



Day of Infamy Remembered

On Friday, December 7, 2018, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 809, its Auxiliary and guests, remembered comrades who suffered and perished at Pearl Harbor 75 years ago. These victims must remain alive in our minds and hearts, for they were the first to face the enemy in open combat.

All the suffering and pain in World War II, all the tremendous victories achieved later in the war, the defeat of two of the 20th Century's worst tyrants, all began for America at Pearl Harbor.

After a brief showing of a "1941 news reel," this remembrance program began with a flag salute, opening prayer, Pledge of Allegiance.

VFW Jr. Vice Commander John Churvti led the program and made these comments:

"Welcome all of you to our Pearl Harbor Day Program. Today we remember the men and women who were on Oahu

Island on December 7, 1941.

There, civilians and military personnel were subjected to an unprovoked attack by the military forces of the Japanese Empire.

Their goal was to destroy the U.S. Pacific fleet in order to give them free reign to attack their neighbors in their growing war on the people and nations of the Pacific. To do so, they chose a Sunday morning to catch our forces off guard. Their naval forces launched aircraft in two strategic air strikes aimed at Pearl Harbor and the Army airfields. Using divebombers, torpedo bombers and fighter aircraft along with submarine assaults from the sea, the Imperial Japanese Navy sank or damaged 21 ships of our Pacific fleet. Ninety-seven Navy and Marine Corps aircraft were destroyed. The Army Air Corps lost 74 planes and had 128 damaged in the attack. The Navy lost

1999 men killed in action with 710 wounded. The Marines lost 109 killed in action with 69 wounded. The Army had 233 personnel killed and 364 wounded in action. The civilian population lost 49 people killed. The Japanese Empire had done all of this damage without a declaration of war, without provocation, making this deed one of infamy and forever remembered as an attack of an evil war aggressive nation. This attack would propel America into the largest war in history, where no citizen was left untouched by the conflict.

This attack left the Pacific fleet in shambles and in ruin but never has our resolve been stronger. Through unbelievable efforts by our fellow citizens and military, The Oklahoma was raised from the bottom of Pearl Harbor, The California was raised and repaired and returned to service. The West Virginia was raised and re-

joined the fleet. The Tennessee was repaired and took an active part in the war. The Nevada was raised. The Pennsylvania was repaired and joined the fleet once more. The Maryland was repaired and took to the high seas again. The Oglala was repaired and back in action. The Helena, The Honolulu, Raleigh and Shaw were all repaired and back in action to meet our Far East foes. All these ships would serve for the remainder of World War II, helping America achieve ultimate victory over an aggressive enemy. The USS Arizona would remain a total loss and today remains with the USS Utah enshrined at Pearl Harbor as a gravesite and a lasting memorial to that fateful day. Today we reflect on World War II in which towns and cities and nations would be destroyed, with some 50 million people losing their lives, to finally end with the atomic bomb deto-

nating in an earth shattering explosion, erasing the city of Nagasaki, but bringing peace to the world once more....it all began for us on a quiet Sunday morning 75 years ago."

A symbolic shrine was prepared. "Taps" was played.

The guest speaker was Freeholder Joan Voss. The National Anthem was played.

Jr. Vice Commander John Churvti's concluding comments: "The United States Navy would survive the attack on Pearl Harbor and World War II. I can't say the same for the Japanese Imperial fleet. Of the six aircraft carriers that took part in the attack, The Zuikaku, The Shokaku, The Akagi, The Kaga, The Hiryu, and The Soryu all now lay at the bottom of the Pacific. As cold, dark, rusting reminders to what happens when good people refuse to let evil prevail." ###