

75th Anniversary commemorative edition

REMEMBERING

A DAY of INFAMY

PEARL HARBOR

The attack itself,
minute by minute

The mood of a nation
plunged into war



REMEMBERING

A DAY of INFAMY

3

THE ATTACK ITSELF

A minute-by-minute look at what happened in Hawaii Dec. 7, 1941.



10

NEWS OF WAR

When the U.S. unleashed “shock and awe” against the regime of Saddam Hussein in 1993, the assault was broadcast live. Not so in 1941, when it took hours for news of the Pearl Harbor attack to reach American homes.

14

MOBILIZATION

Although the United States had had a draft since 1940, the armed forces remained small. That changed swiftly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, when thousands of draft boards sprang up around the country, and millions of men were conscripted for military service.

17

ISOLATIONISM

World War II officially began in September 1939 when Germany invaded Poland, but the United States did not enter the war for more than two years. After Pearl Harbor, the U.S. sprang into action. What was life like before America entered the war?

20

CHRISTMAS 1941

Coming just 18 days after the attack, this was a holiday unlike any other. For many Americans, it was the last time they would be together.

ONLINE

Visit our website to dive deeper into the history of Dec. 7, 1941. Look for ‘Pearl Harbor’ on your newspaper website’s homepage under Our Picks and you’ll find:

- More historic photos
- Video and audio archives from the Library of Congress
- Links to more resources
- An interactive quiz of the trivia on Pages 36-38

25

INTERMENT

World War II is often characterized as the great crusade against tyranny. That’s hard to reconcile with the treatment of Japanese-Americans living on the West Coast, more than 100,000 of whom were uprooted from their homes and sent to internment camps.



32

COULD IT HAPPEN AGAIN?

What would such a surprise attack look like now? What keeps our national security forces up at night?

34

LEARNING MORE

Recommended reading, viewing, memorials to visit

36

TRIVIA

Test your knowledge

39

NAMES OF THOSE KILLED

BLIPPAR

Throughout this section we are using an app called Blippar to direct you to online content via your smartphone.

1. Download the free app in the Apple App Store or Google Play, for Android phones and tablets.

2. When you see these icons near a story or photo, open the app and point your smart device’s camera at the page.



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WITH IMAGE



STEP THREE
BLIPP IMAGE
INTO LIFE

3. Blippar will bring up related digital content on your phone or tablet.

For example, open the Blippar app and hover your phone over the text of FDR’s Christmas Eve speech on Page 23. Audio of the speech should start playing on your device.

THE ATTACK ITSELF

‘Sunday in Hell’ author details two hours on Pearl Harbor that changed history

The U.S. Navy battleships USS West Virginia (sunken at left) and USS Tennessee shrouded in smoke after the Japanese air raid on Pearl Harbor. WIKIPEDIA



Use the Blippar app to open a video of Bill McWilliams interviewing Pearl Harbor survivors.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 2

The following is an excerpt from the book “Sunday in Hell: Pearl Harbor Minute by Minute” by Bill McWilliams. Copyright (c) 2011 by Bill McWilliams. Reprinted with the permission of Open Road Integrated Media, Inc.



On Thursday, 4 December, the U.S. Navy's guarded, highly classified radio receiving station in Cheltonham, Maryland, intercepted a Japanese overseas "News" broadcast from Station JAP (Tokyo) on 11980 kilocycles. The broadcast began at 8:30 a.m., corresponding to 1:30 a.m. in Hawaii, and 10:30 p.m., 5 December, in Tokyo. The broadcast was probably in Wabun, the Japanese equivalent of Morse Code, and was originally written in syllabic katakana characters, a vastly simpler and phonetic form of written Japanese. It was recorded in Cheltonham on a special typewriter, developed by the Navy, which typed the Roman-letter equivalents of the Japanese characters. The Winds Message broadcasts, which Japanese embassies all over the world had been alerted to listen to in a 19 November coded message, was forwarded to the Navy Department by TWX (teletype exchange) from the teletype-transmitter in the "Intercept" receiving room at Cheltonham to "WA91," the page-printer located beside the GY Watch Officer's desk in the Navy Department Communication Intelligence Unit under the command of Navy Captain Lawrence F. Safford.

The 4 December message was one of the last key intelligence intercepts the Navy was decoding and translating, in attempts to determine Japanese intentions and plans during their deteriorating diplomatic relations and negotiations with the United States. There was some delay and uncertainty in decoding and translating the message, which, as indicated in the Japanese government's 19 November message, would be contained in the Tokyo news broadcasts' weather reports. After considerable discussion of the 4 December intercept, senior Naval Intelligence officers concluded the message meant an imminent break in diplomatic relations with Great Britain, at least, and probably the United States – since the embassies had received instructions to destroy their codes. Code destruction and replacement was a routine procedure at regular, specified intervals throughout the year, but ominously, the most recent order to destroy codes didn't fit the normal pattern of Japanese behavior in managing their most secret codes.

But unknown to American intelligence another more ominous message had been sent to the combined fleet at 0730 hours on 2 December, Tokyo time, Monday, 1 December in Washington and Hawaii. Sent by Admiral Yamamoto's chief of Naval General Staff, Rear Admiral Matome Ugaki, it was to become one of the most famous messages in naval history. "Climb Mount Niitaka, 1208." It signaled that X-Day – the day to execute the Japanese war plan – was 0000 December 8, Japan time. Nagumo's task force received the information at 2000 hours, and at this hour was about 940 miles almost directly north of Midway, well beyond the arc of U.S. reconnaissance flights.



One of the 29 Japanese aircraft lost on Dec. 7, this 'Val' dive bomber trails flames from its right wing. THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM



U.S. Army Air Forces aircraft destroyed by Japanese raiders at Wheeler Air Field Dec. 7. WIKIPEDIA

Saturday evenings on Oahu were normally filled with relaxed revelry, sprinkled with "happy hours" in the local hotel lounges and bars, dinners at restaurants and clubs, dances, floor shows, quiet gatherings with families and friends, and walks on the beaches. On the military installations, in the officers' clubs, enlisted recreation centers, and other locations on bases and posts, similar activities occur.

Tracing its origins to the early 1900s, the Navy's School of Music opened in Washington, D.C. in 1935 and operated in conjunction with the U.S. Navy Band. Students enrolled in the school in this era were interviewed in advance, selected for attendance, graduated in complete ensembles, and transferred aboard ship.

At Pearl Harbor, a crowd gathered at the new Bloch Recreation Center the night of 6 December 1941 for "The Battle of the Bands," the last elimination round of a Pacific Fleet music tournament begun the previous 13 September and held every two weeks, with the final competition planned for 20 December. The Bloch Recreation Center was a place designed to give the enlisted man every kind of relaxation the Navy felt proper – music, boxing, bowling,

billiards, and 3.2 beer. Called by some "The Battle of Music," "The Battle of the Bands" featured Navy bands primarily from "capital ships" home ported in Pearl Harbor and those attached to shore installations in Hawaii. Four bands were to compete in each round of the tournament with one winner per round selected to perform in the final competition rounds. The (USS) Arizona band won the first round in September, and several of its members attended this night, to listen to their future "competition" – tonight's winner.

Each band performed a swing number, a ballad and one specialty tune, then played for the jitterbug contest. Competing this final night of the elimination round, were only three bands. As the men stomped and cheered, bands from the battleships Pennsylvania (BB-38) and Tennessee, and the fleet support ship, Argonne (AG-31), fought it out to go to the finals. The Pennsylvania band won, everybody sang "God Bless America," and the evening wound up with dancing. When the crowd filed out at midnight, many argued that the best band of the tournament thus far was the Arizona's.

The threat of hostilities on Oahu seemed farfetched to all but a few.

Planes and a hangar burning at the Ford Island Naval Air Station's seaplane base, during or immediately after the air raid. The ruined wings of a PBV Catalina patrol plane are at left and in the center. THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM

Gordon W. Prange, in "At Dawn We Slept," recorded the chain of events that followed the deployment of the Japanese Empires' midget submarines early the morning of 7 December: "A waning moon peeked through the broken overcast to glimmer on the waters off Pearl Harbor. About '1 ¼ miles south of entrance buoys,' the minesweepers Condor and Crossbill plied their mechanical brooms. At 0342 something in the darkness 'about fifty yards ahead of the port bow' attracted the attention of Ensign Russell G. McCloy, Condor's Officer of the Deck. He called to Quartermaster Second Class R.C. Uttrick and asked him what he thought. Uttrick peered through binoculars and said, 'That's a periscope, sir, and there aren't supposed to be any subs in this area.'"



Use the Blippar app to open newsreel footage of the attack, played in movie theaters in December 1941.

