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## Remarks for the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day

Memorial Park, Royal Oak, Michigan

December 7, 2016

Russell Levine, Vice President, The Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial

*Yesterday, December 7th, 1941 -- a date which will live in infamy -- the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan...*

As families huddled around the radio, these words of President Roosevelt, that are today but a scratchy voice on a grainy black and white newsreel, ripped through the ether and lodged deep into the national psyche. Then, the president steeled the country to the task that lay before it...

*No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.*

His words were prescient, as were those of Harvard-trained Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, the architect of the attack, who afterwards allegedly remarked:

*I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve.*

Four long hard years of sacrifice ensued, and the men, women and children of this state, whose stories will be told here at The Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial, along with countless fellow patriots around the world, gave their all fulfilling these prophecies.

Then, on August 6, 1945, as the war reached its conclusion, Harry Truman reminded the country how the war started. In his speech from the USS

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Augusta, returning from the Potsdam conference, Truman harkened back to this fateful day, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941, and the country's resolute determination. As he broke the news of the bombing of Hiroshima, Truman said,

***The Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many fold...Let there be no mistake; we shall completely destroy Japan's power to make war.***

A few days later, it was all over and the photograph that inspired this statue was immortalized as the definitive statement of the triumph, relief and jubilation of that moment.

We pause now in the shadow of this symbol of the end of the war to remember the 2,403 Americans killed and 1,178 Americans wounded in the attack that began it all, that quiet Sunday morning, 75 years ago, today.

In tribute to that sacrifice and all the sacrifices of the war years, it is up to those of us here today to build The Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial with urgency so that as many as possible of those who fought and labored so nobly are present to witness its dedication. It is up to those of us here today to ensure that their legacy, their stories, lessons and spirit shall not perish from the earth and that this state have a special space to Honor Sacrifice and Celebrate Freedom.