

To the Editor/Member of the Assembly

Day dies in the west; heaven touches earth with rest. The cornet sounds taps; the flags are folded and put away. Flowers on thousands of graves shiver in the cool darkness of evening. Memorial Day 2008 will be history when you read this.

What do we remember on Memorial Day? Families separated by the death of one held dear. If in war, which one?

My parents said my birth father died in WW II and I was relinquished because my mother couldn't make it without him. At 23 I combed through the names on a memorial wall in Luxembourg (<http://media.oaktreesys.com/abmc/video/cemeteries/lx.wmv>); at 28, on a steamy summer day, my husband and I examined the walls at the American Cemetery and Memorial near Manila. (<http://media.oaktreesys.com/abmc/video/cemeteries/ml.wmv>). No "Hampden," was inscribed at either place.

Was that name his, or a fabrication? Will his identity one day be known to me, or will he remain one of the "unknowns" to me and to future generations whose lifeblood will carry on my genetic history?

We relinquished and adopted ones carry our own Memorial Day in our hearts our whole lives if we are forbidden to know those through whom we received life. Not only are our forbears buried in a tomb of the unknown parents, but we ourselves are living tombs of the unknown daughter or son.

The flags will be raised again; the cornets will play taps. Day will die in the west, and our dreams of knowing the truth about ourselves may die at our departure.

Unless....

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Pam Hasegawa