

Reward

by Harry Zirkelbach

There is a smaller city within the city where I live. It sits on a hill, where the land rolls gently, not unlike a frozen moment in giant rolling swells of a great ocean. All agree; it is a pleasant view of that capture. Two small lakes nestle in low spots. From the higher echelons of this community, spires and homes of Denver are visible, teeming with activity seldom seen here.

In this utopia there are no taxes. Children play here, but infrequently. Mostly, that is because they have only a passing acquaintance with any resident, though they can know the name and a few things about each.

As in all communities, the population grows, one by one, but by daylight only. New residents are accompanied by relatives, close friends, one of whom is given a gift to cherish, while in a remote corner of the community a melody is played by a single bugler, eight bars of three notes each.

In spite of this community's 100,000 population, there are only ten named streets, three entrances. The streets are named after seven western states, two cities, one man; Colorado, its neighbors Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Montana; then Denver, and Omaha; and Logan.

To all Coloradans, and nationally, this community is known as Fort Logan National Cemetery, sited to the southwest corner of Denver, out there where the marble grows, one marker at a time. The land and sites have been provided by a grateful nation for those who served in the United States military, honorably. Their final reward and acknowledgement.

Fort Logan is one of 125 National Cemeteries; 109 of these (including Fort Logan) are operated by the Veterans Administration; 14 are maintained by the National Park Service; two by the U.S. Army.

Upon retiring to civilian life, men and women often scatter throughout the land on discharge, reunion infrequent.

Some who shared Military Duty moments nestled, worked, finished their life in the same community as civilians. Over the years I have attended Final Salute with more than a dozen Denverites whose last journey was to Fort Logan. That visit emphasized moments shared in Uniform, unique to our now eternal friendship.

That city on the hill flies the United States flag at half-mast in recognition to all military who marched honorably behind their flag in war and peace.