

“A DAY OF INFAMY”

The Japanese Attack on Pearl Harbor



On December 7, 1941, the Japanese military launched a surprise attack on the United States Naval Base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Since early 1941 the U.S. had been supplying Great Britain in its fight against the Nazis. It had also been pressuring Japan to halt its military expansion in Asia and the Pacific. With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. could no longer avoid war. On December 8, U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt asked Congress for and received a declaration of war against Japan. On December 11, Germany and Italy, allied with Japan, declared war on the U.S. The United States had entered World War II.

Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto conceived the Pearl Harbor attack and Captain Minoru Genda planned it. Two things inspired Yamamoto's Pearl Harbor idea: a prophetic book and a historic attack. The book was *The Great Pacific War*, written in 1925 by Hector Bywater, a British naval

authority. It was a realistic account of a clash between the United States and Japan that begins with the Japanese destruction of the U.S. fleet and proceeds to 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.

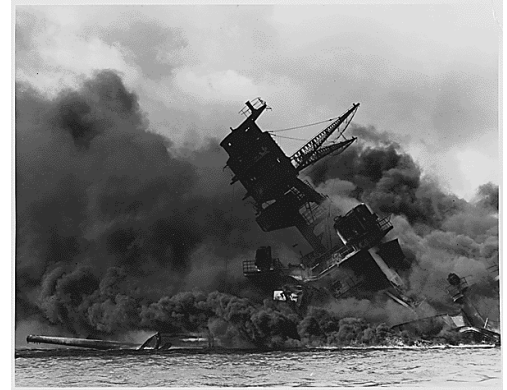
On December 6, 1941, the U.S. intercepted a Japanese message that inquired about ship movements and berthing positions at Pearl Harbor. The cryptologist gave the message to her superior who said he would get back to her on Monday, December 8. On Sunday, December 7, a radar operator on Oahu saw a large group of airplanes on his screen heading toward the island. He called his superior who told him it was probably a group of U.S. B-17 bombers that had been scheduled to arrive that day and not to worry about it.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor began at 7:55 that morning. The entire attack took only one hour and 15 minutes. Captain Mitsuo Fuchida sent the code message, "Tora, Tora, Tora," to the Japanese fleet after flying over Oahu to indicate the Americans had been caught by surprise. The Japanese planned to give the U.S. a declaration of war before the attack began so they would not violate the first article of the Hague Convention of 1907. But the message was delayed and not relayed to U.S. officials in Washington until the attack was already in progress, turning Pearl Harbor into a sneak attack!

The Japanese strike force consisted of 353 aircraft launched from four heavy carriers. These included 40 torpedo planes, 103 level bombers, 131 dive-bombers, and 79 fighters. The attack also consisted of two heavy cruisers, 35 submarines, two light cruisers, nine oilers, two battleships, and 11 destroyers.

The attack killed 2,403 U.S. personnel, including 68 civilians, and destroyed or damaged 19 U.S. Navy ships, including 8 battleships. The three aircraft carriers of the U.S. Pacific Fleet were out to sea on maneuvers. The Japanese were unable to locate them and a planned 3rd wave of attack planes was never launched. The U.S. still had their carrier fleet intact.

The battleship USS *Arizona* remains sunken in Pearl Harbor with its crew onboard. Half of the dead at Pearl Harbor were on the *Arizona*. A United States flag flies above the sunken battleship, which serves as a memorial to all Americans who died in the attack. (A piece of the *Arizona* is displayed at the start of the Pacific Galleries)



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.

The Japanese lost 29 aircraft and 5 midget submarines in the attack. One Japanese soldier was taken prisoner and 129 Japanese sailors and airmen were 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 U.S. at Yokosuka Naval Base. When Admiral Yamamoto learned that his forces had not destroyed the U.S. aircraft carriers or completely destroyed the U.S. fleet, he feared that the United States, with its enormous industrial potential, would soon recover and fight back.

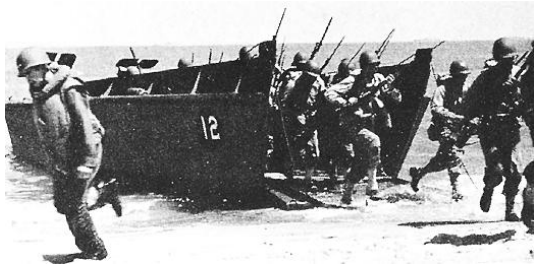
The United States did recover—and quicker than Yamamoto could have imagined. After only six months, the U.S. carrier fleet dealt a decisive blow to Yamamoto's navy in June 1942 at the Battle of Midway, sinking four Japanese aircraft carriers. After this victory came the three-year U.S. island-hopping campaign and the eventual defeat of the Japanese Empire in August 1945.

