

## "Westminster War Memorial Dedication"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

On a rainy Sunday afternoon in December 1949, nearly eight years to the day after the Sunday morning attack at Pearl Harbor marked America's entry into World War II, the citizens of Westminster dedicated their war memorial. The story was front-page news in the December 14th issue of this paper:

"Dedication ceremonies for Westminster's War Memorial were held on Sunday afternoon. Despite the almost constant drizzle, hundreds of folks from the countryside mingled with the townsmen for the parade which preceded the dedication and for the dedication itself at the point where West Main street and Pennsylvania avenue meet.

The parade formed along Willis and Court streets under the direction of the Marshall, Captain John Magin. The procession got under way at about 2:45 o'clock, and proceeded west along Main street, headed by City police escort, the 29th Division Colors, and the Municipal Band. Following came the Mayor and the members of the City Council, the speaker of the day, the distinguished guests, the County Commissioners, riding in automobiles.

Next came a division headed by the colors of Molleville Farm Post No. 467, V.F.W., their drum and bugle corps, post members and auxiliary; Carroll Post No. 31, The American Legion colors and members; Harps-Chase Post, The American Legion (colored) and their auxiliary; the Wm. F. Myer's Sons Band, with Batter "C", 110 Field Artillery, commanded by Capt. Charles Maus.

The Reserve Officers Training Corps of Western Maryland College marched 225 strong. The battalion and band was commanded by Cadet Lt. Col. David Jones of Manchester, Md., and the Carroll County Reserve Officers Association, which comprises a part of the 2014th Logistical Division.

The last division had the Westminster High School Band as its cadence setters. Then came the Westminster Fire Department, members of the Uniform Rank, and a large contingent of Boy and Girl Scouts, representing all of Westminster's troops and dens.

On arrival at the Fork of the Roads, the Westminster Municipal Band opened the dedication program with the National Emblem March; and the Rev. Dr. Lowell S. Ensor, president of Western Maryland College, serving as the master of ceremonies, served notice of the cause of the assembly and called upon the Rev. John C. Broderick of St. John's Catholic Church for the invocation. The Mayor, Joseph L. Mathias, Sr., was then presented and he spoke briefly of the plans and the erection of the monument. He then called upon the Commanders of the two major veterans' post here-Charles E. Shipley of the American Legion, and John P. Donofrio of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to unveil the monument. The band then played the Star Spangled Banner.

Dr. Ensor next introduced the distinguished company who occupied the rostrum. They included: congressman William P. Bolton; Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro of Baltimore; Mayor Herman L. Mills of Hagerstown; Burgess E. Fred Carver of Hanover; Francis Neal Parke, former Chief Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit; members of the City Council, Roy A. Shipley, Scott S. Bair, Levi D. Maus, J. Albert Mitten, and Jesse C. Royer; City Clerk John R. Eckard, and City Attorney D. Eugene Walsh.

Senator Millard E. Tydings, the senior Senator from Maryland was presented as the dedication speakers. In the course of his remarks he paid tribute to Westminster's sons - both living and dead of all wars for the courage and valor displayed. "The dead would implore us never again to lower our guard," he said. "We must in truth always be ready."

Tydings continued with the remark that this nation must be certain of two things: "First, that we are so well prepared that every aggressor will fear to attack us or to disturb the world as to involve us in another way; and secondly, if we are involved we must be sure in advance that defeat will be the portion of the aggressor."

"Only by assuming the world leadership and discharging fully the responsibilities which that leadership entails can we be worthy of our honored dead, and show our appreciation for their great sacrifices."

"Only by going forth with courage and confidence to meet this deepening challenge of our day and hour can we hope to spread upon the most glorious page of the world's future history, A contribution to civilization that will be the price of generations yet unborn. What better day, what better place than this to rededicate ourselves to this unfinished task to world peace with freedom and justice for all," said the Senator.

The Rev. Dr. Elwood S. Falkenstein of Grace Lutheran Church, brought the dedication service to a close with the benediction.

In a central panel of the shaft which rises fourteen feet from the base, are inscribed these words cut into the Barre-Vermont gray granite: DEDICATED TO THE HONOR AND SACRIFICE OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF WESTMINSTER WHO SERVED IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES IN ALL WARS.

The monument, which is octagonal in form, tapers to the top from all sides. Just above the inscription is an exquisitely hand carved American Eagle.

The sub-base of the shaft is also octagonal in shape and is decorated with a handsomely carved laurel frieze in relief, symbolizing victory and achievement of the American Armed Forces.

The general octagonal plan of the monument provides a decorative theme which is interesting and effective from all approaches.

The monument is surfaced throughout with a fine tooled finish and required almost a year of continuous construction. Over twenty-six tons of granite were required in the fabrication of the monument, and approximately thirty tons of concrete were utilized in the foundation. The entire site has been very effectively landscaped and the monument will be lighted at night by concealed floodlights.

This handsome memorial will endure for endless centuries and will reflect in permanent form and tangible manner the undying gratitude and appreciation of Westminster for all those citizens who have unselfishly served our country in times of war."

America was already entering the uncertain Cold War era when Sen. Tydings made his remarks. Americans would soon be involved in fighting a new kind of conflict on the Korean Peninsula and the newly dedicated war memorial would eventually honor the sacrifices of additional Westminster citizens.

Photo caption: Mayor Joseph L. Mathias and Sen. Millard E. Tydings pose in front of the Westminster War Memorial at the intersection of W. Main and Pennsylvania Ave., following the dedication on December 11, 1949. Historical Society of Carroll County collection, gift of Mr. and Mrs. George Irwin, 1996.