



# Teaching with Historic Places



Presented by the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places—Lesson Plan #18

## Remembering Pearl Harbor: The USS Arizona Memorial

By JOHN VIERRA, JR.

**T**oday the battle-scarred, submerged remains of the battleship USS *Arizona* rest on the silt of Pearl Harbor, just as they settled on December 7, 1941. The ship was one of many casualties from the deadly attack by the Japanese on a quiet Sunday that President Franklin Roosevelt called “a date which will live in infamy.” The *Arizona*'s burning bridge and listing mast and superstructure were photographed in the aftermath of the Japanese attack, and news of her sinking was emblazoned on the front page of newspapers across the land. The photograph symbolized the destruction of the United States Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor and the start of a war that was to take many thousands of American lives. Indelibly impressed into the national memory, the image could be recalled by most Americans when they heard the battle cry, “Remember Pearl Harbor.”

More than a million people visit the USS Arizona Memorial each year. They file quietly through the building and toss flower wreaths and leis into the water. They watch the iridescent slick of oil that still leaks, a drop at a time, from ruptured bunkers after more than 50 years at the bottom of the sea, and they read the names of the dead carved in marble on the Memorial's walls.

This lesson will help students understand the logistics of the Japanese attack, the *Arizona*'s destruction, and the significance of the Memorial to the people of the United States. It can be used in American history units on World War II or in courses dealing more generally with war and conflict.

Materials for students include 1) readings drawn from the National Register of Historic Places registration file, “USS *Arizona* Wreck,” the visitor's guide, and *Submerged Cultural Resources* Study—a publication of the USS Arizona Memorial and Pearl Harbor National Historic Landmark; 2) maps showing the Japanese deployment and targets; and 3) photographs of the USS *Arizona* and the Memorial.

### **Objectives for the Students**

- To describe the destruction at Pearl Harbor, the sinking of the USS *Arizona*, and the consequent loss of life.
- To explain the important role of the USS *Arizona* as part of the Pacific Fleet.
- To explain the significance of the USS Arizona Memorial and other war memorials.
- To determine the impact of World War II on their own community.



*Shattered by a direct hit, the USS Arizona burns and sinks, December 7, 1941. (USS Arizona Memorial, National Park Service)*

## Teaching Activities

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### ***Setting the Stage***

Explain to students that the attack on Pearl Harbor thrust the United States into World War II. The attack had significant and far-reaching political effects on the United States, changing the minds of many who had been philosophically opposed to war or who had taken a passive stance towards the war in Europe. The increasing diplomatic confrontations and economic sanctions against Japan by the United States and others, compounded by Japan's undeclared war in China and the weakening of European control in Asian colonies, precipitated the war in the Pacific. The Japanese felt that the time was opportune to conquer British, American, French, Chinese, and Dutch territories in Southeast Asia. This belief pushed militaristic factions in Japan to provoke war with the United States. Fearing that the United States Pacific Fleet would pose a formidable obstacle to Japanese conquest of Southeast Asia, Admiral Isoruko Yamamoto, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet, visualized a bold attack on the Pacific Fleet while it lay at anchor at Pearl Harbor. Such a surprise strategical attack, bold and daring in its execution, would, he believed, secure the Pacific.

### ***Locating the Site***

Have students examine Maps 1 and 2. Ask them to determine when the Japanese set out on their attack and when they returned to Japanese territory. Explain to them that not only Pearl Harbor, but every military installation on the Island of Oahu, was attacked. Using Map 2, have students name the installations that were attacked and the type of aircraft used. Point out the Opana Radar Site on the northern coast of Oahu.

### ***Determining the Facts***

#### **A Day of Infamy**

Have students use their copy of Map 2 as they complete Reading 1, "The Attack on Pearl Harbor." Ask them to answer the following questions:

1. List the factors that led to the surprise strategical attack of Pearl Harbor. How did the Japanese justify such an attack?
2. What did the Japanese regard as the main purpose of the attack?
3. Why were the United States Pacific Fleet and other military installations caught off guard?
4. Why had diplomatic negotiations broken down?
5. Why was there no declaration of war before the attack?

Now have the students examine Map 3 of Pearl Harbor and refer back to the reading to answer the following questions:

1. How many battleships were in the area, known as "Battleship Row"? What happened to each of them?
2. What happened at other military installations?
3. What damage did the U.S. military inflict on the Japanese?
4. Why was the success of the attack on Pearl Harbor considered "great, but not total"?

