

Remembering Pearl Harbor

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. It is estimated there are fewer than 20 survivors still alive in 2020. The attack killed 2,403 service members and wounded 1,178 more. Six U.S. ships were sunk. Additionally, 169 U.S. Navy and Army Air Corps planes were destroyed. Civilians were also in danger. There were 34 men* from St. Louis, St. Louis County and St. Charles County killed in action. Nineteen of them were on the USS Arizona. There were two from St. Charles County killed in action. In all, 64* men were killed from Missouri.

On December 6, 1941 we know of six St. Charles County residents stationed at Pearl Harbor during the attack. It is likely there were more. They were:

- Frederick W. Baue, USS Chew, Destroyer
- Ray Bohnenkamp USS Schley, Destroyer
- James Cregan, USS Argonne, Supply Ship
- Noble Burnice Harris USS Arizona, Battleship
- George McElfresh, USS Reigel, Destroyer Tender
- Joseph Gillespie Smartt, USNR PBY Pilot, Kaneohe Station

Sadly, two would not survive the attack. In all, about 34 St. Louisans were killed at Pearl Harbor.

St. Charles County Survivors Tell Their Stories

Frederick W. Baue of St Charles was born 14-OCT 1915. He served aboard the USS Chew, an old destroyer, docked near “battleship row” next to the USS Allen. As Fred recalled, “I was downstairs eating breakfast, I got up topside about 5 or 10 minutes after it started. The Oklahoma was already going down.” Fred, a torpedoman, said “You can’t shoot torpedoes at airplanes, so I wound up on a machine gun. I think our ship got credit for knocking down two planes.”

According to the activity report of the attack, USS Chew downed one Japanese aircraft with her 3” guns and damaged two more. Her guns didn’t stop firing until the last of the attacking planes withdrew. Immediately after, Chew got underway to patrol the entrance to the harbor in search of Japanese submarines. She dropped 28 depth charges, and it was initially reported that she sank two Japanese submarines, but later reports seem to refute that claim.

Ray Bohnenkamp of Cottleville was born 25-JUN 1917. Ray was a carpenter’s mate aboard the USS Schley. Ray recalled, “At first we thought it was aircraft exercises – until we started hearing the explosions. The ship I was on had almost all of the weapons off. We got a machine gun up and firing a half hour to 45 minutes after the attack started. But by then most of the damage was done.” He remembered the harbor being so crowded that he said, “it was just like shooting fish in a barrel”.

When the attack on Pearl Harbor began, Schley had been undergoing an overhaul. At the time all of her guns were dismantled, leaving her unable to return fire on the Japanese planes. During the

attack, the men of USS Schley took on the aerial war machines with whatever they could get their hands on, mostly rifles and pistols.

The crew did what they could, putting themselves at risk on the slim chance of downing the attacking aircraft with little more than handheld firearms. Though she was anchored among a group of other ships, which would have made for an easy target for Japanese pilots, the attackers were more focused on higher-value targets, especially the battleships berthed along Ford Island's Battleship Row.

When the attack ended, Schley was undamaged, and her overhaul continued almost immediately. Despite the rescue operations in Pearl Harbor, her overhaul was rushed and completed on December 20, at which point she began patrolling the channel leading in to Pearl Harbor.

James J. Cregan of St. Charles was born 25-OCT 1918. James joined the U.S. Naval Reserve on 8-FEB 1940. He was assigned to the USS Allen, a destroyer based at Pearl Harbor. The USS Allen an older ship, had the distinction of serving in both World Wars.

In June 1941 he was reassigned to the USS Argonne a supply ship. On 7-DEC 1941 the USS Argonne was berthed across the harbor from the Arizona in the first repair slip at the north end of 1010 dock. As James recalled "I saw the planes come in, but I thought they were ours. You couldn't tell they were Japanese planes till they flew by. Then you could see that big, red meatball on it."

The after-action report for the USS Argonne, states: The crew manned guns as quickly as possible (about 0758). Total rounds fired: 3" .23 caliber 196 rounds and .50 Cal. machine gun, 3885 rounds. During the attack, a ship's Marine detachment Corporal claimed shooting down an enemy plane with the .50 caliber machine gun aboard the USS Argonne. The after-action reports confirm, "one enemy bomber plane was shot down by .50 Cal. machine gun fire from this vessel. (Corporal Alfred Schlag, USMC), as bomber came along "1010" dock and turned toward Ford Island. The report continues, No losses to personnel. Minor damage.

