



December, 2021

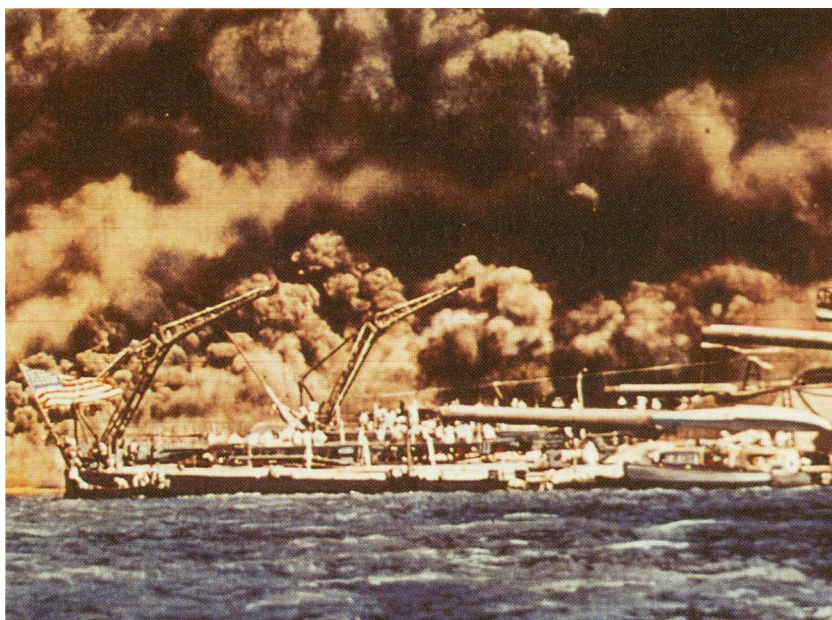
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THIS MONTH IN HISTORY: "PRELUDE AND AFTERMATH OF THE PEARL HARBOR ATTACK"

By LTC (Ret) Thomas D. Morgan

"Air Raid, Pearl Harbor. This is no drill!" That was the message sent in the clear and on all frequencies by the Navy Command Center at 0758 hours on Sunday, 7 December 1941---three minutes after the first wave of Japanese bombers and fighters attacked the United States Pacific Fleet at anchor in Pearl Harbor.

By 0945 hours that morning, the last wave of Japanese planes was withdrawing and except for sporadic strafing, the attack was over. In less than two hours, 353 Japanese planes had sunk or seriously damaged 18 major ships of the Pacific Fleet and had destroyed over 180 Army and Navy aircraft ... the bulk of the airpower in the Hawaiian Islands. United States casualties were 2403 killed or missing and 1178 wounded. The famous Naval historian, ADM Samuel Eliot Morison said, "Never in modern warfare was a war begun with so smashing a victory by one side".



USS West Virginia at the height of the attack, above; Pearl Harbor aftermath, right. Photos courtesy of WORLD WAR II Day by Day by Donald Somerville.

The next day, President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed a joint session of Congress and asked for a Declaration of War, calling Sunday, December 7, 1941, "a date that will live in infamy". Ninety-four ships of the United States Pacific Fleet were surprised at Pearl Harbor that fateful morning eighty years ago. Embarrassing questions were raised about the unpreparedness of the Hawaiian defenses. The Army and Navy Commanders, LT Gen Walter C. Short and Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, were relieved from duty and retired. A joint Congressional Investigating Committee published forty volumes on the subject. The controversy over who was at fault rages to this day.



Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, left, and LT Gen Walter C. Short, right, were relieved of duty following the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The years leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbor were tumultuous ones in the Pacific. Following the defeat of China in 1895 and the acquisition of Korea, Japan began the Russo-Japanese War with a sneak attack against the Russian Fleet in Port Arthur. The following year, 1905, Japan destroyed the Russian Baltic Fleet which had been sent to avenge their loss at Port Arthur. These victories led the two nations to the peace table with President Theodore Roosevelt. The resulting treaty of Portsmouth allowed Japan to emerge as the strongest power in the Pacific. It also marked the beginning of deteriorating relations between the United States and the Empire of Japan.

Surprise attacks were part of *Bushido*, the Code of the Warrior, that dominated Japan's actions as military rule became dominant during the early part of the 20th Century.

