

49 Colo. vets receive Korean War Medals

Forty-nine Colorado veterans of the Korean War were honored as recipients of a Republic of Korea War Service Medal in a special ceremony Saturday.

Rep. Marilyn Musgrave, R-Colo., hosted a ceremony to recognize the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War Armistice and presented qualified veterans with a medal.

"Presenting these service medals was an honor," said Musgrave. "The bravery of these men and women shall not be forgotten. Their tremendous sacrifices more than 50 years ago in Korea warrants recognition to this day. I am pleased they finally get to receive this medal so many years after their service."

Area recipients of medals included Chris John Kraich Jr., Robert Kraich and Ralph W. Rogers, all of Akron; Leslie M. Beck, Wesley Miner (deceased) and Carl R. Nicks, all of Brush; Richard D. Van Vleet of Fleming; Marvin L. Camp and Victor Cook, both of Fort Morgan, and Donald L. Chapin of Weldon.

The Republic of Korea provided the medals to eligible U.S. veterans who served in the Korean conflict or their surviving next of kin.

The Korean War began on June 25, 1950, when North Korean forces invaded Republic of Korea territory. The armistice on July 27, 1953, ended the fighting, although a formal peace treaty has never been completed.

The medal was originally offered by the Republic of Korea in 1951 to United Nations forces serving in Korea and adjacent waters. At the time U.S. law prohibited the U.S. military from wearing medals issued by foreign governments. Congress changed that in 1954, but by then most U.S. service members eligible for the medal had returned home.

In 1998 the government of the

Republic of Korea renewed its original offer of the medal to U.S. military personnel. On Aug. 20, 1999, the Defense Department approved the acceptance and wearing of the medal. Approximately 1.8 million U.S. veterans of the Korean War are eligible to receive it.