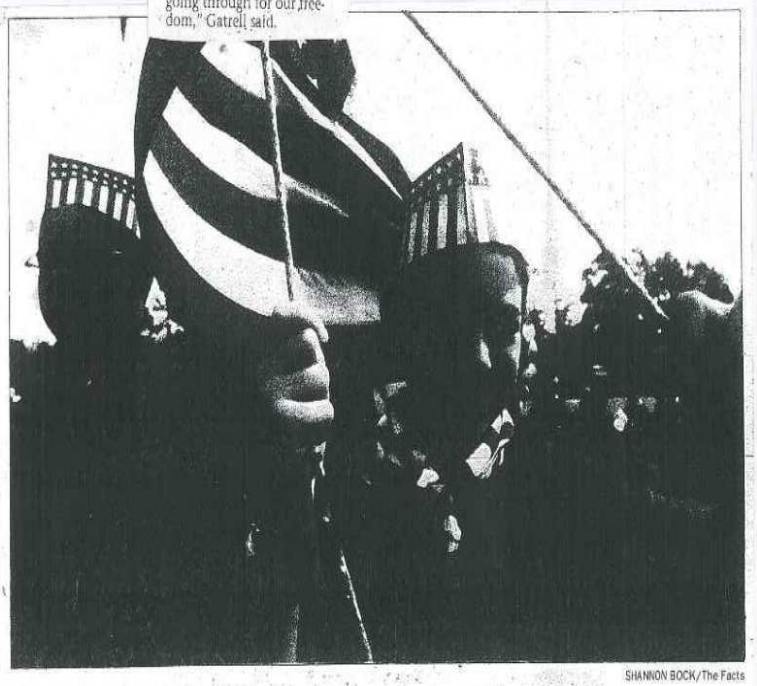
Bullman's cousin, Matthew Wise, 6, also joined in the program. He made a sign to remember the service that his great-grandfather, Jimmy Bryan Stanford, paid as a paratrooper in Vietnam. The first-grader realized the sacrifices that his great-grandfather made and wanted to thank him and other soldiers for the good job they did, the boy said.

"They served in the war," Wise said.

The ceremony served to teach students the meaning of the holiday, said Hope Bullman, who watched her daughter honor her father-in-law in Thursday's ceremony.

"I think they need to know about what their grandfathers and aunts and uncles served in and the price they paid for their country," Bullman said.

Bridie Isensee covers Brazosport ISD for The Facts. Contact her at (979) 237-0149.



SHANNON BOCK/The Facts

Wild Peach Elementary School students Chess White and Colton Watts raise the American flag Wednesday in honor of Veterans Day dur-

VETERANS DAY 2003: HEROES PAST AND PRESENT



VELDA HUNTER/The Facts

Members of Boy Scout Pack 503 salute and watch the American and Texas flags rise during a program Monday honoring Veterans Day at Wild Peach Elementary.

Uniform praise

Wild Peach students honor area veterans.

By Velda Hunter

velda.hunter@thefacts.com

WILD PEACH — Tony Gebhardt and Jeremy Swanner are only 9 years old, but they know about war.

They've heard wartime stories — one about Swanner's grandpa leaving his grandma at home to fight overseas and another about Gebhardt's father's close call with a grenade. And the boys, both Boy Scouts, seemed to understand why the veterans gathered at Wild Peach Elementary on Monday did what they did.

"If they didn't fight those wars, we wouldn't be free and we'd be bossed around by people," Gebhardt said.

The two were among many who participated in a program honoring veterans Monday. About 30 veterans received certificates of appreciation for their service before a flag-raising ceremony.

The ceremony came a day before Americans celebrated Veterans Day. Today marks the 50th celebration of Veterans Day.

Photographs and short biographies of veterans lined the school's main hallway. Among the display were photographs of kindergartner Justin Nichol's grandfather, Leroy Peden, and great-grandfather, Floyd Oliver.

"He got shot in the back, face and arm," Justin said of his grandfather's war service.

His family doesn't talk about war too often. But when Justin has questions, his grandfather answers.

"He asks me 'What did you do in the military?,'" said Peden, who served in Vietnam and Korea. "I was a gunner. ... We got shot twice. I tell him grandpa's got pain."

Peden, who worked on helicopters, earned several medals, including the Purple Heart.

Veterans who attended Monday's program said they were appreciative of the student tribute.

"Wild Peach has always put on a good program and they seem to get better every year," said James Belk of VFW Post 8851.

"A lot of them have grandfathers and fathers standing there. You can see the gleam on their faces," Belk said. "Those same kids will be in our place later on."

America's armed forces already might have found two new soldiers in Gebhardt and Swanner. Both said they wanted to join the military.

See VETERANS, Page 2A



HEATHER WATKINS/The Facts

Lisa Ramirez, a Kingsville resident who serves in the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne, is currently on leave and will return to Iraq on Thursday. She is holding a ceramic angel decorated for her by her aunt, Diana Ramirez of Angleton, who always signs the end of her e-mails to her niece with "May a thousand angels shield you."

Soldier on leave from Iraq to be special guest for veterans parade.

By Michael Wright

mike.wright@thefacts.com

ANGLETON — When Spc. Lisa Ramirez came home on leave from Mosul, Iraq, she wanted two things — a pedicure and a Whataburger.

Ramirez, a 21-year-old Kingsville native, is a trooper with the 101st Airborne division who works in the finance office. She's been in Iraq since May and before that was in Afghanistan. She works 12-hour days, must carry her weapon at all times and can't wear civilian clothes.

"I want to be a girl, let my hair down," she said, while visiting her aunt in Angleton. "We wear boots everyday."

Ramirez, to whom students at Rancho Isabella and Westside Elementary have been writing, will be the guest of honor at today's Veterans Day parade in Alvin.

She was in Reserve Officers Training Corps all through high school, but it wasn't until Sept. 11, 2001, that she realized what she was in for. She had gone to shower after at a friend's home near Port Campbell, where she had been on a march, when she heard the news. She went running through the Kentucky countryside and barely made it back before the post was locked down tight.

"I knew it was like, 'So I'm going to be a soldier,'" she said.

War, or rather the aftermath of war, has been a revelation to this soldier. She doesn't like Iraq.

"It's kind of nasty gross," she said. "Dirty, dusty."

No doubt like many soldiers, she didn't sign up for the ride she's on.

"I wanted to travel the states, not the whole world," she said.

Her parents are proud of her.

"I'm scared, but she's there for a good cause," said Juan Ramirez, who lives in Bay City with Lisa's stepmother and three half-sisters. "They're doing a good job, they're doing something that needs to be done. But it's not something I want my daughter doing."

Juan Ramirez said the little girl who joined the army doesn't show up often.

"She's more serious now," he said. "She's not the happy-go-lucky girl she used to be. She's not a girl anymore, she's a young woman. I still see the little girl in her. I always will. But I see her more as a woman. It makes me feel proud, real proud."

The girl in Lisa comes out when she's discussing what she'll wear in today's parade.

Her mother wants her to wear her uniform, but she doesn't want to.

"I'm trying not to put it on," she said. "I wore it seven months, and I've got to go back and wear it."

Her mother's reply is timeless.

"You won't have to wear it very long," Velma Ramirez said.

The bond between mother and daughter was tight. When Velma heard Lisa was going to Afghanistan, she quit her job as a loan officer in Kingsville and moved to Kentucky, where Lisa was stationed, to be near her. But Lisa shipped out soon after and Velma is back in Kingsville.

She watches the news constantly and her friends are forever asking after Lisa.

Thursday she will return to Mosul, where Saddam Hussein's sons were gunned down. Despite being at the center of things, Ramirez said the soldiers are often the last to find out what's happening.

"They won't tell us," she said. "We won't know until two or three days later."

The work keeps her busy. They often travel to other outposts, always with at least three vehicles, to deliver pay to soldiers.

They talk a little to the Iraqis, but nothing personal. She hasn't asked what life was like under Saddam.

"You can't trust them," Ramirez said.

She's gotten used to carrying a rifle everywhere she goes. A grenade went off at her post, detonated by remote control, and she spent an hour hunkered down in a bunker on full alert.

There is a weariness to her answers, a polite impatience as she's taken away from her family and the home cooking she's yearned for. She offers no opinions on the politics of the war and the undercurrent of opposition that seems to be forming in the United States.

"Everybody's got their own opinion," she said.

She keeps hers to herself when asked if the United States was prepared for the aftermath of the fighting.

"I'd prefer not to answer that one," Ramirez said, not unpleasantly.

She's most animated when she talks about the visit to Whataburger, which doesn't exist in either Iraq or Kentucky.

