



The destroyer USS SHAW explodes in a floating drydock after being hit by three 300-pound bombs.

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A HISTORY OF DECEMBER 7, 1941

Whether your view of the Waiānae and Koolau Mountain ranges is obscured by low-hanging clouds, or the green-topped peaks are clearly visible, it is difficult to imagine today a 353-plane aerial armada delivering a devastating attack against United States military forces on the island of Oahu.

The historic surprise raid of December 7, 1941 was launched at 6 a.m. Honolulu time, from six Japanese aircraft carriers 200 miles northeast of the Hawaiian chain. The first bombs fell at 7:55 a.m., and the attack ended two hours later with the bulk of the U. S. military might in the Pacific temporarily crippled.

On that Sunday morning, "a day that will live in infamy," 2,341 American servicemen and 68 civilians lost their lives. Another 1,178 were wounded. Pearl Harbor was suddenly thrust into world prominence, marking the United States' entry into World War II — and always the rallying cry was "remember Pearl Harbor!"

Striking in over the west coast of Oahu at 7:40 a.m., the Japanese planes struck at Schofield Barracks and adjoining Wheeler Air Field in the central plains. The planes then swung eastward striking Bellows Field and the Kaneohe Naval Air Station, now a Marine Corps Air Station, on the "windward" side of the island. This wave then split to hit simultaneously the grounded aircraft at Ford Island Naval Air Station in Pearl Harbor, the Army's Hickam Field and the Marine Corps Air Station at Ewa. Torpedo planes approaching from the southeast struck at Ford Island's "Battleship Row." Shortly after, high level bombers and torpedo planes from the south hit targets at Hickam and Pearl Harbor. Of the 398 Army and Navy

planes on the ground, only 38 were able to get airborne — and 10 of these were shot down.

The second wave came at 8:40 a.m. with dive bombers, high level bombers and fighters. The high level bombers and fighter aircraft hit Hickam and Kaneohe, and the dive bombers screamed down at Pearl Harbor searching for targets that had not been destroyed.

Of the 97 ships in Pearl Harbor that morning, 18 were sunk or damaged. The biggest prize was the concentration of the seven battleships tied up along "Bat-



Crew members of the battleship USS CALIFORNIA abandon ship after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941. Note USS OKLAHOMA overturned at center right.

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attleship Row: USS California, USS Maryland, USS Oklahoma, USS Tennessee, USS West Virginia, USS Arizona and USS Nevada.

The Arizona took several bomb hits and finally the coup de grace, a delayed action bomb. Presumably a 2,000 pounder, it penetrated the deck near the number one gun turret to the fuel and ammunition storage areas where it exploded in a concussion that rocked the harbor. The Arizona literally erupted like a volcano, and went to the bottom of Pearl Harbor in less than nine minutes.

Of the 2,112 Navy men and Marines killed during the attack, more than half were lost when the Arizona blew up. Of the more than 1,460 Navy and Marine Corps men aboard the Arizona that morning, only 289 survived. The bodies of over 150 were recovered. As she sank to the bottom of Pearl Harbor, most of the crew was trapped. Today, more than 1,000 are still entombed within.

One other battleship, the USS Pennsylvania, flagship of the Pacific Fleet, was in drydock No. 1 along with two destroyers, the Cassin and Downes. Protected by the drydocks and two smaller ships, the Pennsylvania suffered minor damage. The two destroyers were almost completely demolished.

The ex-battleship Utah, converted to a target ship, was moored on the east side of Ford Island. She had been fitted with a fat concrete deck for Navy pilots' bombing practice. The Japanese torpedoed her and sank her. The Utah went to the bottom of Pearl Harbor with 55 of her crewmen still aboard. Her hulk is still visible.

Of the 18 ships sunk or damaged in Pearl Harbor, 13 were repaired and saw action during the war. The first major ship to return to action was USS Maryland, less than three months later.

Three of the ships that did not see action were USS Arizona, USS Oklahoma and the Utah. Oklahoma was sunk at her mooring space in battleship row. She was later refloated but was so badly damaged that she had to be sold for scrap. While being towed to the West Coast, a storm caused her tow line to part and she went to the bottom.

The Japanese surprise attack was so carefully planned that they lost only 29 of the 353 planes launched, nine men in crews of midget subs, and 55 airmen.

Aiding Pearl Harbor's rise from ruins was the fortunate fact that none of the Pacific Fleet's three aircraft carriers were in the harbor that day. They, together with the undamaged submarine force, soon launched offensives to the Western Pacific.

Of the 33 ships comprising the attacking Japanese task force, all but one were sunk during World War II.

TOP RIGHT: USS NEVADA, only battleship to get underway during attack, had to be run aground to keep from being sunk in Pearl Harbor channel entrance.

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MIDDLE RIGHT: The battleship USS PENNSYLVANIA and destroyers USS CASSIN and USS DOWNES in the Shipyard's drydock number one right after the attack.

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BOTTOM RIGHT: USS ARIZONA burning during December 7, 1941 sneak attack.

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