

# Kentucky Commemorates Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

Kentucky lost its last Pearl Harbor survivor, 101-year-old Albert Patrick, on July 16, 2020

Last year, the community of Salyersville celebrated Patrick's 100th birthday, when he was one of four remaining Pearl Harbor survivors in the nation. Today there are only two, both of them 98 years old. Seventy-nine years later, the name "Pearl Harbor" still sends chills up the spine of even people born decades after the event.

"On Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service attacked Naval Station Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii Territory, without warning and without a declaration of war, killing 2,403 American servicemen and civilians, and injuring 1,178 others. The attack sank four

U.S. Navy battleships and damaged four others. It also damaged three cruisers, three destroyers, and one minelayer. Aircraft losses were 188 destroyed and 159 damaged."

It was a surprise attack on a nation then at peace. It was intended by the Japanese to be a devastating first strike, from which the U.S. could not recover.

"Canada declared war on Japan within hours of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the first Western nation to do so. On December 8, the United States declared war on Japan and entered World War II on the side of the Allies. In a speech to Congress, President Franklin D. Roosevelt called the bombing of Pearl Harbor

"a date which will live in infamy." "

Instead of collapsing, the U.S. rallied and rose to battle. Instead of delivering defeat, Pearl Harbor became the event that led to Allied victory in World War II and global U.S. leadership after the war.

It is a tribute to both American power and American peace-making that both Japan and Germany, the defeated Axis nations, are two of our strongest allies today.

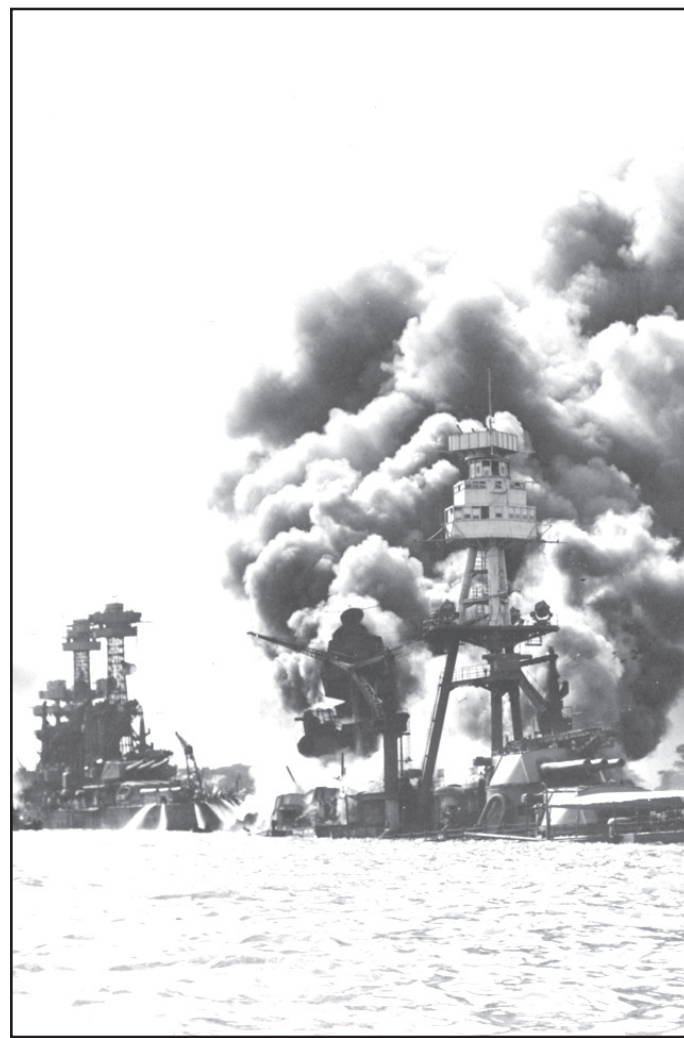
But America did not emerge victorious just on the battlefield. For four years, Americans suffered restrictions and rationing here at home. To have to endure that, after a decade of severe privation during the Great Depression, must

have seemed more than anyone could stand.

