

A PROMISE FULFILLED 1941 - 2010

... a commitment to the men and women who put their lives at risk during the Pacific War to ensure the memory of their service and sacrifice is remembered in future generations.

“Navigator” HO'OKELE

PEARL HARBOR - HICKAM NEWS

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'A Promise Fulfilled 1941-2010' at 69th Pearl Harbor Day

Story and photo by
MC2 (SW) Mark Logico

Navy Region Hawaii Public
Affairs

The National Park Service and the U.S. Navy hosted a joint memorial ceremony commemorating the 69th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7 at the newly dedicated, \$56 million Pearl Harbor Visitor Center at the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument, formerly known as the USS Arizona Memorial Visitor Center.

Themed “A Promise Fulfilled 1941 - 2010,” the ceremony returned to the lawn of the new visitor center which looks directly out to the USS Arizona Memorial situated in Pearl Harbor. For the past five years, the ceremony has been held at Kilo Pier on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam while planning and construction of the new visitor center took place.

“I’m honored to take part in commemorating the opening chapter of one of the most powerful stories in American history,” said Jonathan Jarvis, National Park Service director, in his welcoming remarks.

“On a quiet Sunday morning nearly 70 years ago, the looming conflict that would consume the entire world



DeWayne Chartier, a Pearl Harbor survivor from USS Pennsylvania (BB 38), stands as his former ship is presented with a wreath during the remembrance ceremony. Assisting him is Jim Taylor, Pearl Harbor survivor liaison for Navy Region Hawaii.

announced itself with the sound of airplanes overhead,” he said.

Nearly 4,000 distinguished guests and the general public joined military personnel, members of the

National Park Service and Pearl Harbor survivors for the annual observance of the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor and the dedication of the new visitor center. More than 200 Pearl Harbor survivors

and other WWII veterans attended.

At 7:55 a.m., the exact moment the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor began 69 years ago, attendees observed a moment of silence

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 (SW) Mark Logico

initiated by the whistle of USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52)

USS Chafee (DDG 90) sailed through the harbor and rendered honors to USS Arizona while the Montana Air National Guard flew four

F-15 aircraft over the memorial in a “missing man” formation.

Thomas Strickland, assistant secretary for fish and wildlife and parks, was the keynote speaker for the commemoration and dedication.

“We are humbled to be in the presence of over 100 survivors here today,” Strickland said. “We thank you for your service to our country. This new visitor center will serve as a gateway not just to Dec. 7, 1941, but to all of WWII. Visitors entering the center travel the terrible destruction of Pearl Harbor to the moment of triumph on the deck of the Missouri,” he continued.

Woody Derby, a Pearl Harbor survivor from USS Nevada (BB 36), said he was impressed with the new visitor center. Derby said he hopes to live at least eight more years to become 100 years old.

Highlights of the ceremony included music by the U.S. Pacific Fleet Band, a Hawaiian blessing, a rifle salute by members of the U.S. Marine Corps, wreath presentations, echo Taps, and recognition of the men and women who survived Dec. 7, 1941 and a special remembrance for those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

(Additional Dec. 7 photos on page A-5, A-6 and A-7)



Airmen gather at Hickam to remember Dec. 7 sacrifices

Airman 1st Class
Lauren Main

15th Wing Public Affairs

Airmen, families and veterans gathered beneath Old Glory, flown on the same flag pole that Airmen perished protecting on Dec. 7, 1941, at Atterbury Circle on Dec. 6 in remembrance of the 69th anniversary of the attacks on military bases on Oahu.

The flagpole they faced was bombed three times during the attack by 500-pound bombs. It was strafed, torn

and tattered, but it never fell. It stands today as a tribute to those men who manned a .50-caliber, water-cooled machine gun at her base. As one man was gunned down, another took his place.

On the last note of the National Anthem, the “sound of freedom” roared overhead as the Montana Air National Guard’s 186th Fighter Squadron F-15 fighter jets flew a four-ship missing man formation over the ceremony.

“Reminders of the attack are still visible today,” said Col. Sam Barrett, 15th Wing

commander. “The former big barracks, now the headquarters of the Pacific Air Forces, and its bullet-scarred walls are carefully preserved as a constant reminder.”

“The U.S. military shall never again be caught unprepared, and our resolve will never falter. As Americans, we will always remember the heroism, the dedication and painful sacrifice of our servicemen and women on that terrible, terrible day,” Barrett said.

Coinciding with a ceremony conducted by the Navy

and the National Park Service on the lawn of the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center, the Hickam ceremony featured performances by the PACAF Band. In conclusion, the honor guard performed a three-volley salute, which rang out throughout the hallowed grounds at Atterbury Circle.

Lt. Gen. Hawk Carlisle, 13th Air Force commander, spoke about the time of the attacks and the sacrifice of those who wore the uniform in yesteryear. He explained the Army Air corpsmen and

Sailors in 1941 had just finished with a series of major exercises, and were looking forward to a break through the holidays.

