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The Korean War is No Longer the Forgotten War at Fort Lewis

During the first few months of 2001, the Fort Lewis Military Museum has been very busy supporting events commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War. Since the battles of early 1951 were dramatic and eventful, it was appropriate that the anniversary of those historic days was marked by special programs. Several of these programs were hosted by the Fort Lewis Chapter of the Association of the United States Army.

On 15 February, the historic Battle of Chipyong-ni was recalled by LTC J.D. Coleman, US Army, Retired. The 23rd Infantry Regiment, which has a long affiliation with Fort Lewis, made an epic stand at Chipyong-ni which remains one of the most heroic chapters in the history of the Korean War. On 7 March, historian Dr. Gary Bjorgeg gave an insightful presentation on the Han River Crossings made by the 25th Infantry Division. The Museum supported both of these interesting programs with special exhibits prepared to commemorate these historic events.

The Museum director also made several presentations on the Korean War. In March a presentation was made to the Military Order of the Sojourners, and in April to the Seattle chapter of The Retired Officers Association. Both programs were well received, and members of the audience who were Korean War veterans were recognized and thanked for their service.

It may be honestly stated that the Korean War is not the Forgotten War at Fort Lewis.



Museum volunteer Kelly Heathman, dressed as a Korean War infantryman, and MG John Hemphill, a distinguished veteran of the Korean War, pose in front of the Museum's special exhibit.

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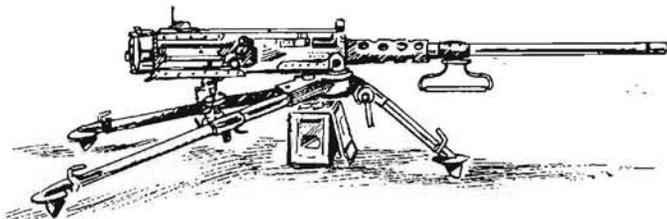
The *Banner* is printed four times a year and is mailed to all members of The Friends of the Fort Lewis Museum. Articles may be submitted to the Editor or left with the Curator of the Fort Lewis Museum. The Friends assume no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts or other materials submitted for publication.
 Editor Alan Archambault

Curator's Update

Many significant events have occurred since my last update in January. First of all, the Museum received its re-certification inspection in March. These inspections are conducted every five years by museum professionals representing the US Army Center of Military History. All aspects of our facility and operations are reviewed to ensure compliance with Army museum regulations and professional standards. I believe the inspection went well, and we are awaiting the results, which must be reviewed and voted on by a board of museum directors in Washington, DC.

As reported on page one, the Museum has been very active in supporting the commemorations of the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War. However, so far this year, we also prepared special exhibits for the 100th Birthday of the Army Nurse Corps, Black History Month, Women's History Month, and Asian Pacific Islander Month. All our exhibits have been well received and help to promote an awareness of our proud and diverse military heritage.

Alan H. Archambault



President's Report

In this issue and the next, we honor our president emeritus, BG Vasco J. Fenili. BG Fenili, (Flip to his friends) is a long-time member of the Friends, and from 1984 until he stepped down last year, was president of the Museum's Board of Directors. A true Friend to the core, no one is more devoted to the Museum and its role at Fort Lewis, and committed to making the community aware of this treasure in their midst. His steady leadership made the Friends the strong "right arm" that it is and continues to be for the Museum. BG Fenili was also a dedicated volunteer at the Cannon Shop, and we hope to gratefully acknowledge his numerous hours with a Fort Lewis award. To further honor BG Fenili, a World War II veteran, the Board recommends that the Museum's "Hall of Valor" be dedicated to BG Fenili and his service to the Army, the Nation, and the Museum.

Our heartfelt thanks, BG Finelli, and to your wonderful wife Louise, for your enduring contributions to the Friends and the Museum. We look forward to seeing you both at future gatherings of the Friends.

I hope that all of our Museum Friends will be able to attend our next General Membership Meeting scheduled for June 3 at the American Lake Club. Our speaker is Mrs. Marion Ball who will present her second part of the story of General of the Armies, John J. Pershing. We will also honor our president emeritus, BG and Mrs. Fenili.

