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VETERANS DAY

Tribute to fallen hero

New monument serves as reminder of World War II fighter's sacrifice



PHOTOS BY JERILEE BENNETT, THE GAZETTE

About a dozen people gathered to lay a wreath, say a prayer and remember the life of World War II veteran Pfc. Floyd K. Lindstrom. Lindstrom was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously.

BY TOM ROEDER
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For generations, one of Colorado Springs' biggest heroes has been all but forgotten.

It's been decades since the tale of the Nebraska-born Cheyenne Mountain High School basketball star and truck driver has been told. On Friday, though, one group decided it was time to remember Pfc. Floyd K. Lindstrom, a World War II draftee who earned a the Medal of Honor on Veterans Day 1943.

"We never forget our fallen soldiers," said Keith Lamee, a member of the downtown American Legion Post 5 who spent two years researching Lindstrom before the group dedicated a monument in his honor Friday.

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Matthew Ebright, left, and Derek Willard represent the Navy in a scaled-down aircraft carrier during a parade Friday at Douglass Valley Elementary.

BREAKFAST AT VFW POST

The meal brought together generations of service members.
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VETS RETURN TO FEW JOBS

There are 240,000 jobless veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.
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A THANKS TO VIETNAM VETS

Hundreds gathered at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.
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VETERAN: No close family alive to visit his grave

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In front of the Platte Avenue post, a new flagpole carries a plaque that tells of Lindstrom's heroism. The Legionnaires also placed a wreath of flowers on Lindstrom's grave in Evergreen Cemetery.

Raised in poverty, Lindstrom grew up at The Myron Stratton Home in Colorado Springs. After leaving high school in 1931, he made his living driving trucks. He lived in a small apartment downtown and was far from famous.

His actions in World War II, though, are carved deeply into Army lore.

"We can't forget the actions of men like Lindstrom," said David Hall, the commander of the Legion post.

Lindstrom first got noticed in 1943. By then he was assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division, which was locked in combat against German and Italian forces in Sicily.

"One truck in a convoy under attack by four enemy planes began rolling, driverless, toward a soldier lying on a road," a Gazette account read. "Lindstrom, disregarding the strafing by the planes, jumped on the truck's running board and guided it away from the soldier and also prevented it going over a steep embankment."

That got Lindstrom the Silver Star Medal, the nation's third-highest decoration for valor.

But it was nothing compared with what he did a few months later in Italy.

The Italian campaign brought some of the bloodiest combat American troops saw in Europe. Fighting bogged down in mountainous terrain, and Americans faced hail storms of enemy machine-gunfire from the high ground.

A story in The Gazette recounted what Lindstrom did when his platoon was pinned down by gunfire at

the base of a slope on Nov. 11, 1943 — Veterans Day.

"Keep me covered," the private told his comrades, the story said.

He jumped up when the German machine-gunner paused.

"Lindstrom charged against the ledge, pistol cocked, and caught the Germans by surprise," the story said. "He shot two, and the rest of the gun crew fled."

Lindstrom turned the German gun on his enemies, clearing the hilltop and repelling a counterattack. At one point, he ran through enemy fire to grab more German ammunition.

"His spectacular performance completely broke up the German counterattack," Lindstrom's Medal of Honor citation reads. "Pfc. Lindstrom demonstrated aggressive spirit and complete fearlessness in the face of almost certain death."

Lindstrom didn't live to bask in the glory of his accomplishment.

Three months later, on

Feb. 3, 1944, the 31-year-old was gunned down on the beachhead at Anzio, Italy. He'd been offered duty far from the fighting, but he'd chosen to stay with his unit.

He's buried in Evergreen Cemetery. He died childless, and no close family members are alive to visit his grave.

His headstone there, a plaque at the Myron Stratton Home and a street on Fort Carson that bears his name serve as reminders for the community.

But, even those on Fort Carson aren't familiar of why they drive on Lindstrom Street.

Fort Carson's Col. Mike Mammay told veterans at a Friday ceremony that there's a school on the street.

"I wonder how many of the kids know who he was," Mammay said. "Probably none."

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