"I went there three times this week," she said. "It was wonderful."

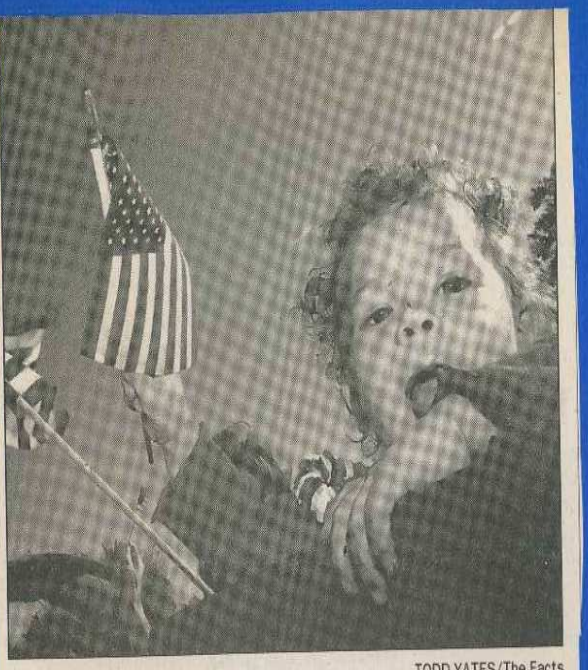
Her family and the world she knows are in Texas, but her future is in front of her, somewhere over the desert horizon. Her fiancé is in Iraq as well, and she won't re-enlist when her obligation ends in September. She plans to go to college and study business and finance.

And she plans to let her hair down.

See RAMIREZ, Page 8A

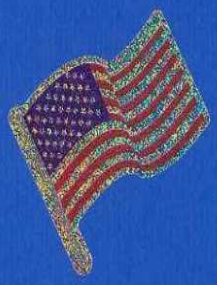
Remembering our veterans

- A listing of community events paying tribute to local veterans — Page 4A
- A federal program is helping states build cemeteries so veterans can be buried close to home — Page 5A
- Express your gratitude for military heroes past and present — Our Viewpoint, 6A
- Pictures of area men and women who answered the call the serve our country — Special Insert



TODD YATES/The Facts

Taeya Brege, 1, of Freeport waves an American flag Thursday as she watches the Brazoria County Veterans Day parade move down Second Street in Freeport.



Veterans Day celebration in Freeport done right

Seven months of planning paid off in a big way last Thursday as the City of Freeport played host to an awesome day of celebration, honoring our troops — past and present — on Veterans Day.

An estimated 400 to 500 residents boarded 70 floats for an afternoon parade, joined by marching bands and the crew of the visiting warship USS Falcon.

The docked ship was itself a treat, as Lt. Commander Robert Smith showed off the Falcon to veterans and U.S. Rep. Ron Paul, R-Surfside Beach. Paul's office supported the request from organizers to have the warship present during the Veterans Day ceremonies.

Freeport and the various groups involved have a lot to be proud of for putting on one of the biggest celebrations of the year in Brazoria County. Especially now, with an offensive in Fallujah being executed in the continued effort to liberate Iraq, it is important to recognize our war heroes and give thanks to the efforts that each and every one put forth for our great country.

Thursday's parade and ceremonies were examples of how to do it — and do it right. We offer our thanks for the memorable day of celebration.

We also offer a tip of the hat to Golden Corral restaurants in Angleton and Alvin, which provided free meals Monday for veterans and active military.





Symbol to remember veterans

BY JIM GARAMONE
American Press Service

Up until the 1960s veterans groups used the red poppy as the symbol of Veterans Day. In Great Britain, it still is.

The symbol comes from a poem written by a Canadian doctor John M. McCrae in 1915:

"In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields."

McCrae tended to the first victims of a German chemical attack on the British line at the Belgian town of Ypres during World War I. The fields of Flanders, where some of the most horrific battles occurred, are now dotted with cemeteries filled with the war dead. If you fly across France and Belgium, you can still see the remains of the trench systems of the war.

The Great War of 1914 to 1918, called the first modern global conflict, was an enormous divide for the world. Millions of soldiers, sailors and airmen died in the conflict. Millions more civilians were also killed or died of disease. It truly was a world war. Men fought in Turkey, the Balkans, East Africa and the Middle East as well as in Russia and France. The war caused the Russian czar to fall and allowed Vladimir Lenin to build what would become the Soviet Union.

On Nov. 11, 1918, that war came to an end. At 11 a.m. the shooting stopped. A war that saw 20,000 British "Tommies" die in 20 minutes at the Battle of the Somme in 1916, was over. The war that saw 1,384,000 French "poilus" die, ended in the trenches that extended from Switzerland to the Belgian coast. Americans, who joined the war in 1917, lost more than 100,000 soldiers in the fighting.

The Germans had signed an armistice with the allies and to the generations of The Great War, Nov. 11 remains Armistice Day. For decades, veterans sold paper poppies to raise money for memorials and for the families of those who died in the war.

But The Great War was not, as President Woodrow Wilson hoped, "the war to end all wars." World War II rose from its ashes, and millions more died to stop the mad dreams of dictators from 1939 to 1945. The U.S. Congress changed the name of Armistice Day to Veterans Day to honor all veterans after more blood was spilled during the Korean conflict to halt aggression.

Congress moved Veterans Day, along with most other federal holidays, to be celebrated on the closest Monday to the traditional date. But soon Congress reversed itself on Veterans Day because of public pressure to honor the powerful symbolism of the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

Along with two world wars and Korea, Americans and their allies have fought and died in Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan and other places.

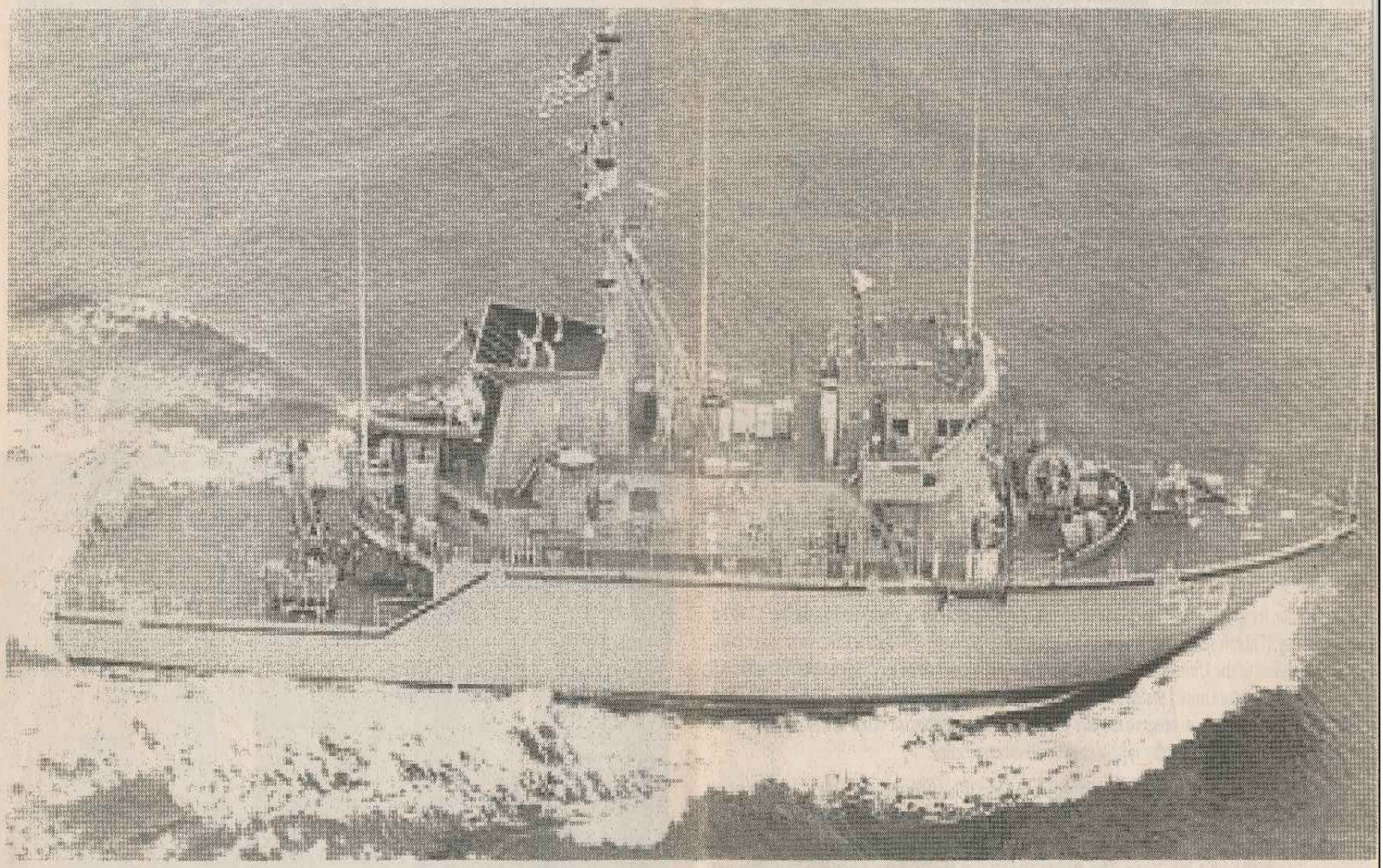
Today, the United States' armed forces confront enemies around the world. U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen defend freedom on station wherever, whenever they are called. Those serving today are ensuring that they do not ignore the final verse of McCrae's poem:

"Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from falling hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields."

