

Rotary Club of Hilo



LAVA FLOW



November 4, 2016

Chartered: December 1, 1920

Reporter: the "Don"

It was a typical beautiful sunny day in Hilo, Hawaii, the day before the big Hilo Veterans' Day parade. As we have done for over 95 years, Hilo Rotarians gathered together for fellowship and *"Service above Self"* in the quaint Hilo Hawaiian Hotel.

Greeted with a smile, and warm handshakes by Greeters **Ian "not Brian" Kitagawa**, and **Malcolm "not Ian" Chun**. We



Hilo Rotarians happily accepted our badges and prepared to enjoy the feast prepared by the chefs of the Hilo Hawaiian Hotel.

Our "veteran" fearless 96th President



Randy "not Gary" Hart asked the illustrious **Barbara "not Jerry" Garcia** lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. So **Da Prez Hart** reminded everyone that our

Club's theme for the year is *"If you want to travel fast, travel alone, if you want to travel farther, travel together."* Also, under the leadership of Rotary International President **John Germ** our Rotary International theme is *"Rotary Serving Humanity."*

Da Prez then brought up **Malcom "not Ian" Chun** to introduce our guests. **John** and **Carolyn Daily** were visiting all the way from Jackson Hole Wyoming. Aloha! Visiting from Rotary Club of Volcano were **Peter Walburn** and **Bev Garrett**. **Sally "oh" O'Brien** brought **Mary Bicknell**. **Rand Mundo** brought **Ray** and **Alida Gandy**. **Bobby Stivers** brought **Lance Niimi**.

Da Prez thanked **Helen "not Don" Hemmes**, and **Mitchell "Morty" Dodo** for last week's lava flow. And also Mahalo to our fearless lava flow coordinator **Tammy "Sterling" Silva** and **Ed "not Portia" Hara** for the publishing. Also, we need more lava flow writers, hey you, yes you who is reading this right now, sign up today!

Announcements!

Kathleen "YWCA" McGilvray and **Nina "mommy2B" Decker** rushed the stage and



gave a plug for our upcoming **Rotary Christmas Social** to be held in December at the Wainaku Center. Stay tuned for a fun-filled evening.

Prez Randy reminded us of the Thursday evening November 10 social at Mehana Brewing Company. And also the Veterans' Parade.

Bobby Stivers and his guest **Lance**



Niimi announced the upcoming Xmas tree fundraiser put on by the Hilo Y's Men! Please consider volunteering as well as buying a tree or two.

Gail "furukaki" Takaki introduced her Roteract guests **Ashley Maldonado**, **Brittany Luna**, and **Brooke Higa**, who gave



us a beautiful presentation on their club project "Operation Christmas Child." They were collecting personal non-liquid hygiene supplies, school supplies and toys to fill 48 community shoe boxes of goodies to help brighten the lives of kids who go without. Please donate supplies or money for this worthwhile cause. Jars on each table collected money while people dropped off many supplies. If you want to help please email the Roteract Club at rotaractuuh@gmail.com or Ashley Maldonado at ash27@hawaii.edu, or call her at (808)342-9780 before November 12.

Happy Dollars!



President Randy led us off \$20 for Operation Christmas Child reminding us that on November 11, Veteran's Day, there will be an event at Kilauea Military Camp at 3 pm.,



His happiness was quickly matched by **Alberta "not Gillis" Dobbe** and many others by placing the green stuff into the jars on each table.

Richard "not Jenny" Johnson was happy that he was moving and liquidating all his stuff. Call him if you need something like an old Toyota pickup, he might just have what you're looking for.



Nancy "Cowgirl" Cabral was happy for so many things, including the fact that her son is a major National Rodeo star and was featured in the Honolulu newspaper, and that the non-profit Kuikahi Mediation Center was having their annual dinner on November 13 where they will honor guys like **Judge Glenn Hara** and **Barry Taniguchi**, and roast guys like **the "Don."**



Kathleen "MacGyver" McGilvray was still happy about walking miles in her shoes and how the **Rotary Club of Hilo** was the largest donor group! Yay team!



Corey Kawamoto was happy about his life.



Treena "not Tina" Breyfogle was happy for her recent vacation where she roamed the wild west with **Kerry Glass**, **Susan Munro** and the **Johnson twins**.

