

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 361 Truly...On the Shoulders of Giants

This coming Sunday we celebrate the 75th anniversary of Guam's Liberation. I'm Jerry Roberts and some thoughts today on looking back and thinking of those who came before. That's up next, on The Extra Point.

Liberation Day number 75. To most it means the biggest single event of the year. Thousands of people will crowd Marine Corps Drive to watch the parade, from Adelup to the Paseo. Several tons of food and drink will be enjoyed and spirits will be high. Then, for most workers, Monday is a paid day off.

This is how we take in most holidays. Heavy on the partying, but light on the reason for the observance.

I don't blame those who focus more on the recreational aspects of the day, rather than the significance it represents. With the passage of time each succeeding generation feels less of a connection to the events we celebrate. That's just how it goes. When I was a kid I knew people who felt strongly about World War I and those who were lost in that horrible time, while I didn't feel the same at all.

Every year, fewer people remain from those who lived through Guam's occupation in World War Two. Anyone who was 13 on July 21, 1944, is 88 now. It won't be much longer until all of the voices of that era will be silent. This includes the Chamorro people set free and those who freed them.

If you have Netflix I encourage you to spend time this week, watching the World War Two series by Ken Burns, entitled *The War*. It was released in 2007 and I just viewed it the last few days. It is a stunning creation and almost impossible to look away from.

I'll tell you up front, it doesn't have a lot to say about Guam. While our island's liberation and the suffering of our people is obviously of

supreme importance to us, we realize that the scale of the fighting here didn't compare to what happened in places like Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Peleliu, the Philippines, Saipan, or Okinawa. That said, about 1,800 US servicemen died in the battle to free Guam. Almost 1,200 Chamorros died during the occupation, with the remainder forced to endure the struggle to just survive, and atrocities inflicted by the occupying forces.

The Ken Burns series gave me a jaw-dropping appreciation for what happened in this part of the world, and it reminded me of the incredible sacrifices made by so many average people who had just wanted to live their lives, maybe go to school, make something of themselves, get married, have kids. Grow old. Almost 300,000 Americans never got that chance when you add up the global death count from the war. It was in the millions for our allies, the Russians, as well as those on the other side, the Japanese and Germans. War is hell for everybody, and I'm sure those were people who wanted the same things we all want.

Watch the program before this Sunday, think of those who fought from island to island so that a liberation of Guam was even possible. Think of those who were lost, and those who made it through. This includes the Americans who fought to free Guam, and the Chamorro people who cheered their arrival. We enjoy our lifestyle today only because of the grit and determination of all of them. They don't call it the Greatest Generation for nothing. We owe them more than we can ever repay.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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