



# KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

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## NEWSLETTER

July–September 2019

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## A Special Day of Remembrance: Dedication of Final Commemorative Tiles

*Photos by Tom Graves, Jeny Kwak Weber, and Chris Moore*



Thursday, September 26 was a proud day for more than 100 Korean War veterans, their families, and survivors. They had gathered to bear witness to the unveiling and dedication of their tiles, the last commemorative tiles to be installed at the Korean War Memorial in San Francisco, in honor of 72 of those who served in the Korean War.

The honorees included members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Merchant Marine. POWs and MIAs. Koreans as well as Americans. Three Medal of Honor recipi-

ents. One of the Tuskegee Airmen. A member of the Turkish Brigade. And a soldier from the last segregated unit in the U.S. Army. Some are still with us. Many are gone. But they all share one common bond: they fought together to defend the freedom of South Korea.



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The final 72 commemorative tiles

The ceremony began with remarks by several dignitaries, including Consul Hyun Jung Kim of the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea, and KWMF Treasurer and Korean War veteran Donald Reid.

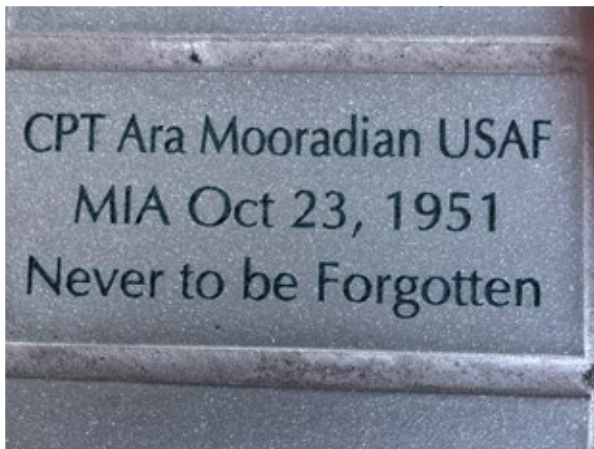


The guests were attentive and patient during the speeches. It was evident, however, that they were there for another purpose: to see their tiles, to remember, and to remind the younger generation of those long-ago events that bind them all together to this day. As novelist William Faulkner wrote, "The past is never dead. It isn't even past."





And so after a brief formal ceremony, the guests, from nonagenarians to toddlers, slowly walked down to the Memorial's commemorative tile wall to view their newly installed tiles. They then spent their time in quiet moments of remembrance and reflection. Here are some images of those moments.



# The Government of the Republic of Korea Bestows Special Honors on KWMF

The Government of the Republic of Korea honored the Korean War Memorial Foundation (KWMF) in two separate ceremonies in one day on September 10. That morning, a delegation from the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs (MPVA) from Seoul, together with officials from the Consulate General in San Francisco, visited the Korean War Memorial for a small, informal gathering. There they were welcomed by KWMF's officers, directors, and friends.



Among the dignitaries in attendance were, as seen from the left in the photo above, KWMF Education Director Wally Stewart; KWMF Vice President Man J. Kim; KWMF Board member Frank Jordan, former Mayor of San Francisco; KWMF Board member Pete Gleichenhaus, Colonel, US Army (Ret.); Consul General Park Joon-yong; KWMF President & Chairman of the Board Judge Quentin L. Kopp (Ret.); MPVA Entitlements Commission Chairman Chung

Jin, Ph.D.; Marines' Memorial Association & Foundation President & CEO Jan Huly, Lieutenant General, USMC (Ret.); KWMF Treasurer Don Reid; KWMF Secretary Mitch Leiber; and Deputy Consul General Kwangyong Chung.

It should be noted that Chairman Chung's MPVA is the largest donor to the Memorial, having given KWMF just under \$1 million during the early design and construction phase. Without that generous gift from MPVA, Republic of Korea, the Memorial might not be here today.

After brief introductions, Judge Kopp led Chairman Chung and the other dignitaries on an informal tour of the Memorial. The two men then presented a commemorative wreath at the Memorial wall. The wreath was a gift from Chairman Chung's superior in Seoul, Minister Park Sam Duck, MPVA.



Judge Kopp and Chairman Chung with the commemorative wreath





**Marines' Memorial Club and Hotel**

Consul General Park then presented Judge Kopp with a citation for KWMF from Republic of Korea Prime Minister Lee Nak-yon.



