

THE VETERAN

“I’ll be seeing you in all the old, familiar places while my heart embraces, all day through. In a small café, a park across the bay, a children’s carousel, a chestnut tree, a wishing well....and I’ll be seeing you....”

We who went to war in WWII were sustained by music, memories, patriotism and those we left behind. For many it became a defining moment in our life and still is for most.

Veteran’s day draws its impetus from Armistice Day, the moment that seemingly would end ‘the War to end all Wars, WWI.’ As we know it was not to be. And Armistice Day became Veterans Day by the pen of President Eisenhower. We celebrate and reflect on our veterans both those who didn’t come home and the returnees. And we pray for those who continue in the cauldron of mid-east angst and conflict.

This story reminds of how most of us felt in those ominous days of WWII. We were idealistic and committed, and our pride was showing. We could be called unsophisticated, naïve, bought and sold by our Uncle Sam, but we did not look at it that way. From innocence we grew into maturity developing character, integrity and a value system- a pinch here and a smidgen there and hopefully an abundance to establish a virtuous foundation for life’s later challenges. Sure, there were cracks in the foundation, and some of us fell prone to all those temptations clutching at us. For me, it was such an emotional ride that it gave me a sense of responsibility that has never wavered. It was, perhaps, easier to go to war in those heady days and progressively more difficult for those who went to war in Korea and Vietnam. As a regular, by God, it was in myself to volunteer and serve. The essence of Gulf

War I, its brevity and management at the top and on the battlefield reminded us-if we must fight, then this is the way to go. To many the glory soon dimmed as its incompleteness, to some, and its ensuing problems has led to Gulf Two, which appears endless.

And what of today and portends? The Promise(hope and travail)and Providence(God in conflict)and the chance we are in a 'War between Civilizations' or moving towards. This conflict appears prevalent and the threat engulfs us(like the scourge of Fascism and Shintoism)-then Communism to which we almost moved too late.

We rationalize as well as seem unbelieving of Islam's mission: religion, ideology and nation that bodes no compromise.

And yet, the moments of separation are the same as the fight goes on. A loved one waits and wonders.

"I'll find you in the morning sun but when the day is through, I'll be looking at the moon but I'll be seeing you."