As the preparations for the largest ever Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) Exercise were underway at Pearl Harbor, friends and supporters of the Navy League of the United States, Honolulu Council, gathered in Waikiki for the 9th Annual American Patriot Awards Dinner. The two distinguished honorees were Outrigger’s Mildred Courtney and Arizona Senator John McCain.

David Carey, Outrigger Enterprises Group CEO and Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce of Hawai’i Military Affairs Council, introduced award recipient Mildred Courtney, one of Outrigger’s longest-serving employees, who, for more than three decades has dedicated herself to supporting our nation’s soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen stationed in Hawai’i or just passing through.

“In that pursuit, she has demonstrated amazing creativity,” David Carey told the audience. “She has collected books for sailors, gathered holiday baskets for families, convinced Pearl Harbor command to start a ‘sailor’s attic,’ and made sure that young military families got the things they needed to live in Hawai’i, including some of Outrigger’s surplus furniture and supplies. She has helped countless officers’ spouses make the adjustment to life in the Island community. She has organized numerous entertainment events to help make award ceremonies memorable, ship christenings exciting and holiday events have an island feel. Most of all, she always concentrated on doing what she could to make the E-5s and below feel wanted and taken care of in Hawai’i.”

Mildred’s dedication to the country’s servicemen and -women is symbolic of Outrigger’s unique historical bond with the military. Outrigger has had a special relationship with the men and women of the military since World War II. On December 7, 1941, Outrigger founders Roy and Estelle Kelley were hosting a breakfast for a Navy captain in their home when the meal was interrupted by the deep, rumbling sounds of bombs dropping on Pearl Harbor just ten miles away. In 1944 and 1945, they opened their home on weekends to military personnel awaiting deployment to the many Western Pacific islands where the war was raging.

As someone who personifies the Outrigger’s support of the military, Mildred has a reputation that spans the globe for finding just the right hotel accommodations for military personnel.

“Whether it is making sure we have reasonably priced rooms for military members and their families or appropriately equipped rooms and services for disabled veterans, Mildred seems to be available at all hours of the day and night,” David Carey said. “And she delivers these many small acts of thoughtfulness with genuine warmth, true aloha and quiet dignity.”

In accepting the American Patriot Award, Mildred thanked Outrigger Enterprises Group for its support and commitment to uplift the spirits of our service personnel. She said that Outrigger’s partnership with all branches of the military has brought about many vital programs and she feels fortunate to have been part of that great effort.

She also noted that, while her recognition as an American Patriot is very much appreciated, “it pales in comparison to the gifts of freedom and security that our military men and women provide us all, often under the most difficult conditions and circumstances and sometimes at the greatest personal sacrifice.”

She pledged to continue to donate her time, services and her aloha for “as long as I am able to do so. It’s been a great ride and one that Outrigger and I take great pride in fulfilling.”

Congratulations to Mildred Courtney – American Patriot!