

WASHINGTON - U.S. Senators Benjamin L. Cardin and Barbara A. Mikulski (both D-MD) joined with **Majority Leader Steny Hoyer** (MD-5) and

Congressman Sam Johnson

(R-TX) and members of the Korean War Veterans Association (KWVA) today to celebrate enactment of legislation granting the group a Federal Charter. They also joined in celebrating the 55th

Anniversary of the armistice agreement ending the Korean War on July 27, 1953. Senator Cardin and Congressmen Hoyer and Johnson introduced the Federal Charter legislation, which was co-sponsored by Senator Mikulski and Congressmen Roscoe Bartlett (MD-6), Wayne Gilchrest (MD-1), C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger (MD-2) and John Sarbanes (MD-3).

“The Korean War is often referred to as the ‘forgotten’ war, and recognition of our veterans from this war is long overdue,” **said Senator Cardin.** “This Federal Charter lets the nearly 1.2 million American veterans of the Korean War who are still alive know that we have not forgotten them, and we honor the sacrifice they made for our nation.”

“Korean War veterans deserve the same official recognition for their struggles and sacrifices on behalf of freedom that other veterans enjoy,” **said Majority Leader Hoyer.** “Granting this Federal Charter delivers a long overdue honor to the 5.7 million Americans who fought and served during the Korean War. It is but a small expression of this nation's eternal appreciation for the extraordinary courage and sacrifice of our Korean War veterans.”

“We owe our veterans a debt of gratitude - not just with words, but with deeds. Korean War veterans have waited a long time for this special recognition,” **said Senator Mikulski.** “On the eve of the 55th

anniversary of the Korean War Armistice, that special recognition has come. I am proud to have cosponsored this bill, which honors the sacrifices and commitment these men and women made. Today, a grateful nation remembers.”

“Imagine coming home from a bloody and brutal war only to learn that your country did not acknowledge your service. That's more or less what happened to the estimated 5 million valiant men and women who served in the Korean War. It's high time these folks receive the recognition and the national charter that they earned,” **said Congressman Johnson,** a 29-year Air Force fighter pilot and Korean War veteran.

The Korean War, often overlooked in American history, is anything but forgotten by the nearly 1.2 million American veterans of the Korean War still alive today. During the three-year course of the war, some 5.7 million Americans were called to serve, and by the time the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed in July 1953, more than 36,000 Americans sacrificed their lives, 103,284 were wounded, 7,140 were captured and 664 were missing.

The KWVA is the only fraternal veterans' organization in the United States devoted exclusively to Korean War veterans and the only U.S. member of the International Federation of Korean War Veterans Associations. Incorporated in 1985, the 17,000-member charitable association has established a strong record of service and commitment to fellow Korean War veterans, ranging from efforts on behalf of Project Freedom to its successful effort to construct a national Korean War Veterans Memorial on the National Mall.

Congress has long recognized various military and veterans patriotic organizations in public law. While a Federal Charter does not confer any special rights, privileges or benefits to a membership organization, it is a public acknowledgement that a group serves the public interest by providing its members important services and community support. Granting this charter to the Korean War Veterans Association will focus more attention on issues of concern to Korean War veterans, and will allow the KWVA to fully participate on veterans' advisory panels and select groups with other congressionally-chartered veterans' and military organizations.

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