U.S. Casualties at Pearl Harbor			
Service	Killed	Wounded	Total
Navy	2,008	710	2,718
Army	218	364	582
Marines	109	69	178
Civilians	68	35	103
Total	2,403	1,178	3,581

U.S. Aircraft Damaged at Pearl Harbor		
Service	Damaged	Destroyed
Navy	31	92
Army Air Corps	128	77

U.S. Ships Damaged at Pearl Harbor			
Type of Ship	Damaged	Destroyed	Years Repaired
Battleships	8	2	1942-1944
Cruisers	3	0	1942
Destroyers	4	0	1942-1944
Auxiliaries	5	1	1942

NEW ORLEANS: HOME OF THE HIGGINS BOATS

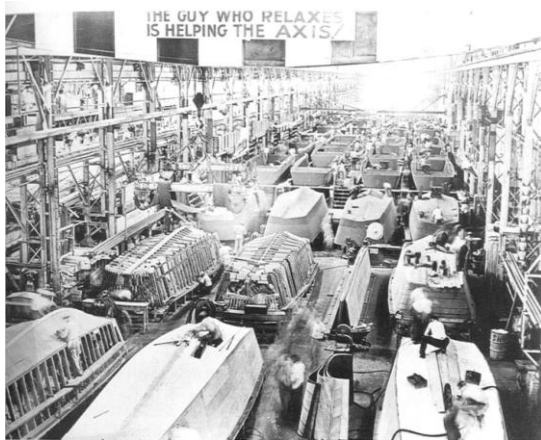


To win the war, the United States and its allies had to develop tactics and equipment to launch massive amphibious landings at sites ranging from Pacific atolls to the French coastline. The city of New Orleans made a unique contribution to this critical part of America's war effort.

New Orleans was home to Higgins Industries, a small boat company owned by the flamboyant entrepreneur Andrew Jackson Higgins. Higgins designed and produced a unique and ingenious collection of amphibious boats capable of delivering masses of men and equipment safely and efficiently from ship to shore, eliminating the need for established harbors. His craft included amphibious LCTs, LCPLs, and LCMs along with PT boats, supply vessels, and other specialized craft. But he is best known for designing and manufacturing thousands of LCVPs (Land Craft, Vehicle, Personnel), special craft designed to carry infantry platoons and jeeps to shore. Higgins boats were used in every major American amphibious operation in the European and Pacific theaters, including D-Day in Normandy. Indeed, they were crucial to the success of those operations.



Higgins initially had difficulty getting the attention of the military. But with persistence and a superior product, he was soon competing with the more established shipyards of the Northeast. Higgins' designs won him huge government contracts and his tiny business expanded dramatically. In 1938, he operated a single boatyard employing less than 75 workers. By late 1943, his seven plants employed more than 25,000 workers. The Higgins workforce was the first in New Orleans to be



racially integrated. His employees included whites, blacks, men, women, seniors, and people with disabilities. All were paid equal wages according to their job functions. They responded by shattering production records, turning out more than 20,000 boats—12,500 of them LCVPs—by the end of the war.

During the war, Higgins' name became indelibly tied to his landing craft. Men did not come ashore in LCVPs, they traveled in "Higgins boats." His achievements earned him countless accolades, but none was greater than the one he received from General Eisenhower. Higgins, Eisenhower said years later, "won the war for us."

The National WWII Museum displays a reproduction of a Higgins LCVP in its Louisiana Memorial Pavilion. This Higgins Boat was built from original plans entirely by volunteers—several of whom worked for Higgins Industries during World War II. The Museum also displays a WWII-era LCP (L) (Landing Craft Personnel, Large), an earlier version of the LCVP that did not include a forward ramp.

D-DAY (JUNE 6, 1944)

Since Nazi Germany forced the Allies out of France to Great Britain in the spring of 1940, the Allies had been planning a cross-Channel assault to retake the continent and defeat Hitler's Third Reich. By the spring of 1944 an elaborate plan—code-named Operation *Overlord*—was secretly in place. The Allies, led by American General Dwight Eisenhower, faced an enemy determined to keep them from landing successfully anywhere along the western European coastline. To ensure against such a landing, Hitler ordered Field Marshal Erwin Rommel to complete the Atlantic Wall—a 2,400-mile fortification made up of concrete bunkers, barbed wire, tank ditches, landmines, fixed gun emplacements, and beach and underwater obstacles. Many of these obstacles were specially designed to rip out the bottoms of landing craft or blow them up before they reached the shore. Others were made to trap soldiers on the beach where they would be exposed to intense gunfire from fortified positions.

