

Rotary
Club of
Charlotte



REPORTER

April 16, 2019

GENERAL JAMES AMOS (Retired) Former Commandant US Marine Corps

THE MAN WHO EARNED CHARLOTTE ROTARY'S (OVERWHELMING) STANDING OVATION



What does a military hero look like? We saw for ourselves on Tuesday, 16 April 2019.

Defining *hero* as “a person who is admired or idealized for courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities,” on Tuesday, Charlotte Rotary was honored to host a *genuine military hero* in the person of GENERAL JAMES F. “JIM” AMOS who, enroute to his 2014 retirement, commanded (among other operations) 15,000 Marines of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing during both Operation Iraqi Freedom campaigns, 45,000 Marines and Sailors of the Second Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Lejeune, and was subsequently appointed the 35th Commandant of the United States

Marine Corps ... the first Marine Corps aviator to serve as Commandant.

Having earned a BS in finance and economics from the University of Idaho, Jim served as an Ensign in the U.S. Navy and attended pilot training prior to being designated a Naval Aviator. A long list of promotions and accomplishments ensued and he was soon granted an inter-service transfer to the United State Marine Corps which, during his forty-two-and-a-half years of distinguished service, included a long roster of honors, medals and twenty assignments around the world ~ culminating in his appointment as Commandant.

Jim began his remarks to our club in a casual fashion, giving us a peek into his life during his last four-and-a-half years in the Charlotte area. First on tap was acknowledging his superb wife and partner in his life's journey, Bonnie, who was in the audience and who has shared every minute of his military career as his chief supporter. Jim then shared this tidbit: “I went out on the beach at our home on Lake Wylie and found a piece of driftwood. I ‘schlepped’ it to the house and decided I’d create a signpost with destinations and mileage pointing to all the places we’ve lived as rare piece of memorabilia.” Our audience was treated to that hint of the creative side of Jim who is entertaining and witty when called upon.

He forged into the topic at hand by inviting us to “Travel briefly with me around the world to look at current headlines” which includes hundreds of hot spots on the world map. He listed nine countries on his “Alert!” roster (Libya, Israel/Hezbollah, Syria, Turkey, Russia, Iran, Pakistan/India, China and North Korea) and that’s when the serious talk about National Security and global uncertainty began. Breaking his speech into those designated nine areas of the world that have the current attention of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Pentagon because of their threatening actions/policies/behavior, Jim began with LIBYA, citing Libyan Military Commander Khalifa Haftar’s Libyan National Army’s internal assault with help from the United Arab Emirates. It’s a reign of terror, injuries and deaths, as well as invasion from the penetrating forces of ISIS following their expulsion from Syria. During

