Remembering Pearl Harbor

LOCAL FEATURE

AARON CRUTCHFIELD/DAILY INDEPENDENT

Janis Bottorff looks over items in a scrapbook chronicling the events of Dec. 7, 1941, and the aftermath. Bottorff's father was stationed at Pearl Harbor on that day, and later overcame his animosity toward the Japanese and formed a friendship with one of the men responsible for planning the attack.

Keeping the memory alive

Scrapbook, diary preserve what happened so this important knowledge is not lost to new generations

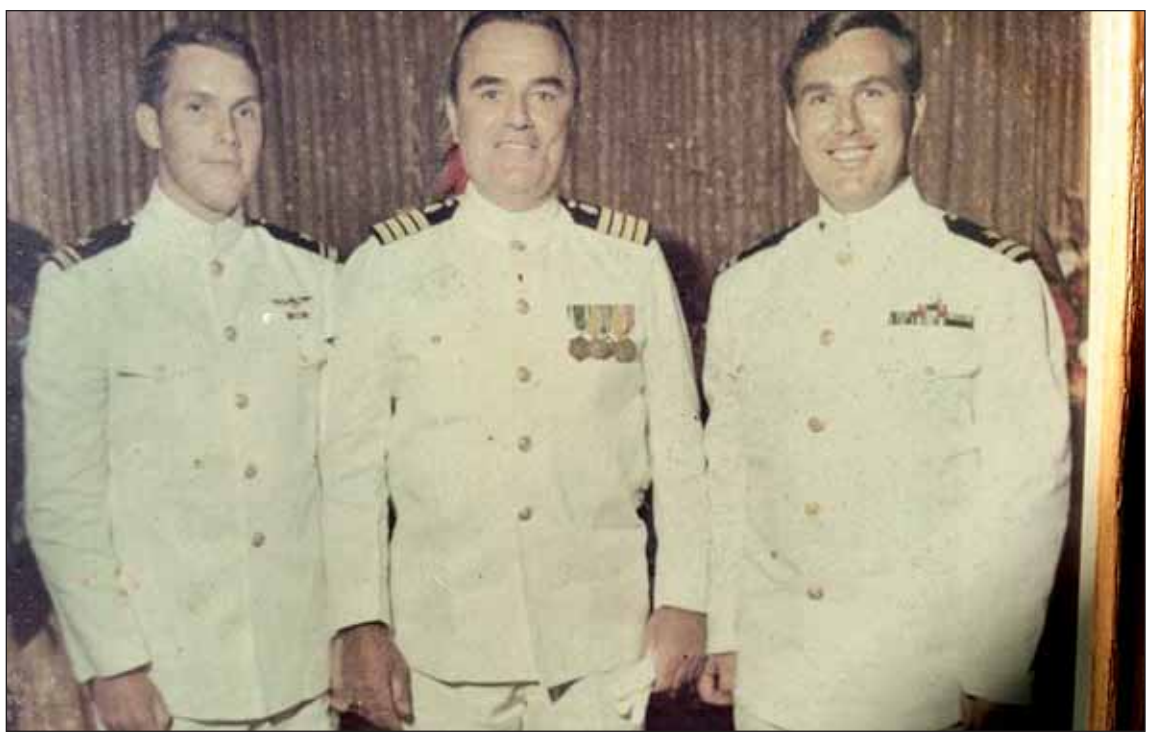
BY AARON CRUTCHFIELD
The Daily Independent

As the number of survivors of Pearl Harbor dwindles, the preservation of the history of that day — truly a date that will live in infamy — becomes more important.

Local resident Janis Bottorff is able to keep that history alive with the diary and scrapbook kept by her father, Kenneth Longeway, Sr. He was stationed at Pearl Harbor — his first duty station after enlisting — on the date of the attack as a dentist. The scrapbook contains news clippings, photographs, and other memorabilia of the event and its aftermath. Meanwhile, the diary has his first-hand accounts.