The Sentinel

Volume I Issue XXXIV | Independently Owned and Published | Commemorative Issue | November 11, 2004

Freeport Welcomes the USS Falcon, Lt. Commander Robert Smith and Crew



The USS Falcon, MHC 59, will be docking at the Port of Freeport next week in honor of the Veteran's day celebration hosted by the city of Freeport.. Port of Freeport dignitaries, city officials and members of local military organizations alike, have been busy in preparation for this momentous event.

"We are very honored to have the ship come to Freeport during this event " said Ed Garcia, co-chair of the parade committee.

"We are very proud that the city of Freeport, the host city this year will be having such a memorable parade and the ceremonies to follow."

"There are 22,000 veterans in Brazoria County and we would love to have the participation of all of

The MHC Class design integrates modern mine countermeasures technology into a uniquely designed plat form with exceptionally low magnetic signatures to protect against mine detonations during mine hunting operations.

The ship has had many accomplishments, most notably as the platform for the launch, recovery, and employment of Battlespace Profiler Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (BPAUV) for the Office of Naval Research.

During a month long prototype demonstration in June 2003, the Unmanned Underwater Vehicle was employed in a myriad of tactical situations ranging from Q-route surveys to Mine Danger

About the Commander.

On Oct. 7, Lt. Cmdr. Robert S. Smith Jr. took over command of the USS Falcon, MHC 59.

Lt. Cmdr. Smith graduated from the University of South Carolina in May 1993, with a bachelor of science degree in personnel management and was commissioned as an ensign through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) at USC.

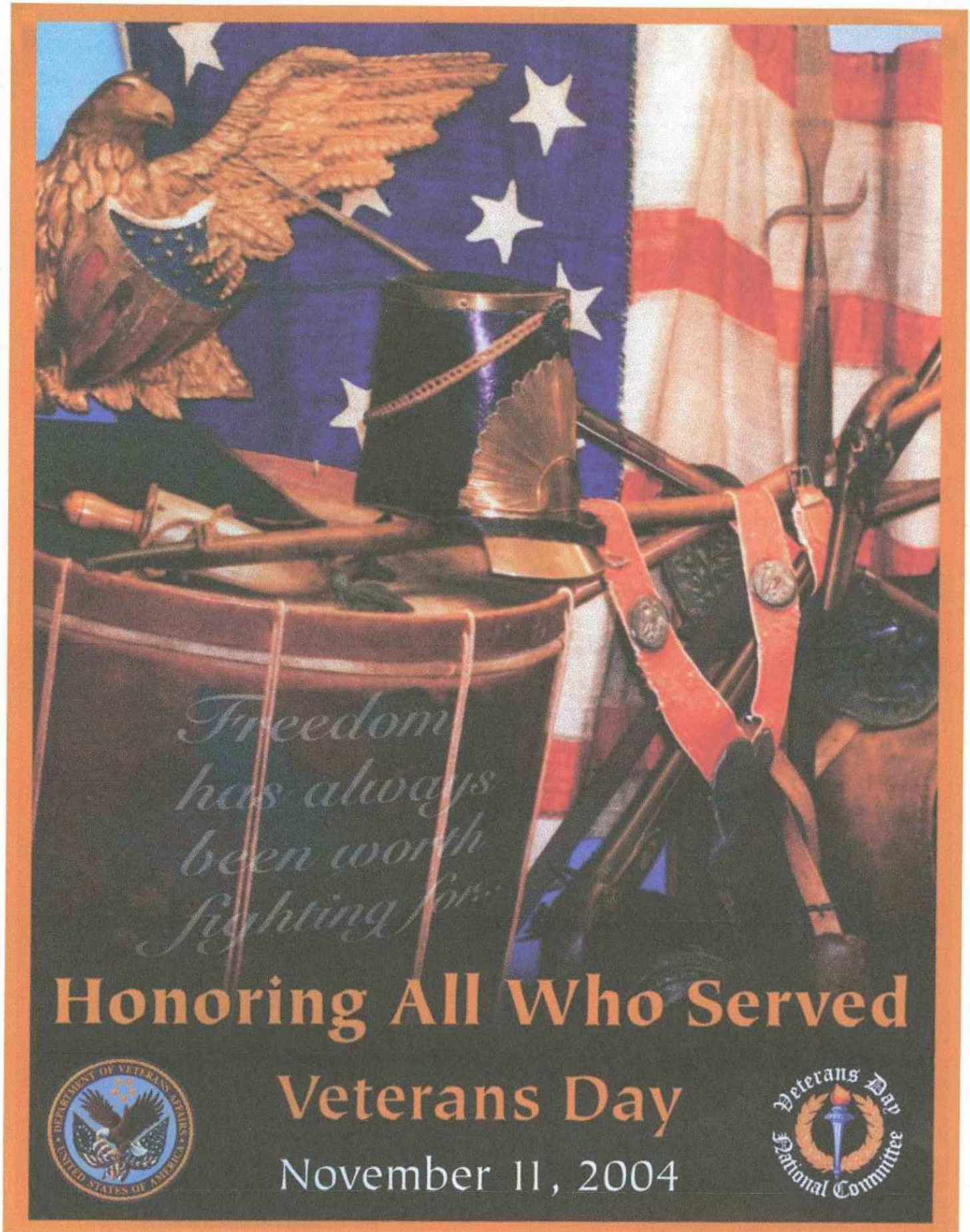
Lt. Cmdr. Smith's initial sea duty assignment was with the amphibious assault ship, USS Inchon (LPH 12), home ported in Norfolk, Va., where he served as repair division officer from December 1993 to March 1995. In February 1998, he reported to USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63) as the engineering fuels officer.

In March 2003, he reported to the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, R.I., where he earned a master of arts degree in national security and strategic studies.

Lt. Cmdr. Smith's personal decorations include two Navy Commendation Medals, two Navy Achievement Medals, as well as various campaign awards and unit commendations.

Information courtesy of Lieutenant Melissa Clarady and the United States Navy.

Clute


Freedom has always been worth fighting for...
Honoring All Who Served
Veterans Day
November 11, 2004
Veterans Day National Committee



Angleton

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED



VETERANS DAY

November 11, 2005





PATRIOTISM





PEACE

Celebration is dream come true

Veteran's Day ceremony idea came to man in sleep.

By Bridget Brown
bridget.brown@thefacts.com

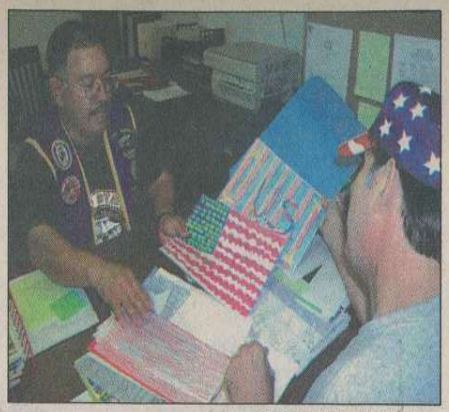
ANGLETON — On Veteran's Day, American flags will wave to the sounds of brass horns and drums playing patriotic favorites along the streets of Angleton. But this red, white and blue slice of American life wasn't built overnight — it was dreamed up that way eight years ago.

John Jasso, a member of the American Legion Charles Dixon Post 241, said a vision of a countywide Veteran's Day celebration came to him in a dream, and he's made it a mission to thank veterans by heading up the yearly event.

Representatives from the county's 17 veteran organizations plan all year for a celebration large enough to honor Brazoria County's 22,000 veterans, Jasso said. It cost about $12,000 to bring the event together this year, he said.