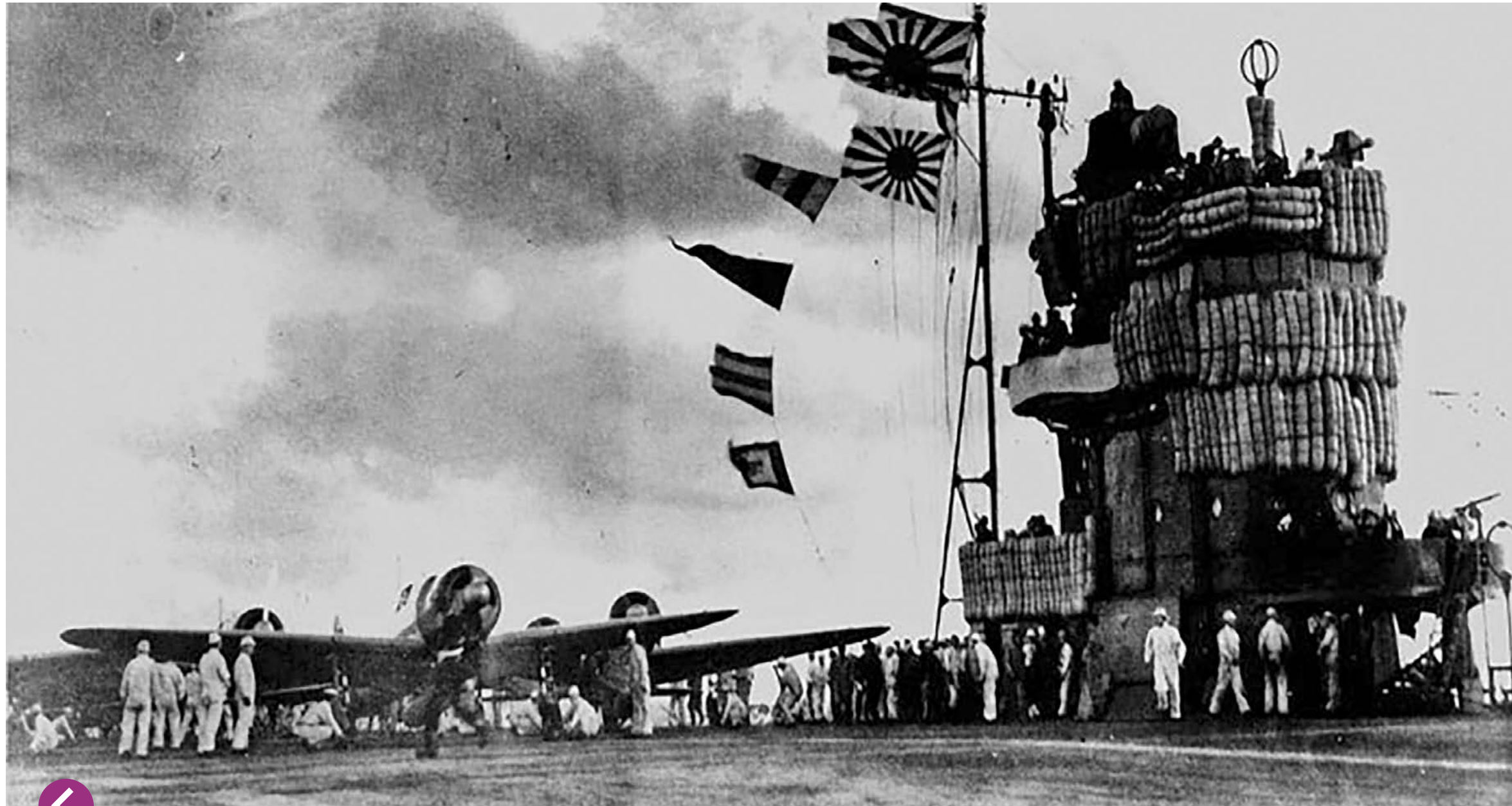
SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 2

In just 90 minutes the Japanese had launched 350 aircraft toward their targets.

The Zeroes' (fast, highly maneuverable, heavily-armed fighters, also called Zekes) first, low-altitude strafing passes at Kaneohe were deadly, and the effects of the remaining 32 in the first wave would prove devastating everywhere that morning. Each carried two rapid-fire 20-mm canons, one in the leading edge of each wing, and two 7.7-mm machine guns mounted on the nose of the fighter, in the engine cowling. To increase the amount of damage caused during their strafing runs, the Japanese loaded their ammunition in the following order: two armor piercing, one tracer; two armor piercing, one incendiary. With this loading the bullets would not only kill, but would shred thin metal, pierce light to moderately thick armor, gasoline and oil tanks, do fatal damage to vehicles, engines, aircraft and anti-aircraft guns – and start fires.

In the first eight minutes of the air assault on Oahu, the Zekes were commencing the near-total destruction of





The Japanese carrier Akagi prepares to launch airplanes in the second attack wave Dec. 7, 1941. PHOTOS COURTESY THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM

the Navy's long range patrol capability on the island. Follow-on attacks by Zekes and horizontal bombing Kates (equipped with torpedoes) and additional fighters in the second wave would bring more death and destruction to Kaneohe Naval Air Station.

Along the beach in Waimanalo to the southeast of Kaneohe, all was serene at Bellows Field until about dawn, when the acting first sergeant ran into the tent area to rouse the

sleeping men, yelling that Kaneohe had been 'blown all to hell.' Corporal McKinley thought he was crazy and just turned over in his bed. At 0810, someone called from Hickam Field and asked for a fire truck because they 'were in flames.' A return call disclosed ... they had been attacked, so the Bellows fire chief left for Hickam with the fire truck.

While the men of the 86th rushed to defend against the next onslaught, the three 44th fighter pilots were

determined to get into the air as soon as possible. Squadron maintenance men scrambled to disperse, fuel and arm their aircraft. Time was of the essence. In another half hour, the second wave's attack would bring much more than a single Zeke fighter strafing Bellows Field on one pass. Though none from the 86th died at Bellows Field that day, and only three were wounded on a field still under construction, two more of their number received wounds

in the Japanese assault on Hickam Field - and two of the 44th's three pilots would die at Bellows, with the other wounded in desperate, vain, raging attempts to get airborne and strike back at the now-declared enemy. The worst was in progress elsewhere, far worse. Between dawn, when the 86th's acting first sergeant told of Kaneohe's attack, 0810 hours, when the call for a fire truck came from Hickam, and 0830, when the Zeke roared through on a strafing

pass, hell was visiting the island of Oahu. Wheeler Field, the home of the Hawaiian Air Force's air and fleet defense, the 14th Pursuit Wing, was the first Army Air Force field struck on Oahu. By 0900, when the second wave struck Bellows and completed their work on Kaneohe, the fierce Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and other military installations on the island had become a never-to-be-forgotten, bloody, American national disaster.

A Japanese midget submarine after having been raised by the U.S. Navy at the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard in December 1941.



Startled, at-first-uncertain and disbelieving men on the ground and aboard ships, all disciplined and trained to respond in a crisis, and fight, were momentarily puzzled. Then they saw bombs or torpedoes released, the white-hot blinking of machine guns and 20-mm canons, the flash of orange insignia - "meatballs" - on the underside of wings or the sides of fuselages, heard a few shouted warnings, the roar of low flying airplanes, and the violent explosions of bombs or torpedoes in the stunning few moments before reality struck home. In the normal preparations for Sunday morning breakfast, church services, a weekend of liberty, lowered crew manning, absence of warning, and low defense alert condition, disaster quickly flourished. While

torpedoes, bombs, cannon fire and machine gun bullets tore into the attackers' primary target, the Pacific Fleet, setting off thunderous explosions, starting numerous fires, and a huge, all-consuming inferno on the battleship Arizona, the men on Army Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps airfields suffered their own brand of hell. Before one hour and forty-five minutes passed, total Army Air Force casualties on Oahu climbed to 163 killed, 336 wounded, and 43 missing. Of these, Hickam Field's losses were 121 killed, 274 wounded, and 37 missing. Out of 231 Hawaiian Air Force aircraft, 64 were destroyed, 93 damaged and only 74 were left in repairable condition. Hangars at both Hickam and Wheeler were severely damaged. An aircraft repair station in Hickam's Hawaiian Air Depot was completely destroyed. 12 Kate torpedo-bombers

charged low across the water from the southeast and east, after passing at 50 feet altitude southeast of Hickam Field's hangar line, and past the south and north ends of Ford Island across the harbor from the west toward the main dock and ships in the north harbor, while other torpedo-bombers pressing in from the east and southeast unleashed devastating attacks on the battleships and other ships in the harbor. Val dive bombers, with a two-man crew of pilot and radioman/ gunner, and Kate horizontal bombers from the northeast and southwest almost simultaneously launched shattering dive-bomb and fighter attacks on aircraft and hangar facilities on Hickam Field, Ford Island, and nearby Marine Corps' Mooring Mast Field at Ewa - while to the northwest, Wheeler Field took staggering blows beginning moments following the assault on NAS Kaneohe Bay.

