

OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Salute to a veteran

Recently a Canyon Lake resident, and a World War II veteran, died. His name is Bob Valdepena.

Does his life, and his death, matter? Yes.

When WWII started he was a child but he wanted to join the fight for freedom. A friend of his came by one day in 1943 wearing a Navy uniform. Bob thought that looked sharp so he decided to be a sailor. Trouble was, he was only 16. So he took an ink eradicator and changed the date on his birth certificate!

He took an entry aptitude test and scored high. Because he did so well he was sent to learn radio and signal communications. It was one of the harder trade schools. The training was at the University of Idaho in Farragut. He finished in the top 10% of his class resulting in a jump promotion. He went straight from Seaman Apprentice to Petty Officer, Third Class. Because of his graduation status he was also given his choice of future assignment. He asked to be on a destroyer in the Atlantic. Instead, he was sent to an attack cargo ship in the Pacific! Needs

of the Navy came first.

He reported to the USS Algol at Portland, Oregon where it was commissioned. From there they sailed to Pearl Harbor. Later they participated in assaults at Luzon, Okinawa and the Philippines.

His next ship was the USS Terror which was a cruiser used for mine laying and the first one built for that purpose.

His third ship was the USS Triumph which was a mine sweeper. It was the smallest of his three and he liked it best because the crew could wear dungarees rather than blues!

It is sad Bob is gone — but he is now free of pain.

And he is where all sailors wish to spend eternity: with their shipmates.

**Star Carey,
Canyon Lake**