

“A day that will live in infamy”

December 7, 1941

Cover painting—a mural, painted in oil on canvas, by New York artist Kipp Soldwedel and unveiled as a permanent part of the Arizona Memorial on Memorial Day, 1969.

It began on a battleship in Pearl Harbor . . . and ended on a battleship in Tokyo Bay

By Cdr. Edward Peary Stafford, USN (Ret.)

Commander Stafford is a former Pacific Fleet historian and served as the DOD project officer, naval coordinator and technical advisor for Tora! Tora! Tora!, the historical movie which re-created the Pearl Harbor attack. Commander Stafford has written the books The Big E and The Far and the Deep plus numerous magazine articles. He is the grandson of Admiral Robert E. Peary, Arctic explorer and discoverer of the North Pole.

The sun rose over Oahu at 6:26 a.m. on December 7, 1941. But the business of that day which mankind can never forget had already begun. In exact accordance with a thoroughly worked-out plan prepared months before, 190 Japanese warplanes from six aircraft carriers were already boring in from the northwest. And around the island and its approaches 25 Japanese submarines waited to pick off survivors of the air attack. From five of the big subs, two-man midgets had already been launched and were converging on Pearl Harbor. The carriers had been at sea since the 26th of November, the submarines since the 20th.

Two hundred miles southwest of Oahu a squadron of Dauntless scout bombers was just launching from the USS ENTERPRISE with orders to search ahead and land at Ford Island. The BIG E's Air Group Commander was already well on his way. ENTERPRISE herself, one of three aircraft carriers in the Pacific and later the spearhead of early U. S. counterattacks, had run into heavy weather on the way home from delivering a squadron of Marine fighter planes to Wake Island and been forced to slow out of consideration for her destroyer escort. She had been due at Pearl Harbor on the evening of the 6th. There was much griping among her crew at the loss of a Saturday night liberty.

At Pearl Harbor it was a bright, clear Sunday morning. Under the

light northeast trades, surrounded by green cane fields and the white puffs of cumulus over the ridge of the Koolaus, it seemed the least probable place on earth for a war to start. But at exactly quarter of seven the destroyer USS Ward patrolling off the harbor entrance fired the first shot of that war at one of the Japanese midget subs trying to enter. With the second shot, half a minute later, WARD hit the midget squarely on the conning tower and then finished it off with her depth charges. Both WARD and the Catalina pilot reported the incident, but after nearly a quarter-century the long habit of peace was hard to break.

Fifty minutes after the sinking of the midget, the Japanese air strike group arrived off Kahuku Point at Oahu's northern tip and deployed to the attack. "Pearl Harbor," the Japanese Commander leading the first formation of planes later wrote, "was still asleep in the morning mist. It was calm and serene inside the harbor." But inside that calm and serene harbor were some 96 warships of the United States Pacific Fleet including eight battleships, eight cruisers, 29 destroyers, five submarines and assorted mincraft, tenders, and auxiliaries.

At five minutes of eight, although the attacking planes were in their dives, the Sunday harbor was still at peace. In the next 60 seconds the battleship WEST VIRGINIA was holed by the first of six or seven torpedoes (especially

