

By Jan Rahn

Editor

Do you have a special memory of Veterans Day? Do you have a spot in your heart for a special veteran?

I have fond memories from my childhood of being patriotic—values that I absorbed from my parents. The ceremonies of Veterans Day and Memorial Day all sort of blend together in my childhood mind, though.

Last week, gorgeous, wet, first-of-the-season snow fell gently upon the flags that hung along the street in honor of our veterans. The parade was cancelled due to the inclement weather.

I like watching the elderly veterans and the young uniformed veterans march along the street advancing the colors toward the high school while fellow comrades ride on a float with the high school band playing patriotic tunes all the way.

We missed that this year....but there will be another chance. Because every year since I can remember, and assuredly every year for many upcoming generations there will be a remembrance and a dedication to those who sacrificed for our nation's freedom.

This Veterans Day has some special meaning, though. It has always been special because it reminds me of my Dad, but this year packs just a little more of a punch to it. My Dad's best friend and Army buddy from World War II who lives in Indiana has recently been diagnosed with cancer. Now....there are a lot of soldiers who have graced this soil. Generation upon generation

of veterans have served their country.

But this veteran is special.....special because he was my Dad's best buddy while being stationed in the Aleutians, and special because he remained a part of our lives for all these years. Lifelong armed forces friendships are treasures.

"Runk" grew to know several people in Perkins County during visits here since World War II, and he has maintained a close friendship with my Mom over the past 15 years since Dad died.

For years and years, Runk would bring a couple friends, his hilarious, magnetic personality and come this direction to hunt pheasants. We four small Porter girls related to him as our favorite uncle, even though there was no blood involved.

During recent years, the lifelong bachelor has grown too old to hunt, but the long trip to western Nebraska was still on his yearly agenda to visit his "family."

It makes me wonder if Runk was able to enjoy the flags, the parades, the music, the dedications held in his honor last week on Veterans Day.

I'm guessing he watched the national coverage and had a flood of memories racing through his mind from 65-plus years ago when he was a strapping young man physically able and willing to serve his country.

To some, Veterans Day last week might simply have been a vacation day. To me, it was a day to be proud, count my blessings, and honor the many generations who unselfishly deserve it. The best we can do is give back in the form of dedication with grateful hearts.

God is in control. Runk knows it. He has remarkable faith. I pray he sees another Veterans Day in this life. But if not, he will certainly be an amazing blazing soldier for Christ's kingdom in his next.

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