

Promoting ‘Selfless Service’

Missouri VFW Post awards deceased Marine life saving award

Nov 27, 2020

Members of VFW Department of Missouri and Post 10906 in Gladstone, Mo., gathered on Oct. 13 to remember and award a local active-duty Marine who died off the coast of Japan in early July.

Post 10906 Commander Ed Oliver presented the VFW Lifesaving Award and a memorial commendation to Marine Sgt. Tyler Rankin, who died saving the lives of two fellow Marines. The Marines were swept off a beach in Japan’s Shimane Prefecture region. Stars and Stripes reported that the seas were rough with 10-foot swells when the 24-year-old Rankin swam out to rescue them.

Sgt. Rankin’s remains were recovered by the Japanese coast guard on July 5. Sgt. Rankin, who was a section leader of his propeller shop, was a fixed wing aircraft mechanic with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Sqdn. 152, Marine Aircraft Grp. 12, 1st Maine Aircraft Wing.

Sgt. Rankin’s father, Brett Rankin, accepted his son’s Life Saving Award and memorial commendation from Oliver, who said Sgt. Rankin “made the ultimate sacrifice” for his fellow Marines.

“I’m honored to do this,” said Oliver, a retired Marine who served in the Vietnam War in 1969-70 with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161. “It’s very personal to me because he was a Marine and from this community. I truly feel blessed to be able to do this.”

Department of Missouri Junior Vice Commander Jim Nail was present during the ceremony for Rankin, a Gladstone native.

“Part of our mission at VFW is to promote selfless service and to make sure that is out front and center to our communities,” Jim Nail said. “They need to understand what these Marines, sailors, soldiers and airmen do for their country.”

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Nail said the best way for people to learn about the “sacrifices” of troops is to bring recognition to people such as Sgt. Rankin.

“Sgt. Rankin truly embodies what’s great about this country,” the Navy veteran said. “We are honored to show our appreciation to him for what he did.”