

**Veterans Day**  
*by Harry Zirkelbach 11-09-2009*

**The majority will celebrate this Veterans Day 2009 by doing little,  
for the day is a National Holiday.  
Governments and businesses are closed.  
A welcome midweek one day vacation.**

**The Veterans Administration is a sizable government body caring for the well being  
of designated Veterans,  
for on benefits., Congress redefines Veteran with each benefit added. One constant,  
all must have served honorably, for some designated time.**

**Then too, in the 50 States, the VA operates and cares for cemeteries available for  
burial of the same honorable discharged Veteran. In practice, the Veterans  
Administration provides for these honorably discharged military personnel, forever.**

**On Dec 9, 1941, President Roosevelt appearing before Congress, asked for a  
Declaration of War against Japan for their attack on the United States the previous  
day at Pearl Harbor. In a short time the 132,164,569 of the 1940 Census were all  
involved in that struggle. Production of nonessentials ended, rationing began, the  
Draft intensified. In the three years to come, 14 million were inducted into the  
military. You knew that.**

**Almost every family with a male, age 18 to 45, became eligible to display a flag in  
their window, showing that a family member was serving in the War.  
No war is popular, This war was supported as none earlier, or since.**

**In the era before instant communications, notification of death or missing was  
delivered to the family by Western Union. When the Western Union man came down  
the street in my home town, Mother's prayed that he not stop at her door.**

**The flag in the window would be changed from Blue Star to Gold,  
but not without that ocean of tears.**

**On a sunny morning 16 April 1946, the Pacific fighting over 6 months, one of the  
staff of the American Ordnance Office for Army First Corps, Japan, called out to  
the Navy personnel who shared the spaces , 'We have been advised that an Ensign  
Bob Jager was killed yesterday in a explosion at Toyohashi Airfield, near Osaka.'**

**Blunt, final. I heard. Bob Jager was a friend, 2 years younger.  
We had graduated from the same Navy Mine Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Mine  
Disposal and Diving schools. His group, 4 months after ours.**

**On leaving Japan in Nov. 1946, three of us visited the American Military Cemetery  
in Tokyo to take photos of the cemetery and the site where Bob had been buried. We  
intended to report this information to Bob's parents in Great Falls, Montana, and  
we did. Bob, their only son.**

**Few military deaths occurred in Japan during the 16 months since hostilities ended.  
Yet, here slept an uncountable horde, stretching in all directions, no building or tree  
in sight. We were to learn that the military had collected remains of the deceased  
from all over the Western Pacific, were awaiting to return these remains to the  
States. No U.S. Military are buried in Japan today.**

**This Great War is over. The gold stars for these Veterans may have been removed  
from window fronting family homes,  
but never from the the hearts and minds of those inside.**

**Those who served have differing remembrances of those days.  
Fort Logan honors many of my friends.  
I try to visit each when another friend dies, thank them.**

**On these Veterans Ds I will raise American and Colorado Flags  
after dawn, remember the Bob Jagers  
whose service is that constant example  
..... no more bitching.**



**Harry Zirkelbach**  
**November 9, 2009**

