

Quincy bugler gets another special gig



Marine Corps veteran Bob Ericson plays taps at a ceremony to mark the 59th anniversary of the end of the Korean War at the Illinois Veterans Home in 2012. Ericson, who played taps to officially mark the start of the cease-fire in Korea on July 27, 1953, will play at a ceremony July 24 at the Korean War National Museum in Springfield, Ill. (H-W File Photo/Michael Kipley)

Ericson tapped to play at Springfield 'reintroduction' ceremony July 24

By **DOUG WILSON**

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Bob Ericson, the Quincyman who played taps to mark the end of fighting in the Korean War, has been asked to sound his bugle again next month at the Korean War National Museum in Springfield, Ill.

"It's going to be on July 24th at the Korean War Museum," Ericson said. "Of course July 27th will be the 61st anniversary of the end of fighting in Korea."

Museum assistant Thomas Kenny said the July 24 event will start at 11:30 a.m. at what is being called a reintroduction ceremony in the Old State Capitol Plaza.

"Mr. Ericson is one of our special guests, and we're going to have Dr. Michael Devine, the former director of the Truman Library, bring a speech on the atomic bombs that President Truman did not drop," Kenny said.

Ericson, 83, now uses a wheelchair, but that doesn't keep the former Marine bugler from playing taps.

"As long as I'm able, I'll go and do it," he said.

Ericson has been practicing with the bugle since the museum asked him to perform. Now living at the Illinois Veterans Home, Ericson goes out into the parking lot behind Fifer Infirmary early in the morning and plays taps. Although he does not play loudly, many residents have heard the bugle

and commented on his efforts.

Ericson was stationed at Panmunjom, Korea, in the final months of the Korean War and beyond. At 10 p.m. on July 27, 1953, Ericson played taps to mark the beginning of the truce that ended major military action, leaving a divided Korea.

"I had the honor of playing at the cease-fire, and it kind of mushroomed from there," Ericson said. "I've played four times in Washington, and I played taps back in Korea."

In addition, Ericson has played taps for an estimated 7,000 military funerals as a final show of respect to veterans who have died and at dozens of other venues for special ceremonies.

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