Ian Larson



President Emeritus, BG Vasco J. Fenili

25th Infantry Division in the Korean War

by Thomas D. Morgan

Fifty years ago this year, the United Nations (UN) forces were fighting for their lives on the Korean Peninsula. The year before, in 1950, UN forces had seen defeat, triumph, and tragedy. 1951 was to be a critical year for the defense of Korean Peninsula and the containment of Communism. The 25th Infantry Division was one of the first divisions sent to Korea from Occupation Duty in Japan in the aftermath of the North Korean Army attack of South Korea on 25 June 1950. The "Tropic Lightning" Division was pushed into an enclave along the southeast coast of Korea along with the rest of the Eighth US Army and UN forces (South Korean and United Kingdom at that time). There the 25th Infantry Division successfully defended the Pusan Perimeter from August until 15 September when the X US Corp's amphibious landing at Inchon and the Eighth Army breakout from the Pusan Beachhead reversed the fortunes of war. Seoul was liberated and the demarcation line of the 38th Parallel was restored.

The 25th Infantry Division was part of the Eighth Army attacking north to the Yalu River to liberate all of the Korean Peninsula north of the 38th Parallel when the Chinese Communist intervened, attacking in force on 25-26 November 1950. This massive attack forced UN forces back across the 38th Parallel, and South Korea was invaded again. Its capital, Seoul, fell for the second time. By January 1951, UN forces were holding a line south of the 38th Parallel and the Han River. UN forces were in disarray following the death in a vehicle accident of their courageous commander, GEN Walton Walker, just before Christmas. GEN Matthew Ridgway, like Walker a legendary WWII commander, had just taken over as Eighth Army and UN Commander. He rallied his troops by personal example, initiating a series of limited-objective, confidence-building counterattacks. He integrated air and naval forces with his ground troops. At the end of January 1951, Ridgway was ready for the first UN Counteroffensive, Operation **THUNDERBOLT**, with the objective of regaining ground south of the Han River. This prompted a Communist counterattack, but Ridgway's forces held, inflicting heavy losses on the Communist Chinese. The fighting around Wonju and Chipyong-ni was especially heavy. UN forces successfully defended their positions and Ridgway was ready for Operation **KILLER** that forced the Communist forces behind the Han River.

The next phase of the UN Counteroffensive was Ridgway's Operation **RIPPER** designed to liberate Seoul and the rest of South Korea. The centerpiece of Operation **RIPPER** was the 25th Infantry Division's crossing of the Han River on 7 March 1951. This crossing took place fifteen miles east of Seoul at the

confluence of the Han and Pukhan rivers. The crossing was preceded by one of the largest artillery preparations of the Korean War. One hundred and forty-eight artillery pieces fired 5,000 to 7,000 rounds in a 20-minute initial preparation that was followed by 45,000 rounds fired on interdiction targets for another two and one-half hours. All three regiments of the 25th Infantry Division (24th, 27th, and 35th Infantry) crossed successfully and defended their beachhead for three days of Communist counterattacks. The 25th Infantry Division took 398 combat casualties and inflicted more than 8,000 on the enemy. The division's subsequent advance up the Pukhan Valley caused the Communists to evacuate Seoul. This was the fourth and last time Seoul changed hands. Operation **RIPPER** liberated most of South Korea and restored UN forces to a general line along the 38th Parallel. Although much heavy fighting continued for more than two years until the Armistice on 27 July 1953, UN forces were never again in danger of losing the Korean Peninsula.



The Army Nurse Corps One Hundred Years of Caring

In February, the Army Nurse Corps celebrated its 100th Birthday. The Fort Lewis Museum was proud to commemorate the event with a special guest. The Chief of the Army Nurse Corps, BG William Besser, toured the Museum while visiting Fort Lewis. His tour guide for the afternoon was our own Mrs. Marion Ball. As many of you know, Mrs. Ball is a former Army Nurse and was therefore a wonderful representative to escort BG Besser. Since BG Besser began his remarkable career at Fort Lewis, he was fascinated and appreciative of our efforts. He even requested a copy of a photograph we have on display depicting the "old" and "new" Madigan Army Hospital.

In appreciation of Mrs. Ball's great tour, her service as an Army Nurse, and her continued dedication to the Army, BG Besser presented her with an attractive coin that commemorates the 100th Birthday of the Army Nurse Corps.



Mrs. Marion Ball shows BG Besser the uniform of an Army Nurse worn during the Second World War.



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