"The average veteran served for four years. That's 88,000 years of service veterans in the county have given to our country," said Glen Moody, commander of the post. "It gives me chills thinking about all that vets have done so much, and the very little

■ See **VETERANS,** Page 9A



BRIDGET BROWN/The Facts

American Legion Post 241 Commander Glen Moody and member John Jasso look Sunday at Veteran's Day posters, which were made by fourth-grade students, at the American Legion Hall in Angleton.

Veterans

CONTINUED FROM COVER

recognition that they have gotten."

The event has toured through seven cities in the county with a different city hosting the celebration every year. The parade, festival and concert will return to Angleton, the location of the original event, for the celebration's eighth year.

"Every year we ask, 'what do you want to do this year to make your town shine," Jasso said. "We want to unite the county."

Saturday, the event will begin at 11 a.m. with a parade that will start at the corner of Wilkins and Valderes streets and run down State Highway 35 ending near Subway. Nashville recording artist Luke Stricken, who served in Iraq in the National Guard 1/153 Infantry, will be the grand marshall. All of the veterans' organizations in the county will be represented on individual floats, Jasso said.

Then, the celebration will move to the Angleton High School stadium, where a program will begin at 1 a.m. Featuring the oldest and youngest veteran in Brazoria County, the program will recognize veterans from every war.

"It's going to be an exciting program," Moody said. "The Angleton band and choir will perform, and there will be skydivers skydiving into the stadium."

Beginning at 4 p.m. a barbecue dinner will be served at the Brazoria County Fairgrounds in Angleton. The dinner is free for veterans, Jasso said. A concert will begin at the fairgrounds at 6:30 p.m. with James Lann and Branded. Strickland will take the stage from 9:30 to 11 p.m.

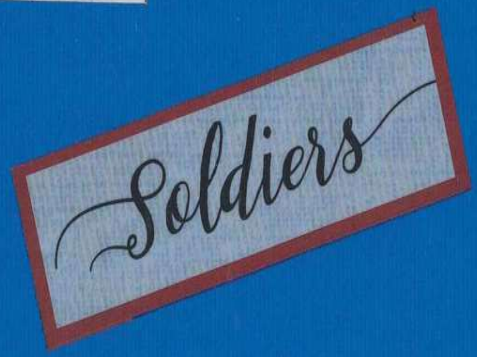
For the first time, posters and essays designed and written by fourth-graders at Angleton elementary schools will line the parade route. Last month, students were asked to interview a veteran and write an essay about the veteran's experience. Every fourth grade classroom was visited by a veteran to prepare for the assignment, Jasso said. The students with the winning essays and posters will be recongnized during the program.

Moody said the group decided to involve the students when he learned some children think the word "vet" means only veterinarian. His grandson asked him why America honors veterinarians, Moody said with a laugh.

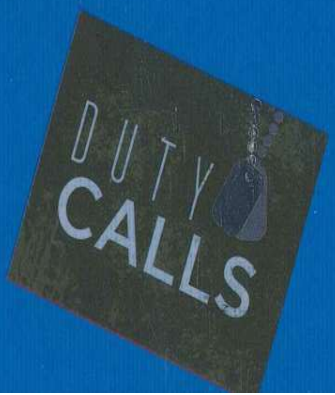
"When we initially started this I thought it might be quite a bit above the kid's heads," said Karen Cringle, a fourth-grade teacher at Westside Elementary. "But, their essays were wonderful. They talked about different heroic acts and how it feels to serve the country."

The project also was designed to allow some veterans a chance to finally share their stories with their families, Jasso said.

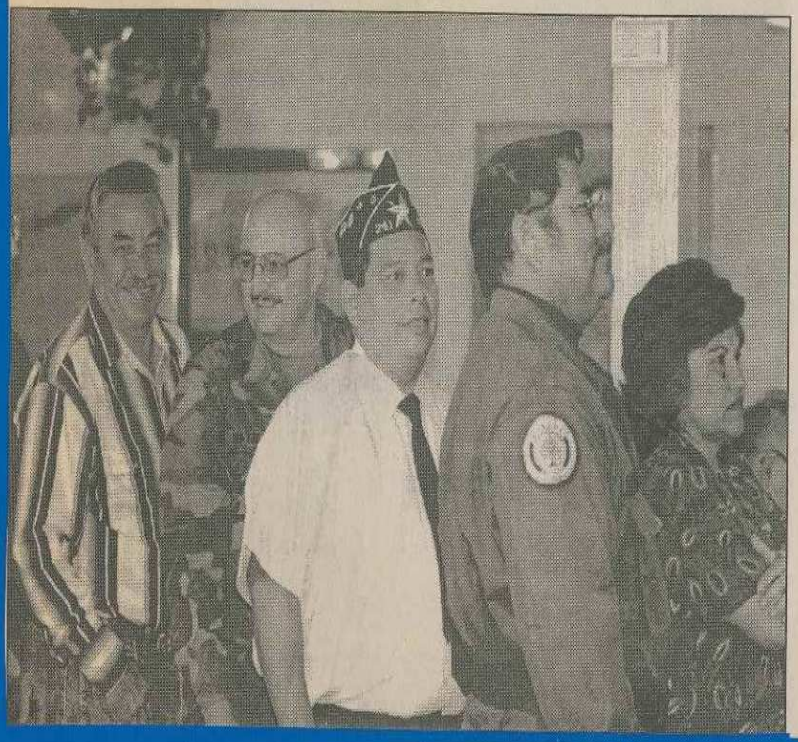
"Each and every year we are getting more veterans to come out of their shell," Jasso said. "We are really touching a lot of guys in the county. That is why we are doing it."





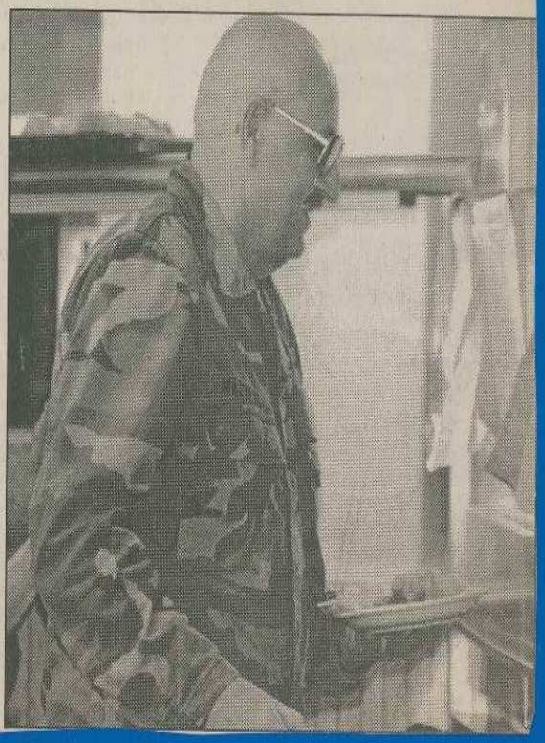


Saluting America's Veterans



Hundreds of U.S. Veterans enjoyed a free buffet at Golden Corral Monday. The meal was in appreciation for the work these men and women have given to the United States. The event lasted from 4 to 9 p.m. to ensure veterans had time to visit with old friends and had a chance to make new ones.

Times Photos
by Roy Gutierrez



Appreciation Night unites U.S. veterans on Nov. 11

BY ROY GUTIERREZ
The Angleton Times

Hundreds of U.S. veterans will unite at Angleton's Golden Corral Monday, Nov. 11 in recognition of Veterans Day.

Retired and active patrons who have served or are dedicating their time to the U.S. Armed Forces will be treated to a free buffet.

The gathering will be from 4 to 9 p.m. at the restaurant which is located at 1227 N. Velasco St. in Angleton.

The Military Appreciation Night is in its second year.

This event will honor veterans for their dedication in protecting the United States.

Every veteran is welcome to the free dinner buffet and no questions will be asked.

More than 200 area veterans attended Military Appreciation Night last year.

"The first year was so wonderful because we had veterans who served in Vietnam, Korea, World War II and Desert Storm," said Jeannette L. Maler, Angleton Golden Corral owner.

"And I would like to see more veterans Monday."

Maler understands the importance of remembering veterans as her late husband served in Korea and her father helped protect the United States in World War II.

"It touches me personally because they gave their time and some school friends also fought in Vietnam, but some didn't come back."

"Our freedom has been earned because they (veterans) have given us this freedom."

Military Appreciation Night will give veterans of all branches a chance to make new friends.

"I've enjoy visiting with all the people, and I get to see those who would not have come in the restaurant normally," Maler said.

Because of the time change, Maler extended the serving time from 5 p.m. to 4 p.m. because it gets dark earlier.

