



COLBY FREE PRESS

10 pages

War history is big part of speaker's remarks

Tells Memorial Day crowd the six reasons 'we are free'

By **PATTY DECKER**
Free Press Editor

Many in Colby honored their war dead at a special ceremony held Monday at Beulah Cemetery.

Jim Griffin, commander of the American Legion, was the guest speaker, and he addressed the meaning of Memorial Day and of those who died in battle.

"No one knows for sure when the first Memorial Day event was recognized," Griffin said, "although in 1971, it became a federal holiday."

He recalled the many wars that Americans were involved in starting with the Civil War in 1812 when 360,000 Union soldiers and 260,000 Confederate soldiers died.

"The Spanish-American War saw 1,600 casualties and in WWI the United States fought its first full-scale war with more than two million fellow Americans serving their country," he said.

In 1939, WWII broke out when Germany took Poland, Griffin said, and Americans became involved in that war three days after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

WWII was also the first war to see more than 200,000 women in the conflict, he said.

"The bloodiest of all wars started in June of 1950 when Americans were sent to Korea, and in the early 1960s the Vietnam war was fought," Griffin said.

As servicemen returned home from Vietnam, they came home to an ungrateful nation, Griffin said, and on Memorial Day it's an opportunity to thank them, too, for a job well done.

He also spoke about the all-volunteer service that is now in its 30th year. "These service members volunteered to give their life if necessary to protect our country," he said.

While walking through the cemetery earlier in the morning, Griffin said, there are so many who died in WWI, WWII, Desert Storm, Korea and other battles.

"We need to honor all of the historic dead — because of them our lives are free and our nation lives on," he said.

It has been said that there are six reasons we are free, Griffin explained.

"Those reasons," he said, "are the Army, Air Force, Marines, Navy, National Guard and Coast Guard."

Along with remembering the dead, Griffin also reminded everyone to think about the soldiers missing in action or who are prisoners of war.

In addition to Griffin's address, other members of the VFW and American Legion were present to lay wreaths and read names of those who served as members of the two groups or who were with the VFW or American Legion auxiliary and are now deceased.

Those included Jim Vap, American Legion member and chaplain; Daren Guy, VFW member; and Betty Brenn and Hazel Duffey, both auxiliary members with either the VFW or American Legion.



Jim Griffin



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Veterans, some pictured here, along with townspeople and visitors attended the Memorial Day Service at Beulah Cemetery to remember those who died for their country. Despite less than favorable weather, a nice size crowd was on hand for the recognition.

See related story and photo on page 6

Burgos family National Guard reception set

Dr. Peter Burgos, his wife Brenda and their four children are returning to Colby for a short visit.

A reception has been set up for Sunday to allow friends and former patients, as well as the public in general, to visit.

The event will be held at Fike Park from 1:30 to 3 p.m.

The family, which includes children Rebecca, Stephen, Rachael and Catherine, left for China in 1997 to be medical missionaries.

Anyone desiring more information, contact Kathy Robert at 462-7404.

State's top general discounts allegations

TOPEKA (AP) — The state's adjutant general said he is satisfied with an internal audit about discharged soldiers, adding that allegations of the National Guard inflating its strength are unfounded.

Maj. Gen. Greg Gardner told reporters that he ordered the audit after receiving a letter from a soldier claiming people were being paid after their discharges from the Kansas National Guard.

The audit, conducted by the U.S. Property and Finance Office, reviewed activities from 1996 through 2003, starting three years before Gardner became adjutant general. Auditors concluded that all discharges and payments were appropriate.

"Looking at ourselves is part of our business," Gardner said during a briefing at the Kansas State Defense Building.

Critics, including House Speaker

Doug Mays, suggested last week that the Guard is inflating its numbers and questioned Gardner's management of the 8,000-member organization.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius has met with Gardner about the report, as well as the recent dismissal of two officers, and has maintained her confidence in the general. Gardner was appointed by Gov. Bill Graves in February 1999 and retained by Sebelius.

Gardner told reporters that the recent publicity and accusations hurt soldiers and airmen across the state. He said they have no reason to doubt his abilities or his integrity.

"I believe the guardsmen and the people of Kansas should be confident," Gardner said.

The report found that over the seven-year period, 2,400 soldiers were retained by their units for as long as six months before dis-

charges were complete. None of those soldiers received pay.

"There is no benefit to inflating the numbers — financial or any kind," Gardner said, noting that federal funds are only paid for those soldiers who report for monthly drills.

Mays, R-Topeka, released that figure to reporters last week — but not the source or a copy of the documents. Mays said Tuesday he stood by his earlier statements and need for an attorney general's investigation.

"I just have to insist that we have a third-party take an objective look at this," Mays said. "I'm confident we have a problem."

But Matt All, Sebelius' chief counsel, noted that the U.S. Property and Finance Office is an independent third party.

"I would suggest that having yet another (review) would not be a

good use of resources," All said.

Col. Dennis Elliott, whose office conducted the audit, said there were differences between his staff's findings and what the Guard believed to be true, which he said is typical of any civilian or military audit. Those differences will be resolved before the audit is closed, he said.

The National Guard Bureau goal for "non-validated" status — soldiers who repeatedly do not show up for duty — is 2 percent. Gardner said the Kansas rate was 1.8 percent for April, the most current numbers available.

Gardner said he was troubled that an internal document was released without authorization and that it may discourage others from coming forward to point out areas of concern.

