

Flag raising ceremony hosted on Independence Day

A flag that flew over the USS Arizona, a ship sunk by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor, was raised over Willis-Knighton Medical Center July 4 in a ceremony attended by more than 100 persons including employees, patients and visitors.



Employees, visitors and patients salute the flag during the National Anthem.

The flag was brought from Pearl Harbor last month by A.E. Stone, M.D.; Jack Coussons, M.D.; and James K. Elrod, president of the medical center.

The battleship still lies where it sank nearly 40 years ago, a tomb for more than 1,000 men



The flag from Pearl Harbor is raised at Willis-Knighton.

who went down with it. Today it is a national shrine and memorial to all military personnel who died in the Japanese air strike that knocked out the heart of the U.S. Pacific Fleet consisting of eight ships moored along Battleship Row in Pearl Harbor.

The Arizona was a total loss, but is kept sentimentally in commission. Resting where it was sunk at its moorings by Japanese planes, its main deck is still visible at low tide.

The battleship is spanned transversely by the USS Arizona Memorial, which was financed by a national campaign that made little headway until an Elvis Presley benefit performance in Pearl Harbor fired public and congressional interest.

"We dedicated this patriotic day in remembrance of those who gave their lives to keep our... America free," commented Elrod.

Jim Jones, director of the division of General Services, who presided over the flag raising ceremony, noted, "We take special pride in having the opportunity to fly this flag over Willis-Knighton Medical Center in remembrance of these men, all of whom will never be forgotten."

Gerald Fontenot and Mike Burns, WK security guards, hoisted the flag at a public ceremony Independence Day morning.