

## **TWO TEXAS STUDENT-TEACHER TEAMS ATTEND ELITE SUMMER INSTITUTE IN HAWAII**

### ***National History Day and Pearl Harbor Historic Sites Provided Learning, Research, and All Expenses Paid Trips to Hawai'i for Select Students***

7 SEPTEMBER 2022, AUSTIN, TX: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—

This summer two Texas students and their teachers took part in an elite cooperative learning program in Hawai'i, *Sacrifice for Freedom®: World War II in the Pacific Student & Teacher Institute*:

**Mr. Rhett Carter** (teacher)  
**Dhilan Nag** (student)  
Plano East Senior High School  
Plano, Texas

**Mrs. Megan Soucek** (teacher)  
**Carter Holton** (student)  
New Caney High School  
New Caney, Texas

The program, coordinated through National History Day®, was sponsored by the Pearl Harbor Historic Site Partners, including Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum, Pacific Historic Parks, USS Missouri Memorial Association, and Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum at Pearl Harbor. The students—Dhilan Nag (Junior) of Plano East Senior High School and Carter Holton (Junior) at New Caney High School—were selected from 54 teams who applied for the competitive summer institute. Each student traveled to participate in the institute with their sponsoring teacher.

Dhilan, Carter, and their teacher-sponsors are longtime participants in the Texas History Day program, the state affiliate of the National History Day program. Dhilan has competed in Texas History Day the last three years, receiving first place his freshman year and his sophomore year, and then second his junior year in the Senior Group Website category. Teacher Rhett Carter has sponsored numerous Plano East students to compete in the Dallas Area Regional contest and has had several students advance to the state competition. Carter has competed in Texas History Day for two years in Senior Individual Exhibit, placing second in the state in 2020 and first in 2021; each time he advanced to the National History Day competition. In 2021, Carter won first place at Nationals with his exhibit on the 1900 Galveston hurricane, *"The 1900 Storm."* Megan Soucek, a teacher at New Caney High School, consistently has students advance to state each year; the last two years, she has consistently had students advance to Nationals.

During spring 2022, students and teachers read historical texts and primary documents, participated in online discussions, and researched the life of a fallen military member from the student's region who is buried or memorialized at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu. Over the summer, the teams then headed to Hawai'i to engage in on-site learning opportunities, such as spending a night

aboard The USS Missouri and visiting with military and local historians at the Pearl Harbor Historic Sites and across the island of Oahu.

*"Spending a night aboard the USS Missouri was an absolutely remarkable experience. As an Eagle Scout, it was an honor to participate in a color guard on the ship the evening we arrived," reflected Dhilan Nag. "The staff gave us a breathtaking tour of the ship, and I especially remember the starboard side where I witnessed the sites of both a tragic kamikaze strike and the 1945 surrender of the Japanese Empire. I would relive this program 100 times more if I could."*

*Sacrifice for Freedom* began in 2019 as an opportunity for student-teacher teams to study World War II in the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawai'i. Past teacher participants noted that the Institute was a significant professional development experience that changed the way they view World War II in the Pacific. Student participants reported that the research and Hawai'i-based learning activities challenged their thinking and expanded their perspective of history. At the culmination of the *Sacrifice for Freedom* program, the students will develop a Silent Hero® profile to be published online during the 2022-2023 academic year at [NHDSilentHeroes.org](http://NHDSilentHeroes.org).

Funded by the Pearl Harbor Historic Site Partners, including Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum, Pacific Historic Parks, USS Missouri Memorial Association, and Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum at Pearl Harbor, travel and program expenses are provided for all participants.

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**The press release is attached, along with photos of the student-teacher teams, and all media inquiries may be directed to Texas History Day State Coordinator and Director of Education Services at the Texas State Historical Association Lisa Berg [lisa.berg@tshaonline.org](mailto:lisa.berg@tshaonline.org).**

#### **About National History Day (NHD)**

NHD is a non-profit organization based in College Park that seeks to improve the teaching and learning of history. The National History Day Contest was established in 1974 and currently engages more than half a million students in conducting original research on historical topics of interest. Students present their research as a documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website. Projects compete first at the local and affiliate levels. The top entries are invited to the National Contest at the University of Maryland at College Park. NHD is sponsored in part by HISTORY®, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Park Service, and Southwest Airlines. For more information, visit [nhd.org](http://nhd.org).

