

December 7, 1941

I was a student in a small midwestern high school, was as near as my history book and as far away as Europe. Until Dec 7, 1941 when a war that began a stone's throw away from my doorstep became My war, Our war.

It was a Sunday morning, my sister and I had finished washing breakfast dishes and the Cream separator. Mom had dinner well underway.

The telephone rang the familiar long and two shorts. Mom answers, pauses to listen, said yes and hangs up. She turns to dad with a puzzled look on her ~~she~~ and said that was Sil, she told me to turn on the radio and hang up. What station, dad asks, "she did not say," Mom answers.

"That's damn funny," he replies and gets up from his chair and walks toward the radio. I hear the familiar click.

The announcer voice finds its way through the humming as the radio warms up. "Ladies and gentlemen, I regret to inform you that the American Naval Base at Pearl Harbor has been attacked by enemy air craft at approximately 7:55 AM this morning, Honolulu time.

The room is silent except for the voice of the announcer. I look at the radio for a long moment in an attempt to understand what I had just


heard. I turn to look at my parents. Disbelief is written on their faces.

My sister and brother who are younger realize that something is wrong. Their questioning eyes search the faces around them. Our parents say nothing.

I turn back to the radio and hear the announcer attempt to compose himself and his voice, as he repeats the news bulletin. I ask myself where is Pearl Harbor? The announcer said, Honolulu that's in Hawaii, Hawaii is that tiny island far out in the Pacific across from California. Will ^{that} bomb California?

Dad leans over the radio and turns the dial from station to station. The voices of the announcers blend one into another, repeating what we have already heard. There is a click and dad said, "let's eat dinner." A silent, thoughtful, family, sat down to dinner on that Sunday, in 1941.

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