Bottorff has two sisters who are teachers with more than 40 years of experience each. "They teach English and history," Bottorff said, "so every year, they read the excerpt to their students, so it won't be forgotten."

On the day of the attack, Longeway was on shore, but was pressed into action quickly in whatever capacity needed. He was on the boat to go to the island, but due to the fire on the water it was unable to reach its destination, so they had to walk on the hot pipeline. He got a slight injury and was eligible for a Purple Heart, but declined it, as he felt his injury was so tiny in comparison to the other men there whose flesh he smelled burning during that walk.



COURTESY PHOTO

Kenneth Longeway, Sr.,stands with his sons David (left) and Kenneth Jr. at the Naval Academy. The father and brothers of local resident Janis Bottorff each served in the Navy.

Although the contents of the diary are quite serious, there are some moments of levity.

"My mother was over there, and she was pregnant with my brother," Bottorff said. "My dad was on the island after the bombing occurred. They had blackouts every night, so they had to paint their windows black. My mom went to the store and she bought the last can of paint they had, painted the windows, and was do proud of herself. And she has this knock on the door, and this service guy said, 'Lady, what do you think you're doing?' She goes, 'What are you talking about?' He goes, 'Your windows.' She said, 'Yeah, I painted them. didn't I do a good job?' And he goes, 'It's reflector paint. Take it off and repaint it.'"

The traumatic events of Dec. 7, 1941, left him with some animosity toward the Japanese, since it was the Japanese who caused this. But the Navy itself found a way to change his feelings toward the Japanese people, and it opened the door to a seemingly unlikely friendship with one of the attack's top planners.

"When he got orders to Japan — you know the Navy — they said, 'Do you want Spain or London,' and he picked Spain, and they gave him Japan," Bottorff said. "He said, 'Nope. I'm getting out of the service.' They said, 'No.' So he goes, 'I'm not going over there with those people.' They said, 'That's why we're sending you over there. So you can get over this deal.' He got over there, and just fell in love with the country and the people."

During his tour of duty in Japan, Bottorff attended high school in Japan. Her junior year, she was required to write a report, and her chosen topic was the Pearl Harbor bombing.

"Well, I got an interview with General [Minoru] Genda, the one that planned it," Bottorff said. "He and my dad met up and became friends, and would go golfing, and he would send us Christmas cards every year."

The interview and subsequent friendship actually didn't touch much on the events of that day, other than that Genda was given orders and carried them out.

Longeway passed away in 1978, but before that, he had the opportunity to be assigned to the United States Naval Academy as two sons, Kenneth Jr. and David. Kenneth Sr. was the CO of the dental clinic, while Kenneth Jr. was a senior and David was a freshman.

Bottorff has had the opportunity to visit Pearl Harbor and see the place where her dad saw so much.

"His picture is on the wall there still," she said. "They have all the people who were stationed there at the time.

"It tugs at your heart when you go there, and the oil is still coming up from the [USS] Arizona after all these years. You relate now to 9/11, and you don't want it to be overshadowed because it was just as devastating at the time. It was something people need to remember."

DI Pearl Harbor

QUESTIONS? Contact Managing Editor Jack Barnwell at 375-4481 or at jbarnwell@ridgecrestca.com

Teen dedicates life to finding WWII vets

AP PHOTO/NICK UT

In this Oct. 17 photo, Rishi Sharma interviews World War II veteran William Hahn at his home in Los Angeles. Sharma's heroes aren't sports or movie stars, or any other kind of stars; they're the U.S. combat veterans who won World War II. And the Southern California teen is alarmed that even the youngest of them are now in their 90s, and they're dying each day by the hundreds. Sharma has launched a campaign to try to ensure the legacy of each World War II combat veteran. He's on a mission to interview one every day while he still can.

Project aims to interview one WWII combat veteran each day while they're still alive

BY JOHN ROGERS
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — For as long as he can remember, Rishi Sharma's heroes haven't been sports stars or movie stars or any other kind of stars. They've been the U.S. combat veterans who won World War II.