"Some veterans are disabled and by starting the buffet at 4 p.m., it gives them the chance to come early and see people they haven't seen in years," Maler said.

For more information about the Military Appreciation Night, call 979-849-6504.

Guests of honor



SARA BOOKOUT/The Facts

Wild Peach resident and 2006 Facts Citizen of the Year Dean Wilke bows his head to pray Saturday during a Veterans Day ceremony in West Columbia. Wilke is a member of the American Legion Mattson-Ringgold Post 503.

Brazoria County residents pay tribute to veterans

By Bridget Brown
bridget.brown@thefacts.com

Drumrolls matched beats with the quick, straight steps of a former soldier's march while hundreds of pint-sized flags waved down the streets of Angleton.

On Saturday, Veterans Day events in Angleton and West Columbia were filled with tearful thank yous and warm handshakes. Children learned what it means to sacrifice while adults lined up to thank those who said good-bye to friends and families and entered into the service alone.

Red, white and blue floats slowly glided down the street Saturday carrying members from several Veterans of Foreign Wars posts, American Legion and ROTC organizations in Brazoria County.

"We've been trying not to cry sitting here," said Alvin resident Terry Pavlock while watching the parade roll by. "It's wonderful to see this many people come out on a Saturday to pay tribute. We don't do enough of it."

The Veterans Day event has toured through seven locations in the county, with a different city hosting every year. This year, the parade, festival and concert returned to Angleton, the location of the first event, held eight years ago.

Saturday, hundreds lined up lawnchairs to watch the procession while children ran into the street to scoop up candy.

"I loved the parade. I thought it was wonderful," said Josephine Smith, a 104-year-old Alvin woman. "These

■ See **VETERANS**, Page 8A



MOREINSIDE

■ President Bush praises soldiers.
A-Plus, 9A
■ Soldier to join twin brothers in Iraq.
Nation, 11A



SARA BOOKOUT/The Facts

Pfc. Daniel Sargent of the U.S. Army marches Saturday during the Veterans Day parade in Angleton.



SARA BOOKOUT/The Facts

Brazoria County Sheriffs Deputies and Air Force ROTC members march with flags Saturday during the Veterans Day parade in Angleton.



VFW and Boy Scout members salute during the flag raising ceremony Saturday at Veterans Memorial Park in West Columbia as part of the city's Veterans Day events.

Veterans

CONTINUED FROM COVER

veterans fought for us. We wouldn't be so free to express our views and live like we do if it weren't for them."

Even some of the youngest parade-goers stopped collecting treats to share what they knew about veterans.

"Someone that served in the military and the war, too," is 6-year-old Seth Chronister's idea of a veteran. Sitting on a tailgate facing the parade, his brother, Gage Chronister, 12, broadened the boy's definition.

"We should thank them for everything they do," Gage Chronister said. "If it wasn't for them, things wouldn't be here now. It wouldn't be America."

Following the parade, the crowd moved to Angleton High School's Wildcat Stadium for a ceremony honoring Brazoria County's 22,000 veterans. The ceremony included a special recognition for prisoners of war and those soldiers who were missing in action.

A solemn hush swept over the bleachers while American Legion Charles Dixon Post 241 Commander Glen Moody explained the significance of an empty round table that sat on the football field. The table, draped in a white linen cloth, was set for a party of five in remembrance of prisoners of war and the ones who never were found.

"We are compelled to never forget that there are others that may still be enduring pain and depravation in imprisonment," Moody told the crowd.

A single rose in the middle of the table symbolized the blood the soldiers may have shed and the friends and family who still wait for their return, he said.

"It's a heart-warming experience. You feel so grateful for what they have done," said Barbara Miner of Angleton. "We enjoy our freedom, but they have sacrificed so much."

In West Columbia, a crowd gathered at Veterans Memorial Park. The program included a flag ceremony, which honored soldiers who served in each military branch.

Former Army Capt. Greg Laughlin and former Air Force Lt. Gen. Steve Polk spoke at the event sponsored by the American Legion Mattson-Ringold Post 503. Veterans were served a complimentary breakfast before the morning ceremony.

"The freedoms and liberties that we enjoy today is because of the veterans," said organizer Sandy Weems. "We owe every veteran a debt of gratitude."

Bridget Brown is a reporter for The Facts. Contact her at (979) 849-8581.



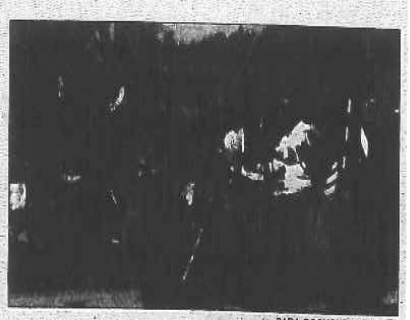
SARA BOOKOUT/The Facts

Matthew Bryant, 12, holds a sign displaying the Marine Corps motto "Semper Fi" Saturday in support of service members at the Veterans Day Parade in Angleton.



SARA BOOKOUT/The Facts

Bugler Al Parrott plays during the flag raising Saturday at Veterans Memorial Park in West Columbia. Parrott is a member of Bugles Across America.



SARA BOOKOUT/The Facts

A member of the Angleton VFW rides by a group of parade revelers holding flags Saturday during the Veterans Day parade in Angleton.



SARA BOOKOUT/The Facts

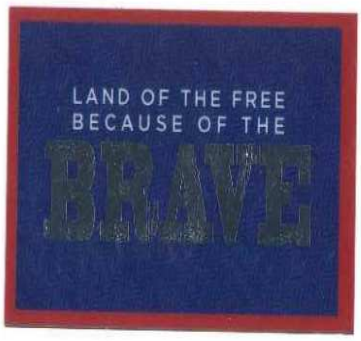
Veterans Day ceremony attendees sing the National Anthem on Saturday at Veterans Memorial Park in West Columbia.








HERO


LAND OF THE FREE
BECAUSE OF THE
BRAVE



AMONG THOSE HONORED IN VETERANS DAY OBSERVANCES ARE THE HOUSTON AREA'S ONLY LIVING RECIPIENTS OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR

CALL TO VALOR

Michael Thornton

As a Navy SEAL in Vietnam, the Montgomery County resident was wounded on Halloween 1972.



E. Joseph Deering / Chronicle



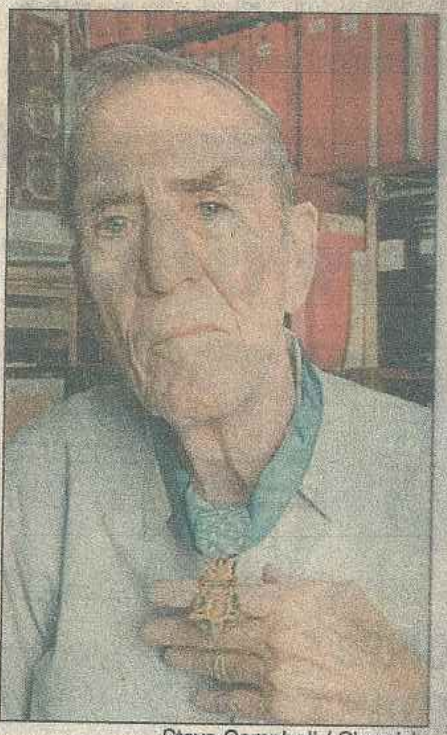
Associated Press

Clarence Sasser

As an Army medic, the Rosharon resident ignored his wounds to treat others in a Jan. 10, 1968, firefight.

David McNerney

The Harris County resident's 108-man company battled a force four times larger March 22, 1967.



Steve Campbell / Chronicle

By CINDY HORSWELL
Houston Chronicle

One was raised with six brothers and sisters on a pig-and-vegetable farm in Brazoria County.

Another grew up in the mountains of South Carolina, supported by a father who had worked since age 11. The third is the son of an entomologist.

There was nothing terribly remarkable about their early years, and yet all three — Clarence Sasser of Brazoria County, Mike Thornton of Montgomery County and David McNerney of Harris County — had what it took to become part of an elite group.

Among the many who are being honored today in Veterans Day observances, they are the Houston area's only living recipients of the nation's highest award for valor, the Medal of Honor.

Nationally, there are only 149 living recipients, and Sasser is one of only three African-Americans among them.

"It's something you don't go looking for. If you do, you'll usually be dead," said Thornton, 52, the South Carolina native who lives in Montgomery County.

Inspired by his love for war games and competitive swimming — and by a movie about a Navy frogman — Thornton enlisted right after high school. He was one of only 16 in a class of 129 who survived rigorous Special Forces training to become Navy SEALs and was promptly dispatched to Vietnam in 1967.