### **A Final Resting Place**

Have students complete Reading 2, "The USS Arizona Memorial," and then answer the following questions:

1. How did it happen that the USS *Arizona* became the focus of a memorial to honor all who died at Pearl Harbor? What special recognition is given to the USS *Arizona* at the Memorial site?
2. How was money raised to build the Memorial?
3. Do you think the architect accomplished his goal for the building? Why or why not?

### **Casualties of War**

Have students study Chart 1, "December 7, 1941 Losses," and Chart 2, "Brothers Aboard the USS *Arizona*, December 7, 1941." Have them discuss the following questions:

1. Why was the Japanese casualty list so low compared with that of the United States?
2. Of the total number of men killed at Pearl Harbor, 1,177 were sailors and marines serving on the USS *Arizona*. What percentage of the dead came from that ship? Some 333 men aboard the USS *Arizona* survived the attack. What percentage of the total crew survived? Do these figures help you to understand why the remains of the *Arizona* were chosen as a site for a memorial?
3. Why might brothers hope to be assigned to the same ship? When these young men enlisted, there was a general belief that the United States would not become involved in the war in Europe, and little thought that diplomatic and economic problems with Japan would ever result in war. If they had known what was coming, do you think they would still have tried to serve on the same ship?
4. How many families had three sons on board? How many of those sons survived? What else can you learn from Chart 2? (There were two sets of twins and a father and son combination; one son survived in each of the families with three sons serving. Explain to students that eventually legislation was passed which prohibited members of the same family from serving on the same ship.)

## Visual Evidence

Provide the students with copies of Photo 1, which shows the USS *Arizona* on trial maneuvers in 1918, and Photo 2, which shows the ship after it was hit. Does the background of Photo 1 give them a sense of the size of the battleship? From examining Photo 2, can they make out where the USS *Arizona* was hit and how she sank?

The U.S. Navy did not allow much from the photographic records of the Pearl Harbor attack to be made public in 1941. Why do you think they made that decision? What do you think was the reaction of the American public when they saw Photo 2 published in their local newspapers?

Have students examine Photos 3 and 4. Ask them if the Memorial is effective in keeping the memory of the war alive. In what ways does the Memorial evoke an emotional response? Do you think the Memorial helps to reconcile American and Japanese bitterness over the war?

## ***Putting It All Together***

Most Americans who were alive in 1941 can remember exactly where they were when they first learned of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. For many of those who served in the armed forces, and families of those who served, the Second World War was the central event of their lives—a source of both pain and pride. The following activities are designed to help students understand some of these feelings. They will also compare how opposite sides in a battle differ in their remembrances of that battle.

### Activity 1: Pearl Harbor and the Casualties of War

The attack on Pearl Harbor propelled the nation into a war that lasted for almost four years. On the first day of that war, more than 2,400 Americans died; their average age was 23. Have students consider the impact such enormous losses would have on the American public. Then ask them to imagine they are reporters at the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Have each student write a short paper describing how they would have covered the news for their local daily papers. They should include information about the surprise attack, the sinking of the *Arizona*, and the statistics about the casualties. Have students work in pairs to correct rough drafts. Have three or four students read their completed features aloud and then hold a discussion on the attack and its results.

### Activity 2: Comparing Textbook Accounts

Using a typical U.S. history textbook, have students read the account of Pearl Harbor. Then have students

read the following paragraph that has been translated from a Japanese history textbook of the late 1960s:

In April 1941, Japan agreed to a Japan-USSR Neutrality Treaty in order to lessen the military threat to the north. This was followed by the occupation of the southern half of Indo-China by Japanese military forces. In consequence, the American attitude towards Japan hardened, and diplomatic relations between the two countries came to a dead end. The Tojo Cabinet conducted its business in extreme secrecy, and in the pre-dawn hours of December 8, 1941 [December 7, Honolulu time], Pearl Harbor in Hawaii was attacked and war was simultaneously declared against the United States and England. The Pacific War was thus begun.<sup>1</sup>

Ask students to cite differences between the two textbook accounts and discuss why they would differ to such a great degree. Have them develop an outline of the information they think should be included in both U.S. and Japanese textbooks. Compare the outlines and discuss differences in treatment.

### Activity 3: Survivors of War

Have students meet in small groups to suggest a list of questions they would like to ask a veteran of any war. List questions on the chalkboard as each group reports and then have the class refine the list and copy the final questions. Either have students use the list during interviews they set up for after school, or for one conducted in the classroom. (Veterans' organizations such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, etc., can usually provide speakers who are willing to go out to classrooms.) When interviews are complete, have students compare responses.

