

# F.T. GORDON, GA. 1943



## Michael Viechec Photo Page



### A day of remembrance



ler Mike Viechec from VFW chapter 7369 lead members of the First Assembly Ministries of Naples church in the Pledge of Allegiance in honor of Memorial Day. Michel Fortier/Staff

## Two local vets honored with trip to D.C. for WWII service

By JOEL ESKOVITZ  
eskovitz@nps.com

Phil Reader spotted the event on the horizon and recognized that it would be a spectacle. He also realized he had to send someone to Washington to revel in it. As quartermaster of one of Naples' two Veterans of Foreign Wars posts, Reader raised money for the trip by organizing a spaghetti dinner one night a week for four months.

Finding the money to send a member and a guest to the nation's capital for this weekend's dedication of the National World War II Memorial might have been a slight burden. Finding the person to send was not.

"The guy who just stands out is Mike Viechec," Reader said. "Mike was there. He went through the whole war from Normandy to the concentration camp liberation."



World War II veteran Michael Viechec, who fought in four conflicts including the Battle of the Bulge, will travel to Washington, D.C., to partake in the dedication of the new World War II memorial on Saturday, May 29.  
[Don Wagner/Staff]

member whose service will be commended by the Collier County Commission on Tuesday night, was a no-brainer.

And so was replicating that honor for another staple of Southwest Florida's veterans organizations. A Naples American Legion post decided in January to solicit money from several area groups to sponsor Julius Futo's journey.

While Futo is reluctant to discuss his military background and the three Purple Hearts he earned as an Army soldier in the China-Burma-India Theater, it is his postwar résumé that most impresses his colleagues: more than 300 trips to escort veterans to the Tampa Veterans Affairs Hospital, visits to high schools for

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## services pay tribute to armed forces

to the rest of the church lit by the morning sun.

More than 100 people attended the memorial services at First Assembly Ministries, East Naples, at 8:30 and 11 a.m.

The 11 a.m. service began with the Pledge of Allegiance lead by six children, members of Royal Rangers, and continued with prayer, singing, moments of silence and "Taps" on a saxophone.

When First Assembly Ministries...

sonnel to stand up to be honored, more than 10 people stood in the crowd. Among those was Wayne Hjelseth, who stood with pride.

Hjelseth, 64, was stationed in Korea during the Berlin crisis for 1 1/2 years and his son has served with the National Guard in Iraq.

Hjelseth, who wore a Royal Rangers uniform, used few words to describe his feelings about this day's service.

Hjelseth was at the service with his wife, Karen and his mother-in-law, Virginia Eistad.

"It's a patriotic church and we have a lot to be thankful for," said Mallory.

Among other veterans was Jack Heaphy, 48, a Navy veteran who served in North Virginia "five years, three months and two days" from 1980 to 85.

"I don't think they (veterans and U.S. military personnel) are appreciated as much as they

is a Roman Catholic, and was at the service with a family friend he was visiting in Naples.

Currently, Heaphy has a friend serving with a National Guard troop in Iraq.

Although Heaphy said he is disappointed that the government cannot pay the U.S. military personnel a better salary, he appreciates what the Navy gave him when he was done serving — a job and a trade.

"We as a nation should do a