

DEMOCRACY IS IN DANGER



**Hawaiian
Coastal
Defense**



Immediately after the attack of Pearl Harbor, a little less than twenty Imperial Japanese submarines fanned around Hawaiian island waters. Their strategic job was to search for enemy United States carriers, which were being hunted as top prizes.

None were located, but on the tenth of December in a reverse play, U.S. carrier pilots of the *Enterprise* spotted one of the submarines. Before nightfall it was reported to have sunk a submarine lurking nearby. It was true, the I-70 was sunk, and so this became the first Japanese Navy war vessel sunk by the United States.

At 5:45 a.m., December 10, 600 American and native troops on Guam—a small island and a Pan Am airways stopover—after receiving orders, surrendered. One single American, George Tweed, with the help of brave Guam natives, escaped and survived until U.S. forces came back. His story is unique; he even saved American ships in 1944. In a distant submarine base at Cavite, Manila, the base itself was hit, and the first U.S. submariners to be killed in the war (5) lay dead. By nightfall, the entire base was a burning shambles, with more than 500 American and Philippine dead.

On December 11, the freighter S.S. *Lahaina* ventured too close to a Japanese sub on patrol and was sunk. Not far from Honolulu, on the 17th, the S.S. *Manini* sank. Next day, the large S.S. *Prusa* went down. Radioman





A week after the attack on Pearl Harbor, a small expedition of U.S. Army troops was sent to investigate and capture a Japanese pilot who had supposedly crashed on a tiny Hawaiian island named Niihau, inhabited by about 200 people. Accompanying them was a burly Hawaiian named Howard Kaleohano. The real horrors of war was repasted in the newspaper, *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, Dec. 16, 1941 edition. It involved 2 American citizens born in Hawaii, Yoshio and Irene Harada; the capture of a Japanese pilot, S. Nishikaichi; the aid given by Yoshio and his wife, Irene, the altercation between the captured Imperial pilot, and how he shot another Hawaiian, Ben Kanahele, three times before being subdued and killed.

The whole story was initially told on radio station KTOH (Kauai), but then was forgotten in history. Howard Kaleohano received the Purple Heart and Medal of Merit, and Ben Kanahele received the Medal of Freedom.

Lawrence Gianella sent an SOS before going down with the ship. Close to home, the petroleum tanker S.S. *Emidio* left Seattle, bound for San Pedro, California. But, secluded at sea, it was fired upon and struck by shells; its fortunate crew was ordered to man the lifeboats. Before December ended, the S.S. *Montebello* would be sunk and the *Dorothy Philips*, *Agwiworld*, *H M Storey*, *Larry Doheny*, *Absaroka* and *Connecticut* were attacked. The *Royal T Frank* was sunk on January 28, 1942. Initially, the dismal incidents mentioned above were told to the press.

People in the United States, accustomed to news, received sparse news from the battlefield. They were generally in the know that Hong Kong, Wake Island, and somewhere all over the Asian mainland, the Japanese Army was furiously sweeping aside all the Allies.

Horrors of war came to the people only slowly. Its main reason was due to war-censorship. In the early stages, most pictures of troops showed troops in clean uniforms, the soldiers immaculate, but it began changing. More and more newsreels (in black & white film) began creeping into America's theatres. (There was no television, but its forerunner, the newsreel, brought moving pictures, and people saw what was shot over there.) More and more people began to be touched by the war directly, as families began receiving telegrams: "We regret to inform you...".

For millions of people halfway across the globe it was very real indeed.

Within fourteen hours after Pearl Harbor, the war sirens in Manila sounded, and after that until surrender, the long ominous air-raid call never failed to blow.

Deeeeeeeee [then followed by] ooooooh.....yie-

deeeeeeeeeeeeeee...

Sirens were always a precursor to a bombarding barrage of destruction. The drone of war planes filled the sky over the Philippines, and for many weeks the dropping of bombs came. In a short span, America's too few aircraft were annihilated. U.S. air protection was generally nil by Christmas of 1941. Twenty-three days into December, the American outpost, Wake Island, fell. Its heroic 447 Marines and some 75 Navy and Army personnel held off over 4,500 Japanese, resisting bravely, even sinking two destroyers, before being overrun by enemy troops, who were supported by two aircraft carriers.

From the Marshalls and Caroline Islands, a Japanese Army of 43,100 landed in the northern Philippines and later swept out throughout all the Philippines and out into the Solomons, Bismark Archipelago (group of isles) and the Gilberts. By the twenty-first, American naval command was forced to evacuate Manila Bay for Corregidor. In Manila, meanwhile, the Army led by General Douglas MacArthur—a brilliant tactician whose love for the Philippines is indescribable in a few words—managed to keep fighting hard in the roads and jungles.