### Activity 4: Examining War Memorials

The USS *Arizona* Memorial records the names of the dead on a white marble wall. The Vietnam Memorial is a black marble wall that rises from the ground. Both commemorate the ultimate sacrifice that is often demanded of our nation's military personnel. Have students look for war memorials in their community. Is there a statue? Lists of the dead? A cannon mounted outside a public building? A special type of tombstone used in the local cemetery for those who served in the military? Are there any World War II memorials? What can students learn about their community's participation in World War II from these memorials (names of those who served, number of people who served, what branch of the military they represented and where they served, etc.)?

Some students may have visited Revolutionary or Civil War battlefields and may have pictures to bring to class. Other students may use library books to find examples of war memorials. Have them compare memorials from different wars by listing the materials they are made of, the size of the monument, the prominence of the memorial in its surroundings, and the dedicatory inscriptions found on the memorial. Then ask them to consider why some wars have been better remembered than others. Does the type of war fought make a difference? Have styles of memorials changed over time? Do all memorials seem fitting to the event? Do they feel the USS Arizona Memorial is appropriate for its purpose?

## Further Reading

Henry C. Clausen and Bruce Lee, *Pearl Harbor Final Judgement*, New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1992.  
D.J. Myers, *Remembering Pearl Harbor 50 Years Later*, Honolulu: Daniel James Publishers, 1991.  
John Toland, *Infamy: Pearl Harbor and its Aftermath*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982.

## Visiting the Site

The visitor center and the USS Arizona are located on the Pearl Harbor Navy Base and are operated and maintained by the National Park Service. The visitor center is located on the shoreline overlooking Pearl Harbor directly off State Highway 99 (Kamehameha Highway), about a 45-minute drive west of Waikiki. The visitor center is open daily from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's days. For further information, write the Superintendent, USS Arizona Memorial, #1 Arizona Memorial Place, Honolulu, Hawaii 96818-3145.

*John Vierra, Jr., is Park Ranger at the USS Arizona Memorial.*

*Fay Metcalf, the series editor for Teaching with Historic Places lesson plans, is an education consultant living in Mesa, Arizona.*

NOTE:

<sup>1</sup>Donald W. Robinson, Editor, *As Others See Us. International Views of American History*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969.

***This is one in a series of lesson plans by the National Register of Historic Places and the National Park Foundation. The National Register is maintained by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, as a means of recognizing properties significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. Each registration file contains a description of the property, an explanation of its historical importance, one or more photographs, one or more maps, and sometimes other documentation. The computerized National Register Information System (NRIS) can produce listings according to location, historical function, historical theme, and other categories. To obtain copies of registration documents or NRIS information, contact Teaching with Historic Places, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127, or phone (202) 343-9536.***