**Prime Minister's Citation**

From L: Deputy Consul General Kwangyong Chung; KWMF Secretary Mitch Leiber; Consul Hyun Jung Kim; KWMF Vice President Man J. Kim; Consul General Park Joon-yong; KWMF President Judge Quentin L. Kopp (Ret.); MPVA Chairman Chung Jin; KWMF Treasurer Don Reid; Marines' Memorial Association & Foundation President Jan Huly, Lieutenant General, USMC (Ret.); and KWMF Education Director Wally Stewart

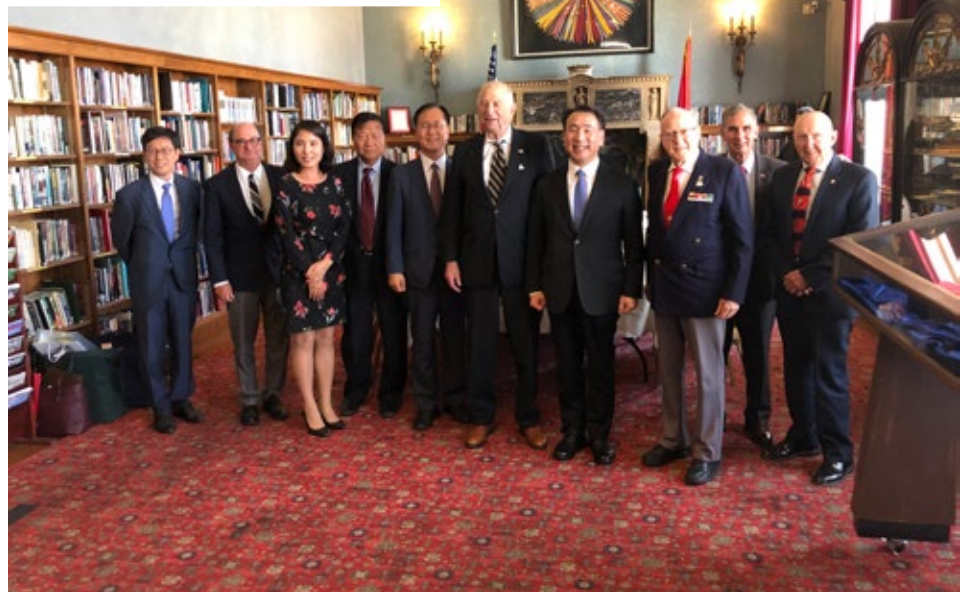
The group then headed from the Presidio to the historic Marines' Memorial Club and Hotel in downtown San Francisco for a private luncheon in the Club's library. The luncheon was sponsored courtesy of the Government of the Republic of Korea and hosted by Marines' Memorial Association and Foundation President and CEO Jan Huly, Lieutenant General, USMC (Ret.). This was the setting for the second honor of the day for

KWMF, when both Chairman Chung and Consul General Park expressed the gratitude of the people of the Republic of Korea for KWMF and for America's Korean War veterans.



**Consul General Park Joon-yong addresses the guests. Visible on the left are Chairman Chung and Lieutenant General Huly. Seated on the right is Judge Kopp.**

After the citation ceremony, the guests posed for a group portrait in the library. It marked the end of a memorable day for the Korean War Memorial Foundation.



# Portrait of a Local Korean War Veteran: Denny Weisgerber

William D. "Denny" Weisgerber was born in Bend, Oregon on May 5, 1930. He attended Boise High School, where he lettered in football, basketball, track, and boxing. More importantly, it's where he met his high school sweetheart and wife-to-be, Marianne Tillery. February, 1949 marked two pivotal events in Denny's life: he married Marianne, and he enlisted in the Marine Corps.



**PFC Weisgerber, right after boot camp, 1949**

Denny spent most of his first year in radio communications at Camp Del Mar and Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego. When the Korean War broke out in June, 1950, his Military Occupational Specialty was changed to 0300, Infantry. For the next two years, he trained Marines bound for Korea, and for his outstanding performance he quickly rose through the ranks. By May, 1952 he was a staff sergeant, and in July of that year, he was shipped to Korea and assigned to Item Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division as an assistant platoon sergeant.



**Denny and Marianne, 1951**

Denny soon saw intense combat action on a number of isolated outposts forward of the Jamestown Line, in an area known as "The Hook": Outposts Bunker Hill, Reno, Vegas, Warsaw, and Seattle. On October 2, 1952, during an assault on Outpost Seattle, Denny was severely wounded. After a long medical recovery for his wounds, he was medically retired in May, 1953. In recognition of his heroic actions on Outpost Seattle, Denny was awarded the Navy Cross, the nation's second-highest award for valor in combat.