On Christmas Day of 1941 came the startling news that the great British port of Hong Kong surrendered. When it fell, 1,689 Canadians became prisoners of war. Moreover, Chinese, Australian and British nurses were raped. It was on this same Christmas that MacArthur's troops were forced to leave for the fortress at Bataan, surrounded by dense jungles. Everyone under his command was told to "evacuate the hell out of Manila." All the ammo depots and oil stockades were "put to the torch," leaving the enemy nothing.

Those troops with General Jonathan Wainwright began holding a defensive line, but just as quickly it never held. They were pitted with very little air cover against

December 12: Big, big blackout in San Francisco, California; even the newspapers went black.

The recent attack without warning at Pearl Harbor rang deep into the consciousness of the American people and the compounding losses were embedding us to war 100%. But the real horrors of war, such as the brutal torture and execution of 20 hospital staff of the Salesian Mission in Shaukiwan, Hong Kong, or of the vicious raping of nurses, would not be known until months later.

About a week after the attack on Pearl Harbor, as a picket of some 490 welders on strike in the Bay area shouted and screamed with signs, the headline news of Dec. 23 in San Francisco: oil tanker *Montebello* sunk near San Luis Obispo.

Dateline Long Beach, California: Dec. 24, 1941, Californians by the hundreds witnessed a ship *Absaroka* (of the McCormick Steamship Co.) blow-up; but in reality it did not sink, but was torpedoed, and then towed into the harbor. One life was lost. On this day, the strike by welders in S.F. ended.

DEMOCRACY EVAPORATES

crack Japanese veterans from the China War.

On December 19, 1941, MacArthur declared the island capital Manila an open city. However, the Imperial Japanese kept bombing and raiding the Philippine capital. Manila resembled a city of Hell, as one observer put it, as large orange flames licked the city, compounded by blackish clouds of thick soot and smoke which came from the nearby military oil dumps still burning. Japanese soldiers, wearing round steel helmets with a yellow star on the front, marched into Manila, occupying it on January 2. In the evening, their army color guard assembled in the center of town and lowered the Stars and Stripes which was on a flagpole in front of the building of the U.S. Commissioner Department. After various officers—in a show of defiance—tore and kicked on the U.S. flag, they raised the flag of the Imperial Rising Sun. An ancient national anthem was played. The Japanese machine of war seemed invincible.

For two months U.S. and Filipino forces, side-by-side, kept pulling back along the 30 mile terrain of Bataan. Bataan was a geographical landscape of dense jungle and wooded low mountains. The fighting in the humidity was a battle for passageways and key-jungle bridges which spanned ravines. Bataan was full of poisonous snakes and 56 varieties of bats.

The battered ground troops never had more than three P-40s for support at any one time. An American-Filipino counter-attack made in mid-February—the battle in the Toul Pocket—literally wiped out enemy salients. This desperate battle held off the advance of “Tojo” for over six weeks. The 82,000 defenders denied the foe usage of the bay at Manila.

A riveting, heart-breaking story was to descend into the history books involving a nearly at full-strength British division, whose full fate would end in Singapore. It is a story rarely found in contemporary history and

never told in any of the old history books because it was top secret. Yet, four-score, and many years ago, no one knew where they were going, or even that it involved the U.S.

Their voyage had begun in 1941—so top secret—it lay hidden in the pages of history for sixty years, and it would have remained dormant had it not been for a chance meeting between one old veteran and an historian on a holiday tour of Chicago. That led to the investigation by Jerome M. O'Connor, who wrote the story of John J. Horrigan, "a true story hardly no one knows." At first, no one believed him. The story finally was written as an exclusive in the 2002 July issue of *Naval Proceedings*.

Three prize American ocean liners were part of the story; the 1931-era S.S. *Manhattan*, along with her twin, *Washington*, stood at 24,289 tons. In their company was the queen of the American merchant liners, the 33,961 ton S.S. *America*, christened by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in 1940. It sported art-deco design with a broad 94-foot beam and a classy 723 feet streamlined length. But, her distinct red, white and blue United States Lines color paint scheme was gone. All vessels were repainted gray, requisitioned for war, and renamed *Wakefield*, *Mount Vernon*, and *West Point*, respectively.

They, along with the troopships *Dickman*, *Leonard Wood*, and *Oriba*, comprised a strange story that is traced to the Atlantic Conference.

The conference was the first time Roosevelt and Churchill met and was the first of many meetings for high-level discourse. See vol. one. Churchill let F.D.R. know Britain's survival was on the line. A few weeks after the conference, both men agreed upon a very secretive deal, that technically violated the pre-war Neutrality Act and, if found out, could have caused talk of impeachment.

When the troops moved over to Bataan, coupled with the lack of air power, a miscommunication that left tons of food further north, and a tight sea blockade around Luzon, some 15,000 U.S. soldiers found out early on they would be short of rations. Also, clear photographs from this era are hard to obtain.

In America, few people actually thought that the Philippines could really fall. There existed about 3,500 American civilians in the Philippines.

