



Find what you are looking for ...

SPONSORED BY:

HOME NEWS SPORTS WEATHER COMMUNITIES ENTERTAINMENT LIFE CLASSIFIEDS REAL ESTATE VOICES OBITUARIES CUSTOMER SERVICE

[Reno](#) [Sparks](#) [Fernley](#) [Dayton](#) [Truckee](#) [Yerington](#) [Celebrations](#) [Get Published](#)

Hi, WashoeGreens!
[Update profile](#) | [Post photos](#) | [Write blog](#) | [Log out](#) | [Search people](#)

Reno nurse, 90, recalls kamikaze attack on hospital ship

BY FRANK X. MULLEN JR. • FMULLEN@RGJ.COM • JULY 9, 2010

[Comments\(2\)](#) [Recommend\(3\)](#) [Print this page](#) [E-mail this article](#) [Share](#)
Type Size **A A A**

[1](#) | [2](#) Next Page

Sixty-five years ago, Reno resident Doris Gardner Howard survived a suicide attack on her hospital ship, the USS Comfort, off the coast of Okinawa, Japan.

On Thursday, Howard, now 90, was the honoree at a ceremony for the USNS Comfort in Baltimore Harbor.

The vessel, the third American hospital ship to be built, is the descendant of the World War II Comfort, which was sunk by a kamikaze plane attack.

Howard, a former nurse and U.S. Army lieutenant, was in Baltimore for the ship's change-of-command ceremony. She toured a floating hospital that distinguished itself by its mercy throughout the world, just as her own Commando was during the world war.

"I wouldn't miss it," she said. "I loved my days on the ship. I never forget when we were invited to go up on the USS Hope, going by. We were asked, 'How do we look like that?' They were beautiful ships with their own missions."

In April 1945, the USS Comfort was alone at sea with a complement of Marines and other servicemen during the Battle of Okinawa. As it sailed through the night, the ship was lighted up brightly, as proscribed in the Geneva Conventions.

The large red cross on the ship's sides signaled a protected hospital carrying no defensive arms.

A lone kamikaze dove from the clouds and struck the ship's red cross, Howard said, as though it were a bullseye.

Onboard the vessel, surgeons were operating. Howard was in a ward with post-operative patients directed by nurses. Bulkheads separating the compartment from the hull with the painted cross were being moved.

She passed a patient and his oxygen tank to get to the medicine cabinet. \



A photo of Doris Howard in her nurses uniform in 1942. Photo by Tim Dunn/RGJ (RGJ)

[Purchase this Photo](#)



Reno resident Doris Howard shows a newspaper photo of her (second from right) and other nurses as they look over the remains of a Japanese kamikaze plane that attacked their hospital ship, the U.S.S. Comfort, during WWII. Dozens were killed and injured in the attack near Okinawa. (Tim Dunn/RGJ)

[Purchase this Photo](#)

DETAILS

USS Comfort (AH-6): It was launched in 1943 and served as a hospital ship in the South Pacific campaign of World War II. Operated with a Navy crew and Army medical staff.

USNS COMFORT (T-AH-29): Built as an oil tanker in 1976 and delivered to the Navy in 1987. The USNS designates a Navy ship crewed by civilians. The first USS Comfort (AH-3) served in World War I.

JOHNSON JEFFRIES
Dateline Reno

\$29.95
*Limited Supply!

hard-bound **BOOK**

[CLICK HERE!](#)

loading a syringe of penicillin, the kamikaze plane crashed through the Cor

The wing-tip took out the elevator shaft behind the medicine cabinet wall. It threw Howard 20 feet into a bulkhead.

"The elevator shaft went, but the medicine-cabinet wall stayed," she said. "It's gone, we would have lost the entire ward. The oxygen tank would have seen some miraculous reason, the tank didn't move an inch. It didn't even fall ov



In Case You Missed It »

CORY FARLEY

STATE PARKS

FIGHT

SEX OFFENDERS



Subscribe to the Sunday Reno Gazette-Journal for just \$1.00 a week.

In Your Voice | READ REACTIONS TO THIS STORY

Newest first



renomuse wrote:

She still looks as beautiful today as she did back then!

7/10/2010 12:33:29 AM

[Recommend](#) [New Post](#) [Reply to this Post](#) [Report Abuse](#)



WashoeGreens wrote:

You should have seen her going up the steep and long gangplank like a trooper. "Admiral Howard has come aboard!" Capt. Ware proclaimed as she walked onto the ship.

A very eventful and emotional day. She spoke with USATODAY and the Surgeon General's Special Assistant, the Rear Admiral of naval medical care including the Comfort and Bethesda as well as the incoming and outgoing captains and spent the day on a whirlwind tour personally given by the Director of Nursing Services.

7/9/2010 8:39:24 PM

[Recommend\(3\)](#) [New Post](#) [Reply to this Post](#) [Report Abuse](#)

Add your comment (max 1000 characters)

Empty text box for adding a comment.

1000 characters left

Submit

More Neighborhoods Headlines

Inattention drives Reno's most dangerous intersections (22)

Watch 'Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs' for \$1

Join historic walking tour of Reno mansions

Author plans book signing at Starbucks

Library plans pirate party for children 6 and older (1)

Latest Headlines

Reno council votes Wednesday on fire staff ballot question

Oakland, Calif.: Man arrested after child thrown in traffic (1)

Dispute snarls Nevada panel on public defender performance

Jon Ralston: Reflections on Obama and Reid and Angle (17)

Las Vegas children's hospital opens probe on catheter problem

ADS BY PULSE 360

[Get Listed Here](#)

Obama Urges Homeowners to Refinance

If you owe under \$729k you probably qualify for Obama's Refi Program.

www.SeeRefinanceRates.com

AARP® Auto Insurance - Official Site

Over 50? Save an Avg \$397 on Auto Insurance. No Hassle, Free Quotes!

AARP.TheHartford.com

Mortgage Rates Hit 4.0% FIXED!

\$160,000 Reno Mortgage:\$633/mo. No Credit Check-FREE Quotes!

www.LendGo.com

Most Recommended Articles

'Spoiled' doesn't describe my life (22)

Reno judge again criticizes Washoe district attorney for remark comparing Biela verdict to sex (14)

Republicans want to let us eat cake (19)

Corporatists have infiltrated society (13)

Republicans always against middle class (7)

Most Commented Articles

Reno bicyclist 'critical' after crash with sheriff's office SUV (218)

Sharron Angle calls Harry Reid a 'desperate

man' (202)

Senator Harry Reid and Reno Mayor Bob
Cashell tour Wells Avenue small businesses
(168)

Cashell angry at talk of Hot August Nights
leaving Reno (142)

Obama in Las Vegas: Choice between
moving ahead or back (131)

**DID YOU KNOW PROSTATE CANCER
AFFECTS 1 IN 6 MEN?**



WWW.PCF.ORG

Partners: [Jobs: CareerBuilder.com](#) [Cars: Cars.com](#) [Apartments: Apartments.com](#) [Shopping: ShopLocal.com](#) [Homes: Homefinder.com](#)

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Weather](#) | [Communities](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Life](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Voices](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Customer Service](#) | [Site Map](#)

[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Subscribe](#)

Copyright ©2009

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) , updated March 2009.