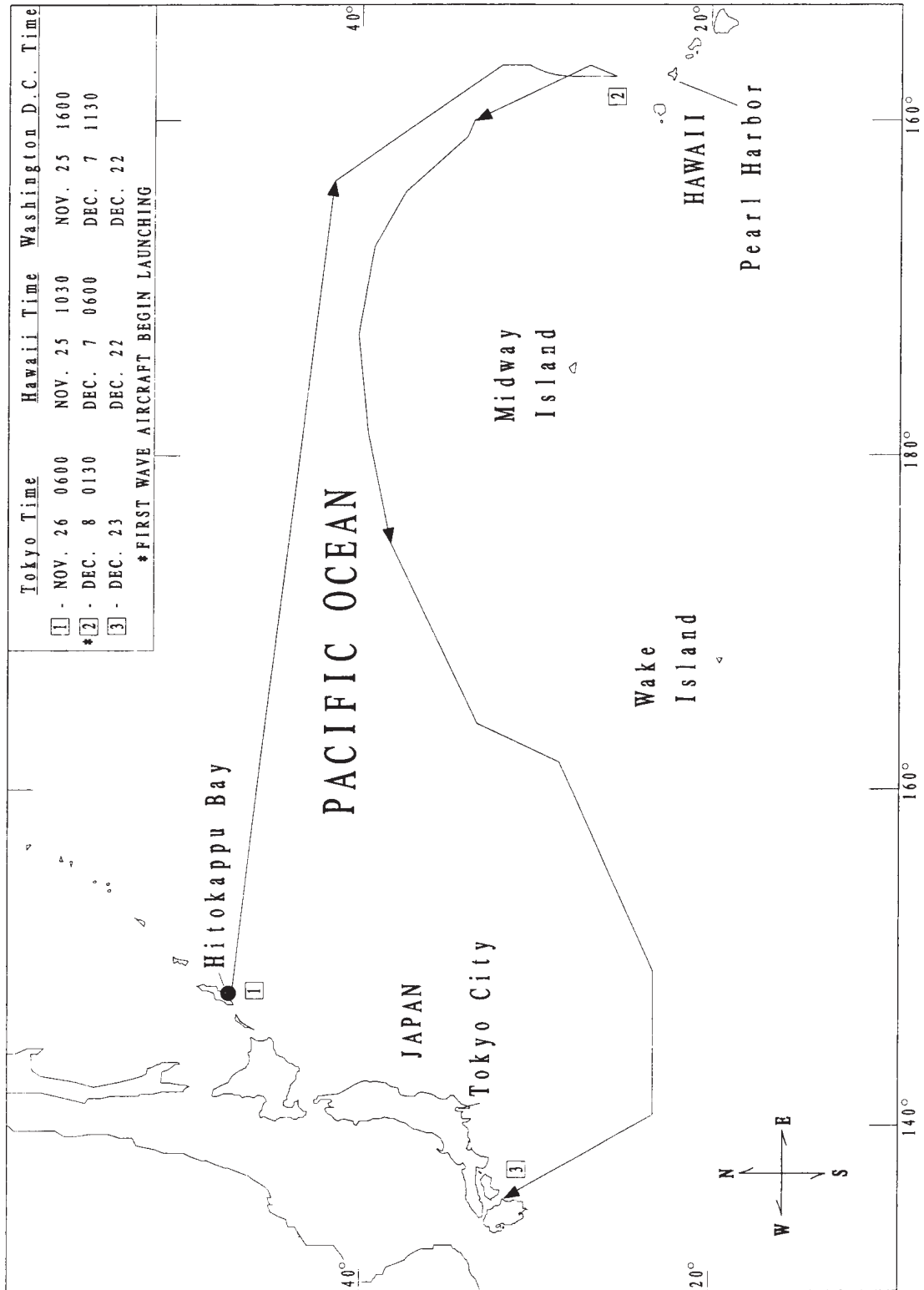
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