“The alert level was high. Sabotage was thought to be the primary threat,” Carlisle said. “But still on that Saturday night, 6 December, the mood was joyful in this Hawaiian paradise.”

The events of the next morning changed their lives forever.

“The next morning, Sunday morning, life started along a serene path as the

veterans will tell us. But soon, in the course of just over two hours, hundreds lost their lives and hundreds more became heroes, trying to save lives,” Carlisle explained.

During the attacks, the Japanese dropped more than 100 bombs on Hickam’s Army Air Field, and nearly every bomb dropped was a direct hit. Twenty-seven bombs were dropped on the main barracks alone. At the time, former Army Air Corps

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Pacific Fleet Band pays homage to USS Arizona Band during commemoration concert See page A-2



Dec. 7 commemoration photos See page A-5, A-6, A-7



Heroes of Dec. 7 See page B-1



Navy hero returns to Pearl Harbor, tells his story See page A-4



USS Utah survivor remembers 'day of infamy' See page A-8



Special Olympics: Winning the gold, winning at life See page B-3



Photo illustration | U.S. photo by MC2 Robert Stirrup

Sailors from the U.S. Pacific Fleet band perform at a commemoration concert for the USS Arizona Band hosted by the U.S. Pacific Fleet Band at the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center at the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument. The band played music from the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Pacific Fleet Band pays homage to USS Arizona Band during commemoration concert

MC2 Robert Stirrup

Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

The U.S. Pacific Fleet Band honored the members of U.S. Navy Band Unit 22, the last band to ever serve on the battleship USS Arizona, during a commemoration concert at the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center at the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument on Dec. 5.

The band performed popular hits from the late 1930s and early 1940s.

“It is a real honor to be out here. The location with the USS Arizona Memorial as the backdrop is perfect, and more importantly to have some of the Pearl Harbor survivors in attendance is truly the highlight of this evening,” said Senior Chief Musician Tom Lawrence. “This is a very important highlight in my career.”

Lou Conter, a USS Arizona Pearl Harbor survivor, offered the opening remarks during the concert.

“During the attack, the

entire band was at their general quarters station passing ammunition beneath gun turret number one when a bomb hit the ship, sinking it in 13 minutes,” Conter said. “My thoughts coming out here each year are with the 1,177 shipmates that died that day, and the 2,403 service members that gave their lives for our country.”

Throughout the concert, audience members had the opportunity to listen to music from NBU 22’s era.

“I thought the concert was great,” said Linda

Jones. “The band did a fantastic job in honoring the USS Arizona’s band.”

According to the U.S. Pacific Fleet website, “On the night of Dec. 6, 1941, there was a band competition called the “Battle of Music” at Bloch Arena at Naval Station Pearl Harbor. It featured Navy bands from “capitol ships” homeported at Pearl Harbor and those attached to shore installations in Hawaii. The USS Arizona band had already won the first round on Sept. 13, 1941, and was not scheduled to play again until

the final competition.”

“During the elimination tournament on the evening of Dec. 6, bands from the USS Pennsylvania (BB 38), USS Tennessee (BB 43) and USS Argonne (AG 31) competed against one another. Several members of the USS Arizona band attended the contest to see their upcoming competition, and to visit with school of music shipmates in the Tennessee band.”

The narrative further describes what happened the morning of the attack. “On the morning of

December 7th, 1941, while the band from the USS Nevada (BB 36) played Morning Colors, the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor occurred. The entire USS Arizona Band, while at battle stations passing ammunition under gun turret number one, was killed in the attack. In the weeks to follow, all the bands that had participated in the “Battle of Music” voted to posthumously award the tournament trophy to Unit Band 22, renaming it the “Arizona Trophy.”

Pearl Harbor survivor interred with shipmates on USS Utah

Story and photos by
Brister Thomas

Contributing Writer

Former Navy Chief Petty Officer David Pirtle Smith, an American hero and a survivor of the Pearl Harbor attack, was laid to rest aboard the sunken USS Utah on Ford Island on Dec. 6.

Full military honors were rendered, including a rifle salute, the sounding of Taps, and a flag-folding and presentation ceremony, by the Navy Region Hawaii Ceremonial Guard and Pacific Fleet Band bugler.

Jim Taylor, retired Navy master chief and Pearl Harbor survivor liaison for Navy Region Hawaii, described Smith as "motivated by patriotism who enlisted right out of high school."

"He dedicated four years to the Navy and 20 years to the Air Force. Dave was a very friendly and happy guy who loved his ship and her crew," Taylor noted.

Dayna Smith and Pat Ward, Smith's daughters, carried the box that held the remains of their departed father down the walkway as the emotional sound of bagpipes filled the air.

