

## PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY – SETTING THE SCENE

Much of what our country and our lives are like today was shaped by events that occurred 67 years ago ... on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941 ... at Pearl Harbor.

In the two years before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, our European allies were – one by one – falling before the Nazi war machine. By 1941, only England remained free. To our west, Japanese military forces were steamrolling across the Pacific Rim.

Over the course of a quiet Sunday morning on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, the United States of America passed from precarious neutrality to all-out war. It was a war fought on every continent of the globe. And it touched the lives of all who lived at that time.

The Second World War came to America in the form of a sudden and massive air assault by Japanese Imperial forces. At 7:55 a.m., the first wave of 183 Japanese planes raced across the mountains north of Pearl Harbor to begin bombing, strafing, and torpedoing the bulk of the U.S. Pacific Fleet anchored in the bay. At 8:45 a.m., a second wave of 170 planes intensified the attack.

The assault claimed 2,403 American lives and left more than a thousand others wounded. The mighty battleship *Arizona* sustained a direct hit by an armor-piercing bomb, and nine minutes later went down with 1,177 sailors and marines entombed in its hull forever.

Later that morning, when the Japanese fighter planes finally turned out to sea, eight battleships had been sunk or heavily damaged along with many cruisers and destroyers.

American airpower, too, was crippled. More than 325 planes — clustered wing-to-wing on the Harbor's surrounding airfields — were destroyed. Within a matter of hours, the bulk of America's naval and air power in the Pacific lay in smoldering ruin.

The devastation left the nation stunned and shaken to its core.

For the people of the United States of America, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941 marked the first of 1,351 days of war. It mobilized 16 million young Americans. Almost three hundred thousand of them would die in battle. And more than 600,000 would become its casualties. December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941 was a defining moment in our nation's history. As then-President Franklin Roosevelt told the country, it was indeed *"a day that will live in infamy."*

## PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY INFORMATION SOURCES

Helpful Web sites:

- Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, Inc. – <http://www.pearlharborsurvivorsonline.org/html/events.htm>

National Geographic - <http://plasma.nationalgeographic.com/pearlharbor/>

American War Library Pearl Harbor links - <http://members.aol.com/USAHeroes/warlib48.htm>

Best Pearl Harbor links

- <http://teacher.scholastic.com/pearl/transcript.htm>
- <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq66-3b.htm>
- <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/>
- <http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/timeline/pearl.htm>
- <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/rep/Pearl/Medical.html>
- <http://www.navsource.org/Naval/arph.htm>

For local Pearl Harbor survivor contacts:

Pearl Harbor Survivors Association  
PHSA, Inc.  
National Administrative Office  
PO Box 1816  
Carlsbad, CA 92016-1816  
Fax: 760-727-9087  
Email: [jimarine@adlphia.net](mailto:jimarine@adlphia.net)

Remember: Fly flag at half-staff on Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

## **PEARL HARBOR PRAYER**

By Herb Cleveland, former VA Chief Chaplain, ret.

Almighty and everlasting God, we give you thanks and praise for your blessings upon this land and its people.

As we gather this day that is remembered as “A Day of Infamy,” we pause to remember the brave men and women who served and died in Pearl Harbor.

We ask Your blessing upon all America’s veterans who have answered the call to serve the cause of freedom.

As we use our lives, let us rededicate ourselves to the noble cause of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all people.

We thank you O Lord for our American veterans and for what they have given this world – peace with honor.

Amen.