

12th Annual Military Ball: The Greatest Generation

By Erin J. Smith / CASA

HONOR AND UNITY were the themes for the 12th Annual Military Ball dedicated to The Greatest Generation and celebrating the U.S. Armed Forces, past and present.

The star-spangled event took place November 8th at the Fess Parker Doubletree Resort, with cocktails, dinner, and a program. John Blankenship, Vice-Chairman of the Board for the Pierre Claeysens Veterans Museum and Library, opened the evening with welcoming remarks while guests were treated to a three course gourmet meal created by Executive Chef Kirk DeLong. Sgt. Major Robert Forties led the Pledge of Allegiance, while Seargent David Gonzalez led the 400-plus guests in “The Star Spangled Banner.”



Santa Barbara Commanding Officer of USCGC Blackfin Lt. **Brian Whistler**; **Tiffany Gette**; **Haley Miller**; and MK2 **Brian Young** USCGC Blackfin



Karen Crawford, Chair of Santa Barbara Navy League, and **Larry Crandell**, Special Guest, with **Terrie Conners**

Now in its twelfth year, the Military Ball was started by philanthropist Pierre Claeysens in 1997. After Claeysens’s death in 2003, the ball has continued as an ongoing annual tradition by the Pierre Claeysens Veterans Museum and Library as a way to honor Claeysens’ pledge that all veterans shall be honored and never forgotten. In Claeysens’ words, “To be killed in war is not the worst that can happen. To be lost is not the worst that can happen... to be forgotten is the worst.”

A special tribute was paid to Guest of Honor Larry Crandell, who served in World War II as a bombardier in the 15th Air Force, Europe, where he flew 35 combat missions and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, and the Air Medal. Crandell graduated from Syracuse University in 1948 and is best known as ‘Mr. Santa Barbara’, a community leader and preeminent emcee in the Santa Barbara community. Stanley R. Sloan, an internationally recognized expert on defense and foreign policy, was the evening’s keynote speaker. Sloan is a Professor of Political Science



Dr. George Walseth and his father **Col. Harvey Walseth**

at Middlebury College and has more than 40 years of experience as an Air Force officer, an intelligence analyst, and a defense and foreign policy consultant for Congress. In his address



Back row: **Kandace Illgen**, Sheriff **Bill Brown**, Board Vice Chairman **John Blankenship**, and honoree **Larry Crandell**. Front row: **Eileen Donovan**, **Donna Brown**, **General F. Michael Rogers**, **Kathy Butts**, and City Council member **Iya Falcone**

NATO and US Interests after 60 Years: Challenges and Opportunities, Sloan discussed foreign and security policy and the role of allies in those interests. “I feel a real and direct tie to the generation that fought World War II,” said Sloan, whose father served in North Africa and Italy as an aircraft mechanic in the Army Air Corps, while his mother worked in support of the war effort on the home front. “Members of this ‘greatest generation,’ using Tom Brokaw’s words, defended not only the United States but also the democratic values on which this Republic is founded and on which so many other nations have come to rely.”

Following the program, guests took to the dance



John Blankenship, Board Vice Chairman, with **Kathy Butts** and **General F. Michael Rogers**



USMC Staff Sergeant **Bert Curfin** and Marine League Member **Jerry Bursek**

floor, dancing ‘til dawn’s early light’ to the tunes of *The Swing Shift*.

For more information about the Pierre Claeysens Veterans’ Museum and Library, contact 966-1660.



Performing Color Guard Honors Sergeant **Manny Silva**; Staff Sergeant **Jerry Pennington**; Staff Sergeant **Edward Lemus**; and Sergeant **Michael Carter** of USMC Color Guard, Recruiting Station Santa Barbara

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