

Lest We Forget

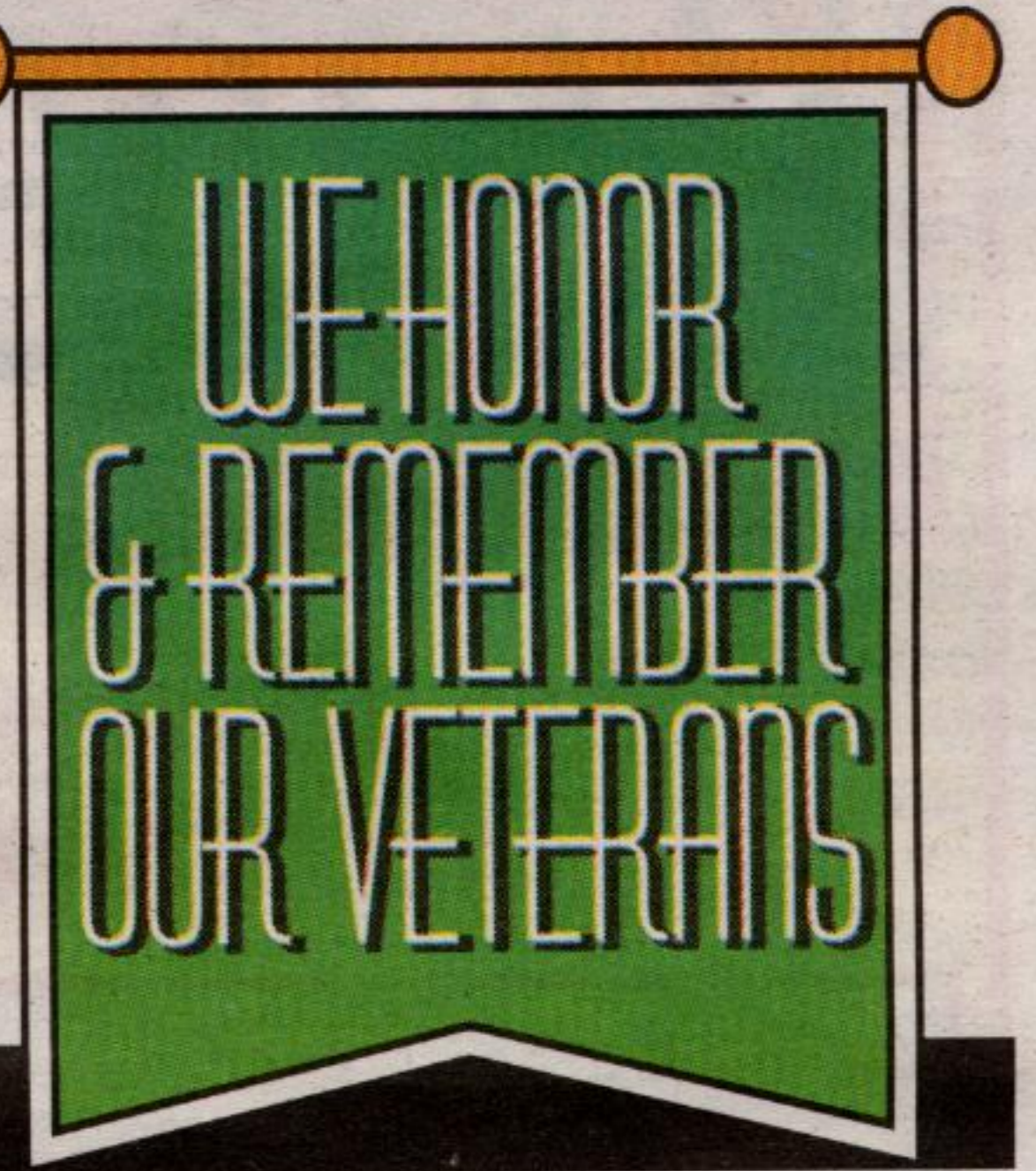


Lest We Forget

REMEMBRANCE DAY



NOVEMBER 11



12 pages

Friday, November 8, 2002



Peter van Daalen (right) lays a Dutch flag at the grave of his father, William George Nurse (above), at Greenwood Cemetery. Van Daalen discovered his father's whereabouts 55 years after he was born. Van Daalen is a liberation child, the child of a Dutch mother and Canadian soldier who landed in Holland to liberate her town.

Photo by Ted Brown

War's other casualties: A liberation child's story

When one thinks of war, most often it's the death and destruction that comes to mind.

All who are affected, be they veterans with both physical and psychological scars, or family members who waited at home—they are all casualties.

But there has emerged one faction of casualties that few think about, outside of their own ranks.

They are the children who are born as a result of war.

Peter van Daalen of Castricum, in the Netherlands is one of those casualties.

Born in Holland in 1946, he knew he was always 'different' from his four younger brothers, and more significantly, he didn't get along well with his 'father'.

It all came into perspective when he learned, during an outburst of anger, that he was actually a liberation child, a child fathered by a soldier who had come to Holland to liberate his country

from German occupation.

"When I was a teenager, I had many fights with my mom and dad," said van Daalen in an interview while visiting Georgetown last August, "My dad would say things like 'I'm not responsible for you,' and I'd notice how my younger brothers seemed to get better treatment.

"Things like birthdays and Christmas—they got better gifts, and more from Santa Claus," he continued. "I'd ask 'Why?' but got no answers. I

didn't even look like any of them."

During an argument with his parents when he was 17, his father blurted out the words that cut like a knife—"You're not one of us, you're not my son. You're the son of some Canadian soldier."

After a week had passed, and the shock had subsided, Peter finally confronted his mother as to the true identity of his biological father.

"She told me he was just a soldier,"

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HONOURING OUR WAR VETERANS



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