

## Building Language Skills with The Seattle Times

November 12, 2015

**Article: “Veterans Day a time to thank a brave but vanishing breed”**

**Tuesday, November 10, 2015** in the e-Edition of The Seattle Times, NWTuesday pages B1 and B7

### Pre-Reading:

Before reading the article, read the title and look at the images. What is the significance of Veterans Day? Do you know any veterans? When, where and how did they serve?

### Vocabulary:

As you read, look for the following vocabulary words that appear in today’s article. Write down what you think the words mean based on the “context,” or how the words are used in the sentence in which they appear. Next, look up the definitions in a dictionary and see how close your guess was for each word.

*veteran*

*breed*

*taps*

*salute*

*flyover*

*intercepted*

*allied*

*vessel*

*combat*

*hospice*

*contemporaries*

*vivid*

*retreating*

*self-effacing*

### Comprehension:

1. Why doesn't Don Hill want to be called a hero?
2. Why are men like Hill a vanishing breed?
3. How many U.S. men and women served in WWII?
4. How old was the average U.S. soldier when the war ended 70 years ago?
5. What do some veterans confide in chaplain Pam Sipos about as they near the end of their lives?
6. What type of work did Pat Flaherty do during the war?
7. What work did Flaherty do after being an army nurse?
8. Who does Flaherty keep in touch with now?
9. Where does much of Hill's joy come from?
10. How does Hill choose to think of the passing of his brothers in the service?

### Post-Reading:

Read the following passage from the article and discuss the following questions in a group:

**"Men like Hill are a vanishing breed. Not just because he is self-effacing and minimizes his role in World War II. But because he was in it at all. Nationwide, America's World War II veterans are slipping away at the rate of one every three minutes. According to the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, of the 16 million U.S. men and women who served during World War II, more than 5 million were still alive in 2000. But the number dropped below 1 million this year and continues to fall by more than 400 a day."**

By what rate is the WWII veteran population decreasing? How many WWII veterans do you think were alive in 2010? How many do you think will still be alive in 2020? Review other sections of the article. Where can you attend Veterans Day events in the Seattle area?

### Building Language Skills:

Read the following passage, and complete the activity below:

**"Don't call me a hero, insists Don Hill, 92. It's true that the German radio signals he and his fellow radio men intercepted before and after the D-Day invasion played at least a small role in helping Allied forces retake much of Western Europe. It's also true that his landing craft drew enemy fire as it approached the French coast, including a blast that lifted one end of the vessel out of the water. But Hill, a resident of Providence Mount St. Vincent in West Seattle, notes that he didn't see close combat, and by the time he landed at Utah Beach in the third wave of the D-Day assault, "Things had cooled down some." "We had a job to do and I think we were good at it," he said. "But we weren't on the front line."**

Based on the above information, do you think Hill is a hero? Why or why not? What is your definition of a hero? Write an essay detailing your definition and examples of heroes in your life. How has this article affected your definition of hero and your understanding of veterans? If you can't attend a Veterans Day event, how can you otherwise honor veterans?

### Comprehension Question Answers:

1. Hill notes that he didn't see close combat and wasn't on the front line.
2. Hill is a vanishing breed because he is self-effacing and minimizes his role in World War II, but also because WWII veterans are passing away at the rate of one every three seconds.
3. 16 million men and women served in WWII.
4. The average U.S. soldier was 25 years old.
5. Some veterans confide in Sipos about the horrors they have never described to their families.
6. Flaherty was part of the "cadet corps," nursing students who were pressed into caring for the patients at St. Mary's Hospital when the regular nurses were sent to treat soldiers abroad.
7. Flaherty had a 22 year career as a nurse at Swedish Medical Center.
8. Flaherty stayed in touch with some friends over the years but most of them are gone now. She gets one letter from a colleague of those long-ago days.
9. Much of Hill's joy comes from his family including sons, a daughter, grandchildren and great grandsons.
10. Hill chooses not to think of it as sad. He says it's part of life and something to accept.