

World War Two Veterans Share Same History, Differing Perspectives on Pearl Harbor and War with Japan

William Ceil Hancock, a native of Polkton, was born during World War I, a war politicians said at the time would "end all wars." Twenty-six years later, Hancock was fighting in Hawaii the day World War II began for the United States.

It was Dec. 7, 1941, and Hancock was a 24-year-old Army corporal stationed at Ft. Shafter, Hawaii, about eight miles from Pearl Harbor Naval Base, where more than 300 Japanese fighter planes and bombers struck the first blow of the war.

"We had just had breakfast. It was around 7:55 a.m.," Hancock said. "We didn't hear the explosions, but we saw the smoke rising over the mountains from the harbor. We went on alert immediately. No one was expecting it. Even the navy was surprised. The admiral in command of the fleet thought the Japanese planes were ours."

The harbor, ringed by mountains, was a bowl of smoke and flame. In all, 21 American warships were sunk or damaged, and 2,388 American servicemen and women were dead, or dying.

Hancock, now 92, was an ordinance man who later served on the south Pacific island of Iwo Jima and witnessed the U.S. flag being raised on Mt. Suribachi. He said he remembers the fear more than the anger in the days and weeks following the sneak attack. "I was angry, sure, but I was mostly scared," he said. "We carried tablets around to purify the drinking water because they thought the Japanese had poisoned the water supply, stuff like that. There were just lots of rumors. We didn't know what was going on."

Because martial law was declared on the island following the attack, Hancock stood guard at Dec. 7. He compared the nighttime sky to a July 4th fireworks display. "There were tracer bullets rising up from the harbor all night," he said. "Everyone was nervous. We were expecting to see the Japanese army anytime."

Hancock, who now lives in Anderson, SC assisted living home, said his thoughts about that day 68 years ago revolve around the people who died. "I ain't no hero," he said. "I just survived the war. I'm 92 and I came home, had a family. I didn't go through the horrors of the war. But there were a lot of men who didn't come back, or who were wounded or became (prisoners of war) — those are the ones we should remember."

The most recent data available from United States Department of Veterans Affairs projected there were about 2.6 million WW II vets still alive as of Sept. 30, 2008, of whom about 900 die every day. As their numbers decline, so do the opportunities to document, and learn from, their experiences.

At the Richard M. Campbell Nursing home in Anderson, a black veteran shared how growing up in the segregated South and serving in a segregated Army impacted his view of the war as he lived through it. Fidi Giles, an 83-year-old from Chester, S.C., remembers his impression of Pearl Harbor when he arrived there as an Army sergeant in May 1945.

"The first time I saw the harbor I noticed the hulls of the ships still down in the water," Giles said. "The first thing that came to my mind was the number of soldiers and ships that were killed."

Three months after the attack President Franklin D. Roosevelt referred to as "a date which will live in infamy," he signed Executive Order 9066. The order called for the relocation of about 120,000 Japanese-Americans living on U.S. soil to one of 32 internment camps located in 14 states. About 12,000 German- and Italian-Americans also were held during the war under the Alien Enemies Act of 1798.

Giles, who said he witnessed the destructive power of war while serving in post-war Japan with the American occupation forces, said his experiences as a young black man in internment camps. "Like everyone else, I was angry about the attack, but I didn't probably feel the way a lot of folks did about the Japanese," he said. "I grew up in a segregated situation," he said. "Everything I knew had been segregated. When I learned about the internment camps, I didn't feel too cool about them. I thought they were degrading to the Japanese citizens living here, because I knew what it felt like to be separated out."

Church News

NOW - DECEMBER 16

Coat Drive

At Faith Baptist Church. Asking for donations of new or gently used coats for children & adults. Info 704-465-8624

NOV 28 - 30 & DEC 2

Pastoral Revival

At Johnson Chapel Church. Wed-Pastor Andrew Davis, Thu-Pastor Joletha Dockery, Fri-Pastor Cindy Wiggins, all at 7:30pm. Sun-Bishop WP Chapman, 3pm. All are invited

NOV 30 - DEC 2

Women's Conference

At Rock Hill MBC, 5pm w/Rev Donna McNair, Sat-9:30am 4 dynamic speakers (\$5) & Sun-11am

