

# DAILY INTER LAKE

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## Soon no Pearl Harbor survivors will be alive.

People look to other ways to learn about the bombing

By **AUDREY McAVOY**  
Associated Press

HONOLULU — Survivors of the 1941 Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor have long been the center

of a remembrance ceremony held each year on the military base's waterfront.

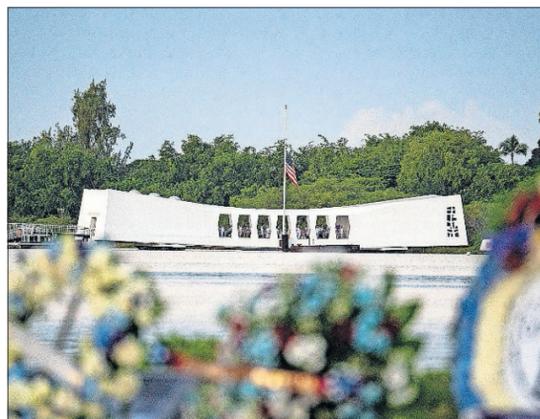
But today only 12 are still alive — all centenarians — and this year none were able to make the pilgrimage to Hawaii to mark the event Sunday.

That means no one who attended had firsthand memories of serving during the attack, which killed more than 2,300 troops and cata-

pulted the U.S. into World War II. The development is not a surprise and is an evolution of an ongoing trend. As survivors fade, their descendants and the public are increasingly turning to other ways of learning about the bombing.

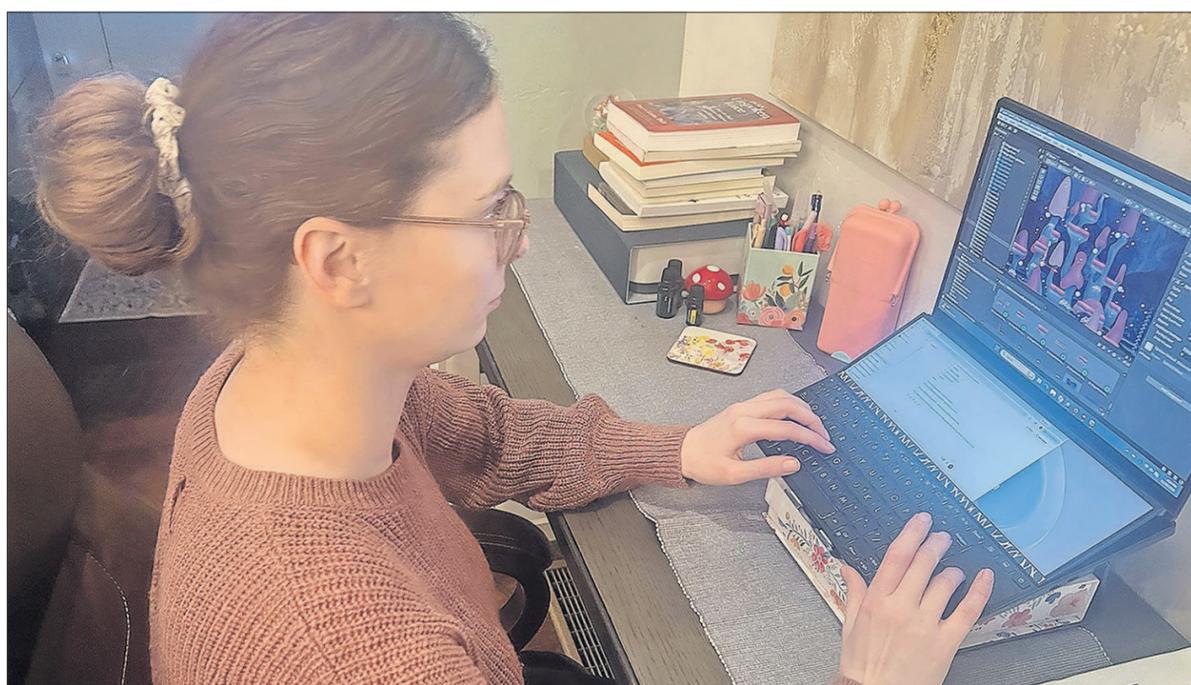
“The idea of not having a survivor there for the first time — I just, I don't know — it hurt

See **CEREMONY, A5**



THE USS Arizona Memorial is seen before the 84th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Sunday, Dec. 7, 2025, in Honolulu. (AP Photo/Mengshin Lin)

### VIDEO GAME DESIGN



UNIVERSITY OF Montana graduate student Brittany Westlund, of Kalispell, works on her video game. (Courtesy photo)

## Graduate student finds winning strategies in new university program

By **CARY SHIMEK**  
UM News Service

If life is a game, one online student with the University of Montana has discovered some winning moves.

