



Pearl Harbor

80th Anniversary

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What Happened at Pearl Harbor

Early on the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, the peaceful Sunday morning in Hawaii was shattered by a Japanese attack on U.S. forces on the island.

More than 350 Japanese planes strafed American forces in the surprise attack, which killed 2,404 Americans, both civilian and military. Here's a timeline of events that fateful morning.

6:10 a.m.: The minesweeper USS Condor sights a periscope off the shore of Oahu. The Condor signaled the USS Ward, a destroyer, who proceeded to the area to hunt for the submarine. Around the same time, the first wave of planes took off from the Japanese aircraft carriers about 200 miles north of the island. The Japanese fleet had 67 ships total.

6:45 a.m.: The Ward, responding to the Condor's sighting of a periscope, sighted the periscope itself in the wake of the cargo ship Antares. The Ward attacked and sank a Japanese midget submarine. The Ward radioed into Navy headquarters, but its message was fatefully delayed by the decoding process.

7:02 a.m.: A radar station on Oahu spots unidentified aircraft heading toward Hawaii. An Army lieutenant disregards the radar report, thinking it's a flight of a B-17 bombers coming from California.

7:40 a.m.: The first Japanese aircraft reach Oahu.

7:55 a.m.: The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor begins. The attack included 40 torpedo planes, 103 level bombers, 131 dive bombers and 79 fighters launched from four heavy carriers. The Japanese force also included two heavy cruisers, 35 submarines, two light



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cruisers, nine oilers, two battleships and 11 destroyers.

8:10 a.m.: The USS Arizona explodes. The Arizona was a Pennsylvania-class battleship built in 1913. More than 1,100 officers and crewman were lost. The wreck is still at the bottom of Pearl Harbor, beneath the USS Arizona Memorial.

8:17 a.m.: The USS Helm sinks a Japanese submarine at the entrance to

Pearl Harbor. The Helm was the only ship underway when the attack began. One of the Japanese sailors survived the Helm's attack and became the first U.S. prisoner of war in World War II.

8:54 a.m.: The second wave of the attack begins. This wave contained 78 dive bombers, 35 fighters and 54 high altitude bombers.

9:30 a.m.: The USS Shaw explodes in dry dock. The Shaw was a Mahan-class

destroyer in dry dock for repairs at the time of the attack. Two Japanese bombs went through the forward machine gun platform and one more through the port wing of the bridge. The forward magazine exploded, but the Shaw eventually returned to service, even coming back to Pearl Harbor.

10 a.m.: The Japanese planes return to their carriers.

President Roosevelt's Speech

Dec. 8, the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt addressed a joint session of Congress. This is what he said.

Mr. Vice President, Mr. Speaker, members of the Senate and of the House of Representatives:

