



Lee Soucy 1919 - 2010

Pearl Harbor Survivor and USS *Utah* crewmember Mr. Lee Soucy died in Plainview, Texas on January 7, 2010. Soucy was known as an expert on Pearl Harbor history and was involved in several national print and TV interviews about the event, including a TV documentary called "Navy Medicine – Trial by Fire." He made numerous local and regional presentations about the bombing.

On that fateful day almost 70 years ago that prompted the United States to enter World War II, Soucy – a pharmacist's mate in the U.S. Navy – dove off the sinking USS *Utah* and swam to Ford Island, dodging bullets the entire way.

"As I was running down the passageway toward my battle station, another torpedo hit and shook the ship severely. I was knocked off balance and through the log-room door. By then, the ship was already listing. After a minute or two below the armored deck, we heard another bugle call, then the boatswain's whistle followed by the boatswain's chant, 'Abandon ship! Abandon ship!'"

After sliding down the barnacle-encrusted side of the capsizing ship, Soucy found himself swimming toward a launch.

"After a few strokes, a hail of bullets hit the water a few feet in front of me in line with the launch," he said. "As the strafers banked, I noticed the big red insignia on his wing tips. Until then I really had not known who attacked us. At some point I had heard someone shout, 'Where did those Germans come from?' I changed course and hightailed it for Ford Island."

Sixty-eight people onboard the *Utah* died; Soucy and 439 others survived.

He made numerous trips to Pearl Harbor and the famous USS *Arizona* Memorial and was pleased when his ship was given its own memorial.

USS *Utah* survivors have been holding annual reunions for close to 35 years, and Soucy attended many of those throughout the country, most recently in 2003.

His last trip to Hawaii came in 2006 for the 65th anniversary of the attack. In an interview with the *Herald* shortly after that trip, Soucy's voice broke up a bit as he remembered touring the *Arizona* Memorial:

"We got an escort and the full treatment. One of the guides said, 'We're fortunate today to have a survivor with us.' People got up and clapped. I never had anything like that happen before."

Mr. Soucy was married to wife Margaret, a Lieutenant in the Navy Nurse Corps stationed at the Naval Hospital from 1943-1945, for 70 years. They were married at St. Andrews chapel in Honolulu. He is survived by daughters Mary McCormick and husband Kern of Amarillo, Texas; son John Soucy of Honaunau, HI and his partner Susan Gierman; daughter Margaret A. Soucy of Silver City, NM; Mary and Ken's daughter, Melissa Brockman and her husband, Leland Brockman of Lubbock TX; Melissa's children McKenna and Carson Shelton of Lubbock, TX; Mary and Ken's son Marty McCormick of Lubbock, TX; and Claire Soucy, John's daughter of Taos, NM.

Obituary furnished with the kind permission of the Plainview Daily Herald.