



until after breakfast. There will be war movies on TV and parades down Main Street and picnics in the park. There will be wreathes laid and speeches made. But nothing that gets said or done will change the endless madness of the machinery of war.

I attended a memorial the other day at the Alma mater, a plaque dedication for a friend who was killed in Viet Nam over 45 years ago. It's been a long time coming for recognition. Lance Corporal Daniel Lynch was killed in 1969 when he was 20 years old. Here I am over 60, having lived three lifetimes compared to Danny. But longevity is not necessarily the measure of a life. It's more about how you live the years you're given. And Danny lived brilliantly.

For whatever reason, Danny's name was not on the original plaque and the Fenton Class of 1968 spearheaded by Bill Schey rectified the omission. The ceremony began when Alex Rodriquez played a somber rendition of Amazing Grace on the bagpipes and concluded with Rich Tomasek's pure and mournful Trumpet blowing Taps, while classmate Suzi Reichl read the names of those who perished. The list was inconceivably too long and emotionally overwhelming.

In between, a few friends reminisced about Danny skipping stones across Salt Creek, having chocolate shakes at the Malt Shop uptown, ordering fries at the diner by the tracks, fishing at Franzen's slough, hunting at Rosenwinkle's grove and Danny driving the original and authentic 1960's rock and roll Midwest American Graffiti push-button dream. Of course, to remember is like a dream, surreal and tragic.

Danny was an avid outdoorsman, with a fondness for weaponry, especially knives and rifles. "That's not a knife, this is a knife," was coined by Danny long before Crocodile Dundee ever considered acting as a career. Danny called it a "miniature machete" and would wave it gallantly above his head like Braveheart going into battle.

When I was eleven, I bought a Stevens Savage .22 caliber pump action rifle from Danny; actually I traded a metal tackle box for the rare rifle. Of course this predates the FOID card fiasco and other government folly. I realize there's plenty of folks abhorred by the idea that kids and guns might mix, but I agree with the Was Not Was lyric "every child should have a weapon and a case of dynamite."

After the ceremony, I met Jim Letnicky, lifelong friend and

neighbor and we talked about Danny. "Remember the Halloween fiasco?" asked Jim. Ah, let's not bring that up or my whole argument of kids and guns mixing falls apart. Danny was wild though, never mean spirited, just spirited. One of those rare individuals who blaze into the night, down the neon avenue, through a dark alley, into the dense jungle like nothing in the world can harm them.

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Memorial Day

By Kenn Hartmann

It's shaping up to be one of those days. Around 2 this morning sport bikes were wailing out on the Ike, I mean wailing like Chuck Barry's legendary man wailing some giant mythical celestial sax, where the Ike bends into a straightaway to 355, this posse of jix'ers, Ninjas and Boo'sas blew doors off anything standing still. I stare at a dark ceiling, like staring into Heaven, and I smile that smile, knowing what those riders are feeling as they twist the grip and let it rip. At dawn I hear a few Harley's out on the Kingery Highway, rolling like thunder to some early bird rendezvous. I watch the shadows fall and crawl down the plaster wall, maybe jealous that I'm not out there with them, but I've been riding all week, working all week and feeling that weary workman's blues. I just want to stare off into nothingness until some glimmer of inspiration entices me to face the day.

The bedroom windows are open, and the sparrows and robins are making a racket, the mourning dove is almost lost in the cacophony. Jets landing and taking off at O'Hare shake the house and rattle the panes. Somebody is cutting the grass; you think they'd at least wait



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