Wheeler Field, struck shortly before 0800, was home for the Hawaiian Air Force's entire pursuit (interceptor) force, which was the 14th Pursuit Wing, composed of the 15th and 18th Pursuit Groups. A successful attack on Wheeler would virtually assure air superiority. The Japanese took Wheeler Field completely by surprise, as they did every other installation on Oahu. No one on the ground sighted the oncoming Val dive bombers until they made their final turn for the attack. Aircraft and maintenance facilities along the flight line were the primary targets. Supply depots, barracks and people anywhere in the vicinity of these targets, were secondary but also received devastating blows. The Japanese pilots were too well trained to waste their bombs and ammunition on insignificant targets. One bomb did land in the front yard of a house, but it was the result of a miss rather than a deliberate attack on the housing area.

The multi-direction attacks by the bombers and fighters added confusion and chaos to the abject fear and terror of defenseless men scrambling for cover and weapons to defend



USS Nevada afire off the Ford Island seaplane base, with her bow pointed up-channel. The volume of fire and smoke is actually from USS Shaw, which is burning in the floating dry dock YFD-2 in the left background. WIKIPEDIA

themselves against an enemy bent on destruction of the field's mission capability. Observations and recollections of events differed widely among those on the receiving end of the destructive weapons tearing Wheeler Field apart. According to some, the first place hit was the gas storage dump on the southwest corner of the base, where all of Wheeler's flammables such as gas, turpentine, and lacquer were kept. Most witnesses, however, reported that the first bomb struck Hangar 1, where the base engineering shops were located. The tremendous blast blew out skylights, and clouds of smoke billowed upward, making it appear the entire hangar was lifted off its foundation. The explosion decimated the sheet metal, electrical, and paint shops in the front half of the hangar, but spared the machine and wood shops, and tool room, which were protected by a concrete-block, dividing wall. 20 The bomb that hit Hangar 3 had struck the hangar sheltering the central ammunition storage area, where, because of the Hawaiian Department's Alert One status, the

ammunition unloaded from aircraft, including rounds pulled from machine gun belts, had been stored. The hangar's exploding ammunition, going off like firecrackers in the flames, severely limited the ability to defend Wheeler Field against the continuing air attack.

Immediately behind the completed first wave of dive bombing attacks came the bombers, back again joining the fighters in follow-on, low level strafing attacks. The 72nd Pursuit Squadron tent area between Hangars 2 and 3 came under heavy attack.

The new P-40 fighter planes were being blown to bits, their burning parts scattering along the ramp in all directions, setting other planes on fire. One P-40 fell in two pieces, its prop pointing

By the time alerts were shouted, torpedoes were in the water. No time to react and more Kates followed behind, coming at the largest, most exposed targets among the battleships: Oklahoma, West Virginia, Arizona, Nevada, and California.

almost straight up. A P-36 exploded, hurling flaming debris upon a nearby tent, setting it ablaze.

At times there were over 30 fighters and dive bombers attacking Wheeler from every direction, a tactic used on every target complex on Oahu. The well-planned and executed tactic was designed not only to destroy fighter opposition on the ground and ships in the harbor, but to confuse and overwhelm gunners who might try to mount an effective anti-aircraft defense.

While aiming and firing in one direction at an airborne target, approaching fighter pilots pressing attacks at low altitude could see and cut down the defenders from another direction.

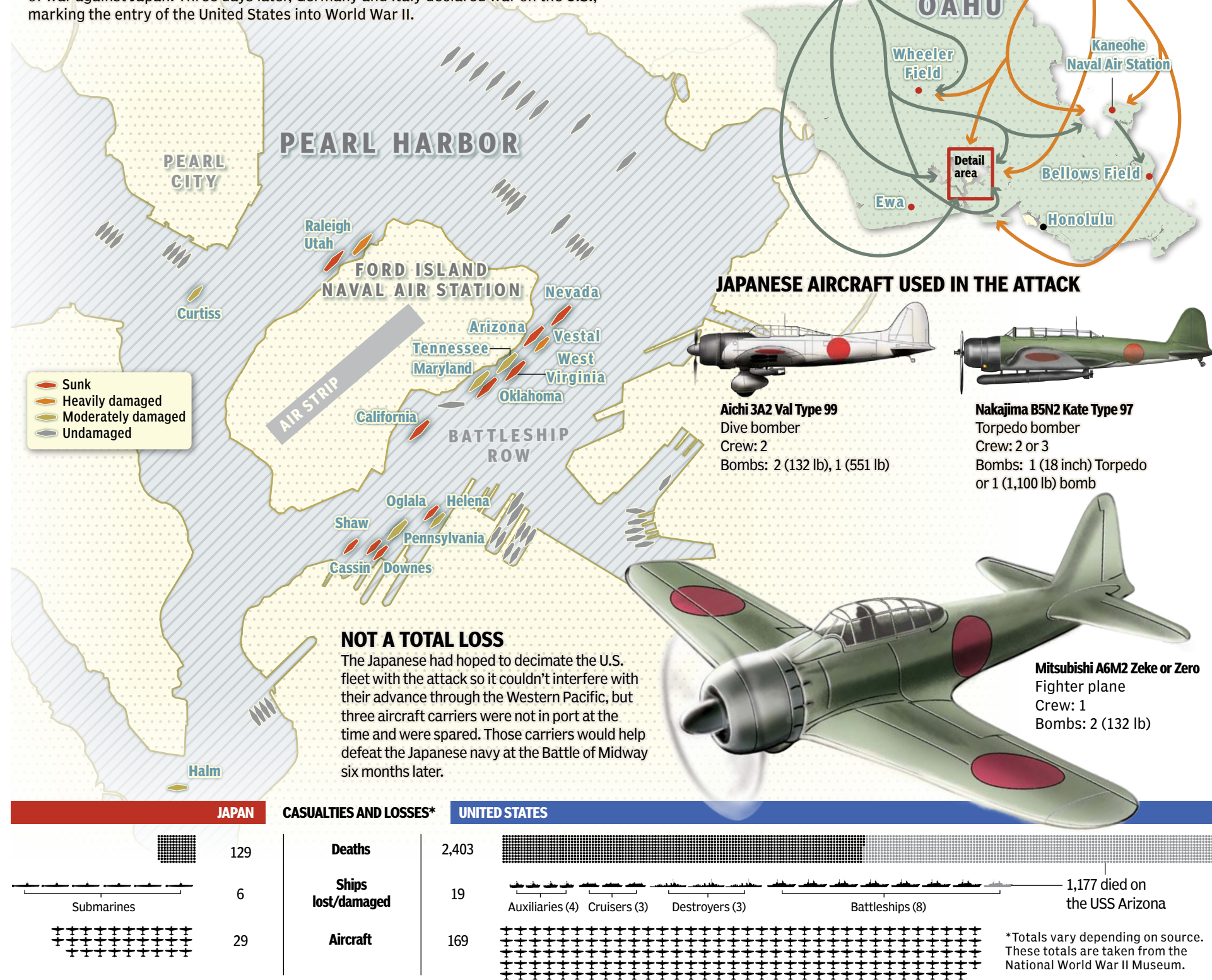
At the Marines' Mooring Mast Field, Ewa (pronounced Eva), on the southwest coastal plain of Oahu, near Barbers

Point, the first wave hit as the Japanese began their deadly assault on Ford Island and the ships in Pearl Harbor. At 0740, when Fuchida's air armada closed to within a few miles of Kahuku Point, the forty-three Zekes split away from the rest of the formation, swinging out north and west of Wheeler Field, the headquarters of the Hawaiian Air Force's 18th Pursuit Wing. Passing further south, at about 0745 the Soryu and Hiryu divisions executed a hard, diving turn to port and headed north toward Wheeler. Eleven Zekes from Shokaku and Zuikaku simultaneously left the formation and flew east, crossing over Oahu north of Pearl Harbor to attack NAS Kaneohe Bay. Eighteen Zekes from Akagi and Kaga headed toward what the Japanese called Babasu Pointo Hikojo (Barbers Point Airdrome) - Ewa Mooring Mast Field.

By the time alerts were shouted, torpedoes were in the water. No time to react and more Kates followed behind, coming at the largest, most exposed targets among the battleships: Oklahoma, West Virginia, Arizona, Nevada, and California.

Surprise attack

On December 7, 1941, the Empire of Japan launched a surprise attack on the United States' Pacific Naval Fleet at Pearl Harbor. The U.S. lost 2,335 military personnel in the attack, as well as 68 civilians, and another 1,178 were wounded. The next day President Franklin Delano Roosevelt asked Congress for and received declaration of war against Japan. Three days later, Germany and Italy declared war on the U.S., marking the entry of the United States into World War II.