Alarmed that even the youngest of them are now in their 90s and dying each day by the hundreds, the Southern California teenager has launched a campaign to try to ensure each one's legacy.

"I'm on a mission to in-depth film interview a World War II combat veteran every single day," the earnest 19-year-old says after a recent afternoon spent in the living room of William R. Hahn of Los Angeles, where Sharma mined the 93-year-old's memories for hours.

His Canon 70D camera rolling, his long, jet-black hair tied back in a tight ponytail, the son of Indian immigrants listened intently as Hahn recounted how he received the Silver Star for bravery by charging through a hail of gunfire on Easter Sunday 1945 as Allied forces retook the German town of Hettstandt.

Asked if he considers himself a hero, Hahn chuckled.

"Not really," said the retired metal-shop teacher who had a bullet come so close to him that it blew the canteen on his belt to smithereens. Other guys, he said, did similar things, and not all came back to talk about it.

Sharma wants to meet and honor every one who did, and he knows time is not on his side.

Of the approximately 16 million Americans who served in some capacity during WWII, some 620,000 survive, but they are dying at the rate of nearly 400 a day, according to the National Museum of World War II.

"I want to create this movement where people, where they just realize that we have such a limited time with these men who saved humanity," he says. "Let's try to learn as much as we can from them and give them a proper send-off and make them feel like their sacrifices they made were worth it."

He figures he's got about 10 years to do that so he's putting off college, putting off finding a job, putting off looking for a girlfriend, putting off just about everything except occasionally eating and sleeping between interviewing combat veterans.

Since childhood, Sharma says, he's been fascinated by the sacrifices men his age made during WWII, risking their lives for freedom, then returning home to raise families and take everyday jobs as they transitioned back to civilian life.

He read every book and watched every documentary he could find. But it wasn't until his junior year at Agoura Hills High School, just north of Los Angeles, that he became committed to meeting them.

He came across the name Lyle Bouck, one of the heroes of Germany's Battle of the Bulge offensive in Belgium, as he read historian Stephen Ambrose's book "Citizen Soldiers."

Fascinated, he looked up Bouck's phone number and called him, not realizing it was 1 a.m. where the 92-year-old war hero lives. A friendly voice on the other end of the phone told Sharma if he called back at a decent hour, Bouck would be happy to talk.

That's when the teen had an epiphany. "It made me realize these guys are really out there! And I could do this for all of them."

Soon Sharma was riding his bike to every retirement home within pedaling distance. After he interviewed every combat-hardened soldier there, he turned to veterans halls, then the internet.

Borrowing his parents' car, he traveled to Oregon over the summer, then back down the California coast, interviewing still more people. He's up to about 160, and has plans to expand his travels in the weeks ahead to Arizona and other states and, on today's 75th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, to Hawaii.

He makes a DVD of every interview and gives it to the veteran. Some have passed on copies to the World War II museum.

"He's just totally dedicated and a very decent young fellow," says Howie Beach of Fullerton, whom Sharma recently interviewed. What he is doing is important, says Beach, another Silver Star recipient who at 91 sometimes speaks to high school groups.

"But a lot of them go on their merry way, just taking their lives and their freedoms and all that for granted," Beach says of those students. "So it's good to see a young man like Rishi with such a convincing way about him."

Such an effort doesn't come cheap, however, and Sharma quickly exhausted his modest life's savings carrying it out. He raised about $3,300 through a GoFundMe account and has spent most of that. To economize during the Oregon-Northern California trip, he limited himself to one meal every other day.

But Sharma, who also founded a nonprofit called Heroes of the Second World War, has huge dreams for his effort. He'd like to eventually recruit others to help conduct interviews, perhaps get the interviews to museums and allow others to get to know some of the people he says have become his closest friends.

"This one guy I interviewed in Oregon told me he hadn't been visited by anyone in over five months and that he was just waiting to die," Sharma recalled. "This is a 94-year-old who saw combat in the South Pacific, and now he has no one."

