

Sunday Morning at the Butcher Shop

By Lawrence M. Abrams

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Once at Kohn's, I ordered meat from the same butcher I have known for over 25 years. An old man, standing in line behind me, asked about my hat and if I was in Vietnam. He was very old, probably in his mid-80s and had a slight stoop to his stance. He wore a white shirt with a yellow stain around the collar and an old dark suit coat with no tie.

He said that he too was a Veteran and was in the Normandy invasion, battle field commission. He invited me for a cup of coffee. I agreed. The butcher told me to go ahead and sit down, and he would hold the meat for me in the back room. I'd never met this gentleman before, although I have been going to this same butcher shop for years. We talked and swapped stories. His were much more interesting than mine. He shed tears from time to time. It was infectious. My eyes began to water. You see he lost many friends in that battle and over the years since, lost his wife and son. Essentially, I guess, he is alone.

I invited him, as my guest, to join us this Friday evening for the Texas Hold 'em tournament, which coincidentally is four days before Veterans Day, November 11. I explained that we are raising money to help veterans and their families. His eyes once again became red and moist. He thanked me, but not for the invitation.

After, what seemed a short time, but was almost 45 minutes later, we shook hands, ready to part company when I said, "By the way, I don't even know your name! I am Lawrence Abrams, and yours?"

He shook my hand with a firm grip and replied, "Mr. Abrams, my name is unimportant. But what you and your friends are doing next week to help the Veterans is important. Tell your friends and associates about me. Tell them about our conversation this morning. Tell them my story and yours. And thank them for helping the Veterans."

He never returned to the counter. He never purchased anything from the butcher. He just walked away, slowly, stooped over, and left the butcher shop.

I walked over to the counter to get my meat. I asked the butcher who he was. The butcher replied with his usual friendly smile, "I've never met him before. I've never seen him before."

What a Sunday morning!