

Ceremony: Survivors 'epitomize the strength and resolve of this great country'

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will live in infamy." The attack killed more than 2,400 Americans, wounded nearly 1,200 more and launched the United States into World War II.

The second quote, often attributed to Japanese Marshal Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, claims the attack served "to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve." The attack, Gibson said, did in fact stun the United States, not least because of the enormous loss of life and military equipment.

"When they attacked us, we were that sleeping giant, and we did awaken," he said.

On Dec. 8, 1941, America declared war on Japan; three days after that, Germany declared war on America. The country became embroiled in a two-front war. What followed were several years of gruesome combat, the detonation of atomic weapons on two Japanese cities and the death of many more Americans, not to mention millions of people across the world. Through it all, U.S. military men and women showed resolve. To Gibson, Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day is "a shout out to all those heroes."

"For those lost, we can't replace them," Gibson said. "But for those survivors, you epitomize the strength and resolve of this great country."

Also during the ceremony, Clatsop County Veterans Services Officer Luke Thomas,



Spurgeon Keeth Sr., a Pearl Harbor survivor, listens to guest speaker retired U.S. Navy Capt. Steve Gibson, during the Pearl Harbor Day of Remembrance ceremony.

the master of ceremonies, read a proclamation on behalf of the city of Seaside, declaring Dec. 7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

"Those heroes hold a cherished place in our history through their courage, sacrifice and selfless dedication," the proclamation stated. "They saved our country and preserved freedom."

Ali Vander Zanden read a letter from U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, who could not be present. In the letter, Bonamici said the country owes "profound gratitude" to service members, like Thomas and Keeth, "who survived the

Pearl Harbor attack and served with bravery and distinction to demonstrate the United States' commitment to freedom here and abroad."

"The veterans I've met tell me how their service altered their perspectives on life and marked their character," Bonamici wrote. "I am humbled and inspired by their stories."

Bringing the community together

Undeterred by the drizzling rain, the crowd then moved outside the convention center to watch as local Boy Scout Troop No. 642 low-

ered the flag to half-staff. A color guard from the Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center posted colors to the bridge that spans the Necanicum River, where Thomas lay a ceremonial wreath as the U.S. Coast Guard flew overhead. Nearby, Gibson played "Taps."

Seaside resident Trish Vowels, who attended the ceremony, said patriotism runs deep in her family. Several of her relatives are veterans, including her father, who served in World War II. Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, she said, is an event that "brings us all together for a really great



Bill Thomas, a Pearl Harbor survivor aboard the USS Medusa, salutes as Boy Scout Troop 642 lowers the flag to half-staff during the Pearl Harbor Day of Remembrance ceremony at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center Monday. Thomas, a Seaside resident, was 20 at the time of the attack.

cause and helps us remember who we are."

Her great niece, Kayla, sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "God Bless America" at the ceremony. The 14-year-old also performed at last year's ceremony, and she said she loves it.

"It feels nice to honor those who fought for our country," she said. "Tons of people died for our country, and I think it's important to remember who did."

Additionally, she said, participating in this type of event helps people, herself included, learn about the history being commemorated.

"It makes me more educated on what America went through," she said.

Nolan Milliren, a member of troop No. 642 and a high school junior, said participating in the ceremony the past three years and meeting veterans, like Thomas, heavily in-

fluenced his viewpoint on "the importance of remembering" those who served the country.

"It's an amazing experience you can't have anywhere else," he said.

Stan Gandy, scoutmaster for troop No. 642, said the troop normally could not attend the ceremony, but the Seaside School District had an in-service day Monday, which allowed most of his Scouts to participate.

Some said they wished more people would attend the event. Vowels and Milliren said it would be a great field trip for local history teachers to provide for their students. Milliren said he hopes to fill the big auditorium at the convention center.

"That's the recognition this day should get," he said. "That's how high it should be held."

Though history may fade, he added, "thing like this shouldn't."

Award: Students pick the criteria by which they will judge books

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depth of great literature in Oregon, Schmelzenbach said.

"The class encourages students to see there is a lot out there, and all of it is valuable," she said.

Each year, students in the

class pick the criteria by which they will judge books written by authors who have spent a substantial amount of time in Oregon and who are still living. The students this year picked four criteria: compelling plot, impact, depth of character and depth of theme. The students

said Lindsey's book "Comin' in Over the Rock" excelled in these categories.

The students each selected a book to read and then presented it to the class. Once the finalists are chosen, the students read each of the books and pick a winner. Past recipients of the

literary award include Craig Lesley, author of "The Sky Fisherman," Cheryl Strayed, author of "Tiny Beautiful Things," and Brian Doyle, author of "Mink River."

Lindsey, who moved with his family to Cannon Beach in 1954, is a folklorist, who par-

ticularly enjoys the tradition of oral storytelling and passing on stories through the generations by word of mouth. At the ceremony, he shared several stories that capture his memories as both a student and teacher at Seaside High School.

"Seaside High has never been large in numbers but always has been very large in spirit and soul," Lindsey said. Addressing students, he added, "You should indeed be proud of your school and yourselves and those who preceded you."

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