

# AMERICANISM



Pearl Harbor is a U.S. naval base near Honolulu, Hawaii, that was the scene of a devastating surprise attack by Japanese forces on December 7, 1941. Just before 8 a.m. on that Sunday morning, hundreds of Japanese fighter planes descended on the base, where they managed to destroy or damage nearly 20 American naval vessels, including eight battleships, and over 300 airplanes. More than 2,400 Americans died in the attack, including civilians, and another 1,000 people were wounded. The day after the assault, President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on Japan.

## Ships lost or damaged

Twenty-one American ships were damaged or lost in the attack, of which all but three were repaired and returned to service

## Battleships

- [Arizona](#) (Rear Admiral [Isaac C. Kidd](#)'s flagship of [Battleship Division One](#)): hit by four armor-piercing bombs, exploded; total loss. 1,177 dead.
- [Oklahoma](#): hit by five torpedoes, capsized; total loss. 429 dead.
- [West Virginia](#): hit by two bombs, seven torpedoes, sunk; returned to service July 1944. 106 dead.
- [California](#): hit by two bombs, two torpedoes, sunk; returned to service January 1944. 100 dead.
- [Nevada](#): hit by six bombs, one torpedo, beached; returned to service October 1942. 60 dead.
- [Pennsylvania](#) (Admiral [Husband E. Kimmel](#)'s flagship of the [United States Pacific Fleet](#)): in [dry dock](#) with [Cassin](#) and [Downes](#), hit by one bomb and debris from USS [Cassin](#); remained in service. 9 dead.
- [Tennessee](#): hit by two bombs; returned to service February 1942. 5 dead.
- [Maryland](#): hit by two bombs; returned to service February 1942. 4 dead (including floatplane pilot shot down)

1



2



3



1-Arizona during the attack

2-Nevada, on fire and down at the bow, attempting to leave the harbor before being deliberately beached

3-West Virginia was sunk by six torpedoes and two bombs during the attack.

### Salvage



Captain [Homer N. Wallin](#) (center) supervises salvage operations aboard [USS California](#), early 1942

After a systematic search for survivors, Captain [Homer N. Wallin](#) was ordered to lead a formal salvage operation.

Around Pearl Harbor, divers from the Navy (shore and tenders), the [Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard](#), and civilian contractors ([Pacific Bridge Company](#) and others) began work on the ships that could be refloated. They patched holes, cleared debris, and pumped water out of ships. Navy divers worked inside the damaged ships. Within six months, five battleships and two cruisers were patched or refloated so they could be sent to shipyards in Pearl Harbor and on the mainland for extensive repair.

Intensive salvage operations continued for another year, a total of some 20,000 man-hours under water. *Arizona* and the target ship *Utah* were too heavily damaged for salvage and remain where they were sunk, with *Arizona* becoming a [war memorial](#). *Oklahoma*, while successfully raised, was never repaired and capsized while under tow to the mainland in 1947. The *Nevada* proved particularly difficult to raise and repair; two men involved in the operation died after inhaling poisonous gases that had accumulated in the ship's interior. When feasible, armament and equipment were removed from vessels too damaged to repair and put to use aboard other craft.



Stephen Tyree Early (August 27, 1889 – August 11, 1951) was a U.S. journalist and government official. He served as the third White House press secretary under Franklin D. Roosevelt from 1933 to 1945 and as the acting press secretary under President Harry S. Truman in 1950 after the sudden death of Charles Griffith Ross.

### News coverage

The initial announcement of the attack on Pearl Harbor was made by the White House Press Secretary, **Stephen Early**, at 2:22 p.m. Eastern time (8:52 a.m. Hawaiian time): "The Japanese have attacked Pearl Harbor from the air and all naval and military activities on the island of Oahu, principal American base in the Hawaiian Islands." As information developed, Early made a number of additional announcements to approximately 150 White House reporters over the course of the afternoon.

Initial reports of the attack moved on news wires at approximately 2:25 p.m. Eastern time. The first radio coverage (which, at the time, represented the earliest opportunity for ordinary people to learn of the attack) was on the CBS radio network's scheduled news program, *World News Today*, at 2:30 p.m. Eastern time. John Charles Daly read the initial report, then switched to London, where Robert Trout ad-libbed on the possible London reaction. The first report on NBC cut into a play, a dramatization of *The Inspector-General*, at 2:33 p.m. Eastern time and lasted only 21 seconds. Unlike the later practice with major news stories, there were only brief interruptions of scheduled commercial programming.

