

Remember Pearl Harbor: 77 years later, the number of those who recall it is shrinking

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON – On Dec. 7, 1941, the United States was attacked in what was considered a surprise raid by the Empire of Japan through the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

More than 2,300 people were killed from across the Navy, Marines and Army. Several dozen civilians were also killed, and 18 ships were sunk or run aground. Five of those were battleships. That single event, which the Japanese blamed on an oil embargo from the United States, brought Americans into the Second World War, which had already gone global with Japanese incursions into Chinese Manchuria and Nazi Germany at war with Great Britain and France after the blitzkrieg of Poland.

For more than four years, the United States pummeled Pacific islands, hopping from one to the next in order to liberate that theater from Japanese occupation. When they were

about to reach the mainland for what was promising to be a catastrophic invasion for both sides, the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima by Paul Tibbets, who trained for his career as a pilot at the Western Military Academy in Alton, followed by a second bomb being dropped in Nagasaki.

The American aspect of that war, which left hundreds of thousands dead, began on this day 77 years ago. While the veterans who served during that war are in short supply – a representative from Alton V.F.W. Post #1308 said there are only a dozen or less World War II vets in their membership – their sacrifices are still being honored.

At that V.F.W. Post tonight, there will be a Pearl Harbor tribute conducted by the band, Flip the Frog, who will be playing from 7-11 p.m. That tribute will follow the usual Friday night dinner hosted at the post from 5-7 p.m. There is a \$5 cover if people would like to stay for the band.