

Back to Pearl Harbor Territory of Hawaii

On July 23, 1941, when this picture was taken Adrian and Wanda were probably already fearful of events happening in the world that could shatter the lives of many Americans including theirs. His leave time in California ended on September 17 with what must have been a heart wrenching goodbye. Adrian had already spent eight months at Pearl Harbor and was heading back. Wanda returned to Brooklyn to live with her parents.



Photo # 80-G-182874 Pearl Harbor, looking southwest, 30 October 1941



This aerial photo was made on October 30, 1941 about two weeks after Adrian had returned. Battleships were usually clustered close to Ford Island lined up in a row while cruisers were anchored in East Loch. The narrow entrance into the harbor can be seen at the top of the photo. This view is looking south toward the Pacific Ocean.

Thanksgiving



MENU

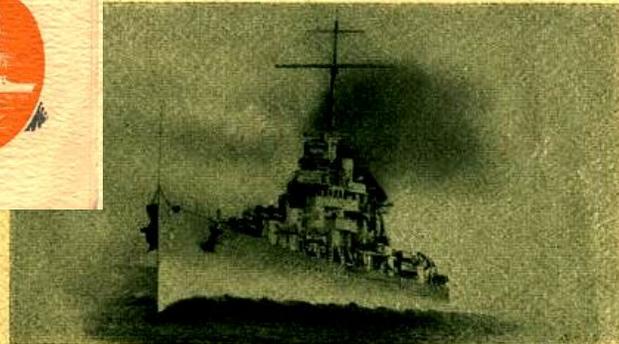
NOVEMBER
TWENTIETH
1 9 4 1



U. S. S. HELENA

Thanksgiving on board the USS Helena November 20, 1941.

Adrian probably would not have eaten pumpkin pie! We never had pumpkin pie at Thanksgiving!



U. S. S. HELENA



CAPTAIN R. H. ENGLISH, U. S. NAVY
COMMANDING

COMMANDER V. C. BARRINGER JR., U. S. NAVY
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

LIEUT. COMMANDER F. M. HOOK (SC) U. S. NAVY
SUPPLY OFFICER

CHIEF PAY CLERK T. M. WELCH, U. S. NAVY
COMMISSARY OFFICER

MENU THANKSGIVING DAY



OLIVES	HEARTS OF CELERY
CREAM OF TOMATO SOUP	
SODA CRACKERS	
ROAST YOUNG TURKEY	
GIBLET GRAVY	CRANBERRY SAUCE
OYSTER DRESSING	
BAKED HAM IN PINEAPPLE	
GREEN PEAS	BUTTERED ASPARAGUS TIPS
MASHED POTATOES	
FRESH FRUITS	MERINGUE PUMPKIN PIE
NEAPOLITAN ICE CREAM	
LEMONADE	
BREAD	BUTTER
	S. P. DUSHANE, C.C.STD., U.S.N.
	T. E. LEDOUX, C.C.STD., U.S.N.

Fall Events in Adrian's life:

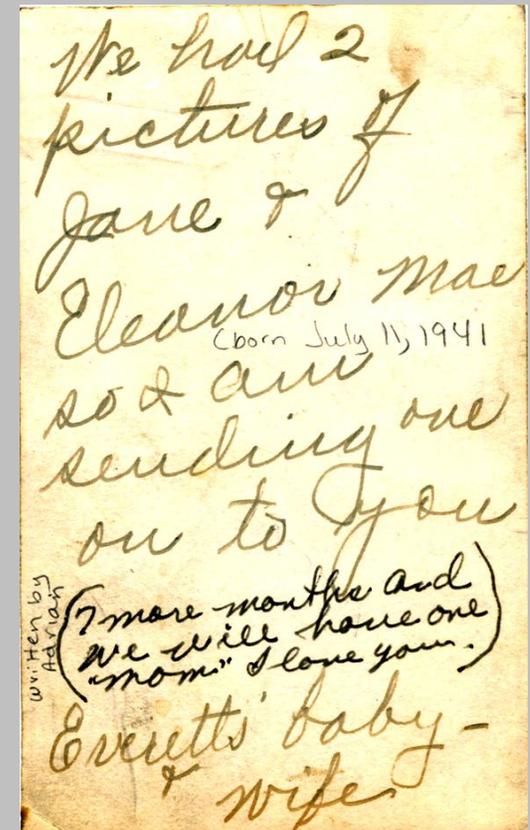
17 September 1941 – qualified as FC(M) 3c

Fire controlman third class – The M indicates an expertise in the maintenance of fire control systems. He had already qualified as a gun pointer. It is more complicated than it sounds since their aim had to be adjusted for hitting a moving target from a moving ship while taking into account wind, distance, and characteristics of the projectile.

