



Robert Fickbohm addresses a capacity audience at Monday morning's Veterans Day program held at the W.H. Over Museum in Vermillion.

(Photo by David Lias)

By Travis Gulbrandson
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Although he knew Don Johnson for only a brief time, Robert Fickbohm still considers him one of his best friends. Fickbohm shared his memories of Johnson — who was killed in action during the Korean War — at part of this year's Veterans Day program at the W. H. Over Museum this Monday. Fickbohm was raised about 10 miles northeast of

Vermillion and Johnson was a native of Burbank, but neither of them met before their induction into the Army on Nov. 12, 1952. Their friendship continued from then on. "Don and I were together all through basic training, and we went to Japan together," Fickbohm said. "He was one of the best friends I ever had." The pair were inducted in Sioux Falls, at which point they were sent to Fort Sheridan, which is north of Chicago.

They were then sent on a troop train to the southwestern US, eventually reaching California. "We were in the same outfit, the same barracks, the same schedule" all through basic training, Fickbohm said. The training they received was a bit different than prior recruits had, due to the nature of the Korean War. "At this time ... the US Army and the Marines were not used to that type of warfare," Fickbohm said. "Hordes came over the hills

— Chinese and North Koreans — and they weren't used to dealing with hordes. "You could be doing pretty well until about the third horde, and then you'd be running out of ammunition," he said. As a result, the recruits received an extra two weeks of bayonet training. Eventually, the pair shipped out of San Francisco to Japan on a World War II troop ship. "The day we sailed out of San Francisco we saw the Golden Gate Bridge," Fickbohm said.

"We wondered if we would ever see that bridge again. We were dying at about 300 a day in Korea. ... "I went back and I (saw) that bridge, but Don didn't get to see that bridge again," he said. After an 18-day voyage aboard the ship, they reached a camp outside of Tokyo, where they were processed. Fickbohm went to serve with the 26th Infantry Scout Dog

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NPR's 'What Makes It Great?' coming to NMM Nov. 21

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On Thursday, Nov. 21, area music-lovers will have the opportunity to go below the surface of a piece by Beethoven to find out "what makes it great." That's because public radio host Rob Kapilow will bring his show "What Makes It Great?" to the National Music Museum (NMM) to tape a performance with the University of South Dakota's Rawlins Trio. "(Kapilow) does everything from A to Z," said Cleveland Johnson, Ph.D., executive director of the NMM. "He'll do everything from a Beatles tune all the way up to Beethoven. "It's all about helping listeners get beneath the surface, because whether you're talking about a pop tune or whether you're talking about a great classical treasure, all of us can benefit by listening more carefully," Johnson said. "He helps everybody understand that by asking a few simple questions, you can get beyond the outer trappings of any song and discover a great deal of interest in music that we consume every day. Rob makes it very fun." The piece Kapilow will discuss and the Rawlins Trio will perform Thursday is Beethoven's Archduke Trio. "What he does is explain music," Johnson said. "He doesn't necessarily perform it. He will demonstrate some things on the piano, but the shows that he does revolve around a particular composition that he takes apart and very entertainingly deconstructs, explains and reassembles for the audience to hear." Kapilow and the Trio also will perform an abbreviated version of Thursday's show for free the following day at 12:05 p.m. at one of the NMM's Brown Bag Lunches. Thursday's event came about through a contact Johnson has with IMG Artists, a management group. "When I first came to the museum last year I was in touch with him to let him know that I was here and

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About face: US Army to retain ROTC program at USD

By Randy Dockendorf
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In a reversal of its decision, the U.S. Army will retain the ROTC program at the University of South Dakota and its affiliate at Mount Marty College. Army officials announced last month the elimination of Reserve Officers Training Corps programs at 13 schools nationwide — including USD — in spring 2015. "This decision was based on an Army FY11 (fiscal year 2011) study of program viability standards along with geography, demographics and a look at the Army's recruiting focus area/programs," according to the USD program's Facebook page. But Wednesday, the Army announced it was suspending the closure of those programs and immediately placing them on probationary status. For LTC Ross Nelson, the reversal came as a welcome surprise. Nelson serves as a USD military science instructor and works with the ROTC programs at both USD and MMC. "It's business as usual," he said. "I was told (Wednesday) night that I can start recruiting again and get as many cadets as I can." Nelson clarified the term "probationary" when it comes to the USD program. "We're not a bad program, but we didn't meet the Army's viable (definition) of 15 commissions a year," he said. "If I could commission 15 lieutenants a year, then that would relieve our pressure."



Cadets involved in the ROTC program at the University of South Dakota, Mount Marty College, and other area schools take part in training exercises on the USD campus in this 2009 file photo.

(Photo by David Lias)

USD has come within one student, which makes the goal very attainable, Nelson said. While he welcomes the Army's reversal of its decision, Nelson noted the developments of the past month have made recruiting more difficult. "We didn't get a recruitment officer hired for this semester (because of the uncertainty)," he

explained. "And it's a critical time recruiting for next year's freshman class and anybody transferring. For our colleges, it's a prime time for recruiting." The USD effort will need to double down on its recruiting efforts and get out the word that the

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