

I've been thinking a great deal about my father lately. Not because it's been seven years this September since his passing, but because of the times in which we live. My father, Vito Charles Scaletta, dropped out of high school to fight in World War II. The story goes that he was not yet the required 18 years of age but was strongly determined to join the Marines. He did just that. His service ended when he was wounded after taking some shrapnel to his shoulder in the Pacific theater.

I think about some of our current 17 year olds. Leaving home for rigorous training and not knowing where you would go to fight or if you would live, would not be appealing to anyone, let alone a 17 year old today. And yet, that is what members of the Greatest Generation did in the hundreds of thousands. Their drive and passion for our nation and its cause of liberty was placed above feelings of personal safety. They were willing to, at a minimum, put their lives on hold and, to the maximum extent, give up their lives for the good of others.

Here is how that all relates to my current thinking: this global pandemic is our World War II. It is the first time in our lifetimes that there has been a worldwide threat to life that has involved **everyone** and **every** nation. In the same way that my father and his generation answered the call, so we, too, are answering the call. That is why I am still here. If Dad could offer his life for the cause, what's a little delay on a retirement?

When history looks back at these times, I feel that educators will be among the heroes listed. Certainly our front line health workers lead the hero parade, but this pandemic has been incredibly challenging on every level for education: transportation, food service and environmental services. Efforts among our administrators have been Herculean. For teachers, trying to keep up with their usual excellence of in-person learning and trying to translate that to online learning is both challenging and time consuming. I think we are all learning, even when it comes to something as simple as a meeting, that our skills are best plied with people in front of us, not on a screen.

I am very grateful for the dedication I am seeing among our staff. Everyone has a personal level of concern over the virus and many are subjugating that for the sake of our students.

In this, our World War II, we are *all* being called to act for the sake of the common good. We are being asked to mask when we are around people. Will you rise to the challenge?

We are being asked to stay six feet away from others. Will you rise to the challenge?

We are being asked to avoid crowds and give up much of our socializing. Will you rise to the challenge?

We are being asked to accept that things **can't be** the way they always were. Will you rise to the challenge?

What we are being asked to do for this pandemic does not require us to totally give up our current lives as did the members of the greatest generation, but, the part we each need to play is important. Will we all rise to the challenge?