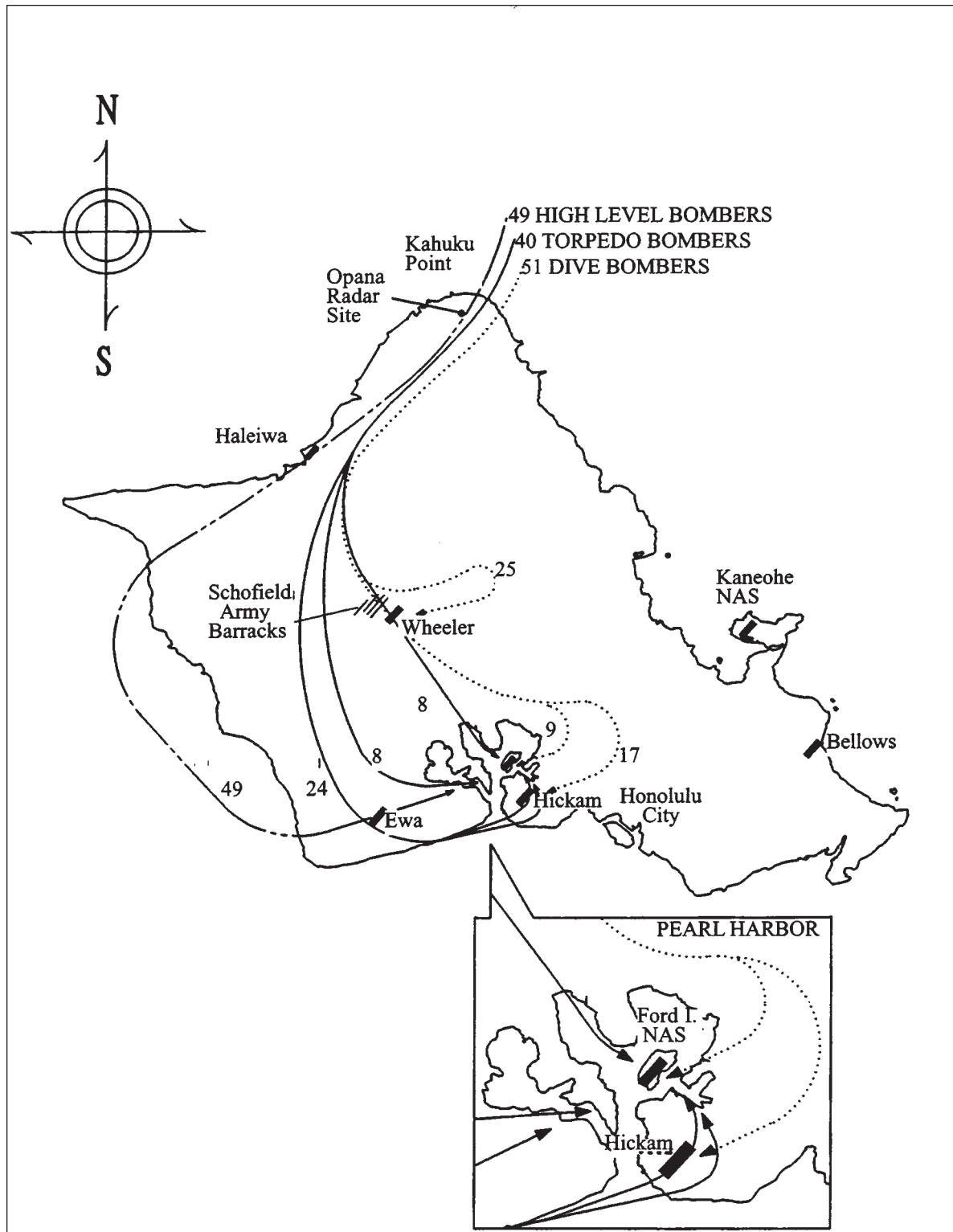
# Map 1

