

THE SANDS OF WAIKIKI

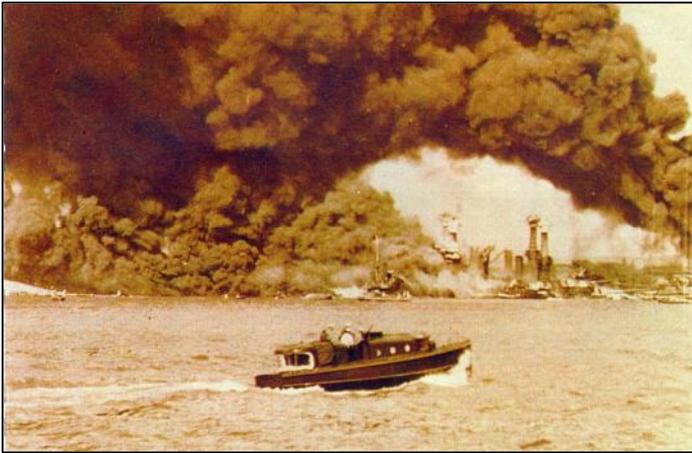
By John F. Hall

On December 7, 1941, a day that will live in infamy, the Empire of Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. The first picture in this story shows the two surprise deployment routes of the attacking Japanese planes on that day.



Later on in this true story, my wife's friend, Dorothy Kartus will share her experience of what she witnessed that day.

The second picture in this story shows the great battleships burning at their moorings.



The Navy's Pacific fleet was totally caught off guard at Pearl Harbor. The aftermath-2,403 people killed, 8 ships sank or beached and 10 ships damaged.

The third picture of this story shows the headline of the Honolulu Star Bulletin on the day of the attack.





The fourth picture of this story shows the barbed Wire on the Waikiki Beach after the attack on Pearl Harbor. I suspect that the Army erected the barbed wire, more to calm the fears of the local civilians, than to stop any potential ocean invasion by the Japanese.

The December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor was a tactical victory for Japan. But it was also a strategic blunder. The Japanese failed to destroy the American aircraft carriers. They failed to destroy the strategic oil reserves at Oahu. They only slightly damaged the ship yards and docks. The Japanese later made a secret raid, but the overcast weather and blackout curfew caused that night mission to be a total failure.

The first time I arrived on Waikiki Beach at Fort DeRussy, Hawaii was in 1965. I was 19 at the time. This was 24 years after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The average age of the sailors killed on the battleship Arizona during that attack was 23. I was a member of a security team guarding classified weapons on a World War II Merchant Marine ship. In a story that I wrote about being on that ship titled, "The Storm," I wrote about surviving a typhoon in the East China Sea. I ended that story with these words, "For one short moment in time, I was a sailor steering a ship in the East China Sea. I was, however briefly, a sailor once and young." To write realistically about being a sailor, a writer should have experience as a sailor on the high seas.

The Captain of the Merchant Marine ship gave us shore leave. This is what I wrote about that shore leave experience, "The ship's Captain, if my memory serves me well, had a white beard and he appeared to be in his fifties. He called the security team together for a meeting. He told us that we had three days of shore leave. He would put us ashore by the ship's tender (small motorized boat) onto Waikiki. After three days, he would send the ship's tender to pick us up. If we were not at the pick up point on the third day, he would leave without us. I had very little money, so I decided that I would sleep on the beach at the pick-up point. This was before the military hotel, the Hale Koa Hotel, was built on this government beach property called Fort DeRussy. There was a restroom and showers on this property. The Army's Military Police (MP) patrolled this beach. One night the MPs woke me up. I showed them my military ID and travel orders. I explained my situation. They told me to be careful. The local Hawaiians told me where to eat, away from the high priced tourist areas. A fellow team member rented a Honda motor scooter and he invited me to ride on the back as he drove around the city and up to Diamond Head Mountain."

