



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

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Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

(Greetings)

Today, we remember the event that changed the course of history and altered America's destiny. The December 7, 1941, Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor tested the resolve of Americans like never before, and with it produced what has been called the "greatest generation."

This infamous day 75 years ago produced many U.S. casualties: more than 3,500 were left dead or wounded, 21 ships were sunk or damaged, and more than 340 aircraft were damaged or destroyed. Although

it was a day of immense tragedy, it was also a day which revived our national pride and our great American spirit.

We remember the events of December 7, 1941, but more importantly, we recall the thousands of Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen and Coast Guardsmen who perished during the terrible ambush and in the tumultuous years that followed.

Following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's speech to Congress declaring our nation at war is perhaps the most iconic speech in American history — particularly Roosevelt's famous line describing the outrageous attack the previous day:

"Yesterday, December 7, 1941 — a date which will live in infamy — the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the empire of Japan."

President Roosevelt spoke with prophetic words when he stated, “No matter how long it may take us to overcome the premeditated invasion, the American people, in their righteous might, will win through to absolute victory ... with the unbounding determination of our people – we will gain the inevitable triumph – so help us God.”

The attack on Pearl Harbor awoke a sleeping giant, and with it, helped strengthen America’s enduring values of freedom, dedication and service. The long odds our nation faced during those dark days in 1941 served to fuel the indomitable spirit of our country, and carried us through to ultimate victory against the Axis powers.

The attack on Pearl Harbor taught us that we must be ever-vigilant against enemies of our way of life. It

taught us the necessity of maintaining a strong national defense, and a well-trained and well-equipped military, able to thwart the efforts of freedom-hating tyrants.

For nearly 60 years, the lessons learned from the attack on Pearl Harbor kept our nation safe and secure. But September 11, 2001, taught us that we must never let our guard down; that while we enjoy an abundance of freedom, we are not exempt from danger.

The attacks that occurred on December 7, 1941, and September 11, 2001, prove one thing; our people may be attacked and our buildings destroyed, but our enemies will never be successful in crushing our democracy or destroying the American way of life.

Many Pearl Harbor attack survivors went on to serve in other places; some became casualties of other

battles. Many returned home to their families and friends and quietly resumed their lives as civilians. Yet, as the decades have passed, sadly, many survivors are no longer with us.

But, their contributions, their sacrifice, their steadfast devotion to duty, God, country and to their families, have provided us with examples of true character we need to emulate every day of our lives. Today, we continue to be inspired by their dignity and perseverance, and strengthened by the memory of their actions. May we leave here equally resolved in our determination to serve our nation and fellow man as selflessly as they did.

God bless you, God bless our service members, veterans and their families, and God bless America.

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