

Rotary Club of Honolulu Meeting
Minutes September 13, 2022

President Lyla Berg called the September 13, 2022, zoom meeting of the Rotary Club of Honolulu to order at twelve noon. She welcomed members and visitors zooming in and turned the program over to **Kevin Hall** for the Inspiration and Pledge to the Flag. Kevin's inspiration reflected on the anniversary of September 11th and how different the feel of the country is now compared to after the disaster. Then our country with all its differences pulled together. Now our country has many sad divisions. He asked that we Rotarians, even with our differences, be respectful and caring of one another. After his leading of the Pledge of Allegiance, **Lee Labrash** led the group in the singing of "If You're Happy and You Know It." President Lyla broke the meeting into groups for ten minutes of Fellowship Time.

Lyla turned the meeting over to **Rick Tabor** for speaker introductions. The first speaker, General David Bramlett, is a retired United States Army four-star general who commanded the United States Army Forces Command upon retirement. After retirement he became interested in the history of Nisei involvement in WWII. He referred the club members to the Google site "most elite unit in WWII", which was the 442nd. His talk, "The Nisei Soldier in WWII, the 100th Battalion in the 442nd Regiment", began with the fact that Congress passed the Selective Service Act September 1940, shortly before the U.S. war involvement. It included a non-discriminatory part that led to interesting directives and reorganizations for the Nisei soldiers.

He described three exceptional leaders who led the 100th battalion, Farrant Turner, Jim Lovell, and Jack Johnson, by requirement at the time non-Nisei. Because of their exceptional abilities and the non-discrimination portion of the SS Act, Turner put three Nisei officers in charge within their battalion. The 100th battalion was so exceptional it was subsumed by the 442nd. General Bramlett used maps to trace the battles the Nisei fought and described their bravery and high casualty numbers. The battle of Cassino was so brutal reporters called it the Purple Heart Battle and named the 100th infantry "the little men of honor". When asking for volunteers in Hawaii, 10,000 Nisei showed up. Only 2,686 were needed. Senator Daniel Inouye was number 2,985 and was grateful he made the cut. The Nisei included the Buddhaheads (from Hawaii) and the Katonks (from the mainland and families in internment camps). Initially they were not a cohesive group. That changed after a visit to the Rohwer internment camp and the local boys realizing why their mainland compatriots felt as they did. The 442nd was the only regiment the Germans tracked because of their fearsomeness. They called them the "fearsome Turks". General Bramlett described the rescue and battalion cost of the 442nd breaking through the lines to rescue the lost Texan soldier unit. After the 4-day fight, 800 Nisei lost their lives to save 244 Texans.

Bramlett described the many exceptional awards the 100th battalion and the 442 Regimental Combat Team earned and compared them to the far fewer numbers received by other battalions and regiments. He cited the Japanese values that impelled the Nisei soldiers.

The meeting was turned over to Harry Nakayama who described the development history of the 442nd club and clubhouse. The soldiers had saved part of their pay for the building of the club and clubhouse, where soldiers could reminisce and do charitable projects. The 100th infantry veterans started a memorial service in 1946, which has occurred on the 4th Sunday of September since (except for Covid years). The date coincides with the date of the first Nisei soldier's WWII death. The service involves decorating Nisei war graves in the state, most of which are at Punchbowl. Rotarians are invited to help decorate the graves with flowers. Contact **Rick Tabor** to help.

President Berg thanked both speakers and gave the announcements, most of which will be found in the *Tradewind*. Next week's meeting will be at the Outrigger Canoe Club, which will be the meeting location for the near future. She closed with a quote of Mary Davis, "We can't heal the world today. But we can begin with a voice of compassion, a heart of love, and an act of kindness."

After the singing of the closing song, she adjourned the meeting at 12:57 p.m.

Nancy White, Scribe