SHIPS PRESENT PEARL HARBOR 7 December 1941

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| ALLEN (DD-66) | PT-30 |
| ANTARES (AKS-3) | PT-42 |
| ARGONNE (AG-31) | PATTERSON (DD-392) |
| ARIZONA (BB-39) | PELICAN (AS-14) |
| ASH (YN-2) | PENNSYLVANIA (BB-38) |
| AVOCET (AVP-4) | PERRY (DMS-17) |
| AYLWIN (DD-355) | PHELPS (DD-360) |
| BAGLEY (DD-386) | PHOENIX (CL-46) |
| BLUE (DD-387) | PREBLE (DM-20) |
| BULLHORN (AM-20) | FRUIT (DM-22) |
| BREESE (DM-18) | PYRO (AE-1) |
| CG-8 (USCG) | RAIL (AM-26) |
| CACHALOT (SS-170) | RALIGH (CL-7) |
| CALIFORNIA (BB-44) | RALPH TALBOT (DD-390) |
| CASE (DD-370) | RAMAPO (AO-12) |
| CASSIN (DD-372) | RAMSAY (DM-16) |
| CASTOR (AKS-1) | REEDBIRD (AMc-30) |
| CHENGHO (IX-52) | REID (DD-369) |
| CHEW (DD-106) | RELIANCE (USCG) |
| CINCHONA (YN-7) | RIGEL (AR-11) |
| COCKATOO (AMc-8) | ST LOUIS (CL-49) |
| COCKENOE (YN-47) | SACRAMENTO (PG-19) |
| CONDOR (AMc-14) | SAN FRANCISCO (CA-38) |
| CONYNGHAM (DD-371) | SCHLEY (DD-103) |
| CROSSBILL (AMc-9) | SELFRIDGE (DD-357) |
| CUMMINGS (DD-365) | SHAW (DD-373) |
| CURTISS (AV-4) | SICARD (DM-21) |
| DALE (DD-353) | SOLAR (AH-5) |
| DETROIT (CL-8) | SOTOYOMO (YT-9) |
| DEWEY (DD-349) | SUMNER (AG-32) |
| DOBBS (AD-3) | SUNNADIN (AT-28) |
| DOLPHIN (SS-169) | SWAN (AVP-7) |
| DOWNES (DD-375) | TANEY (PG-37) (USCG) |
| FARRAGUT (DD-348) | TANGIER (AV-8) |
| GAMBLE (DM-15) | TAUTOG (SS-199) |
| GREBE (AM-43) | TENNESSEE (BB-43) |
| HELENA (CL-50) | TERN (AM-31) |
| HELM (DD-388) | THORNTON (AVD-11) |
| HENLEY (DD-391) | TIGER (PC-152) (USCG) |
| HOGA (YT-146) | TREVER (DMS-16) |
| HONOLULU (CL-48) | TRACY (DM-19) |
| HILBERT (AVD-6) | TUCKER (DD-374) |
| HULL (DD-350) | TURKEY (AM-13) |
| JARVIS (DD-393) | UTAH (AG-16) |
| KEOSAUQUA (AT-38) | VEGA (AK-17) |
| MAC DONOUGH (DD-351) | VESTAL (AR-4) |
| MANUWAI (YFB-17) | VIREO (AM-52) |
| MARIN (YN-53) | WAPELLO (YN-56) |
| MARYLAND (BB-46) | WARD (DD-139) |
| MEDUSA (AR-1) | WASMUTH (DMS-15) |
| MONAGHAN (DD-354) | WEST VIRGINIA (BB-48) |
| MONTGOMERY (DM-17) | WHITNEY (AD-4) |
| MILFORD (DD-389) | WIDGEON (ASR-1) |
| NARWHAL (SS-167) | WORDEN (DD-352) |
| NAVAJO (AT-64) | YG-15 |
| NEOSHO (AO-23) | YG-17 |
| NEVADA (BB-36) | YG-21 |
| NEW ORLEANS (CA-32) | YMT-5 |
| NOKOMIS (YT-142) | YN-17 |
| OGALA (CM-4) | YO-21 |
| OKLAHOMA (BB-37) | YO-43 |
| ONTARIO (AT-13) | YP-108 |
| OSCEOLA (YT-129) | YP-109 |
| PT-20 | YTT-3 |
| PT-21 | YT-119 |
| PT-22 | YT-130 |
| PT-23 | YT-152 |
| PT-24 | YT-153 |
| PT-25 | YW-16 |
| PT-26 | ZANE (DMS-14) |
| PT-27 | YO-30 |
| PT-28 | YO-44 |
| PT-29 | |

designed and adjusted long ago for the short, shallow runs required in Pearl Harbor), the battleship ARIZONA was blown apart by a bomb hit in her forward magazine, and the battleship OKLAHOMA took three torpedoes and began to capsize.

In carefully coordinated attacks which they had been practicing for three months, the Japanese aviators slashed at the startled Americans on ship and shore. But their prime target was Battleship Row along the southeast shore of Ford Island where seven battlewagons were moored. Skimming down East and Middle Loch and across Pearl City, four waves of Kate torpedo bombers fanned out and lay their long "fish" in the harbor from altitudes of 40 to 100 feet pointed straight at the long broadsides of the battleships. Almost simultaneously the Val dive bombers swooped out of the Sunday sky to comb the line of heavy vessels fore and aft with both conventional bombs and converted 16" armor-piercing naval shells. When bombs and torpedoes had been expended all planes banked around and attacked again, strafing viciously.

