



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **National Park Service And Pacific Historic Parks Sponsor First Ever December 7<sup>th</sup> Reading Aloud Event With 6,000-Plus Students Across Hawaii**

*Thousands of elementary and intermediate school children in the Department of Education's A+ Afterschool Care Program hear the true life story of an unlikely friendship between Pearl Harbor survivor Richard Fiske and Japanese diver-bomb pilot Zenji Abe through the reading of "Pearl Harbor Warriors: The Bugler, The Pilot, The Friendship."*

**(PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII)** -- Every December 7<sup>th</sup>, thousands of people from around the world gather at the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center to pay tribute to the thousands of military service members and civilians who lost their lives in the name of freedom in 1941. For the few surviving Pearl Harbor survivors who are able to make the trek to this sacred place, their message to future generations is clear: Remember Pearl Harbor, the tremendous sacrifice that was made that day, and the terrible consequences of war.

For the first time ever, the National Park Service and Pacific Historic Parks shared the historical significance of December 7<sup>th</sup> with 6,000-plus school-age children across Hawaii with a simultaneous reading aloud program. Children attending 130-plus elementary and intermediate schools who are enrolled in afterschool care programs managed by the Department of Education, Kama'aina Kids, YMCA of Honolulu, YMCA of Maui, Island of Hawaii YMCA, Dreamco and Moiliilii Community Center learned about the real life story of an unlikely friendship between the late Pearl Harbor Survivor Richard Fiske and Japanese Fighter Pilot Zenji Abe. The children's book entitled, "Pearl Harbor Warriors: The Bugler, The Pilot, The Friendship," was read to the children. "Pearl Harbor Warriors" is a story of peace and forgiveness and how these men, who were once enemies of war, overcame their hatred and fear for one another.

"As stewards of the USS *Arizona* Memorial and World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument, the National Park Service's mission is to preserve and share the history of the Pacific War, including what took place at Pearl Harbor 71 years ago," said National Park Service Superintendent Paul DePrey.

"Sharing the message of peace and reconciliation amongst thousands of young children across Hawaii is significant. The story of Richard Fiske and Zenji Abe is proof that through friendship and peace, we can make this a better world for future generations."

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## NPS/PHP READING ALOUD EVENT - 2 OF 3

Pacific Historic Parks, a cooperating association that assists the National Park Service, supports the education, preservation, development and interpretation of four National Park managed historic sites throughout the Pacific, including Pearl Harbor. Pacific Historic Parks purchased 175 copies of the book to provide to each participating school.

A marine bugler on the USS *West Virginia*, Fiske witnessed the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the massive destruction that happened at the hands of Japanese fighter pilots. For many years, his heart was filled with anger and hatred for the Japanese and his health suffered because of this. Hospitalized due to the stress of his anger, he knew he had to forgive the Japanese for what they had done in the name of war or face imminent death due to his failing health. In 1991, during the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Pearl Harbor Symposium, Japanese Fighter Pilot Zenji Abe offered an apology for the attack to members of the Pearl Harbor Survivors and extended his hand in friendship. Fiske accepted his apology and the two became friends. As a symbol of peace and friendship, Abe gave Fiske \$300 and asked him to lay two roses at the Arizona Memorial each month, one for him and one for Fiske. He also asked Fiske to play the taps on his bugle after he did this. Fiske honored this request every month until he passed away in 2004.

“Pearl Harbor Warriors: The Bugler, The Pilot, The Friendship” is a children’s book written by Pearl Harbor civilian survivor and author Dorinda Nicholson. The book, which has won numerous national awards including the International Reading Association’s Children’s and Young Adult’s Book Award, is written as a correspondence between the author and her granddaughter, recounting the story of two World War II veterans--an American Marine and a Japanese pilot--whose lives intersected in war at Pearl Harbor and again in reconciliation fifty years later.

As part of its reading aloud program, the National Park Service has posted several other real life stories of Pearl Harbor survivors on their website for parents to read to their children. Go to [www.nps.gov/valr/forkids](http://www.nps.gov/valr/forkids).

### Witness To History Videoconference Program

The National Park Service, with funding from Pacific Historic Parks, also offers a year round distance learning program for students and teachers from around the world. Witness To History is a free program that utilizes videoconferencing technology to take students where visitors cannot go, bringing the sites and stories of Pearl Harbor to children and adults unable to visit Oahu. The program includes a Pearl Harbor Survivor Series where participants can see and hear Pearl Harbor Survivors share their personal testimonies of what they experienced on that fateful day. The Interpretive Ranger Series shows a video of a USS *Arizona* underwater dive while a National Park Ranger provides a voice-over interpretive lesson. The program ends with a student and educator question and answer session. For more information or to schedule a free Witness To History videoconference, contact 808-954-8744 or 808-4428.

### About World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument

One of nearly 400 units in the National Park Service, World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument preserves and interprets the stories of the Pacific War, including the events at Pearl Harbor, the internment of Japanese Americans, the battles in the Aleutians, and the occupation of Japan. This year, over 1.7 million individuals will visit the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center, making it the most popular visitor destination in Hawaii. Learn more at [www.nps.gov/valr](http://www.nps.gov/valr).

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## **NPS/PHP READING ALOUD EVENT - 3 OF 3**

### About Pacific Historic Parks

Pacific Historic Parks supports and funds educational materials, museum exhibits, and interpretive programs for four National Parks throughout the Pacific: World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument at Pearl Harbor, Kalaupapa National Historical Park on the island of Molokai, American Memorial Park in Saipan and War in the Pacific National Historical Park in Guam. Formed as a non-profit cooperating association with the National Park Service in 1979, Pacific Historic Parks (formerly known as the Arizona Memorial Museum Association) changed its name in June 2010 to better reflect its increased scope of support.

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