Legion honors non-veteran

By VALERIE FINHOLM
Camera Staff Writer

Hal Barker is not a veteran, but he received a plaque Monday from the Boulder chapter of the American Legion. Barker, 36, was recognized for his work toward establishing a national memorial in Washington, D.C., for veterans of the Korean War. His father was a highly decorated helicopter pilot in the war.

"I'm proud to get something like that," Barker said of the award. "People forget why we survive as a country. We survive as a country because of our veterans. We owe them a lot and we tend to forget it — quite regularly we tend to forget it."

Barker's father, Edward Lee Barker, does not know about his son's award. Hal Barker said his dad, who lives in Texas, doesn't like to talk about the war.

At the American Legion Monday, George V. Antimary, commander of the post, said Barker corresponds with more than 200 veterans of the Korean War "and the list is growing."

Barker, who began his work with Korean veterans 10 years ago as a way to learn about his father's military career, is now writing a book on the subject. He is president of the Colorado Steering Committee for the Korean War Memorial.

The memorial won't become a reality until at least next year, when the U.S. Congress reconvenes. Barker said his goal is to get the entire Colorado congressional delegation to support the memorial, which will be paid for through private contributions.

So far, Representatives Pat Schroeder and Tim Wirth have endorsed the proposal; Senator Bill Armstrong and Gary Hart (who signed on last week) left their families and homes. The Larimer County sheriff's office said Phillip Gomez, 45, of Harl, 20, also of Thornton. The