

Name _____

Pearl Harbor

By Jane Runyon

"Yesterday, 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." These are the words President Franklin Delano Roosevelt used to address the United States Congress on December 8, 1941. Every American within the sound of a radio heard his words. He used the word **infamy**. That word refers to someone or something which will be remembered for a very long time. Unfortunately, it will be remembered in a bad way, not a good one. The United States had just suffered a devastating attack on its navy and air force.



Let's take a look at what led up to this attack. Japan had been at war with China since the mid 1930's. Germany, led by Adolph Hitler, had declared war on Europe in the late 1930's. Germany and Japan had signed a pact that they would not fight each other. Instead, they would help each other when they could. Italy became a member of this partnership when they all signed the Tripartite Pact. The United States had decided to stay out of the conflicts in Europe and Asia. The president and Congress had decided that there had been enough loss of life and material goods during World War I.

Japan was in dire need of oil and other goods. The small land mass of their islands was not able to produce the supplies they needed to keep their war efforts alive. They wanted to take control of the lands they needed to produce these goods. The United States and its European allies had effectively cut off their attempts to seize oil and other minerals in the East Indies and Southeast Asia. President Roosevelt had moved the United States Naval fleet to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in 1938. He felt that the presence of this fleet in the

Pacific would deter Japan from any thoughts of invading the lands they wanted.

Diplomats from Japan and the United States spent months in negotiation. Their goal was to provide a **compromise** that would be acceptable to both sides. Japanese ambassadors were meeting in Washington, D.C., in December of 1941. No agreement had been reached, but everyone was still hopeful.

Then it happened. In the early morning hours of December 7, 1941, the skies over the Hawaiian island of Oahu filled with the sound of plane engines. The first wave of Japanese bombers started their attack at 7:53 AM. They had been launched from aircraft carriers 274 miles off the coast. The next wave attacked at 8:55 AM. By 10:00 there was nothing left but death and destruction. This surprise attack had left 2,403 people dead, 188 planes destroyed, and 8 battleships sunk or severely damaged. One battleship alone, the Arizona, had carried 1,300 naval personnel to their deaths at the bottom of the Pacific.

The United States would not have been surprised if the Japanese had attacked islands in the East Indies, or Malaya, or even the Philippines. They had no clue that American soil would be the target of the attack. The Japanese had hoped that this "sneak attack" would completely convince the leaders of America and the American people to stay out of the war. It was their hope that the American Navy and Air Force would suffer such great loss that they would not be able to join in the war effort even if the people wanted them to.

Their plan did not work. The following morning, President Roosevelt addressed Congress and asked them for a declaration of war. The Senate gave their approval **unanimously**. The House had only one dissenting vote. This vote came from a pacifist from Montana who did not believe in war for any reason. The United States joined World War II. The military was scarred and battered, but they were determined that no one would ever underestimate the United States again.

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Questions

_____ 1. Where is Pearl Harbor located?

- A. The Pacific Ocean
- B. Europe
- C. In the East Indies
- D. The Indian Ocean

_____ 2. Who was Japan at war with?

- A. The Philippines
- B. Germany
- C. Italy
- D. China

_____ 3. Why was Japan so interested in controlling the islands in the Pacific Ocean?

_____ 4. Japan is a country made up of islands.

- A. False
- B. True

_____ 5. What country was NOT a member of the Tripartite Pact?

- A. Japan
- B. United States
- C. Germany
- D. Italy

6. Why did President Roosevelt say that December 7, 1941, would live in infamy?

_____ 7. The President of the United States can declare war on his own.

- A. True
- B. False

_____ 8. What did the attack on Pearl Harbor accomplish?

- A. It totally wiped out the United States military.
- B. It brought the United States into the war.
- C. It put an end to World War II.
- D. It made Hawaii a tourist spot.