Public support needed to build memorial to Korean War vets

The ranks of the men who fought in Korea are thinning. So is their hair. Those who remain wonder if, once they are gone, anyone will remember what they did.

Legislation has been introduced in Congress authorizing the establishment of a memorial to those who served in the Korean War. A national steering committee is attempting to raise the money to design and build such a memorial. A South Florida man, Peter Stumberger of Boca Raton, is working with the National Committee for the Korean War Memorial and will hold a fund-raiser Nov. 5 at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4141 in Delray Beach.

Why a memorial to the Korean War?

Why not? American has memorials to those who fought in all its other wars. Why not similarly honor the 5.7 million Americans who fought in Korea between 1950 and 1953? Indeed, how do you explain not honoring the Korean veteran to the families of the 54,338 Americans who died there?

Attempts have been made, especially since Vietnam, to denigrate what was achieved in Korea. It has been said that the war, if not lost, certainly wasn’t won, and those arguing this point say the price was too high to gain only a draw.

But the United Nations—under whose auspices the United States and 15 other nations fought—wouldn’t have could in Korea. It established the 38th parallel as the boundary between communist North Korea and democratic South Korea. The very existence of the Republic of Korea is a memorial to those who fought there.

Veterans like Peter Stumberger want more. They want a memorial in Washington dedicated to the memory of them and their comrades. The dastardly black granite slabs dedicated to Vietnam recall the veterans of Korea that they are being forgotten.

The Vietnam Memorial cost the neighborhood of $14 million, not including recent revisions to tone down its anti-war message. The National Committee for the Korean War Memorial thinks it can do the job for about $6.5 million. It plans to erect a smaller, more “traditional and patriotic” memorial.

We hope you consider contributing. You can send your contribution to the Committee at 1844 21st Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20009. It’s tax-deductible and, if you contribute $25 or more, you’ll receive a cassette recording of Gen. Douglas MacArthur’s famous “old soldiers never die” speech to Congress.

If you have an idea what the memorial should look like, the Committee welcomes your suggestions. There is a $20 design fee for individuals ($100 for professional architects or firms). The fee, however, is waived for veterans. The winner of the design competition, selected by a group to include veterans of the war, will receive a $10,000 award.

If you served in Korea, or know someone who did, you should be concerned that memory of that clear-cut resistance to communist aggression might fade away. Help those who fought their fight one last battle.

Raise drinking age, by law or by citizen

Lawmaking by citizen initiative—it’s one of those “megatrends” that author John Naisbitt helped popularize.

It’s a side whose time has definitely come. Initiative campaigns are under way in dozens of states, covering issues as diverse as taxation and nuclear power.

The concept is simple. If your elected lawmakers won’t pass a law you feel is necessary, you get together with other citizens and force approval of the law through the citizen initiative process.

In Florida, as in most states, this involves collecting voter signatures on petitions in support of a voter referendum on the issue. If enough people sign up, the issue must be placed on the ballot. If enough people vote to pass it, the issue becomes law, without legislative approval.

Florida has had success with the initiative referendum process. In 1975, when they passed the Sunshine Amendment to the Florida Constitution, they required a two-thirds vote of the Legislature to pass a constitutional amendment requiring a three-fifths vote in the Legislature and a simple majority in the electorate.

But there is another, just getting started, which deserves support.

A few weeks ago, State Rep. Fran Carlton, D-Orlando, filed a bill to raise the legal drinking age from 18 to 21. Now she has decided to take out some insurance in case her bill doesn’t make it through the legislative process, the same as last session. The outlook in the Senate is dim, so she and Sen. Richard Langley, R-Clermont, via citizen mortgage to young people.

When decades earlier to young people.

Florida’s three years some of their licenses.

Unless drinking approval.