That year, Sasser, now 54, of Rosharon, was drafted into the Army shortly after finishing high school. He was trained and sent to Vietnam as a medic.

Two years after Thornton and Sasser entered the military, McNerney, now a 70-year-old Crosby resident, retired as a sergeant with 20 years of combined service in the Navy and Army.

He says two forces motivated him to enlist in 1949 after graduating from Houston's St. Thomas High School: the attack on Pearl Harbor when he was 10 years old and too young to fight, and his family's proud military history.

McNerney says his father, Edward, suffered exposure to poison gas and lost part of a leg while serving as an Army lieutenant in World War I. His fa-

See VALOR on Page 25A.

Valor

Continued from Page 1A.

'Whenever I talk about it, it takes a couple of days to get over the remembering. . . . I was just doing my job. Otherwise we might not make it out of there alive.'

Clarence Sasser, 54, of Rosharon

ther was decorated five times, he says, including earning the nation's second-highest award, the Distinguished Service Cross.

In addition, he says, his oldest brother served on a submarine that sank six enemy ships during World War II; another brother earned the Distinguished Flying Cross and 12 air medals while flying for the Air Force in Vietnam; and his older sister served as an Army nurse.

Beyond the call of duty

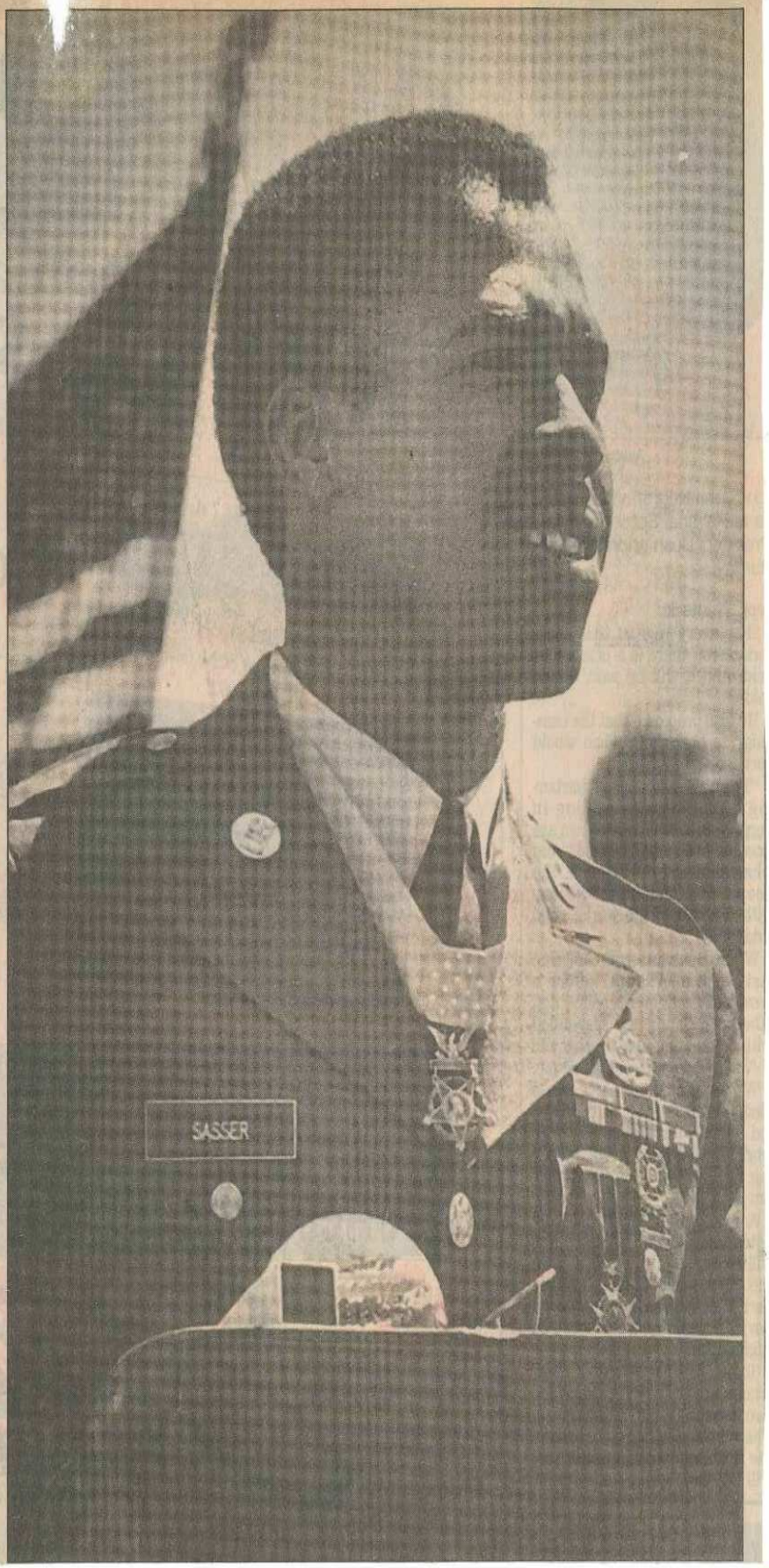
But while many in the military accomplish heroic feats, the Medal of Honor is reserved for those whose deeds set them apart. Each of the Houston area's three recipients was cited for ignoring his injuries to go far beyond the call of duty and risk his life for others.

Sasser speaks haltingly about the events of Jan. 10, 1968.

"Whenever I talk about it, it takes a couple of days to get over the remembering," he says.

Like the other two, he never viewed what he did as heroic. "I was just doing my job," he says. "Otherwise we might not make it out of there alive."

His company of 106 men had been flown to the Mekong Delta on a reconnaissance mission. They were ambushed, and within minutes 30 were killed. By the end of the seven-hour battle, more than three-fourths of the company were dead or wounded, according to military reports.



A bullet grazed Sasser's head as soon as he jumped from the helicopter, but he had no time to treat the wound. Of four medics in the company, he was the only one who survived.

Outnumbered by a 12-1 ratio, his company took cover behind levees in a rice paddy while taking fire from the woods on three sides.

Without regard for his safety, Sasser ran through a hail of fire in the open field to tend to the wounded and pull them to safety. Fragments from an exploding rocket wounded him in the shoulder but didn't stop him.

Feeling faint from pain and blood loss, he continued assisting the injured even after suffering two leg wounds. Limited by his injuries, he dragged himself about 100 yards through the mud to reach some soldiers, according to reports.

"Sure, it hurt, but I didn't let myself think about it," Sasser says.

After the company was evacuated, he spent 84 days in hospitals but made a full recovery.

AMERICAN HERO



Highest honor

Above: Clarence Sasser addresses students at Angleton High School in May 1969. Even today, the Brazoria County resident speaks haltingly about the events of Jan. 10, 1968.
Right: President Lyndon Johnson awards the medal to Harris County's David McNerney for his actions during a March 22, 1967, firefight.



Courtesy of David McNerney

A miscalculated risk

Thornton was wounded during an intelligence-gathering mission Oct. 31, 1972, along the coast just north of the Cua Viet River. He and another Navy SEAL, Tommy Norris, were serving as advisers to three South Vietnamese soldiers.

Because of a radar miscalculation, the team was launched from a boat two miles north of its intended destination. Support teams, as a result, were unable to locate the team after its members swam ashore.

An enemy soldier did spot them, however, a half-mile inland. He soon was joined by about 70 comrades, according to reports on the engagement.

In the ensuing battle, seven pieces of shrapnel pierced Thornton's back and legs.

Seeing that they were about to be surrounded, the team's five members headed for the beach. One of the South Vietnamese then reported that Norris, who was providing covering fire for the withdrawal, had been killed.

"I would not believe it until I saw for myself," says Thornton. "Even if true, I wouldn't leave his body there. They would just cut it to pieces."

Running through heavy fire, he found Norris unconscious but alive. Norris had been shot in the left temple, losing an eye and a portion of his forehead.

Thornton slung Norris onto his back and fought his way back to the beach. One of the South Vietnamese had been wounded and couldn't manage in the surf.

Aided by a life jacket, Thornton breaststroked into the sea, supporting the wounded South Vietnamese soldier in front of him while Norris rode on his back.

"We swam for about three hours before a junk picked us up," Thornton recalls. "You don't think about the pain — just try to survive."

The other two soldiers made it to safety under their own power.

Norris survived and, after 29 surgeries, went to work for the FBI as one of its top agents until retiring two years ago, Thornton says. He notes that Norris was awarded a Medal of Honor for rescuing two downed pilots deep in enemy territory six months before being wounded.

'Like bumblebees'

Harris County's McNerney earned his Medal of Honor during a firefight March 22, 1967, in Polei Doc.