Chaplain Lt. Steven Voris of Pearl Harbor Memorial Chapel offered words of comfort to those who attended. "We long for the day when war will be no more," he said.

A bugler played Taps as the bullet casings from the shots fired during the rifle salute were folded into the flag. The flag was then presented to Smith's daughters on behalf of the U.S. Navy.

At the end of the memorial ceremony, the urn was lowered by ship's line to the waiting divers. The divers slowly swam with the remains above the water until they reached the site of the overturned, sunken Utah.

Then with the swiftness of a disappearing sun, Smith's remains were taken under the waters where his final wish was granted as he was placed in the Utah with his fellow shipmates. Pearl Harbor survivors who served aboard the Utah may have their cremains interred



Photo illustration

within the ship's hull by divers.

Navy Diver 1st Class Daniel O'Brien said, "This was one of the most honorable dives I have ever made. It means so much to be able to return a Sailor to his ship."

"As a maritime archeologist, participating in these interment dives is one of the most powerful experiences I am privileged to have because not only am I experiencing an element of the past with the site, but it's also such a privilege and honor to be able to see the family and the survivors, which makes it a continuum experience that's really powerful for me," said Kelly Gleason, a diver with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Papa hanaumoku kea Marine National Monument.

"This was our father's

wish to return to the Utah. We are honored that the military provides such a

meaningful experience for the families," Ward said. "Mother wished she could

be here but her health would not permit it," Dayna shared. "Dad had hoped to be here

today for the reunion. He was president of the Utah association, and this service would have meant so much to him," she continued.

Smith's daughters described him as a big, very soft-spoken man who lived with memories of Dec. 7 every day of his life.

"He had very vivid memories of waking up and looking out the porthole, seeing the planes coming in. He remembers being surprised they were flying on a Sunday," Ward said.

"Then suddenly it dropped a torpedo and simultaneously, he saw the plane lift up and he saw what he called the "meatballs" underneath the plane, and knew they were Japanese. He ran through the galley, warning everyone that they were under attack. He never forgot that day and always felt guilty that he survived and others did not," she said.

"He put family first. Our parents were at home every night for dinner. Nothing ever happened to our family. I always thought that we had the most boring life. But now I realize that was the best thing that ever happened," Dayna said.

She added, "He was completely without artifice. He was the most genuine and most honorable person you could ever meet."



Photo courtesy of Naval History & Heritage Command

This poster was designed by Allen Sandburg and issued by the Office of War Information, Washington, D.C., in 1942, in remembrance of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. The poster also features a quotation from Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address: "... we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain ...".

Diverse Views



Sailors from USS Reuben James (FFG 57) participated in the USS Nevada Memorial service at Hospital Point, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam and escorted several members of the Pearl Harbor survivors. Here are their thoughts:



Logistics Specialist 1st Class (SW)
Donal Fleming

I'm an immigrant and I joined the Navy. I became naturalized in 2001, and all that led me to the singular honor of escorting a Pearl Harbor survivor. It's very emotional and helps connect the present with the past. By escorting them

around and listening to their stories over the last week, I'll be honored to carry his story into the future.

Fire Controlman 1st Class (SW))
Russell Reamer



It's a dream of a lifetime. I have a degree in history and my grandparent talked about this all the time as a kid. It is a dream to greet and be an escort to these guys and talk to them and hear their stories.

Fire Controlman 2nd Class (SW)
Anthony Salcido



It's a great feeling to actually talk to the guys who paved the way for us. I'm honored to be with these guys in this momentous occasion.

(Provided by MC2 (SW) Mark Logico)

Want to see your command featured in Diverse Views?
Got opinions to share?

Drop us a line at editor@hookelenews.com or karen.spangler@navy.mil

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Navy hero returns to Pearl Harbor, tells his story

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Carolyn Viss

Joint Base Pearl Harbor-
Hickam Public Affairs

When Navy 2nd Class Signalman Delton Walling climbed the water tower in the Pearl Harbor shipyard at 6 a.m. on Dec. 7, 1941, he wasn't even there to start a shift – he was going to collect money from a buddy who was on duty. His shift wasn't supposed to start until 4 p.m. What would have been an eight-hour shift was about to turn into 18 hours of devastation.

From 180 feet in the air, he saw the first bomb hit Ford Island at 7:56 a.m., when the first group of 183 Japanese attack planes swooped in beneath the tower to systematically destroy the Navy fleet at Pearl Harbor. The second bomb of the attacks hit the USS Utah.

"From that time on, there's no way I could say I saw it all," said "Wally," now 89 years old.

Bombs began exploding around him as he watched the chaos, death and destruction unfold.

"Within the first 15 minutes, the USS Utah sunk, the California had rolled over, and the Oklahoma was going down," he said. "We were devastated."



Delton Walling, a survivor of the Dec. 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, tosses flowers over the USS Arizona Memorial during the 69th anniversary commemoration on Dec. 7.