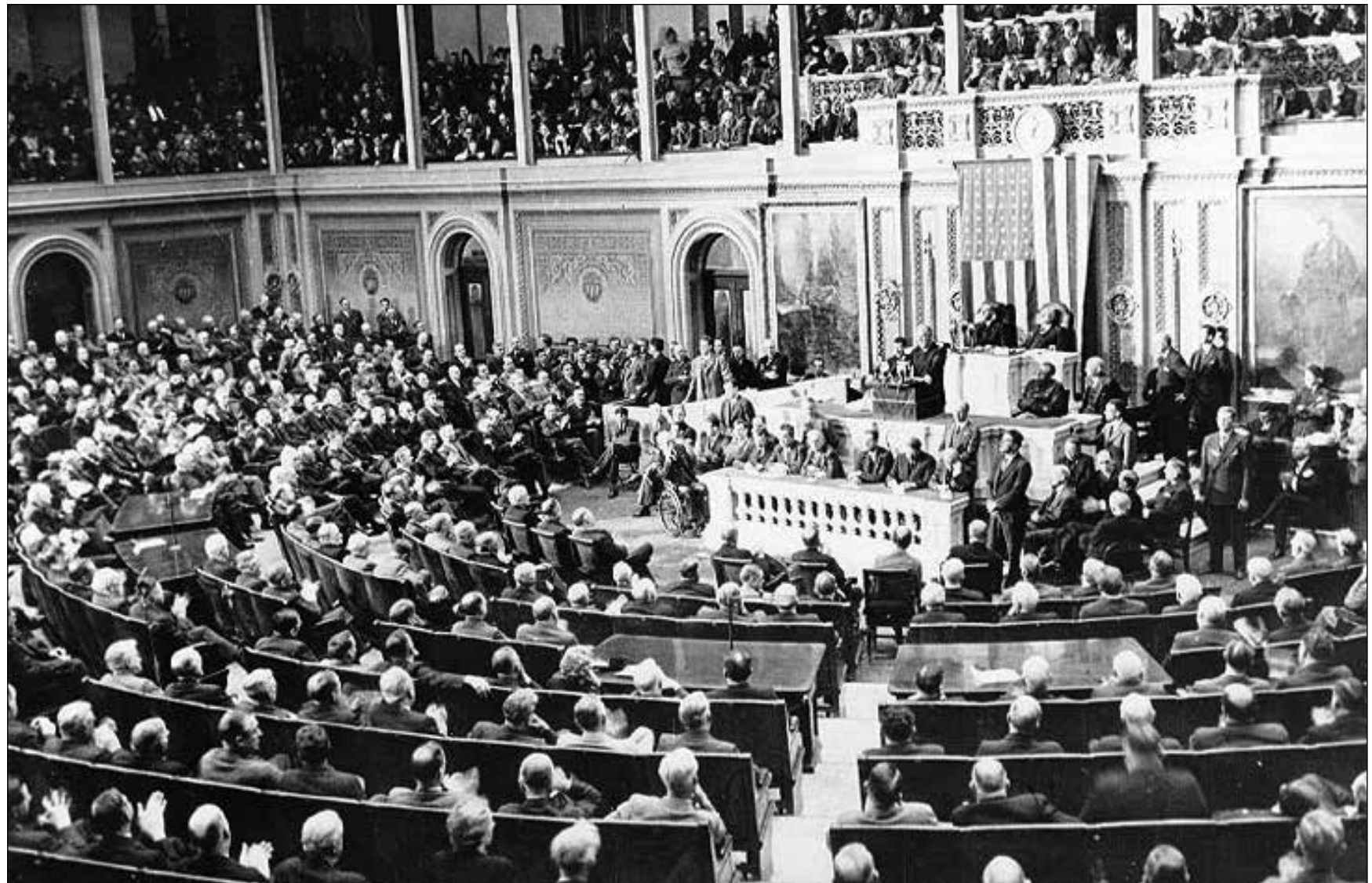
Yesterday, Dec. 7, 1941 — a date which will live in infamy — the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its government and its emperor, looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific.

Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in the American island of Oahu, the Japanese ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to our secretary of state a formal reply to a recent American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or of armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time, the Japanese government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. I regret to tell you that very



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many American lives have been lost. In addition, American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

Yesterday, the Japanese government also launched an attack against Malaya.

Last night, Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong.

Last night, Japanese forces attacked Guam.

Last night, Japanese forces attacked the Philippine islands.

Last night, the Japanese attacked Wake Island.

And this morning, the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

Japan has, therefore, undertaken a

surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our nation.

As the commander in chief of the Army and Navy, I have directed that all measures be taken in our defense. But always will our nation remember the character of the onslaught against us. No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.

I believe that I interpret the will of

the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost, but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us.

Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory and our interests are in grave danger. With confidence in our armed forces, with the inbounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph, so help us God.

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese empire.

Seat of Japanese Power: Hirohito

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the United States' leader at the time of Pearl Harbor.

The emperor Roosevelt referred to in his famous Infamy speech was Hirohito.

Here's more about the Japanese emperor that oversaw the attack on Pearl Harbor.

EARLY LIFE

Hirohito, the 124th emperor of Japan, was born in Tokyo in 1901 during the reign of his grandfather, Emperor Meiji. He was the first son of Crown Prince Yoshihito and Crown Princess Sedaka. When Emperor Meiji died in 1912, Yoshihito ascended to the throne. Hirohito became the heir apparent and was commissioned into Japanese armed forces. He was formally proclaimed crown prince and heir apparent in 1916.

Before he took the throne, Hirohito traveled extensively, making official visits to the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and the Vatican City in the first visit to Western Europe by a Japanese crown prince. He returned to Japan in 1921 and became regent in the place of his ailing father.

AS EMPEROR

Hirohito assumed the



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throne on the death of his father in 1926. His early reign was marked by a financial crisis and increasing military power in the Japanese government, with rampant political violence. Hirohito himself escaped assassination in 1932 and survived a coup in 1936. Hirohito also presided over the Second Sino-Japanese War, going so far as to authorize the use of toxic gas despite a League of Nations resolution condemning such action.

In 1940, Japan joined with Germany and Italy to form the Axis Powers. Throughout 1941, Japan prepared itself for war, even as Hirohito urged his ministers to strive for peace.

By November, Hirohito was approving plans for engaging with the United States and Allied powers, and war was declared Dec. 1.

