

## KOREAN WAR

By Ellen Knight<sup>1</sup>

The Korean War began on June 25, 1950 and ended with an armistice on July 27, 1953, a date designated as Korean War Veterans Armistice Day by presidential proclamation.

Dubbed “The Forgotten War,” the conflict in Korean has certainly been a much overlooked segment of Winchester’s history, unchronicled in the *History of Winchester*<sup>2</sup> and unrepresented by any photographs, stories, or other documents—including the town’s Annual Reports—in the town archives. Except for the Veteran’s Memorial outside Town Hall, there apparently would not be any public record of Winchester’s participation in the Korean War.

When the war began, it did not receive immediate recognition in the local newspaper. Then, in the July 14 edition of the *Winchester Star*, W. Allen Wilde, a member of the District Draft Board was quoted as saying, “There has been no great change in conditions, as they affect the board, because of the situation in Korea.”

He reported that much of the draft information at the district office was currently inaccurate and of little use. Young men over 18 were reminded to register for the draft. For advice, a Winchester Military Manpower Committee existed.

According to the Korean War Honor Roll, at least 663 Winchester residents were in the service during the Korean War. One of them, former Navy man Sherman “Whip” Saltmarsh Jr., though not involved in the conflict itself, recalled the time.

“You’re right when you say it’s the ‘Forgotten War,’” he said. “Americans didn’t know a lot about Asia,” he observed. “It was hard for the average American to relate to what was going on in the Far East.”

Though recognizing that there was more home support during the Korean War than the Vietnam War, he saw a strong parallel between the two wars. Both had the objective to stop the flow of communism from the north to the south, and both “ended in a sort of stalemate.” In both, “it was a group of Americans who went off to war with the objective to fight aggression through the world.” He observed that the same number of service people were killed in Korea and in Vietnam.<sup>3</sup>

## IN MEMORIAM

1,502 Massachusetts men and women gave their lives during the war. The names of six Winchester men killed in Korea are listed on the Honor Roll: Pfc. Anthony Gagliormella, Pfc. Richard Mead Golden, Lt. Robert G. Herlihy, Pfc. Festus J. McDonough, Pfc. Edmund V. Morrissey, and Pfc. William E. Violante. For each there was an individual story.

The first death was the result of a friendly accident. PFC Golden, a native of Maine who enlisted from Winchester, was a member of the 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. While his company was in a defensive position at Majon-Ni, North Korea, he was adjusting the trip-wires of friendly anti-personnel mines when another soldier accidentally caused a device to explode, killing Golden on Nov. 12, 1950.



Violante, a graduate of WHS, class of 1949, entered the Marine Corps on Dec. 3, 1950, at the age of 20. He served as a machine gunner and reportedly was in combat during the five months before he was killed in action on Nov. 2, 1951.



On Oct. 31, 1952, Gagliormella was killed in action at what was known as "Triangle Hill." A graduate of the class of 1947 and, like Violante, a former football player, Gagliormella entered the Marine Corps in February 1951. He was reportedly in Korea only a few days when he was killed, at age 23. Herlihy, also a Marine, arrived in Korea on July 1 and was killed the day before the truce was signed, also at age 23.

McDonough, who served with the 696<sup>th</sup> Ordnance Ammunition Co., went overseas in Dec. 1952 and was reportedly on active duty from then until the end of the war when he was reported missing. In Feb. 1954, his mother was notified by the War Department that he was officially dead, killed on July 28, 1953 while checking ammunition stacks in a remote, densely wooded area in the vicinity of Yangju-gun, Korea.<sup>4</sup> At its spring 1990 meeting, Town Meeting named the general area at the intersection at the Arthur Street and Loring Avenue for McDonough.

*Yearbook photos  
of Violante (top)  
and Gagliormella*

Morrissey moved to Winchester from South Boston after marrying Winchester native Mary Haggerty about three months before entering the service. While a member of the 65th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Division, he was killed during a surprise attack on a United Nations outpost on May 23, 1953.<sup>5</sup>

When the caskets of those who were returned to Winchester for burial arrived, the flags on the Common and public buildings were at half mast, and the trains were met by selectmen, the veteran's service officer, and an honor guard of members of the VFW and American Legion.

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<sup>1</sup> This article © 2019 is a revision of an earlier article by the author, Ellen Knight, published in the *Daily Times Chronicle* on July 26, 2000. This article supersedes all previous articles.

<sup>2</sup> Henry S. Chapman, *History of Winchester*, Town of Winchester, 1936.

<sup>3</sup> Interview of Sherman "Whip" Saltmarsh by Ellen Knight, July 2000.

<sup>4</sup> *The Winchester Star*, Feb. 19, 1954.

<sup>5</sup> *The Winchester Star*, July 31, 1953.