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# A Date in Infamy

DECEMBER 03RD 2011 BY UNKNOWN

## A Date in Infamy

***By Jo Ann Emerson***

Seventy years ago, our nation was attacked at Pearl Harbor. In Southern Missouri, many citizens remain among us who lived through that day and the war that followed. They are a present part of our history. They served and sacrificed so that our nation might survive the aftermath of the Japanese massacre that Hawaii morning, December 7, 1941.

Wartime America in the years that followed demonstrated the strength, courage and character of our nation. Every family sacrificed something... a loved one who enlisted, a mother who went to work, or rationing of food, gas and other basic materials. But it was always the tragedy of Pearl Harbor that rallied our spirits during dark times. The memory of that somber day awakened our will to win the war in the Pacific.

Only a few thousand survivors of the battle of Pearl Harbor remain with us today. These Americans, in their eighties, nineties and hundreds, are national treasures and witnesses to a lesson in history we must not let slip.

The defense of our country from all threats, whether known or unknown, is essential to our very freedom.

We cannot be secure or free without the willingness of Americans to serve in uniform, on the vanguard of our shores, in remote places around the world where forces conspire against liberty and democracy.

We must also remember the code of national sacrifice that allowed us to reach our

national goal of victory in World War II. Anyone who lived through the era will tell you that the war effort required every American to put country ahead of self. Everyone went without something in order to help our troops accomplish their mission, and doing so united our entire nation in purpose.

Pearl Harbor reminded us, just as September 11th did, that our freedoms make us a target for other nations and organizations around the globe. We are a light of liberty to the rest of the world, but it is not simply the fact of our liberty that makes others envious – it is how well we make use of our liberty to achieve great things.

The ensuing war reminded us that we are unique among nations for what we Americans can accomplish through tremendous combined effort. We must always be ready to make that effort. We must always observe the responsibilities of our freedom.

And, in retrospect, it is clear that the sacrifices of World War II were not made selfishly for the Greatest Generation of that era, but for their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. They gave everything so freedom would survive through the generations. There is no greater gift than that, and no greater debt we must repay.

Unfortunately, it is all too often tragedy or adversity that causes us to realize these precious things about our nation. But the anniversary of a dramatic, unprovoked assault on our nation serves as no better time to recall the great blessings we must protect beneath our ever-present flag.

The motto of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association serves to instill in us the important legacy of that grave day 70 years ago. It says: “Remember Pearl Harbor – Keep America Alert – Eternal Vigilance Is the Price of Liberty.”

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