

A TRIBUTE TO THE VETERAN

As an avid reader of Military History, I've always been fascinated by General Douglas Mac Arthur. He was the Supreme Commander, South West Pacific Area in World War II, took the surrender from the Emperor of Japan, and was instrumental in formulating their Constitution and transferring their nation from monarchy to democracy. He was also known for stopping the communists at 38th parallel and for the famous and audacious Inchon Landing in Korea.

When his political masters felt uncomfortable with his charismatic leadership, he was unceremoniously sidelined. During his last official appearance in a farewell address to the U.S. Congress, he said, "old soldiers never die; they just fade away." He also spoke at length about "Duty, Honor, Country". Today, in my twilight zone, I come across many veterans in the civvy street. We have nearly 4,100 veterans in the erstwhile D.K. District. Through this medium I would like to urge you, Veterans, to rekindle the embers of pride and dignity in your bellies. The nation might have forgotten us, but let us have that "never say die" attitude and walk tall with pride.

Who is a veteran?

A "Veteran" - whether on active duty, discharged, retired, or reserve - is someone who at one point in his life wrote a blank cheque made payable to "The Democratic Nation of India" for an amount of "Up to and including his life".

My dear ex comrades in arms, that is "Duty, Honor, Country". There are way too many people in this country today who no longer understand these qualities. Remember the following unbelievable facts that happened because of you :

- * Despite resistance from world powers, you created a nation... Bangladesh.
- * In a single day, you took the surrender of 95000 Pakistani Army, Air Force, Navy, and Para Military Forces. An event unsurpassed in military history.
- * With one hand tied behind your back, you fought the terrorists, anti-national elements and insurgents for the past six decades to uphold our sovereignty.
- * You went to Sri Lanka as part of IPKF with no clear-cut terms of reference and did not complain.
- * You went to the highest battlefield in the world and fought the enemy, glaciers, and hostile weather without a whimper.
- * You were quick to rescue a child stuck in a borewell because your civilian brethren were helpless..
- * You rushed to the call of distress by your people due to flood and earthquake. You even made a rope bridge and slept over it so that they could walk over you to safety.
- * You came to the rescue of the nation to conduct world-class games when your counterparts showed low moral turpitude and incompetency.
- * You screamed "Yeh Dil Mange More" and conveyed everything to the nation, bringing a lump in the throat.

Therefore, my brethren, "Be strong, but not rude; Be kind, but not weak; Be bold, but not a bully, Be humble, but not timid; Be proud, but not arrogant. "Mission Accomplished" - Let us walk together as one with pride and elan.



Brig I.N. Rai

Jai Hind !