



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
71st Anniversary Pearl Harbor Day Commemoration
Pearl Harbor Visitor Center
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
Admiral Cecil D. Haney
7 December 2012
As Prepared for Delivery**

Good Morning and Aloha. It is great to see you here today.

Lieutenant Governor Schatz, Honorable Rhea Suh, distinguished guests, Pearl Harbor Survivors, World War II veterans and all those who have served, or continue to serve, in our Armed Forces. I am humbled and grateful to be part of this ceremony.

It has been 71 years since that infamous day when Pearl Harbor was attacked. Imagine what it was like here in Hawaii on that fateful day. Although the winds of war were stirring in 1941, we were not expecting to be attacked in the way that we were.

It was a beautiful Sunday morning, much like today. More than 100 ships of the Pacific Fleet were here in the harbor. Crew members were just starting their day. Sailors were preparing their uniforms for duty. Some were sitting down to breakfast. Others were attending church services when the drone of approaching aircraft was first heard.

On that peaceful morning, as the first bombs fell and the torpedoes hit the water, our forces hadn't realized that the aircraft they were hearing were the enemy. When they heard explosions, saw ships being destroyed and their comrades dying, they quickly understood what was happening. After the initial shock, they sprung into action, using the guns that they could find to fight back.

One example, a story that does not often get told, but that was so typical of the courage and heroism of our military that day, was that of the crews of the destroyers *Cassin* and *Downes*, and the battleship *Pennsylvania*.

These ships were immovable; they were trapped while under repair in Dry Dock 1. But like so many that day, these Sailors struggled to restore power to their ships, ready their guns and fought whole heartedly until *Cassin* and *Downes* were destroyed by bombs, including incendiary bombs that caused a huge fire in the dry dock. The fire eventually set both destroyers ablaze, causing the warheads on torpedoes inside of *Downes* to explode, taking out both destroyers. I can't imagine trying to fight a ship while high and dry in dry dock.

Imagine what it must have looked like from where you are sitting after an hour into the attack. Ships were on fire, listing, sinking, and spilling out their oil into the water. Columns of smoke lifted into the sky. You would hear the ceaseless droning of airplanes as they flew over the harbor on their attack runs, the echoes of machine gun fire, the concussion of explosions and the sounds of chaos from those working diligently to respond. Imagine the

smell from the smoke, fuel, oil and the explosives. Paradise had been transformed that day into perdition.

Many of those responders, our Sailors, Soldiers, Marines and Coastguardsmen, were just young men, kids as young as 17 or 18 years old. Consider how difficult it was for them as they struggled to save their ships, planes and each other.

Although history has revealed how we were surprised that day, the determination and will of our Armed Forces to fight against incredible odds gave the Japanese a glimpse of their overall fate in World War II as they woke a sleeping giant, the United States of America.

As for me, I enjoy listening to our Pearl Harbor Survivors recount their experiences that day and will discuss three such stories representing the many heroic deeds during that day and beyond.

I remember the story told to me by Gery Porter. Gery, can you please stand?

Gery was assigned to the battleship *West Virginia*. As a Machinist Mate he had just been assigned temporary duty to the galley. Now not everyone appreciates their assignment to the galley, but Gery certainly did, at least that day. He told me that if he had been not been in the galley that day, he would not have survived the attack. The battleship *West Virginia* was hit by two bombs and at least seven torpedoes that day, which blew huge holes in her port side. Skillful damage control prevented capsizing, but she quickly sank to the bottom.

Gery fought fires on his ship and others throughout the harbor well into the night. After Pearl Harbor, he went on to serve on several other warships to include service on the escort carrier *Bogue* in the Atlantic and Light Aircraft Carrier *Langley* in the Pacific campaigns. Thank you for your tremendous efforts throughout the war.

Last year, while I was on Ford Island looking over at the Arizona Memorial, I had the unique opportunity to meet Ewalt Shatz, another survivor. During the attack he was onboard the destroyer *Patterson*. That day his ship was being prepared to move into the yards for repairs. Their boilers were being taken apart. When the alarms were sounded, most of the experienced Sailors went below to put the boiler back together, leaving the junior Sailors to fight off the attack. Ewalt found himself manning a .50 caliber machine gun and was credited with shooting down one of the attacking Japanese aircraft.

Ewalt, will you please stand?

That was some good shooting that day. I also understand it was your first time shooting the .50 cal machine gun too. Thank you for your courage and tenacity, our Nation is truly grateful.

After the attack on December 7th, our Nation was committed to victory in the Pacific. The men and women of the Pearl Harbor Naval Ship Yard worked to resurrect our sunken fleet, putting back into service many of those ships sunk during the attack. Our forces fought

valiantly throughout the Pacific. In those first difficult months of the war, we struggled to inflict serious harm on the enemy. At the Battle of Midway, just six months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, our forces defeated the Imperial Japanese navy. From that moment on, our Nation was on the offensive, all the way across the Pacific to victory.