The American author, George Santayana wrote, “Those who cannot remember the past



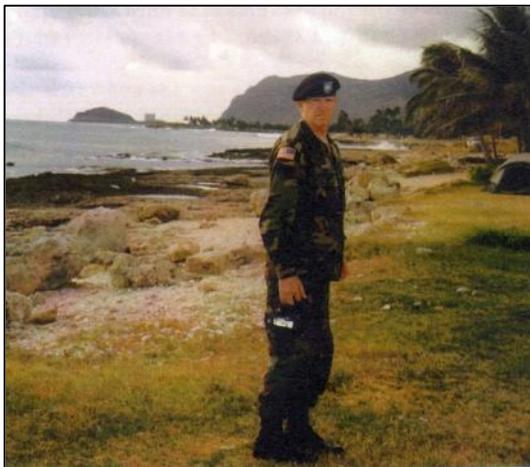
are condemned to repeat it. Studying history is necessary to avoid repeating past mistakes.” The price of freedom is constant vigilance. Freedom is not free. The sailors entombed in the Arizona made that supreme sacrifice. The Army sent me to Tripler to assess and update their security plan. I had two weeks to complete that mission. I was given an office and access to all the facilities as the IRR Provost Marshal. The fifth picture in this story was taken in that office.

There is another side to this story. The sixth picture in this story shows the Hale Koa Hotel that the Army built on Fort DeRussy in 1971. Only the military, their dependents and retirees can stay there. I paid to have my wife, Paula accompany me on that two-



week Active Duty for Training (ADT) assignment. We had to stay at the Hale Koa Hotel for one week until quarters became available at the Tripler Medical Center. I was busy working on the security plan update, but I took the weekend off so Paula could visit a former DOD counterpart on the west side of Oahu. I could not tell my wife what Honolulu FBI Special Agent Sam S.C. Mum told me about the Hale Koa Hotel. It was the number one target for a possible terrorist attack due to the fact

that it is a soft target and a significant number of active duty military stay in its 817 rooms.



Most tourists to Hawaii stay on the tropical Waikiki beach area. Not that many travel to the west side of the island. The seventh picture in this story shows me standing on the rocky, rugged terrain on that side of the island.

I turned 59 on the day that Paula and I went to visit Dorothy Kartus at her ranch. She is a native Hawaiian. She has a few cattle and two horses in Oahu's arid Waianae Valley. Her ranch is a tiny part of the 200,000-acre land

trust that serves as neighborhoods, farms and ranches for native Hawaiians. Her house is below a mountain. The grass was all brown from the lack of rain. Dorothy was Paula's counterpart at the Tripler Army Medical center. Paula was the Chief of Admin Services at the Fort Campbell Army Hospital before she retired. They become friends when they attended records management conferences in Denver and New Orleans. The eight picture shows us inside Dorothy's home.



Under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920, Dorothy Kartus has a 99-year lease at \$1 a year that can be passed down to her children or grandchildren, so long as they can prove 25 percent Hawaiian ancestry. Sadly, Oahu has the largest per-capita homeless population in the United States. The average price of a single-family home is three

quarters of a million dollars. Many Hawaiian grandparents wind of taking care of their grandchildren because the parents work two and three jobs just to make ends meet. Dorothy raised her grandchildren.

Dorothy told me that when she was a young girl, she was walking across the pasture on the ranch. She heard several planes flying very close to the ground. She looked up and clearly saw the face of one of the Japanese pilots. She was too young to understand what was going on. She said that she would never forget what happened that day and what that pilot did to those brave soldiers on those ships in Pearl Harbor.

At the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii was a U.S. Territory. After the attack, Marshal Law was declared and it lasted almost four years. On August 21, 1959, Hawaii became the 50th State. From my memories of sleeping on the sands of Waikiki Beach almost 40 years ago, to looking out of my window at Tripler, towards Pearl Harbor, 15 years ago, I never forgot the meaning of a Hawaiian word. Aloha is found in silence, lived in peace and passed in love.

John F. Hall

*Read more stories written by John F. Hall at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>