## **CITATION:**

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Cross to Staff Sergeant William D. Weisgerber (MCSN: 1072880), United States Marine Corps, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy of the United Nations while serving as Right Guide in a Platoon of Company I, Third Battalion, Seventh Marines, First Marine Division (Reinforced), in action against enemy aggressor forces in the Republic of Korea on the night of 2 October 1952. With his platoon engaged in attacking a well-entrenched enemy force occupying an outpost forward of the main line of resistance, Staff Sergeant Weisgerber aggressively led his men in the face of a devastating barrage of hostile small-arms, artillery, mortar and grenade fire and initiated a



daring charge against a machine-gun emplacement, succeeding in destroying the enemy position with hand grenades and small-arms fire. Although painfully wounded by the intense enemy fire, he steadfastly refused medical treatment and courageously moved forward to aid a wounded comrade. Fearlessly exposing himself to a veritable hail of hostile fire falling over the area, he personally carried the casualty down a hazardous slope. Severely wounded by a burst of mortar fire while engaged in this heroic act, he continued to assist his wounded comrade until physically incapable of proceeding any further. By his outstanding leadership, great personal valor and intrepid fighting spirit, Staff Sergeant Weisgerber served to inspire all who observed him and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.



Denny's other awards include the Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal, Korean Campaign Medal with two stars, United Nations Korea Medal, Navy Unit Commendation Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Combat Action Ribbon, and National Defense Medal. In 2011, in recognition of a lifetime of achievements, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus selected Denny Weisgerber for honorary promotion to Gunnery Sergeant in the United States Marine Corps.

From 1953 through the end of the 1960s, although now a civilian, Denny continued to serve. He volunteered his time in an unpaid capacity to the Marine Corps Reserve unit in San Jose, California, teaching small arms, tactics, and other martial subjects to the young reservists, and sharing the lessons of his combat experience. In the ensuing decades, Denny never ceased serving his Corps and his community. He has

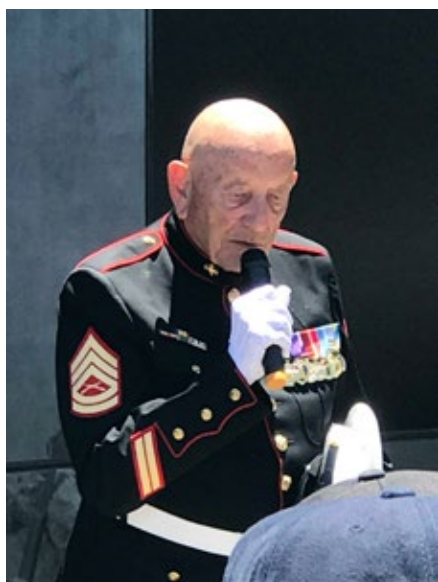
been active in the Marine Corps League and a number of other veterans' organizations. And he has dedicated his time and energy to wounded warriors at the VA Hospital in Palo Alto and Menlo Park, California. He helps them with their benefits, and mentors them through the difficult ordeal of living with their wounds. He has been doing this for the past 65 years, since he himself was medically retired because of the loss of his leg and other wounds.

Denny Weisgerber has a BA in Business Administration from the University of San Francisco. He is a 55-year member of Rotary International, having served two terms as Milpitas, California Rotary Club President and

as District 5170 Governor from 1999 to 2000. He served twelve years on the Milpitas City Council, including three 2-year terms as Mayor. Denny and his high school sweetheart Marianne were married for 68 years until she passed away in 2017. Together they raised two children who have blessed them with five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.



**Marianne and Denny at the Marines' Memorial Club, San Francisco, 2014**



**Denny, who also serves as Chaplain for the 1st Marine Division Association, delivers the Invocation at the Korean War Memorial, San Francisco, Memorial Day, 2018**



**William D. "Denny" Weisgerber, Marine. Semper Fidelis**

## Two Nations. Two Generations. One Memorable Encounter



From left: Korean War veterans Frank Mendez, Jimmy Chong, Marvin Pheffer, Richard Friedman, Denny Weisgerber, and Don Reid

On Friday, July 26 in San Francisco, twenty students from Kyungbuk College in South Korea met over lunch with six Korean War veterans from the Bay Area: Jimmy Chong, Richard Friedman, Frank Mendez, Marvin Pheffer, Donald Reid, and Denny Weisgerber. And the encounter turned out to be memorable and rewarding for the vets and students alike. The seventeen young women and three young men—more than sixty-five years younger than the veterans—are in the San Francisco Bay Area on an exchange program sponsored by Berkeley Global Institute (BGI). BGI brings student groups from Korea to the Bay Area so that they may broaden their horizons and experience American culture.



