Pearl Harbor survivor shares his stories

By Ryan Parker, Denver Post

COLORADO SPRINGS – No one asked Navy Lt. James Downing to hurriedly memorize the names on the dog tags of the dead and injured during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

But Downing, then 28, did it because he could not bear the thought of families not knowing the fate of their loved ones. He wrote to as many families as he could.



A memorial in Honolulu commemorates those who died Dec. 7, 1941. Photo/LTN file

The Colorado Springs resident, who celebrated his 100th birthday in August, is the oldest known survivor of the Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese sneak attack that killed more than 2,400 Americans .

Downing fought to save lives that day, all the while wondering whether it was the day his own life would end.

Downing was a gunner's mate 1st class and postmaster, assigned to the USS West Virginia. The battleship had just returned to base after more than a week on patrol.

His wife of five months, Morena, was cooking Sunday morning breakfast for a few servicemen in the couple’s home near the harbor when they heard explosions in the distance, Downing said.

“Then an anti-aircraft shell landed right outside and blew a crater about 25 feet across,” Downing said, illustrating with outstretched arms.

Read the whole story

Shred for Sushi rail jam in Stateline

Sushi Pier has teamed up with On Course Events to produce the 3rd annual Shred for Sushi event Dec. 12 at 7pm.

Registration is from 5:30-6:30pm in the parking lot next to Sushi Pier, 177 Highway 50, Stateline.

The event will feature a rail jam competition for skiers and snowboarders of all ages; three live DJs spinning from the Red Bull MXT truck; food and drink specials; raffle and giveaways; and local vendor and sponsor booths. There will be a cap at 50 competitors.

The event will benefit SOS Outreach, a nonprofit that helps build character in youths through outdoor adventures.

Lake Valley holiday fire truck ready to roll

Lake Valley’s decorated Christmas engine is about to head into neighborhoods.

Here is the schedule:

Dec. 11 – Echo View Estates, Tahoe Mountain Road, Mule Deer Circle

Dec. 12 – Lake Tahoe Blvd from Boulder Mountain Drive to Grizzly Mountain Drive

Dec. 13 – West side of North Upper Truckee from Zuni Street, Highway 50, Chiapa Drive

Dec. 14 – East side of North Upper Truckee from Grizzly Mountain to West San Bernardino Ave.

Dec. 15 – Christmas Valley from Highway 50 to Grass Lake Road

Dec. 16 –North side of Highway 50 in Meyers (lower Apache, Magnet School), behind Station 7 (Cornelian Drive, Navahoe Drive, Cheyenne Drive).

Dec. 17 – North of Pioneer Trail from Highway 50 to Elks Club (Southern Pines Drive, Tionontati Street, Meadow Vale Drive), Player Drive

Dec. 18 – Upper Apache Drive and Mandan Street

Dec. 19 – Pioneer Trail from Busch Way to Washoan Boulevard (Glen Eagles Drive, Hekpa Drive)

Dec. 20 – Pioneer Trail from Washoan Boulevard to Jicarilla Drive (Apalachee Drive, Nadowa Street, Susquehana Drive)

Dec. 21 – Kokanee Estates (Marshall Trail, High Meadow Trail)

Dec. 22 – Golden Bear Trail, Meadow View Estates (Plateau Circle, Cattleman's Trail)

Dec. 23 – Cold Creek Trail, Del Norte Street, Black Bart from Pioneer Trail to Meadow Crest Drive.

Cold weather a signal to pay attention to pipes

By Pam Emmerich

With the Tahoe region engulfed in a bitter cold snap, the North Tahoe Public Utility District would like to remind residents to take precautions to make sure their homes, especially their water lines, are prepared for the cold.

• If you know that pipes in your home freeze, make sure to leave them running.

• Never completely shut the heat off when you are not at home and leave cabinet doors open to allow air to circulate.

• All homeowners should have a water shut off valve installed in the home that will allow you to completely shut off the water to your home when you will not be home for any length of time. The shut off should also allow the water system in your home to completely drain leaving no water in the pipes.

• Most important, make sure your water district has your most current contact phone number so we can reach you in the event of a water emergency. There is nothing worse than seeing water pouring out of a house or garage and having to send a letter

to notify the homeowner, instead of calling them.

