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## Navy hero returns to Pearl Harbor, tells his story

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

The World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument was formerly known as the USS Arizona Memorial Visitor Center.

Themed "A Promise Fulfilled 1941 – 2010," the ceremony was held on 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 National Park Service Director Jonathan Jarvis. "On a quiet Sunday morning nearly 70 years ago, the looming conflict that would consume the entire world announced itself with the sound of airplanes overhead."

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 World War II veterans attended.

At 7:55 a.m., the exact moment the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor began, attendees observed a moment of silence. USS Chafee (DDG 90) sailed through the harbor and rendered honors to the USS Arizona Memorial while the Montana Air National Guard flew four F-15 aircraft over the memorial in a "missing man" formation.

Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Thomas Strickland was the keynote speaker for the commemoration and dedication.

"We are humbled to be in the presence of over one hundred survivors here today," said Strickland. "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 World War II. Visitors entering the center travel the terrible destruction of Pearl Harbor to the moment of triumph on the deck of the Missouri."

A Pearl Harbor survivor from USS Nevada (BB 36), Woody Derby, said he was impressed with the new 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.

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