There's an intense debate on the role Hirohito played during the run up to World War II. There's evidence the emperor didn't want to go to war and was opposed to joining the Axis Powers, but was overcome by militarists in the government. But other historians say Hirohito was involved in planning battles and Japan's expansionist strategies, particularly in China.

By 1945, Japan was facing defeat. The United States dropped two atomic bombs

and Japanese cities regularly underwent heavy air bombardment. Shipping was strangled and food and housing shortages were rampant.

Hirohito and Japan surrendered on Aug. 14, 1945, after the United States dropped two atomic bombs on the country.

In his surrender speech to the nation, Hirohito said, "Moreover, the enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is, indeed, incalculable, taking the toll of many innocent lives. Should we continue to fight, not only would it result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation,

but it would also lead to the total extinction of the human civilization."

AFTER WORLD WAR II

Japan emerged from the war a constitutional monarchy with the emperor's powers severely curtailed. Hirohito began to make public appearances and permitted pictures and stories about his family life to be published, helping to preserve the imperial system. Hirohito continued to reign as emperor, visiting the United States in 1975 and meeting President Richard Nixon. He died in 1989 as Japan's longest-serving emperor. He was succeeded by his son, Akihito.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected president at the depth of the Great Depression, asserting in his inaugural address that “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

EARLY LIFE

He was born in 1882 in Hyde Park, New York, and graduated from Harvard University and Columbia Law School. He married Eleanor Roosevelt in 1905 and entered a life of public service just like his fifth cousin President Theodore Roosevelt. He was elected to the New York Senate in 1910 and also served as the assistant secretary of the Navy.

Roosevelt was stricken with poliomyelitis in 1921 when he was 39. He regained the use of his legs and, at the 1924 Democratic convention, appeared onstage on crutches to nominate Alfred E. Smith. In 1928, Roosevelt became the governor of New York.

PRESIDENCY

Roosevelt would serve an unprecedented four terms as president of the United States. He was elected in 1932, when there were 13,000,000 unemployed Americans and almost every bank was closed. In his first hundred days, he oversaw



PRIEST, L.C. (LT), ROYAL NAVY OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

a sweeping recovery and relief program. The New Deal drove America toward recovery by 1935, but faced opposition to his economic policies. He was elected again in 1936, and took this election as a mandate.

Roosevelt pledged America to the “good neighbor” policy

and sought neutrality legislation to keep the U.S. out of the war in Europe. But as France fell and England came under threat, he began to send Great Britain all the aid he could without sending the actual military.

The war came to Roosevelt, however, on Dec. 7, 1941,

when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. He directed the United States to prepare for and execute a global war. Roosevelt navigated the U.S. successfully through World War II and began to lay groundwork for the aftermath, planning a United Nations that would solve disputes

before it came to war.

However, on April 12, 1945, Roosevelt died in Warm Springs, Georgia, of a cerebral hemorrhage. He was succeeded by his Vice President, Harry S. Truman, who said when he heard he was president, “I felt like the moon, the stars and all the planets had fallen on me.”



U.S. NAVY

USS West Virginia

On the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, the West Virginia, a Colorado-class battleship was moored in 40 feet of water next to the USS Tennessee at Ford Island in Pearl Harbor.

The first two torpedoes struck the ship at 7:55 a.m., and the explosions began.

When the nearby USS Arizona exploded, huge chunks of steel rained down, but still the West Virginia's gun crews fired on enemy aircraft.

More torpedoes ripped into the battleship and fires roared. The commanding officer, Capt. Mervyn S. Bennion, was mortally wounded. The West Virginia settled on the bottom and uninjured hands, including Mess

Attendant Second Class Doris Miller, started hauling their wounded comrades up into higher parts of the ship. Miller, with no instruction, went on to man a machine gun and fire on incoming Japanese planes.

More than 100 enlisted men were killed as well as two officers, including Bennion. The West Virginia was burning, settling upright into the bottom of Pearl Harbor.

But she wasn't lost.

The West Virginia was salvaged in

stages. Divers patched holes in the hull. Cofferdams were erected to hold the ship as armaments and, unfortunately, the bodies of trapped sailors were removed.

She floated again on May 17, 1942, and moved to dry dock. The hull was made watertight again, guns and other equipment was repaired and the ship was cleaned and returned to a usable state. On April 30, the West Virginia sailed to Bremerton, Washington, for more repairs and outfitting.

In July 1944, more than two and a half years after the attack at Pearl Harbor, the West Virginia began sea trials at Puget Sound Navy Yard. The ship was upgraded with radar and fire con-

trol equipment and rearmed with 16-inch main guns.

