

## Words of Honor for the Silent

Valpo Mayor and CEO thank Fallen Veterans for Service, Sacrifice

By Mallory Jindra Times Correspondent | Posted: Friday, May 27, 2011 6:00 pm

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VALPARAISO | A sure way to thank a veteran is by exercising your right at a polling place, Mayor Jon Costas told a crowd Friday morning at a memorial service.

"I like to tell (young people) that when you get old enough to vote, you only need one reason to vote in every single election," Costas said. "It's because every veteran fought for you to have that right to vote."

Military veterans, dignitaries and community members gathered Friday to honor the more than 130 Valparaiso-area military members who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

The Memorial Day ceremony, held at the Service Memorial in Foundation Meadows Park, included speeches by Costas and Laurie Mullet, CEO of Pines Village Retirement Communities.

Mullet reflected on her son, husband, father and great-great grandfather, who each served in the U.S. military.

"Quite truthfully, I feel humbled by the opportunity to speak because, really, I'm just an American," Mullet said. "I have a lot of pride in our country and in our ability to serve our country and honor those who have served."



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Three speakers recited the name of each veteran inscribed on the Duty and Sacrifice Wall, reserved for those veterans who gave their life for their country. At the close, the Rev. John Wolf, a Navy chaplain who served during World War II, delivered a benediction as Costas and Mullet laid a wreath against the wall of names.

"Let's remember that we are not just honoring the names listed here," Wolf said. "One million, two-hundred-thousand Americans have died since the Revolutionary War. All of us who were in combat feel it every day in our hearts and in our brains. We are all wounded."

The service memorial, which was created by Vietnam War veteran and former president of the Valparaiso Parks Foundation Doug Pierce, consists of a black granite fountain that sits quietly amid the names of people who have given of self for their community and country.



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"It's about the few sacrificing for the many," Pierce said. "When you see how many names, just in this area ... it's an incredible sacrifice."