

USAHEC to host Korean War Commemoration Event July 27

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A 6th Army tank is one of the highlights of the new Korean War exhibit on the Army Heritage Trail.

The 60th anniversary of the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement is inspiration for the Army Heritage and Education's special event, July 27 at 11 a.m. on the Army Heritage Trail, to commemorate the anniversary.

The Consul General for the Republic of Korea, Son Se-joo, Army War College Commandant Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo will officiate at the commemoration, and dedicate the new Korean War Exhibit on the Army Heritage Trail in honor of Korean War veterans.

The AHEC event celebrates the special relationship between veterans and the Center, which preserves their papers, mementoes, and memories. Veterans of the April 22, 1951, action during the Chinese People's Volunteer Army Spring Offensive will be present to meet and greet, and participate in the event to honor the sacrifices of all who served in the conflict.

The first phase of the Korean War exhibit on the Army Heritage Trail will highlight an action of the 8th Ranger Company (Airborne) and the 6th Tank Battalion that took place during the Chinese People's Volunteer Army Spring Offensive that began on April 22, 1951.

Veteran Rangers from the 8th Ranger Company (Airborne) that survived that fight -- including BG (Retired) Ranger James Herbert, COL (Retired) Ranger Bob Black, Ranger Eugene Rivera, Ranger Gill Gregory, Ranger Peter Torres and Major (Retired) David E. Teich, Sr -- will be at the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center to dedicate the exhibit that highlights their actions.

With three army groups of 24 divisions and approximately 300,000 men, the Chinese People's

Volunteer Army Spring Offensive sought to drive U.S. and allied forces back below Seoul. In the center, the thrust fell upon heavily on the 24th Infantry Division, the 25th Infantry Division and the Republic of Korea 6th Division. During the action, the 6th Division was routed and Chinese forces threatened to encircle the 24th and 25th divisions.

For historical footage, from the USAHEC collection, of GEN Mark Clark signing the armistice, view the 2-min video of the signing, with footage of Soldiers in Korea:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1Ln6Yrq8Vg>

With the situation unclear, on April 23rd, the 8th Ranger Company (Airborne), attached to the 24th Infantry Division, was ordered to move forward to gain intelligence. Over the next 18 hours, eighty-seven enlisted men and 3 officers advanced to high ground on the Division's right flank. After an exhausting march, they gained the summit of a ridgeline that offered observation of the enemy's avenues of approach.

As dawn broke on April 24th, the Rangers could see what appeared to be rivers of Chinese soldiers flowing southward. Captain James Herbert, the company commander, informed his seniors of the situation by radio and began to call artillery fire and air strikes on the enemy. Herbert and his Rangers were now deep in Chinese-controlled territory. Receiving orders to return to U.S. Lines, Herbert successfully bypassed several of the advancing Chinese units.

As they moved south, their lead element scouts reported a large Chinese force blocking their route back to friendly lines. Though vastly outnumbered, Captain Herbert led the Rangers in an attack. The Ranger action slowed the Chinese advance on the flank of the 5th Infantry Regimental Combat Team, another element of the 24th Infantry Division. The Rangers were then ordered to "Get out as best you can;" but a third were wounded, including Captain Herbert, who was shot through the throat, shoulder and arm.

With his company commander severely wounded, acting communications chief for the unit, Corporal Eugene Rivera, continued to report the movement of the Chinese forces and adjusted artillery fire on the enemy. He sought relief for his outnumbered unit but friendly forces could not break through. Finally, a Ranger observed U.S. tanks in the valley floor. He called to Rivera to communicate with the tanks.

Unable to make contact from his location, Rivera refused to give up. He moved to higher ground, a nearby barren hill under heavy and continuous fire, to improve radio communications. There he established and maintained radio contact with the tank platoon leader who had been sent forward to help extricate the Rangers. .

That tank platoon leader was Lieut. David Teich, assigned to Company C, 6th Tank Battalion. In the spring of 1951, his unit normally supported the 24th Division when they needed armor support. Though his company commander directed him to withdraw, Teich could not leave those Rangers to be overrun. Advancing towards a rendezvous location, he engaged the Chinese on surrounding high ground. Finally, he linked up with the Rangers. Placing the wounded on the tanks, Teich moved his Soldiers and the remaining 65 Rangers back to friendly lines.

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