

JUNE NEWSLETTER

We have made it to the halfway point in 2014. If you are reading this, make sure that your vote is one that counts in the mid-term elections. If nothing else, we can leave Obama a lame duck president for the remainder of his term.

Our club's annual meeting was held on May 31 at the range. As in the past meetings, business was preceded by an excellent steak dinner cooked on site. I want to personally thank all the people that participated in arranging and preparing the meal, including those that help set up and take down tables and chairs. Elections were held, officers continue in their current positions, and a general discussion of our direction as a club for the next few months was held.

I hope that everyone had a pleasant and enjoyable Memorial Day holiday. More than anything, I hope that at least once over the long weekend your thoughts turned to what we were actually celebrating – the remembrance of each and every soldier who has ever stood up for our country, left the comfort of his or her home, so we could enjoy the comfort of ours. I hope you remembered the untold thousands that left our shores and never returned. I hope you looked at a flag and felt the same things I feel when I do.

I have met over the years a tremendous number of World War II veterans. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind why these guys are referred to as “the Greatest Generation.” They fought a terrible conflict on two fronts, paying a huge price in lives lost and damage done. Three of these vets stand out the most – I guess because I grew to know them better. The first, a U.S. Army veteran, survived the Channel crossing aboard the H.M.S. Cheshire, fought with the 66th Panther Division in the prolonged campaign against the hundred thousand or so Nazi troops cut off in the lower French peninsula. He came back to the states, raised a family, and allowed me to marry his daughter. A finer, quieter, gentleman I will never know.

The second was a member of the 1st Marine Raiders. He was involved in three of the bloodiest, costliest, beachhead assaults across the Pacific Islands while chasing the Japanese. The names Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, and Peleliu may ring a bell. Casualty rates among the U.S. troops ran 70 to 80% in some instances, but he came home. He, too, raised a family. The willingness to lend a helping hand and strength of character is something I recognize very well in his children and grandchildren.

The third was a Navy veteran. He just happened to be stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941 – the morning the Japanese launched their infamous sneak attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet. He was aboard a stricken and sinking American vessel in the harbor. Wounded himself, he made numerous trips back in the water to rescue shipmates. His efforts were so valiant, he received the Navy's highest honor. He also survived having another destroyer torpedoed from under him. He returned home to lead a productive, long life.

There is no doubt these gentlemen were molded from the same clay as you and I. But the furnace they were fired in was at a much higher temperature and produced an exceptional product; one not often seen. They rose to the call.

I hope the call never goes out again. I hope that we, as a country, are never faced with the decisions that had to be made at those times. History says we will. I hope we can.

Enough of that. I hope everyone has an enjoyable summer. Have fun and be safe. Please remember, as always – any opinions expressed in these newsletters are mine and mine alone.

Tim Courtney

Secretary ACSC