Brittany Westlund, a third-year graduate student living in Kalispell, studies UM's new Master of Fine Arts in Game Design and Interactive Media. Like a growing number of college students, she is completing all her coursework online, starting with her UM undergraduate degree in media arts. She intends to finish her graduate work next spring.

Game design is life for Westlund, and she has scored some impressive wins in recent months. Last spring, her game won Best in Show in its category at the university's Media Arts Expo. This past summer, she collaborated on a short-form video game — or game poem — published in Game Poems magazine. Additionally, an article she wrote was accepted recently

for publication in the Games for Higher Education encyclopedia.

And this is all while teaching online UM classes, launching her own game studio (Charmlab Studio) and working on a video game about a curious mushroom who helps restore a struggling forest through rest, renewal and small acts of care.

“Brittany has become a leader and innovator in creating community in the online space,” said Michael Cassens, an associate professor in the UM's School of Visual and Media Arts and one of Westlund's mentors. “I think her journey has been remarkable and that she has come to embody who we are here at UM.”

As it states on her studio site, Westlund strives to create gaming experiences that inspire curiosity, compassion and creativity — the opposite of violent first-person shooter games.

“There are plenty of those out there,” she said with a laugh.

A native of Vancouver,

Washington, Westlund moved to Montana and began her professional life working in a microbiology lab before attending Flathead Valley Community College for her first two years of undergraduate studies. She greatly appreciated the Montana University System 2+2 Honor Scholarship, which allowed her to transfer and finish her undergraduate degree tuition-free at the university. As a married student in her early 30s rooted in Kalispell, she didn't want to relocate and was attracted to the media arts bachelor's degree that can be taken fully online.

Westlund was used to being surrounded by people and initially found the online experience a bit lonely. Over time, she “developed some hacks” to combat this.

“You need mentors you can talk to about the things you really care about,” Westlund said. “And I made sure I was doing the work to connect with the campus community.”

She made it a habit to participate in student workshops and seminars, whether they were offered by her department or not. She also benefited from weekly seminars with her game development crew. Graduate students in her school are also required to take on teaching roles, which grew her connections to campus and her passion for teaching.

“Usually this starts as a grading assistant, but by the second or third year you can be teaching,” Westlund said. “I kind of followed that route and fell into web design because I was comfortable in that area. I was really excited to teach people how to code because it was hard for me to learn. I think it kind of gave me an advantage knowing where people were going to get caught up, because I know where I had problems. So it has been fun for me to relate my own learning experience to theirs and really connect with the students.”

See **DESIGN, A4**

### KALISPELL

## City council to weigh naming policy for city parks

Councilor suggests developing guidelines for the vetting process

By **JACK UNDERHILL**  
Daily Inter Lake

Kalispell City Council will weigh the adoption of a naming policy for city parks and other facilities during a Council meeting on Monday.

Council meets at 7 p.m. in City Hall, 201 First Ave. E.

Councilor Jed Fisher urged his colleagues to consider a policy for naming public facilities during a September meeting after Council voted to rename the Kidsports Complex in honor of Dan Johns, one of its founders.

Fisher supported the athletic facility's name change but said that in his 30 years directing the Flathead County Parks and Recreation Department, he routinely fielded requests from people wanting to see their names adorned on public property.

Fisher suggested developing guidelines to avoid constantly altering the names of parks or other public properties or pitting requests against each other.

City staff compiled example policies from Baltimore, Minneapolis and Elk River, Minnesota, as well as Marion County in Oregon, for Council to consider Monday night.

“There is typically a distinction between naming a park or a geographic feature, recognition of a historical figure/event, recognition of contributions from an individual and naming based on donations, with consideration criteria for each,” read a memo from Assistant Director of Development Services PJ Sorensen.

While the steps to getting a name change approved can vary, there is usually a vetting process through city staff before a name change is considered by Council, according to Sorensen.

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