Wally had joined the military just a year and a half prior, at age 19. He was so excited to serve in the world's best Navy that he was willing to do whatever it took to join. During a medical screening, the doctors had turned him away, stat-

ing that an old boxing injury – a broken finger on his right hand – had healed in such a way as to disqualify him from enlisting. He asked them if there was anything he could do, and the doctor replied, "Cut it off."

So he went and had his

own finger medically amputated.

Now he was watching his beloved Navy, for which he had already sacrificed one of his appendages, sink into the Pacific Ocean.

"You lose your ego pretty fast," he said, "because, my god, if the Japanese can do this in 20 minutes, you think, what else is in store? You've been told you're the greatest, but you realize you aren't. What you've been taught, in 15 minutes goes right out the window."

Although the attacks, including a second round of 172 aircraft that flew in 30 minutes after the first, were over by 10 a.m., Wally was in the tower all day until midnight.

"You can't leave," he said. "I mean, you just have to stay. We couldn't come down and help with retrieving the bodies; we wouldn't have had anything to help anyway."

His voice trailed off as he remembered the events of the long day. It was chaos, he said, a "terrible scene," with all the ships on fire and people swimming through the mess.

From his position, he had watched as six scout planes from the Enterprise came in, returning from their flight out to sea to look for Japanese aircraft carriers. Night was falling, and there

was mass confusion. U.S. forces fired upon friendly aircraft, killing all but one of the six pilots.

The Japanese had done their damage. Twenty-one ships were badly wounded or sunk entirely, including the USS Arizona, Utah and Oklahoma. One hundred eighty-eight American planes were destroyed. One thousand, one hundred seventy-eight military members and civilians were wounded. And 2,403 American lives were lost.

"Those ships are etched in my memory," he said.

The next day, the U.S. declared war against Japan and Wally was promoted on the spot to E-6. But his service wasn't over. He spent the rest of the war in the South Pacific – two and a half years out to sea, without even putting a foot on shore, under attack all the time. His ship was one of six that were taking on all the casualties, with only four doctors attending all the needs of the patients on board. His job was to sew up the dead in canvas bags and put their personal effects into envelopes to send to their families.

The war ended in 1945, and Wally separated from the Navy. He was 26 and 80 percent disabled, but he went on to become a foreman for a large paper com-

pany for 29 years. He said he also built houses and had the biggest tree service in California until he retired in 1976.

In 2002, Dec. 7 marked another sad anniversary when his wife of 55 years died. But he continues to live his life to the fullest, skydiving and doing as many exciting things as possible around the world and at home in Valley Springs, Calif.

"People say I'm a hero," he said, "but I'm not. In the South Pacific lies the bodies of 54,000 who were killed in the war. They gave their lives for the freedom we have – not our lifestyle. They are my heroes, and I live to tell their story."

Walling often returns to Pearl Harbor and the Arizona Memorial to commemorate the events of that fateful day. This Dec. 7, which marked the 69th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, he gathered with more than 200 survivors for an annual commemoration ceremony at the Pearl Harbor Visitors Center at the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument.

"This is home to me," he said. "I have a lot of feeling for Hawaii and the people of Hawaii. The people are very patriotic. I'll be buried here."

Dec. 7 ceremony honors USS Oklahoma heroes

Karen S. Spangler

Managing Editor

Pearl Harbor survivors and their families, military service members and civilians gathered at the USS Oklahoma Memorial on historic Ford Island on Dec. 7 to honor the 429 Sailors and Marines who lost their lives on the USS Oklahoma during the Pearl Harbor attack.

During the ceremony, the National Park Service Ceremonial Honor Guard presented the colors. Eileen Martinez, chief of interpretation for the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument, conducted a reading of the USS Oklahoma casualty list.

Members of the National Park Service presented a wreath for the sons and daughters of Pearl Harbor survivors.

Edward E. Vezey Jr., an Oklahoma survivor, attended the ceremony and

offered remarks. He has been a frequent visitor to Dec. 7 remembrance events at Pearl Harbor.

"I went to battle with pajama pants, a cap, my boxers and a .45," Vezey said in an interview, recalling where he was during the Dec. 7, 1941 attack.

He also talked about what his former ship meant to him. "It's your mother, your home, and if you spent a lot of time at sea as we did, it's the fundamental island of security," he said.

The number of those who died on Oklahoma was second only to the 1,177 men who perished on the USS Arizona. 'The Okie' was struck by multiple torpedoes and capsized within 12 minutes, trapping hundreds of men below the decks.

Thirty-two crew members were saved two days later when fellow Sailors cut the hull open. Almost 400 of her crew members, most unidentified, are

entombed at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl).

The USS Oklahoma was raised in 1943, made seaworthy and sold for scrap. In May, 1947, she sank in a storm, about 540 miles out of Hawaii while being towed to San Francisco. She rests there now.

