



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 6, 2017

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**Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor
Partners With National Park Service
And Zero Fighter Admirers' Club Japan
To Host Blackened Canteen Ceremony
Aboard The USS *Arizona* Memorial**

*Ceremony of peace and reconciliation is held on the eve of the 76th anniversary
of the attack on Pearl Harbor*

HONOLULU, HI -- For the past 26 years, Dr. Hiroya Sugano, Director General of the Zero Fighter Admirers' Club in Japan, has traveled to Pearl Harbor, Oahu to conduct a ceremony of peace and reconciliation aboard the USS *Arizona* Memorial. This morning, on the eve of the 76th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, and with the assistance of the National Park Service and Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor, Dr. Sugano offered prayers and poured bourbon whisky from a WWII-blackened canteen into the water from the USS *Arizona* Memorial as an offering to the spirits of the fallen.

Blackened Canteen Serves As Inspiration For Peace

On the night of June 20, 1945, during a bombing raid over Shizuoka, Japan, two Army Air Force B-29s from the 314th Bomb Wing out of Guam collided and crashed, killing 23 crewmen. The raid also claimed the lives of more than 2,000 Shizuoka citizens.

A local Shizuoka businessman and farmer, Fukumatsu Ito, was at the scene of the crash, pulling U.S. airmen from the wreckage who were fatally injured. He also retrieved a blackened canteen, distorted from the heat and bearing what appears to be, a handprint of its late owner seared onto the canteen.

A devout Buddhist, Ito believed all life is precious and bore no hatred or ill will towards America for the loss of civilian life in Shizuoka. Shortly after the raid, Ito started the tradition of conducting an annual ceremony, honoring those who had paid the ultimate price as a result of war. During the ceremony, a silent prayer was said and bourbon whiskey was poured from the blackened canteen onto the crash site as an offering to the spirits of the fallen, both Japanese and American. Eventually, two monuments were erected atop Mount Shizutaka in memory of these men, where Ito's ceremony was held each year, thereafter.

At the time of the crash, Dr. Sugano was a young boy living with his family in Shizuoka. He experienced the horrors of that night and later visited the crash site with local townspeople. He never forgot the death and destruction that lay before him. He also witnessed Ito's display of courage and devotion to peace even as Ito was shunned by Shizuoka residents for honoring the U.S. airmen who lost their lives in the crash.

Before his death, Ito gave the blackened canteen to Dr. Sugano, who promised to carry on the tradition. Since 1972, Dr. Sugano has personally hosted the annual ceremony at the Mount Shizutaka monuments on the Saturday closest to June 20th, the day of the crash.

In 1991, Dr. Sugano traveled to Oahu to attend the 50th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, conducting his Blackened Canteen Ceremony aboard the USS *Arizona* Memorial. Since 1991, he has attended the Pearl Harbor attack commemoration every year, presiding over the Blackened Canteen Ceremony aboard the USS *Arizona* Memorial with the assistance of the National Park Service and Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor.

“Through Mr. Ito's unwavering compassion and courage, the Blackened Canteen Ceremony has become an important symbol of peace and reconciliation,” said Kenneth DeHoff, Executive Director at

Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor. “The canteen serves as a reminder that good can come from tragedy and we are grateful for Dr. Sugano’s dedication to continue this ceremonial tradition. Pacific Aviation Museum is honored to have the opportunity to co-host the Blackened Canteen Ceremony with Dr. Sugano and the National Park Service.”

The Ceremony was followed by a youth symposium hosted by the Museum to commemorate this story of forgiveness, reconciliation, and friendship borne out of the horror of World War II. Dr. Sugano and several WWII veterans shared their experiences with students from Honolulu, Japan, Australia, who then participated in a symposium discussion.

Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor is located on Historic Ford Island, where bombs fell during the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. Visitors to the Museum can see remnants from that day of infamy, including the 158-foot tall, red and white iconic Ford Island Control Tower, Hangars 37 and 79, and bullet holes in Hangar 79. Through its preservation and restoration of World War II fighter planes and accompanying artifacts in the Museum’s historic hangars, Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor shares the story of the vital role aviation played in the winning of World War II, and its continuing role in maintaining America’s freedom.

Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Its mission is to develop and maintain an internationally recognized aviation museum on Historic Ford Island that educates young and old alike, honors aviators and their support personnel who defended freedom in The Pacific Region, and to preserve Pacific aviation history.

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