



While standing in historic Richardson Hall, located on Fort Shafter, Olav Holst, historian and guide, Home of the Brave Hawaii Victory Tour, tells tour patrons about the mural on the walls surrounding them. The mural, completed in 1945, is entitled "Marching Men" and was painted by William R. Domaratus, a former Army master sergeant. Photos by Kristen Wong

Home of the Brave tour shares more about Pearl Harbor WWII history

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HONOLULU — An air-conditioned cabin of a tour van is shielded from the noise of morning traffic surrounding it. Inside, tourists gaze intently at the black and white war movie playing on a screen in the front of the van. The actors of "From Here to Eternity" are momentarily silenced by the voice of historian and guide Olav Holst, dressed in a 1940s khaki Army Air Corps pilot uniform over the intercom. With a calm voice reminiscent of an airline pilot, Holst adds some additional facts to accompany the movie scene in progress.

From 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday, patrons of the Home of the Brave Hawaii Victory Tour explore multiple historical sites on Oahu significant to World War II and the attack on Naval Station Pearl Harbor. From the Tropic Lightning Museum on Scholfield Barracks to war correspondent Ernie Pyle's grave at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, tourists learn more about the people, places and events not necessarily found in school textbooks.

"People get a more complete picture of what happened December 7th and why," Holst said. "If we can learn from our history then hopefully we won't repeat our mistakes."

One highlight of the tour, which could easily take a full day on its own, is the USS Arizona Memorial. Be prepared to leave most of your

belongings in the van, as the memorial does not allow patrons to bring along bags or purses. Once there, patrons can visit a gift shop, view a documentary video and have their picture taken with Pearl Harbor survivors.

Aboard the memorial itself, visitors crowd the railings to catch a glimpse of the aged remains of the battleship USS Arizona. Patrons cannot miss the view beneath the white pillars of the memorial, as one of America's greatest losses continues to bleed rainbow-tinged oil into the surrounding calm water 68 years after the attack.

"[The memorial] was overwhelming," said Dick Rhuda, a visitor from Nashua, N.H. "[Emotions went] from sorrow to excitement and everything in between."

Rhuda said he was interested in the tour because of his military tie as a former petty officer in the Coast Guard. He said he and his wife reserved time during their Hawaii vacation specifically for this tour.

While driving between sites, patrons watch a firsthand account of World War II Japanese spy Takeo Yoshikawa's experiences, clips from war movies such as "From Here to Eternity" and more. Holst said tour patrons often ask how and why the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred.

"We do not romanticize the war," said Glen Tomlinson, founder and president, Home of the Brave Hawaii Victory Tour. "[The tour gives patrons a] real good feel for what it was like in the 40s."

"I've always been interested in World War II history," said tour patron Christine Elmerick, a visitor from Santa Barbara, Calif. "It's always been a dream for me [to visit Pearl Harbor]. I feel it's important that my children will know history ... when they are older."

Elmerick wasn't the only one excited by the tour. Her son Ben and daughter Emily helped Holst display visual materials during his narrative at Fort Shafter. Ben Elmerick, 8, said he wants to join the Navy and described the tour as "fun and exciting."

"I liked the boat ride [to the Arizona Memorial]," he said. "But the Arizona was sad, because it's a great loss of men."

Close to noon, the van heads to Fort Shafter for a buffet lunch at the Hale Ikena Community Club, which costs approximately \$10 and is not included in the tour price.

The tour also includes a final stop at the Home of the Brave Museum on Waimanu Street in Honolulu. The museum, which was added to the tour in 1995, includes various World War II memorabilia, including magazines, knives and uniforms. The museum also features a jeep and motorcycle used in the movie "Pearl Harbor."

But for Tomlinson, the veterans and their stories are the most valuable aspect of this tour.

"I could spend hours telling the different stories [of the veterans]," Tomlinson said. "[The stories are] better than any Hollywood movies."

In the past, veterans taking the tour have

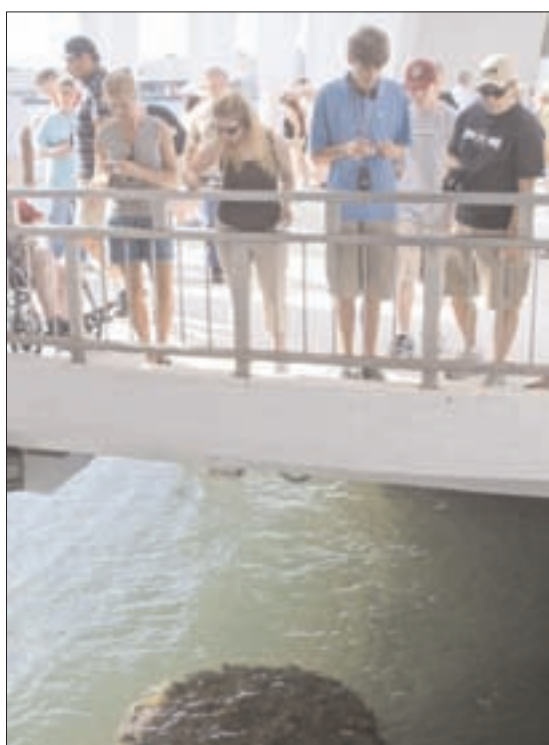
shared their own stories with tour patrons. Eight years ago, the museum started photographing World War II veterans who visit the museum and displays them on the wall. Many veterans have even donated their old photographs and memorabilia from the war to the museum.

"[Through the tour] we're able to pass on their stories and keep those stories alive," Tomlinson said.

In addition to the Hawaii Victory Tour, Tomlinson said he hopes to start his new evening tour, "Wartime Honolulu" soon. The tour, which will run from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., includes a short tour of downtown Honolulu. The tour is followed by dinner and entertainment either on the first or second floor of the museum, depending on the size of the group.

The Home of the Brave Hawaii Victory Tour started in 1991 upon request by World War II veterans visiting Hawaii for the 50th annual commemoration of Dec. 7, 1941. Tomlinson, who was on the commemoration committee, helped put together the tour, which became popular among the veterans returning to Hawaii with their families and continues to operate today.

The Home of the Brave Hawaii Victory Tour costs \$89 for adults and \$79 for military patrons, children and senior citizens. For more information about the Home of the Brave Hawaii Victory Tour, visit <http://www.pearlharborhq.com>.



Tourists at the USS Arizona Memorial look down on the ship's hull which has been underwater since 1941. The memorial is normally the first stop on the Home of the Brave Hawaii Victory Tour.



Tour patrons learn the significance of this tile design of the U.S. Army, Pacific Insignia, found at the entrance to Richardson Hall on Fort Shafter. Fort Shafter is just one of the various sites featured on the Home of the Brave Hawaii Victory Tour. Glen Tomlinson, founder and president of the Home of the Brave Hawaii Victory Tour, plans to add an evening tour called "Wartime Honolulu" in the future.



Christine Elmerick and her daughter, Emily, visitors from Santa Barbara, Calif., view the names of fallen service members while visiting the USS Arizona Memorial June 5.