Birthdays:

Rand Mundo November 8
Randy Hart November 12
Kerry Glass November 22
Malcolm Chun November 29

Club Anniversary:

Kathleen McGilvary November 1, 2013 (3)
Bob Fujimoto November 16, 1959 (57)

Wedding Anniversary:

Gay & Chuck Porter Nov. 7 (24)
Gene & Julia Tao Nov. 13 (53)
Reese & Steven Mates Nov. 15 (1)
Susan Munro & Kerry Glass Nov. 22 (31)

Announcements:

Nov. 10 - Mehana Brewery Tour & Tasting
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Nov. 11 - No Meeting
Nov. 18 - Andrea Furili
Hawaii Community Foundation

Rotary Club of Hilo Board of Directors 2016 - 2017:

- President – **Randy Hart**
- Past President – **Wally Wong**
- President Elect – **Steve Handy**
- Vice President – **Mitch Dodo**
- Secretary – **Treana Breyfogle**
- Treasurer – **Corey Kawamoto**
- Sergeant at Arms – **Dirk Yoshina**
- Rotary Foundations – **Kerry Glass**
- Membership – **Connie Ichinose**
- Public Relations – **Marcia Prose**
- International Service – **Stew Hussey**
- Community Service – **Reese Mates**
- Vocational Service – **Cindy Boots**
- Club Service – **Kui Costa**
- New Generations – **Gail Takaki**

Foundation Chairpersons:

- Hilo Rotary Club Foundation – **Lisa Rantz**
- The Rotary Foundation – **Kerry Glass**
- Hawaii Rotary Youth Foundation – **Mitchell Dodo**

Da Prez then moved on to the program featuring a special Veterans' Day talk by retired



Brigadier General Raymond E. Gandy, Jr. Brigadier General Raymond E. Gandy Jr. was born in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. He is a graduate of Punahou School and after a period of active duty received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from the University of Hawai'i. **General Gandy** holds a Professional Secondary Science Teaching Credential.

General Gandy enlisted in the US Army, October 1966 from Honolulu, Hawai'i and was commissioned in March 1968 from Artillery Officer Candidate School. He deployed immediately to Vietnam where he served as an Infantry Company Artillery Forward Observer. After becoming Airborne and Ranger qualified, he served a second Vietnam tour as an Advisor to Regional and Popular Forces, Bing Duong Province, III Corps.

Upon release from active duty, **General Gandy** joined the U.S. Army Reserve where his assignments included: Secretary to the General Staff, IX Corps (Augmentation); Commander, 621st Personnel Services Company; and as Corps Nuclear Weapons Employment Officer. From 1986-1988, **General Gandy** commanded the well-known 100th Battalion/442 Infantry, located in Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa and Saipan. Subsequent assignments included: South Asia Region Chief, Pacific Army Liaison Command; Deputy Commandant, 4960th US Army Reserve Forces School; Chief, Combat Division, 1085th Training, Exercise and Maneuver Group; Team Alpha Chief, 322d Civil Affairs Brigade, and as Commanding General, 9th Regional Support Command

General Gandy is a graduate of the Artillery and Civil Affairs Advance Courses, the Army Command and General Staff College, the US Air Force Air Ground Battle Staff Course, and the Army War College, Resident Course, Class of 1991.

His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Meritorious Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Commendation with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Vietnam Service Medal, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal with three

Oak Leaf Clusters, Ranger Tab, Parachutist Badge and the Vietnamese Medal of Honor, First Class.

General Gandy was the Science Department Chair at Saint Andrew's Priory School from 1978- 1988 then joined US Army, Pacific in Federal Civil Service. He served as Chief, Mobilization and Reserve Affairs Branch and retired in 2006. Married to the former **Alida King**, he has two children. Their daughter **Genevieve** has her Master's Degree in Special Education from the University of Hawai'i and lives in Iowa with her two children. The **Gandy's** son **Colin**, an Infantry Major, is currently serving on the Army Staff in Washington D.C. His wife **Nanci**, an Army Signal Corps Major, is assigned Cyber Command in Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Both have completed multiple Iraq tours.

General Gandy's talk was memorable and inspiring. It was a short history and recognition to those who served in the trenches in Vietnam, as well as pointing out that our society is disconnected from those who have served their country. I am attaching a copy of it to this lava flow because any summary would not do it justice. **President Randy** emailed it out to those members who have email. The Club thanked and saluted the General for all that he has done, and continues to do for our country. **Mahalo General Gandy!**

Da Prez Hart then announced that our next speaker on November 18 will be **Andrea Furuli** from the Hawaii Community Foundation.

He then asked **Malcolm "not Ian" Chun** to lead us in the **4-way test**, and then we were out of there. And that's a fact Jack.



Rotary Club Lunch-Vietnam War, Hilo, November 4,2016

I've been asked to speak briefly about my experiences as a Vietnam Veteran and why my peers and I chose to serve. To do so, I need to set the stage for that time and place. I feel duty bound to draw some differences between those of us who served during that war and those of my generation who did not. I'll try to give you a sense for who we Vietnam Veterans were then and who we are now.