A contemporaneous newspaper report compared the attack to the Battle of Port Arthur in which the Imperial Japanese Navy attacked the Imperial Russian Navy, triggering the Russo-Japanese War, 37 years prior. Modern writers have continued to note parallels between the attacks, albeit more dispassionately.

### Aftermath

The day after the attack, Roosevelt delivered his famous [Day of Infamy speech](#) to a [Joint Session of Congress](#), calling for a [formal declaration of war on the Empire of Japan](#). Congress obliged his request less than an hour later. On December 11, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States, even though the Tripartite Pact

did not require it. Congress issued a declaration of war against Germany and Italy later that same day.



The United Kingdom had already been at war with Germany since September 1939 and with Italy since June 1940, and British Prime Minister [Winston Churchill](#) had promised to declare war "within the hour" of a Japanese attack on the United States. Upon learning of the Japanese attacks on [Malaya](#), Singapore, and Hong Kong, Churchill promptly determined there was no need to either wait or further consult the US government and immediately summoned the Japanese Ambassador. As a result, [the UK declared war on Japan](#) nine hours before the US did.

The attack was an initial shock to all the Allies in the Pacific Theater. Further losses compounded the alarming setback. Japan [attacked the Philippines](#) hours later (because of the time difference, it was December 8 in the Philippines). Only three days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the battleships [Prince of Wales and Repulse were sunk](#) off the coast of Malaya, causing Churchill later to recollect "In all the war I never received a more direct shock. As I turned and twisted in bed the full horror of the news sank in upon me. There were no British or American capital ships in the Indian Ocean or the Pacific except the American survivors of Pearl Harbor who were hastening back to California. Over this vast expanse of waters, Japan was supreme and we everywhere were weak and naked."



*Remember December 7th!* by [Allen Saalburg](#), poster issued in 1942 by the [United States Office of War Information](#)

Throughout the war, Pearl Harbor was frequently used in [American propaganda](#).

One further consequence of the attack on Pearl Harbor and its aftermath (notably the [Niihau incident](#)) was that Japanese-American residents and citizens were relocated to nearby [Japanese-American internment](#) camps. Within hours of the attack, hundreds of Japanese-American leaders were rounded up and taken to high-security camps such as [Sand Island](#) at the mouth of Honolulu harbor and [Kilauea Military Camp](#) on the [island of Hawaii](#). Eventually, more than 110,000 Japanese Americans, nearly all who lived on the West Coast, were forced into interior camps, but in [Hawaii](#), where the 150,000-plus Japanese Americans composed over one-third of the population, only 1,200 to 1,800 were interned.

The attack also had international consequences. The Canadian province of [British Columbia](#), bordering the Pacific Ocean, had long had a large population of Japanese immigrants and their [Japanese-Canadian](#) descendants. Pre-war tensions were exacerbated by the Pearl Harbor attack, leading to a reaction from the [Government of Canada](#). On February 24, 1942, Order-in-Council P.C. no. 1486 was passed under the [War Measures Act](#), allowing for the forced removal of any and all Canadians of Japanese descent from British Columbia, as well as prohibiting them from returning to the province. On March 4, regulations under the Act were adopted to evacuate Japanese-Canadians. As a result, 12,000 were [interned](#) in interior camps, 2,000 were sent to road camps, and another 2,000 were forced to work in the [prairies](#) on sugar beet farms.

In the wake of the attack, 15 [Medals of Honor](#), 51 [Navy Crosses](#), 53 [Silver Stars](#), four [Navy and Marine Corps Medals](#), one [Distinguished Flying Cross](#), four [Distinguished Service Crosses](#), one [Distinguished Service Medal](#), and three [Bronze Star Medals](#) were awarded to the American servicemen who distinguished themselves in combat at Pearl Harbor. Additionally, a special [military award](#), the [Pearl Harbor Commemorative Medal](#), was later authorized for all military veterans of the attack.



The USS Arizona Memorial, at Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Hawaii, marks the resting place of 1,102 of the 1,177 sailors and Marines killed on USS Arizona during the Attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and commemorates the events of that day. The attack on Pearl Harbor led to the United States' involvement in World War II.

***Birthdays to remember:***



***U.S. National Guard- December 13, 1636***



*U.S. Space Force- December 20, 2019*

*Remember to keep using the hashtag #AuxiliaryPatriotism and watch it grow in our communities! Now, would be a good time to get all your reporting up to date before the holidays "get in the way!"*

*My reason to live is my reason to give of myself is probably what all the soldiers and sailors were feeling as they tried to defend Pearl Harbor. Please remember all of these brave men and women on December 7<sup>th</sup>.*

*Nathaniel "Buddy" Nicholas, NH VFW Auxiliary Americanism Chairman (2022-2023)*