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QUESTIONS? Contact Managing Editor Jack Barnwell at 375-4481 or at jbarnwell@ridgecrestca.com

Japanese leader to visit Pearl Harbor; no apology

Prime Minister Abe will be first Japanese leader to visit Pearl Harbor

BY KEN MORITSUGI
Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe won't apologize for Japan's attack when he visits the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor later this month, the government spokesman said Tuesday.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said that "the purpose of the upcoming visit is to pay respects for the war dead and not to offer an apology."

Abe announced late Monday that he would have a summit meeting with President Barack Obama in Hawaii and visit Pearl Harbor. He will be the first Japanese leader to go to the site of the Japanese attack that propelled the United States into World War II.

The unexpected announcement came two days before the 75th anniversary of the attack and six months after Obama became the first sitting American president to visit Hiroshima for victims of the U.S. atomic bombing of that city at the end of the same war.

"We must never repeat the tragedy of the war," Abe said. "I would like to send this commitment. At the same time, I would like to send a message of reconciliation between Japan and the U.S."

The White House confirmed that Obama and Abe would visit the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 27. It said "the two leaders' visit will showcase the power of reconciliation that has turned former adversaries into the closest of allies, united by common interests and shared values."

Defense Secretary Ash Carter, on an official trip to Japan, said he would tell Abe at a meeting later Tuesday how pleased Obama and the U.S. are.

The announcement of the summit comes as Japan worries about the direction of U.S. foreign policy under Obama's successor, Donald Trump.

Tsuneo Watanabe, a senior research fellow at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, said that together with Obama's visit to Hiroshima, the Pearl Harbor visit will complete the reconciliation process and help smooth bilateral relations under any administration.

"Historical disputes tend to be brought up when relations become thorny ... but once you put them behind and move on, it makes a difference if there is any negative sentiment in the future," he said.

But Koichi Nakano, a professor of international politics at Tokyo's Sophia University, said the Pearl Harbor visit and Abe's commitment to the Japan-U.S. alliance are tantamount to "giving a blank check to Trump" despite the uncertainty over bilateral relations under his administration.

More than 2,300 U.S. servicemen died in the aerial attack, which will be marked Wednesday at Pearl Harbor with a remembrance ceremony and a moment of silence at 7:55 a.m., when the Japanese planes hit their first target.

Three and a half years later, the war came to an end after the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, and on Nagasaki three days later. Japan surrendered on Aug. 15.

AP PHOTO/CAROLYN KASTER, FILE

In this May 27, 2016, file photo, U.S. President Barack Obama, right, shakes hands with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima, western Japan, as Obama became the first sitting U.S. president to visit the site of the world's first atomic bomb attack. Abe said Monday, Dec. 5, he will visit Pearl Harbor with Obama at the end of this month, becoming the first leader of his country to go to the U.S. Naval base in Hawaii that Japan attacked in 1941, propelling the United States into World War II.

USS Arizona survivor heads to Pearl Harbor 75 years later

BY AUDREY McAVOY
Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Lauren Bruner was getting ready for church in 1941 on his battleship, the USS Arizona, when the alarm sounded.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor had begun, and Bruner, then 21, scampered up five stories by ladder to the enormous anti-aircraft guns he was responsible for manning.

But bullets hit his left leg and explosions set off by the Sunday morning bombardment rocked his ship before he could get to the weapons. The ship sank just nine minutes later. Bruner escaped, but suffered severe burns.

This week Bruner, now 96, plans to visit a memorial over the Arizona's sunken wreckage and attend a remembrance ceremony at Pearl Harbor on the 75th anniversary of the Dec. 7, 1941, attack.

Bruner has traveled from his Southern California home for the events many times, but doesn't know how long the Arizona's few remaining survivors will able to keep up the tradition.

"It's getting close to being the end pretty soon. There's only five of us left now," Bruner said.

More than 2,300 servicemen died in the Japanese attack that plunged the United States into World War II. Nearly half of those killed were on the Arizona, most still entombed in the wreckage.

