

Veterans

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Once inside the outer bar and relatively safe from a torpedo, half speed was ordered on the engine room telegraph to enable better control of the vessel in the narrow channel. Upon passing the lighthouse point Coast Guard lookout station, we were of course challenged by blinker light as to the ship's complete identity.

In 1942, German submarines sank more than 100 freighters in the Gulf of Mexico, and in fact part of the civilian effort of the war on the island included people who would keep watch for submarines from the rooftops of tall buildings.

Celebrating Veterans Day: One man's opinion By Dean Laux

I am a veteran of the Korean War, and I have been alive and reasonably sentient during the six "hot" wars my country has engaged in since 1941. As a writer, I have interviewed a large number of veterans, from enlisted GIs to three-star generals, and from unwilling draftees to gung-ho flyboys who couldn't wait to join the action. Some spent their service time safely behind a desk, while others were at high risk in the line of fire daily for months at a time. Some are justifiably proud of their service, some are nonchalant about it, and still others strongly dislike talking about it at all. Regardless of their personal views, on Veterans Day the nation celebrates all



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who served their country honorably in times of need.

But as Union General William Tecumseh Sherman said in 1879 – long after the end of the Civil War – "War is hell," and he was on the winning side! Why should we, generations later, remind ourselves of the hellish events that stained our nation's history and cost it so many lives? In announcing the creation of Armistice Day (which became Veterans Day), then-President Woodrow Wilson heralded the "splendid forgetfulness of mere personal concerns" shown by our doughboys. Do we now live in splendid forgetfulness of what our veterans went through in the hell that is war?

I can tell you that, down deep, every veteran who escaped death in war wonders, "Why me? Why am I alive when others who served side-by-side with me died?" Luck? Fate? God's will? Take your pick, but on Veterans Day that question bubbles inescapably to the surface in those who served and survived.

The marching bands and military parades will go on around the country on November 11, and the kids will love the hoopla. It's right to give honor and respect to those who served and to give three cheers for our country and its flag. But maybe it would be better to make November 11 voting day, and make sure that every citizen has the right and time to vote for those who would lead us ... hopefully to happier times without war.

The White Table ...

"We cover a small table with a white cloth to honor a soldier's pure heart when he answers his country's call to duty."

"We place a lemon slice and grains of salt on a plate to show a captive soldier's bitter fate and tears of families waiting for loved ones to return."

"We push an empty chair to the table for the missing soldiers who are not here."

"We lay a black napkin for the sorrow of captivity, and turn over a glass for the meal that won't be eaten."

"We place a white candle for peace and finally, a red rose in a vase tied with a red ribbon for the hope that all our missing will return someday."

"You are not forgotten so long as there is one left in whom your memory remains."

Setting The White Table on Veteran's Day is a way to honor those missing in action or still imprisoned.



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