

## WAR: They used snow to make coffee and hot chocolate

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he said. "The Korean War reached an inconclusive armistice."

Murdock emceed the event, noting that his own father was in World War II, but rarely talked about his experiences. He said the day his father was called up, he was in the middle of coaching football at a high school in Washington.

"There are many individuals in this room who could tell similar stories about the disruption of their lives and families," Murdock said. "Some of you, I am sure, bear scars inflicted as part of your service."

Tom Tangney, a Korean War veteran and Pendleton resident, was the keynote

speaker. He reminisced about some of his experiences in Korea, where he was for about a year.

Tangney, 86, said there was little about the Korean War in history books.

"It was known as a 'conflict' until 1953," Tangney said.

Though he recalled some of the hardships he and other soldiers went through while there, including the loss of his brother, Clarence, Tangney's speech focused mostly on memories of the day-to-day experiences of being in Korea.

"It was a very cold place to live," he said. He recalled trying to sleep, layering up in as many pairs of pants as they could. He remembered eating from rationed food, noting that it was a bad move to

eat them while they were still frozen.

"If you were wearing two or three pairs of pants, you didn't want to have the runs," he said.

He remembered using snow to make coffee and hot chocolate, and a horse, "Reckless," that made several trips unaccompanied.

He acknowledged that returning from the war was difficult.

"I was called 'shell-shocked,' combat fatigue, or just crazy as heck," he said. "But I'm proud of my country, and what I've done," he said.

Larry Nelson and Meryl Navratil were two of the veterans honored at the service.

Navratil was in the Army, and served from 1950 to 1952 as a squad leader.

"I got there when the first cavalry got run over by the Chinese, and there weren't many people left," he said. "They grabbed me, and handed me a rifle. They said, 'You're going to be a staff sergeant.'"

Nelson, now a Umatilla resident, said coming to the service was somewhat emotional for him.

"I was drafted three blocks from here," he said.

A mechanical engineer, he didn't go to Korea, but served during the end of the Korean War, from 1953 to 1955, working in communications for the Army.

"This is kind of an event," he said, looking at his congressional certificate. "I didn't expect anything like this, for goodness sakes."



Korean War veteran Raymond Slabik, of Pilot Rock, smiles after receiving a certificate during a special tribute to Korean War and Korean service veterans on Sunday at the Pendleton Convention Center. Slabik's uniform still fits.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

## VIETNAM: Morehead was offered more than \$11,000 to serve another six years

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"They classified me 4F," he said.

That worked to his benefit. Employers were eager to hand jobs to men not bound for the military. Morehead got on at the Pilot Rock mill as a saw filer keeping the blades sharp. Three years later a dear friend from high school died in the Vietnam War. Morehead said he wanted to join again — for revenge.

A doctor told him to avoid bacon and eggs before the physical and his albumin level would be fine. Morehead joined the Navy on April 23, 1968, and weeks later was on the burly M-6.

"We were mostly with the 9th Infantry and the 25th," he said, providing artillery support to troops on the ground that were part of the Army/Navy Mobile Riverine Force. His first duty was to handle one of the 20-mm guns, and the last third of his 18-month tour he was the mount captain on the howitzer. The Navy gave him a written commendation for a firefight that occurred two



Mike Morehead of Pilot Rock on board the Monitor M-6 riverboat during his service in Vietnam.

years to the day he joined.

"Typical of Petty Officer Morehead's performance under fire was the night of April 23rd, 1970," according to the letter. "Of particular note is the fact that the whole boat crew was not present on the boat during the firefight. Petty Offi-

cer Morehead immediately upon receiving the fire, he and his shipmate commenced to deliver a devastating barrage of return fire upon the enemy position. They continued this retaliation until all enemy fire had been suppressed."

Morehead reached the

rank of Radioman 3rd Class and received numerous awards, including the National Defense Service Medal, the Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Vietnam Campaign Medal and the Presidential Unit Citation that President Richard Nixon signed.

After Vietnam, the Navy stationed Morehead at Pearl Harbor as supervisor of the message center. He said he was shy on technical expertise, but was a good supervisor. And those decorations looked good on his dress uniform, so base command liked to have him around when brass visited.

The medals also proved enticing to a thief.

While taking a shower one day, he said, he left open a locker door and someone stole all the awards.

He left the Navy at the end of 1971. Morehead said the Navy offered him more than \$11,000 cash to give another six years. He went back to the mill.

And his wife, Barbara Morehead, went after the medals. She contacted then U.S. Rep. Bob Smith. The congressman for the Oregon 2nd District looked into Mike Morehead's service records and helped restore the medals.

Morehead put in 35 years at the mill, then worked 13 years at the Umatilla Chemical Depot until its closure in 2012. He helped remove toxic sub-

stances, including mustard gas and worse, from the weapons there.

He retired afterward with Barbara on about 6.5 acres on McKay Creek near Pilot Rock. Morehead is an outdoorsman. Monday he was busy preparing an elk carcass. He also is a lifelong member of VFW Post 922, Pendleton, but he said he does not participate in many of the post's activities.

"I'm a proud vet, and I know too many vets that talk it up when they have nothing to talk up," he said.

Rather, he said, he and his fellow river boat crew members get together for their own reunions, gathering in Wisconsin or Tennessee or wherever is next. He said he suffers from the trauma of war, but enjoys sharing his military experiences, and can't help but think about Vietnam everyday, from the sudden violence to the quieter moments, such as when he tried plow a field. He could not get that to work, he said, but it all adds up.

"It makes you who you are," Morehead said. "I think so."



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## CHAMBER MEMBER SPOTLIGHT - PENDLETON TRIANGLE

### What made you decide "this business"?

I noticed a need for quality housing in Pendleton. With my background in construction and my knowledge of the housing market, I took the opportunity to build outside of the Portland metro area.

### Why be a Chamber member?

I choose to be a Chamber member to get more involved in the business community in Pendleton and meet other local business owners.

### How long have you been in business?

I have been in the real estate business for about 15 years as a builder/broker/investor/developer.

### Why do you love Pendleton?

I love the dry climate, the beautiful views, and friendly people.

### What's the most rewarding part of your job?

The most rewarding part of my job is seeing a need and being able to help fill it. I enjoy providing quality housing that people really appreciate. I love being my own boss and I love to build things.

### What should people know about your property that they may not?

The new townhomes are very energy efficient, have a modern layout, stainless steel appliances, large rooms, washer and dryers in the units, and garages. Located on the top of the South Hill, we are a few minutes drive to the hospital or downtown.

### How can people contact you?

Email is the best way to contact me: [thesouthhills@outlook.com](mailto:thesouthhills@outlook.com). You can follow Pendleton Premier Properties on Facebook and Instagram.

### What's your favorite part of doing business in Pendleton?

My favorite part of doing business in Pendleton is working with the city. The city staff has been easy to work with and available to answer questions. There is little red tape and the permit fees are reasonable.

### As a developer in several communities how do you keep work/life balance?

I keep my work/life balance by involving my family in any way I can. I bring them to the site, ask their opinions on details, and keep them up to date on the progress.

### Though you reside in Portland we know you spend an enormous amount of time in Pendleton, what surprised you most about the community when you first arrived?

What surprised me most about Pendleton was the amount of family friendly amenities. My family and I have enjoyed the many parks, the Children's Museum of Eastern Oregon, the Pendleton Center for the Arts, the Pendleton River Parkway, and the Pendleton Aquatics Center.



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