

## Veteran Saw Beginning and End of World War Two

Radio Script by Frank Samandari

Clinton Westbrook was mere feet away from the U.S.S. Arizona when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 07, 1941.

*“The first plane that went over made us think the Army Air Corp was pulling a surprise attack, which they did often, usually on Sundays.”*

Throwing caution to the wind, Westbrook says he ran toward the wreck —helping rescue the few survivors of the attack.

*“It did one thing right away. It made all us young kids men.”*

The years that followed would prove to be as tough for Westbrook as they were for the rest of the country.

*“I lost seven friends on the Arizona, so I became a loner. I didn’t want to make friends. I didn’t want to go through that again.”*

Years later, Westbrook was aboard the U.S.S. Taylor, which escorted the U.S.S. Missouri into Tokyo Harbor for the Japanese unconditional surrender. In 1997, he met one of the Japanese pilots responsible for the horrors of that December day, but says he holds no animosity.

*“I think my healing came in that I could talk about it. A lot of them don’t. That’s bad because it’s going to cause flashbacks, bad dreams. I’ve been lucky in that I was able to eliminate those.”*

Westbrook was awarded the Purple Heart, and earned two bronze stars. He visits the Pearl Harbor Memorial in Hawaii every year, where he says he reflects with pride on the struggles of the ‘Greatest Generation.’

*“When I went aboard, I had the feeling that those who died knew I was there.”*

