

# "A day that will live in infamy": State, local Commanders reflect on 75th anniversary of Pearl Harbor attack

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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**SPRINGFIELD - Illinois VFW Commander Dave Stout of Alton** was moved by a special commemoration in Springfield on Wednesday for the **75th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack.**

He said he met a few veterans at the event who were in the service at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack or shortly after it happened.

“You figure if you were a soldier or sailor at Pearl Harbor on the day it was attacked, they are at least 92 years old today,” he said Wednesday afternoon. “I am just honored to know any of the Greatest Generation of people.

"They did so much for our country. They joined forces with the Allies and saved the entire world from intrinsic evil in the form of Adolph Hitler and the Japanese empire. The Japanese empire was a brutal operation that killed nearly 4 million people in China when they were doing the conquest of China."

"I met a 93-year-old Marine today who was part of the occupation forces of Japan when they moved the Second Marine Division Headquarters to Nagasaki," Stout continued. "Nagasaki was still a little hot with radiation when he was there and he lived to be 93. No wonder the U.S. won the war. I am in just in awe when I get to talk with one of those guys. Their stories are amazing and I am equally impressed of their resolve that has filtered down to the Korean and Vietnam War veterans. Many of the Vietnam veterans' children are now serving and carrying their family's military legacy forward."

**Edwardsville American Legion Post 199 Commander Ron Eberhart** served in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968. He knows firsthand what it is like to be in a difficult war situation.

He said he has a great deal of respect for those who were serving at the time Pearl Harbor happened and the veterans who fought to keep America's flag flying free after World War II started.

"It was a Sunday morning, many of them were in their bunks when this happened," he said. "The day after that happened, the Japanese did the same thing in the Philippines and bombed the air base there. They weren't ready there either for an attack. I am surprised they weren't on high alert after Pearl Harbor had been bombed. That was our introduction into World War II."

Eberhart worries that younger people aren't hearing about World War II, Korea and Vietnam in their history classes.

"I worry about it being lost in the fog of history as things move forward," he said. "There was a moment of silence in Washington on television this morning and I think they are better focused now than they were the past few years in remembering Pearl Harbor Day."

Eberhart said he was brought up to honor the sacrifices that veterans made and he hopes that situation will improve as time goes on with the younger generations.

**Alton VFW Post 1308 Commander Wendell Parrish** said we cannot ever forget the sacrifices the men and women made on that fateful day at Pearl Harbor. As Franklin D. Roosevelt said, Dec. 7, 1941 is "the day will live in infamy."

“I am thankful our guys went on to conquer Japan, Germany or Italy,” Parrish said. “If they hadn’t done what they did we would probably be speaking Dutch or Japanese. We had some good warriors. On Pearl Harbor Day alone, 1,177 were killed on the Arizona alone and 1,072 are still under water. It was just horrific for the families.

“We cannot forget them and their sacrifices. I pray for their families and loved ones that are left every day. We lost a great bunch of good men and women overall in World War II.”