DEAR ABBY:

Memorial appeal gets a shower of support

DEAR ABBY: I am Kathleen Cronon Wyosnick, and I wrote to you seeking support for the Korean War Veterans Memorial. You printed my letter, and the day it appeared, my phone started ringing at 7 a.m. and continued to ring nonstop throughout the weekend.

I heard from other wives who had lost their husbands in Korea; mothers who had lost sons; and men and women whose brothers, uncles and cousins were killed, wounded or missing in action in the Korean "conflict." (Although 54,246 died, 103,284 were wounded and 8,177 were missing in action, our government never called that three-year battle in Korea a "war."!)

I had calls from many Korean War vets. "Bob" phoned from Montana, and in a booming voice said, "Kathleen, I just want to say, 'LADY, I LOVE YOU!'" Before I could ask him his last name, he'd hung up.

A few just wanted to share some war stories that had been locked away for 35 years. Some choked up — unable to talk — and asked me to thank Abby for devoting her entire column to the Korean War vets on Veterans Day.

Abby, the mail was unbelievable! Sacks of mail were held at the post office until we could get enough hands to open it. An SOS went out to all the Kiwanis Clubs in the area. They recruited volunteers, who did an incredible job of opening it.

Some of the letters accompanying the contributions were heartwarming: John Lopez, a Sunnyvale, Calif., Marine vet who had been a POW, was one of the first to respond. A teenage girl from Denver sent $2, saying she'd never heard of the Korean conflict! From San Antonio came a check from Jeane Westerman, a 76-year-old retired Army nurse (WW II), with a note: "Wish I could send more but my retirement isn't all that great." Al Johnson, a Korean War vet from Vancouver, Wash., sent a check saying he was going through a painful divorce, feeling alone and depressed, and this effort would give him something to do.

A week later he wrote again to say he'd collected $5,000! Another vet said he was broke, but enclosed $5 in food stamps.

A check came from Gene Baenen of Lake Forest, Ill., in honor of his kid brother — one of the first Marines to be killed in Korea. (He went over in August, was killed in September, and would have been 21 on Christmas of that year.)

Abby, how can I thank you for all you've done for the veterans of the Forgotten War? I want to shower you with roses, hugs and kisses. May God bless you in a very special way. — KATHLEEN C. WYOSNICK

DEAR KATHLEEN: Please don't thank me; that's what I'm here for.

Readers: We now have slightly more than $2 million of the $6 million needed to reach our goal. We have miles to go before we sleep, so please send your tax-deductible checks and money orders to: Korean War Memorial Fund, P.O. Box 2372, Washington, D.C. 20013-2372.

Don't put off writing thank-you notes, letters of sympathy, etc. because you don't know what to say. Get Abby's booklet, "How to Write Letters for All Occasions.

Send a check or money order for $3 ($3.39 in Canada) to: Dear Abby, Le Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, 61054. (Postage is included.)

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