The USS Oklahoma Memorial was formally dedicated on Dec. 7, 2007 at a joint ceremony hosted by the USS Oklahoma Memorial Committee and the National Park Service. The memorial is constructed of 429 pieces of three dimensional white marble columns, engraved with the names of each crew member who perished during the attack. The white marble columns are arranged in a "V" shape, designed to resemble Sailors manning the rails. Surrounding the columns are black marble slabs etched with notable quotes from Oklahoma survivors.



The National Park Service Ceremonial Honor Guard presents the Colors at the USS Oklahoma Memorial during a December 7 remembrance ceremony on Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on 7 Dec 2010.

U.S. Navy photo by
David D. Underwood Jr.

DECEMBER 7 1941 - 2010

... a commitment to the men and women who put their lives at risk during the Pacific War to ensure the memory of their service and sacrifice is remembered in future generations.



Ninety-year-old Army veteran and Pearl Harbor Survivor Allen Bodenlos greets his peers as he is escorted by Logistics Specialist 1st Class (SW) Donal Fleming, assigned to USS Reuben James (FFG 57).

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 (SW) Mark Logico

Adm. Patrick M. Walsh, commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, renders a salute after presenting a wreath at the USS Arizona Memorial. The wreath laying was part of a floral tribute commemorating the 69th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor and dedication of the site's new Pearl Harbor Visitor Center.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Michael Hight



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Michael Hight

Wreath presenters, Mal Middlesworth, assisted by Frank Hays, area director for the National Park Service, and Navy Counselor 1st Class Subhana Begum, render a hand salute following the presentation of a memorial wreath. Wreaths were ceremoniously placed for nine ships and six battle sites during the ceremony at the National Park Service's Pearl Harbor Visitor Center.



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Michael Russell

Marines assigned to 3rd Radio Battalion, Marine Corps Base Kaneohe Bay, fire a rifle salute in front of the amphibious dock landing ship USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52).



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Michael Hight

The national ensign flies at half-mast during a ceremony commemorating the 69th anniversary of the Dec. 7, 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 (SW) Mark Logico

Art Herriford, left, president of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, greets fellow veteran DeWayne Chartier during a ceremony commemorating the 69th anniversary of the Dec. 7, 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

A PROMISE 1941 - 2010 FULFILLED ... a at ri serv



The Montana Air National Guard performs a missing man flyover during the 69th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. The National Park Service and the U.S. Navy hosted a joint memorial ceremony commemorating the event themed "A Promise Fulfilled 1941 - 2010."

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 (SW) Mark Logico



(Below) Musician 2nd Class Kristen Snitzer, assigned to the U.S. Pacific Fleet Band, performs "Echo Taps" during the Dec. 7 commemoration ceremony.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 (SW) Mark Logico



(Above) Survivors of the Dec. 7, 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor salute as the U.S. Pacific Command Joint Services Color Guard presents the colors.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Michael Russell

(Right) Pearl Harbor survivor Allen Bodenlos talks with members of a Marine Corps ceremonial rifle team before the start of the commemoration of the 69th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor at the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center at the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Robert Stirrup



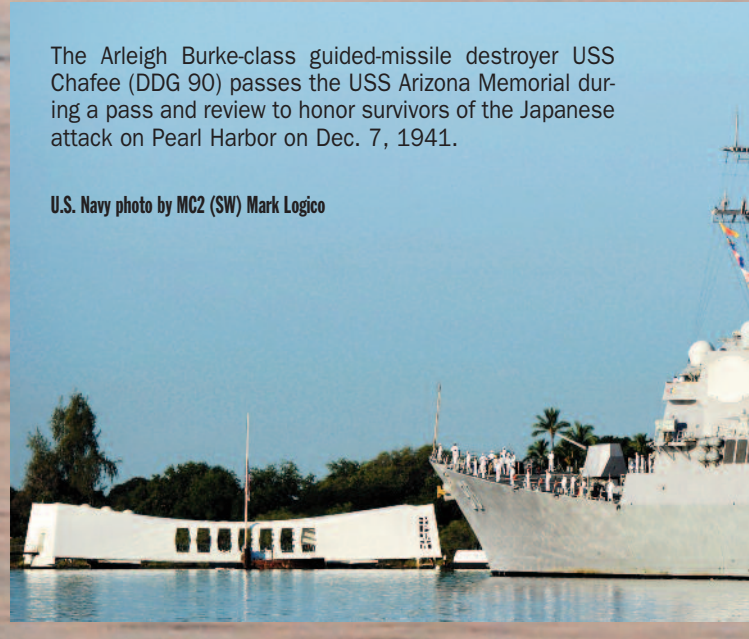
Lt. Gen. Hawk Carlisle presents Phillip Corsello, a former Army Air Corps private, with a plaque that thanked him for his service to his country at the 69th anniversary remembrance ceremony on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on Dec. 7. Carlisle is the 13th Air Force commander.

