



# ST. JOSEPH NEWS-PRESS

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## Event recalls soldiers' sacrifice

*More than 100 attend ceremony at legion post*

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Hands were over hearts or above the brow intermittently during the Memorial Day service at the American Legion Post 359 Monday morning, paying tribute to fallen American soldiers.

More than 100 people were on hand for the annual event held by the Joint Veterans Committee of St. Joseph. Rain forced the event inside instead of its usual location at Civic Center Park.

Tech. Sgt. David Hickok, right, along with other members of the 139th Airlift Wing, give a 21-gun salute Monday morning at the memorial service held by the Joint Veterans Committee at the American Legion Post 359. (JESSICA STEWART/St. Joseph News-Press)

While the remembrance of soldiers killed in the line of duty was solemn at times, draped with formality and tradition, some of those in attendance smiled during the singing of "America the Beautiful," and wiped tears away during the National Anthem. And kids squirmed on the laps of parents holding handmade paper pansies.

For those in attendance — who had different reasons for wanting to pay tribute Monday — the theme of remembrance rang true, like the 21-gun salute toward the end of the ceremony.

"I'm just thankful that I'm able to live like I am, and to do anything I want ... within reason, of course," said St. Joseph resident Mary

Scott with a smile after the ceremony. Ms. Scott has a daughter in the Naval Sea Cadets, who were on hand to present the flag.

Before and afterward, veterans made the rounds and shook hands with other veterans, introducing family members and comparing backgrounds:

"What company?"

"When did you serve?"

"There's no such thing as an ex-Marine."

The managing editor of Military Review, Lt. Col. Arthur Bilodeau, gave a speech about the importance of Memorial Day, stressing that now, more than ever, Americans need to remember their heroes.

"I think we're distracted," he said after the ceremony. "We have a 100 percent volunteer army,

and they're professionals, but it's out of sight, out of mind."

St. Joseph resident Sandy Allen, whose daughter Kristen serves in the Navy, agreed with Mr. Bilodeau's message.

"It's a three- or four-day weekend for some people," she said. "There's an entire generation that has no idea what we're commemorating today."

In other Memorial Day events, about 30 people attended a service at Riverfront Park in recognition of U.S. military personnel who died at sea. Mayor Ken Shearin and state Reps. Ed Wildberger and Dr. Rob Schaaf, along with state Sen. Charlie Shields, were among dignitaries at the event, which was marked by single carnations being placed in the Missouri River.