As early as 1908, Japanese militarists had laid out their plans for the establishment of a Japanese-controlled Pacific. This plan later became known as The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

World War I enabled Japan to begin the acquisition of the Pacific Islands. She sided with the Allies and immediately occupied all German holdings in the Central Pacific. She took control of the Marshall and Caroline Islands as a mandate from the League of Nations following the war.

Her conquests continued with the occupation of Manchuria in 1931 and the invasion of China in 1937. Japan joined Hitler and Mussolini in the Tripartite Pact in 1940 and occupied French Indochina after the fall of France that same year.

President Roosevelt retaliated against Japan by restricting trade, placing an embargo on oil and steel and freezing Japanese assets in the United States. He also moved the Pacific Fleet from the West Coast to Hawaii. The scene was now set for the eventual show-down between the United States and Japan.

Ironically, the Pearl Harbor attack came almost ten years after the United States' Grand Joint Exercise Number 4, which proved that the Hawaiian Islands were vulnerable to air and land attack.

Early on the morning of Sunday, 7 February 1932, the planes from the carriers Lexington and Saratoga, flying south through the same passes the Japanese later used, caught the Army Air Corps planes on the ground and theoretically destroyed them, leaving the Hawaiian bases defenseless. At the same time, the 30th Infantry Regiment from the Presidio of San Francisco landed on the East coast of Oahu and within two and a half hours defeated the defending Army. These maneuvers were observed by the Japanese Military and Naval Attaches and numerous "innocent" Japanese fishermen. In the after-action critique that followed, it was generally considered that Sunday morning attacks were dirty pool. But, as we were to learn later, the Japanese didn't think it was!

The Japanese also gained essential knowledge from the 1940 British surprise carrier attack on the Italian Fleet in the harbor of Taranto, Italy. The Royal Navy had used 24 old-fashioned biplanes to sink three Italian battleships in an attack that shifted the naval balance-of-power in the Mediterranean to the Allies.

The Japanese attack plan consisted of two parts. From six aircraft carriers in the 33-ship Japanese fleet, 353 planes made the surprise attack ... only 29 failed to return. As back up, a force of 27 Japanese submarines was scheduled to sink the fleet if it left Pearl Harbor. Five of the submarines carried midget subs intended to infiltrate the harbor and sink ships at anchor.

Compared to the effectiveness of the air strike, the submarine attack was a failure. No United States ships were sunk by the subs and all five of the midget subs were either sunk or heavily damaged. The Japanese had no plans to land troops following the attack. However, one of the midget subs was washed up on the beach. The Japanese Ensign commanding the sub became our first prisoner of the Pacific war.

The sinking of the Arizona within a few minutes of the beginning of the attack was the most dramatic incident of a day filled with drama. She absorbed at least eight bomb hits and several torpedoes before a final 1760-pound bomb penetrated the powder magazine, causing the ship to explode in a tremendous blast that sank her instantly. Four other battleships were either sunk or beached after being repeatedly hit by bombs and torpedoes. Three more battleships received lighter damage.

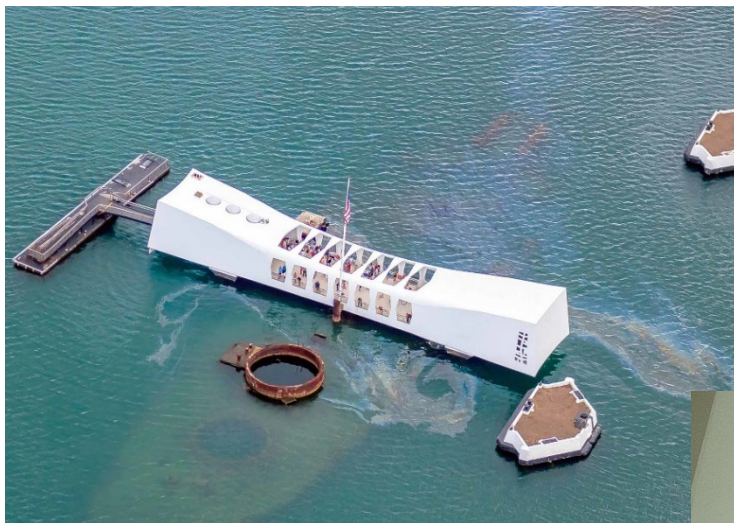
In direct contrast with the fate of the Arizona is the story of the Light Cruiser Phoenix. She received only one bullet hole in a range finder shield and was christened the "Lucky Phoenix". Forty-one years later in 1982, her luck ran out. She had been sold to Argentina in 1951, renamed the General Belgrano, and was sunk by a British submarine during the Falkland War.