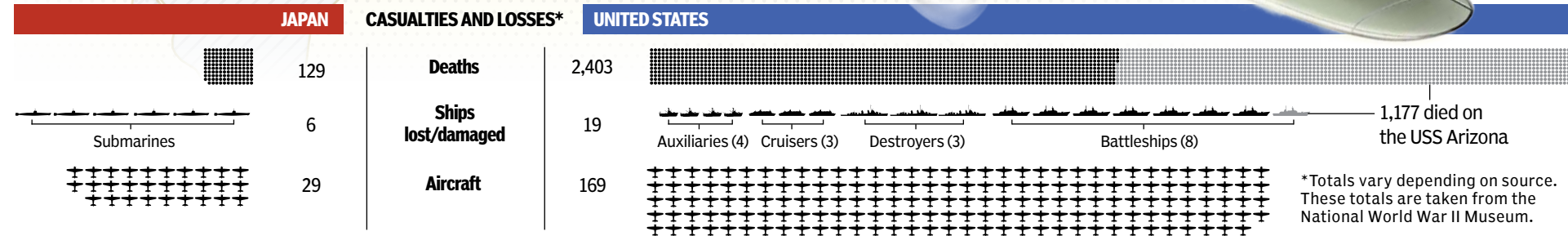


TWO WAVES

The Japanese attack proceeded in two waves consisting of 353 aircraft targeting the fleet at Pearl Harbor and other targets throughout Oahu.

First wave: 183 aircraft

Second wave: 170 aircraft



NEWS OF WAR

SOUND & FURY

By Brian Rosenwald
Special to GateHouse Media

When the unthinkable happened on Dec. 7, 1941, social media was more than 60 years in the future, phones existed solely for voice calls, and television was in its infancy. The government, not ordinary citizens, rang the alarm about the assault upon Pearl Harbor, and most Americans, many disbelieving, heard the news from radio, word of mouth and newspaper extras.

Americans glued themselves to their radios in the days following. The networks broadcast for 34 hours straight. On Dec. 8, a record of between 79 and 81 percent of Americans listened to President Roosevelt request that Congress declare war. The next night, a whopping 60 to 90 million Americans, the largest audience to date, heard him deliver a fireside chat on the predicament confronting the country.



War was all over the Dec. 10, 1941, front page of the Columbus Evening Dispatch.



Newspapers couldn't match radio's ability to provide instantaneous information and to 'transport' Americans to happenings around the globe.

Today we learn about breaking news instantaneously. One tweet becomes a torrent as we struggle to grasp the enormity of what we've read. Our phones buzz incessantly with news alerts and texts from friends and family. Within minutes we can watch nonstop coverage on a dozen television networks, not to mention digital platforms. We discover what happened in little blips, sometimes incorrect, as journalists rush to share what they know and average Joes contribute cellphone video and observations from the scene.

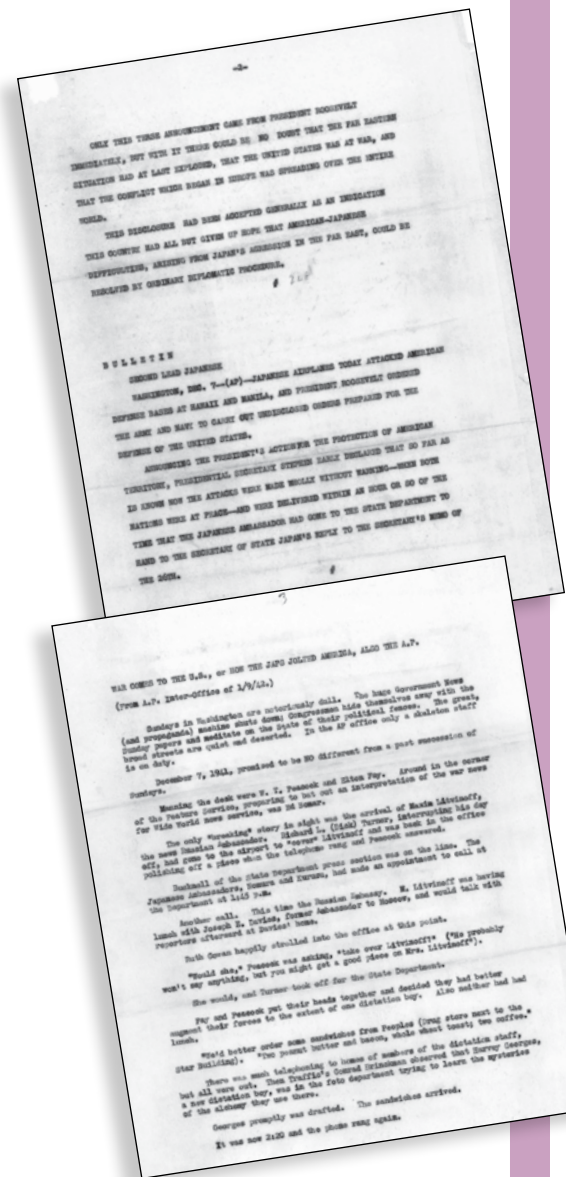
Before social media, television dominated breaking news coverage. Most Americans beyond their teenage years remember witnessing the World Trade Center towers collapsing on that tragic morning in 2001. An older generation recalls the sight of CBS newsmen Walter Cronkite, clearly grappling with his emotions, removing his spectacles and informing the nation of the death of President Kennedy.

Yet for all that television seared those images into our minds, the medium only dominated breaking news for a relatively short time. Television didn't

take off until the late 1940s and early 1950s. Television networks emerged in 1947 and 1948, and the number of television stations exploded in the early 1950s. As recently as 1948, only 0.4 percent of homes had televisions (by 1958 that number would climb to 83.2 percent).

While television eventually usurped radio's primacy as America's broadcast news source, during the late 1930s and the early 1940s, it was radio that surpassed newspapers in covering breaking news. Newspapers couldn't match radio's ability to provide instantaneous information and to "transport" Americans to happenings around the globe.

As tensions heightened in Europe in the late 1930s, path-breaking correspondents like CBS' Edward R. Murrow shared the sounds of war and familiarized Americans with the people and ideas propelling the conflict. Americans listened to speeches from Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain and other European leaders. Harnessing shortwave transmissions, an expanding stable of correspondents and stringers, and a burgeoning pool of commentators, radio tackled the biggest stories live as they unfolded.



The Associated Press sent the first flash, or news update, to its member media outlets at 2:22 p.m. Eastern Dec. 7, 1941 - about 90 minutes after the attack began. It read, "Washington - White House says Japs attack Pearl Harbor." AP/ORG

On that fateful Sunday, Japanese bombs started pelting Pearl Harbor shortly before 8 a.m. Hawaii Standard Time. By 8:04, KGMB in Honolulu jettisoned regular programming to air an announcement beckoning all military personnel to report immediately for duty. The station kept repeating this call, with competitor KMU soon joining in.

At 1:47 p.m. Eastern, roughly a half hour after the barrage began, Navy Secretary Frank Knox alerted President Roosevelt. FDR reacted with disbelief. He called Press Secretary Stephen Early, still at home reading the Sunday papers in his bathrobe, and at 2:22 p.m. EST, Early phoned the three wire services with a bulletin notifying Americans of the incursion. At 2:36, still at home (some reporters actually beat Early to the White House), Early erroneously informed the wire services that the Japanese had bombarded Manila, Philippines, as well.

The scheduled network radio programming that wintery afternoon included a New York Philharmonic concert on CBS, a Brooklyn Dodgers-New York Giants football game on Mutual Broadcasting System, and the "University of Chicago Roundtable" on NBC Red (RCA operated two networks, NBC Red and NBC Blue). Between 2:25 and 2:31 ET, all four networks interrupted programming to share what little information they had.

Even though more than 80 percent of households had radios in 1941, many Americans weren't tuned in that Sunday afternoon, and learned about the attack from neighbors, friends and relatives, who breathlessly queried whether they had heard the news - sometimes hours after the fact.

The 27,102 attending the clash between the Washington Redskins and the Philadelphia Eagles at Griffith Stadium, for instance, only learned about Pearl Harbor because news trickled out from the press box. Between plays the stadium loudspeaker implored various dignitaries and newspapermen to report to duty immediately, but stadium and Redskins management refused to announce the news both for fear of igniting

hysteria and because they never broadcast non-sports news.

Similarly, while radio listeners to the Giants-Dodgers game heard the news first, the 50,051 fans at the Polo Grounds remained clueless even as a buzz grew with each announcement summoning VIPs to a box-office telephone. Only after the cold drove New York Times scribe Harrison Salisbury and his wife from the stadium and to a friend's flat for a drink did they discover the news. That night, in Austin, Texas, Luis Calderon heard newsboys' calls of "extra, extra" and, wanting to know what they meant, learned that war had commenced when he stopped to buy a paper.

