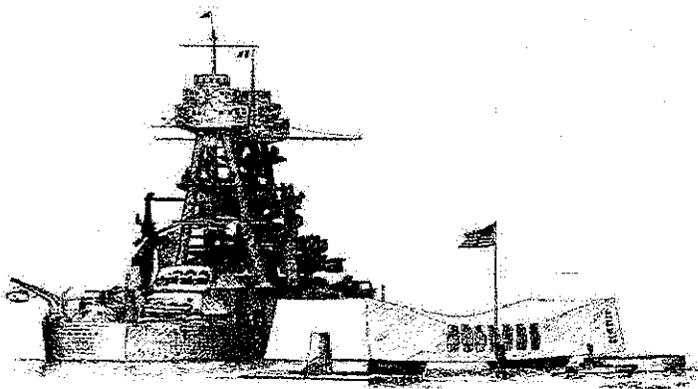


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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POC: Lt. j.g. Zamora

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NAVY TO MARK ANNIVERSARY OF WEST LOCH DISASTER

Navy Region Hawaii will host a memorial ceremony Friday morning to mark the 60th anniversary of the West Loch disaster.

On May 21, 1944, as 29 tank landing ships (LSTs) gathered in Pearl Harbor's West Loch to load ammunition in preparation for the invasion of Saipan, one of the LSTs exploded. A chain reaction of explosions followed that left six LSTs sunk, and left several more severely damaged. In all, 163 men were killed, and 396 wounded. It was Hawaii's second greatest disaster in terms of casualties.

Nine survivors from the incident will return to Pearl Harbor for Friday's ceremony to pay honor to their fallen shipmates. Capt. Michael A. Donch III, commander of Naval Magazine Pearl Harbor will be the master of ceremonies and Rear Adm. Michael S. Roesner, the Pacific Fleet's deputy chief of staff for Logistics, Fleet Supply and Ordnance will be the guest speaker.

The ceremony begins at 9 a.m. at Naval Magazine Pearl Harbor. Media representatives who would like to cover this event must contact the Navy Region Hawaii public affairs office at (808) 473-2888 by 4 p.m., May 20, and meet at the Nimitz Gate visitors pass office parking lot at 7:45 a.m. on May 21. Boat transportation will be provided to and from Pearl Harbor Naval Station. As the area surrounding Naval Magazine Pearl Harbor is normally closed to the public, this is a rare opportunity to obtain photos and video footage of West Loch not available at any other time.

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