



Saint Viator Students Pick Up Where They Left Off: Dialoging with Korean War Veterans

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Saint Viator senior Tedman Marszalek of Arlington Heights, seen here with fellow authors and seniors Natalie Cataldo of Arlington Heights and Steven Jensen of Mt. Prospect, talks about his experience writing the book. (Photo by Saint Viator senior Chris Santucci)

Veterans' Day extended into last week at the Wheeling Township Hall in Arlington Heights, when AP history students from Saint Viator shared a panel discussion with Korean War veterans.

Their presentation followed up on the book they developed together, "Lest We Forget: Arlington Heights' Korean War Veterans," which came out last summer.

The veterans presented some of their experiences from serving in the "forgotten war," while students commented on the impact of meeting real war heroes and of sharing their stories.

"My grandfather had never talked about his time in the war with anyone in the family before I interviewed him for this book," said junior Elizabeth Meehan of Des Plaines. "When my grandmother died, I think he realized he

needed to tell someone."

Carl Brandon, a Korean War veteran from Arlington Heights who had been interviewed by senior Steven Jensen of Mount Prospect, described how different the reaction was to returning Korea veterans from World War II soldiers, a decade earlier.

"For years we didn't talk about the war," Brandon said, "because no one else was talking about it. But people have to know why we were there."

The book was the second in an ongoing series. Written by Saint Viator students, it profiled 18 local Korean War veterans. It followed up on "Arlington Heights' Greatest Generation," which told the stories of local World War II veterans. Both were underwritten and promoted by Peoples' Bank in Arlington Heights.

Don Smith of Prospect Heights said he never talked about his role in the Korean War, since he never participated in any combat. Participating in the book, he said, helped to tell the whole story of American's role in advancing peace and rebuilding the country.

"I was honored to get the call to participate in the interview," Smith said.

The joint presentation filled the meeting room at Wheeling Township, drawing other Korean veterans, as well as other seniors, parents of students, and Saint Viator faculty and administration members.

"I am grateful our students had the opportunity to literally live and experience history," said the Rev. Robert M. Egan, C.S.V., president. "The generosity of these veterans they met provided the best learning experience they could have."