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HAWAII NEWS

Remembering, honoring, celebrating the 73rd anniversary of the end of WWII

By [Rob Shikina](#)

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JAMM AQUINO / JAQUINO@STARADVERTISER.COM

Above, the 3rd Marine Regiment of Marine Corps Base Hawaii performed a rifle salute Sunday at the Battleship Missouri Pearl Harbor.

Veterans, their supporters and their families celebrated the 73rd anniversary of the end of World War II on Sunday aboard the USS Missouri, the battleship where the Japanese officially surrendered.



The Pearl Harbor ceremony also honored the 75th anniversary of the formation of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the most decorated unit in U.S. history and made up of Japanese-Americans, many of them from Hawaii.

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Michael Carr, president and CEO of the USS Missouri Memorial Association, noted the ceremony had a connection to the recent death of U.S. Sen. John McCain, whose father, Navy Adm. John McCain Sr., was aboard the Missouri to observe the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay on Sept. 2, 1945.

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On Sunday, Art Albert, 91, recalled being a firefighter on the Missouri when the war ended. He described seeing a destroyer, or “tin can,” circle the battleship, then saw Gen. Douglas MacArthur step off the “tin can” and onto the Missouri like a “taxicab pulled up to the curb.” He said everyone on the ship cheered.

During the Japanese surrender, Albert was thinking about going home. Now he returns every year to the USS Missouri for the anniversary ceremony. He has been coming for 18 straight years.

A Hattiesburg, Miss., resident, Albert was only 17 when he joined the Navy and 18 when he first stepped aboard the Missouri. He was joined Sunday by his wife, Sherry, son Shane Johnson and Johnson’s fiancée, Sabrina Carpenter.

“Every year it’s like coming home,” he said.

On the day of surrender in 1945, more than 250 Allied ships representing 10 countries were at Tokyo Bay to observe the proceedings — four years after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

Following the Japanese attack, the U.S. government began sending Japanese-Americans to internment camps after President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 in 1942.

In 1943 the 442nd Regiment was formed as a volunteer force of Japanese-Americans. The unit, whose motto is “Go for Broke,” fought mainly in Europe during the war, and its members received more than 9,400 Purple Hearts, eight Presidential Unit Citations and 21 Medals of Honor.

Kenji Ego, 94, who was an Army private first class with the 442nd during WWII, attended Sunday’s ceremony with a veteran’s hat, white shirt and cane.

He recalled how Japanese-Americans were despised and associated with the enemy at the time, but he said what makes America special is what happened afterward.



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"I don't think that any of us, while fighting in Europe, thought that such a day as today would ever come," he said after the ceremony. "This really shows the greatness which is America.

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The U.S. government may have been at fault for the way we were treated, but subsequently the greatness of the United States is reflected in how it admitted its wrongs," he said.

Gov. David Ige, whose father, Tokio Ige, served in WWII with the 442nd, said the alliance between Japan and the United States stands as a cornerstone of peace and stability in the Asia- Pacific and a force for progress around the globe.

"Our alliance has never been stronger," he said in the keynote address. "What has binded us together is the hope of reconciliation made possible through the spirit of tolerance."

He said the world needs more tolerance and reconciliation today.

"The sacrifices that gave us this opportunity for peace were not given in vain," he said. "In fact, we can all do a little bit to help make that vision for a better world a reality. That is the best way to continue to honor the legacy of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team."

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