U.S. Air Force photo by A1C Lauren Main



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Chafee (DDG 90) passes the USS Arizona Memorial during a pass and review to honor survivors of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 (SW) Mark Logico



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commitment to the men and women who put their lives at risk during the Pacific War to ensure the memory of their service and sacrifice is remembered in future generations.

Edward E. Vezey Jr., a USS Oklahoma survivor, speaks during a Dec. 7 remembrance ceremony at the USS Oklahoma Memorial on Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on Dec. 7.

Photo by David D. Underwood Jr.



(Right) Jim Nabors sings the National Anthem at the beginning of the commemoration at the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Michael Hight



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Michael Russell

Sailors render honors on Dec. 6 as the amphibious dock landing ship USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52) passes the USS Arizona Memorial during a scheduled port visit in Hawaii. Pearl Harbor is part of the Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group transiting the U.S. 3rd Fleet area of responsibility returning to homeport in San Diego after a seven-month deployment.

Nevada Sailors remember Dec. 7 attack

Story and photos by
MC2 (SW) Mark Logico

Navy Region Hawaii Public
Affairs

Pearl Harbor survivors, families and friends gathered at the Nevada Memorial on Hospital Point, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on Dec. 8, to remember the actions of USS Nevada (BB 36) and its crew during the Dec. 7, 1941 attack.

Coordinated by the Sailors of USS Reuben James (FFG 57), the memorial service was led by Woody Derby, a survivor from USS Nevada (BB 36), who gave a historical account from his memories of the day that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.

"What an honor it is to be here, sincerely," Derby said. "And there's not a nicer location than here at Hospital Point, up and down the cliff here. It's just a beautiful area."

Derby, who is now 92 years, joined the Navy on Dec. 7, 1938 and served in it for 20 years. While on Nevada, Derby worked in the supply room and was there when the ship was attacked. He remembered the sounds of the bombing, the gushing water that flooded his ship.

Nevada was the only battleship to get underway during the attack. The ship eventually became a target for several attacks that left it



Photo illustration

severely damaged. To save the ship from sinking and to clear the Pearl Harbor channel, the crew finally beached the ship on Hospital Point.

Capt. Taylor Skardon from U.S. Pacific Command was the guest speaker at the memorial service.

"You can imagine on that day, those folks who were on the other ships, fighting to save their ships and their shipmates all of a sudden seeing the Nevada getting underway making its way toward the channel," Skardon said. "It had to be

an uplifting time that did something to their spirits to keep them moving, to continue to fight for their ships."

During the attack, 57 crew members were killed in action defending their ship against Japanese air attacks on the morning of the attack.

Later, two Sailors were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, and 15 were awarded the Navy Cross for their actions on that day.

After Tuesday's service, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 31 invited Derby and several of his Pearl

Harbor survivor peers, families and friends to visit the command's USS Nevada Conference room which features several historical photos of Nevada.

Chief Fire Controlman (SW) Vincent Leddy, assigned to DESRON 31, said that when his commodore, Capt. Richard L. Clemmons Jr., came from a harbor tour one day, he assembled his staff and said he wanted to reconnect with these heroes. Later, the members of DESRON 31 refurbished the conference

room and re-dedicated it to the crew of Nevada.

Clemmons, who was present to greet the Pearl Harbor survivors at the conference room, said thank you on behalf of all the members of the U.S. armed forces.

"I was once told that if you don't remember the past, you are destined to repeat it, and I always thought it was important to remain connected to you all, heroes," Clemmons said. "It's a different era, but there are some of the same challenges

that potentially exist. The message of being ready and being prepared is something that remains an important message today. So it is really special to have you all here and remind us of the importance of being ready, being prepared to make that sacrifice for our country."

Nevada, the second U.S. Navy ship to be named after the 36th state, was the lead ship of the two Nevada-class battleships. Her sister ship was USS Oklahoma (BB 37).

Nevada served in both world wars. During WWI, Nevada was based in Bantry Bay, Ireland for the last few months of the war to support the supply convoys that were sailing to and from Great Britain.

In WWII, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Nevada was salvaged and modernized at Puget Sound Navy Yard. Nevada participated in the Normandy landings, the invasions of southern France, Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

At the end of WWII, the Navy decided that Nevada was too old to be retained in the post-war fleet, so Nevada became a target ship in the Bikini atomic bomb experiments on July 1946. Nevada withstood two atomic blasts but was heavily damaged and radioactive. The battleship was eventually sunk during a naval gunfire exercise in 1948.

USS Utah survivor remembers 'day of infamy'

Story and photo by
Brister Thomas

Contributing Writer

Former Fireman 1st Class Gilbert Meyer, a Pearl Harbor survivor, was excited to be promoted to fireman first class on Dec 6, 1941, just one day before the Japanese attack on the Navy fleet at Pearl Harbor.