But only during the first few seconds of the shock were the attackers unopposed. Fleet doctrine called for a quarter of each ship's anti-aircraft batteries to be manned and ready with ammunition at hand. As a result the machine gun batteries opened up almost at once and within four minutes the first five-inch round slammed its lethal black puff into the teeth of the enemy. On all the ships the general alarm was sounded immediately and they began to fight back as best they could. And that best was not too bad under the incredible circumstances. Five of the torpedo planes which began the attack, for example, were shot down by the steadily rising drumfire of resistance.

By 8:25 when the first attack was over, "ARIZONA was a burning wreck, OKLAHOMA had capsized, WEST VIRGINIA had sunk, CALIFORNIA was going down and every other battleship (except PENNSYLVANIA in

sunk in the channel and block it. The destroyer MONAGHAN got underway at 8:27, rammed, depth-charged and sank a midget submarine which had penetrated the harbor, and made it safely to sea. The light cruiser ST. LOUIS got underway at 9:31 and just inside the harbor entrance dodged two torpedoes and probably sank the midget which had fired on them. There were many other minor successes within the overwhelming defeat but at ten o'clock that morning when the last Japanese planes joined up over northern Oahu for the flight back to their carriers they had won the most smashing victory ever achieved at the start of a modern war. With a loss of 29 planes, five midget submarines and 64 men they had sunk four United States battleships, badly damaged three more and wounded the eighth, demolished two destroyers and blown the bow off a third, and put several other warships permanently or temporarily out of commission. In the battered, sunken hulls of ships, in the oil coated harbor water, on the piers and docks and hangars of Pearl Harbor 2,113 Navy men and Marines were dead, another 987 wounded. In ARIZONA's blasted hulk, 1,177 officers and men still lay where they fell that terrible morning. The United States Navy in two hours and four minutes had lost three times as many men as it had lost by enemy action in all of the Spanish-American War and World War I combined.

From 8:25 to 8:40 there was a lull in the action during which most of the BIG E's Scouting Squadron was able to dodge or fight its way into Ford Island. At Pearl Harbor the shaken sailors on their shattered ships tended the wounded and rushed to get ammunition to their guns to meet the next attack. In Washington, D. C., at 8:30 Pearl Harbor time, Japanese Ambassadors Nomura and Kurusu met with Secretary of State Cordell Hull in continuing negotiations to preserve the "peace."

At 8:40 while the "peace" envoys were consulting with Mr. Hull, high level bombers left over from the 7:55 attack began crisscrossing the burning ships and installations laying sticks of bombs from 10 and 12 thousand feet, and as they veered away to return to their carriers at 9:15, the second attack wave came in. Fifty more high-level bombers swung in over Bellows Field, around Diamond Head and Waikiki and across Hickam Field to make their drops through columns of black smoke rising from the burning ships. At the same time 80 more dive bombers roared in over the Koolaus to attack from the eastward while 40 fighters swooped down to strafe and engage the few defending interceptors which managed to get airborne.

But after 8:40 it was not as terribly one-sided as before. As late as 8:05 there had been only isolated puffs of anti-aircraft fire in the clear sky over Pearl, but after the 15-minute lull from 8:25 to 8:40 the guns got into action in earnest and the heroic efforts of the sailors and their officers began to take effect. NEVADA shot down two torpedo bombers and got underway shortly after 8:30 despite a 45 by 30-foot hole in her bow, fought her way through a determined dive-bombing attack but was ordered grounded on Waipio Point across from the south end of Ford Island for fear she might be

Yet in final summation the calculated treachery of Sunday, December 7th, 1941, did not pay. Of the 18 warships sunk or damaged at Pearl Harbor, 13 were repaired and lived to strike back. Of the six carriers, two battleships, two cruisers and nine destroyers of the Japanese Striking Force, four of the carriers were sunk six months later in the Battle of Midway, and only a single destroyer survived the war. 1,364 days after it began, the war ended in crushing defeat for those who began it. And it ended on the deck of a United States battleship—not in Pearl Harbor but in Tokyo Bay.

