

# Hawaii World War II memorial rededication ceremony



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On Nov. 12, 2021, the Hawaii Department of Defense, along with the Hawaii Office of Veterans' Services, held a rededication ceremony at the World War II Memorial Plaque in Honolulu. The original memorial was dedicated in 1944 to commemorate the service of the Hawaiians who died during World War II.

The memorial is decorated on four sides with an American eagle, the olive branch of peace, the shield of the United States, and the Hawaiian coat of arms. 880 names are carved into the sides of the monument. It is prominently located on King Street and Punchbowl Street, near the statue of King Kamehameha and across the street from Iolani Palace.

After a visit to Hawaii, many phone calls and several emails with the Director of the State Office of Veterans' Services, Col. Ronald Han, the vision of this memorial came to life. I was heartbroken that I was not able to be there for the dedication due to surgery; however, having Air Force veteran Howard Komine, president of Honolulu, HI Branch 860, standing in my place was reassuring and amazing. I would not have wanted anyone else—thank you.

Col. Han opened the ceremony with a welcoming message, which was followed by a prayer led by American Legion Chaplain Michele Hauser. The three keynote speakers were Major General Kenneth S. Hara, Chief Master Sgt. Bridget Komine and her husband, NALC's own Howard Komine.

"It's been 80 years since the bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7," Howard Komine said. "To have the World War II memorial laid out and fixed up—it's beautiful."

The renovation of the memorial plaque would not have been possible without the contribution of NALC members, a fact that was recognized at the ceremony. All three keynote speakers mentioned the benevolence of the NALC by name.

"On behalf of our State Office of Veterans Services, thank you so very much for making this special ceremony happen," Han stated. "We cannot sing enough praises on you and the NALC."

In his speech, Komine recognized the absence of what would have been a large group of attendees at the rededication, had the ceremony taken place as planned during the 2020 NALC convention.

"But for the COVID-19 pandemic," he said, "there would have been hundreds of veteran letter carriers here today to honor all Americans of Hawaii who paid the ultimate sacrifice to preserve our freedom."

Some other notable highlights of the day included the presence of a family member of a deceased Hawaiian who was present on Dec. 7, 1944, for the original dedication of the WWII Memorial, as well as three WWII veterans who are recipients of the Congressional Gold Medal. The veterans were accompanied by their family members and helped represent all WWII veterans.

During the program, Howard Komine was given the Governor's Commendation Certificate as a mark of the gratitude of the Hawaiian government for the generosity of the NALC.

"I was just so proud that the NALC supported [the rededication]," Komine said. "I took it as an honor to represent the NALC."



At left, the unveiling of the memorial plaque; above, Honolulu Branch 860 President Howard Komine and his wife, Chief Master Sgt. Bridget Komine.