The news stunned Americans; many instinctively assumed that it must be a hoax. A Los Angeles Times reporter dispatched to an Army post stopped in a diner to exchange bills for change to make phone calls. When he revealed the news to the diner's patrons, they suspected a gag. Once on the Army post, the reporter again encountered incredulity and skepticism from soldiers who had yet to hear about the assault.

On the beach in Santa Monica, volleyball players ignored a radio listener's urgent cries until he brought his radio over and they heard the bulletin with their own ears. Mutual's initial dispatch prompted an irate call to the switchboard from a listener who protested another "stunt" like Orson Welles' "War of the Worlds," which had panicked her.

Once convinced of its veracity, the news indelibly etched itself into Americans' minds. Decades later their activities from that day remained vivid. A passerby informed future President George H.W. Bush, then a 17-year-old student at Phillips Andover Academy in Massachusetts, as he walked by Cochran Chapel with a friend. By day's end, the infuriated Bush had resolved to join the fight as soon as possible. In a 2014 interview, George Allen, who flew B-52s during the war, recounted hearing the news in the car with his family. On their way home, Allen's family picked up four servicemen on the side of the highway scurrying to return to their base.



Use the Blipper app to hear the radio broadcast bulletin on the attack from Dec. 7, 1941.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 2



▶ The radio networks launched virtually unprecedented coverage in the wake of the attack. Only the Munich crisis of 1938 and the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 had provided even somewhat comparable occasions for radio journalists. As such, things that seem unimaginable to modern sensibilities occurred in the hours after the bombing.

▶ CBS immediately tapped their network of stringers and affiliates across the world, including in Honolulu and Manila, to provide news, insight and analysis. Yet, the network also persisted in airing its previously scheduled orchestra concert and evening entertainment programming, albeit with constant interruptions. Merely delaying or interrupting the day's commercial programming represented innovation and even gumption.

▶ The onset of war also meant strict censorship rapidly snapping into place. NBC broadcast live reports from a correspondent and eyewitnesses in the hours after the attack — though the military took over the shortwave circuit two minutes into the first report. Subsequently, however, information became scarce, parceled out by the White House only once it could be explicitly verified and posed no risk of providing aid or comfort to the enemy. Radio was no stranger to censorship — European war dispatches had to receive clearance from government censors. In fact, CBS raised its stringer in Manila 90 minutes after the attack on Pearl Harbor, but he got cut off the air, presumably by censors.

▶ In the days after Dec. 7, mystery shrouded the attack and its toll. Reporters felt severely hamstrung — a Dec. 11 United Press International news agency piece noted “censorship permits a cautious description of the attack.” By happenstance, voluntary

radio censorship prevented the public from immediately learning the grim details of the destruction wrought.

▶ CBS' Murrow and his wife had dinner plans with the Roosevelts the night of Dec. 7. After the attack, Eleanor Roosevelt insisted on keeping their plans, reasoning that they all had to eat regardless. FDR skipped the meal, but he met with Murrow after midnight, confiding the devastating toll taken by the attack. While Murrow puzzled over whether their conversation occurred on or off the record, he never recounted it for listeners. Two days later, in spite of promises to the press, Roosevelt withheld these details from his fireside chat to avoid providing the enemy with information.



Dec. 8 and 9, 1941, newspapers from coast to coast herald news of war in their evening editions and in extras. WIKIPEDIA, STOCKTON (CA) RECORD, COLUMBUS (OH) DISPATCH



Radio journalists pioneered elements of breaking news coverage ... that would shape how television, and later digital media, chronicled the most consequential stories in real time.

▶ Americans also consulted newspapers for information — Chicagoans scarfed up “war extra” editions as quickly as trucks could unload them — but Pearl Harbor was radio’s moment. Radio journalists pioneered elements of breaking news coverage in the late 1930s and early 1940s that would shape how television, and later digital media, chronicled the most consequential stories in real time.

▶ Radio’s coverage of the strike against Pearl Harbor suffered from the same maladies that plague modern breaking news coverage — misinformation, confusion, network personnel scrambling into place and analysts speculating about hazy facts. Nonetheless, it symbolized a quantum leap from past practices, and enabled Americans to learn more about

the incursion and world reaction more quickly and intimately than would have been possible before the radio age.

– Brian Rosenwald is a fellow at the Robert A. Fox Leadership Program at the University of Pennsylvania and an instructor at Penn. He also conducts research for the Slate podcast “Whistlestop” and a book companion to the podcast. His doctoral dissertation, “Mount Rushmore: The Rise of Talk Radio and Its Impact on Politics and Public Policy,” is becoming a book for Harvard University Press. He has also written for CNN.com, Politico, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Baltimore Sun, The Daily Beast, and Time Magazine’s history blog, and contributed insight to pieces for media including The Wall Street Journal and BuzzFeed. He has appeared on radio and television programs including “The Michael Smerconish Program,” “Stand Up! with Pete Dominick,” “The Leslie Marshall Show” and “BackStory with the American History Guys.”



MOBILIZATION

THE 'SLEEPING GIANT' WAKES

The US responds to the reality of war

By Rob Citino

Special to GateHouse Media

*“What a difference a day makes,
Twenty-four little hours ...”*

Turn on a radio back in the 1940s and you might have heard the song “What a Difference a Day Makes.” It’s not the most memorable tune of the era, and its lyrics were never going to win a literary award (“It’s heaven when you ... find romance on your menu”).

Still, even the simplest song lyric can hit a listener hard. Americans hearing Bing Crosby sing “What a Difference a Day Makes” on his wartime Kraft Radio Hour might have grasped a deeper meaning. All of them had been through a recent, traumatic experience. If ever a single day had made a difference in their lives, it was Dec. 7, 1941. Pearl Harbor not only plunged the United States into war, but changed the country forever. It divided the life of every living American into a “before” and an “after,” and few of them would ever forget where they were when they heard the news.

The Japanese attack on Pearl was at first bewildering. Those who were there remember the shock: aircraft careening in, attacking, then banking away to reveal the big red circle on their wings, the mark of the Rising Sun. Sailors on ships in nearby waters got the chilling radiogram, labeled “urgent”: AIR RAID ON PEARL HARBOR X THIS IS NOT DRILL. Back at home, a lot of Americans didn’t even know where Pearl Harbor was, or what it was, for that matter. Remember, Hawaii wasn’t a state yet, not until 1959. Indeed, you read from time to time of a child who, on hearing that Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor, asked, “Who’s she?”

But things quickly clarified. Already that evening, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt – by now well into his unprecedented third term in office – was dictating a message to a joint session of Congress, a message he would deliver the next day. “Yesterday,” he wrote, “December 7, 1941, a date which will live in infamy, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.” The President didn’t bother with a lot of details. He didn’t stop to explain to the American people that Pearl Harbor was an advanced American naval base in the Hawaiian Islands, or to lay out a blow-by-blow account of the Japanese attack.

No, this was big picture stuff. What was Pearl Harbor? It was “America.” And what had happened there? An attack, committed “suddenly and deliberately.” It was an act of “infamy,” he said, nothing less than a crime.

By the numbers

When the European war began in earnest on Sept. 1, 1939, with the German invasion of Poland, the U.S. Army had 190,000 soldiers, the 17th-largest force in the world (just behind the small nation of Romania). By 1945, it was 8.3 million.

Presidential production goals set in January 1942 were staggering. FDR might have deliberately set them at impossibly high target levels so that he could get the highest possible production:

1942: 60,000 aircraft
1943: 125,000 aircraft

Actual US aircraft production:

1939	2,141
1940	6,068
1941	19,433
1942	47,836
1943	85,898
1944	96,318
1945	46,001

Total: 303,695

Medium tank production (including the M4 Sherman, our signature wartime tank):

1940	6
1941	1,430
1942	15,720
1943	28,164
1944	15,489
1945	8,055

Total: 68,864

– Rob Citino

No one could read the popular or political mood like FDR. He asked Congress for a declaration of war, dated precisely to the moment of the Japanese attack. The U.S. hadn’t started the war, FDR pointed out. Japan had. The Senate agreed unanimously – 82-0 in fact. The vote in the House of Representatives was all but unanimous, 388-1. Pacifist Jeanette Rankin of Montana voted no, just as she had voted against going to war with Germany in 1917.