DECEMBER 7, 1941 -- "A DAY THAT WILL LIVE IN INFAMY"



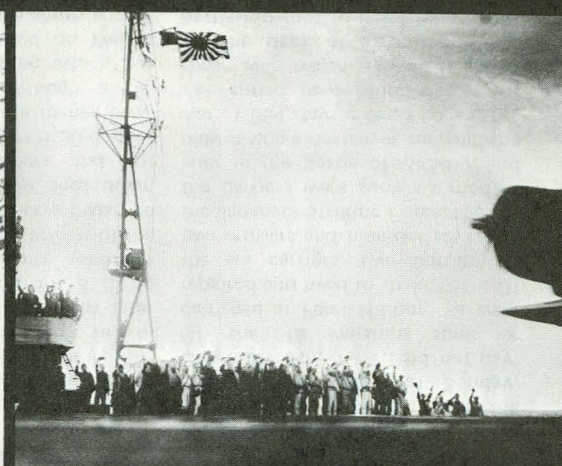
USS Arizona Departing New York, 1918



USS Arizona In All Her Glory, 1935



How Japan Planned Pearl Harbor Attack



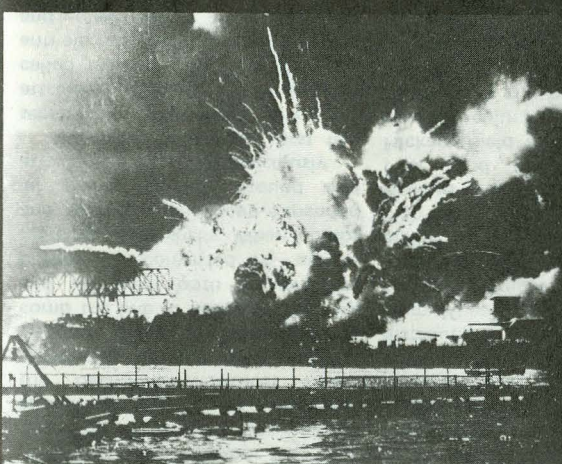
Japanese Planes Take Off to "Banzai" Salute



