

## **SIXTEEN STUDENT-TEACHER TEAMS CHOSEN FOR NATIONAL HISTORY DAY SUMMER INSTITUTE IN HAWAI'I**

*National History Day and Pearl Harbor Historic Sites Provide Learning, Research, and All Expenses Paid  
Trips to Hawai'i*

JANUARY 10, 2023, COLLEGE PARK, M.D.— As a way to connect the past with the present and future, National History Day® and its sponsors, the Pearl Harbor Historic Site Partners, which includes the Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum, Pacific Historic Parks, Battleship Missouri Memorial, and the Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum at Pearl Harbor have selected sixteen teacher-student high school teams to participate in *Sacrifice for Freedom®: World War II in the Pacific Student & Teacher Institute*, an all-expenses paid program that offers an exceptional opportunity to study World War II history on Oahu, Hawai'i.

This meaningful program provides an opportunity for each team to research the context of World War II in the Pacific and specifically, the life of a Silent Hero® who died during World War II and is buried in or memorialized at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawai'i. The duos will select a Silent Hero® from the same region they are from—a true hometown hero. The culmination of six months of research and preparation will lead the teams to Hawai'i, where they will share their “eulogies” of their Silent Hero® graveside at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

“Programs like this one help to share the true sacrifice of freedom, it allows young students, our future leaders, to honor those who have paved the way for their future success. It's such an honor to have these students and teachers sharing the stories of their hometown heroes in hopes that it will further connect them to a war fought so many years ago,” says Neil Yamamoto, Education Outreach Coordinator, Battleship Missouri Memorial. “As much as history comes alive for them while here visiting, they are the ones who keep it alive in their classrooms and communities.”

This year, 68 teams applied for the competitive summer institute. Selected teams hail from Arkansas, American Samoa, Arizona, Guam, Hawai'i, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin. Past teacher participants noted that the Institute was a significant professional development experience that changed how they viewed World War II in the Pacific. Student participants reported that the research and Hawai'i-based learning activities challenged their thinking and expanded their perspective of history.

“This program makes history tangible as students trace the steps of soldiers and visit locations that were instrumental in the Pacific during World War II,” Executive Director Cathy Gorn states. “Each year, when students read their eulogies for their Silent Heroes in Hawai'i, I can see the deep meaningful connections that transcend time and place. The past becomes the present in that moment.”

At the culmination of the *Sacrifice for Freedom* program, the students will develop a Silent Hero® profile to be published online during the 2023–2024 academic year at [NHSilentHeroes.org](https://NHSilentHeroes.org).

Funded by the Pearl Harbor Historic Sites, which includes the Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum, Pacific Historic Parks, Battleship Missouri Memorial, and the Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum at Pearl Harbor, travel and program expenses are provided for all participants.

The following teams have been selected for this program:

**Arkansas**

**Mrs. Jessica Culver** (teacher)

**Morgan Nietert** (student)

Ozark High School

Ozark, Arkansas

**American Samoa**

**Mr. Lio Alofaituli** (teacher)

**Lama Petelo** (student)

Manu'a High School

Pago Pago, American Samoa

**Arizona**

**Ms. Samantha Ness** (teacher)

**Aiden Kerbs** (student)

Copper Canyon High School

Glendale, Arizona

**Guam**

**Mr. Brian Paul Galang** (teacher)

**Bernard Malicsi** (student)

Father Duenas Memorial High School

Chalan Pago Ordot, Guam

**Hawai'i**

**Mr. Micah Benavitz** (teacher)

**Hannah Baker** (student)

Mililani High School

Mililani, Hawai'i

**Illinois**

**Mr. Josue Contreras** (teacher)

Harriet Beecher Stowe Dual Language School

Chicago, Illinois

**Joshua Mendez** (student)  
Wheaton North High School  
Wheaton, Illinois

**Iowa**

**Mrs. Debora Masker** (teacher)  
Kirn Middle School  
**Emily Newby** (student)  
Abraham Lincoln High School  
Council Bluffs, Iowa

**Michigan**

**Ms. Jan Klco** (teacher)  
**Megan LeaTrea** (student)  
Whitehall High School  
Whitehall, Michigan

**Minnesota**

**Mr. Christopher Stewart** (teacher)  
**Gavin Klabecek** (student)  
North Lakes Academy  
Forest Lake, Minnesota

**New Hampshire**

**Mr. Christopher Soule** (teacher)  
**Brady Gardner** (student)  
Gilford High School  
Gilford, New Hampshire

**New Jersey**

**Ms. Jayne O'Neill** (teacher)  
**Ashley Marie Diaz Briones** (student)  
Passaic County Technical Institute  
Wayne, New Jersey