On 18-DEC, eleven days after the attack, the Post-Dispatch reported, James' parents had not received any news of their son. Families across American would agonize for days and weeks awaiting word from their loved ones.

James, a chief pharmacist, said after the attack, "the remaining crew continued to do their jobs which was mostly caring for the wounded brought over from other ships, recovering bodies from the water and assisting with facility repairs."

Cregan had the distinction of surviving Pearl Harbor and participating at Normandy on D-Day.

George McElfresh was born 3-NOV 1914. He lived in St. Charles at 418 Morgan Street. George served as electrician's mate first-class aboard the USS Reigel, a destroyer docked near the

entrance of the harbor. George had also just finished eating breakfast when the first attack had started. The USS Reigel was moored in berth 13, U.S. Navy Yard, Pearl Harbor on 7-DEC 1941, undergoing major repairs and conversion. Approximately half the officers, including the Captain and Executive Officer and one third of the crew were on shore on authorized leave or liberty. At about 0815, December 7, 1941 an air attack by Japanese aircraft began on ships moored in Pearl Harbor and other military objectives on the Island of Oahu. This vessel has no armament installed hence could take no offensive or defensive action.

This command concerned itself with rescue efforts with ship's boats available. Ensign Charles R. Hake, U.S.N.R. volunteered as a boat officer and was put in charge of Rigel's #1 motor launch with a volunteer crew consisting of MILLER, Keith M., S1c., USN, Coxswain, WINEBARGER, Eugene, F1c., USN Engineer, SHEPHERD, Robert H., S2c., USN Bow Hook and BLAIR, William E., S2c USN Stern hook. This boat proceeded to rescue survivors from the U.S.S. West Virginia and succeeded in saving between 50 and 100 men who were injured or blown overboard and were in imminent danger of drowning or death from suffocation or burning due to flaming oil which covered the surface of the surrounding water. The work of this boat was stopped by a fouled screw in such a position that it was in imminent danger of destruction by burning. Ensign Hake and the crew succeeded in saving the boat. The attack on the West Virginia consisting of torpedo, bomb and machine gun assaults by waves of planes was at its height during the rescue operations above mentioned. It is considered that Ensign Hake and the crew of #1 motor launch as enumerated above are deserving of special commendation for the initiative, resourcefulness, devotion to duty and personal bravery displayed on this occasion.

St. Charles County Men Killed in Action

Noble Burnice Harris was born on July 9-JUL 1918. St Charles is listed as his hometown. Noble enlisted 9-JAN 1940 in the Navy. He attended boot camp at the Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois. Noble's occupational specialty was Coxswain. Coxswain work with canvas, handled boats and knew signaling. Noble was officially assigned to the USS Arizona (BB-39) beginning March 26th, 1940. The USS Arizona was a Pennsylvania Class Battleship built for the US Navy in the 1910's and launched in 1915. Noble would serve briefly during World War II before war was declared.

Noble Burnice Harris was killed on the Arizona during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941. Noble, along with 1101 of his shipmates remain entombed on the USS Arizona today. Noble's posthumous awards include: Purple Heart, American Defense Service Medal w/Fleet Clasp, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal w/Star, WWII Victory Medal.

Joseph Gillespie Smartt was born on 19-MAR 1917 in Texas. His father was George Pendleton Smart, MD (1880-1918) and his mother was Sara Alice Gillespie (1884-1968). Joseph had one brother; George Pendleton Smart Jr. Joseph Smartt was in the US Navy Reserve.

Ensign Smartt had started his flight training at NRAB (Naval Reserve Aviation Base), in St. Charles Missouri just outside of St. Louis. The number of cadets being trained kept increasing so the Navy purchased several hundred acres of land in St. Charles County near where the Illinois River

entered the Mississippi River. This became an auxiliary landing field for the cadets to practice takeoffs and landings. When the United States entered the war and student training was greatly expanded, a large hexagon shaped blacktop area was added with a pair of runways every 60 degrees, so you were never more than 30 degrees out of the wind. This same shape and design was used in hundreds of primary training fields (Navy and Army Air Corps) around the country. A large hangar and aircraft workshop were added and later, barracks and mess halls.



