



## PRESS RELEASE

News Release Date: April 13, 2022

Contact Person: Deloris Guttman

Telephone: 808-597-1341

Honolulu, Hawaii

The Obama Hawaiian Africana Museum in collaboration with Hawaii Joint Military Forces invite the public to join us in remembering forgotten heroes who died seventy-eight years ago in the West Loch Disaster at Pearl Harbor, two years after December 7, 1941, bombing.



The 11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of West Loch Internees Life & Memory Ceremonies at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl on Friday, May 20, 2022, at 2:00pm.

The keynote speaker will be Major General David Wilson, 8<sup>th</sup> Theater Sustainment Command at Fort Shafter.

It's doubtful that you have ever heard of the West Loch Disaster unless you live in Hawaii. The West Loch Disaster was a maritime accident during World War II at Pearl Harbor. The incident, which occurred just after 3 p.m. on Sunday, May 21, 1944, while Schofield Barracks predominantly African American from the 29<sup>th</sup> Chemical Decontamination Company (CDC) were unloading ammunitions, supplies, and assault weapons on LST 353 before the explosion on LST 353, in the staging area for Landing Ships.

Hawaii military forces were preparing for Operations Forager an invasion assaults against the Japanese-held Marianas Islands.

The fires burned for 24 hours destroying six LSTS and hundreds of lives were lost. The incident is not well known, in part because it was classified 'top secret' until the 1960s.

###