



From left to right. Myself, Faith, one of the volunteers, a world war two veteran that survived Pearl Harbor and my best friend and wing woman Mary Briner.

Pearl Harbor

Jacqueline Bradford | JROTC | December 7th, 2016

On the 7th of December 2016, 37 of our cadets from Tx-863 boarded a bus to the Birchman Baptist Church to visit over 100 Veterans, 70 fought in WWII, and 2 were aboard ships in Pearl harbor.

When our unit stepped off the bus we immediately received direction and formed up in two rows facing each other. When a veteran would walk between us, Kevin Fisher would call for us to present arms and if able, shake the hands of these veterans.

It nearly brought me to tears at the sight of these men and woman when they saluted us back, so much so, I had to break my bearing to look at these heroes and reflect what they were giving me. When I would shake the hand of these veterans and return my hand back to my side I couldn't imagine what they had gone through.

Some of these veterans, when they would reach the end of the line, would tear up or even cry at our actions, every single one of us were extremely proud to do this, all 37 of us held our salute with as much patriotism, gratitude, and respect that we could muster, it would not equal what these men and woman gave to protect the beautiful country that is the United States of America, but it was what we were able to give.

When I looked across while we stood at attention I saw the faces of cadets I've grown with my past 3 years and I felt so proud, everyone knew how important this was, every one of us felt the emotion and I even saw a few cadets wiping their tears away after we had ended.

If there was any point in time I felt the immense unity of our group more, it was right there, saluting the veterans as they passed.

My Freshman year I did an essay on WWII, mostly summarizing the actions of the U.S. I've watched countless documentaries about the attack on Pearl Harbor, D-Day invasion, Korean war, Vietnam, ect.

However, for a normal U.S citizen like myself, seeing and writing these historical events down was like reading it out a text book. It seems almost like a story. You know it but it doesn't feel real to you, you didn't experience it nor were you born in the era. With all that I've learned about what these heroes did in this time of war I couldn't fathom what they had been through. I remember visiting Pearl Harbor itself and learning about the barrels of limbs scattered around and men trapped in USS Arizona SOSing to their friends above by tapping the ships walls. My brain is just unable to comprehend something so awful, waking up in the morning hearing sirens and ships being blown to bits and knowing in the back of your mind, as you rushed to whatever station you were assigned to, that hundreds of men, were already dead, and there were much more to come, and even as you got outside to feel the pungent sting of fire, ash, fuel, and flesh strangle your senses, and the sirens that raked at your ears that the time to defend your country would come and you may not make it home.

I could see the shocked look of my friends and family of Tx- 863 as we were told the past of these men and what they encountered in Pearl Harbor. One of them told of how he was under gunfire and dove into a hole with two other men, and when he attempted to raise up, they were dead.

This is the kind of thing you'd see in movies, but they do happen, and they were real, and they happened to a person. I couldn't fathom the shock I'd be going through at the moment, how angry I'd be at the bullet from the hand that took their life, and that, possibly, the only reason I was alive was the two men before me that relieved me of duty, that were also dead. It's impossible to grasp unless you

were in that type of situation, and it would never be wished upon you, but it's one of the symptoms of war.

We had to leave a bit earlier than we had wished and I was only able to have short conversations with these heroes, what surprised me most is all of them wanted to

know who I **was**,
what I was going to **do**,
who I wanted to **be**,

I never knew who I **was**, what I was going to **do**, before I entered JROTC.

But standing in front of these veterans, I knew who I wanted to **be**.

I wanted to be them, I can never do what they did, I can never see what they have seen, but as our creed says-

"I will honor those I serve with, those who have gone before me, and those who will come after me."

I will be who comes after them, as they are those honored before me, and I will wear their shoes and march, follow, and lead as they did, and perform it to the best ability as they did as well.

What I got out of this trip is that the phrase "They have fought for our freedom" for veterans, doesn't just include the battle, it includes the heartthrob of not seeing their family, their children grow up, the unconceivable feeling and thought of what their minds played over and over at night of what they'd seen as they tried to sleep, the knowing that the friends they came here with may not always be there and they might be returning home without them, as many did, if they returned at all.

But they would do it again.

the **American words** "They have fought for our freedom" is a grand understatement.

I would like to thank our three instructors for bringing me along for this trip and honoring me with this important life lesson.