DECEMBER 1

Birthday Banquet

At Henry Grove Baptist Church, 6pm. Everyone is invited

Rainbow Tea

At Centenary AME Zion, 5:30pm w/John Kirkpatrick. Dinner is invited

DECEMBER 1 & 2

Christmas Drama

Jesus, the Heartbeat of Every Generation an outdoor presentation at N Wadesboro Baptist Church, 7pm nightly. Live drama with narration & music. You can watch from your car. 1211 N Greene St, Wadesboro. Info 704-694-3711

DECEMBER 2

Christmas Cantata

By Youth Ministry of Rock Hill MBC, 3:30pm. Everyone is welcome

Performance

The Christmas Story at New Hope UMC, 6pm

Men's Program

At Lindsey Chapel Friendship COG, 2pm w/Min Leake. All are invited

Christmas Praise

Peace at Hopewell UMC in Peachland, 11am w/Lumber River Quartet

DECEMBER 3

Mission Yard Sale

At Harris Chapel AME Zion, 7am

DECEMBER 4

M-A-R-Y Christmas

For ladies at Hopewell UMC, 7pm w/Becky Seamon. Refreshments provided

DECEMBER 8

Christmas Ball

By West Deep Creek MBC at Lockhart-Taylor Center, 6pm w/theme "Back to the 70's." Photographers available 5-6pm. Tickets: adults \$20, 7-17 \$8, 0-6 free. Info Lisa Redfern 704-694-7571

DECEMBER 8

Christmas Program

At House of Faith Outreach Ministries, Wortham St in Wadesboro, 6pm

Concert

At White Oak Grove MBC in Morven 4pm w/Sons of Saron, Boys of Glory & Praise Team

DECEMBER 9

29th Anniversary

Of Bishop & Founder of Lilesville Holiness Church, LR Byrd, 2:30pm w/Rev Clyburn. Everyone is welcome

Christmas Play

The Bethlehem Inn at Mineral Springs Baptist Church, 6:30pm. Soup served. Everyone is invited

DECEMBER 14

Contest Deadline

Polkton Art Contest for kids 5-15. Winner announced a week later. Entry forms & info 704-272-7463

DECEMBER 15

Family & Friends Day

At Grace Temple COG, Lilesville, 3pm w/Pastor Louis Marshall

DECEMBER 16

Candlelight Service

At Rock Hill MBC, 5pm w/Rev J McLendon

DECEMBER 22

Holiday Meal

For homeless, seniors, shut-ins & needy at Ebenezer MBC beginning at 11am. Clothing also available. To donate funds for the food or clothing please call 704-848-4412

DECEMBER 23

Christmas Program

At Lindsey Chapel Friendship COG, 2:30pm. All are invited

Youth Christmas Play

At Mineral Springs Baptist Church during 11am service. Everyone is invited

DECEMBER 29 & 30

5th Sat & Sun Fellowship

At 10 Parkers Grove MBC. Sat-11am & Sun-4pm. Info 704-695-4910

ONGOING

Bible Study

At Parsons Grove MBC Tue at 6:30pm

Noon Prayer

At Greater St. Mark COD, noon on Tuesdays

Rides to Service

At East Rock Ford MBC. Call 704-695-2997

Thursday's Child

Children's choir, Gail Litaker director, an outreach ministry of First United Methodist Church, open to all children grades K-6, no pre-registration necessary, Thursdays, 4-5pm, cost is free, 704-694-5179

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Events

NOW - DEC 7

Medicare Sign-ups

Call Precision Drug Plan. For Grace Senior Center for info & appointment 704-694-6616

NOVEMBER 28

Blood Drive

At First Baptist Church on Lee Ave in Wadesboro, 1:30-6pm. Info to win \$1,000 gift card. Call 704-475-1239

NOVEMBER 29

Child Car Seat

Check-Up event for free by certified technician at Lilesville Baptist Church, 2-5pm. Info 704-694-4036

DECEMBER 1

Christmas Dinner

Woodmen of the World, 6pm at Lodge Hall on Hwy 74 W of Wadesboro. Ticket info 704-694-4107

DECEMBER 2

Christmastime Tour

Of Homes by Uptown Wadesboro, Inc, 4-7pm. Tickets \$10 available at

Lacy's, Fancy Crafts, Buff Monkey Fitness, Wadsworth Chamber of Commerce & Wadesboro Town Hall. 704-694-5171