Hawaii and Japan. (John F. DeVirgilio for USS Arizona Memorial, National Park Service)



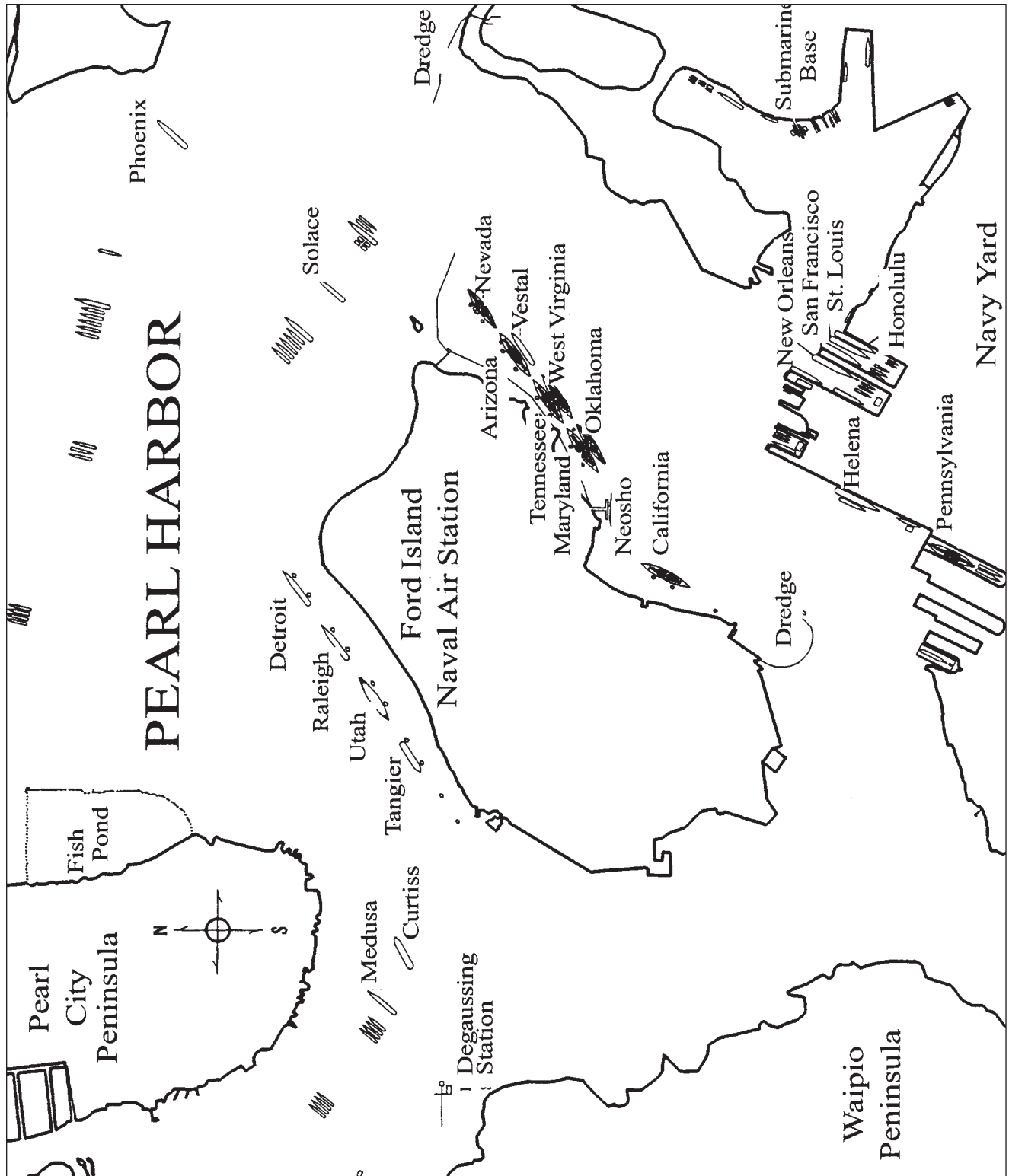
## Map 2

*The Island of Oahu. (John F. DeVirgilio for USS Arizona Memorial, National Park Service)*



### Map 3

Pearl Harbor. (John F. DeVirgilio for USS Arizona Memorial, National Park Service)



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## Reading 1: The Attack on Pearl Harbor

The attack on Pearl Harbor was the culmination of a decade of deteriorating relations between Japan and the United States over the status of China and the security of Southeast Asia. This breakdown began in 1931 when Japanese army extremists, in defiance of government policy, invaded and overran the northern-most Chinese province of Manchuria. Japan ignored American protests, and in the summer of 1937 launched a full-scale attack on the rest of China. Although alarmed by this action, neither the United States nor any other nation with interests in the Far East was willing to use military force to halt Japanese expansion.

Over the next three years, war broke out in Europe and Japan joined Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in the Axis Alliance. The United States applied both diplomatic and economic pressures to try to resolve the Sino-Japanese conflict. The Japanese government viewed these measures, especially an embargo on oil, as threats to their national security. By the summer of 1941, both countries had taken positions from which they could not retreat without a serious loss of national prestige. Although both governments continued to negotiate their differences, Japan had already decided on war. The attack on Pearl Harbor was part of a grand strategy of conquest in the western Pacific. The objective was to immobilize the Pacific Fleet so that the United States could not interfere with invasion plans. The principal architect of the attack was Admiral Isoruko Yamamoto, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet. Though personally opposed to war with America, Yamamoto knew that Japan's only hope of success in such a war was to achieve quick and decisive victory. If there were a prolonged conflict, America's superior economic and industrial power would likely tip the scales in her favor.

On November 26, the Japanese attack fleet of 33 warships and auxiliary craft, including 6 aircraft carriers, sailed from northern Japan for the Hawaiian Islands. It followed a route that took it far to the north of the normal shipping lanes. By early morning, December 7, 1941, the ships had reached their launch position, 230 miles north of Oahu. At 6 a.m., the first wave of fighters, bombers, and torpedo planes took off. The night before, some 10 miles outside the entrance to Pearl Harbor, five midget submarines carrying two crewmen and two torpedoes each were launched from larger "mother" subs. Their mission: enter Pearl Harbor before the air strike, remain submerged until the attack got underway, then cause as much damage as possible.

Meanwhile at Pearl Harbor, the 130 vessels of the U.S. Pacific Fleet lay calm and serene. Seven of the fleet's nine battleships were tied up along "Battleship Row" on the southeast shore of Ford Island. Naval aircraft were lined up at Ford Island and Kaneohe Bay Naval Air Stations, and Marine aircraft at Ewa Marine Corps Air Station. At Hickam, Wheeler, and Bellows airfields, aircraft of the U.S. Army Air Corps were parked in groups as defense against possible saboteurs.

At 6:40 a.m., the crew of the destroyer USS *Ward* spotted the conning tower of one of the midget subs headed for the entrance to Pearl Harbor. The *Ward* sank the sub with depth charges and gunfire, then radioed the information to headquarters. Before 7 a.m. the radar station at Opana Point picked up a signal indicating a large flight of planes approaching from the north. These were thought to be either aircraft flying in from the carrier *Enterprise* or an anticipated flight of B-17s from the mainland, so no action was taken.

The first wave of Japanese aircraft arrived over their target areas shortly before 7:55 a.m. Their leader, Commander Mitsuo Fuchida, sent the coded messages "To, To, To" and "Tora, Tora, Tora," telling the fleet that the attack had begun and that surprise had been achieved.