The West Virginia took her revenge on Oct. 19, 1944, bombarding targets in Leyte, Philippines. She flew the same flag that was hoisted Dec. 7, 1941. On Oct. 25, the West Virginia, participated in the Battle of Suirgao Strait, firing 16 salvos from the main battery and sinking the Japanese battleship Yamashiro. The ship also took part in landings at Mindoro, Luzon, Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

West Virginia entered Tokyo Bay on Aug. 31, 1945, just two weeks after Japan's surrender, and was moored just down from the USS Missouri as the surrender ceremony got under way.

Memorials and Museums

More than 2,000 Americans are died at Pearl Harbor and it is still a day that lives in infamy.

While there are plenty of places to memorialize these brave men and women in Hawaii, you can also honor them with plenty of places to visit stateside. Here are a few to consider.

WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL, WASHINGTON D.C.

Sitting on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., the World War II Memorial was designed by Austrian-American architect Friedrich St. Florian. It opened in 2004. The memorial consists of 56 pillars representing U.S. states and territories and a pair of triumphal arches for the Atlantic and Pacific theaters. This surrounds an oval plaza and fountain. It includes the Freedom Wall with 4,048 gold stars, each representing 100 Americans who died in the war.

WESLEY BOLIN MEMORIAL PLAZA, PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Two giant naval guns loom over the plaza, one from the USS Arizona and the other from the USS Missouri. The gun from the Arizona was also used on the USS Nevada, which survived the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The Missouri was host to the Japanese surrender



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ceremony at the end of the war.

USS KIDD AND LOUISIANA VETERANS MEMORIAL, BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

While the Kidd, the destroyer on the banks of the Mississippi River, wasn't at Pearl Harbor, the destroyer New Orleans was, and the Kidd Memorial contains the ship's bell and the builder's model along with mementos of the

launching ceremony. The song "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" was inspired by the New Orleans' chaplain Howell M. Forgy during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

USS WARD GUN, ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

The USS Ward's No. 3 four-inch, 50-caliber gun sits on the grounds of the Minnesota State Capitol. The Ward fired the first U.S. shots of World War II, sinking a Japanese

midget sub off Oahu just before the planes were sighted at Pearl Harbor.

USS HOGA, ARKANSAS INLAND MARITIME MUSEUM, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

The Hoga is a Woban-class district harbor tug. At Pearl Harbor, the 100-foot tug rescued sailors in the water, fought fires and pulled ships out of harm's way. The little tug spent 72 continuous hours

fighting fires and also pushed the sinking USS Nevada to safety, keeping the ship from blocking the channel. The tug is now on display at the Little Rock museum.

TEXAS PANHANDLE WAR MEMORIAL, AMARILLO, TEXAS

The museum is home to an 800-pound piece of the USS Arizona's side and deck along with many other significant World War II items.

Pearl Harbor Veterans

With each passing year, the number of Pearl Harbor veterans that can tell a first-hand story dwindles. It is estimated that there are now fewer than 100 Pearl Harbor veterans left.

Here are a few of the people of Pearl Harbor.

