



NEWS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Bob Lally, CAPT USN (Ret),
Chair, Pikes Peak Heroes Legacy Committee
BLally@ppymca.org
(719)761-5149

Lisa Bachman
Public Relations/Event Coordination
Lisa@bachmanpr.com
(719) 272-1833

DON STRATTON -- USS ARIZONA SURVIVOR EXHIBIT RELOCATED TO PIKES PEAK LIBRARY DISTRICT EAST LIBRARY FOR PUBLIC VIEWING

Colorado Springs, CO., April 20, 2021 – The Pikes Peak Heroes Legacy Committee is proud to announce that the Don Stratton *USS ARIZONA* exhibit has been relocated to Pikes Peak Library District where it is now on display for public viewing at East Library, 5550 N. Union Blvd, Colorado Springs, CO 80918. The public is invited to visit ppld.org/east-library for current hours to experience this powerful exhibit.

The interactive museum quality exhibit is a multi-panel display of images and digitized videos about the Dec. 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, the history of Stratton's life, one of his uniforms and memorabilia, and interactive bios and photos of "*all the gallant men*" who served on the *USS ARIZONA*. The exhibit also includes a 150-pound piece of the actual *USS ARIZONA* superstructure, presented as a gift to the citizens of the Pikes Peak region by the U.S. Navy.

"The Colorado Springs Airport was honored to host our hometown hero, Don Stratton and his wife, Velma, at the unveiling of the exhibit April 24, 2019 on the Airport's concourse. The exhibit has been at the Airport for two years and we are grateful that his legacy was brought to the millions of individuals who traveled through COS," said Greg Phillips, Director of Aviation for the Colorado Springs Airport. Don passed away February 15, 2020 and Velma, his wife of nearly 70 years, passed away April 30, 2020.

"I am thrilled the Don Stratton exhibit is now on display at PPLD East Library for the community to view and learn about the *USS Arizona* and America's World War II history, said El Paso County Board Chair Stan VanderWerf. "Don Stratton, one of only 334 from Arizona's crew of 1511 who survived the Pearl Harbor attack, lived for a long time in El Paso County. We were blessed to have a witness to history and hometown hero living among us. I am grateful to the Colorado Springs Airport for previously hosting the exhibit and introducing Don Stratton and our *USS ARIZONA* exhibit to travelers from all around the world."

Don's story as a *USS ARIZONA* survivor during the attack on Pearl Harbor and his subsequent legacy live on through the exhibit, paid for by contributions from private donors, perpetuating his legacy for future generations. "We express our thanks to the numerous individuals and organizations who volunteered their time and expertise to relocate the exhibit," said Bob Lally, Pikes Peak Heroes Legacy Committee. "Individuals with the Colorado Springs Airport, El Paso County, Pikes Peak Library District, Heritage Arsenal, Condit Exhibits, and Winters Electric all assured that the exhibit was carefully moved to its new location at East Library and meticulously reassembled for continued public enjoyment and education."

Stratton and his wife Velma were longtime Colorado Springs residents of Holiday Colorado Springs, having lived in the Holiday Village community at Interstate-25 and the Fillmore Street Interchange. The I-25/Fillmore bridge was named in honor of Don Stratton June 8, 2018 during a ceremony in which interstate signs were unveiled reading, "Donald G. Stratton, *USS Arizona* Survivor."

A best-selling author, Stratton co-wrote *All the Gallant Men* about his experiences in Pearl Harbor, the first memoir by a *USS ARIZONA* survivor. "I hope when people see the proud name *USS ARIZONA*, they will remember the men who died defending our great country, and to ensure that an attack like that never happens again," said Stratton at the time of the exhibit unveiling. "Remember those who gave their lives to protect our freedoms. Thank you to the citizens of the Pikes Peak region for honoring my shipmates."

Pikes Peak Heroes Legacy Committee: The Pikes Peak Heroes Legacy Committee is an all-volunteer organization formed to identify, recognize and honor local heroes from the Pikes Peak area. Stratton is the committee's first honoree as a local WWII hero and part of *The Greatest Generation*. Goals of the committee are to give the respect and recognition to our local heroes that they richly deserve, to create awareness in our community of their achievements as a role model for others, and to help build understanding of heroism as an essential value in our community. Future honorees will include citizens that, through their actions, have demonstrated outstanding courage, sacrifice and personal achievements for a noble cause.

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Photo courtesy of Pikes Peak Library District

Pikes Peak Heroes Legacy Committee | www.pphlc.org
102 S. Tejon Street, Suite 1200 | Colorado, Springs, CO 80903 | ph: 719-471-8183 | fx: 719-471-9733

Lisa Bachman, Mary Beth Burichin, Andy Cain, Welling Clark, Matt Coleman, Bob Lally, Bill Linn, Bill Nelson, Greg Phillips, Mark Seglem, Nikki Stratton, Randy Stratton, Stan VanderWerf, Andy Vick, Henry Yankowski