

SURVIVORS HONORED

On Dec. 7, 1941, the men and women who were at Pearl Harbor awoke to a war that changed the course of our Country's history and their lives forever. Sixty years later, my Company, Jostens, recognized the sacrifice of the Minnesota survivors of Pearl Harbor with a tribute that included 10k gold commemorative rings, remembrances from those who were there, and tributes from local dignitaries.

Jostens execs, Minnesota Secretary of State and Major General Eugene Andreotti, spoke of heroism and the renewed patriotism in our nation since Sept. 11. The wife of one honoree said, "this is the most recognition these vets have received since they came home from World War II."

Many guests were deeply touched by the story of Leo Stewart, the Arizona resident who grew up in Minnesota and whose letter planted the seed that led to the event. "My 1939 Sebeka High Class ring survived the attack on Pearl Harbor and four years of war," wrote Stewart. "But working as an airplane mechanic took its toll and there wasn't much left to it, so I bent it on my dog tags. When I came across the ring last spring, I sent it to Jostens because I thought you would be interested to see what it had gone through."

The letter prompted Jostens to restore Leo's ring and organize the Pearl Harbor event held on Dec. 7, 2001. The event was attended by 52 of the Minnesota survivors of Pearl Harbor including Ruth Erickson, the State's only remaining woman survivor of the attack.

THE DOLITTLE RAID

Sixty years ago last month, the air attack on Japan launched from the aircraft carrier Hornet and led by Lt. Colonel James H. Doolittle, was the most daring operation yet undertaken by the U.S. in the young Pacific War. Though conceived as a diversion that would also boost American and allied morale, the raid generated strategic benefits that far outweighed its limited goals.

Joined in mid-ocean on 13 April by Vice Admiral William F. Halsey's flagship Enterprise, which would provide air cover during the approach, Hornet steamed toward a planned 18 April afternoon launching point some 400 miles from Japan. However, before dawn on 18 April, enemy picket boats were encountered much further east than expected. These were evaded or sunk, but got off radio warnings, forcing the planes to take off around 8AM, while still more than 600 miles out.

Most of the sixteen B-25s, each with a five-man crew, attacked the Tokyo area, with a few hitting Nagoya. Damage to the intended military targets was modest, and none of the planes reached the Chinese airfields (though all but a few of their crewmen survived). However, the Japanese high command was deeply embarrassed. Three of the eight American airmen they had captured were executed. Spurred by Combined Fleet commander Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, they also resolved to eliminate the risk of any more such raids by the early destruction of America's aircraft carriers, a decision that led them to disaster at the Battle of Midway a month and a half later.

SOLOMONS MEMORIAL

During the years 1942-45 more than 68,000 men passed through the Amphibious Training Base at Solomons, Maryland on their way to North Africa, Guadalcanal, Luzon, Sicily, Bouganville, Anzio, Iwo Jima, and Normandy. Today, little remains to recall the presence of the base. Like the men who returned from war, the site was reverted to peaceful uses and since its closure in 1945 has been fading from our collective memory. Except for one lone marker which reads: *Amphibious Training Base, Solomons—the Cradle of Invasion.*

Today a fund-raising effort is under way to erect a statue "On Watch" which will memorialize the service of the Amphibious forces that trained there. Land has been donated and organizers hope to achieve their goal this year. There will also be a series of special events held at the site this August 9-11 including booths, displays, drill teams, demonstrations, food, a concert, a USO show, and an actual amphibious landing.

Another attraction in the area is the Calvert Marine Museum with its exhibits, programs and boat rides around Solomons Harbor. For more info on both the statue donations and the August events, write to:

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