

Memorial Day Celebrated

We had a very moving Memorial Day this year, starting with the annual Veterans Memorial at Bonanzaville last Thursday. The Red River Valley Veterans Concert Band again provided us with an excellent concert with my friend Dale Rollie singing each of the service songs. Dale really does a great job. This year Miss West Fargo, Lizzie Jensen sang our National Anthem. She is a very good signer, fun to talk with and goes to college at M|State here in Moorhead. Mike Gruchalla, a medic in Vietnam talked about his experiences during the war. It was one of the most moving speeches we've ever had at Bonanzaville. Our Vietnam Veterans of America chapter 941 grilled burgers and hot dogs to go with beans, chips and cupcakes. The Junior ROTC from West Fargo, presented Colors and as always were very professional. Our older Veterans really like seeing young people as part of the event. Board president John Lund promised that we will hold this even in 2018. Bonanzaville staff did a super job on putting on the event including a fly over by a P-51 Mustang.

Memorial Day in Moorhead started with the annual wreath ceremony on Veterans Memorial Bridge at 7:00 am. Legion Post 21 and Auxiliary, VFW Post 1223 and Auxiliary organized and performed the ceremony in a slight drizzle. As Legion Commander Haugen said 'the soldiers we honor today served in much worse conditions'. The Posts continued all morning visiting local cemeteries, Bev and I joined them at Riverside honoring Bev's father. At 11:00 am, we joined many others at the Moorhead Armory for the annual Memorial Day ceremony. Guest speaker MSG (Ret) Eric Marts, US Army, IRAQI Veteran and Host of the Heroes of the Heartland Radio Show delivered an inspiring speech. Eric provided a brief history of Memorial Day with personal experiences and finishing with how we all should honor our deceased Veterans. A few of us retired to Legion Post 21 club for some relaxing conversation.

Sweetie Bev and I drove up north to visit Newfolden area cemeteries on Saturday and took photos of the grave markers for all Veterans in my family. At Bethesda cemetery, west of Newfolden, five of the twelve graves with flags were from my family. Returning home, I superimposed the military photo on top of the grave marker photo and posted them on Facebook. You can search Facebook for Les Bakke and see how they turned out. It was our small way of honoring our family Veterans.