

StarTribune

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2009

LETTER OF THE DAY

Honor and thanks to Uncle Roger and all who served U.S.

On this Veterans Day, my thoughts turn to my Uncle Roger, who is a Vietnam veteran. He now spends much of his time providing military rites at the funerals of veterans and organizing events honoring veterans that emphasize the importance of good citizenship.

After graduating from college, Roger joined the Air Force in 1954 and spent 20 years in military service. In Vietnam, Roger flew the F-4 Phantom on bombing missions. He also directed bombing missions with an Army combat unit that suffered more than 80 percent casualties.

Roger is gentle man, and I have never heard him raise his voice. He is a fighter pilot who conveys a calm sense of duty. After the war, Roger was a mailman until his retirement.

This past week, my daughter interviewed Roger for one of her high school classes. When asked what was the lasting impact of the war on him, Roger replied that he was left with a strong feeling of what a great country we have. On the other hand, he feels that one of the lasting impacts of the Vietnam War on our country is our loss of idealism and the rise of narrow self-interest.

The values of my Uncle Roger – citizenship combined with duty, idealism coupled with service – transcend time, place, and politics. Whatever the future may hold for my daughter, I hope that she learns the importance of these values.

CHRIS KNOPE, North Oaks