We did stand it. We gave up driving because the troops needed the tire rubber and the steel and the gasoline for cars. We grew Victory Gardens and canned everything. We saved every scrap, went without, endured Thanksgivings and Christmases without loved ones.

We did it year after hard year because every sacrifice meant saving the lives of the troops fighting overseas.

On December 7, remember Albert Patrick and his fellow survivors, remember the 2,403 fallen, remember that at our lowest point in the 20th Century, we had what it took to not just survive but emerge victorious.



## Remembering Albert Patrick

# World War II war hero dies at 101

by **HEATHER ONEY**  
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Magoffin County said goodbye to a well-decorated World War II hero with the passing of Albert Patrick.

Most notable for witnessing the bombs drop at Pearl Harbor and being instrumental in the Battle of Guadalcanal, Patrick passed away Thursday night, July 16, at 101 years old.

Two years ago Patrick was honored during a ceremony at Salyersville Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, with Congressman Hal Rogers presenting him with not only the Bronze Star Medal, but also the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three bronze stars, and a World War II Victory Medal.

Patrick received the Bronze Star Medal for his role in the Battle of Guadalcanal, which was the battle that followed the attack on Pearl Harbor and was an instrumental victory for the Allied Forces.

Even then, at 99 years old, Patrick detailed the events that earned him the prestigious awards.

"Just before dark the sergeant told us to go out there and look over the cliff and see if it was clear," Patrick said. "He had shot some guys close to there earlier in the day. I just took my pistol .45 and looked over the cliff, but not straight down, but I should have. I looked down there and there wasn't no roads, just paths going every which way. I slid down the bank on my stomach, and while going down head-first, I heard the safety go off of a gun."

He was sliding down the hill, head down and landed right between the man's legs, he said.

"I fired about where I thought his body should be and he fired at the same time. I fell backward and my helmet came off, blown about 10 feet away. I got up and sat down, but I was so shook up."

One of his partners

picked up his helmet and, sure enough, the bullet had hit his helmet, but his opponent was dead.

Later on, he found out they had retrieved the man's diary from the site of the shooting and there was an entry that read, "Killed 93, Probably 63."

"That was marines and we had just been there a month," Patrick said.

Two of his commanding officers promised to have him put in for a Silver Star for the event, however within the next two weeks they were both killed in combat.

Patrick previously received the Purple Heart and a Combat Infantry Badge, however, due to a lapse in paperwork, he never received all the medals he was promised. He also told of a foxhole incident that occurred while in on New Georgia Island, when a man in a foxhole next to him was severely injured by a grenade that landed at his feet.

"He was going on, praying, and wanting his mother. He was just 18 years old. I crawled to him. One of his feet was blown nearly completely off and the other one wasn't quite as bad, but it was a mess and blood everywhere. We didn't have anything in those foxholes, so I had to take my shoelace and tie it around his legs. He laid back and for the rest of the night he laid in my arms. They came and got him and I thought that was the last I would hear of it."

Five or six years later, Patrick's buddy, Curtis Adams, visited wounded soldiers in North Carolina, and ran into the man, whose last name was Whitaker, who vividly recounted the same story Patrick had told him.

"He told him, 'That's the name I had been searching for, wanting to know who tied his legs off. He said, 'he's the guy who saved my life,'" Patrick remembered. "Curt said they took off the rest of his foot and they were still working then to try to

save the other one."

Patrick told the crowd at the ceremony two years ago that he served in the Army for roughly six years and everything he remembered from the attack on Pearl Harbor.

"It was a Sunday morning and I went down for breakfast," Patrick remembered vividly. "I had just got in around 2 a.m. from Honolulu, but I got my eggs and pancakes and I was coming to the mess room and just about 10 or 12 of us had got up. It was Sunday morning, so everyone was sleeping in. I heard this noise and pushed the door open to look out and the plane was close enough to see the figures, and it released something and it was aimed down right at our Army air field. In just a few seconds more it hit Pearl Harbor."

Patrick said they had been training for just that type of an attack, and everyone else was still asleep, so they got their guns and went to the roof to shoot at the planes.