SECRET CONVOY

In accordance with convoy duty, a plan was drawn where, despite Neutrality, British troops were to be escorted on U.S. vessels toward a war zone. Captains of 18 U.S. Navy ships, on September 26, 1941, received an authorization to help transport 20,000 officers and men to the Middle East, under Secret Serial Letter 077338. In accordance with convoy duty, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, on October 30, the aircraft carrier *Yorktown*, battleship *New Mexico*, light cruisers *Savannah* and *Philadelphia*, with a screen of destroyers, began escorting nine little British transports to Halifax. In the channel of Halifax, the Tommies exchanged ships and set sail for the Middle East—so they thought—ultimately via Trinidad, Cape Town, South Africa, Kenya, Bombay, India, and Singapore.

Pictures of Task Force 14 are as rare as kangaroos in Antarctica. On your right is a painting of the USS *America* before she was painted war-drab gray. Before December 7, 1941, the *Manhattan*, *Washington* and *America* evacuated thousands of refugees from war-torn Europe. Conductor Arturo Tuscanini came to America on the *Washington*. A detachment of lucky Marines guarded each ship. Two Nazi spies took advantage of America's Neutrality and wherever the ship sailed, Erwin W. Siegler and Franz Stigler served as innocent-looking crew-members. They served as links to an espionage spy ring, operated by a Frederick Duquesne. Captured, they were sentenced in January 1942--see page 241.

But, Singapore is not the Middle East, you say.

Yes, you are right.

The convoy, designated Task Force 14, had been long at sea when orders were changed. It was not long after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the entry of the United States into war, that on December 12, Churchill sent a dispatch to F.D.R., "We feel it necessary to divert 18th Division...to reinforce army we



are forming against Japanese invasion of Burma and Malaya." Roosevelt replied, "I am in entire agreement and orders have already been issued for the diversion of the convoys requested." So, the British 18th Division, which as the Americans on board found out, had spent nearly a year being specially trained in desert warfare, were now going to the Far East.

Soon after Pearl Harbor, the U.S. warship escorts had to depart from the secret convoy; some headed for new

North Atlantic duties, others back to the States. The six transports were on their own.

The convoy was led by Commodore of the convoy, Captain Donald B. Beary, a 1906 Naval Academy graduate. The *Orizaba*, *Mount Vernon* and *West Point* were manned by U.S. sailors. U.S. Coast Guardsmen manned the *Dickman*, *Leonard Wood* and *Wakefield*. They arrived Christmas Day in Mombasa, Kenya.

All six made it to Bombay, where the *Dickman*, *Leonard Wood* and *Orizaba* disembarked their troops, who underwent additional training. Those transports then returned home. Only the three former ocean liners sailed on in the Indian Ocean, but not together. The *Wakefield* and *Mount Vernon* sailed with another convoy.

The first liner to arrive in Singapore was the *Mount Vernon*, arriving about 1 p.m. on a cloudy Tuesday afternoon, January 13. It fell under attack by the first of 30-40 planes, when, before they knew it, it began to rain heavily. The closest bombs fell about 100 yards away, according to eyewitness George Ramos from California, before it turned into a downpour. Luck descended. The air raid had to stop. 13 wasn't so unlucky for the *Mount Vernon*. No bomber touched her. She sailed away next day, replenished with 362,970 gallons of bunker oil and 350 tons of water and some lucky passengers.

On January 27, the *West Point* and *Wakefield* sailed on past Krakatoa in the Java Sea and into Japanese-held waters. Two days later, the last British troops disembarked on Singapore's port in the middle of an air raid.

British transport *Empress of Asia* was sunk in the channel with much of the 18th's ammunition, heavy artillery, trucks and food.

On January 30, as the *Wakefield* was being loaded with civilians, mainly women and children, a bomb hit the ship near the No. 2 hatch, penetrated the B deck

Jan. 28, 1942: "Since capture at Wake, the prisoners, including myself, have been treated and are all in good health...." Commander Winfield S. Cunningham USN. "When we arrived here (Yokohama), we were given good beds to sleep in and are well fed....I am sending this message to my wife and friends. So long, Joe. I am alive and I am happy as I can be, with you." Maj. Paul A. Putnam, Marines. *Radio Tokyo* heard via short wave, *NBC* and *U.P.*

On January 29, 1942, after about 20 days at sea, the American *Wakefield* and *West Point* rescue liners, in the company of British Empire liners, including *Empress of Japan* (in which baseball star Babe Ruth sailed to Japan in Oct. 1934, name changed to *Empress of Scotland*, Oct. 1942) and *Duchess of Bedford* reached the mayhem of Singapore.

Four Filipino chaplains (three Roman Catholic, one Anglican) are missing in action: Feb. 23, 1942, *Time* magazine. Rev. Mathias Zerfas of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, not shaving since the war started, by Feb. sported a heavy black beard.

1942 began as a bleak year for the Allies.