

# VFW Honors Pearl Harbor Survivor with Award

**'I feel I don't deserve it, but I will accept the honor on behalf of all veterans'**

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**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** — The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. honored a Pearl Harbor survivor and author on May 2, 2017, at VFW National Headquarters.

Retired U.S. Navy officer Jim Downing, 103, was presented a certificate of recognition by VFW Quartermaster General Debra Anderson in appreciation for his 24 years of Navy service. Downing is a VFW Life member.

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"I feel I don't deserve it, but I will accept the honor on behalf of all veterans," Downing said of the honor.

Downing is the second-oldest known Pearl Harbor survivor. He fought in and survived the Pearl Harbor attack on Dec. 7, 1941, while stationed on the battleship *USS West Virginia* as an enlisted sailor. After the attack, he continued to service and eventually became a gunnery officer on the *USS San Carlos* and *USS Nespelen*. Downing was also the commanding officer of the *USS Patapsco* during the Korea War.

Downing is currently on a book tour for his third book, "The Other Side of Infamy." He spoke with VFW staff members and guests on Tuesday about his experience in the Navy during WWII and the Korean War, as well as his upbringing in Plevna, Mo. He currently resides in Colorado Springs, Colo.

*This article was written by [Dave Spiva](#), editorial associate, [VFW magazine](#).*