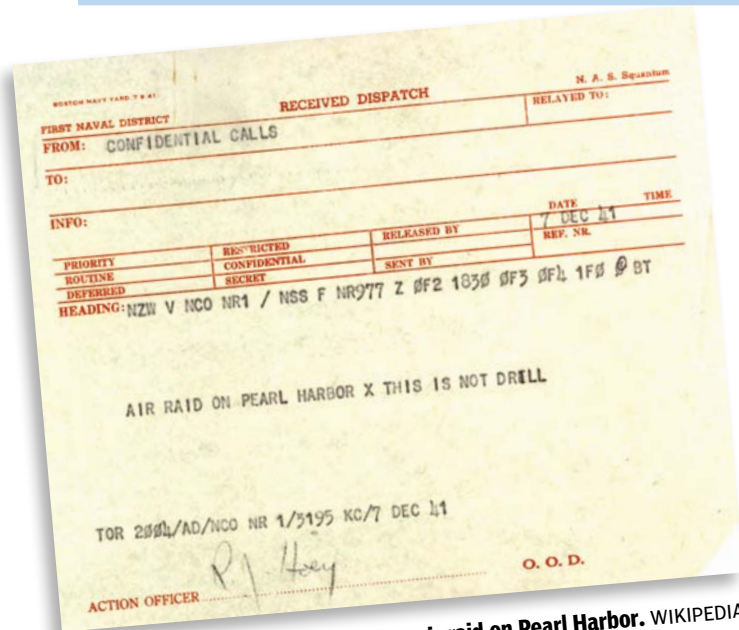
And that quickly, America was at war. A single day before, any representative or Senator voting to send the country to war might have been tarred or feathered. War had been raging in Europe and Asia for years, Hitler’s armies had Britain at bay and were gouging deep into Russia, and the Japanese warlords were waging a murderous war in China. Americans were all over the place in how to respond. Some, a small number, wanted to get in it directly, with troops; others, a larger group, were for getting it in indirectly, by supplying Britain with ships and weapons, for example. The largest number, however, were “isolationists.” The best thing the U.S. could do, they felt, was to stay out of the war altogether. The country had already fought one world war, they noted, and had nothing to show for it. Protected by its God-given oceans on both sides, America could and should sit this one out.

The first bomb at Pearl exploded that notion, and ended the isolationist movement forever. Our enemies had proven that the ocean could be a highway, not a barrier, and had made it clear that even if Americans weren’t interested in war, war was interested in them. The Japanese militarists thought that they were launching a surprise blow on a divided people who would never come together to form a common front. Instead, the attack on Pearl united the American people as never before. Virtually every citizen living in our sprawling, diverse republic shared the same desire: to show the Japanese that the “highway” ran in both directions. American public opinion, almost unanimously, came to a conclusion: This war could only end in one way – with U.S. forces sitting in Tokyo.

War against Japan (and soon Germany, as well) was by definition a global one, and fighting across the globe required a new kind of America. The U.S. was an industrial and financial giant, yes, but few would have described it as a great military power. Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto famously described America as a “sleeping giant,” but perhaps “sleepy” is more like it. A large chunk of the population still lived on the farm, statistics for high school graduation were shockingly low by today’s standards, and millions of Americans didn’t even have basic modern amenities like electricity or running water.



Posters like these seized upon the horror of Dec. 7 to spur the country into action. WIKIPEDIA



The warning dispatch about Dec. 7's air raid on Pearl Harbor. WIKIPEDIA



Use the Blippar app to see video of ads for war bonds using imagery from these posters.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 2



The Great Depression had bit hard into the social fabric of the country, as well, ruining lives and shattering families. The U.S. military was puny, spending less on arms than minor European states like Romania. Most Americans liked it that way, in fact. No standing army, no constant skirmishes with our neighbors, a civil society dedicated to peaceful pursuits: That was America's self-image in 1941. Much of the world agreed. No less an authority than Reichsmarshal Heinrich Goering, the chief of the German air force, declared that Americans might be able to produce consumer gizmos like "refrigerators and razor blades," but certainly not an arsenal for modern war.

And now, suddenly, it was time for the giant to wake up, work out, and put on some muscle. With the country enraged over Pearl Harbor, few questioned the complete redesign of American society. Young men marched off in the hundreds of thousands, and soon the millions. A grand total of 15 million Americans eventually traded their civilian garb for the uniform, and this in a country with a total population of just 135 million (less than half its size of today). Millions of boys from Cleveland and Des Moines and Paducah journeyed to places they had never heard of before, shipping out to islands in the South Pacific like Guadalcanal or Saipan, or to bloody Kasserine Pass in North Africa. Some flew bomber missions over Germany or Japan, some hit the beach at Normandy, others crewed the gigantic new U.S. Navy ships roaming the seven seas. Millions worked with the supply troops abroad, making sure the bullets, bombs and bread got forward to the fighting troops. Hundreds of thousands of them died, and millions would be wounded or missing in action. Indeed,

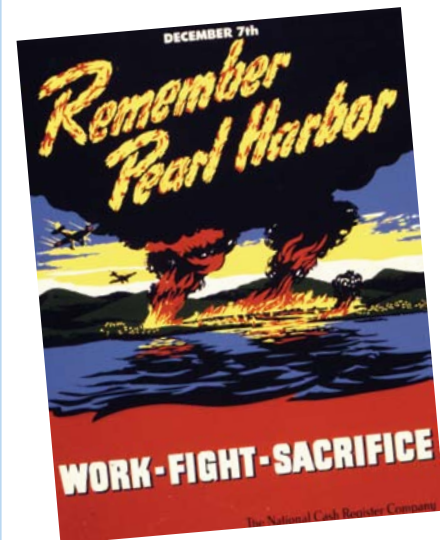
over 70,000 Americans from World War II are still listed as MIA.

The departure of most of the country's young men meant that other groups had to step in and man the factories. Check that: not "man." By war's end, over 19 million American women were in the workforce. Many had moved over from the traditional roles of "women's work" as domestic servants or waitresses into war plants, manning the lathes, drills and punch-presses that formed the backbone of modern war production. Alongside them were the millions of women who entered the workforce for the first time, leaving hearth and home to roll steel, bore out rifle barrels and screw fuses onto artillery shells. Rosie the Riveter was the new American icon: wearing blue coveralls, hair tied up in a scarf, bicep flexed. "We can do it!" was her slogan. Like the rest of post-Pearl Harbor America, Rosie had the eye of the tiger.

Pearl Harbor was a turning point for another group who had traditionally been outsiders: African Americans. Total war required the military and the economy to be firing on all cylinders, and that meant putting every possible American into either a uniform or a factory. Discrimination and racism, long tolerated, suddenly became a monkey wrench in the war effort. Moreover, how could democratic America condemn Germany and Japan for their racist policies while openly discriminating against its own at home? Many African Americans spoke openly of the "double victory" they were seeking: against the Axis abroad and against second-class citizenship in their own country.



The famous 'Rosie the Riveter' poster encouraging women to aid the war effort.
WIKIPEDIA



Pearl Harbor transformed the United States into one vast armed camp. Millions of soldiers, sailors and airmen fought at the front. Many more millions of workers at home – black, white, men, women – built the guns, tanks and aircraft needed for victory. Industry completely reinvented itself. Underwood Typewriter Company shifted over to producing M1 Carbine rifles; Kaiser Shipyards figured out how to build a transport vessel in a single week, the famous "Liberty Ship"; and Ford Motors kept pace at its sprawling Willow Run Plant in Ypsilanti, Michigan (dubbed "the Grand Canyon of the mechanized world"), by churning out a four-engine B-24 bomber every hour.

The global war unleashed on Dec. 7, 1941, demanded nothing less. Sure, other days have been critical to American history. The country wouldn't exist without July 4, 1776, and the grisly events of Sept. 11, 2001, still haunt our collective psyche. Neither of those days had the dramatic, long-lasting impact of Pearl Harbor, however. Those "twenty-four little hours" changed U.S. priorities permanently, set the country on the path to global power, and perhaps gave it a glimpse of itself as "a more perfect union" for all its citizens.

– Dr. Rob Citino is the Samuel Zemurray Stone senior historian at The National World War II Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana.

ISOLATIONISM

WHEN WAR CAME TO US

Sentiment in America before Pearl Harbor was decidedly anti-war

By Ron Milam, Ph.D.
Special to GateHouse Media

President George Washington warned the American people to "steer clear of permanent alliances," and to "extend foreign commercial relations that could be mutually beneficial while maintaining as little political connection as possible." These words were written in his farewell address to the nation as he watched Europe engage in wars that his own cabinet members had publically taken diverse positions about, causing friction within his administration and creating concern among warring nations. His warnings have often been cited as the beginning of isolationism by both elected officials and by the American public.





Fast-forward over 100 years, and Americans were still heeding Washington's words as Europe continued to fight "small" wars over ideology and geography. President Woodrow Wilson kept America out of World War I for three years because he did not want to send American boys to fight what he considered to be a European war. When he reversed his position in April 1917 by asking Congress to declare war to make the world "safe for democracy," his decision was criticized by many peace organizations and industrial leaders such as Henry Ford.