In his soft-spoken Texan accent, he told about what happened 69 years ago.

"I had the mid-watch that night and was really tired. After my watch, I went to the galley and we drank coffee and discussed what we would do if the Japanese attacked," he remembered.

As Meyer recounted the hours that led up to the attack, he reminisced about the good news of his promotion. "I got to sleep in luxury on a cot in the fire room. Everyone else on board were on hammocks," he said.



Photo illustration

Meyer said that he barely woke up as the first torpedo hit. "I was sleeping on the starboard side, so I was safe. The torpedoes came

from the channel on the port side."

He discussed how the second torpedo hit and the battle lanterns were not opera-

tional. The steam fell to zero and the lights went out.

"My good friend, John Reeves Crain, died then. We only knew each other six months, but back then, that was a long time," Meyer said.

Meyer explained that there were three of them who had just been promoted to firemen first class - Crain, Leonard Lew Purifoy and himself.

Meyer spoke more about that day so long ago, "After the lights went out, the ship began to list and I knew I had to get off. I started to run off in my skivvies and shoes, but once I made it off the ship I did not have my shoes. I have no idea what happened to them."

Meyer continued, "The ship was rolling and there were large timbers on board and they rolled off and killed some. As we all got to shore, the wives from the officer housing told us to

run in their homes and find any clothes we could."

He recounted how they were in grave danger because many Sailors either could not swim or were drowning in the oil that had spilled due to all the heavy strafing. He also told how everyone found a way to help - by either shooting rifles at enemy planes or rescuing Sailors from the water.

Meyers explained that after the attack was over, Sailors would walk onto the quarterdeck of any ship and give their rate to see if anyone needed assistance. If they did, that is where they would work for the day.

A one-cent postcard was sent to Meyer's parents to notify them of his status after the attack. The postcard was pre-typed with multiple options: I am well; I have been admitted to hospital as wounded/sick/serious/not serious; I am getting on well, hope to

return to duty soon. Sailors had to scratch off the items that were not appropriate and the card usually took three- to six weeks to reach their families on the mainland.

Meyer's nephew, Gilbert Benton, joined him on his trip to Pearl Harbor this year. "This is an incredibly huge honor to witness the area where my uncle was so long ago. We feel extremely proud right now," Gilbert said.

Meyer's great-niece, Kristie Benton, also accompanied him on the trip. "I think I got my love for history from him. I am a history teacher now, and it is amazing seeing firsthand what I have studied in books for years," Kristie said.

Today, only four USS Utah survivors remain.

Meyer summed up his experiences from Dec. 7, 1941. "I was a lucky son-of-a-gun during World War II," he said.

'Hawk's' final flight as 13th AF commander

Lt. Gen. Herbert "Hawk" Carlisle, 13th Air Force commander, takes in the view of the Hawaiian Islands on Nov. 30 during his final flight as 13th AF commander. Carlisle's final flight was supported by the 15th Wing's 535th Airlift Squadron at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. Carlisle has been confirmed for assignment as deputy chief of staff, operations, plans and Requirements, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.

U.S. Air Force photo by Mark Bates



Presidential Proclamation for National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

President Barack Obama

Nearly 70 years ago, on Dec. 7, 1941, our service members and civilians awoke on a quiet Sunday to a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor by Japanese forces. Employing whatever weapons were at hand, those who defended Hawaii that fateful morning stand as examples of the selfless heroism that has always characterized the Armed Forces of the United States. More than 3,500 Americans were killed or wounded, and the images of burning battleships and the grief for lives lost were forever seared into our national memory.

The deadly attack on Pearl Harbor did not accomplish its mission of breaking the American spirit. Instead, it reinforced our resolve. Americans responded with unity and courage to a tragedy that President Franklin D. Roosevelt called "a date which will live in infamy." In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, thousands of resolute individuals immediately volunteered their service to a grieving nation. Sixteen million of America's sons and daughters served during World War II, and more than 400,000 paid the ultimate sacrifice in

defense of life and liberty. Countless other patriots served on the home front, aiding the war effort by working in manufacturing plants, participating in rationing programs, or planting victory gardens. In the face of great loss, America once again showed the resilience and strength that have always characterized our great country.

The Allied Forces battled the scourge of tyranny and ultimately spread the transformative march of freedom. As we recognize the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II this year, we honor not only those who gave their lives that December day, but also all those in uniform who traveled to distant theaters of war to halt the progression of totalitarianism and hate. In honor of all who have borne the cost of battle throughout America's history, let us pledge to meet our debt of honor and uphold the ideals they fought to preserve.

The Congress, by Public Law 103 308, as amended, has designated Dec. 7 of each year as "National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day." Now, therefore, I, Barack Obama, president of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Dec. 7, 2010, as National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

Hickam Dec. 7

Continued from A-1

Pvt. Joseph Corsello was a resident of the barracks, but by a stroke of providence he was on guard duty when the attacks began and his dorms were bombed.

