Remains of veteran lost at Pearl Harbor identified

By Donna Cipolloni
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Sailor returning home to family

It has been 77 years since Water Tender 2nd Class Edgar D. Gross was killed during the attack on Pearl Harbor, but his remains have finally been identified and are coming home to rest.

Gross was on duty aboard USS Oklahoma (BB 37) when, at approximately 7:55 a.m. on Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese bomber aircraft and torpedo planes shattered the quiet Sunday morning with a surprise aerial attack that destroyed or damaged 19 U.S. Navy ships, including eight battleships.

“As a water tender, Edgar is believed to have been working in the boiler room when it happened,” said Sherry Balmain, an analyst for NAWCAD’s Command Evaluation and Control at NAS Patuxent River, and a distant cousin of Gross’ wife, Pearl. “He could’ve been killed immediately by the blast, but he also might’ve been trapped or injured and unable to escape.”

Oklahoma was moored in berth Fox 5 along Battleship Row – a prime target during the attack – and took several early hits; she began to list almost immediately. Her hull’s port side was torn open from below the forward gun turret back to the third turret, a distance of more than 250-feet. It didn’t take long for the ship to capsize, coming to rest at the bottom of the harbor with a portion of her starboard underwater hull and the starboard propeller still showing above the surface.

On Dec. 8, through the intense efforts of Sailors and Navy Yard civilians guided by the sound of banging from within, holes were cut in Oklahoma’s exposed bottom and 32 men were pulled alive from the wreckage. Unfortunately, 429 other crew members were lost, including the 39-year-old Gross, who had already left the Navy but returned to serve again.

Orders accepted through Nov. 16

Like to eat but hate to cook? River’s Edge Catering and Conference Center has the perfect solution.

Since 2012, River’s Edge has been saving Thanksgiving Day hosts a lot of stress by preparing – in advance – full turkey dinners with sides and pie.

“Our chef will prepare a fully cooked whole turkey with all the fixings; just heat on ‘Thanksgiving Day,’” said Debbie Bailey, food and beverage coordinator for MWR at Pax River. “We leave the carving to you and you can take all the credit.”

Options are available for 4, 8 or 12 people and can be purchased as full feast dinners or sides-only. Meals include herb roasted turkey, traditional cornbread stuffing, classic mashed potatoes, green beans, cranberry orange relish, gravy, dinner rolls and choice of pumpkin, apple, blueberry, cherry or pecan pie.

Prices for full dinners range from $89.99 to $199.99 and for sides-only from $55.99 to $129.99.

Depending on the number of orders received, it takes the River’s Edge chef at least a day and a half to prepare everything. “There are several large commercial ovens to prepare all of the turkeys and trimmings,” Bailey explained. “The sides are prepared while the turkeys are cooking and then are packaged ready for pickup. Heating instructions are included.”

About 20 turkey feasts are prepared each year by River’s Edge, and customers need only remember the one important deadline that cannot be missed. “Folks must pick up their orders by 3 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 21,” Bailey noted.

Thanksgiving Feast-to-go is available to anyone with base access. Orders can be placed through Nov. 16 by phoning 301-342-3656 or stopping by the River’s Edge. Payment is due at time of order placement and there are no refunds available.