And while American soldiers did affect the outcome of the war in France and Britain's favor, the American people were not supportive of the decision, particularly when watching American boys return home with terrible wounds and lung damage from battlefield exposure to poison gas. Isolationism set in as polls indicated most Americans believed fighting "the war to end all wars" was a mistake, and some even believed that "merchants of death" had wanted American involvement in the war so that they could profit from selling war materials.

Presidents Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge sought to decrease the likelihood of another "great war" by negotiating limits to the size of naval armaments at the 1921-22 Washington Naval Conference. If the world's powers – America, Britain, Japan, France, and Italy – could restrict their post-war construction of battleships to an agreed upon tonnage and gun size, perhaps the reduction in ship size would lead to less belligerence on the seas. Virtually all parties broke the treaty by 1935 as hostilities began in Asia with Japan's invasion of China.

While most historians mark the beginning of World War II as 1939 when Germany invaded Poland, Japan had already conquered the Chinese province of Manchuria in 1931, and began to invade other provinces in 1937 when both Shanghai and Nanking were attacked. President Franklin Roosevelt wrote critical letters addressing this aggression, particularly when the American river gunboat the USS Panay was sunk by Japanese aircraft while attempting to rescue survivors of Nanking.

But the American people were not supportive of going to war with Japan, even though military planners had anticipated such a conflict by designing War Plan Orange as early as 1924. With the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 still in effect, it is unlikely that Americans would have supported



President Roosevelt signs the Lend-Lease bill to give aid to Britain and China in 1941. WIKIPEDIA

further involvement in the Sino-Japanese War. Furthermore, with the American economy having been severely affected by the Depression and unemployed citizens standing in bread lines, events in Asia were not at the top of their priority list. They were, however, paying some attention to the rise of Adolf Hitler in Germany.

With the memory of World War I still fresh, there was not a movement toward involvement as long as America itself was not being attacked.

As President Roosevelt launched his New Deal to improve the living conditions of the American people, many congressional leaders became concerned about the various conflicts erupting around the world. In 1935, Italy conquered Ethiopia and proclaimed fascism as the new form of government most likely to succeed in Europe. With Benito Mussolini allying with Hitler, there was a growing concern by the president that America would have to take a more aggressive approach to world affairs.

However, the isolationist movement began to influence members of Congress, who believed that the best course of action to avoid wars was to pass neutrality acts that would have the effect of limiting America's role in

For more information

Sources used in this work include:

- Saul K. Padover, "The Washington Papers: Basic Selections From the Public and Private Writings of George Washington," (New York: Easton Press, 1989).
- George C. Herring, "From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776," (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- David M. Kennedy, "Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War," (New York: Oxford Press, 1999)

what was perceived to be regional conflicts. Since the president needed many of these isolationists to support his domestic policies, such as the enactment of the Social Security Act and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Act, he allowed a series of neutrality acts to be passed. While there were many internationalists who believed America had a role to play in these disputes, they were outnumbered by a wide array of conservatives, industrialists and peace activists who believed that American intervention would lead to participation in what could eventually become a new world war.

In 1938, Hitler negotiated an agreement with European leaders to allow Germany to annex the Sudetenland areas of Czechoslovakia. President Roosevelt supported British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's acceptance of the Munich Agreement, even though there were cabinet members who predicted Hitler's long-range plan to be much more expansive. When Germany then occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia, then Poland, then France, and began the bombing of Britain, America had to at least become concerned about a Second World War.

But isolationists were still successful in keeping America out of both Asian and European conflicts. An America First Committee movement began across the country in 1940, led by businessmen, leftists and celebrities such as Charles Lindbergh. While there was also a group of internationalists that formed the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies in 1940, the isolationists were successful in keeping America out of what was now becoming World War II.

President Roosevelt ran for a third term in 1940, and even though he was actively working with Britain to help them in their lone action against Nazism and fascism, his campaign rhetoric was still supporting the isolationists: "I have said this before but I shall say it again and again. Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars." The new British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, knew that only America could stop Hitler's movement toward European domination, and he appealed to the president in a very personal way. Recognizing America's vast industrial machine, Churchill asked for help that would not require American boys to fight a foreign war, but allow America to support Britain through rebuilding its naval armaments.

President Roosevelt sent a bill to Congress that gave him the

authority to "sell, transfer, exchange, lease, lend, or otherwise dispose of any war material to any nation whose defense was deemed vital to the defense of the United States." And to assure the isolationists that this was truly a patriotic gesture, the bill was designated as HR1776.

British ships were towed to American shipyards to be repaired before re-entering service, and American vessels were "loaned" to England with commitments to return them to the United States after the war. The "lend-lease" program aided Britain's war effort and minimally satisfied both the isolationists and the internationalists.

But President Roosevelt knew that Japan needed oil and war material in the Pacific to continue its goal of Southeast Asian dominance. Only the United States could stop Japan's conquest of the

British Commonwealth possessions of Singapore and Hong Kong, Malaya and other islands, as well as the Philippines, French Indochina and China. The United States Navy's Pacific Fleet stood in the way of Japan's aggression, particularly since it had recently been relocated from San Diego, California, to the Hawaiian Island of Oahu.

On Dec. 7, 1941, the Japanese attack on the fleet at Pearl Harbor would be an event that would finally bring the interests of both the internationalists and the isolationists together. America would declare war on Japan the next day, and Germany and Italy would declare war on the United States. With this attack, the attitudes and theories about economics, morality and politics were replaced

by concern for the defense of the homeland.

– Ron Milam, Ph.D., is an associate professor of history, a Fulbright Scholar to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and the faculty advisor to the Veteran's Association at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. He serves on the Content Advisory Committee tasked with writing the history of the Vietnam War for the new Education Center at The Wall in Washington, D.C., and is a combat veteran of the Vietnam War. Milam is the author of "Not a Gentleman's War: an Inside View of Junior Officers in the Vietnam War" and is working on two book projects: "The Siege of Phu Nhon: Montagnards and Americans as Allies in Battle" and "Cambodia and Kent State: Killing in the Jungle and on the College Campuses."



Water-cooled machine guns just arrived from the U.S. under Lend-Lease are checked at an ordnance depot in England. WIKIPEDIA

CHRISTMAS 1941



‘A UNITED PEOPLE, GIRDED FOR BATTLE’

War casts a pall over Christmas 1941

By Stanley Weintraub
Special to GateHouse Media

Coming just 18 days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Christmas 1941 was a holiday unlike any other. For many Americans, it was the last time they would be together. In Stanley Weintraub's "Pearl Harbor Christmas: A World at War, December 1941," he describes the mood of the nation at the time, and President Roosevelt's determination to keep to tradition.

After much politics-as-usual debate about the appropriate age for draft registration, Congress on Dec. 19, 1941, had timidly settled on 20 for induction and 18 for registration. On both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, the services had hurriedly set anti-aircraft guns on the roofs of buildings and alongside docks. Some weapons were obsolete, others wooden fakes, there to instill spurious confidence. Sentries, often bearing 1918-vintage rifles, were posted at railway stations and armaments factories. Although the only interloper likely over the American skies at Christmas was likely to be Santa Claus with his sleigh and reindeer, a 24-hour sky watch in the Northeast was ordered for the holidays by Brigadier General John C. MacDonnell, air-raid warning chief for 43,000 volunteer civilian observers. "Experience in war," he declared, "has taught that advantage is taken of relaxation in vigilance

to strike when and where the blow is least expected." Lights remained on almost everywhere.

The hit book for Christmas giving, at a hefty \$2.50, was Edna Ferber's Reconstruction-era romance "Saratoga Trunk." For the same price, war turned up distantly yet bombastically in a two-disc set of Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture," performed by Artur Rodzinski and the Cleveland Orchestra.

On war maps in the press, limited to much less than the actual facts, a dismal Christmas loomed, but it did not appear that way in shop windows across America. Enhanced by holiday lights, the street lamps and store fronts glittered, and a plethora of merchandise long vanished from high streets in Britain awaited shoppers now benefiting from jobs created by

anxiety on the Pacific coast about Japanese air raids, however absurd, had already panicked San Francisco, thanks to the paranoia of Fourth Army commander Lieutenant General John DeWitt at Fort Ord. Every Japanese fisherman and vegetable farmer along the coast was suspected of covertly warning nonexistent enemy aircraft, and the hysteria resulted in the relocation of the New Year's Day Rose Bowl extravaganza from California to somnolent Durham, North Carolina, where Duke University would play Oregon State.



President Roosevelt addresses the crowd at the Christmas tree lighting ceremony from the White House South Portico on Dec. 24, 1941. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill can be seen on the right. PHOTOS VIA WIKIPEDIA

proliferating war contracts and a burgeoning army and navy. Christmas trees were plentiful, seldom priced at more than a dollar or two, and in the traditional holiday spectacle at Radio City Music Hall in New York, the star-spangled Rockettes, in mechanical unison, high-stepped away any war gloom. In newspapers across the nation the Japanese were thwarted in the "Terry and the Pirates" comic strip, and in film Gary Cooper as Sergeant York was defeating the Germans single-handedly in the earlier world war.