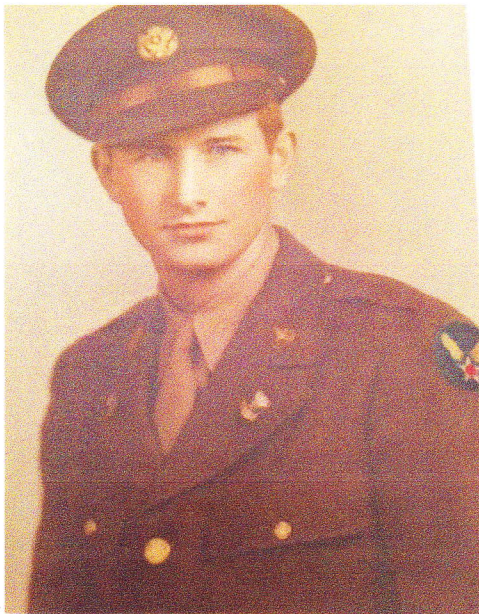
AMERICAN HEROES

The trip to the Pearl Harbor 75th Anniversary event was amazing and inspiring. Both of my great grandfathers fought in ww2 as well as Korea and Vietnam. They were both Full Bird Colonels when they retired. Unfortunately, they passed away before I had a chance to listen to their stories. This event gave me the privilege and the honor to meet those who were part of the great generation that brought my family together. I've always been known for how I am "old fashioned" and strikingly identical to my great grandfather Jack F. Blankenship (Whom passed away a couple years before I was born). Despite never have meeting him I can feel him in my heart and this event made that feeling more noticeable. The amount of gratitude I feel for the veterans is unexplainable. Speaking to these American heroes made me tear up at times due to the immense amount of happiness, sadness, and honor. I felt like half of my emotions were my great grandfather beside me, helping me show our appreciation for all who served in the military as well as those who work hard to keep America a great country.

Chase Diulio

Western Hills HS TX-863 AF JROTC

12/07/2016



Jack Ford Blankenship

1923-1996

Pearl Harbor Ceremony

Madison Anders
Bravo
12-8-2016

Sunday December 7th, 1941 Pearl Harbor was attacked. Even though this tragic event only lasted two hours, it was still devastating. 20 American naval vessels were destroyed, including more than 300 airplanes and 8 battleships. Killing 2,000 American soldiers and sailors and 1,000 were wounded. After the assault on Pearl Harbor President Franklin D. Roosevelt decided to ask congress to plan an attack on Japan. Congress approved, more than two years in the conflict we finally entered WW11

We were sharp in our uniform and I felt proud to be in front of so many veterans from all of the branches that have served our country. When I saw how they looked at me in my service dress I felt proud and I also felt like I didn't deserve to be in the uniform, because I haven't risked my life for anyone else, I haven't done half of the things that those soldiers have done or been through. To know that not everyone has got the opportunity that I did to be in the presence of a Pearl Harbor veteran and also to shake his hand was amazing. The ceremony tugged at my heart, all the stories that they told while they were on stage about losing a loved one or a best friend that was with you since high school. Lee Long was an original member, was at Clark field in the army airport in the Philippines. Was also bombed while Pearl Harbor was attacked, he was coming back from lunch with his high school friend George Laurence. Looked up and thought it was the navy but instead it was the Japanese carrier loaded with 300lb bombs. And George went to the officer quarters and Lee and two other soldiers jumped in a ditch and took cover. Well when the Japanese got done destroying their base Lee tried getting up but he couldn't because the two soldiers that jumped in with him had died. Or Robert Edward Moody who was killed on the USS Arizona at Pearl Harbor, he was a WW11 veteran the brother of Harmon Moody.

I'm proud to have been a part of the Pearl Harbor ceremony it touched my heart hearing what those men and women went through. Not even the veterans but also the wife's that had to wait at home and pray that their husbands or boyfriends came home safe. Not everybody is strong enough to do what those men did today. And I'm proud that I got to be a part of their life on the 7th and share that moment with them.

Venyelys Ayala

7 Dec 16

Today, December 7, 2016, I had the chance to experience a once in a lifetime event: the 75th anniversary of the bombings of Pearl Harbor, an American naval base stationed in Hawaii, and Clark Field, an Air Force base in the Philippines. I was one of the 37 cadets who were invited to have lunch with over 180 veterans. They were veterans who fought during the events of Pearl Harbor, World War II, the Vietnam War, the Korean War, the Iraqi and Afghanistan wars, and peacetime (i.e. the Cold War, etc.)

I had the chance to greet the veterans as they entered the Church where the event was held. The 37 of us were aligned in two lines parallel to each other and the entrance. We saluted the veterans as they passed by and shook hands with them as they approached. I had the chance to shake the hands of over 30 veterans who fought so hard to ensure my freedom.

After greeting the veterans at the entrance, we fell into formation on each side of the stage where the podium was located. We stood for the National Anthem, the Pledge of Allegiance, and for our color guard. We prayed and helped serve the veterans and participants. We got to mingle with some of the veterans as we ate and enjoyed a comfortable atmosphere. Halfway through the program, we got to hear some of the stories the veterans told about their experiences and about what they were doing on Sunday December 7, 1941.