Joseph Gillespie Smartt was killed in action on 7-DEC 1941 at Pearl Harbor. He was stationed at Naval Station Ford Island, assigned to Patrol Squadron 11 Kaneohe Naval Air Station. Ensign Joseph Gillespie Smartt was among those cited by CinCPacFlt, "For prompt and efficient action and utter disregard of personal danger in the effort to repel the attack on

Naval Air Station, Kaneohe Bay, Oahu, Territory of Hawaii, by Japanese forces on 7-DEC 1941, which was made in conjunction with the attack on the fleet in Pearl Harbor on that date." It is likely Smartt was one of the first casualties at Pearl Harbor.

The facility in St. Charles MO. was later renamed Smartt Field in honor of Ensign Joseph Smartt, who was killed in the Japanese attack on NAS Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii on 7-DEC 1941. A shipbuilder later named an escort ship the U.S.S. Smartt in memory of Ensign Joseph G. Smartt.



The Days After the Attack

The days ahead would be tough on Americans. St. Louis like other cities prepared for war. Many feared attacks here in the Midwest. Residents in St. Charles County practiced blackout drills, air raid drills and guards were posted at strategic locations around the city and county. The war would last nearly four years. Americans on the home front would make sacrifices. Over 400,000 American servicemen and women would make the supreme sacrifice before VJ Day.

Never forget their sacrifices.



Men from St. Louis Killed at Pearl Harbor

<u>NAME</u>	<u>BRANCH</u>	<u>SHIP</u>	<u>CITY</u>
ATCHISON, John Calvin	Marine	USS Arizona	St. Louis
BELT, Everett Ray Jr.	Marine	USS Arizona	St. Louis
Brune, James William	Navy	USS Arizona	St. Louis
FUNK, Frank Francis	USN	USS Arizona	St. Louis
Grant, Lawrence Everett	Navy	USS Arizona	St. Louis
HARDIN, Charles Eugene	USN	USS Arizona	St. Louis
Harrington, Keith Homer	Navy	USS Arizona	St. Louis
Hyde, William Hughes	USN	USS Arizona	St. Louis
Kaiser, Robert Oscar	USN	USS Arizona	University City
Kirkchoff, Wilbur Albert	Navy	USS Arizona	St. Louis
Kirkpatrick, Thomas Larcy	Navy	USS Arizona	Webster Groves
MONROE, Donald	USN	USS Arizona	Webster Groves
Noble Burnice Harris	Marine	USS Arizona	St. Charles
Peckham, Howard William	Navy	USS Arizona	Wellston
Pedrotti, Francis James	Marine	USS Arizona	St. Louis
Sanford, Thomas Steger	USN	USS Arizona	St. Louis
SMITH, Earl Jr.	USN	USS Arizona	St. Louis
WINDISH, Robert James	Marine	USS Arizona	St. Louis
Windish, Robert James	Marine	USS Arizona	St. Louis
Cannon, George Ham	Marine	Shore Battery	Webster Groves
Bazetti, Michael Louis	Navy	USS California	St. Louis
Belt, Everett Ray Jr	Navy	USS California	St. Louis

Manges, Howard Ellis	Navy	USS California	St. Louis
Wise, Clarence Alvin	Navy	USS Chew	St. Louis
Marshall, John Andrew	Navy	USS Downes	Overland
Pummill, Nolan Eugene	Navy	USS Downes	Eureka
McAbee, William E	Army	Hickham Field	St. Louis
BOSLEY, Kenneth Leroy	USN	Hickham Field	St. Louis
Boswell, Frank G	Army	Hickham Field	St. Louis
Smartt, Joseph Gillespie	USN	Kaneohe Bay	St. Charles
George, Themistocles George	Navy	USS Oklahoma	St. Louis
Hoard, Herbert John	USN	USS Oklahoma	Desoto
Stout, Robert Thomas	Navy	USS Oklahoma	St. Louis
Torti, Natale Ignatius	Navy	USS Oklahoma	St. Louis