

Bones from Pearl Harbor tomb ship may be identified

By Michael E. Ruane, Washington Post

OFFUTT AIR FORCE BASE, Neb. – Inside an old aircraft factory here, behind the glass windows of a pristine laboratory, the lost crew of the USS Oklahoma rests on special tables covered in black foam.

Their bones are brown with age after 50 years in the ground and, before that, months entombed in their sunken battleship beneath the oily waters of Pearl Harbor.

Legs, arms, ribs, vertebrae. Some have blue tags tied with string, identifying the type of bone. Some have beige tags, indicating that experts also want samples for DNA testing.

They are the unidentified remains of hundreds of sailors and Marines who perished 74 years ago Monday, when Japan launched a surprise air attack on Hawaii and plunged the United States into World War II.

Now, seven decades later, the government is trying to put names to the old salts and teenage sailors who died when their ship was sunk by enemy torpedoes Sunday morning, Dec. 7, 1941.

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