"We fired at them and someone asked if we ever shot down one, and I never saw one go down, but one was smoking as it flew out of sight."

He said rumors started circulating in the hours that followed, saying there were Japanese parachutes coming down on a certain golf course, "So we rushed out there. We passed the Arizona sinking, laying on its side, little blazes of fire on the water and fellows were trying to get to shore. There wasn't no one on the golf course, though."

Patrick also told about how he had been promoted to the rank of sergeant, but got into a fight with a corporal, and was discharged at a ranking of Private First Class. On his certificate that was given to him in 2018, he was listed as a sergeant, however.

Sergeant Patrick was deployed with the Army's Company H, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Divi-

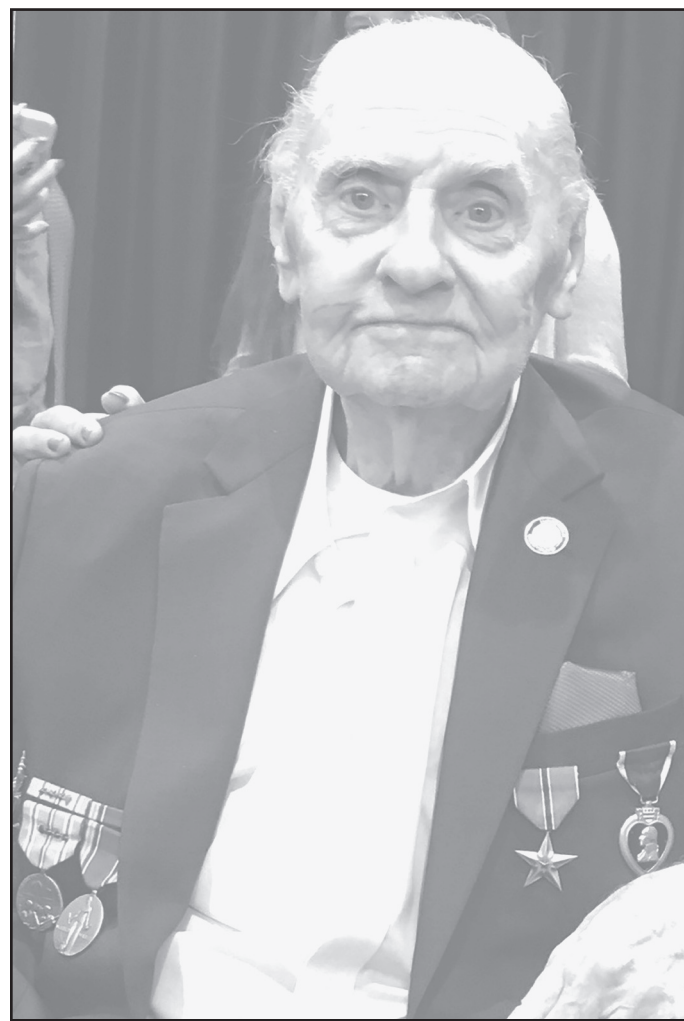
sion in support of Tropic Lightning's ferocious Fight on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands.

For Veterans Day 2018, just a few days shy of his 100th birthday, the Magoffin County Courthouse was renamed the "The Magoffin County Courthouse, Albert Patrick Building" and Route 1888 Old Burning Fork Road was given the name "Sgt. Albert Patrick Highway." Route 1888 was where Patrick was raised and lived most of his life.

A funeral was held at the Magoffin County Funeral Home on Sunday, July 19, 2020, with Patrick remembered with a raised flag on the way to the burial site on Burning Fork. His full obituary and military rites is available on A4 of that week's paper and a recognition by the DAV is on A6.

From all of us at the Independent, thank you for your service, Sergeant Patrick.

Story and photos  
courtesy of  
Heather Oney, editor,  
Salyersville Independent



ABOVE: Albert Patrick was presented several medals by Congressman Hal Rogers, two years ago, for his role in the Battle of Guadalcanal where Patrick fought after surviving the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese on Sunday morning, December 7, 1941. He was the last Kentucky survivor.

BELOW: Albert Patrick is pictured while stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