this time the United States announced the impending withdrawal of troops from Libya due to “security conditions on the ground.” ISRAEL/HEZBOLLAH: “An Iranian Proxy,” Jim categorized. Another example of shootings, stabbings, and killings between Palestinians and Israelis. Jim reported that “Conservative leader Netanyahu’s party may be able to form a governing coalition for his fifth term as Israel’s head of government.” IRAN and HEZBOLLAH have secured missiles that are powerful enough to accurately hit Israel’s infrastructure and destroy it, which means Israel will be coerced into further involvement with the Syrian conflict which, in turn, will lead to a more dangerous war with Hezbollah ... “sooner rather than later,” he warned. “These are, he said, “bad, bad, bad people.” A Syrian government offensive threatens to spark further escalation,” Jim told us. “Recently, Israel shot down two Syrian military drones that crossed into Israeli territory.” Officials in Jerusalem are worried and we should be, too, since Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah earmarks the attacks as “a new phase” in the conflict with Israel. Hezbollah’s missile stockpile ~ with Iran’s help ~ is technologically advanced and Israel could be overwhelmed by the vast number of missiles and rockets. In 2006 there were 2,000 rockets. In 2019 there are 120,000 ~ enough to wipe out a mammoth Israeli population. SYRIA: Now in Year Number Nine, almost a half-a-million lives (all fellow citizens) have been lost and millions of Syrians displaced. Jim describes it succinctly as “suffocating smell of death.” TURKEY: “The great Pretender.” From Alexander The Great to Genghis Khan, generals in Turkey have flourished and taken over, then a coup was formed, then they re-flourished, and, once again, a coup attempt ... and so on and so forth. Jim said, “Turkey is seizing the opportunity to attack their enemy, the Kurds, with marked alacrity in a strong effort to get rid of ISIS.” Just last Wednesday, Jim told us, Vice President Mike Pence warned Turkey that it could risk membership in NATO if it goes against international opposition and buys a Russian air defense system. Pence said that “Turkey must choose if it wants to remain a critical partner in the most successful military alliance in the history of the world or risk the security of that by making reckless decisions.” Jim categorized Turkey’s threat in two words: DEEPLY TROUBLING. Seeing the United States as an imperial predator, the pugnacious President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is defying Washington which has made him popular with his supporters and secular critics. He’s clearly trying to maintain the reputation of supporting U.S. supporters and partners. The U.S. will, no doubt, block the delivery of Turkey’s newest fighter jets unless a mutual agreement is reached. RUSSIA: Vladimir Putin is working toward global predominance. Attacking Ukraine and deploying Russian air and naval forces, even under international criticism, has turned him into a popular politician in Russia. Now serving his second term as President, he’s been accused of (*and probably did* mastermind and authorize) vote tampering. Although his popularity had fallen, it rose again after the annexation of Crimea and his latest international bullying behavior. “Russia,” Jim said, “is rebuilding its military. Five new nuclear submarines this year --- more than they’ve had in the last three decades.” “And,” he added, “They continue to fly long-range reconnaissance flights along our U.S. borders and overfly our Navy’s deployed task forces.” Once again ... scary. Russia is also experiencing a steep decrease in the price of oil which makes for serious trouble. That trouble segues to bad behavior. Jim warned, “We should be worried. Stay tuned.” IRAN: Friction between Iran and Iraq are worrisome. Between Iran’s support of the Iraqi government’s fight vs. ISIS and its support of Hezbollah against Israel, it’s a battle every day. PAKISTAN: Now we’re looking at “one of the most unstable and dangerous countries on the face of the earth,” said Jim. The border dispute with India, the struggle with military control of their government, and their huge number of nuclear weapons produced each year make for intense worry. ASIA PACIFIC REGION: CHINA AND NORTH KOREA. Territorial disputes and regional instability. Enough said. CHINA: Wishing to reclaim the Spratly Islands in the China Sea and building a 10K Runway on the Fiery Cross Reef (claiming it’s Chinese territory) is another top international worry. NORTH KOREA: Premier/Despot Kim Jung Un has, as his mission in life, to build a stable of nuclear weapons that will threaten the Western world. He’s “erratic and frightening,” Jim told us.

Jim concluded his remarks with these words, “Ladies and Gentlemen, this is our world ...” HOWEVER, he continued, our senior military leaders deal with these matters every day with no days off, no weekends off, and no holidays or vacations.” These are highly trained, military leaders who devote their experience, their knowledge, and their expertise to keeping America safe. *“So, I want you to be able to sleep at night knowing that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and their teams are paying close attention to the world we live in and seldom are they surprised. And seldom does something get by them.*

He shared this notable comment with us, “The Joint Chiefs of Staff are as bi-partisan a group of senior leaders as I know. I never once heard a reference to being a Democrat or a Republican. We are all in this together as a team. The Joint Chief of Staffs are the principal advisors to the President *and have been to every President.* Nothing is more important to them than the defense of the United States of America and the caliber of men and women who shoulder this burden are superb. They are great patriots. Currently serving as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is General Joseph Dunford. The five other members of this prestigious group are: General Mark Milley, General Joseph Lengyel, General David Goldfein, General Robert Neller and Admiral John Richardson.

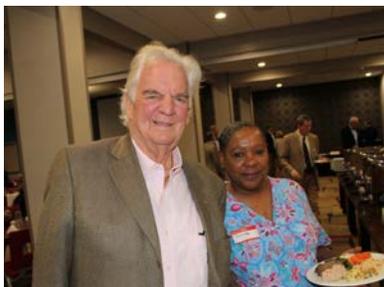
Jim signed off with, “I’m proud to be a Marine, a Commandant, and I’m exceptionally proud of our Joint Chiefs of Staff and this wonderful country they protect.” (And in response to a question during Q&A, “Do NATO allies do enough, Jim’s answer was swift. “No.”)

“Dirtbag” is a popular Marine slang expression which Jim loves to use. *You are no “dirtbag,” Jim. You are, most certainly, AN AMERICAN HERO.*

(Note: Any misstatement or incorrect wording must be attributed solely to the author of this Reporter review.)

Speaker Write-Up: Marilyn Bowler; *Head Table:* Will Barnhardt, John Lassiter, David Zimmerman, Rudy Rudisill; *Invocation:* Cheryl Banks; *Photos:* Bert Voswinkel; *Introduce Visitors:* Tom O'Brien; *Greeters:* Clyde Robinson

CLUB NEWS



It was GREAT to see **Biff Virkler** at Rotary. Biff suffered a stroke a week ago Saturday and he’s making remarkable progress.