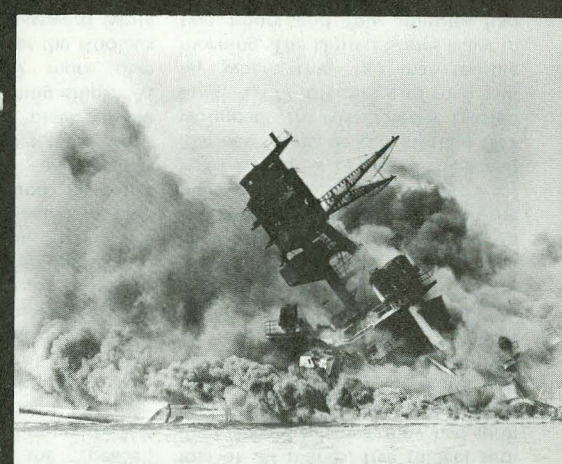
Battleship Row Under Attack



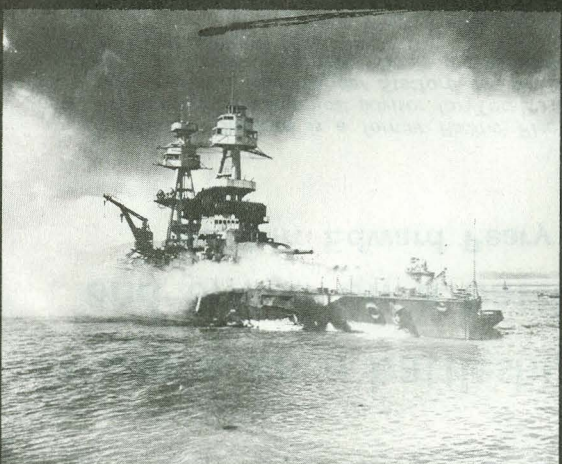
Ford Island-based Ships Were First Hit



Destroyer USS Shaw Explodes



USS Arizona Sank In 9 Minutes



USS Nevada Aground and On Fire



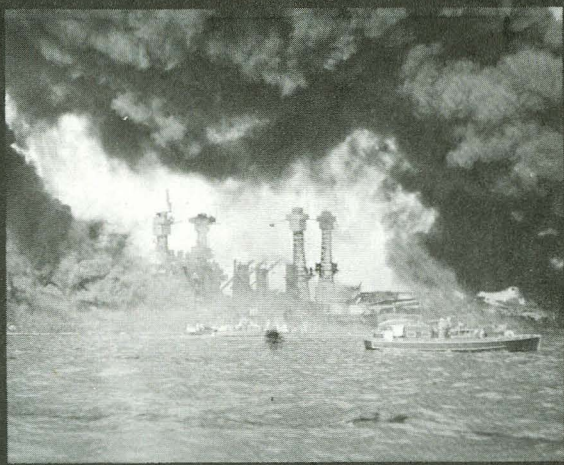
USS California Struggles To Stay Afloat



Submarine Base Escaped Damage



USS West Virginia Resting On Bottom



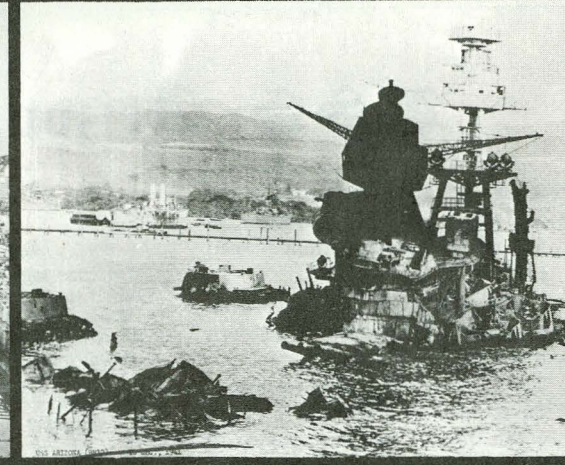
Small Boats Rescue Men In Water



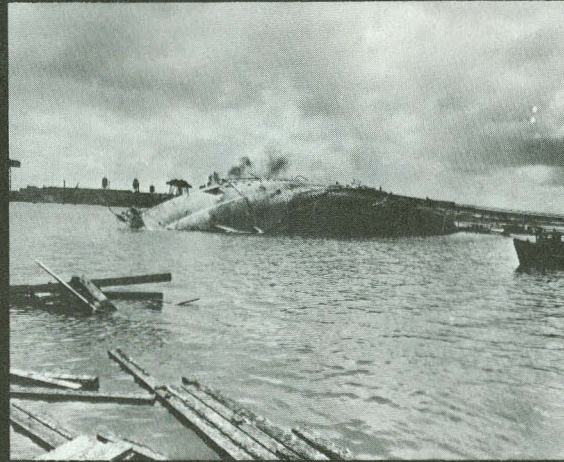
USS Helena Burning, USS Oglala Capsized



USS Downes, USS Cassin and USS Pennsylvania (background)



USS Arizona Resting On Bottom



USS Oklahoma Lies On Its Side



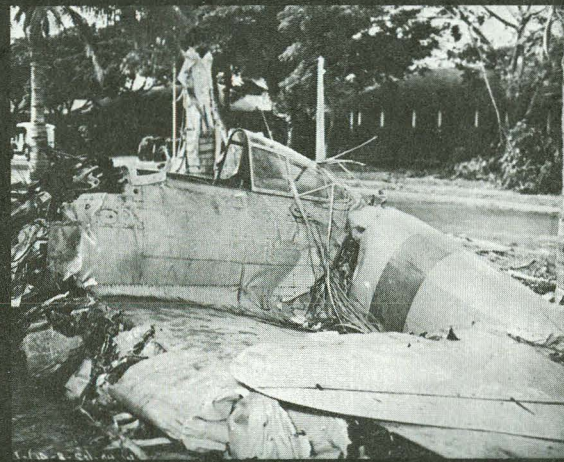
Ford Island Hangar Burns After Direct Hit