Who we are today in many respects mirrors the experiences of Veterans from World War II and Korea. In spite of many negative Hollywood portrayals; most of my Vietnam brothers and sisters came home and went back to school or got jobs. We got married and had children. We honored our fellow Veteran's selfless service and sacrifice by working hard and becoming productive members of our communities. If you take away nothing else from my comments today; remember that about us. Many of whom have been called the "Vietnam generation" were idolized as the "best and the brightest". They made headlines by being largely opposed to a war that they refused to fight in. Pundits back then invented the "generation gap". Campus leaders urged fellow baby boomers not to trust anyone over 30. The WW II generation, today lauded as the "greatest generation", were often looked down upon as shallow, materialistic, and out of touch. My "Vietnam generation" was not monolithic. The war permanently divided us based on our different reactions to this "counter-culture" agenda. My peers and I who chose to serve in the military during the Vietnam War were quite different from those who for decades have claimed to speak for us.

Woodstock was not important in our lives. The college protestors were spoiled rich kids. Nine million men served during the Vietnam War, three million in Vietnam. Contrary to urban myths since; two-thirds were volunteers and 73 percent of those who died were volunteers. Vietnam to us was not free love and flowers in San Francisco ... nor marches protesting "the Man" ... nor some intellectual exercise in avoiding the draft It was a battlefield just as brutal as any our fathers had faced in WW II or Korea.

Often the citizens of this country forget that there is a moral difference between the Veteran and non-Veteran. This difference lies in the field of civic virtue. Civic virtue is being concerned first with the well being of the Nation and implies selfless service to something greater than the individual. Every Veteran who took the oath of enlistment accepts personal responsibility for the safety of the Nation! He or she has pledged to defend the Nation against all enemies .. if need be with their lives. The civilian has not asked for this responsibility nor do they have this duty or commitment. So who were "we", my comrades in arms?

The men who fought in WW II were our heroes and role models. We emulated their service. Like all Veterans, selfless service for Vietnam Veterans is defined by their oath of office. The oath highlights that moral difference between the civilian and the Soldier. It begins ... "I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same.

The 26th Amendment to the Constitution lowered the voting age from twenty-one to 18. It was ratified on July first, 1971. Many of my fellow Troopers in Vietnam fought and died honoring their oath before they were even old enough to vote!

What bothered us most was that the negative reception we got coming home was often from the very elites of our age group who claimed to speak for us. Those same privileged elites who did not serve in the military and had no connection to our lives. In World War II, 11.5% of the nation served in four years. In Vietnam, 4.3% served in 12 years. In the Global War on Terror since 2001, only 0.45% ... less than one half of one percent of our population has served. This lack of connection between the civilian and today's Soldiers is similar to what we experienced during the Vietnam War. Veterans of all Services and conflicts often only truly talk with other Veterans. Veterans feel that when they return home; no matter how positive their welcome might be, that the world around them has no real appreciation of their life experiences.

Who is a hero? My heroes are those young men and women who have faced these issues of war and death; weighed those concerns, then interrupted their lives to serve in obedience to duty and country as we understood it.

I enlisted in 1966 and graduated from Officer Candidate School in the middle of the famous 1968 Tet Offensive. 1968 was the highest year for American casualties in the entire war. Unlike later conflicts where US casualties would be measured by handfuls per year; in 1968 they averaged almost 300 per week; that is like losing Hilo High School's entire Senior Class; week, after week, after week.

My OCS class was the first class to get sent straight into combat in Vietnam. No short tours stateside. When I arrived in country I had been a 2ndLt for 28 days. Within the first month; half of my OCS classmates in country had been killed or wounded. I spent most of 1968 with Delta Company, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry. After becoming Airborne and Ranger qualified, my second tour was in 1970-71 with Military Advisory Team 91 near the Cambodian border. General Custer's old regiment; the 7th Cavalry, made up the "Garry Owen" Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) ... more commonly known as the "First Air Cav". The Garry Owen Brigade consisted of the 1st, 2nd, and 5th Battalions of the 7th Cavalry; an Air Cavalry Battalion had four Infantry Companies. Each Air Assault Company was approximately 150 people "paper strength" - usually around 110-120 actual "boots on the ground" warm bodies.

In February when the '68 "Tet" started the 1st Cavalry Division was moved north from the Central Highlands to First Corps and fought its way into Hue City with the Marines. Less than a month later during Operation Pegasus, the Garry Owen Brigade would lead our Division in relief of the 58 day siege of the Marines at Khe Sanh.