All United States ships at Pearl Harbor, with the exception of the Arizona, the Utah, and the Oklahoma, were refloated and later saw battle action. The Maryland, in February 1942, was the first battleship to return to the Fleet. The Nevada provided naval gunfire in support of the Normandy and Iwo Jima landings. Five other Pearl Harbor battleships crossed the enemy "T" at the Battle of Surigao Strait in 1944 and extracted their revenge by sinking the better part of the Japanese Fleet. These ships also participated in the capture of Okinawa. All the Japanese ships that took part in the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor except two, a destroyer and a supply ship, were sunk by the war's end.

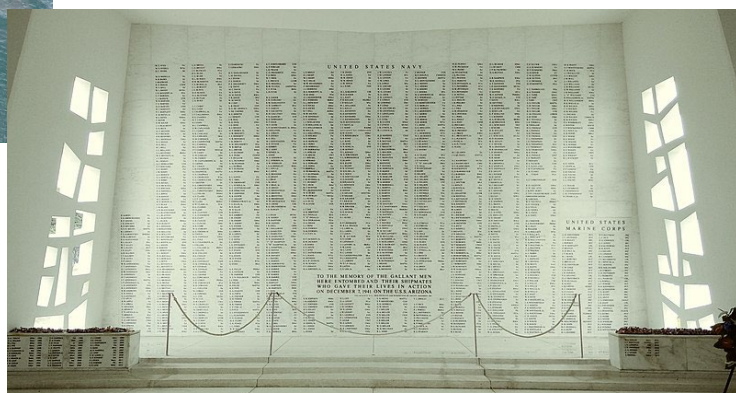
While the Japanese had destroyed the Pacific Battle Force at Pearl Harbor and the Hawaii-based aircraft, they neglected the shops, dry docks, submarine base and above all the oil storage tank farm. Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz remarked, "The fact that the Japanese did not return to Pearl Harbor and complete the job was the greatest help to us, for they left their principal enemy with the time to catch his breath, restore his morale, and rebuild his forces".

Upon hearing that the carriers Enterprise and Lexington were not at their anchorage, Admiral Yamamoto, the reluctant architect of the Pearl Harbor attack stated, "I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve".

And awaken we did! **"Remember Pearl Harbor"** was the rallying cry that mobilized and sustained the American people.



The Arizona Memorial, above, is the final resting place for most of the crew of the Arizona, who lost their lives defending the ship. The 184 foot structure covers the sunken battleship, but does not touch the hull which is the tomb for 1102 Sailors and Marines. The Memorial Wall, right, shows the names of the victims of the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, as well as survivors of the attack who have since passed away. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia.org.



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PEARL HARBOR 1941

“Prelude and Aftermath of the Pearl Harbor Attack” After the Battle – Duty Served

Both Captain Franklin Van Valkenburgh, the captain of the Arizona, and Rear Admiral Isaac Kidd, commander of Battleship Division 1, spent Saturday night, 6 December, aboard the Arizona and were aboard her shortly before 0800 on Sunday, 7 December 1941, when Japanese fighters and bombers appeared overhead. As the Japanese planes started to attack the Arizona, Van Valkenburgh ran from his cabin and arrived on the navigation bridge where he began to direct the ship's defenses. He was asked if he wanted to go to the conning tower which was less exposed, but he refused and manned a telephone to fight for his ship's life.



Later known to the Allies as “Val”, the Aichi D3A1 was the Jap Navy's primary carrier-borne dive bomber in late 1941. 126 of them were involved in the Pearl Harbor operation, each carrying a 500-lb. bomb as offensive armament.