The Navy and National Park Service expect several dozen attack survivors to attend the remembrance ceremony Wednesday on a pier overlooking the harbor. They, along with thousands of others, will observe a moment of silence at 7:55 a.m. — the same minute the Japanese planes hit their first target in the harbor.

Back then, in 1941, Bruner didn't know who was attacking until the planes got close enough for him to see the red Rising Sun Japanese insignia on their sides. The aircraft shot at "everything in sight," he said. Then an explosion tore through his battle station.

"That's where the flames blew right through and cooked me right there," Bruner said in a telephone interview from his home in La Mirada, California.

With "everything burning," Bruner tried to get off the ship as fast as he could. But the water in the harbor 80 feet below — infused with leaked oil — was on fire, too, so jumping wasn't an option.

Bruner and a few fellow shipmates shouted to a sailor on the ship moored next to the Arizona to toss over some rope. The six of them tied the rope and carried themselves hand-over-hand across the 100-foot expanse to the USS Vestal.

"You're like a chicken getting barbecued," he said. All of them made it, becoming six of the 335 sailors and Marines on the Arizona to survive. Another 1,177 shipmates died.

Doctors on the USS Solace hospital ship wanted to amputate most of Bruner's hands, leaving him with just his forefingers and thumbs, he said. Ultimately they peeled off his dead skin and let new skin grow in. They put him in a special bed with hoops that allowed sheets to be draped above him but not touch him.

Navy documents recently uncovered by the genealogy and historical records company Ancestry show Bruner suffered burns on his face and the back of his neck, his right shoulder, right arm and forearm, fingers, hands, outer thighs and lower legs.

The burns on his right arm were particularly severe and took longer to heal, according to the documents, which Ancestry has posted in a special section for Pearl Harbor survivors within its military records site Fold3.com.

Bruner spent seven months recovering but returned to service, he said, because the Navy needed sailors to train new recruits to fight the war. He was on the USS Coghlan when it bombed Japanese positions on Attu Island in Alaska in 1943. His ship later took troops to the South Pacific and was near Guam when the war ended.

He doesn't like to rehash many details from Dec. 7. He said he just "grins and bears it" to cope with the memories.

"There are parts of this whole thing that I can't talk about. If I do talk about it, I cannot sleep," he said.

After the Navy, Bruner went to work for a former Marine's refrigeration business and spent 39 years with the company. He married twice, but outlived both wives.

Bruner wants his ashes interred inside his old battleship after he dies, like many other Arizona survivors who have chosen to be buried with their shipmates. Bruner said he prefers this to lying in a sparsely visited cemetery.

"I think I've got the last spot," he said, expressing confidence he'll be the last of the survivors to go.

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Associated Press Writer Christine Armario in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

AP PHOTO/CAROLYN KASTER, FILE

In this Dec. 29, 2011, file photo, U.S. President Barack Obama lays a wreath at the USS Arizona Memorial, part of the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

DI Pearl Harbor

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The remains of this Pearl Harbor sailor, and many others, are finally coming home

RICHARD MESSINA/LOS ANGELES TIMES/TMS

Pallbearers remove the flag from the casket holding the remains of Navy Fireman 3rd Class Edwin Hopkins at Woodland Cemetery in New Hampshire.

BY BARBARA DEMICK
Los Angeles Times

KEENE, N.H. — Edwin Chester Hopkins' casket was draped with an American flag that had hung above the state Capitol. Boy Scouts saluted as the motorcade weaved around the colonial town square to the cemetery, where a military bugler readied to play taps in the dappled sunlight of a cool autumn day.

It was a grand funeral, one of the most memorable this New England town had witnessed, for a young man who had perished just past his 19th birthday. All that was lacking were the copious tears one would expect for someone whose death was so tragic and premature.

None of the several hundred mourners had met Hopkins, not even his near relatives. He was truly an unknown soldier, but the sense of loss, of what might have been, was still palpable. Hopkins was one of 2,403 Americans killed during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, the date that would live in infamy.

His ship, the Oklahoma, suffered five torpedo hits, capsized and rolled over with its mast touching the bottom. By the time crews salvaged it two years later, the nation was in the thick of World War II, and nobody had the time, inclination or technical means to sort out the entangled remains of the 429 crewmen dead.