On the eve of June 5, 1944, 175,000 men, a fleet of 5,000 ships and landing craft, 50,000 vehicles, and 11,000 planes sat in southern England, poised to attack secretly across the English Channel along a 50-mile stretch of the Normandy coast of France. This force, one of the largest armadas in history, represented years of rigorous training, planning, and supplying. It also represented a previously unknown level of cooperation between allied nations, all struggling for a common goal—the defeat of Nazi Germany. Because of highly intricate deception plans, Hitler and most of his staff believed that the Allies would be attacking at the Pas-de-Calais, the narrowest point between Great Britain and France.



In the early morning darkness of June 6, thousands of Allied paratroopers and glider troops landed silently behind enemy lines, securing key roads and bridges on the flanks of the invasion zone. As dawn lit the Normandy coastline the Allies began their amphibious landings, traveling to the beaches in small landing craft lowered from the decks of larger ships anchored in the Channel. They assaulted five beaches, code-named *Utah*, *Omaha*, *Gold*, *Juno*, and *Sword*. The bloodiest fighting occurred at *Omaha*, where

the Americans suffered more than 2,000 casualties. By nightfall nearly all the Allied soldiers were ashore at a cost of 10,000 American, British, and Canadian casualties. Hitler's vaunted Atlantic Wall had been breached in less than one day. The beaches were secure, but it would take many weeks before the Allies could fight their way out of the heavily defended Normandy countryside and almost a full year to reach and defeat Germany in the spring of 1945.

Operation *Overlord* was not just another great battle, but the true turning point of WWII in Western Europe. While the U.S. and Great Britain had earlier engaged the Axis powers on the periphery of the Europe (North Africa, Sicily, Italy), it was not until the invasion at Normandy that they brought on the beginning of the end for Hitler and his Nazis. Had the invasion failed (*Eisenhower was prepared to read a statement over the radio taking full responsibility if Allied troops were driven from the beaches*), Hitler would have been able to pull troops out of France to strengthen his Eastern Front against the encroaching Soviets. A second Allied invasion into France would have taken more than a year to mount. Hitler, meanwhile, would have further strengthened his Atlantic Wall, his newly developed V-1 flying bombs would have continued to rain down on England from launching pads across the Channel, and the Nazis' *Final Solution* against European Jews might well have succeeded completely.

WHAT DOES THE “D” IN D-DAY MEAN?



This is the most frequently asked question by visitors to The National WWII Museum. Many people think they know the answer: *designated day*, *decision day*, *doomsday*, or even *death day*.

Our answer, like many answers in the field of history, is not so simple. Disagreements between military historians and etymologists about the meaning of D-Day abound. Here are just two explanations:

In Stephen Ambrose's *D-Day, June 6, 1944: The*

Climactic Battle of World War II, he writes,

Time magazine reported on June 12 [1944] that “as far as the U.S. Army can determine, the first use of D for Day, H for Hour was in Field Order No. 8, of the First Army, A.E.F., issued on Sept. 20, 1918, which read, ‘The First Army will attack at H-Hour on D-Day with the object of forcing the evacuation of the St. Mihiel salient.’” (p. 491)

In other words, the D in D-Day merely stands for *Day*. This coded designation was used for the day of any important invasion or military operation. For military planners (and later historians), the days before and after a D-Day were indicated using plus and minus signs: D-4 meant four days before a D-Day, while D+7 meant seven days after a D-Day.

In Paul Dickson's *War Slang*, he quotes Robert Hendrickson's *Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins*,

Many explanations have been given for the meaning of D-Day, June 6, 1944, the day the Allies invaded Normandy from England during World War II. The Army has said that it is “simply an alliteration, as in H-Hour.” Others say the first D in the word also stands for “day,” the term a code designation. The French maintain the D means “disembarkation,” still others say “debarkation,” and the more poetic insist D-Day is short for “day of decision.” When someone wrote to General Eisenhower in 1964 asking for an explanation, his executive assistant Brigadier General Robert Schultz answered: “General Eisenhower asked me to respond to your letter. Be advised that any amphibious operation has a ‘departed date’; therefore the shortened term ‘D-Day’ is used.” (p.146)

Brigadier General Schultz reminds us that the invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944 was not the only D-Day of World War II. Every amphibious assault—including those in the Pacific, in North Africa, and in Sicily and Italy—had its own D-Day.



