Meeting Notes – Feb. 16, 2021

Our president, Rotarian Dr. John Caldwell, provided the weekly program for Feb. 16, 2021. His program was on the "Tide at Tarawa". Tarawa is an island in the Pacific, near the equator, and the site of one of the most famous battles in World War II. Tarawa

US troops planned to land on the island at high tide so their larger boats could ride the tide over the coral reef that stuck out about 500 yards. They thought they had the tides calculated correctly, but did not account for the particular alignment of the moon, earth and sun that day, which prevented the high tide from rising more than 3.7 feet over the reef, rather than the five feet that were needed. This particular alignment of the sun, moon and earth did not occur again for another 44 years.

Because of the lack of sufficient high tide, the Marines had to wade in, for 600 yards, with their machine guns over their heads. The Japanese met them with machine gun fire, resulting in thousands of injuries and death. So many servicemen were buried there that not all of the graves could be accounted for.

Dr. Caldwell also showed us a brief video of Sandy Bodiford, one of the fallen Marines. His body was later recovered on the island and identified by two gold crowns in his mouth. His body was later returned to the US for burial.

Dr. Caldwell also shared with us the actor, Eddie Albert, who played on Green Acres, won a bronze star for his actions on Tarawa Island.

Diane Sherriff

Immediate Past President