"We were eyeball-to-eyeball in one of the fiercest encounters of all my years in the military," he says. "It lasted all day long."

His 108-man company had been dropped there by helicopter to search for a missing four-man reconnaissance team. The company encountered an enemy force that was four times larger, according to reports.

Bullets were "flying like bumblebees" past his head as he tried to set up a defense perimeter, McNerney recalls.

During this effort, he was fighting several enemy soldiers at close range when blown from his feet by a grenade that embedded shrapnel under his right arm. Despite the wound, he pushed forward to destroy a machine-gun position that had his men pinned down, reports stated.

Soon afterward, he learned that his two superior officers had been killed and he was forced to assume command.

As first sergeant, he felt a strong paternal instinct for his men.

"I had taken these kids as civilians and trained them for over a year," McNerney says. "When you see they all depend on you, you do whatever must be done."

The men who survived credit McNerney with saving their lives as he exposed himself to enemy fire, running up and down the line directing the fighting and assisting the wounded. To make sure a rescue team could find them, he also went into the open to identify their location and climbed a tree to tie an identification panel in the highest branches.

When he needed to clear a landing zone among the large trees, he crawled outside the protected perimeter through heavy fire to retrieve explosives from abandoned rucksacks.

After medical rescue teams arrived, McNerney refused to be evacuated until the new commander arrived, the report stated.

Day of special meaning

Veterans Day has special meaning for the three medal recipients — especially now as America wages a new war.

Thornton, who retired as a lieutenant commander in 1992 after 25 years in the service, grumbles that many take freedom for granted.

"The media keep showing us a few hundred peace protesters when right now we have thousands in the military who are risking their lives for our freedom," said Thornton, now employed as an operation consultant for Gallery Furniture.

"A lot of those protesters are just kids who want to get their name on TV. But I'll bet money if their family had been killed at the Pentagon or the Twin Towers, most would see it different," Thornton said, referring to the terrorist attacks in Virginia and on the World Trade Center in New York on Sept. 11.

McNerney, who retired after 20 years in the military and another 25 years as a U.S. Customs Service inspector in Houston, says he also has "no tolerance" for the protesters.

Sasser, who spent two years in the Army and now works as a veterans' claims review officer, thinks many are ungrateful for what others have done.

"Freedom means a lot to me," he said, "when you know somebody else is fighting and sacrificing for you."






ONCE A MARINE
ALWAYS A MARINE
MARINE CORPS LEAGUE
BRAZORIA Co. DETACHMENT


VFW

HOME IS WHERE THE MILITARY SENDS US







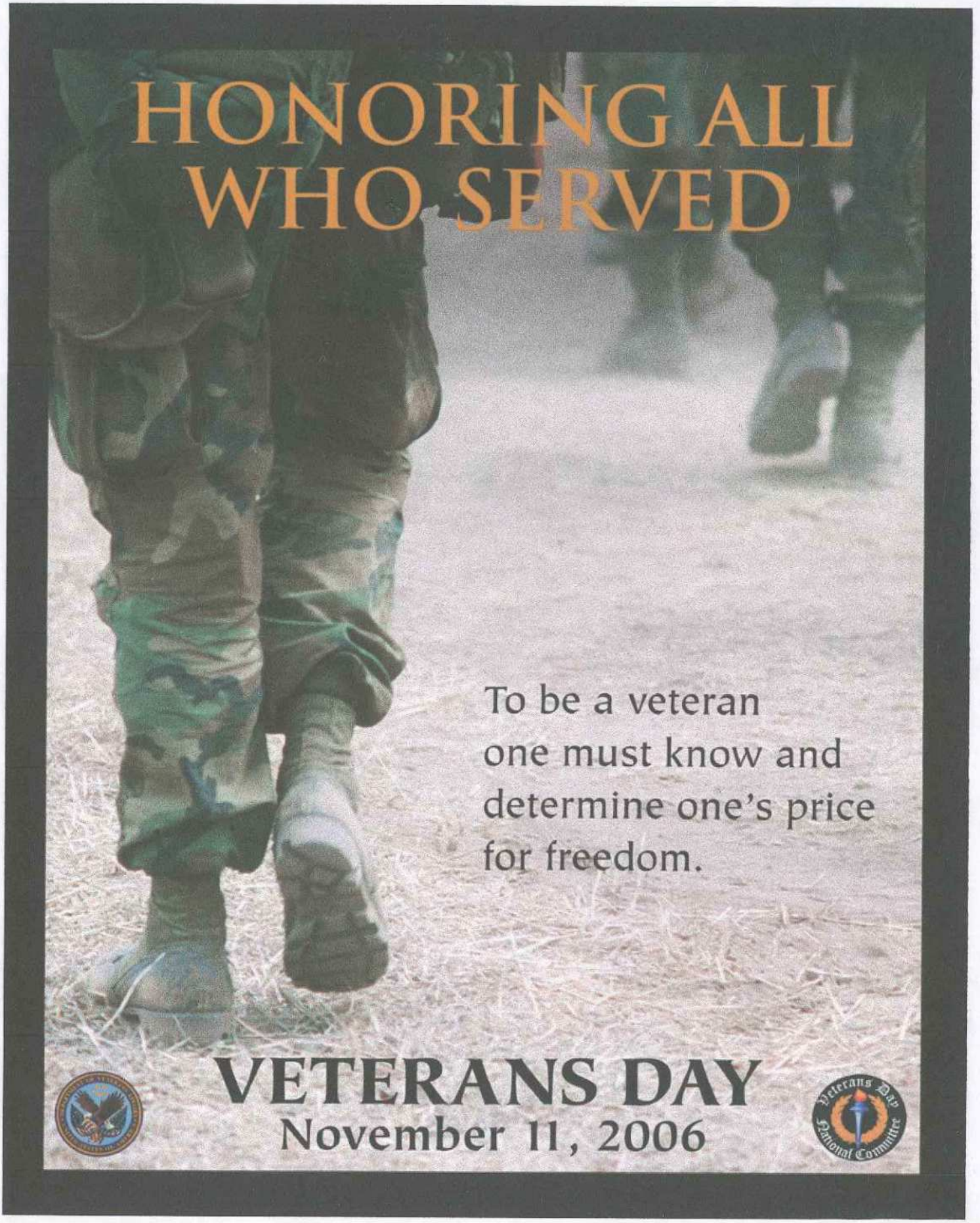


MY HERO





Danbury


HONORING ALL WHO SERVED
To be a veteran one must know and determine one's price for freedom.
VETERANS DAY
November 11, 2006
Veterans Day National Committee



LAURA McKENZIE/The Facts

Former Marine Charlie Meazles waves Sunday to the crowd gathered for Danbury's Veterans Day parade while aboard a Toys for Tots Float.

Our pride on parade



LAURA McKENZIE/The Facts

Linda Filipp, left, Beverly Wollam and Carole Zeselka lip-synch to music while riding aboard their USO float during Sunday's Veterans Day parade in Danbury.

County honors heroes of freedom.

By Erin McKeon

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DANBURY — As veterans in the annual county Veterans Day parade passed by smiling onlookers waving flags, the kinship between the two was evident. Frequently, veterans who passed each other also waved and said, "Welcome home, brother."

"I just think it's a time for us to stop and reflect on the freedom that we have," Jessica Winebrenner of Alvin said. "It isn't free, it's bought with a price. Many people have given their

■ See **VETERANS,** Page 8A

Veterans

CONTINUED FROM COVER

lives as sacrifices for us to have the freedom that we have."

Even young children who might not grasp the full meaning of the gathering had something to say about the celebration.

"The parade is for my Daddy, 'cause he's in the parade. I'm proud of my Daddy," said 4-year-old Preston Purcell, dressed in military clothing. Purcell said his father is in the Army and recently returned from a tour in Iraq.

Though their wording might be different, the reason spectators gathered for the parade remained the same.

"Veterans Day means a celebration of all the veterans, in all the branches are honored by their local communities and nationwide for their services and dedication in keeping the freedom of America," said Jonathan Parker, past commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4341 in Freeport.

Jim Ortego, a Vietnam veteran, spoke of his service. He said he has some long-term effects internally and with his vision from Agent Orange, an herbicide that was used in the war to help eliminate heavy foliage in Vietnam.

"I feel a little more fortunate than those that didn't make it," Ortego said.

During the program that followed the parade, many gathered to continue the celebration and listen to special music and the guest speakers.

State Rep. Dennis Bonnen, R-Angleton, said he believes the sacrifice that soldiers have made, and continue to make every day, is vital to the freedom of America, and the support Americans show veterans is wonderful.