• Finally, if you see water running out of a neighbor’s garage, down a driveway or anywhere else you don’t typically see running water, call your local water district.

During the winter of 2009-10, a significant cold spell in the region resulted in more than 60 homes having significant water damage. Home service breaks showed usage in the 20,000 to 40,000 gallon range with several homes in the 100,000 to 200,000 gallon range. As you can imagine, that amount of water running through a home will cause significant damage.

For reference, during the winter with no landscape irrigation, domestic (home) water usage usually runs well under 10,000 gallons per month. The district’s National Avenue Water Treatment Plant was producing 200,000 to 300,000 gallons more per day than would be expected this time of year.

Pam Emmerich works for the North Tahoe Public Utility District.

Foot of snow and counting in Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

More than a foot of snow has fallen at lake level and it’s still coming down this morning. The winter storm warning remains in effect until 10am Saturday.

The National Weather Service in Reno said a lake effect band could continue to bring even more snow to the Stateline area and parts of the East Shore this afternoon.



More than a foot of snow fell overnight in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN

The snow is light – none of that Sierra cement. While it's ideal for skiing, it doesn't come with water content. Nor is it great for making a base on the slopes.

Kirkwood is reporting 2 to 3 feet of fresh stuff and expects to open more terrain today. Heavenly has about the same amount, but is starting the day on wind hold. Northstar has 18 inches of new snow, Squaw 15 inches and Boreal 8 inches.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the guy from Tahoe.

The Sierra Avalanche Center is saying the danger level is "considerable" for Dec. 7.

Roads are slick and full of the white stuff. For road conditions, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News.*

"Now that we have snow cover, we are waiting for the really cold temperatures to hit," Shane Snyder, meteorologist with the NWS, told *Lake Tahoe News*. Saturday and Sunday are expected to be the two coldest nights for the area. It could be minus 5 in South Lake Tahoe and closer to minus 14 in Truckee.

No records were broken in this last week for South Lake or Truckee for low temperatures. However, on Dec. 4 a high

temperature was broken in South Lake Tahoe. In 1973 the mercury hit 32 on that date, while this year it was 29.

The sun will return Sunday, with the next possibility of snow slated for Thursday or Friday.

Study: Most U.S. workers unprepared for retirement

By Stuart Pfeifer, Los Angeles Times

More than half of U.S. workers aren’t saving enough money to be able to cover essential living expenses in retirement, according to a survey by Fidelity Investments.

The savings survey found that 55 percent of people will have trouble covering housing, healthcare and food expenses, Fidelity said.

The online survey of 2,200 households, performed from June through October, measured whether workers were on track to cover their estimated post-retirement expenses.

Read the whole story

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3 bouncers at Mo's Place may get plea deal in 2012 beating death of out-of-town patron

By Kathryn Reed

It is likely the three Mo's Place bouncers will serve less than four years behind bars for their role in the death of Derek "Zippy" Penaranda.

Penaranda, who was from Ripon, was in South Lake Tahoe in May 2012 to celebrate his 30th birthday. He never recovered from the injuries he sustained from a fight at the Highway 50 bar. He died in October 2012.

Rodolfo Hernandez, 44, is charged with involuntary manslaughter. He has been in custody since he turned himself in after being indicted. He is on an immigration hold and could be deported if found guilty. If Hernandez is guilty, he faces a maximum of four years in county jail. (Because of changes in California prison rules a conviction of manslaughter is no longer a prison term.)



Derek "Zippy" Penaranda and Katie Musselwhite had hoped to marry one day. Photo/Provided

Sean Canilao, 49, and Ruben Lizzaragga, 41, are charged with assault with force that is likely to cause great bodily injury. Both are out on their own recognizance. They face a maximum four-year prison sentence.

“One of the inconsistencies in the legislation is punishing of different types of crimes,” Joe Alexander, El Dorado County deputy district attorney, said of the new sentencing rules set by the Legislature.

Hernandez, Canilao and Lizzaragga are scheduled to be tried at the same time. The trial date is Feb. 11 in Placerville. However, a readiness and settlement conference is set for Jan. 3 before Judge Daniel Proud.