Hopkins' funeral in mid-October this year was the result of decades of lobbying by family members and POW advocates, as well as leaps in forensic science. As the nation prepares to mark the 75th anniversary of the surprise attack, more and more of those who died that day are finally returning home.

This year alone, the remains of more than 20 sailors from the Oklahoma have been identified and reburied with full military honors — some at Arlington National Cemetery and others at their hometowns.

Eddie Hopkins was 18 in 1940 when he dropped out of high school and enlisted in the Navy. His older brother, Frank, had joined six months earlier. Their decisions were motivated as much by pragmatism as patriotism.

Although their postcard-perfect hometown, renowned for its brilliant fall foliage, now draws thousands of weekend tourists to its quaint bed-and-breakfasts, back then it was barely recovered from the Great Depression. There were dairy farms, cornfields, a woolen mill and a small company that manufactured crates and buckets, but hardly any jobs for a young man with ambition.

Hopkins wrote on his enlistment papers that he had chosen the Navy because he "wanted to learn a trade." After three months of training in Detroit and Chicago, he earned the rank of fireman third class.

His last communication, dated Sept. 9, 1941, as he was about to board a train to San Francisco harbor, was a postcard of the Oklahoma, the message scrawled in a childish cursive that scrunched up to save space at the bottom, and he mailed with a 1-cent stamp.

"Dear Folks. Here is the picture of the ship I am going to be on. ... We are all ready to leave tonight at nine o'clock, Love Eddie."

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Hopkins' brother, Frank, had three children, and they knew little about the uncle killed at Pearl Harbor. It was a topic their father, a taciturn man, and grandparents, flinty Yankees, were reluctant to discuss.

"It was the white elephant in the room. Nobody talked about it," said Edwin Hopkins Jr., 72, a retired Navy yard worker who lives in New Jersey and was named after the uncle he never knew.

"My grandparents were New Englanders who hid everything inside and covered it with a smile," said Faye Hopkins-Boore, 70, his sister, who lives in Lewes, Del.

The unspoken death haunted the family. "I bought a Subaru when I was 35 years old, and I was afraid to tell my grandmother," Hopkins-Boore recalled. Each year when Dec. 7 rolled around, she would switch off the radio and television to avoid reminders of the anniversary.

It was not that Hopkins death was forgotten. Dillant-Hopkins Airport, adjacent to Keene, had been named for Hopkins and another local son killed in World War II. But the man, or the boy as it were, was something of a cipher. Had he ever been in love? What were his ambitions? There were only a handful of photos of the teenage Eddie, skinny and jug-eared with a long nose and a cowlick sprouting from the back of his head.

An energetic, take-charge type, Hopkins-Boore had time on her hands after she retired as an operating room nurse, and decided to make it her mission to find out more about this uncle and what happened to his remains.

Each time her grandparents had moved, first from the farmhouse to downtown Keene, and then to Florida, she rummaged through drawers and suitcases looking for old letters. She found nothing — only that last postcard with the picture of the Oklahoma.

But as her father aged, slipping into dementia in his final years, it was like opening a time capsule of the past. The memories spilled out: The one-room schoolhouse he and Eddie attended as children. The frozen stream where they ice-skated. How Eddie raised a calf for the 4-H club and named it Helicopter Petunia. The way Eddie on a dare hiked to the top of nearby Mount Monadnock and then did it again on another dare.

The brothers were nothing alike in appearance or personality. Frank was barrel-chested, quiet and cautious — the family thought the result of post-traumatic stress from the war. Eddie was a smart aleck and, by all accounts, the more charismatic brother. "He had a bit more personality. My grandmother loved him to death," said Edwin Hopkins Jr.

Having no other siblings, the brothers had been extremely close, sharing a bedroom under the eaves of their farmhouse, camping out on the screened front porch on summer nights. They had hoped to be assigned to the same ship, mostly likely the Hornet.

