

Korean War veterans mark 60th anniversary at Memorial Day Parade (with video)

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SARATOGA SPRINGS — As a blistering day that felt more like the middle of August than the end of May came to a close, local veterans, officials, musicians and scout groups marched down Broadway in the city's annual Memorial Day parade Wednesday.

This year's event was hosted by the American Legion Post 70 and marked the 60th anniversary of the start of the Korean War, which lasted from 1950 to 1953.

Veterans of that conflict strode along in uniform while others rode in floats commemorating prisoners of war and those missing in action. Residents braved the heat to watch from lawn chairs stationed on the curb.

"I like to see a nice long parade with the horses and the kids," said Mike Harrington of Saratoga Springs, who stood on Broadway with his pal Susan Travis. "When we find out the action's going into town, we both take off together."

The pair have been attending parades downtown together for years, a tradition Harrington said started when his mother brought him and his eight siblings — who are all veterans — to downtown parades when they were kids.

Four-year-old Reese Nachbur, of Greenfield Center, waved to passing fire trucks near the Arts Council as his father, Nick, stood by.

"It's always fun to show appreciation for the soldiers and the police and the firefighters," Nick Nachbur said. "It was good to see the Korean veterans memorial on the Adirondack Chapter float."

The evening concluded with a ceremony at the veteran's memorial in Congress Park, where local dignitaries addressed a small crowd.

"We're here today in the memory of the men and women who fought and died for America so long ago, so many times. We're also here for the future, for these men and women who are in Afghanistan and Iraq," said state Sen. Roy J. McDonald, R-Saratoga, who served in the Army's First Cavalry Division during the Vietnam War.

McDonald reminded listeners of the importance of providing shelter, education, health care, and emotional and family support to veterans returning from combat.

Mayor Scott Johnson took the podium and pointed out two veteran-related initiatives that have been undertaken locally in the last year: The Guardian House shelter being built for homeless female veterans in Ballston Spa and the renaming of Geyser Park to Veterans Memorial Park, done by the Adirondack Chapter No. 60 of the Korean War Veterans Association.

"There are many things that make us proud to be Americans, simple things day-to-day, but certainly service and dedication to our veterans ranks high on the list," Johnson said.

He finished by asking the crowd to take a moment of silence to remember and give thanks for those who have died during the last year, before American Legion Post 70 Cmdr. Bob Pelletier and post Ladies Auxiliary President Ginger Nichols laid wreaths on the memorial.

"Often times our schedules are so busy day to day, that we lose sight on what's important in life," Johnson said. "That's why these holidays are so important in life, to stop for a moment as a people, a collective people, to pause, reflect and again, give thanks those who help make our community what it is today."