

Veteran's Day: Stories of Service

Totem Report November 8, 2017

By Dann Mead Smith

President Mark kicked off the Veteran's Day program with, "today we are going to have a history lesson by people who have lived this history and deserve our thanks." He introduced Lori Matsukawa from KING TV and our member, retired General **Jimmy Collins**. Jimmy asked all the veterans from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard in the audience to stand and be recognized.



He turned it over to Lori for a discussion on Japanese Americans during World War II with Dale Kaku of the Nisei Veterans Committee (NVC). Dale discussed his path to serving in the military and also the thousands of Japanese Americans who served during World War II in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, including those that were incarcerated in internment camps on the West Coast. Dale said many of the 14,000 in the 442nd served to "prove their loyalty by fighting for your country." The 442nd was one of the most decorated units and served in North Africa and Italy, as well as helping crack the Japanese war code and then helping rebuild Japan after the war.

Jimmy Collins thanked Dale for "sharing that piece of history." He received a standing ovation at the end of the short program. Jimmy then asked all the Gold Star family members (those who lost a family member whether as a spouse, parent, sibling etc. in the line of duty) to stand and be recognized.

The main program featured comments from a panel of our club members that have served in the military.

Jerry Costacos: joined the Navy right after Pearl Harbor at the age of 17; "everyone his age knew they would join the military." He was deployed in the Philippines and "was scared, it was not fun," he candidly recalled.

Karl Ege: joined the Marines in 1962 and served in Vietnam and then as a college recruiter. Most of his family served in the military and he saw serving as "part of his duty and obligation as a citizen."

Skip Rowland: "there is a difference between being a citizen and an American; and I wanted to be an American, so you needed to serve to be an American." He joined the service in 1967 and served for 12 years, "the sweetest years of his life."



Diankha Linear: her father and grandfather served but there was no expectation she would before she joined in 1991 to help pay for college. She served for 16 years, which were the best years of her life where she “learned about being an American.”



Lori Matsukawa then asked what was the main lesson they learned from the military that applies to life today?

Linear: How deeply connected (she is) to this country when the flag goes up.

Rowland: How powerful the USA is and how proud he was to be a part of it.

Costacos: Respect for elders and other human beings from different backgrounds.

Ege: The value of teamwork and what true leadership is; you demonstrate it, you earn it.

President Mark closed with these words that reflected what everyone in the audience was feeling at the end of this program:

“I am so honored that we got to learn more about the veterans in our club today and also about the Nisei Veterans. We civilians will never truly know what you experienced... there’s just no way. We will never know how hard it was to do what you did. We will never know what it’s like to deal with the aftermath of combat and service. But that said, I know that I speak for all of us when I simply say ‘thank you’.

Thank you for wanting to serve, for risking your life, safety and well-being to ensure the freedoms we all enjoy. Without you, there is no America. There is no freedom. And there truly is no way to put a price on what you’ve done for us. But know this: we will carry in our hearts the gift that you’ve given us through your service. When you think about it, military service is the most profound act there is of “Service Above Self,” our motto as Rotarians. Thank you.”

Our Veteran's Day program opened with **Rev. Jeff Gill** leading us in an Election Day and Veteran's Day themed prayer. **Lou Lundquist** with **Marli Iverson** on the piano led us in "God Bless America" with a moving spoken word intro version by Lou. We had several visitors from around the region and the world in attendance, including the new honorary consul of Tanzania and three guests from Mexican universities.

President Mark recognized our member **Lillian Sherman** who is being honored this week by *The Puget Sound Business Journal* as one of their 2017 Women of Influence.



As follow-up to the RCOS board's endorsement at its meeting on October 26, 2017, and in accordance with the nominating process outlined in the Rotary International Bylaws Section 14.020.4, Club President Mark Wright nominated the immediate past club president **Cathy Gibson** for the position of Governor for District 5030 for the Rotary year 2020-2021. Past Club President **Sten Crissey** seconded the motion. All club members then voted in support of the nomination; there were no "no" votes. Club Secretary **Virginia McKenzie** will certify today's vote and Cathy's nomination will move forward for consideration. The appointment of the new district governor will be announced in early December. President Mark mentioned that the last time someone from our club served in this role was in the 1960s.

During the monthly membership anniversaries recognition, President Mark recognized **Don Kraft** who is celebrating his 69th year as a Rotarian!

As part of the Rotary Foundation Flash, **Rob LoBosco** highlighted **Peace Trees Vietnam** which has received support from the Foundation for their work to remove land mines and other explosives. One of the main projects has been building healthy gardens so over 200 women don't have to walk through mine-infested fields to get produce and so they can feed their families and earn an income. Rob said this is "one example of how your Rotary Foundation money is being used."



Lisa Mayfield then announced that **Rotary First Harvest** received \$15,000 from **BECU's People Helping People Award!** She encouraged us to spread the word about the impact that our Rotary First Harvest is having in our community.

[Please share her video](#) that explains the impactful work they do of bring fresh produce and healthy food to local food banks and encourage others to vote for them.

[You can vote here for Rotary First Harvest and help them receive an additional \\$15,000 to support their important work.](#)