Keep up the good work, Biff!

Wes Jones is participating in a 30-mile hike on the Appalachian Trail to raise money in support of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. The one day event will be April 27th and if you would like to support Wes, please do so here: http://fightcf.cff.org/site/TR?px=3654498&pg=personal&fr_id=7550&et=xeKVSx21Zg9VnM0UWEWzlw&s_tafid=102270



While attending The Salvation Army's Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, **Mark Norman** was pleased to accept the Group Recipients Award to the Rotary Club of Charlotte...."Each year you will find the bells ringing at Trade and Tryon. For over 25 years the Rotary Club of Charlotte has supported The Salvation Army through the annual Red Kettle campaign. Each year Rotarians sign up to man the kettle and encourage Charlotte's lunch crowd to donate their spare change. Funds from the annual Red Kettle go towards supporting Salvation Army programs year round. The Salvation Army is thrilled to honor such a philanthropic organization for their volunteerism and fundraising efforts." Mark expressed his

thanks to **Tom Robertson**, who started this tradition in 1992 and also **Herb Harriss** and the many, many Rotarians and families that particate in this effort each year.

ROTARY SPRING SOCIAL...APRIL 24...5:30-8PM

Who: Well...YOU of course!

What: An informal, drop-in gathering of Rotary members, friends, family, and potential members

When: Wednesday, April 24th between 5:30 & 8pm

Where: 5610 Carnegie Blvd.

How: By train, plane, car, feet, scotter...we don't care how you get there. We'll just be happy to see you.



For more information, suggestions, or concerns email Noelle at nculler@wfae.org

Coming soon: WFAE 90.7fm fan? Ever wonder how that studio magic happens? Be on the lookout for another social committee opportunity in May and the following months on Friday morning. It will be a sign up event for eight Rotary members that would like to meet up for coffee on Friday morning and sit in on the live broadcast of the Charlotte Talks News Roundup at Spirit Square. We'll be there with top journalist from across the city from various publication sources discussing the weekly headlines. We will do this once a month and continue offering it until everyone that wants to go can go. The dates will be published soon – you will sign up by emailing Noelle. Have a son or daughter interested in journalism? Let Noelle know and she can include them in this opportunity.

Follow-Up

-Support Mt. Kilimanjaro END POLIO NOW climb : <https://rotary7680kiliclimb.org> (click on Warren Kean to make your donation).

-Rotary Scholarship Golf Classic: September 10, 2019 Ballantyne Resort. Looking for golfers, sponsors, auction items.

MEMBERSHIP

07/01/2018 288

04/16/2019 280

Net Increase: -8

New Members: Robert Shaw

Resignations: Gene Bratek, Richard Mialik, Em Syrewicze

Proposed for Membership (comments to Rotary office by 04/23/19)

Bryan McAllister – Finks Jewelers (Classification: Jewelry, Retail)

Sponsor: Noelle Culler Endorsed: Sandy Osborne, Alan Simonini

Visitors 18
Club Members 122
Total 140 (52.4%)

Guests: Blake Bourne, Montgomery Morris, Joan Zimmerman, Sylvia Van Hoy, Renea Robinson, Bill Crowder, Chelsea Engle, Robert Thomas, Bryan McAllister, Jim Huzl Aaron Harper, Paul Bill, Tommy Norman, Sue Breckenridge, Bonnie Amos, Ashton Addison, Patrick Baker, Beth Trotter

BIRTHDAYS (04/25/19 – 05/01/19)

04/25 Catherine Horne
04/26 Ronnie Pruett, Biff Virkler
04/27 Rex Welton
04/28 Graham Wilson
04/29 Marcus Lee
04/30 Jessica Dupree
05/01 Carla DuPuy

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES (04/25/2019 – 05/01/19)

04/26 Linda & Rudy Rudisill
04/27 Karen & Rob Calder
04/27 Claire & Tom Blocker

ROTARY ANNIVERSARIES (04/25/2019 – 05/01/19)

01 year – Frank Mueller, Linwood Bolles
05 years – Terence Gordon
09 years – Lisa Mask
24 years – Ed Kizer
26 years – Bill Nichols
35 years – Bert Voswinkel, Phil Van Hoy, Bob Brietz
46 years – Bob Freeman

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

04/23 – Michael Reagan, Secretary, N.C. Department of Environmental Quality
04/30 – Molly Grantham, News Anchor, WBTV
05/07 – Tony Zeiss, Museum of the Bible and More
05/14 – John Lassiter, Republican National Convention

Photos from our luncheons and other events can be found on Flickr [Click here](#)