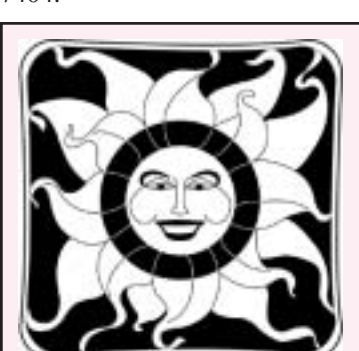
"We want them to come forward because we're always wanting to make ourselves better," Gardner

said. "We want to do things that encourage people to tell us what's wrong, because we want to fix them."

Col. Robert Bloomquist, deputy chief of staff for personnel, said if units are not meeting the 2 percent goal, the commanders would be brought in to discuss the situation with Brig. Gen. Jonathan Small, assistant adjutant general in charge of the Army.

The issue of inflated strength reports was the subject of an April 2002 investigation by a U.S. House Armed Services subcommittee. The report found that strength accounting had steadily improved within the Army National Guard in recent years and that widespread inflation of unit strengths by unit commanders wasn't evident.

On the Net:
Kansas Adjutant General: <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/kansas/adjutant/>



Sunny, hot

Thomas, Logan Counties

Tonight...Mostly clear. Lows in the mid 50s. Light northeast wind becoming south late this evening. Thursday...Very hot. Mostly sunny. Highs in the upper 90s. South wind 10 to 15 mph becoming northwest late. Thursday night...Mostly clear. Lows near 60. Friday...Partly sunny. Highs in the mid 80s. Friday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 50s. Saturday...Mostly clear. Highs in the mid 70s.

By the numbers

Tuesday's high, 84
Low this morning, 50
Year ago today, 86 and 49
Records for the date, 100 in 1895, 33 in 1947
Soil temperature, 67
24-hour precipitation up to 8 a.m. today, 0.00
Month's precipitation to date, 2.30
Year's precipitation to date, 6.32
Water Usage/Colby
May 23-24-25 = averaged 1.752 million gallons per day
May 26 = 1.838 million gallons
May 27 = 2.462 million gallons

Two awarded scholarships for criminal justice studies

Two Colby Community College students will receive scholarships for the 2003-2004 school year through the generosity of the City of Colby "Special Law Enforcement Fund" at the Thomas County Community Foundation, said Becky Donelan, the Foundation's executive director.

She said the purpose of the scholarship fund is to provide assistance for second year criminal justice students.

Christi Somers of Brewster and Clayton Kaiser of Colby, the latest recipients, will each receive \$1,500 scholarships, Donelan said.

Somers is majoring in criminal justice with an emphasis in psychology, Donelan said. She has been Colby Community College Student Senate vice-president, a Presidential Scholar and Criminal Justice Association secretary.

After graduation in May of 2004, she plans to transfer to Washburn

University to pursue a career as a defense attorney.

Kaiser is also majoring in criminal justice with an emphasis in psychology. He has been involved in Youth on Board, Teens Against Smoking in Kansas and Community Awareness Team.

Kaiser is also a member of the college's baseball team. He plans to pursue a career with an agency such as the FBI, U.S. Marshal or CIA.

Briefly

Food delivery Saturday

The "Share" delivery for this month will begin at 10:15 a.m. Saturday in the Colby Sacred Heart School gymnasium, said Gene Griffin, coordinator. The menu consists of ground beef patties, cooked ham steak, sausage patties, chicken breast fillets, lettuce, green peppers, cucumbers, potatoes, apples, oranges, kiwis, lemons, and Velveta shells and cheese.

Delzeit reception is Friday

A reminder was issued today of the retirement reception for Corky Delzeit, director of public power, at 3 p.m. on Friday in the council chambers of Colby City Hall. He has worked for the city for 36 years. The invitation includes everyone in the community.

Cystic fibrosis walk is Saturday

The Great Strides Walk to fight and cure cystic fibrosis will

be held in Colby on Saturday. Check-in is at 8 a.m. and the walk begins at 9 at Fike Park. This is the first time the event will be held in Colby. Questions to 465-7907.

Free physicals here Thursday

Colby Medical and Surgical Center, 175 S. Range, will be providing free physicals on Thursday to all students entering seventh through twelfth grade next year. Colby Middle School is scheduled at 5:30 p.m.; Colby High School at 6:15; and students from Brewster and Golden Plains at 7.

Flea market scheduled noted

Rexford PRIDE is sponsoring its Farmers/Flea Markets during the months of May through September, said Evelyn Johnson, one of the coordinators. The events will be held on the first Saturday of each month from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Booth cost for vendors is \$10 with a lunch stand provided by various community organizations. Anyone interested in partici-

pating as a vendor or has questions, call Johnson at (785) 687-3925.

Carnival 'work days' reminder

The Thomas County Amusement Association continues to hold "work days" each Saturday at the fairgrounds and everyone in the community is encouraged to lend a hand. This will be an all day event.

Contact the association's vice president, Chad L. Zimmerman at 460-1818 if you need additional information about lending a helping hand.

Still accepting military photos

Colby Photo at 420 N. Franklin is still accepting pictures to honor military members either serving overseas or in the United States. Ardash Beringer, owner of Colby Photo, said the "window to honor our troops," can also include Reserve and National Guard members. Photos used in the tribute will be returned. Questions to 462-8169.

