



## PEARL HARBOR ATTACK HISTORICAL FACT SHEET

**WHAT:** Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor  
**WHEN:** December 7, 1941  
**WHO:** Japanese Imperial Navy (attacker); US Pacific Fleet (target)  
**WHERE:** US Naval Base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

### TIMELINE:

**Pre-December 7, 1941** Since early 1941 the United States had been supplying Great Britain in its fight against the Nazis and pressuring Japan to halt its military expansion in Asia and the Pacific, but not actively engaging in the armed conflict.

**December 6, 1941** The United States intercepts a Japanese message inquiring about ship movements and berthing positions at Pearl Harbor. The cryptologist gives the message to her superior who says he would get back to her on Monday, December 8.

**December 7, 1941** Early morning: A radar operator on Oahu sees a large group of airplanes on his screen heading toward the island. He calls his superior, who tells him it is probably a group of US B-17 bombers scheduled to arrive that day and not to worry about it.

**December 7, 1941** 7:55-9:10 a.m.: The US Naval Base at Pearl Harbor is attacked by Japanese bombers.

**December 8, 1941** President Franklin D. Roosevelt asks Congress for and receives a declaration of war against Japan, signaling a decisive response from a newly unified America.

**December 11, 1941** Germany and Italy, allied with Japan, declare war on the United States.

**June 4, 1942** After a string of disappointing losses, the US carrier fleet deals a decisive blow to the Japanese navy at the Battle of Midway, sinking four Japanese aircraft carriers.

### KEY PEOPLE:

**Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto** - conceived the Pearl Harbor attack.

Yamamoto was inspired by a prophetic book and a historic attack: *The Great Pacific War*, written in 1925 by British naval authority Hector Bywater, was a realistic account of a clash between the United States and Japan that begins with the Japanese destruction of the US fleet, followed by a Japanese attack on Guam and the Philippines. When Britain's Royal Air Force successfully attacked the Italian fleet at harbor in Taranto, Italy on November 11, 1940, Yamamoto was convinced that Bywater's fiction could become reality. (In fact, the Japanese did not destroy the entire fleet or any aircraft carriers in the Pearl Harbor attack.)

**Captain Minoru Genda** - planned the attack

**Mitsuo Fuchida** - Japanese captain who sent the code message "Tora, Tora, Tora" to indicate that the US fleet had been taken by surprise



**Dorie Miller**, a steward on the USS *West Virginia*, distinguished himself by courageous conduct and devotion to duty during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He first assisted his mortally wounded captain and then manned a machine gun, which he was not accustomed to operating, successfully destroying two Japanese aircraft. He was the first African American awarded the Navy Cross, the service's highest award, for his actions during the attack.

**KEY STATS:**

• **Japanese craft involved:**

- 4 heavy carriers
- 353 aircraft, including:
  - 40 torpedo planes
  - 103 level bombers
  - 131 dive-bombers
  - 79 fighters
- 2 heavy cruisers
- 35 submarines
- 2 light cruisers
- 9 oilers
- 2 battleships
- 11 destroyers

• **Japanese losses:**

- 29 aircraft
- 5 midget submarines
- 1 Japanese soldier taken prisoner
- 129 killed

\*\*\*Out of all the Japanese ships that participated in the attack on Pearl Harbor only one, the *Ushio*, survived until the end of the war. It was surrendered to the United States at Yokosuka Naval Base.

• **US casualties:** 3,581 total, including:

2,403 killed:	1,178 wounded:
2,008 Navy	710 Navy
218 Army	364 Army
109 Marines	69 Marines
68 civilians	35 civilians

• **US aircraft impacted:** 328 total, including:

159 damaged:	169 destroyed:
31 Navy	92 Navy
128 Army Air Corps	77 Army Air Corps



• **US ships impacted:** 19 total, including:

16 damaged:	3 destroyed:
6 battleships	2 battleships
3 cruisers	1 auxiliary
3 destroyers	
4 auxiliaries	

\*\*\* The battleship USS *Arizona* remains sunken in Pearl Harbor with its crew onboard. Half of the dead at Pearl Harbor were on the *Arizona*.

\*\*\*3 aircraft carriers of the US Pacific Fleet were out to sea on maneuvers and escaped harm.