“I believe there is some likelihood of it settling on that date,” Alexander said in reference to next month’s hearing.

“There is evidence the crime was committed, but also other things occurred that to some extent mitigate the crime itself. Evidence that makes it more difficult than appears on the surface,” Alexander told *Lake Tahoe News*.

If a settlement were reached, that would mean the three men would be serving less than the four-year maximum for each of their crimes. Canilao and Lizzaragga until now had clean records, so they would benefit from good behavior allowances.

“Early on I told my family don’t be surprised if they only get probation. That is something the judge can initiate. We are in a wait-and-see mode,” Wayne Penaranda, the victim’s father, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Penaranda has been at every court hearing. He is in regular contact with prosecutors. Now he wants it all to be over. His family wants closure.

“No amount of punishment will do anything or bring my boy back. It is kind of an academic situation. We are not real

happy with it, but it’s the letter of the law,” Penaranda said. “All of the laws are built to protect the criminals’ rights.”

Letter: EDSO working for you

To the community,

The holiday season is upon us. This is a time of year to reflect on the year that was and the year that soon will be.

From a personal standpoint, it’s a time to reflect on the priorities in life: faith, family, friendship, health and happiness.

From a professional standpoint, it’s a time to take a few steps back and assess our progress, gauge our growth and prepare ourselves for the year to come.



John
D’Agostini

This season is a time for family gatherings and celebrations. Whether it is families traveling to a relative’s home to celebrate or friends venturing out for their holiday shopping, these trips typically require driving. All of our area law enforcement agencies will be working around the clock to ensure the safety of our community out enjoying Christmas and

New Year parties and celebrations, but we also look to each and every person to take responsibility for their actions, drink sensibly, and not drive after drinking.

At all levels of government and private industry we are still facing an uncertain fiscal future. As you know our sheriff’s office and employees have made significant budget reductions doing their part in assisting with a balanced county budget without reducing the level of service to our community.

I want you to know that providing public safety services will continue to be my highest priority and I will insure that when you need our assistance, we will be there.

My vision is to maintain one of the best law enforcement agencies in California, building on the hard work and service provided by the dedicated employees at the sheriff’s office. Your sheriff’s office consists of highly professional, well trained staff, with access to some of the most reliable equipment and technology available to law enforcement. With these tools and a commitment to public service, our level of interaction with the community will increase and I will work hard to protect your rights and our foothill lifestyle.

Please know that we work for you and accept my wishes for a happy and safe holiday season for you and those you hold dear.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you and all you cherish.

John D’Agostini, El Dorado County sheriff

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Lake Tahoe Pizza Company in South Lake Tahoe is open after months of refurbishing because of a fire.

• South Shore and North Shore are contenders in *USA Today*'s contest to be North America's best ski destination. Vote online.

• Squaw Valley and the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association are putting on the Lake Tahoe Wedding Faire at Squaw Valley on Feb. 1 from 11am-3pm.

• Alpine Meadows and Homewood Mountain Resort plan to open Dec. 13. Tickets that day at Alpine will be $59, with all proceeds going to the Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows Foundation.

• Megan Kasden of Incline Village won the Gene Upshaw Memorial Fund Super Bowl raffle. The prize is an all-expense paid trip for two to Super Bowl XLVIII at the Met Life Stadium.

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5 U.S. men in top 30 at Beaver Creek

By USSA

BEAVER CREEK -– Five-time Olympic medalist Bode Miller

(Franconia, N.H.) rallied into 13th place despite continuous snow and sub-zero temperatures in the Audi Birds of Prey World Cup opening.

Miller, who is back on the World Cup tour after taking a year off to heal his knee, moved up in the results again this week to show continual progress as he guns for a historic fifth Olympics.

Norway’s Aksel Lund Svindal claimed his second downhill win in Beaver Creek.

The downhill course combined the upper part of Raptor, the 2015 FIS Alpine World Ski Championships women’s speed track, and the bottom part of the traditional Audi Birds of Prey men’s course.

The U.S. Ski Team pulled out five top-30 results, including Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) finishing on the heels of Miller in 15th. Teammates Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah), Marco Sullivan (Squaw Valley) and Erik Fisher (Middleton, Idaha) went 21, 28 and 29.