

the farmington enterprise & observer

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Wednesday, June 3, 1970

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Thousands Gather For Parade, General's Speech At Monument



"I feel that if our war dead were to have one request to this nation, it would be that we don't squander the heritage for which they sacrificed so much," said Major General Robert R. Ploger on Memorial Day in Farmington.

Over 500 persons listened to Ploger, the U.S. Army director of military engineering, speak at ceremonies at Veterans Memorial Monument in Farmington after the annual parade.

He is the highest ranking military officer to ever visit the city.

PLOGER REFLECTED on whether men like Nathan Hale, who regretted that he had but one life to give for his country, would now find his dedication old-fashioned.

"Would he not feel betrayed by the shallow-minded few who shout the slogans of Ho Chi Minh, desecrate the flag and call for destruction of the very republic which offers

highest meaning to our lives?" asked Ploger.

Nowadays, some people think it's unfashionable to sing or speak of patriotism and idealism or to proclaim in depth the things America stands for and the cost of freedom," stated the general.

"You may be sure that most Americans believe in these things," said Ploger. "I hold that such a deep belief motivated those we honor today."

PLOGER REGARDS war as a province where uncertainty and confusion abound and "where one surrenders his personal welfare to the common good.

"Those who risked lives did so with the firm belief that their country was depending on them, with a sturdy faith that America would somehow be safer, somehow stronger and somehow better because of their sacrifice," continued Ploger.

The general criticized those persons who "deride patriotism" and would have Americans believe that "these soldiers go blindly to their fate.

"I have served in three wars and I have never believed this," said Ploger. "No American worthy of the name can accept this cynical counsel of despair," he added.

"If we are to preserve our liberty and our nation, we must guard our unity," said Ploger.

"We must seek to remain morally right in the handling of our critical problems, if we are to keep our states united," he went on.

PLOGER ALSO mentioned that "our liberty wasn't easily

attained, and we can't buy it at any bargain counter.

"We must retain strong enough military forces to discourage foreign aggressors," he said.

The general suggested that citizens "turn some part of their endeavors to constructing a safer, stronger and better America." He also called for respect of the flag and the growth of a greater spirit of brotherhood.

"With such resolve we can depart this place, calm in the

knowledge that each fallen comrade has reason to rest untroubled in peace," concluded Ploger.

AFTER CEREMONIES at the monument, a memorial banquet was held in the American Legion Hall on Grand River Ave.

Colonel Paul Fisher of the U.S. Army, who is deputy to the brigadier general at Selfridge Air Force Base, was the guest speaker.

"If the world's aggressors

are given pause by our steadfast refusal to compromise on freedom, these heroes we honor today will not have made their sacrifice in vain," said Fisher.

"If we firmly demonstrate to all who threaten freedom that we will pay the price, we increase the probability that the lives of Americans in the future will not be lost as they have been in the past," mentioned the colonel.

DURING THE banquet, the

outstanding float in the parade was announced.

The award went to the Liberty Bell float of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, which carried Miss Ameriphoenix Kathy Courtney.

The float's theme was "liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants."

Clarenceville High School won the outstanding senior band trophy while Farmington Junior High School received the junior high band award.

SUBSTITUTE -- Army Col. Paul Fisher filled in for his boss as guest speaker at the Memorial Day Banquet Saturday afternoon in the Farmington American Legion Hall. Scheduled to speak was Brig. Gen. John W. Dean Jr., deputy commander, 2nd Region, Army Air Defense Command. Fisher is Dean's top assistant. (Evert photo)



GUNNERY CREW -- Attracting the eyes of the crowd on Grand River was this U.S. Marine Corp gunnery crew, one of many military entries in Saturday's Memorial Day Parade. (Evert photo)



WINNING BAND -- Earning honors as the top senior high band in Farmington's Memorial Day Parade was the Clarenceville High School marching band. (Evert photo)

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enterprise
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Editorial Office
2542 Farmington Road
Farmington, Mich.
Phone 474-6225

Home Delivery Service
Newsstand per copy, 15c
Carriers monthly, \$6

Phone 474-8737

Published every Wednesday
and Weekend

Published by Observer Newspapers, Inc., 271 South Main Street, Plymouth, Michigan, 48170 every Sunday. Philip H. Howe, Publisher. Entered as Second Class Matter at the U.S. Post Office, Plymouth, Michigan. Address all mail subscription change of address forms 3278 to Box 200, Plymouth, Michigan, 48170.



TOPS IN NATION -- Honored in Farmington Saturday were the top enlisted men from each of the four branches of military service. Shown with trophies are (from left) Sgt. Elbert Mills, Air Force; Staff Sgt. Richard Hall, Army; Yeoman 1/C James Streiter, Navy; and Gunnery Sgt. James Martin, Marine Corps. (Evert photo)

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EXHIBIT

Consumers Power will demonstrate the advantages of using gas to barbecue. These demonstrations will be held in the middle of the mall at the following times:

THURSDAY
June 4, 12-2, 7-9 p.m.

FRIDAY
June 5, 12-2, 7-9 p.m.

SATURDAY
June 6, 12-4 p.m.

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