In early April, the Garry Owen Brigade would also lead the Division Air Assault into the A Shau Valley on the Laotian border. Two full North Vietnamese Army Divisions were operating in the valley. Of the 40 helicopters in the initial Air Assault into the valley all but 19 were hit or shot down by the enemy's anti-aircraft guns. This was the highest loss of helicopters suffered in one day in U.S. Army history. Our Delta Company Commander was wounded in the valley so 20 year old First Lt James M. "Mike" Sprayberry, the Executive Officer, became the Company Commander "no notice". The average age in Delta Company was 19. In all of Delta Company I think only the Mortar Platoon Sergeant

was older than I was and I celebrated my 22nd birthday in the A Shau Valley on 3 May. First Lt Mike Sprayberry would celebrate his 21st birthday, also in the A Shau Valley, one day before he earned the Medal of Honor on the 25th of April. When the Company was rotated out of the valley in mid-May, we were down to about 50 percent strength.

One day in the life of .. : Infantry Company Troopers were commonly known as "line animals". We were light years different from all the other REMFs - rear echelon mama foxtrots, in Vietnam. And yes "foxtrot" was not the word we used! An Airmobile Infantry Company was never "in the rear". We spent our days conducting Combat Air Assaults from Huey helicopters into the jungle. The "rear" for us was a Battalion Fire Base usually with a battery of 105 mm howitzers where we got 4-5 days "rest" manning the green line around the fire base. In an Air Cav Company there were no luxuries like hot food, cots, tents, or electricity. You owned what you could carry along with the 60-70 pounds of weapons, ammo, c-rations, and gear you had to hump each day. This usually got down to letter-writing paper, minimal toiletries, a poncho liner, and maybe a small instamatic camera. Home was a chest deep two-man fox hole you and a fellow Cav Trooper dug each night wherever the Company set up defensive positions. You slept on the ground or in your hole. Sleep came in one or two hour pieces as you rotated watch duty with your buddy. When you added night time ambushes, listening posts, radio watches, H and I fires, and such you averaged about 4 hours a night for months on end.

In addition to the physical and combat toll we enjoyed poisonous snakes, centipedes, leaches, ringworm, hookworm, dysentery, dengue fever, malaria, and various kinds of skin crud the medics still haven't ID. Trench foot was an added bonus during the monsoon season. I was in country eight months before my first "real" shower.

Three sounds no Air Cav Trooper ever forgets are the "whup, whup, whup" of a Huey's chopper blades, the metallic "chink, chink" of incoming rounds hitting the bird, and the sick "thunk" when they hit a fellow Trooper. During an Air Cav combat insertion, the scariest words in the English language were ... "weaponsfree! The landing zone is hot!" Infantry combat in the jungle was measured in feet;

not yards. Most fire fights were vicious and direct. Hand to hand combat especially for the point man or lead Platoon was not unusual.

Between daily combat and DEROS rotations back to "the World"; in gross numbers we turned over the Company's entire paper strength about every three weeks. The vast majority of wounded, killed in action, or sick in that turn over came from the constant flow of F-N-Gs; foxtrot'en new guys, and yes foxtrot'en was also not the word we used. 70-80 troopers made up the hard combat core of the Company. Replacements were dangerous. They had not learned the Darwinian survival skills of the jungle.

R&R was only five days long and Hawaii was an R&R site. So; since I had not yet met my lovely wife; instead of going to Hong Kong, Bangkok, or Sidney.v.my Family "ordered" me to come home. It was a surreal experience sitting with my parents in our family living room on Oahu and knowing in less than a week I'd be back in the bush. I was uncomfortable not having a weapon 24/7.

I was nervous when anyone came up behind me. In restaurants I would automatically sit with my back to a wall so I could see the

entry door. At night any sound your brain did not immediately ID as "known and ok" would jerk you awake. You wanted to return to the Company where a fellow Cav Trooper had your back and you felt "safe". It was impossible to explain these feelings to family who had no frame of reference.

Because our reception coming home was so different, Vietnam vets often bond with each other more intimately than Veterans from other conflicts. Mike Norman, a fellow Vietnam Veteran, captured this relationship best when he wrote: "I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the (men and women) who once acted their best, who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped raw, right down to their humanity.

I did not pick these comrades, they were delivered by fate, but I know them in a way I know no others. I have never given anyone such trust.

My brothers in Delta Company spent their year in hell with me. Almost 50 years later, those memories are still crystal clear in my mind's eye... Crusty old 20- year olds teaching scared youngsters of 18 how to survive that hostile battlefield ... Unarmed Company Medics dragging wounded Troopers out of the line of fire Teenage Squad Leaders moving up the line while under fire unerringly directing and leading their men Their incredible courage and willingness to risk their own lives to save other Troopers wounded or in trouble.

It saddens me that our own countrymen have for so long completely missed this story of their service and sacrifice. I would go into combat tomorrow with any man from Delta Company; they were not druggies or whiners or basket cases ...they were Warriors ...

It was a privilege and an honor to have served with them.

That is who we were and who we are now!

"Garry Owen!"