The Solomon Islands Campaign (Guadalcanal)

Location: Guadalcanal / Solomon Islands (South Pacific) **Date:** August 7, 1942- February, 9, 1943

Background: Following their attack on Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941), the Japanese Imperial Navy occupied scores of islands throughout the western Pacific Ocean. Japan's goal was to create a defensive buffer against attack from the United States and its Allies—one that would ensure Japan mastery over East Asia and the Pacific. After the United States' strategic victories at the Battles of the Coral Sea (May 4-8, 1942) and Midway (June 4-7, 1942), expansion of the Japanese Empire halted. The Japanese Imperial Navy was no longer capable of major offensive campaigns and the Allies could now start their own offensive in the Pacific. The U.S. chose Guadalcanal, in the Solomon Island chain, as their first offensive campaign in the Pacific. The Solomons represented the farthest reach of Japanese territorial control in the Pacific, and would be the first of many islands the U.S. would retake in a brutal three-year island-hopping campaign to reach and defeat Japan.



Pacific Theater of War, 1942

The Battles: The Solomon Islands Campaign lasted six months and consisted of a number of major battles—on land, at sea and in the air. American forces first landed on the Solomon Islands of Guadalcanal, Tulagi and Florida on the morning of August 7, 1942. After some fierce fighting, the Marines cleared Tulagi and Florida by August 9. The main forces on Guadalcanal met little resistance on their way inland to secure the airfield at Lunga Point (soon to be renamed Henderson Field). Almost immediately, Japanese naval aircraft attacked transport and escort ships and Japanese reinforcements were sent to the area.

Over the following days, the first of many deadly naval battles occurred—the Battle of Savo Island. The fight for control of Guadalcanal (and with it Henderson Field) and the seas around them continued for months with both sides continuing to lose men, ships and aircraft, but with no clear winner.

As the first amphibious invasion in the Pacific, the U.S. made many initial mistakes, including not having the proper resources on the beaches to move men and material inland. The logistical challenges of transport and supply across the Pacific were immense. Difficult jungle terrain, inhospitable weather, lack of infrastructure and a foe that fought to the death, gave the U.S. its first taste of what was to come throughout the Pacific Theater of War. It seemed that every time the U.S. fought to victory, the Japanese would resupply Guadalcanal by night and be ready for more fighting the next day. But eventually, U.S. forces gained the upper hand and by February 1943, the Japanese withdrew their final men and surrendered the island to the Allies.

The Outcome: The Solomon Islands Campaign cost the Allies approximately 7,100 men, 29 ships and 615 aircraft. The Japanese lost 31,000 men, 38 ships and 683 aircraft. Over the next two and a half years, U.S. forces captured the Gilbert Islands (Tarawa and Makin), the Marshall Islands (Kwajalein and Eniwetok), the Mariana Islands (Saipan, Guam, and Tinian), Iwo Jima and Okinawa. With each island reclaimed from the Japanese, the U.S. moved closer to Japan. Growing superiority at sea and in the air, as well as in the number of fighting men, gave the U.S. increasing advantages. Nonetheless, wherever U.S. forces met Japanese defenders, the enemy fought long and hard before being defeated.

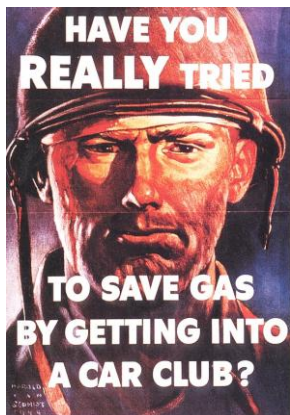


To learn more about the Battle for Guadalcanal:

www.nationalww2museum.org/see-hear/collections/focus-on/



THE HOME FRONT DURING WWII



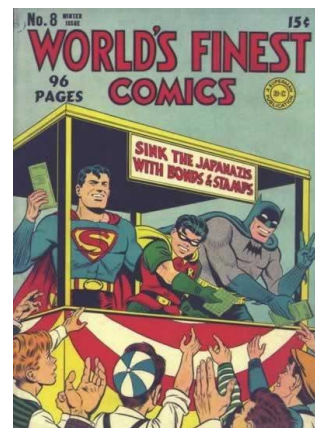
"We are now at war. We are now in it—all the way. Every single man, woman, and child is a partner in the most tremendous undertaking of our American history." So stated President Roosevelt on December 9, 1941, during his weekly radio address to the nation. With the bombing of Pearl Harbor, America had formally entered the war as a partner of the Allies in the fight for democracy—and life on the Home Front would never be the same.

