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FEATURED

## Dedication of Veterans Memory Park in Dodge draws large crowd

By DELORES MEISTER

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**A LARGE CROWD** turned out Monday for the dedication of the Veterans Memorial Park in Dodge, which features, among other things, a life-sized statue of a Korean War veteran.

Correspondent/Delores Meister

DODGE — It was August 1944 during World War II.

Seven-year-old Doreen and her 9-year-old brother, Delbert, were playing outdoors on their farmstead when a car drove onto their place. The driver went into the house for a short time and then, as quickly as he came, he drove away.

The two went into the home to find their parents crying. It was because their oldest brother, Harold, had been killed in action in France.



That's what Memorial Day is all about. Remembering. Honoring. And thanking.

Doreen Eikemeier Uhing remembers the day vividly as the family members, including another brother, Clarence, gathered to mourn together.

Soon the whole family was together in sorrow in the house. The post mail received the telegraph and brought out the news. Later the parish priest and others arrived. To this day, Harold's grave is in France.

Ultimately, five Eikemeier brothers — Harold, Valerian, Ralph, Albin and Clarence — served in the U.S. military and now are memorialized on a bench depicting their military careers at Veterans Memory Park in Dodge.

With picture-perfect weather Monday, the downtown park was dedicated in the presence of about 450 people. Veterans were seated in front of the bleachers flanking the monument.

At 10 a.m. the Eagle Squadron from Columbus had a flyover, and a return flyover.



At the podium VFW Post 8597 Quartermaster Willy Anderson gave the welcome and introductions. Hailey Coufal sang the National Anthem, the Rev. Jean Vargo gave the invocation. Jeanette Wieberg and Susie Anderson laid the wreath at the monument.

Clarence "Doc" Wieberg, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8597 commander in Dodge, served as the project leader and did the ribbon-cutting for the park, which came to fruition after three years of planning and construction.

Keynote speaker Jeff Treu quoted John 15-13: "No one has greater love than this to lay down one's life for one's friends." More than 2,700 Nebraskans have died for Americans to have the freedoms they enjoy every day, he said.

Treu said Nebraskans who gave their lives in WWII totaled 1,714; in Korea, it was 354; in Vietnam, 396; and in other global conflicts, 28.

That would be like wiping out the total population of Snyder, Dodge, Clarkson and Leigh, Treu said.

The Veterans Memory Park Memorial is located in the open space next to the Dodge veterans building. The paved ribbon walkway leading to the center monument is of three textures. Three sides of the walk have raised decks with tiles with names of individual veterans, rank and service.



The tall center monument has an American eagle at the top. The column has five-sided pictorial panels depicting veterans from various wars with a life-sized statue of a Korean War veteran on the front.

A large painting of the raising of the American flag at Iwo Jima flag — done in black and grey — is located on the side of the veterans building and was done with the direction of Kim Anderson and student Hailey Eikemeier.

The park was designed by West Point Monument and the Dodge committee. Rolf Masonry Construction of Dodge did the work.