



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

27 SERVICE MEMBERS TAKE PART IN JOINT REENLISTMENT CEREMONY ON 72ND ANNIVERSARY OF PEARL HARBOR ATTACK

Ceremony Held Onboard the USS Missouri, with the USS Arizona Memorial in View

Pearl Harbor, HI – (December 7, 2013) – With the sunken USS *Arizona*, the battleship signifying America's entry into World War II in the backdrop, 27 service members of the Armed Forces today reenlisted for duty onboard the retired USS *Missouri*, the battleship where the war ended.

The special Joint Reenlistment Ceremony, held in partnership with the Battleship Missouri Memorial, took place on the forward main deck under the Missouri's Gun Turret One, allowing the participants to look toward the USS *Arizona* Memorial as they recited their oaths.

"Our deepest appreciation and gratitude goes to these service members and their families for recommitting their service to America's Armed Forces, and the preservation of our nation's freedom," commented Michael A. Carr, President and COO of the Battleship Missouri Memorial. "We remember all those who were serving in Pearl Harbor 72 years ago, and honor those who are following in their footsteps."

Among the 27 Armed Forces personnel taking part in today's reenlistment ceremony was Chief Master Sergeant Paul Koester, 58, the Air Force's oldest current active-duty member. A 39-year veteran, Chief Koester's military career spans from the Vietnam Conflict to Operation New Dawn in Iraq. Today's ceremony marked his final reenlistment.

Each reenlisting service member participating in today's ceremony was invited to fly his or her own National Ensign above the USS *Missouri*, and received a commemorative flag certificate from the USS Missouri Memorial Association, caretaker of the Battleship Missouri Memorial.

Officiating today's ceremony was Rear Adm. Alma Grocki, Deputy Chief of Staff for Fleet Maintenance for the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Rear Adm. Grocki was born and raised in Honolulu and holds the distinction of being the first woman from Hawaii appointed to the United States Naval Academy, graduating in 1981.

It was 72 years ago today, December 7, 1941, "a date which will live in infamy," as proclaimed by President Franklin Roosevelt, when Pearl Harbor and other military installations in Hawaii and the Pacific were attacked by Imperial Japan, thrusting the United States into World War II.

Construction of the USS *Missouri* (BB-63), the last battleship ever built for America, began in the Brooklyn Navy Yard on January 6, 1941, 11 months before the attack. The "Mighty Mo" was launched on January 29, 1944 and sent to protect America's freedom in the war's major battles of the Pacific Theater. World War II ended and peace was restored onboard the USS *Missouri* on September 2, 1945, when Imperial Japan surrendered to the Allied Forces. The *Missouri's* famed "Surrender Deck" is now a must-see monument for visitors to the battleship.

Since opening on January 29, 1999 as the Battleship Missouri Memorial, military ceremonies have been conducted onboard the Mighty Mo on an almost daily basis, including reenlistments, promotions, retirements, and change of commands for personnel serving in all Armed Forces branches. Counting today's joint reenlistment ceremony, the *Missouri* has hosted over 800 military ceremonies in 2013.

Battleship Missouri Memorial

The Battleship Missouri Memorial is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. General admission, which includes choice of an optional tour, is \$22 per adult and \$11 per child (4-12). Military, *kama'aina* (local resident) and school group pricing is available. For information or reservations, call (toll-free) 1-877-644-4896 or visit USSMissouri.org.

The Battleship Missouri Memorial, located a mere ship's length from the USS Arizona Memorial, completes a historical visitor experience that begins with the "day of infamy" and the sinking of the USS Arizona in Pearl Harbor and ends with Imperial Japan's surrender aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

Following an astounding career that spans five decades and three wars, from World War II to the Korean conflict to the Liberation of Kuwait, the "Mighty Mo" was decommissioned and donated to the USS Missouri Memorial Association, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which operates the battleship as a historic attraction and memorial.

The Association oversees her care and preservation with the support of visitors, memberships, grants and the generosity of donors.

#

Images



Link to image: <http://i.imgur.com/oC7Aw3r.jpg>

Caption: 27 Armed Forces members reenlisted today, December 7, in a special Joint Reenlistment Ceremony held in Pearl Harbor under the big guns of the Battleship Missouri Memorial. Rear Adm. Alma Grocki (far left), Deputy Chief of Staff for Fleet Maintenance for the U.S. Pacific Fleet, officiated the ceremony.

Photo credit: Navy Public Affairs Support Element West, Det. Hawaii



Link to image: <http://i.imgur.com/o01WY0v.jpg>

Caption: After taking part in a Joint Reenlistment Ceremony onboard the USS *Missouri*, Paul Koester, 58, the Air Force's oldest current active-duty member, raised the Stars and Stripes above the Mighty Mo. Koester was one of 27 Armed Forces members to reenlist in today's ceremony held in Pearl Harbor on the 72nd anniversary of the attack that thrust America into World War II.

Photo credit: [Battleship Missouri Memorial](#)

Media Contact:

Patrick Dugan

808-539-3411/808-741-2712

Patrick.Dugan@AnthologyGroup.com

Jaclyn Hawse

(808) 455-1600 ext. 246

JaclynH@ussmissouri.org