

3 Then War Comes

Earlier we learned that, despite a brief challenge, the oligarchy maintained political control in the Islands during most of Hawai'i's territorial days. This control was interrupted abruptly, however, by the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Normal life here ended. Island government was transformed. And after the war was won, returning soldiers banded together to fight another kind of battle, one in the political arena. But that story comes later. First, let's look at the events of that December day and their immediate aftermath.

Honolulu Star-Bulletin 1st EXTRA
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WAR! (Associated Press by Transpacific Telephone)
SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 7.—President Roosevelt announced this morning that Japanese planes had attacked Manila and Pearl Harbor.

OAHU BOMBED BY JAPANESE PLANES

SIX KNOWN DEAD, 21 INJURED, AT EMERGENCY HOSPITAL

Attack Made On Island's Defense Areas
WASHINGTON, Dec. 7.—(AP)—A White House announcement detailing the attack on the Hawaiian islands is: "The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor from the air and all naval and military activities on the island of Oahu, principal American base in the Hawaiian islands."
The army has ordered that all civilians stay off the streets and highways and not use tele- phones.
Evidence that the Japanese attack has reg- istered some hits was shown by three billowing pillars of smoke in the Pearl Harbor and Hick- am fields area.
All navy personnel and civilian defense workers, with the exception of women, have been ordered to duty at Pearl Harbor.
The Pearl Harbor highway was immediately a mass of racing cars.
A trucking stream of injured people began pouring into the city emergency hospital a few minutes after the bombardment started.
Thousands of telephone calls almost

CIVILIANS ORDERED OFF STREETS
First indication of the need came shortly be- fore 8 this morning when anti-aircraft guns around Pearl Harbor began sending up a thun- derous barrage.
At the same time a vast cloud of black smoke arose from the naval base and also from Hickam field where flames could be seen.
BOMB NEAR GOVERNOR'S MANSION
Shortly before 9:30 a bomb fell near Wash- ington Place, the residence of the governor, Governor Poindexter and Secretary Charles M. Hite were there.
It was reported that the bomb killed an unidentified Chinese man across the street in front of the Schuman Canning Co. where

ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS IN ACTION
Hundreds of thousands were drawn to the top of Puukoa, some with their eyes on the sky and others on the ground.
The anti-aircraft barrage began at 7:55 and continued for 15 minutes.
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Hundreds See City Bombed
Names of Dead and Injured

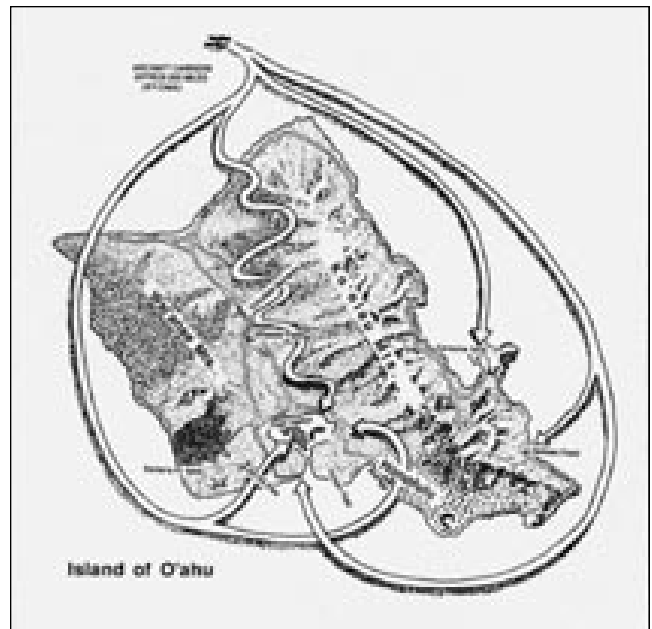
A History of Hawai'i, Linda Menton and Eileen Tamura, Curriculum Research & Development Group, College of Education, University of Hawai'i, Honolulu, HI

The Attack on Pearl Harbor

About eight o'clock on the morning of December 7, 1941, Japanese planes flew through the early morning clouds and dropped their bombs on Pearl Harbor and other military bases on O'ahu in a massive surprise attack. Caught unaware, the U.S. military and naval forces lost 188 planes, 8 battleships, 3 destroyers, 3 light cruisers, and 4 miscellaneous vessels. More than three thousand American soldiers and sailors and some fifty-seven civilians died, either hit by gunfire or trapped in sinking ships.

The attack enraged the American population and destroyed antiwar and isolationist sentiments in the country. Congress immediately declared war on Japan. Germany and Italy, Japan's Axis allies already at war in Europe, promptly declared war on the United States. America had entered World War II.

Although the Pacific fleet suffered tremendous losses at Pearl Harbor, the United States was not at the mercy of Japan. For one thing, U.S. aircraft carriers



The December 7 air attack on O'ahu. (Source: Adapted from Allen 1950)



The attack on Pearl Harbor (Courtesy of Hawaii State Archives)