PETER TOMICH, USS UTAH

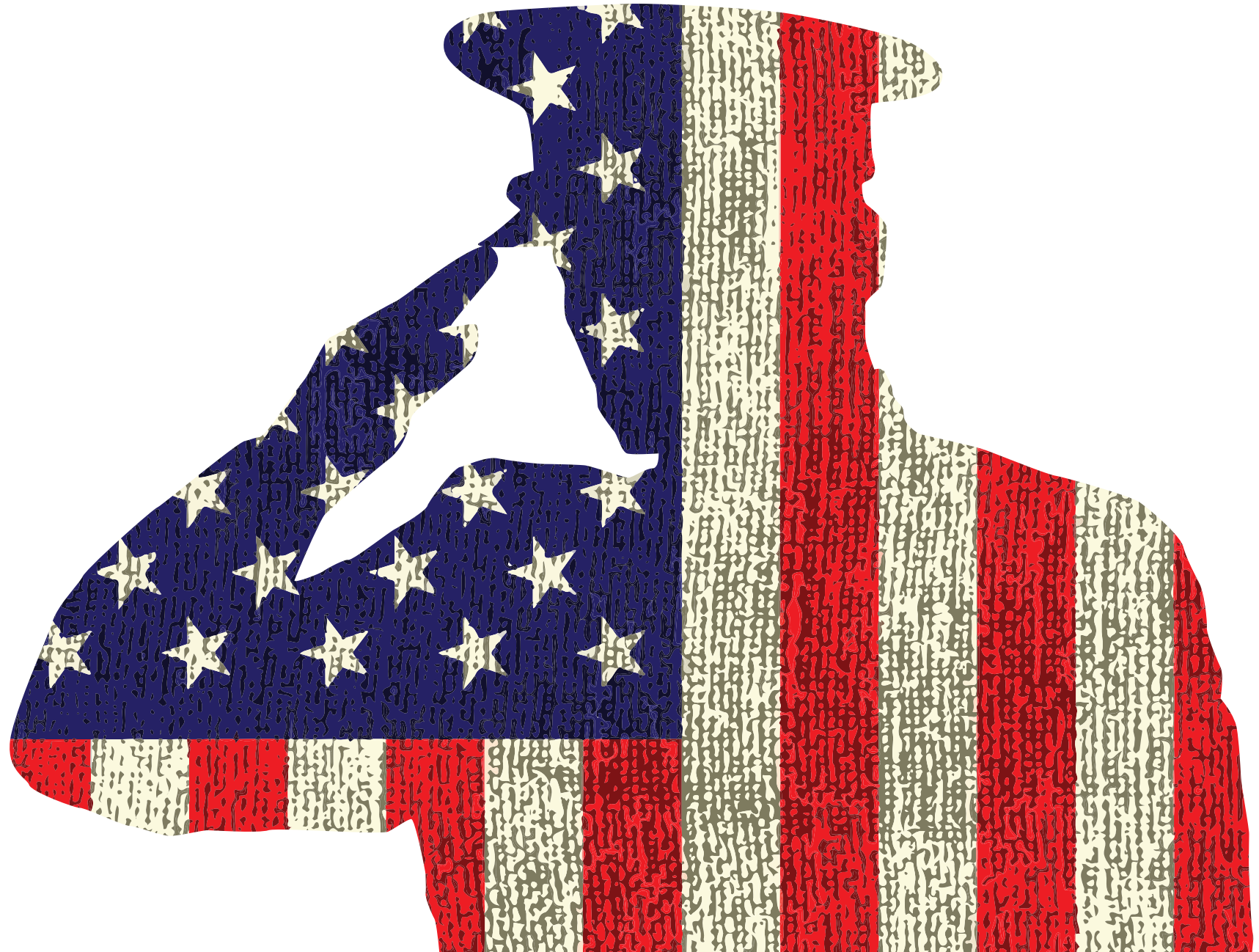
The Utah was a training and target ship that was hit by two Japanese torpedoes during the attack. Chief Watertender Peter Tomich ordered his crew to abandon ship, but the World War I veteran returned to his post and secured the boilers, preventing an explosion that would have killed many more men. Tomich went down with the Utah and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

JOHN FINN, KANEOHE BAY AIR STATION

Chief Petty Officer Finn was in bed when the Japanese planes attacked his base 15 miles from Pearl Harbor. Finn commandeered a .30 caliber machine gun, drug it to an open area and kept up a steady fire. "I can't honestly say I hit any," Finn told the History Channel. "But I shot at every damn plane I could see." Finn had more than 20 wounds from shrapnel and bullets. For his actions on Dec. 7, he received the only Medal of Honor specifically awarded for combat action during Pearl Harbor.

GEORGE WALTERS, PEARL HARBOR DOCKYARD

Civilian George Walters manned a rolling crane alongside the dry-docked USS Pennsylvania. When the attack



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began, Walters moved his Crain back and forth along its track, shielding the Pennsylvania from low-flying bombers and fighters. He even tried to use the crane's boom to swat planes out of the sky. The Pennsylvania's gunners used his movements as a guide to return fire.

PHIL RASMUSSEN, WHEELER FIELD

Purple pajama-clad Rasmussen was one of a few American pilots who got in

the air the morning of the attack on Pearl Harbor. His P-36 fighter took some 500 bullet holes and brought down at least one Japanese plane. He was awarded a Silver Star for bravery and served in the Air Force for 24 more years, retiring as a colonel.

SAMUEL FUQUA, USS ARIZONA

Lt. Cmdr. Fuqua was at breakfast with the attack began. Just moments later, he was the USS Arizona's senior

surviving officer after a bomb detonated the ship's ammunition magazine, killing more than 1,000 men. Under a hail of Japanese gunfire, Fuqua led the efforts to evacuate the ship and was one of the last men to leave the stricken battleship. Even then, he and another officer commandeered a boat and picked up survivors from the fiery water. He won the Medal of Honor for his actions at Pearl and retired a rear admiral of the Navy in 1953.