The hit book for Christmas giving, at a hefty \$2.50, was Edna Ferber's Reconstruction-era romance "Saratoga Trunk." For the same price, war turned up distantly yet bombastically in a two-disc set of Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture," performed by Artur Rodzinski and the Cleveland Orchestra. In New York gift crates of oranges and grapefruit from Florida were \$2.79 at Bloomingdale's. A new Ford or Chevrolet, both soon to be unobtainable, cost \$900. Hattie Carnegie's designer dresses began at \$15. The upscale Rogers Peet menswear store offered suits and topcoats from a steep \$38. (At

recruiting stations nationwide, the army was offering smart khaki garb at no cost whatever to enlistees.) Henri Bendel featured silk stockings at \$1.25 a pair; stockings in the current wonder weave, nylon, sold for \$1.65. By the following Christmas nylons would be almost unobtainable. The fabric would be the stuff of parachutes.

Among the long-prepared Christmas toy glut, shops across America advertised a remote-control bombing plane at \$1.98, which ran along a suspended wire to attack a battleship. The Japanese high seas Kido Butai had not needed suspended wires at Pearl Harbor, nor in the Philippines, Malaya, or Hong Kong. The Royal Navy's principal warships on the Pacific Rim were at the bottom of the Gulf of Siam, and the depleted Pacific Fleet, with seven battleships sunk or disabled at their anchorages, had only two destroyers available to patrol the long coastline between Vancouver and San Diego. As British Prime Minister Winston Churchill would put it, "Over all this vast expanse of waters Japan was supreme, and we everywhere [were] weak and naked."



For security in wartime the Secret Service proposed to have the formidable national Christmas tree erected in Lafayette Park, a seven-acre expanse across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House, as the event Dec. 24, 1941, would draw thousands of unidentifiable persons. The President insisted that tradition required the White House lawn. Within the patrolled iron-picket fence around the White House grounds, only those specifically invited would get close to the participants on the South Portico. Even so, guards warned, “No

cameras, no packages.” A tent outside the two gates had been set up as a package checking station, but some visitors refused to give up their places in line at the 4 o’clock opening and dropped their Christmas bundles at the fence, hoping they would find them again afterward. The uninvited could watch from beyond — and under a crescent moon thousands were already gathering in the early winter twilight.

Was a brilliantly lit hazard being created at odds with unenforced wartime brown-outs? The White House was assured that no enemy could penetrate Washington airspace. Also, Christmas Eve traditions were exempted in the interest of national confidence. Despite restrictions involving landmarks, the red aircraft-warning light 550 feet atop the Washington Monument remained aglow and could be seen from the White House lawn. At the lighting ceremonies in 1940, realizing that war was approaching from somewhere, and perhaps soon, the President had told the crowd that it was welcome to return in

At the lighting ceremonies in 1940, realizing that war was approaching from somewhere, and perhaps soon, the President had told the crowd that it was welcome to return in 1941 ‘if we are all still here.’ Many were back.

CHRISTMAS MENU • 1941		
TOMATO BISQUE	SALTINES	
PICKLES	OLIVES	CELERY
ROAST MAINLAND TURKEY		
WALNUT DRESSING	GIBLET GRAVY	
CRANBERRY SAUCE		
BAKED SPICED HAM		
SNOWFLAKE POTATOES	CANDIED SWEET POTATOES	
PEAS AND CARROTS	BUTTERED CAULIFLOWER	
HOT PARKER HOUSE ROLLS		
ICEBERG LETTUCE — THOUSAND ISLAND DRESSING		
NEAPOLITAN ICE CREAM		
FRUIT CAKE	MINCE AND PUMPKIN PIES	
ASSORTED FRUITS		
CANDIES	MIXED NUTS	
CIGARS AND CIGARETTES		
HOT AND ICED TEA	COFFEE	
SHARE CHU LUM, Chef		

The Christmas meal menu for remaining personnel at Pearl Harbor, 1941. WIKIPEDIA

1941 “if we are all still here.” Many were back.

Christmas Eve 1941 was the only public occasion when Roosevelt and Churchill spoke from the same platform. As they gathered with guests and the White House staff in the East Room an hour before the ceremonies at 5, the Marine Band on the South Lawn struck up holiday music, beginning with “Joy to the World,” accompanied by choirs from nearby churches. Outranking the Prime Minister in the party were stately, beautiful Crown Princess Marthe of occupied Norway and her princely husband, the future King Olav V. Marthe, whom FDR adored, was one of the rare women he kissed whenever they met. With her children, she had been offered a temporary White House residence after fleeing Norway, until she could find an American home, which she did

nearby in Maryland. In what seemed like a royal gesture, each White House employee was presented with a signed photograph of Franklin and Eleanor.

When the sunset gun at Fort Myer, across the Potomac, boomed, the band began “Hail to the Chief,” and the President, on the arm of an aide, was escorted slowly out to the south balcony with Mrs. Roosevelt and the Prime Minister. Following them, the White House party, many shivering in the chill evening, watched as FDR pressed a button lighting the big evergreen at the lower slope of the lawn. The crowd applauded, their eyes especially on Churchill. Then the Rev. Joseph Corrigan, rector of Catholic University in northeast Washington, delivered a brief invocation tailored to the times. “Hear a united people, girded for battle” he began, looking up, “dedicate themselves to the peace of Christmas.” He confessed “strangeness” in such a contradiction in words, yet “All the material resources with which Thou has blessed our native land, we consecrate to the dread tasks of war.” It was what Churchill wanted to hear and the reason he had come.

Radio carried their voices across the country and abroad. As the Christmas lights glowed, Roosevelt spoke directly to the event. “It is in the spirit of peace and good will, and with particular thoughtfulness of those, our sons and brothers, who serve in our armed forces on land and sea, near and far — those who serve and endure for us — that we light our Christmas candles now across this continent from one coast to the other on this Christmas evening.”

Now, he added, “my associate, my old and good friend” wanted to speak to Washingtonians and to the world. No one in hearing distance had any doubt as to who that was, especially once his rolling, almost antique, voice echoed across the lights and shadows. “This is a strange Christmas eve,” Churchill began:



This telegram was sent by Richard and Harold Hall to their parents wishing them a Merry Christmas following the attack on Pearl Harbor.

FLICKR/USMC Archives



Use the Blipper app to open video of FDR and Churchill's Christmas Eve 1941 speeches.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 2

has led us to the field. Here, in the midst of war, raging and soaring over all the lands and seas, creeping nearer to our hearts and our homes, here, amid the tumult, we have tonight the peace of the spirit in each cottage home and in each generous heart. There, we may cast aside for this night at least the cares and dangers which beset us, and make for our children an evening of happiness in a world of storm. Here, then,

Almost the whole world is locked in deadly struggle, and with the most terrible weapons which science can devise, the nations advance upon each other. Ill would it be for us this Christmas-tide if we were not sure that no greed for the land or wealth of any other people, no vulgar ambition, no morbid lust for material gain at the expense of others

for one night only, each home throughout the English-speaking world should be a brightly lighted island of happiness and peace.

While far from his own hearth and family, he continued, “Yet I cannot truthfully say that I feel far from home.” He referred to his kinship with his audiences, listening rapt on the White House lawn, and nationwide:

Whether it be ties of blood on my mother's side, or the friendships I have developed here over many years of active life, or the commanding sentiment of comradeship in the common cause of great peoples who speak the same language, who kneel at the same altars, and, to a very large extent, pursue the same ideals, I cannot feel myself a stranger here at the centre and at the summit of the United States. I feel a sense of unity and fraternal association which, added to the kindness of your welcome, convinces me that I have a right to sit at your fireside and share your Christmas joys.

‘Let the children have their night of fun and laughter. Let the gifts of Father Christmas delight their play. Let us grown-ups share to the full in their unstinted pleasures before we turn again to the stern task and the formidable years that lie before us ...’

It was, he conceded, “a strange Christmas eve,” with war “raging and roaring over all the lands and seas, creeping nearer to our hearts and homes.” Nevertheless, the PM concluded, using the English equivalent for Santa,

Let the children have their night of fun and laughter. Let the gifts of Father Christmas delight their play. Let us grown-ups share to the full in their unstinted pleasures before we turn again to the stern task and the formidable years that lie before us, resolved that by our sacrifice and daring, these same children shall not be robbed of their inheritance or denied their right to live in a free and decent world.

And so, in God's mercy, a happy Christmas to you all.

— Adapted excerpt from “Pearl Harbor Christmas: A World at War, December 1941” by Stanley Weintraub. Copyright © 2011. Available from Da Capo Press, an imprint of Perseus Books, LLC, a subsidiary of Hachette Book Group, Inc.