"The first thing I did was look for a place to hide," Corsello remembered. "I was standing next to an old wooden building at the time and when we opened it up, it was full of ammunition: guns, 50-calibers, 30-calibers, 45-automatics and all kinds of weapons. We set that up outside and waited. After the first wave left, we looked for somewhere else to set up so we could fight them. But it was a little more than we were prepared for."

Don Thaw, another survivor who vividly remembers the events from his perspective, was a Hawaiian Air Depot civilian employee. Thaw, a sheet metal shop foreman, worked on the aircraft at Hickam for four months when the attacks occurred.

"As soon as the bombs started falling, I left the house in a hurry," he said,

remembering his reaction was so quick he forgot to tell his wife he was leaving. "She was busy hanging out the morning laundry in the backyard of our civilian base housing."

"When I got to the hangar, you could see how a bomb fell through the roof causing structural damages as well as destroying the aircraft we had scheduled for maintenance," he recalled. "The flat roof building next door was where we kept our tools, and fortunately not much damage was done there."

Thaw was eventually credited in 1948 by the Department of the Army with a Commendation for Meritorious Civilian Service for his actions that day. With disregard for his own life, he gave assistance to the wounded, removing them from bombed and burning buildings in the face of enemy attacks.

"Those men who survived the attacks have felt a responsibility to remember the true heroes, the 189 who gave their lives," said Jessie Higa, Hickam Field survivors' liaison. "This is our heritage; this is our legacy."

Remembrance ceremony honors USS Utah

Story and photo by
Brister Thomas

Contributing Writer

USS Utah (BB 31) rests on the west side of Ford Island in Pearl Harbor. Pearl Harbor survivors, veterans, active duty service members and civilians gathered along the shoreline on Dec. 6 to pay respects and remember the Utah, her crew and the sacrifices they made 69 years ago.

According to the plaque on the memorial, 58 Sailors were killed during the attack. Since 1941, 11 Utah survivors have been interred in the ship by Navy and National Park Service divers, including a ceremony for former Navy Chief Petty Officer David Pirtle Smith, held earlier on Monday.

Chief Yeoman Albert T. D. Wagner also had the ashes of one of his twin daughters, Nancy Lynne, in his locker aboard ship on Dec. 7, 1941. He was waiting for a chaplain to come aboard and for the Utah to go out on maneuvers so her ashes could be scattered at sea in the old Navy tradition. The urn containing the ashes of the tiny baby girl went down with the Utah.

Baby Nancy's twin sister, Mary Kreigh attended Monday's remembrance ceremony along with her daughter, Nina Kreigh, and presented a floral wreath in memory of her sister.

"I come every year to pay respects to my sister. We do not even have birth



Pearl Harbor survivors, veterans, active duty service members and civilians gathered along the shoreline on Ford Island on Dec. 6 to pay respects and remember the USS Utah, her crew and the sacrifices they made 69 years ago.

certificates. Nancy and I were born in the Philippines at three pounds each. Nancy had the cord wrapped around her neck and died in two days. I was pronounced dead three times to my mom. She said I was always the stubborn one," Mary related.

Wreaths were also presented by the USS Utah Association, Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors, and National Park Service.

Superintendent Paul DePrey of the National

Park Service welcomed those in attendance. "It's a real pleasure to have you all here. I do want to thank those of you who came from USS Pearl Harbor. It's important that we have your presence here."

DePrey discussed the Utah and her missions. "This pier reaches out to a once mighty vessel. The Utah was commissioned Aug. 31, 1911. She ferried refugees and served as the flagship in European waters. The Utah performed vital service as a

mobile target, and this service brought her to the waters in Hawaii where she aided in the development of aviation and submarine attack strategies," DePrey explained.

"Now the mission of the USS Utah continues. Her final role includes that of which she is now, a final resting place for her Sailors. She is the reason for this memorial and her presence is a reminder of the terrible toll taken on Dec. 7. May her final role be her most impressive," DePrey continued.

Capt. Lawrence Scruggs, chief staff officer at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH), noted, "It's always a wonderful time from our perspective here at Joint Base PHH to be able to be with the families of the brave men of the best generation that we've known.

To the Pearl Harbor survivors, you are the epitome of today's Navy."

To the families of the Utah Sailors, he said, "Rest comfortable knowing we will continue to guard the veterans that

we have here."

Chaplain Lt. Steve Voris of the Pearl Harbor Memorial Chapel concluded the ceremony with the words from the day the memorial was dedicated by Senator Frank Moss. "While we honor those that gave their last full measure of devotion, all of us hope and pray that the time will come we no longer need to dedicate memorials to men who die in battle, that we will dedicate memorials to those who live in peace," he said.

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