An exuberant group

The luncheon took place at Sears Fine Food restaurant in downtown San Francisco, owned by KWMF Vice President Man J. Kim, who generously hosted the event. After a very brief initial period of cultural and generational awkwardness, everyone relaxed and began a series of animated conversations that never let up for a moment. And strangers soon became friends.





**BGI President Unee Kim (center) with her staffers Michelle Son (L) and Mun Choi (R)**

BGI President Unee Kim approached KWMF several years ago, and suggested that we bring the students and veterans together for a luncheon. That luncheon has now evolved into a very popular—and meaningful—annual event. “We feel that young people in Korea today aren’t as aware as they should be of the sacrifices made on their behalf by young Americans more than sixty-five years ago,” Unee said. “We want to offer these students a unique opportunity to meet face to face with some of the Americans who fought for them way back then, so that we all might better understand and appreciate our shared history. In addition, the veterans see these young people as a validation that their sacrifices during the war were not in vain, and I believe that’s very satisfying and reassuring for the veterans.” The following photos show some of the highlights of the gathering.



**Korean War veteran Denny Weisgerber and a cheerful student**



**Denny then and now. As a young Marine during the war, he was about the same age as these students are**

U.S. Army veteran Richard Friedman is amused by his squad of V-signing students all vamping for the camera. The gesture seems to be quite prevalent among young Koreans.



**Marine veteran Don Reid with one of the students. Again the V-sign!**





**U.S. Merchant Marine veteran Frank Mendez recounts what it was like to be a young American in Korea nearly seventy years ago.**



**Veteran Jimmy Chong with his new friends. An American citizen today, Jimmy was a soldier in the ROK Army during the war and later emigrated to this country. Note that a couple of these students have opted for a chin-in-palms look instead of V-signing.**



**Marine veteran Marvin Pheffer clearly enjoying himself. Three V-signs, one chin-in-palms.**



**Time to enjoy the food**



**Luncheon host Man J. Kim with the Berkeley Global Institute women who created this annual event: Unee Kim, Michelle Son, and Mun Choi**





Don Reid joins the students for a stirring rendition of the beloved Korean folk song "Arirang."



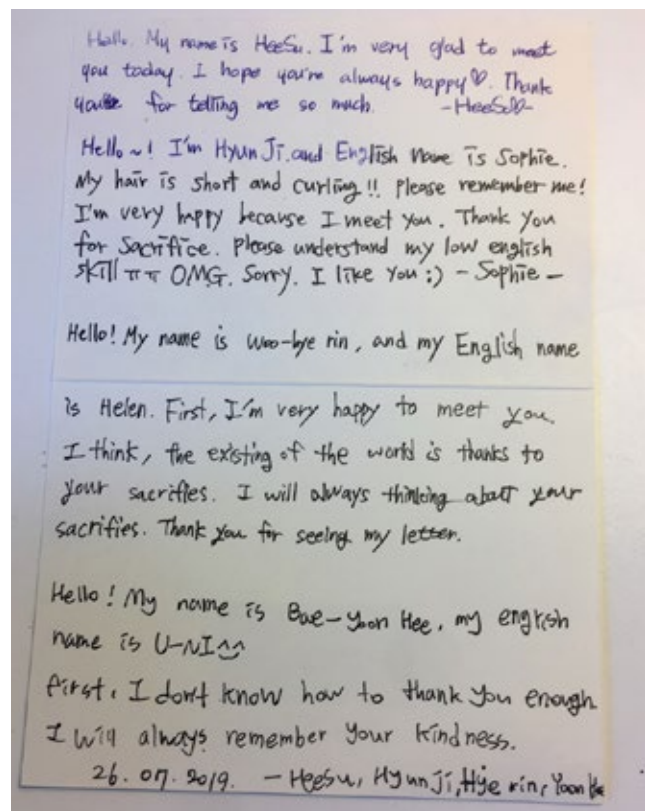
Student Spokesperson Kim Su-jung formally thanks the veterans for their sacrifices in defense of South Korea's freedom.



Two more students join Ms. Kim in expressing their gratitude to the veterans.

## Thank you, Lighthouse Worldwide Solutions

KWMF wishes to thank Dr. Kim Tae Yun and her staff at Lighthouse Worldwide Solutions in Fremont, CA—[www.golighthouse.com](http://www.golighthouse.com)—for their generosity in underwriting the costs of printing and mailing this newsletter.



Finally, the students presented handwritten notes of gratitude to the veterans. Here are a few endearing samples.



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