

## Veterans Day

As we approach Veterans Day, 2015, I've decided to dedicate this column to Veterans and Veterans Day. As I'm sure most of you already know, Veterans Day started after "The Great War", World War I. The Armistice was signed in the Palace of Versailles, outside the town of Versailles, France on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month – November 11, 1918. This is generally regarded as the end of "the war to end all wars". Of course, we know that was not the case. Originally known as Armistice Day, the day was reserved to honor veterans of WWI. The name was changed to Veterans Day by an act of Congress in 1954 and it became a day to honor all veterans. Today Veterans Day is celebrated in a number of ways. Today, Veterans organizations, chapters and posts honor our veterans in a number of ways including a ceremony at the Veterans Memorial Bridge, color guard activities at local cemeteries, hosting special meals, marching in parades, visiting Veterans at retirement homes honoring all of our Veterans. Many restaurants offer discounts or free meals to Veterans on Veterans Day. The Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 941 members are available to do presentations in local schools on the Vietnam War.

Remembering those who served is an important part of our respect to Veterans. Asking our veterans to record their stories and memories is equally as important. The Library of Congress created a national Veterans History Project which collects, preserves and makes accessible the personal accounts of American war Veterans so that future generations may hear directly from Veterans and better understand the realities of war. Some of the more interesting stories come from minority servicemembers during WWII. One African American soldier tells about a white chaplain who stands near the showers to see if the black soldiers really had tails. A Japanese American soldier tells about enlisting after his family has been moved from California to a camp in Wyoming. A Native American relates his experience as a Navaho Code Talker. The on-line link is <http://www.loc.gov/vets/vets-home.html>. HCSCC developed exhibits for WWII both the war and home life, provided presentations on the war, including information on the Moorhead German POW camp. The State of North Dakota had a several years long project collecting oral histories of Veterans. The Heritage Education Commission has over 75 Veterans oral histories audio recordings on-line, most of which have transcripts. They can be found at [www.heritageed.com](http://www.heritageed.com). In 2016, the Heritage Education Commission will again be recording stories. What this space for details.

From a personal perspective, my father, Adolph Bakke served in the US Army during WWI and was in France when the war ended. He served in the artillery and I still have his helmet and uniform jacket. He talked very little about the war which is very common for combat veterans. My father was active in the Newfolden American Legion for most of his life. He was part of the color guard for the 50<sup>th</sup> year celebration of the Village of Newfolden. Three of Adolph's sons served in the military; my oldest brother Bob served in the Army, my second oldest brother Pete served in the Army while I served in the Air Force. My military experience was a great learning experience because I was lucky enough to be selected for language school and attended the University of Indiana's Intensive Russian program, then completed Intelligence Analyst school at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas followed by two years in northern Japan.

My specialty was listening to, translating, analyzing and reporting on Russian Air Defense Command activities.