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## Nevada Sailors Remember Pearl Harbor Attack

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PEARL HARBOR (NNS) -- Pearl Harbor survivors, families and friends gathered at the Nevada Memorial on Hospital Point at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam 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 Nevada, who gave a historical account from his memories of the day Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.

"What an honor it is to be here, sincerely," said Derby. "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 old, joined the Navy 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 and 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 the ship 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," said Skardon. "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 actions on that day.

After the 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 Capt. Richard L. Clemmons Jr., the commodore of DESRON 31, 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 rededicated 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," said Clemmons. "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. Nevada's sister ship was USS Oklahoma (BB 37).

Nevada served in both world wars. During World War I, 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 World War II, 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 World War II, 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.

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