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In both photos, WWII veteran **Raymond Vazquez** and his family speak to a first grade classroom at Kordyak Elementary as part of Take a Vet to School Day.



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John Kazalunas greets UTI student and United States Marine Corps veteran **Oscar J. Loera** at the UTI Veterans Day Ceremony. Loera served in the Marine Corps from 2004 to 2013.

Kazalunas, cont. from front
 tors at Universal Technical Institute in Rancho Cucamonga. Kazalunas' 21 years in the United States Marine Corps, along with his tireless efforts as a distinguished education leader in the Rialto district, made the veteran a

"perfect fit" as the ceremony's keynote speaker, said UTI representatives. Kazalunas spoke to veteran students and UTI staff about the importance of veterans committing to lifelong learning and the transition into civilian life and workforce--something that resonates with the

students, UTI representatives explained. "He's an advocate for education and well respected," representatives said. Kazalunas served 21 years in the United States Marine Corps and is a veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars, according to a UTI



IECN PHOTO/YAZMIN ALVAREZ

WWII veteran **Raymond Vazquez** of Rialto shared a few of medals with students Nov. 9 including a Purple Heart and Silver Star

Veterans, cont. from front

experiences of veterans and understand the true meaning of Veterans Day, organizers said. To offer gratitude for their service, students gave the handful of veterans invited a moving performance, singing renditions of patriotic songs in their honor. Rialto resident **Raymond Vasquez**, 87, a highly decorated WWII Army veteran at Friday's event said, "their voices were absolutely beautiful." His daughter-in-law and fellow veteran, **Carol Vasquez**, explained how the special event brought tears to her eyes. "I can't even put words together to describe the feeling it gives me to be a part of this," said Carol, who was the only woman veteran at the Kordyak event. After the grand salute, the Vasquez family along with other veterans and the several other active duty personnel honored, visited classrooms, sharing their stories and experiences to help

keep the appreciation of history alive. "I look at you guys and man, I wish I was your age again," Raymond said to a classroom of first grade students. "But since I'm not, and I'm an old man, I have old stuff to show you." With pride, Raymond opened a small box to unveil a Purple Heart--one of the three he was awarded--a Calvary sword, a dress sword and a hollow WWII grenade from his time served in the Philippines. "Wow," the classroom said in sync. "You are so cool." Kordyak staff partnered with local service organizations, including Girl Scout Troops 647 and 1209 to host the second annual tribute at the school, in an effort to honor and thank the men and women who have served or are serving in the military, organizers said. **Yazmin Alvarez is a reporter with Inland Empire Community Newspapers and can be reached at iecn.yazmin@gmail.com.**



COURTESY PHOTO/UTI

John Kazalunas was presented with an honorary award by UTI Student Services Director **Raquishela Stewart** and Campus President for his 21 years of service in the United States Marine Corps and 20 years of service on the Rialto Unified School District School Board.

news release. He also served more than 40 years with the Rialto Unified School District. The ceremony included an award presentation for Kazalunas from Raquishela Stewart, UTI Student Services Director and Sean Carlson, campus president. Veteran students were presented with spe-

cial certificates as well as a slide show commemorating UTI veterans with photos from their military service. **Yazmin Alvarez is a reporter with Inland Empire Community Newspapers and can be reached at iecn.yazmin@gmail.com.**