Destination Lodi

American Hero

ROBERT RICHARD ROWLAND

LET US CELEBRATE OUR MILITARY PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

MANY MEN AND WOMEN IN OUR AREA HAVE SERVED BRAVELY, SERVED IN EVERY MILITARY SERVICE BRANCH, SERVING IN EACH MILITARY ACTION THROUGH THE YEARS. SADLY, MANY DID NOT RETURN HOME. WE WANT TO THANK EACH AND EVERYONE WHO SERVED TO PROTECT US.

 ONE OF OUR OWN WAS HIGHLY DECORATED FOR HIS SERVICE AND SKILLS.

BORN IN LODI OHIO ON October 8, 1917, GRADUATED FROM LODI HIGH SCHOOL IN 1935. ATTENDED OHIO STATE AND UNIVERSITY OF THE, MAJORING IN SCIENCE. MARRIED A LODI GAL, JANET BARTHOLOMAI. HE ENTERED THE ARMY AIR CORP JANUARY 1938. A TRUE AMERICAN HERO. “DICK”, HE WAS NEVER KNOWN AS ROBERT, WAS THE HIGHEST-RANKING OFFICER FROM THIS AREA.

 DURING WW II LT, COLONEL DICK ROWLAND SERVED IN THE US ARMY AIR FORCES AS AN ACE, CREDITED WITH SHOOTING DOWN EIGHT (8) ENEMY AIRCRAFT IN AERIAL COMBAT. THE FIGHTER PLANE HE FLEW NAMED “THE PRIDE OF LODI”.

 AFTER THE WAR HE TRANSFERRED TO THE NEW US AIR FORCE, RETIRED IN 1968 AS A MAJOR GENERAL.

DURING HIS DISTINGUISHED CAREER, DICK ROLAND IN 1941 HELD SEVERAL POSITIONS AS A DIRECTOR FOR ADVANCED TRAINING WITH THE TUSKEGIE ARMY FLYING SCHOOL IN TUSKEGIE, ALA. DURING HIS LONG CAREER LT. GENERAL ROLAND WAS PRESENTED THE AIR FORCE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE METAL , THE SILVER STAR, LEGION OF MERIT, THREE BRONZE OAK LEAF CLUSTER/DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS AND THE SOLDIER MEDAL.

THE SILVER START FOR WW11 ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY AS A FIGHTER PILOT OF THE 348TH FIGHTER GROUP, AGAINIST THE EMENY IN AERIAL COMBAT NEAR CAPE GLOUCSTER, NEW BRITIAN 12/26/1943.

THE LEGION OF MERIT FOR WW11 OUTSTANDING SERVICES IN THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC THEATER OF OPERATIONS 11/17/1943-06/07/1945.

THE BRONZE OAK LEAFS/DISTINQUISHED FLYING CROSS FOR WW11 TIMES TWO FOR COMBAT AND DEVOTION TO DUTY AND COURAGE, SHOOTING DOWN 8 ENEMY AIRCRAFT IN AERIAL COMBAT, THE COLD WAR FOR POLICY INSIGHT, PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING, FORCEFUL LEADERSHIP, and OUTSTANDING FORESIGHT AND CEASLESS EFFORT 12/9/1957-05/17/1958 AND VIETNAM.

THE SOLDIER MEDAL FOR HEROISON AT SAIDOR, NEW GIUNEA 4/16/1944 WHERE TWO PLANES COLLIDED OVERHEAD AND CRASHED. COL. ROLAND RAN OVER TO THE WRECKAGE, IN SPITE OF FLAMES AND EXPLODING AMMUNITION ENTERED THE PLANE TO SAVE THE SURVIVING CO-PIlot.

Lodi American Legion Post 523 will sponsor an Observance on Monday May 31st from 9:00am-11:00am at Central Park in downtown.
The program will be as follows:
-Contingent marching from the American Legion to Central Park
-Post Adjutant will open ceremonies
-Post Chaplain will provide invocation
-Guest Speaker, Bill Nye, son of recently deceased Commander, Kerwin "Buzz" Nye
-Reading of the veterans lost
-Salute to the dead
-Taps
-Raising of the Flag -salute
-Lowering to half mast
Conclusion