Then a violent explosion suddenly shook the ship, throwing Van Valkenburgh, an ensign, and the quartermaster to the deck as the bridge's windows blew out. The ensign escaped, but Van Valkenburgh and the quartermaster did not. A fire raged aboard the Arizona for two days, but Captain Van Valkenburgh and the quartermaster were never seen again. Only his Annapolis Class of 1909 ring and two uniform buttons were retrieved. He was survived by his wife, two daughters and a son.

Rear Admiral Kidd suffered a similar fate. As commander of Battleship Division 1, his personal effects were sent home to his widow in Annapolis, Maryland. Years later, when Admiral Kidd's son and grandson helped her move to a new home, the two men discovered the admiral's sea chest in her storage room. In it were his uniforms, sword, and pocket watch that divers brought up from the Arizona's final resting place in Pearl Harbor. Also in the storage room was the top of a heavy metal box sent in 1942 to Mrs. Kidd. It contained a gold nugget from the Admiral's Class of 1906 Naval Academy ring. It was found infused into the top of the Arizona's conning tower. That was all that was left of Admiral Kidd.

Both Admiral Kidd and Captain Van Valkenburgh were later awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.



December 7, 1941 - USS Arizona as she sinks in Pearl Harbor, above.



Captain Franklin Van Valkenburgh, captain of the USS Arizona. Photo courtesy of <https://usnamemorialhall.org>.



Rear Admiral Isaac Kidd, commander of Battleship Division 1, USS Arizona. Portrait by Heiter. Courtesy of the Navy Art Collection, Washington, DC.

REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR

WORDS BY
DON REID
MUSIC BY
DON REID and
SAMMY KAYE



Shortly after the Japanese attack on December 7, 1941, Sammy Kaye and Don Reid wrote the music and Reid wrote the words to “Remember Pearl Harbor.” On December 17, 1941, RCA Victor recorded the song, with Sammy Kaye’s Swing and Sway Band and The Glee Club.

Verse

History in ev'ry century records an act that lives forevermore.
We'll recall, as into line we fall, the thing that happened on Hawaii's shore.

Chorus

Let's REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR
As we go to meet the foe.
Let's REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR
As we did the Alamo.
We will always remember how they died for Liberty.
Let's REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR
And go on to victory.

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The World War II POW Camp at Fort Lewis

By Emily White

During WWII, Allied forces captured over three million prisoners; of those, 425,000 were held in camps in the United States. In 1942 the United States began to take prisoners from Britain and Africa that were captured by the British Army. 372,000 of all captured were German.

The POW camp at Fort Lewis, one of the largest in the U.S., held around 5,200 prisoners. Initially small, the prison camp quickly grew to five separate compounds on post with branch camps at Fort Lawton, Spokane, Walla Walla, Vancouver Barracks, and Toppenish. The prisoner population consisted of mostly Germans and a few Italian prisoners. Primarily from the Afrika Korps, the Germans were captured in Tunisia. A few were seized in Italy, France, and Greece as well.

The main camp was set up north of Gray Airfield in the area near 41st Division Drive and Pendleton Avenue. A separate compound was located about a mile away for troublesome prisoners and those that were known National Socialist (Nazi) Party members.

Another compound was set up in a previous camp near the present-day Logistics Center. Using the same World War II wooden barracks and administrative buildings occupied by American troops, the main camp was organized in three compounds, each surrounded by a barbed-wire fence and ten guard towers. Each compound had four companies with four barracks, a mess hall, an orderly and supply room, and a dayroom manned by German Prisoners. The compounds included a prisoner laundry, canteen, and barbershop.

Two clinics served the camp, staffed by German doctors and corpsmen under the supervision of an American medical officer. A beer hall, carpenter shop, tailor shop, lecture hall with a library, aquarium, and two theaters offered recreational opportunities. The prisoners built one of the theaters for their theater group and orchestra. Often the theaters featured American movies as part of the government's re-education and denationalization program.

Approximately 360 prisoners worked within the compounds, with the remainder of the enlisted men working on the post at jobs such as clearing brush, sawing lumber, repairing clothing and equipment, and similar tasks. Others were sent out to work on various farms in the surrounding areas.

