

Research Paper

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Ralph Tierno's Story

Pearl Harbor took place on December 7th 1941 in Hawaii. This was a defining moment in history for the United States because the Japanese knocked out our navy making it easier for them to expand southward without major complications from us (history). Many people recognize it as a day that many people were killed but it also marks how brave soldiers were to help. From talking to a veteran you can get a different view of what went on and some extra details that wouldn't be in your history book per say.

Pearl Harbor was a major naval base for the United States because it is on the island of Hawaii which is an island so there are tons of harbors to store ships. When Japan bombed the harbor, they did not know what they got themselves into. They had destroyed more than machinery and ships, they destroyed thousands of lives. The total number of lives killed that day in a two hour period was 3,500. Some events that might have led to this tragic event are the United States not transporting certain goods to Japan, not allowing the Japanese to buy any oil therefore weakening their war force, and the US demanding that Japan should get out of China and Indochina (pearl). The tensions grew and the Japanese sent a letter to Washington DC, warning us they were going to bomb us. But the letter came too late, causing the United States to be in utter shock. The president at that time was Franklin Roosevelt, and he delivered his Day of Infamy speech and later that day declared a war on Japan (pearl). But when Japan bombed us they did not get our aircraft carriers, submarines, and most importantly our fuel oil storage facilities which was the foundation for our war on Japan. This war was called the Battle of Midway and resulted in us

winning four years later.

The true heroes of Pearl Harbor are the soldiers that came and put Hawaii back on its feet. Some veterans can remember which Sunday of their lives it happened and can tell you almost everything they did the night before and the morning of. This image of people being hurt and killed would stick with them forever. However, some people were not so surprised. For instance, Ralph Tierno states "They got a submarine outside of the harbor early that morning, they had a fellow from Pennsylvania here who was on the New Radar, reported the aircraft coming in. And somebody at the headquarters just decided that it must be a B-17's coming in from the mainland. Which was very untrue." Tierno could recall the moment that this took place saying "I remember it was my 38th Sunday that I had attended Mass (Ralph)." Ralph Tierno was one of the many troops that helped that day to recover Hawaii from the tragic incident.

Ralph Tierno is almost 90 years old and still can recall his war experience from when he entered the army at 18. He attended Pleasantville High School in a small town in New Jersey. He was 10 out of 218 in his class, and graduated at the age of seventeen and a half. After graduating high school, he went to help his dad at a bread company. After that summer, January 18, 1941 he joined the army. He was sent to Fort Shlokum, which was in New York. He wasn't there that long because he signed up to go to the territory of Hawaii out at Schofield barracks. Once he got there he had to study in individual, unit, and large unit trainings, but then he got the news that he got accepted into West Point Prep School. This is the school you have to train in before to get into the actual West Point. This was one of his mother's dreams for him; she wanted at least one of her five boys to go there. But this dream was put on halt because of the attack of Pearl Harbor. He was at Hawaii when it happened but did not go to Pearl Harbor until the day after so that they could help with recovery. After

that Tierno went to school but on July of 1941 they wanted him to go to the Philippines. However, he turned this down so he could focus on getting into West Point. In May of 1942, Ralph got the news that he got accepted into West Point, he went there shortly and spent three years there until they commissioned him in 1945. He was sent to the in the tropics specifically the Philippines but then he was taken to Japan. He spent a total of 38 months there working for General Mac Arthur's headquarters. He then returned to the United States and he trained units at Fort Devons, Massachusetts. He then found himself a wife, whom they have been married for 64 years, but was sent to Korea. He fought in the Korean War but got pulled out because a sniper hit him in the arm in October of 1951 near the Yalu River. Ralph has many badges that he earned including a purple heart. The purple heart is awarded to those who got wounded or killed in action, and it was first established in 1782. After that he stayed in Germany for quite a bit. He made a remark "I spent most of my time in the field because the Russians were always threatening". They lived in Oxford until his third son was born. After that they moved back. He was just a small town boy looking to join the army like a lot of the boys at his time. He never thought that he would travel the world, and make a good living for himself. Luckily, Ralph was able to take his family and keep a close relationship with them. He ended up graduating in the first class, second lieutenant in charge, and private first class. He now resides in Pennsylvania with his wife of 64 years (Ralph).

Throughout the years warfare has become more advanced, but what makes war is the people who are willing to fight in it. No matter what war someone was in, whether it is something such as Pearl Harbor or even the Korean War, they fight to protect the United States of America. People who become troops form "families" in a different way because their life depends on them. In Pearl Harbor we lost a total of 2,400 servicemen which is a great loss because many of the survivors are not alive today (house). Ralph Tierno is only one of the

billions of people to fight for us and tell us his story. Not much people are as lucky as Ralph to survive in a war. He is courageous, brave, and noble the many qualities of a true hero. He has been everywhere, achieved his goals, and is a great model of a person.

Bibliography

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Ralph Tierno, Pearl Harbor Veteran

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