

John Thomas DeVaney

U.S. Navy—WWII & Korean War USS Nevada—Pearl Harbor



John T. DeVaney
U.S. Navy

John DeVaney enlisted in the U. S. Navy on November 25, 1940 at the age of 18. John was born on March 15, 1922 in the city of Springfield, Illinois.

After basic training John was assigned to the USS Nevada.

On December 7, 1941 the USS Nevada happened to be one of the ships setting in Pearl Harbor.

The story and the history of the USS Nevada is

extremely noteworthy and John DeVaney was part of that history.

Background USS Nevada

“USS Nevada (BB-36), the second United States Navy ship to be named after the 36th state, was the lead ship of the two Nevada-class battleships; her sister ship was Oklahoma. Launched in 1914, the Nevada was a leap forward in dreadnought technology; four of her new features would be included on almost every subsequent US battleship: triple gun turrets, oil in place of coal for fuel, geared steam turbines for greater range, and the "all or nothing" armor principle. These features made Nevada the first US Navy "super-dreadnought".



USS Nevada
Late 1930's

The USS Nevada served in both World Wars: during the last few months of World War I, Nevada was based in Bantry Bay, Ireland, to

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protect the supply convoys that were sailing to and from Great Britain. In World War II, she was one of the battleships trapped when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. She was the only battleship to get underway during the attack, making the ship "the only bright spot in an otherwise dismal and depressing morning" for the United States.[13] Still, she was hit by one torpedo and at least six bombs while steaming away from Battleship Row, forcing her to be beached. Subsequently salvaged and modernized at Puget Sound Navy Yard, Nevada served as a convoy escort in the Atlantic and as a fire-support ship in four amphibious assaults: the Normandy Landings and the invasions of Southern France, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa." [Wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Nevada) (2016)



**USS Nevada Supporting the Landings
Utah Beach, June 1944**

By Official U.S. Navy Photograph 80-G-19940

Attach on Pearl Harbor ([Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attack_on_Pearl_Harbor))

When the weekend of 6–7 December arrived, all of the Pacific Fleet's battleships were in port for the weekend for the first time since 4 July. Normally they "took turns" spending time in port—six would be out with Vice Admiral William S. Pye's battleship Task Force One one weekend, while the next weekend would find three ranging with Vice Admiral William Halsey, Jr.'s aircraft carrier task force. However, because Halsey could not afford to take the slow battleships with his fast carriers on his dash to reinforce Wake Island's Marine detachment with fighters and because it was Pye's turn to rest in port and the harbor was where "it was safe", none of the battleships were sailing on that morning.[58] When the sun rose over Nevada on the 7th, the ship's band was playing "Morning Colors"; but planes then appeared on the horizon and the attack on Pearl Harbor began.[59]

Aft of Arizona during the attack, Nevada was not moored alongside another battleship off Ford Island, and therefore was able to maneuver, unlike the other seven battleships present.[k][1] The Officer of the Deck, Ensign Joe Taussig (son of the admiral of the same name), had earlier that morning ordered a second boiler lit off, planning to switch the power load from one boiler to the other around 0800. As Nevada's gunners opened fire and her engineers started to raise steam, a single 18 in (460 mm) Type 91 Mod 2[11] torpedo exploded against Frame 41 about 14 ft (4.3 m) above the keel at 0810.[60] Seconds later, the same Kate torpedo bomber that dropped the torpedo was shot

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down by the Nevada's gunners. The torpedo bulkhead held, but leaking through joints caused flooding and a list of 4–5°. [60] Her damage control crew corrected the list by counter-flooding and Nevada got underway at 0840, [60] her gunners already having shot down four planes. [61] Ensign Taussig's efficiency paid off, likely saving his ship, but he lost a leg in the attack.

Nevada became a prime target for Japanese Val dive bombers during the second wave. Japanese pilots intended to sink her in the channel ostensibly to block the harbor. [62] Tactically target selection was wrong as 14–18 dive bombers attacking her wouldn't be able to sink a battleship with 250 kg bombs [63] and the channel's width of 1200 feet made the idea of "bottling up" the harbor impossible. [64] As she steamed past Ten-Ten Dock [1] at about 09:50, Nevada was struck by five bombs. One exploded over the crew's galley at Frame 80. Another struck the port director platform and exploded at the base of the stack on the upper deck. Yet another hit near No. 1 turret inboard from the port waterway and blew large holes in the upper and main decks. Two struck the forecastle near Frame 15; one passed out through the side of the second deck before exploding, but the other exploded within the ship near the gasoline tank; leakage and vapors from this tank caused intense fires around the ship. [60]

The gasoline fires that flared up around Turret 1 might have caused more critical damage if the main magazines had not been empty. For several days prior to the attack, all of the 14-inch-gun (356 mm) battleships had been replacing their standard-weight

main battery projectiles with a new heavier projectile that offered greater penetration and a larger explosive charge in exchange for a slight decrease in range. All of the older projectiles and powder charges had been removed from the magazines of Nevada, and the crew had taken a break after loading the new projectiles in anticipation of loading the new powder charges on Sunday. [65]



**USS Nevada Beached and Burning from
Damage Sustained During Pearl Harbor
December 7, 1941**

As bomb damage became evident, Nevada was ordered to proceed to the west side of Ford Island to prevent her from being sunk. Instead, she was grounded off Hospital Point at 10:30, [66] with the help of Hoga and Avocet, [67] though she managed to force down three planes before she struck the shore. [61]

Over the course of the morning, Nevada suf-

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ferred a total of 60 killed and 109 wounded.[1] Two more men died aboard during salvage operations on 7 February 1942 when they were overcome by hydrogen sulfide gas from decomposing paper and meat.[68] The ship suffered a minimum of six bomb hits and one torpedo hit, but "it is possible that as many as ten bomb hits may have been received, [...] as certain damaged areas [were] of sufficient size to indicate that they were struck by more than one bomb." [61]

John enlisted in the Navy on November 25, 1940 and release date for World War II was December 12, 1946. Serving aboard the USS Nevada and then USS Boxer during its original commission date of April 16, 1945.



**USS Boxer
1946**

USS Boxer was commissioned on 16 April 1945 under the command of Captain D. F. Smith. She subsequently began sea trials and ashakedown cruise. Before these were complete, the Empire of Japan surrendered on V-J Day, marking the end of World War II before Boxer could participate. She joined the Pacific Fleet at San Diego in August 1945 and the next month she steamed for Guam, becoming the flagship of Task Force 77, a position she held until 23 August 1946. During this tour, she visited Japan, Okinawa, the Philippines, and China. (Wikipedia)

He returned to active duty for the Korean War from June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953.

John returned home to Springfield, Illinois and married Denzil Lorene DeVaney on November 7, 1953. They raised two children Mark Allen, Rita Jo and Carol Ann.



Mr. DeVaney also served as the Assistant Fire Chief in Springfield, Illinois until his death.

John passed on May 13, 1984 and was laid to rest in Calvary Cemetery, Springfield, IL.

In Remembrance and In Honor
Lovingly Submitted by Daughter
Carol A. Armstrong

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