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## Reading 1: The Attack on Pearl Harbor (continued)

At approximately 8:10, the USS *Arizona* exploded, hit by a 1,760-pound armor-piercing shell that slammed through her deck and ignited her forward ammunition magazine. In less than nine minutes, she sank with 1,177 of her crew. The USS *Oklahoma*, hit by several torpedoes, rolled over, trapping more than 400 men inside. The USS *California* and USS *West Virginia* sank at their moorings, while the USS *Utah*, converted to a training ship, capsized with more than 50 of her crew. The USS *Maryland*, USS *Pennsylvania*, and USS *Tennessee* all suffered significant damage. The USS *Nevada* attempted to run out to sea but took several hits and had to be run aground to avoid sinking and blocking the harbor entrance.

While the attack on Pearl Harbor intensified, other military installations on Oahu were hit. Hickam, Wheeler, and Bellows airfields, Ewa Marine Corps Air Station, Kaneohe Bay Naval Air Station, and Schofield Barracks suffered varying degrees of damage, with hundreds of planes destroyed on the ground and hundreds of men killed or wounded.

After about five minutes, American anti-aircraft fire began to register hits, although many of the shells that had been improperly fused fell on Honolulu, where residents assumed them to be Japanese bombs. After a lull, at 8:40 a.m. the second wave of attacking planes focused on continuing the destruction inside the harbor, destroying the USS *Shaw*, *Sotoyomo*, a dry dock, and heavily damaging the *Nevada*, forcing her aground. The Japanese also attacked Hickam and Kaneohe airfields, causing heavy loss of life and reducing American ability to retaliate.

Army Air Corps pilots managed to take off in a few fighters and may have shot down 12 enemy planes. At 10 a.m. the second wave of attacking planes withdrew to the north, and the assault was over. The Japanese lost 29 planes and five midget submarines, one of which was captured when it ran aground off Bellows Field.

The attack was a great, but not total, success. Although the U.S. Pacific Fleet was shattered, its aircraft carriers (not in port at the time of the attack) were still afloat and Pearl Harbor was surprisingly intact. The shipyards, fuel storage areas, and submarine base suffered no more than slight damage. More importantly, the American people, previously divided over the issue of U.S. involvement in World War II, rallied together with a total commitment to victory over Japan and her Axis partners.

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*Adapted from the National Park Service visitor's guide for the USS Arizona Memorial.*

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## Reading 2: The USS Arizona Memorial

The USS *Arizona* is the final resting place for many of the ship's 1,177 crewmen who lost their lives on December 7, 1941. The 184-foot-long Memorial structure spanning the mid-portion of the sunken battleship consists of three sections: 1) the entry and assembly rooms, 2) a central area designed for ceremonies and general observation, and 3) the shrine room, where the names of those killed on the USS *Arizona* are engraved on the marble wall.

The primary concern of the U.S. Navy immediately after the attack had been to repair the damaged ships as quickly as possible. Early on, it became clear that the USS *Arizona* would never sail again. While other ships were restored, she lay under the water, a silent reminder of the "date which will live in infamy." When the navy began to consider raising the ship and recovering the dead, medical examiners advised that many of the men had been cremated by the blast and ensuing fire, and others would be unrecognizable after being submerged for a long time. The navy then decided to maintain the old custom of sailing men: those who die at sea are buried at sea. They would not, however, be forgotten.

The USS *Arizona*'s Memorial grew out of the desire to establish some sort of shrine at Pearl Harbor to honor those of the USS *Arizona* and all others who died in the attack. Suggestions for such a memorial began in 1943, but it was not until 1949, when the Territory of Hawaii established the Pacific War Memorial Commission, that the first concrete steps were taken to bring it about. Initial recognition came in 1950 when Admiral Arthur Radford, Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC), ordered that a flagstaff be erected over the sunken battleship. On the ninth anniversary of the attack, a commemorative plaque was placed at the base of the flagstaff.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who helped achieve Allied victory in Europe during World War II, approved the creation of the national Memorial in 1958. Its construction was completed in 1961 with private donations and public funds appropriated by Congress. The Memorial was dedicated in 1962.

According to its architect, Alfred Preis, the design of the Memorial, "Wherein the structure sags in the center but stands strong and vigorous at the ends, expresses initial defeat and ultimate victory . . . The overall effect is one of serenity. Overtones of sadness have been omitted to permit the individual to contemplate his own personal responses . . . his innermost feelings."

