

MEMORIAL DAY IS THANKSGIVING

Wartime military service means that once you enter a war zone you can look forward to two possible results: (1) you will become a veteran, or (2) you will become a casualty. If you enter the armed forces at 17 or 18 or 19, the chances are that only if you become a veteran will you ever marry and raise a family. Once a year we observe a day called Memorial Day – this year it will be May 25th -- to acknowledge the sacrifice of those who never became veterans. This veteran, for one, would like to acknowledge the opportunity to be one. And not to be a casualty.

Harry Truman saved my life. In 1945 I was in the Aleutian Islands where my ship, a small Navy minesweeper, had been patrolling and sweeping for three years. We were scheduled to get outfitted for the invasion of Paramashiru. But of course that never took place. The atom bomb dropped, and we were sent back to the States instead. I was told that the average life of one of those YMS's was 80 mines. Sooner or later you were bound to hit one. And in a direct hit virtually all hands were lost. By the end of the War, my ship had cut 78. So, like many others, I always figured the atom bomb saved my life.

Thank you, Mr. Truman.