The most surprising story the family heard concerned their grandmother, Alice Sanderson Hopkins, whose lineage could be traced to the Mayflower. The year after Pearl Harbor, she hired a psychic to hold a seance to communicate with her son.

"Somebody is in the room, all wet with his hair standing up," the psychic told the grieving mother, which according to Hopkins-Boore surely referred to Hopkins' cowlick.

Alice Hopkins died in 1987 at age 93. She had ordered a family gravestone that listed the names of her parents; her husband, who had predeceased her by 20 years; and at the very bottom: "Edwin Chester, their son, F 3/C U.S. Navy, killed Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941."

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Aside from the Arizona, the Oklahoma suffered the most damage and highest casualties in the Pearl Harbor attack. When the ship was turned upright and drained of water in 1943, the salvage crew "literally just shoveled the remains out," said Natasha Waggoner, a spokeswoman for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.

Then workers did something that modern forensic scientists find inexplicable. They sorted the skeletons by like body parts. "They had been underwater for two years so there was no flesh left. They put skulls with skulls, arm bones with arm bones," Waggoner said.

The various body parts were buried as unknowns in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, nicknamed the Punchbowl for its setting in an extinct volcano in Hawaii.

Hopkins-Boore had started going regularly to Hawaii, strolling through the graves of about 2,760 unknown soldiers from Pearl Harbor and other conflicts. In 2008, just a few months after her father died, she learned something shocking.

An elderly Pearl Harbor survivor, Ray Emory, had been meticulously combing through mortuary documents and found that the Navy knew all along where some of the casualties were buried. Hopkins was among 22 Oklahoma victims who had been tentatively identified through their dental records in 1943 but buried with unknowns because there was no second source of identification.

"I think if my grandparents and my father had known back then where he was buried, their grieving process would have been easier," Hopkins-Boore said. "I can't imagine losing a child and not knowing what happened. A part of you might believe maybe they made a mistake, maybe he is in a nursing home with amnesia. Without knowing where the body is, it is a big puzzle in your head."

At first, the families encountered stiff resistance from the Navy. But after a bureaucratic fight that dragged on for years, Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert O. Work in 2015 issued an order allowing for the Oklahoma remains to be disinterred as part of the Pentagon's commitment to its "sacred obligation to achieve the fullest possible accounting for U.S. personnel lost in past conflicts."

It has been painstaking work for the forensic anthropologists in the laboratory in Hawaii to put the skeletons back together. For example, DNA testing revealed that one casket thought to contain five sets of remains actually held remains of about 100 people.

"Due to the commingling, we are still working on trying to individuate remains back to specific people," said Debra Zinni, the laboratory manager and forensic anthropologist, who has also worked on mass graves in the Balkans. Her staff starts with the skulls, which are relatively easy to identify with dental records, then moves on to the limbs, taking accurate measurements to make sure the left and right side are close to mirror images. DNA samples ensure matches are accurate.

Bringing back Hopkins also brought the scattered family members together. The laboratory needed mitochondrial DNA, which comes only from the maternal line, so the family tracked down a distant cousin, a Vermont dairy farmer. Yet another cousin in Connecticut, whom Boore-Hopkins had never met before, had better political connections, so he was deputized to write the nagging letters to various members of Congress to push for the process to be expedited.

On Oct. 15, Hopkins was buried next to the family tombstone his mother had commissioned decades earlier. Naval officials flew in from around the country and veterans of war roared in on motorcycles. Fire trucks put their ladders together to suspend a huge American flag over the entrance to the parking lot at the airport bearing his name.

Delivering the final eulogy, Hopkins-Boore struggled to evoke memories of the unknown sailor. "I'd like to tell you what he looked like, how he carried himself. Did he like to whistle like my dad? Did he jingle his keys in his pocket when it was time to go home?" she said.

All unanswerable questions. Despite that, or maybe because of it, a few tears came from the crowd of strangers. Then she addressed her uncle directly.

"Most of all I'd just like to say, welcome home, Uncle Ed. Welcome home."