Contrary to popular belief, the USS *Arizona* is no longer in commission. As a special tribute to the ship and her lost crew, the United States flag flies from the flagstaff, which is attached to the severed mainmast of the sunken battleship. The USS *Arizona* Memorial has come to commemorate all military personnel killed in the Pearl Harbor attack.

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*Compiled from the National Park Service visitor's guide for the USS Arizona Memorial and the National Register of Historic Places registration form, "USS Arizona Wreck" (Honolulu County, Hawaii), by James P. Delgado, 1988*

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## Chart 1: December 7, 1941 Losses

<u>Personnel Killed</u>	<u>United States</u>	<u>Japan</u>
Navy	2001	64
Marine Corps	105	
Army	240	
Civilian	58	
<u>Personnel Wounded</u>		
Navy	710	Unknown
Marine Corps	69	
Army	364	
Civilian	35	
<u>Ships</u>		
Sunk or beached*	12	5
Damaged	9	
<u>Aircraft</u>		
Destroyed	164	29
Damaged	159	74

\*All U.S. ships, except the USS *Arizona*, USS *Utah*, and USS *Oklahoma* were salvaged and later saw action.

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*From the National Park Service visitor's guide for the USS Arizona Memorial.*

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## Chart 2: Brothers Aboard the USS *Arizona*, December 7, 1941

### Survivors in **Bold Print**

#### Twins\*

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 1. *Anderson, Delbert J.<br><b>John Delmar</b>                  | 15. Flory, Max Edward<br><b>Dale Frederick</b>                   | 30. Shive, Malcolm Holman<br>Gordon E.  |
| 2. Allison, Andrew K.<br>J.T.                                   | 16. *Heidt, Edward Joseph<br>Wesley John                         | 31. Skiles, Charley Jackson, Jr.<br>Eugene  |
| 3. Ball, William V.<br><b>Masten A.</b>                         | 17. Ingalls, Richard Fitch<br>Theodore A.                        | 32. Starkovich, Charles<br>Joseph Jr.   |
| 4. Becker, Harvey Herman<br>Marvin Otto<br>Wesley Paulson       | 18. Iverson, Earl Henry<br>Norman Kenneth                        | 33. Velia, Galen Steve<br><b>Keith Lloyd</b>  |
| 5. Birdsell, Ryan Delois<br><b>Estelle</b>                      | 19. Jones, Daniel Pugh<br>Woodrow Wilson                         | 34. Wells, Raymond Virgil Jr.<br>William B.   |
| 6. Bromley, George Edward<br>Jimmie                             | 20. Jones, Edmon Ethmer<br>Homer Lloyd                           | Father and Son:<br><br>Father     Free, Thomas Augustus<br>Son         William Thomas |
| 7. Chandler, Donald Ross<br><b>Edwin Ray</b>                    | 21. Keniston, Donald Lee<br>Kenneth Howard                       |   |
| 8. Chapman, Naaman<br><b>Noel B.</b>                            | 22. Kennington, Charles Cecil<br>Milton Homer                    |   |
| 9. Christiansen, Edward Lee<br><b>Harlan Carl</b>               | 23. Kramb, James Henry<br>John David                             |   |
| 10. Conrad, Homer Milton, Jr.<br>Walter Ralph                   | 24. Lakin, Donald Lapier<br>Joseph Joran                         |   |
| 11. Conlin, Bernard Eugene<br>James Leo                         | 25. Livers, Raymond Edward<br>Wayne Nichols                      |   |
| 12. Cooper, Clarence Eugene<br>Kenneth Erven                    | 26. Miller, George Stanley<br>Jessie Zimmer                      |   |
| 13. Czarnecki, Stanley<br><b>Anthony Francis</b>                | 27. Murdock, Charles Luther<br>Melvin Elijah<br><b>Thomas D.</b> |   |
| 14. Doherty, George Walter<br>John Albert<br><b>John Andrew</b> | 28. Nichols, Alfred Ross<br>Louis Duffie                         |   |
|   | 29. O'Bryan, George David<br>Joseph Benjamin                     |   |

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**Photo 1**

USS Arizona sets out from New York for trial maneuvers in 1918. (USS Arizona Memorial, National Park Service)



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**Photo 2**

*Shattered by a direct hit, the USS Arizona burns and sinks, December 7, 1941. (USS Arizona Memorial, National Park Service)*



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**Photo 3**

*The approach to the memorial is by sea. (USS Arizona Memorial, National Park Service)*



**Photo 4**

*The names of Arizona's dead are inscribed on this white marble wall. (USS Arizona Memorial, National Park Service)*

