



THE
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

of Cincinnati
and
Hamilton County

800 Vine Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202-2071
www.CincinnatiLibrary.org

Phyllis Hegner
Assistant PR Manager
Phone (513) 369-4571
Fax (513) 369-4565
Phyllis.Hegner@CincinnatiLibrary.org

Richard Helmes
Press Officer
Phone (513) 369-6959
Fax (513) 369-4565
Rick.Helmes@CincinnatiLibrary.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Press Release

November 16, 2006



Joe Whitt

Remember, Understand, Honor: 65th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor

Main Library Tuesday, December 5, Noon

The December 7, 1941, surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and other military bases on Oahu, Hawaii lasted two hours, leaving 21 U.S. ships heavily damaged and 323 aircraft damaged or destroyed. It killed 2,390 people and wounded 1,178. To commemorate the 65th anniversary of the attack, the Main Library, 800 Vine Street, will host *Remember, Understand, Honor: 65th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor* on Tuesday, December 5 at noon. The program will include:

- Local Pearl Harbor veteran Joe Whitt, who will relate his experiences as an 18-year-old sailor on board the *USS San Francisco*.
- Moderator Dan Hurley, LOCAL 12 history reporter and producer and host of *Newsmakers*, and President of Applied History Associates.
- Kent Richardson, author of *Reflections of Pearl Harbor: An Oral History of December 7, 1941*. Mr. Richardson gathered over 170 personal narratives not only from veterans but from residents who were there or on the mainland. Copies of Mr. Richardson's book will be available through the Friends' Shop, and a book signing will follow.
- A librarian from the History & Genealogy Department to discuss resources available in the department.

About Joe Whitt, United States Navy

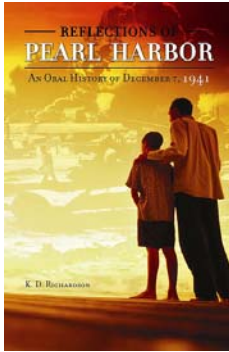
"I was only 18 years old on December 7, 1941," recalls Joe Whitt, who was then stationed aboard the *USS San Francisco*. "I was learning to play guitar in my quarters when the Japanese began their attacks. I remember being in shock physically and mentally when I realized that such a horrible attack was underway." Whitt clamored to the top of the ship and started aiming a 30-caliber rifle at the planes with the big red ball on their sides, flying overhead. "It was the most devastating 120 minutes of my life," says Whitt. "Seeing the death, the destruction, changed me forever and I will carry those memories with me to my grave."

Whitt served in the U.S. Navy from 1941-1946 and was involved in some of the biggest military campaigns of World War II. Battle after battle, Joe Whitt manned the gun turrets in Okinawa, Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal, New Guinea, the central Pacific campaign, the Philippines and the coast of Japan. He was there when Butch O'Hare (from whom Chicago's airport receives its name) had his infamous day shooting down the enemy. He

has story after story of the brave men and women he encountered, and their incredible spirit in the face of certain defeat. Joe Whitt holds 17 battle stars and a presidential unit citation.

"That was the last guitar lesson I ever had," Mr. Whitt said, adding that the buddy teaching him was killed days later. "I never had the heart for it after that."

About Kent Richardson



Kent Richardson is a Hamilton, Ohio native, a 1979 graduate of Miami University, and has been writing for ten years. For the last five years he has been the sports columnist and photographer for *The Venice Cornerstone* monthly newspaper in Ross, Ohio. He began pulling together stories for his book in 1998, and published it in 2005. "The book is an oral history of that fateful day with over 170 personal narratives describing a day in the life of America, from individuals who have not, and never will, forget that historic moment in world history" he said.

✓ **Our goal is to make our programs accessible to everyone. Please request ADA services one week in advance at 513-369-4400 (TTY 369-4409).**

✓ **Information about events at the Main Library and 41 branch libraries is available on the Internet site: www.CincinnatiLibrary.org.**