Anson Singers Concert

3pm at First United Methodist Church in Wadesboro, immediately preceding the Christmastime Tour of Homes. This free concert features sacred & secular music for the Christmas season

Class of 1973

Bowman High School 40th Class Reunion planning meeting. All members urged to attend. Info Diane Dean Johnson or Cheryl Cason Coppage 704-465-8399

DECEMBER 3

Blood Drive

3-7pm at Southside Baptist Church. Donors must weigh at least 120lbs

DECEMBER 4

Deadline

For donations to Wadesboro Police Dept Shop with a Cop program, giving gifts to children for Christmas. Any amount is much appreciated. Info 704-694-2167

Bluegrass Christmas

Concert at Ansonia Theatre, 6:30pm. \$10 ticket includes refreshments. Available at Wadesboro Town Hall, Buff Monkey Fitness & Chamber of Commerce

DECEMBER 6

Christmas Luncheon

For senior citizens 60 years and older, 11am in Ingram Room at Lockhart-Taylor Center. Register 704-694-6616

DECEMBER 7

Motorcycle Ride

For Tents for Tots, 10:30am at Centenary AME Zion. Cost \$10 plus new toy per rider. Dinner served. For information call 704-848-4412

DECEMBER 7

Zimmer Friends

Gather together at House Restaurant in Ansonville, 6pm

Deadline to Register

For 4-H Holiday Craft Workshop for kids 5-11 to be held Dec 21, 9am-1pm. Cost is \$7. Register at 501 McLaurin St in Wadesboro

DECEMBER 10

50+ Club Meets

In Little Theatre at Hampton B. Allen Library, 10:30am w/the band Nighthawk playing Christmas favorites. Everyone is invited. Info 704-694-5177

Registration Deadline

For Parks & Rec Youth Basketball, ages K-12th grade, \$25 per player. Info 704-694-5751

DECEMBER 11

Women's League Meets

Country to 1pm at Twin Valley Country Club for lunch & speaker. \$8.50 & all Anson women invited. RSVP Angela Smith 704-385-9327

DECEMBER 22

Holiday Meal

For homeless, seniors, shut-ins & needy at Ebenezer MBC beginning at 11am. Clothing also available. To donate funds for the food or clothing please call 704-848-4412

DECEMBER 24 - 26

Offices Closed

For Anson County Government for Christmas holidays

JANUARY 1

Offices Closed

For Anson County Government for New Year's Day

ONGOING EVENTS

Bingo

For ladies & gentlemen at Grace Senior Center each Monday from 2-4pm. Register & info at 704-694-6616

Every Thursday

'Take a Walk in Her Shoes' by Anson County Domestic Violence Coalition at 5:30pm. New route each week, never over 3 miles. Sponsorship of your walk will help raise funds for ACDVC programs. Info 704-694-4499

NAACP Meeting

Third Sundays, Hampton B. Allen library theater, 5pm, 704-694-6749

Learning Center Hours

Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center, Mon-Fri, 10:30-5:30pm. Computer lab (children & adults), copy service, fax service & resource library. All available to the public for a small fee

Cognitive Disability

Caregiver Support Group, second Tuesdays at First Presbyterian Church, Wadesboro. 7-8:30pm, Nancy Capellan 704-694-3156

Compassionate Friends

Meet on the 2nd Thursday of month, 7pm, at the Training Room at Pee Dee Electric, bereaved parents, family and friends invited, 704-826-6063 or 704-694-2425

Arts & Crafts Workshop

Every Tuesday, 1-4pm in Olde Mill Gallery in Lockhart-Taylor Center. Bring your supplies. Free, donations accepted. 704-694-4950

ACDVC One on One

Call us to meet & discuss how to keep you & your children safe. Anson County Domestic Violence Coalition 704-694-4499

After School Program

Kid Cafe Mon-Fri from 2:30-5:30pm. at the Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center, 704-826-8737

Childcare Association

Meets every 3rd Thursday of month, 6:30pm. Info 704-695-1666

Museum Open

Ansonville Historical Society Museum open 4th Sunday each month, 2-4pm

New Beginnings Cancer Support Group

Meet on third Monday each month. 704-694-5211

Cruise-In

Third Thursday each month, 5-8pm at The Old Store. Bring your cars, trucks & motorcycles & show them off! Food discounts, door prizes, 50/50 raffle to benefit Feed My Lambs & lots of fun

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