

SURVIVOR ATTENDS VFW PEARL HARBOR CEREMONY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

MADIERA BEACH, Fla. -- December 7, 2017 – Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 4256 held its annual Pearl Harbor Day remembrance ritual at the John's Pass Bridge on Thursday, December 7, in remembrance of the 76th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, which killed 2,403 Americans. Among the participants was Mel Smith, a WWII Navy veteran, who was at Pearl Harbor on the day it was attacked.

The event was led by Post Commander Ronald Mills and attended by approximately 25 military veterans, post auxiliary members and the public.

Prior to joining the navy, Smith was a civilian welding contractor at Pearl Harbor. On December 7, 1941, he found himself in the midst of the Japanese attack and witnessed the attacking planes up close. “They were coming right at us and low, and I could see some of the pilots in the cockpits, but their targets were our ships in the harbor about a mile away.” In 1944, Smith went on to join the Navy and served on a combat landing craft throughout the Pacific during the war.

Smith, 99, threw a ceremonial wreath off the Johns Pass Bridge and into the channel as participants applauded. Among the participants was Smith's 7 year-old great-granddaughter, Eva, one of Smith's five great-grandchildren, who proudly stayed by his side throughout the ceremony.

Prior to making the short trek up the bridge, Mills addressed the gathering at the post facility stating, “It's important to keep the memories and stories of Pearl Harbor alive for all generations.” He said, “We very much appreciate Mel Smith attending our ceremony and it is truly a special honor to have a Pearl Harbor survivor as a member of our post.”

The VFW post is located in Madeira Beach in front of Johns Pass.



Flag bearers, l-r: Tony Demarco, Tony Curbo, Kenny McClimmens; wreath held by Don Daviau; great-grand-daughter Eva standing next to Mel Smith, seated

Press Release written by Post Adjutant, John Kieffer, who can be reached at 813-919-9161 or johnkieffer1234@aol.com for clarifications or questions.

Additional contact information:

Ron Mills, VFW Post 4256 Commander
12901 Gulf Boulevard in Madeira Beach, Florida 33708
Phone: 727-397-3767
Email: HVFW1@tampabay.rr.com
Website: www.TheVFW4256.org