One of the stories we heard was about a sailor whose brother had died during the bombing of Pearl Harbor aboard the USS Arizona, who later survived to see the surrender on the

second day of D-Day in Omaha. Another was about a soldier whose crew of 12, were attacked by German machine guns as they reached land. Only 2 of the 12 present survived the attack. One was also about a navy man on the USS Honolulu, or the Blue Goose, who was relieved from guard duty 10 minutes before the ship was hit by a torpedo, killing 80 men, including the two men who relieved him from duty. He then ran to a ditch before two other men jumped on top of him for cover. Seconds later, a bomb was dropped in the immediate vicinity of the ditch. When the sailor tried to leave the ditch, he discovered that the two men who were on top of him were killed by the blast.

Towards the end, we also got to hear about the 3 survivors of Pearl Harbor and what they thought about the war. We got to meet almost 200 veterans who fought for the freedom of everyone alive today. To me, it was an honor to be graced by the presence of *The Greatest Generation*.

Form the experiences I have been through TX-863's AFJROTC program, I am proud of what Cadets has done. Me as a Cadet, the 75th Anniversary of the infamous attack of Pearl Harbor will always be upholding inside of me. Being part of the color guard has been an extra co-curricular activity I have been enjoying but, it's a great honor to present the colors in front of World War II veterans. As I dipped the Texas flag, World War II veterans saluted as the color guard was presenting the colors. I have never in my life felt so proud of myself to be part of TX-863. Before starting the event, Cadets made two file lines to salute and hand shake veterans who served during World War II as they proudly entered the building where the event was placed. I as a Cadet was so proud of the group, which has given me so much hope for our upcoming inspection. During the event, veterans were talking about their life in the military from beginning to the end. There were different emotions during the event such as joyful, sorrowful, and honorable moments. I have learned that the soldiers who wield the flag with honor may never get awarded, they do it for their country. I asked veterans what changed your life as an active duty military, they mostly said "The news of Pearl Harbor." They told me that their country has been attacked and felt that they needed to protect us. Which some said that's their reason for enlisting the military. This unforgettable experience will be passed on to people, teachers, family, friends also, will be passed for posterity. Pearl Harbor will be viewed differently for me now and always will be. The American veterans from Mexican Border Period, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Lebanon Expeditionary Force, Grenada Expeditionary Force, Persian Gulf War, Somalia Expeditionary Force, Operations Joint Endeavor, Global War on Terrorism, and future periods of wartime shouldn't be remembered only on memorial day, they should be remembered from the lakes, Form the hills, From the sky. This 75th Anniversary will always be remembered not just as a Cadet, but also a fellow citizen of America.

I will honor those I serve with, those who have gone before me, and those who will come after me.

Kenya Arevalo
Flight: Golf
12/7/16

Today is the 75th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack. Not only did the attack cause great loss for America, but it also induced the United States into World War II. Today, I was honored to obtain a once in a lifetime experience. I was able to salute, shake hands, and thank Pearl Harbor survivors, World War II veterans, and several other veterans from different wars.

While at the location, I was privileged to hear about the memories of veterans briefly explaining where they had been on the attack of Pearl Harbor. I was also privileged to hear the interesting stories of World War II veterans and their reactions of when they became aware of the attack. Furthermore, I was amazed to hear that several of the veterans there had served in more than one war.

Overall, I feel thankful, honored and privileged to have met all of those veterans who in their earlier years fought for what we have today. Like the hosts said, "They are the best generation of our history."

Essay

Meeting veterans of the Pearl Harbor, Cold War, Iraq, Vietnam, Korean, etc. was an amazing experience to me. Being able to converse and shake hands with the surviving heroes of America was a very big deal to me since I eventually want to become a hero like them, protecting and serving the people of America. It was a huge honor to be able to serve these war veterans as they saved us in their younger years in battle. I enjoyed myself mostly because of the joy and appreciation on the veterans faces, and them knowing that they weren't and never will be forgotten. I also used the fact I got to take a little part in American history on Pearl Harbor's 75th anniversary.

The Field trip to Pearl Harbor was something that I am very proud that I experienced. One story that I remember was when they let me have a picture of the brother that was at Pearl Harbor. It made me very happy to see all of them and to shake their hands.

Also their stories were interesting and how they put humor on stage and made everyone laugh.

Hearing everyone's rank and what branch they were interested in. I also remember the story on where Veterans came from Germany just to fight the Pearl Harbor, and most of them fought more than one war or battle. How they did were they were the day of Pearl Harbor was very interesting.

But this trip was something. I enjoyed very much, that I will never forget, and that I truly thank every veteran, they were amazing.