

No Apostrophe  
Needed

11/8/20

# From The Principal's Pen

This Wednesday, we celebrate Veterans Day. The day was first celebrated in 1919 as the first anniversary of the armistice that ended World War I. Over the years, we have added more wars to the list, more veterans to the rolls, and more blood equity into the overall cost of our freedom. The remembrance of the armistice that started on the eleventh day, of the eleventh month, at the eleventh hour of 1918, would eventually become the holiday we celebrate this week. Grammatically speaking, Veterans Day does not have an apostrophe. The holiday does not belong to any one veteran or group of veterans. It is a day to honor each and every person who ever signed a blank check and honored this country with their service.

My father's father was thirty-three when he joined in the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor. He would leave nine kids at home and cross the Atlantic for Europe. He returned a few years later with a head full of stories, a permanent limp, and a purple heart. I remember a set of braces next to his bed, a necessity due to the damage his legs took from a land mine. Some of the best years of my childhood was spent sitting next to his rocker, listening to stories from half a world away. He was incredibly proud of his service and never complained of the cost.

My mother's father dreamed of being a teacher and, at seventeen, left for college. His draft card lists his address as Box 74, Western Carolina Teacher's College, Cullowhee. He had started classes and spent the first semester preparing to be an educator. On January 9th, 1945, his eighteenth birthday, he left college and joined the Air Force. He would never continue his preparation for teaching after returning from the war. I like to think that my decision to spend my life in education would have made him proud, completing the dream that he surrendered on behalf of his country.

My father spent two tours with the First Infantry Division in Vietnam. I was blessed to be raised in a home where sacrifice and service were both honored and respected. So many of the freedoms we enjoy and, at times, take for granted were paid with an overwhelming personal cost. Our enduring freedom has been earned by those that gave their lives. It's what Abraham Lincoln called, "The last full measure of devotion." It has also been earned by both men and women who have left their families, put their dreams on hold, and returned home with permanent scars, all in the name of freedom. This Veterans Day, I encourage you to take the time to find a veteran and simply say, Thank You!

"Never was so much owed by so many to so few."- Winston Churchill