The pay for prisoners was 80 cents a day or \$24 a month for work unless they had disciplinary issues such as failure to work; then they would be docked 70 cents per day. The money earned could be spent at the canteens and deposits could be made into a prisoner welfare fund, which was used to purchase recreational equipment and supplies.

The last group of prisoners returned to Germany and Britain by July 1946 and the camp closed soon after.

Three German POWs entered into rest at the Camp Lewis U.S. Army Cemetery where beautiful Douglas fir trees line the entrance. Established in 1917, the cemetery is laid out as a large square divided into four sections. **Leo Paluczkiwicz, Kurt Messner, and Karl Simon** are interred in section 2 of this peaceful place.

Leo Paluczkiwicz, Subordinate Officer (Unteroffizier).

Leo was born in Duisberg-Meiderich, Germany on July 30, 1917. After training with the regular Wehrmacht, he was attached to an aviation unit. In November of 1942, Leo contracted malaria. He was captured in Tunisia, North Africa on May 11, 1943. Before arriving at Fort Lewis, he had spent time at another camp in Louisiana.

Leo died at a Prisoner of War Camp in Walla Walla, Washington at 27 on July 4, 1945. He was not married and had no known children. He died of a heart attack from prior injuries: officially the cause of death was listed as a coronary occlusion due to arteriosclerosis and thrombosis of the left anterior descending coronary artery. His body was moved to the Camp Lewis Cemetery for burial on July 6, 1945. In 1948 his mother Maria was notified of her son's death.



Dr. Kurt Messner, Senior Physician (Oberarzt)

Dr. Messner was born in Greifenburg-Kaernten, Austria. He became a German citizen in 1935 when he was expatriated by the Austrian Federal Ministry. Then he moved to Berlin to practice as an OB/GYN at a University Women's Hospital.

On November 4, 1943, American forces captured Dr. Messner while he worked in a field hospital in Tunis, Tunisia. From there he was shipped to the U. S. and spent time at the POW camp in Crossville, Tennessee. Sometime later, Kurt arrived at Madigan Army Medical Center.

During his incarceration, Kurt wrote letters to Olga Milles, an artist whose husband, Carl, was recognized by the Swedish Government for his design of the monument to Sten Sture, Sweden's Lord Regent at the end of the fifteenth century.

The papers of Carl and Olga Milles, including Kurt's correspondence, repose in the Archives of American Art, part of the Smithsonian Institution's Online Virtual Archives.

In his correspondence with Olga, Dr. Messner states that Olga and Carl are lucky to be living in the U.S., far away from the war. He worries about finding work in Germany as an OB/GYN after the war; perhaps he will have to establish himself as a general physician. In his last known letter written just two weeks before his death, Kurt stated he was well and enjoyed reading articles written about Carl Milles.

On August 18, 1945, at the age of 37, Dr. Messner took his own life by hanging himself. He was buried on August 21, 1945, in the Camp Lewis Cemetery next to Leo Paluczkiwicz.

Karl Simon, Private (Gefreiter)

Karl was born in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany on December 28, 1923. He went to school until 8th grade, and was an avid skier, swimmer, and mountain climber. Before entering the Wehrmacht, Karl worked in a bakery. Karl's last unit was the 3rd Paratrooper Division nicknamed the "Green Devils".

After Karl was hospitalized in Athens, Greece around December of 1942, his health continued to decline. Unlike most of the POWs at Fort Lewis, he was captured in Rome, Italy on June 4th, 1944, and spent time in and out of hospitals.

Karl died at Madigan General hospital on Ft. Lewis on January 20, 1945, of tuberculosis with cavitation, both lungs. He was only 21 years old, single with no children or spouse. It wasn't until December of 1947 that his parents received word of his death and his belongings were sent to his father in Germany.



Olga Milles, friend of Dr. Kurt Messner.



Private Karl Simon. Courtesy Bundesarchiv (German Archives).



Emily White is a graduate intern from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. For more than five years, she has been a faithful volunteer at Lewis Army Museum.



Just in time for the holidays, the heat is on! The museum's new HVAC system provides heat now to the first and second floors.

All of us at Lewis Army Museum wish everyone a happy, healthy, warm and cozy Holiday Season!



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