**South Dakota**

**Mrs. Brett Brennan** (teacher)  
**Emily Heuer** (student)  
Waverly-South Shore School  
Waverly, South Dakota

**Tennessee**

**Ms. Rebecca Byrd** (teacher)  
**Molly Bohanan** (student)

Sevier County High School  
Sevierville, Tennessee

**Texas**

**Mr. James O'Keeffe** (teacher)  
**Fatima Garcia Meraz** (student)  
Northwest Early College High School  
El Paso, Texas

**Utah**

**Mrs. Aliyah Bacca** (teacher)  
**Keilana Tu'itupou** (student)  
Salt Lake Center for Science Education  
Salt Lake City, Utah

**Wisconsin**

**Mrs. Naomi Peuse** (teacher)  
Weyauwega-Fremont School District  
Weyauwega, Wisconsin  
**Jennifer Omernik** (student)  
Amherst High School  
Amherst, Wisconsin

**About National History Day (NHD)**

NHD is a non-profit organization based in College Park that seeks to improve the teaching and learning of history. The National History Day Contest was established in 1974 and currently engages more than half a million students in conducting original research on historical topics of interest. Students present their research as a documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website. Projects compete first at the local and affiliate levels. The top entries are invited to the National Contest at the University of Maryland at College Park. NHD is sponsored in part by HISTORY®, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Park Service. For more information, visit [nhd.org](http://nhd.org).

**About Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum**

Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization located on Historic Ford Island at the central site of the December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor. Its mission is to steward America's first aviation battlefield of World War II, sharing the artifacts, personal stories, impact, and response to the Pearl Harbor attack and the Pacific region battles that followed, honoring those who have defended our freedom to educate and inspire future generations. Visitors walk the Pearl Harbor flightline where the attack began, enter the bullet-scarred hangars, see the control tower and vintage aircraft, and learn the stories of WWII heroes and events that changed our nation and the world.

**About Pacific Historic Parks**

Headquartered in Waipahu, HI, Pacific Historic Parks is the non-profit cooperative association of the National Park Service and has been raising funds and providing support to NPS operations at Pearl

Harbor since 1979, when the organization was known as the Arizona Memorial Museum Association. PHP's mission is to "support the USS Arizona Memorial and other Pacific historic locations through education and interpretive programs, research, preservation, and restoration, to perpetuate the memory of events and honor the people involved in these sites." PHP also supports NPS operations at: Kalaupapa National Historical Park on Molokai; the War in the Pacific National Historical Park on Guam, and the American Memorial Park on Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands. Since 2014, Pacific Historic Parks has also partnered with the state Department of Land and Natural Resources to support the Diamond Head State Monument. See [www.pacifichistoricparks.org](http://www.pacifichistoricparks.org).

#### **About the Battleship Missouri Memorial**

Since opening in January 1999, the Battleship Missouri Memorial has attracted more than 9-million visitors from around the world with a compelling tour experience showcasing the USS *Missouri's* unique place in history. Located a mere ship's length from the USS *Arizona* Memorial, the *Mighty Mo* completes a historical visitor experience that begins with the "day of infamy" and sinking of the USS *Arizona* in Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and ends with Japan's formal surrender aboard the USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945.

The USS *Missouri* had an astounding career over five decades and three wars – World War II, the Korean War, and Desert Storm – after which it was decommissioned and donated to the USS Missouri Memorial Association, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The Association operates the Battleship Missouri Memorial as a historic attraction and oversees her care and preservation with the support of visitors, memberships, grants, and donations.

The Battleship Missouri Memorial is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Military, kama'āina (local resident) and school group pricing is available. For information or reservations, call (808) 455-1600 or visit [USSMissouri.org](http://USSMissouri.org).

The USS Missouri Memorial Association is dedicated to preserving the Battleship Missouri and sharing her story and place in history. For information or reservations visit [USSMissouri.org](http://USSMissouri.org).

#### **About the Pacific Fleet Submarine Memorial Association**

The Pacific Fleet Submarine Memorial Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that was founded in 1978 with the purpose of acquiring the WWII fleet submarine USS *Bowfin* and placing her on permanent display at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. USS *Bowfin* opened to the public in 1981, and last year welcomed her nine millionth visitor.

With an average of 400,000 visitors per year, the Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum is the most visited submarine museum in the world and one of the few places that the public can learn about the history of our "Silent Service."

The submarine museum is open daily from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 11 Arizona Memorial Drive at Pearl Harbor, except on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. For more information, call (808) 423-1341 or go to [www.bowfin.org](http://www.bowfin.org).