

## **USS PEARL HARBOR REMEMBERS THE DAY OF INFAMY**

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On Sunday, December 7, 1941 at 0755 in the morning, Pearl Harbor, HI was hit with a crippling attack from the Empire of Japan. Over 2,300 servicemen lost their lives. To honor their sacrifice and to never forget what happened that day, the National Pearl Harbor Survivors' Association held this year's National Convention in Fredericksburg, Texas.

Fredericksburg is the boyhood home of Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, the former Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet during World War II. The NPHSA decided to hold the convention from 04-08 December, 2008 in Fredericksburg for a variety of reasons, but mainly because most survivors are becoming unable to travel to Pearl Harbor and this location still provided a sense of honor and remembrance and was close enough for most survivors to attend.

Included in the convention were three sailors from the USS PEARL HARBOR. ENS Adam Turpin of Henderson, KY, PS1 Romel Serencio of Guam, and CS2 Michele Reyes of Los Angeles, CA traveled from San Diego, CA to spend time with the survivors and to learn their stories. "I have never met a group of men so dedicated, so loyal, to their country as those men who survived

the attack," reflected ENS Turpin, "They faced a catastrophic, life-altering event and became heroes for what they did with it. To call them the greatest generation is the absolute truth. Attending this convention and learning their stories is a once in a lifetime event that I will never forget."

USS PEARL HARBOR is the last of the United States Navy's four new cargo variants of the WHIDBEY ISLAND class of Landing Dock Ships and the first ship to carry the name Pearl Harbor to commemorate the heroic actions of the members of the armed services as well as the citizens of the Island of Oahu during the attack on December 7, 1941. She recently completed a six month Western Pacific Deployment in November.

The members of USS PEARL HARBOR had the opportunity to interact with several of the survivors including Mal Middlesworth, the President of the NPHSA. "It is an honor and a privilege to have members of the ship that bears our namesake in our company," stated Mr. Middlesworth. They also participated in the local Weihnachten Parade, the Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day Ceremony, and the NPHSA Banquet at the close of the four day convention. During the parade, the sailors of the USS PEARL HARBOR had the privilege of walking with the Sons and Daughters of the Pearl Harbor Survivors. The next day, the sailors were able to mix with all the survivors at the Remembrance Day Ceremony, where the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

General James E. Cartwright, USMC, delivered the keynote speech. At the close of the convention, members of the USS PEARL HARBOR attended the NPHSA evening banquet where General Cartwright again addressed the audience and spoke about the nation's greatly adaptive and vastly superior military force that was forged from the trials of the greatest generation.

In the stress of our lives, it is easy to forget the magnitude of what these men did that day. But even with our hectic lives and busy schedules, we must never let the distractions of our daily lives allow us to forget the American valor that occurred on December 7, 1941. The USS PEARL HARBOR sailors are truly grateful for the opportunity to experience the real life heroes of that fateful day. It was an event that they will never forget.