

## Perot visits Pueblo



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/BRYAN KELSEN

**Texas businessman and former independent presidential candidate Ross Perot, greets a group of high school students Friday at the Pueblo Convention Center. Perot was in Pueblo to attend the premiere of a film - 'Beyond the Medal of Honor' - he has financed for distribution to each of the nation's 17,000 high schools.**

### **Perot, Puebloans laud Convention Center premier film about city's heroes**

**By PETER ROPER**  
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

It was an evening of standing ovations as an audience of nearly 900 honored Pueblo's four Medal of Honor recipients Friday night at the premier showing of a new video documentary that tells their story.

H. Ross Perot, the Texas millionaire and Navy veteran, declared the film "perfect" at a press conference before the premier at the Pueblo Convention Center. The Perot Foundation is paying to have a copy of "Beyond the Medal of Honor" distributed to every high school in the nation.

"I didn't need a committee to decide whether I wanted to sign onto this thing once I knew what it was about," Perot said in his distinctive twang. "When I saw the final product I said, 'Don't change a thing. It's perfect.' "

The premier came at the first meeting of the new Family and Friends of the Medal of Honor organization and Pueblo's two surviving Medal recipients - Raymond "Jerry" Murphy and Drew Dix - both spoke about growing up in Pueblo and the city's affection for them.

"As a 13-year-old boy delivering papers on Jerry Murphy Road, it meant a lot to me to have someone like Jerry Murphy as my hero," Dix told the audience, which filled the main banquet room.

Pueblo's other two Medal recipients, William Crawford and Carl Sitter, died in 2000, but they were very much alive in the two-hour film the audience watched. Produced by Capture It Productions of Pueblo, the film skillfully wove together interviews with all four men, their friends and comrades, along with historic combat film footage of their campaigns and wars.

The film will be shown locally on KTSC-Channel 8 at 7 p.m. Wednesday and on PBS stations nationally in November.

Crawford received his Medal for heroism as an Army scout in Italy during World War II. He single-handedly destroyed three German machine gun positions before being captured.

Sitter received his Medal for leading his Marine company in an all-night battle against repeated North Korean attacks in November 1950. Despite being wounded, he kept his men supplied with ammunition, medical treatment and encouragement through the night.

Murphy was also a Marine in Korea and received his Medal for taking command of an attack on a fortified Chinese hill position in February 1953. When all other officers were killed or wounded, Murphy took charge and fought off several counterattacks. Also wounded, he made repeated trips up the hill under fire to recover all the Marine dead and wounded before getting all of his dead and wounded off the hillside.

Dix was a Green Beret in Vietnam in January 1968 when a North Vietnamese attack captured a nearby town of Chao Doc. Knowing there were American civilians in the town, including a nurse, Dix led a small team back into the city, killing numerous enemy and rescuing the civilians. The following day, he led a counterattack that recaptured the town.

Dix recalled for the audience how he was a nervous young Army sergeant when he came back to Pueblo in 1969 for a parade in his honor. "I must have looked nervous, too, because Bill Crawford leaned over to me and said, 'Drew, this is your hometown and these are your friends,' " he said. "And he was right."

In his press conference, Perot noted that Pueblo has erected four bronze statues to its Medal winners outside the convention center.

"You don't know the impact those will have on young people," Perot said. "They will look at those bronze statues and say to themselves, 'I want to be like those men.' "

Perot attended the premier Friday because his philanthropy paid for the film and will pay to distribute it to 17,000 high schools across the nation. Asked how much he was spending, Perot grinned and quickly shot back, "Whatever it takes."

Perot has been a supporter of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society for years and he spoke with his characteristic fervor Friday in talking about the men who have received the Medal over the years.

"It's important that all the young people understand the sacrifices that have been made to keep this country free," he said, adding that patriotism is still strong in today's servicemen and women fighting in Iraq. He related how he had befriended one Army helicopter pilot who was wounded and shipped back to the United States to recover. When the pilot had healed, he called Perot to report he was heading back to Iraq.

"I told him he didn't have to hurry, but he said, 'Perot, that's where my men are,' " Perot said. "Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone, if all the big corporations in this country, showed the same concern for their people that these military men do?"

Perot predicted the film would be inspiring to the high school students who would see it.

"Did I get my money's worth? You bet I did," he said.