Our Pearl Harbor Survivors and World War II veterans, many of the men here with us today, went on to fight in some of our Nation's most historic battles. They fought, bled and sacrificed in remote islands such as Guadalcanal, the Solomon Islands, Peleliu, Palau, Tarawa, Papua New Guinea, Corregidor and others. They ultimately achieved victory in every one of these battles. This year we have commemorated the 70th anniversary of these various campaigns. I have had the opportunity to see some of these places myself as I participated in commemoration ceremonies. I was struck by how remote and inhospitable these places were. I was able to catch a rare glimpse of history that has affected my thinking as I work to ensure warfighting readiness is a top priority for today's Pacific Fleet. I applaud each of you who participated in these battles and helped our Nation win.

From the surprise attack here at Pearl Harbor to victory in Japan on August 14, 1945, less than four years had gone by. In that span of time, our Nation had 'come of age, from innocence to valor', from being surprised to victory.

In 1996 while I was commanding officer of the submarine *USS Honolulu*, I met another Pearl Harbor survivor, Louis Nockold, and his wife Sally. He had been onboard the light cruiser *Honolulu* during the attack. So, for me, it is fantastic to also have Raymond Emery, who you heard from at this ceremony, who was also on Light Cruiser *Honolulu*. You and Lou were shipmates at the time.

I was fortunate to be able to have Lou onboard my submarine on numerous occasions to talk to my crew. He told me how he was a trained gunner and had to use an axe to get his gun that was locked in the armory during the attack. He explained how his ship received damage from a bomb that hit the pier only 20 feet away.

Once, I was able to have him up on the bridge of the submarine *Honolulu* as we sailed from the pier to the ammunition depot at Lualualei. As we sailed along, he pointed out the details of what the harbor looked like that day and the devastation that had occurred throughout the harbor. For me it was the education of a lifetime. As he visited with the crew he held both officers and enlisted spellbound with his vivid history lessons. I know they and I will never forget what he taught them. We learned from Lou how the men who fought for our nation on December 7th, 1941 had 'came of age' quickly as they responded to surprise.

Lou served throughout the rest of the war. He became an officer and served in submarines during the Korean and Cold Wars. He also told me about some of the hairy situations they would get into at that time. Their diesel submarines were not nearly as maneuverable as our submarines are today. Lou served as the commanding officer of two diesel submarines before retiring after 33 years in the Navy.

But after retirement, he continued to serve our Nation as a school teacher starting up a Navy Junior ROTC unit in the high school that he also taught computer science in. He was passionate about teaching future generations, especially about the attack at Pearl Harbor. He believed it was important to teach them to be always vigilant. I know he would have enjoyed seeing the kids, our children, as part of this ceremony today. It is such a great way to keep this valuable message alive. Louis committed his life's work to the service of our Nation and I am thankful he did.

Regrettably Louis is no longer with us, but I am so pleased to see his wife Sally here today. Thank you Sally for being here.

The Pearl Harbor Survivors and World War II Veterans have left a tremendous legacy that has stood for more than seven decades. Because of the efforts of the 'greatest generation' during the war and in the decades after, we achieved victory and have since maintained our readiness to address challenges in the Pacific and throughout the world.

Every time I visit the Arizona Memorial, I think of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association's motto "Remember Pearl Harbor-Keep America Alert-Eternal vigilance is the price for liberty". I couldn't agree more.

Your message to our Nation has been heard loud and clear and will remain relevant far into the future. Punctuated by the surprise attack of the USS *Cole*, and of course 9/11, we get it, and those of us in uniform today will continue to carry out the warfighting ethos you Pearl Harbor Survivors and World War II veterans have established.

Today, once again, our young people in our military are putting themselves in harm's way to protect our freedom. While surprised, this generation of Americans has responded accordingly, has gone to war and followed your example. They have 'come of age, from innocence to valor'. We remain vigilant and watchful, despite challenges that we face in a turbulent world and amidst an uncertain economy. We are working diligently to avoid surprise.

In closing, I would like to say how impressed I am on a daily basis by the quality of today's Sailors, Marines, Airmen, Soldiers and Coastguardsmen who volunteer to serve to defend our Nation. They carry on the proud legacy of those who survived Pearl Harbor and fought for victory in the Pacific.

To our Pearl Harbor Survivors and World War II veterans, our Nation is grateful for your achievements in the war and over the decades since. Each of you has much to be proud of.

Thank you for your commitment to our Nation, your courage under fire, and your loyalty to each other.

May your courageous efforts remind our grateful Nation of the importance today of maintaining and sustaining an appropriate defense capability and the talent needed as we continue to support and promote peace and security in this uncertain world we live in.

May God bless our Nation, our Joint Services and each of you who have served.

Mahalo.