Total war meant that all levels of the economy and all segments of society dedicated themselves to victory. FDR urged Americans to join the war effort by "out-producing and overwhelming the enemy." While scarcity, rationing, and shortages became regular topics of conversation, so too did talk of duty, patriotism, unity, and victory. The United States, which had the world's 18th largest military in 1939, mobilized itself for total war production almost overnight once the nation entered the war. The immediate conversion of peacetime industries into war production facilities involved companies of all sizes and types. Toy companies began to manufacture compasses. Typewriter companies made rifles and piano factories produced airplane motors. The Ford Motor Company ceased producing cars and began turning out tanks and bombers. And behind each soldier stood hundreds of civilian workers making everything an army needs to fight around the globe. The Depression was over. Full employment was a reality and confidence in victory was strong.

From 1940 until the Japanese surrender, the United States produced more than 300,000 aircraft, 86,000 tanks, and 12.5 million rifles. Its shipyards were just as productive, building 107 aircraft carriers, 352 destroyers, and 35 million tons of merchant shipping. The US also supplied a majority of war materials for its Allied partners. By 1945, the U.S. had produced more than twice the war supplies of Germany, Italy, and Japan combined.

While returning to work and earning more money, Americans on the Home Front also had to learn to ration their food, recycle their scrap, plant backyard "Victory Gardens," and cut back on travel. The government regulated the economy to control inflation, maintaining price and wage controls and instituting tight rationing programs throughout the war. Every family received ration books with stamps and coupons for food items such as meat, sugar, and butter, and other goods, like tires and gasoline. The government further encouraged civilians to collect fabric, scrap metal, and old tires for recycling. Rationing even changed fashion styles. Women's slacks and skirts became slimmer and shorter to save fabric and men's suits became cuff-less and vest-less. Millions of families observed *Meatless Mondays*, millions more helped fund the war by buying War Bonds.

The war permeated every aspect of life on the Home Front. Comic books, popular music, movies, and Broadway shows all had patriotic themes. Propaganda supporting the war effort was everywhere. Slogans like "Kick 'Em in the Axis" and "Can All You Can" became popular and made people feel that they could play a vital role in producing victory. And the battle on the Home Front changed America in vital ways as the workforce expanded to include women and minorities, people relocated to fill war industries, and the *United States* fulfilled its role as "Arsenal of Democracy." These changes were not always easy, but Americans made them with the same determination and optimism that they exhibited on the battlefields around the world.



"The principal battleground of the war is not the South Pacific. It is not the Middle East. It is not England, or Norway, or the Russian Steppes. It is American opinion."

—Archibald MacLeish, Director of the Office of Facts and Figures, forerunner of the Office of War Administration

What is a Victory Garden?



During World War II, Victory Gardens were planted by families in the United States (*the Home Front*) to help prevent a food shortage.



Planting Victory Gardens helped make sure that there was enough food for our soldiers fighting around the world. Because canned vegetables were rationed, Victory Gardens also helped people stretch their ration coupons (*the amount of certain foods they were allowed to buy at the store*).



Because trains and trucks had to be used to transport soldiers, vehicles, and weapons, most Americans ate local produce grown in their own communities.



Many different types of vegetables were grown—such as tomatoes, carrots, lettuce, beets, and peas. Victory Gardens were responsible for bringing Swiss chard and kohlrabi onto the American dinner table because they were easy to grow.



At their peak there were more than 20,000,000 Victory Gardens planted across the United States.



By 1944 Victory Gardens were responsible for producing 40% of all vegetables grown in the United States. More than one million tons of vegetables were grown in Victory Gardens during the war.



People with no yards planted small Victory Gardens in window boxes and watered them through their windows. Some city dwellers who lived in tall apartment buildings planted rooftop gardens and the whole building pitched in and helped.



Many schools across the country planted Victory Gardens on their school grounds and used their produce in their school lunches.



The U.S. government printed recipe books describing how to prepare home grown vegetables to make nutritional and tasty meals. Agricultural companies gave tips on how to make seedlings flourish in different climates.



Excess food grown in Victory Gardens was canned and used during the winter months to help supplement the amount of food available.



Growing Victory Gardens gave Americans on the Home Front a feeling that they were doing something helpful to win the war (*and they were*)!

Learn more about the Home Front at www.nationalww2museum.org