

A Rainbow Girl's Voice

Who taught you patriotism? My parents always instilled a respect for the flag, hand over my heart, not letting it touch the ground and the pledge of allegiance. My choir teacher, Miss Perko, insisted that every student learn the words to the Star-Spangled Banner – declaring that most Americans did not. When I joined Rainbow I became a part of an already long standing tradition with the VFW, placing flowers on their cemetery monument in honor of those young men who paid the ultimate price for our freedom. It wasn't an aha moment but rather mentors instilling pride to be an American.



Every Memorial Day for the last 73 years, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Sumner Rainbow Girls remember each young man, as their name is called, with the placing of a Red, White, or Blue carnation in their memory.

One of the VFW members, Claire Morgan, touch me in a way I cannot explain. He stood with pride as his son's name was called. Each year I would look for him and make a silent promise that I would always remember his son, even when he could not.

Rainier K. Morgan was born in Germany on September 1, 1944. His father was killed in WWII. Later Rainier's mother Ema met a serviceman, Claire Morgan while he was stationed in Germany. They married and shortly after their marriage, Rainier was adopted by Claire and was given the last name of Morgan. In 1949, his parents were shipped stateside and he had to adapt to American schools and living away from his grandparents. Rainier and his parents settled in Sumner, Washington.

Rainier was a great big brother by always being there for his sister, Barbara and brother, Roy. He taught them how to bat a ball, play marbles, climb trees and all those things big brothers do.

Army Sergeant, Rainier K Morgan, was killed while on patrol in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam, at the age of 23.

Rainier's father, Claire, died in 2013. Though I never shared my silent promise, I will not forget Rainier and the other young men who paid the ultimate price serving our country.

Memorial Day we reverently and gratefully honor the patriotism and sacrifices of those who died serving our country.

On May 30, 1868, at the inauguration of the very first Decoration Day at Arlington National Cemetery, then congressman James Garfield said...

"We do not know one promise these men made, one pledge they gave, one word they spoke. But we do know they summed up and perfected, by one supreme act, the highest virtues of men and citizens. For love of country they accepted death, and thus resolved all doubts, and made immortal their patriotism and their virtue."

The coronavirus has forced the cancellation of virtually all of the ceremonies and events that generally mark the observance of Memorial Day, but it has not diminished, and it will not diminish, our indebtedness to those who, in life, gave everything for their country and our freedom, and who, in death, are worthy of our greatest respect.

The observation of Memorial Day this year may be less visible, a bit more subdued, constrained by this terrible virus that has already cost us so much. But our appreciation will not be neglected, nor will the honor and esteem that this day memorializes. Garfield's sentiments in 1868 are surely ours today: *"Here let them rest, asleep on the Nation's heart, entombed in the Nation's love."*

