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# Veterans: A quieter salute to service

In the last few editions of the Coeur d'Alene Press, several articles and pictures have been published praising America's military veterans and extolling Veterans Day. I am one of many who have been so-lauded. Part of my military career was 33 months on the waters and shores of South Vietnam, for which I received the Navy Commendation Medal.

I boast of my heroic feats to lay to rest that I speak as an outsider of war. But I state my experiences also to lay the background for some thoughts from a war veteran; thoughts that run counter to today's mainstream thinking.

On my first day of returning from Vietnam (flying-in, dressed in uniform), I was physically assaulted because I was wearing that uniform. I had to protect myself in a fist-fight with an anti-war activist in what I had naively thought to be my country of sanctuary. I am also boastful enough to state that I prevailed. Not because of my uniform, but because my taunter



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was almost dead-drunk.

Cut to the chase many decades later: We citizens defer to our current warriors as the flight attendant instructs us to stay in our seats

to allow these men and women to depart the plane. We clap as we do so, and I join the applause.

Every day, we veterans are praised in various media, almost without interruption, and rarely with any contradictions. Newscasts, editorials, game shows, Podcasts, etc. — all proclaim us to be virtuous, without fault.

Given this background, permit a few observations about veterans and about Veterans Day.

First, this veteran gives thanks to the United States for granting me the privilege of serving in its military. Second, this service was voluntary, as has been the case for most of us veterans of the past

several decades. Third, it is not just Veterans Day, but it is the almost incessant harping in America's media about our nobility. Day after day, it's veterans-this-or-veterans-that. Some people have garnered their occupations on the backs of veterans by proclaiming the rights of veterans.

I recognize my writing this article will engender considerable disagreement (even hostility) from those who disagree with my views.

Fine. I only speak for one veteran; one who wishes the halftime of a football game would not show five U.S. military planes streaking overhead while a rendition of a puppet pig sings "God Bless America."

We veterans signed up to serve people's America; not to serve corporate America. We need no flyovers. We did our own flyovers for ourselves when we volunteered to serve. That was our duty. It should be considered the duty of every American.

A few silent words of quiet patriotism would speak so many words for misplaced bravado.