"We are a country that has had sacrifice throughout its time, and it's extraordinary that we will show back up each and every year to pay tribute, respect and appreciation to those who've made those sacrifices," Bonnen said, "whether it be the ultimate sacrifice of giving their life or the sacrifice of serving one day or one minute."

On behalf of the Brazoria County Fair Association, Fair Queen Jessica Effenberger also spoke to the meaning of the day.

"You are heroes in the eyes of millions, and I do not believe that our country can do enough to thank you for all that you have done," Effenberger said. "May your hearts stay brave, may your families know our thanks and appreciation and may God bless you veterans in America."

County Judge E.J. "Joe" King, himself a veteran of the U.S. Army, said he was proud of his fellow veterans for what they have done.

"The United States exports many things," King said. "The thing that most people want the United States to bring to them is freedom, hope and democracy, and that's what these men have exported around the world."

Erin McKeon is a reporter for The Facts. Contact her at (979) 237-0152.



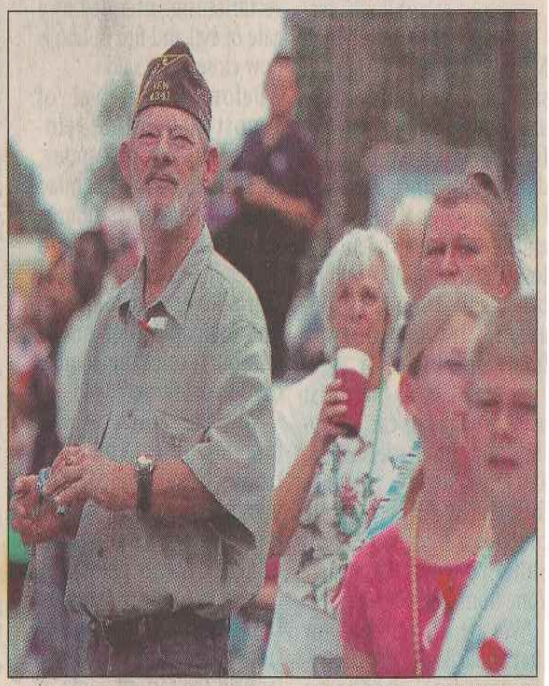
LAURA McKENZIE/The Facts

Motorcyclists, many bearing American flags, make their way down Spur 28 at the start of Sunday's Veterans Day Parade in Danbury.



LAURA McKENZIE/The Facts

Hazel Poindexter, 20 months, waves to revelers as she rides in Sunday's Veterans Day Parade in Danbury.



LAURA McKENZIE/The Facts

Jonathan Parker, a past commander of VFW Post 4341 in Freeport, watches the Veterans Day parade Sunday in Danbury. Parker served in the Navy from 1976-83.

COURAGE

A GREAT NATION

Sturdy tribute

■ Danbury school pays homage to area veterans.

By VELDA HUNTER
The Facts

DANBURY — Veteran Jack Woods remembers times when valiant efforts of the U.S. military came with thanks and times when their endeavors were not appreciated, though lives and limbs were lost on the battlefield.

"I think the low point was the Vietnam War," said Woods, who served in the U.S. Marines from 1955 to 1963. "I've seen guys come back and be ridiculed. And the thing about it was they were doing what they were told to do. ... They didn't get support at all."

But after the realities of war and the events leading to such events hit home Sept. 11, 2001, Woods said it sparked a renewed a sense of patriotism.

Woods and about a dozen other veterans witnessed such patriotism Friday as Danbury Elementary School students paid tribute by giving thanks and sharing knowledge.

Dressed in red, white and blue, third graders gave a salute to the American flag.

To them, it stands for freedom, unity, democracy, friendship to other countries, courage, pride and the brave men and women who fought for the country. It also represents the country's long line of leaders from G.W. to G.W. That's George Washington to George W. Bush, two students said.

Other students paid tribute by singing songs while a select few led the audience in the pledge of allegiance.

"Veterans Day is a time that is and should be very special in the hearts of all Americans," said Principal Gaylin Black.

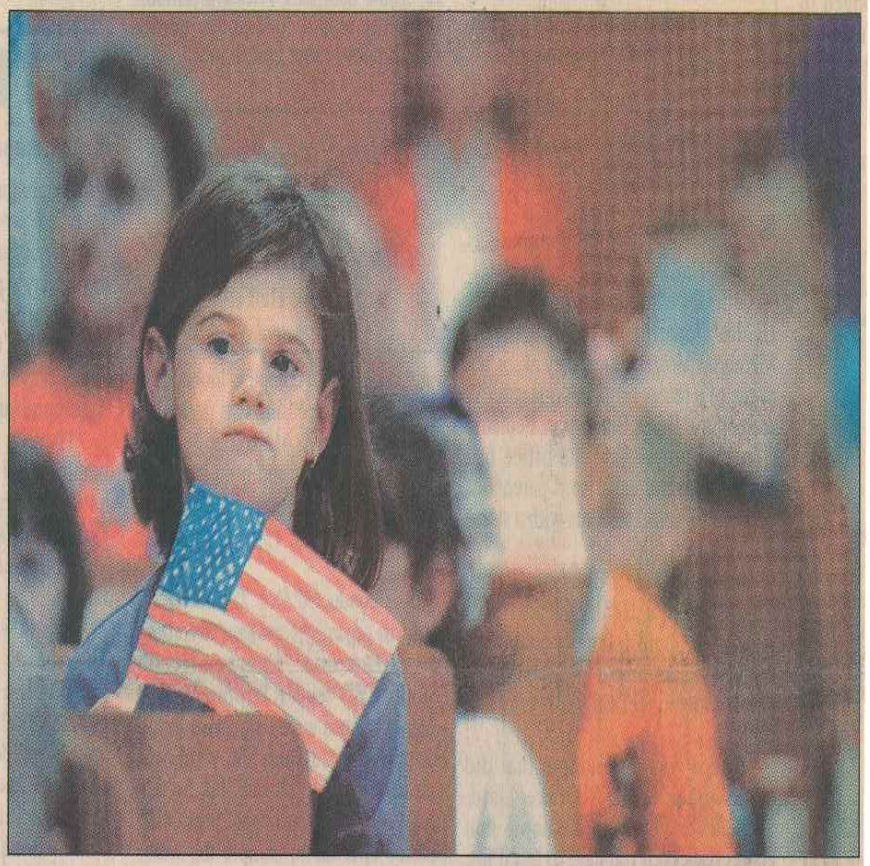
She told students that veterans, such as the ones in the audience, fought so they would learn of war from textbooks rather than by fighting on a battlefield. "They fought so that it will not become a part of your lives," Black said.

Black spoke of the scars veterans carry today, and the many lives lost. Students must learn about their efforts and give thanks so that their sacrifices are not in vain, she said.

Veterans Day, recognized nationally Monday, was established June 1, 1954 to honor American veterans of all wars, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs. It was previously known as Armistice Day.

Fifth-grader Bailey Vrazel, 10, called the men and women who fought brave.

See VETERANS, Page 2A



Facts photos: Todd Yates

Bailey Carter, 6, waves her hand-made American flag during Danbury Elementary School's Veteran's Day assembly Friday. The students honored local veterans with a patriotic song presentation.

"They gave their lives so we could be free."
Bailey Vrazel
fifth-grader



Osualdo Surdina waves his hand made American Flag during the Danbury Elementary School's Veteran's Day assembly.

VETERANS

■ Continued from 1A

"People gave their lives," Vrazel said. "They gave their lives so we could be free."

Veterans and other Danbury residents attending Friday's program said they were impressed by the ceremony and all the work students put into making the event a success. Justice of the Peace Wayne DuBose told students their tribute was appreciated.

"There is not a veteran in this world that would stand up here, see these children and have one regret about what we did," said DuBose, a Vietnam War veteran.

Similar sentiments were shared by John Jasso.

"This is what it takes to get veterans out. ... Their hearts melt and their pride comes out," said Jasso, a Vietnam veteran. "There are lots of kids who have grandparents and parents who served, and don't know it."

Ruben Jasso, who served in the U.S. Army, said some veterans think people just don't care.

"We need more communities as patriotic as Danbury," he said.

On Monday, several other schools, including Wild Peach Elementary and Alvin High School, have planned programs to honor America's veterans.

At 9:30 a.m., Wild Peach Elementary students will honor veterans by singing patriotic songs and presenting guest veterans with certificates of appreciation before a flag-raising ceremony. At 12:30 p.m., Alvin High School will have a program honor local veterans.



NOT JUST TODAY...
BUT EVERY SINGLE DAY,



thank YOU Veterans!