

KINS COMMUNITY COMMENT (442-5744)

This is Ron Pierre for Community Comment.

Seventy years ago the people of this country were united in something that touched every family in the land. From the grocery store to the church, regular conversations centered on any news from the front. It had been this way since Pearl Harbor. By December 1944, Allied forces had landed in Normandy and had fought across France. The politicians and some military leaders even stated that the war would be over by Christmas. Expectations were high. Reality was different. In a final attempt to stop the Allies, the Germans mounted a Winter offensive of monumental proportion. In the Low Countries, Belgium and Luxemburg in the Ardennes near the City of Bastogne, desperate men fought and died in terrifically large numbers.

Ask people about the Battle of the Bulge and most Americans, wouldn't know any of the significant facts of what happened in December 1944. News media, education systems, and politicians seem to talk endlessly about the misgivings of American society, and not about the historic sacrifices that sustained us as a country. Most people are quick to point out an historic event only if the event supports a reason to protest some cause de-jour. The rest of the time, American historical happenings can be rewritten out of existence to meet what is politically correct or what passes for a new educational teaching model.

My wife and I are watching a Canadian film series called: World War II: The Last Heroes-- This series chronicles the final years of the Allied Campaign in World War II and reveals what it was really like from the trenches of Omaha Beach to the snows of the Ardennes. I recently finished reading Bill O-Reilly's book: Killing Patton, and the combination of the film series and the book have made me focus on those final months of the war.

I find it hard to equate the significance of anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, and excusing college students from taking final exams because they might be traumatized by a court decision. Yet negativity about our country seems to be the only media focus these days. Aside from some brief comments from a few veterans about safe guarding America, we don't hear much about items like the Battle of the Bulge.

As we begin this holiday season I am reflecting back to December 1944. The series we are watching is "first-hand" testimony from the now aging survivors of the last months of World War II.

At the time, Christmas 1944 was highlighted for the survivors of the Battle of the Bulge, by a dramatic rescue by the U.S. Third Army, commanded by General George Patton. The Battle of the Bulge was last major German offensive in the European theater.

The testimonies and written accounts I have listened to and read, address the treacherous circumstances of this battle. Prisoners were tortured or killed and all the horrific aspects of war were manifested in every way imaginable. Desperate circumstances required desperate decisions. It is easy to look back and to say something is not a core American moral value, yet when decisions needed to be made by young men in battle, the decisions were instantaneous, there wasn't a focus group providing the answer. Soldiers react to survive.

I carry that survival lesson from the Battle in the snows of December 1944.

This is Ron Pierre for Community Comment.