

South Bend Tribune

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OUR OPINION

We salute our military veterans

There is no apostrophe in Veterans Day. Perhaps there is a reason for that.

Using the possessive form would connote that the holiday is solely for veterans. But clearly it is not.

You don't have to be a veteran to be moved when veterans like Bill Wenger recount their experiences. Wenger was 17 and a member of the USS Hull crew when the bombs began to fall on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. A Niles resident, he was one of those who kept that moment in history alive until his death last month at 86. He remembered seeing the bombs coming out of the Japanese planes; he remembered jumping over the side of his boat to escape machine-gun strafing. He wasn't scared, he said: "There wasn't time to be scared."

You don't have to have served to feel the pride when veterans stand and salute. You don't have to have served to understand what a different world this would be if so many Americans hadn't sacrificed and risked their lives to defend and extend freedom.

You also don't have to be a veteran to share retired Judge Robert L. Miller's dream of making special havens in this community for homeless veterans. Miller, who is also a U.S. Naval Reserve lieutenant commander, will soon turn 90. He started Miller's Vets last year, an organization that puts homeless vets back

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in military uniforms to perform at Veterans Day ceremonies. He's also in the process of creating a homeless veterans center in conjunction with the Center for the Homeless. The plan is for it to open next year, on 11/11/11. Judge Miller's efforts deserve the support of everyone in this community, both those who served and those who didn't.

This is a holiday without an apostrophe because it is a day that should mean something to all of us.

We join with all those in our community to salute those who have served and remember them with thanks.