#### **About Texas History Day:**

Texas History Day (THD), sponsored by the Texas State Historical Association, is an affiliate of National History Day. THD is a yearlong education program that culminates in an annual state-level history fair for students in grades six through twelve. It provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their interest in, and knowledge of, history through creative and original papers, performances, documentaries, individual interpretive web sites, or three-dimensional exhibits.

Over the course of the school year, students research and produce a History Day entry, the results of which are presented at one of the 24 regional competitions in early spring. From there, some students advance to the state competition in April in Austin, or even to the national contest held each June at the University of Maryland at College Park. At each level of competition, outstanding achievement may be recognized through certificates, medals, trophies, or monetary awards. The most important rewards are the skills and insight that students acquire as they move through the History Day program.

As many as 50,000 young Texans are involved in the program at the regional and state level each year. More than 1,000 students participate in THD, and approximately 80 students represent Texas at National History Day each year. For more information, contact Lisa Berg, Director of Education Services at the Texas State Historical Association, [lisa.berg@tshaonline.org](mailto:lisa.berg@tshaonline.org) or visit [texashistoryday.com](http://texashistoryday.com).

### **About Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum**

Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum is located on Historic Ford Island, where bombs fell during the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. Walk the Pearl Harbor battlefield where the attack began, enter the bullet-scarred hangars, and see the control tower and aircraft of the battle, including a Japanese Zero and the B-17 Swamp Ghost. Hear the stories of World War II heroes and their response to the attack that changed our nation and world. Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum's mission is to steward American's first aviation battlefield of World War II. It is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that depends on membership, volunteers, and donations for support. To join, volunteer or support, visit [www.PearlHarborAviationMuseum.org](http://www.PearlHarborAviationMuseum.org).

### **About Pacific Historic Parks**

Headquartered in Waipahu, HI, Pacific Historic Parks is the non-profit cooperative association of the National Park Service and has been raising funds and providing support to NPS operations at Pearl Harbor since 1979, when the organization was known as the Arizona Memorial Museum Association. PHP's mission is to "support the USS Arizona Memorial and other Pacific historic locations through education and interpretive programs, research, preservation, and restoration, to perpetuate the memory of events and honor the people involved in these sites." PHP also supports NPS operations at: Kalaupapa National Historical Park on Molokai; the War in the Pacific National Historical Park on Guam, and the American Memorial Park on Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands. Since 2014, Pacific Historic Parks has also partnered with the state Department of Land and Natural Resources to support the Diamond Head State Monument. See [www.pacifichistoricparks.org](http://www.pacifichistoricparks.org).

Visit <https://www.pacifichistoricparks.org/sacrificeforfreedom> to view Sacrifice for Freedom 2021 Silent Heroes Eulogies.

### **About the USS Missouri Memorial Association**

Since opening in January 1999, the Battleship Missouri Memorial has attracted more than 9-million visitors from around the world with a fascinating tour experience showcasing the USS Missouri's unique place in history. Located a mere ship's length from the USS Arizona Memorial, the Mighty Mo completes a historical visitor experience that begins with the "day of infamy" and sinking of the USS Arizona in Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 and ends with Japan's formal surrender aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945.



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The USS Missouri had an astounding career over five decades and three wars – World War II, the Korean War, and Desert Storm – after which it was decommissioned and donated to the USS Missouri Memorial Association, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The Association operates the Battleship Missouri Memorial as a historic attraction and oversees her care and preservation with the support of visitors, memberships, grants, and donations.

The Battleship Missouri Memorial is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For information or reservations, call (808) 455-1600 or visit [USSMissouri.org](http://USSMissouri.org).

#### **About the Pacific Fleet Submarine Memorial Association**

The Pacific Fleet Submarine Memorial Association is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation that was founded in 1978 with the purpose of acquiring the WWII fleet submarine USS Bowfin and placing her on permanent display at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. USS Bowfin opened to the public in 1981, and this year welcomed her ten millionth visitor.

With an average of 400,000 visitors per year, the Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum is the most visited museum of its kind in the world and one of the few places that the public can learn about the history of our “Silent Service.”

The submarine museum is open daily from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 11 Arizona Memorial Drive at Pearl Harbor, except on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s Day. For more information, call (808) 423-1341 or go to [www.bowfin.org](http://www.bowfin.org).