

VETERANS  
HERITAGE  
PROJECT



In honor of **Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day**, we pay tribute to the 2,403 servicemen who gave their lives on December 7, 1941, and the 1,178 who were wounded. We are fortunate to share a little bit of history of that day, as seen through the eyes of Lou Conter, one of the last four survivors of the *USS Arizona*.

PICTURED LEFT IS A 3D PRINTED MODEL OF THE USS ARIZONA AS IT LIES TODAY IN PEARL HARBOR

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*"On the fantail, the ship's band prepared to play for colors and the raising of the national ensign. And then, devastation and tragedy struck. Not one member of the band survived. In the movie presentation at the memorial it is wrongly stated they were asleep. This is not true. They were all at their battle stations. First call was to close all watertight doors and immediately thereafter we sounded General Quarters. The first guns were firing within a few seconds, followed by the five-inch anti-aircraft guns within a few minutes. The men were at their battle stations. We were being bombed, torpedoed, and strafed [by the Japanese]. The final dealing projectile struck the starboard side of #2 turret, approximately 13 minutes into the attack, penetrated five steel decks, and exploded in the forward magazines, igniting all the black powder (over one million pounds). The massive blast shook the 34,000-ton, 608-foot battleship from stem to stern, raised her 30 to 40 feet into the air--she shuddered, burning--[then] settled back into the mud of Pearl Harbor, her back broken, taking 1,177 young lives with her."*

*"The USS Arizona still bleeds today. One drop of oil every few seconds emerges from her hull, slowly floats to the surface, and bursts into a rainbow of iridescent hues that spread over her watercovered deck. Her hull cradles in her womb the crew still aboard. Seventy-six (76) years have passed and the pain still remains."*

**Louis A. Conter, Lcdr.  
USNR. Retired**

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On the morning of December 7, 1941, a 20-year old Lou Conter battled fires aboard the *USS Arizona* and rescued 16 to 18 men until it became too dangerous and the order to abandon ship was made. It took five days for the *USS Arizona* to

cool and then Lou spent a week of diving and searching the ship to retrieve bodies.

Lou went on to serve as a pilot in the South Pacific during World War II and Korea, and was shot down twice. During the Vietnam War, Lou shared his survival skills and instincts with the military and helped establish the Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) program.

Lou was kind enough to share his amazing story for inclusion in *Since You Asked* Volume 14, Edition 1, which will be released at our annual [Community Reception and Book Signing](#) on April 8, 2018. Thanks go to Joe and Paulette Maslick for arranging to have Lou Conter visit Arizona, and to [Images Arizona Magazine](#) for highlighting Lou's interview with VHP in their January 2018 issue.



LOU'S INTERVIEW WITH STUDENT HARRISON KESSEL FROM CACTUS SHADOWS HIGH SCHOOL & VHP ALUMNA KATELYN FINEGAN



BOARD MEMBER SHELLY YECK WITH LOU CONTER IN HIS DRESS WHITES

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