Smoke And Fire Blanket Ford Island



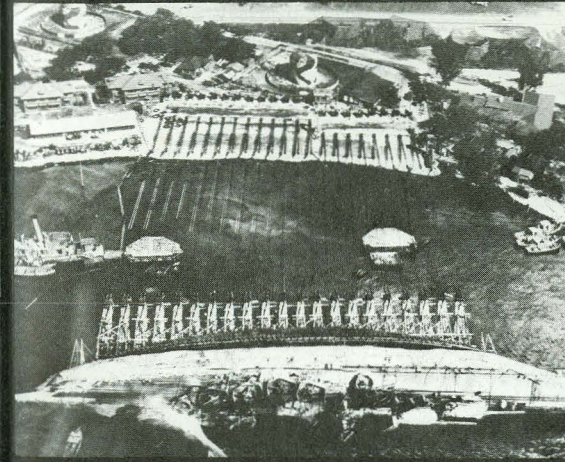
Seaplanes At Ford Island Sit In Ruins



One Of 29 Japanese Planes Shot Down



Japanese Midget Sub Found In Harbor



Righting Of Battleship USS Oklahoma



Japanese Surrender, September 2, 1945

ARMY 228 KILLED
364 WOUNDED

MARINES 109 KILLED
69 WOUNDED

NAVY 2,004 KILLED
710 WOUNDED

CIVILIANS 68 KILLED
35 WOUNDED

TOTALS 2,409 KILLED
1,178 WOUNDED

DECEMBER 7, 1941 -- "A DAY THAT WILL LIVE IN INFAMY"

USS Arizona Memorial

The USS Arizona Memorial spans the sunken hull of the battleship USS Arizona, which rests in 38 feet of water at the bottom of Pearl Harbor.

An enclosed bridge touching no part of the ship itself, the 184-foot memorial is supported by two 250-ton concrete girders resting on 36 pre-stressed pilings. It varies in width from 27 feet at the center to 36 feet at the ends and in height from 14 feet at the center to 21 feet at the ends.

The memorial is divided into three sections: the museum room, housing mementos from the ship; the assembly area, which can accommodate 200 persons for ceremonies; and the shrine room, where on a large marble wall are engraved the names of the 1,177 Navy men and Marines who were killed on the USS Arizona in the Pearl Harbor attack.

Construction of the memorial was authorized by the 85th Congress and approved by President Eisenhower in 1958. A bill appropriating \$150,000 for construction was passed by the 87th Congress and signed by President Kennedy in 1961. Under sponsorship of the Pacific War Memorial

"The form, wherein the structure sags in the center but stands strong and vigorous at the ends, expresses initial defeat and ultimate victory.

"Wide openings in walls and roof permit a flooding by sunlight and a close view of the sunken battleship eight feet below, both fore and aft. At low tide, as the sun shines upon the hull, the barnacles which encrust it shimmer like gold jewels . . . a beautiful sarcophagus.

"The overall effect is one of serenity. Overtones of sadness have been omitted to permit the individual to contemplate his own personal responses . . . his innermost feelings."

ALRED PREIS
Architect

Commission, the remaining funds were raised through public contributions, including \$100,000 donated by the State of Hawaii. The memorial was dedicated on Memorial Day, 1962.

More than 3.5 million persons have visited the Arizona Memorial since its opening, including a record 504,885 visitors in 1973, compared with a first year total of 102,000 in 1962.

Pearl Harbor was designated a national landmark in 1965 in recognition of its "exceptional value in commemorating and illustrating the history of the United States."

This distinction was bestowed on the Pearl Harbor naval base, not just the USS Arizona Memorial. No other naval base has been so honored.

A bronze plaque officially registering Pearl Harbor as a national shrine was presented to the Navy by the Department of Interior on June 29, 1965, in ceremonies at the Arizona Memorial Boat Landing.

Pearl Harbor has since become Hawaii's most popular tourist attraction with more than 750,000 persons visiting the naval base annually by Navy and commercial tour boats and during open house events.



HER FLAG STILL FLIES PROUDLY

In tribute to the American fighting men killed during the attack on Pearl Harbor, the national ensign is flown over the USS Arizona daily. The ship is no longer in commission, having been stricken from the active list in 1942, but in memory of the brave men who lost their lives on that tragic Sunday morning, the Navy has granted special permission to fly the American flag over the USS Arizona.

The U. S. flag is flown from 8 a.m. to sunset. It appears to fly from the USS Arizona Memorial, but in fact does not touch any part of the monument itself. The flagpole on which it flies is mounted on a part of the battleship's superstructure which is still visible above the water.