3 to 18 October 1941 - Helena in route from California to Hawaii

Mid October –Adrian's mother sent him a picture of his sister-in-law, Jane and their new daughter. The picture can be seen here along with the note written on the back. Adrian's mother noted: "We had 2 pictures of Jane & Eleanor Mae so I am sending one on to you. Everett's baby & wife."

Many months ago, I had sorted this picture into an "unimportant" stack but later flipped the picture over and carefully read the back. It amazed me!



The back of a photograph with handwritten text in black ink. The text reads: "We had 2 pictures of Jane & Eleanor Mae (born July 11, 1941) so I am sending one on to you (7 more months and we will have one 'mom' I love you.) Everett's baby & wife". On the left side, there is a vertical stamp that says "Written by Adrian".



By comparing handwriting and remembering my father's script, I was able to determine that the note written in black was added by Adrian before mailing it to Wanda. He added "7 more months and we will have one "mom." I love you." I have noted Eleanor's date of birth. When all events are put together it becomes obvious that Wanda was pregnant when she left California in August of 1941.

Prelude to the Japanese attack

Along with thousands of other sailors, Adrian was located in the exact spot destined to pull the United States into a second world war.

So why was the world in this state?

Everyone knows about Adolf Hitler and his desire to take over as much of the world as possible. War in Europe had been declared in 1939 but was mostly contained in Europe. The average American did not want to enter a war that was not posing a direct threat to us. But of course, Pearl Harbor was not attacked by the Germans or Italians but the Japanese.

Why would Japan do such a thing?

During the 1920s, Japan realized that they had little or no coal, gas, or other natural resources necessary to compete with the growing complexity of the modern world. Their answer to this problem was to expand their control into areas that did have these resources. In 1931 Japan invaded China and over the next decade continued to take over any place nearby that had resources. In 1940 Japan joined with Germany in the Axis Alliance. They began taking over Indochina (Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam). They knew the United States would block their attempts to take over or control the islands in the Pacific Ocean.



Japanese troops capture Nanking

Photo: UPL/Corbis/Bettman

The spies among us

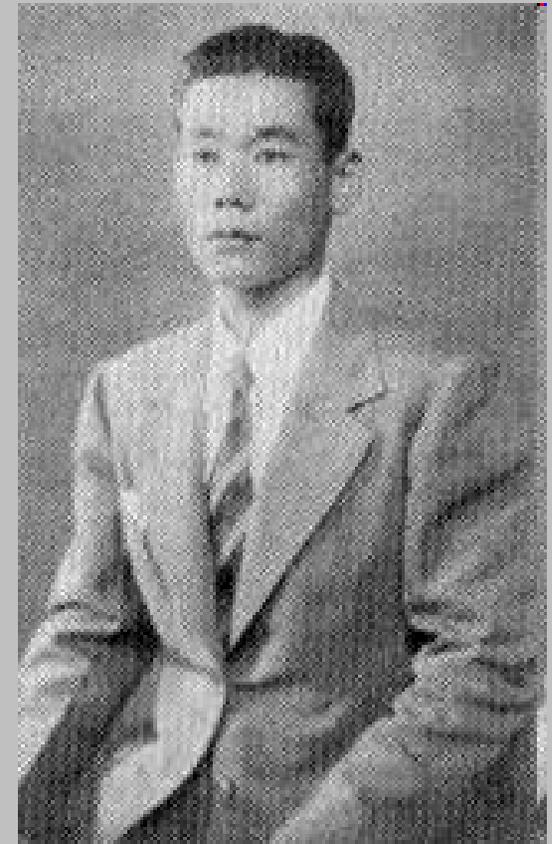
In the spring of 1940, the US Pacific Fleet (which included the USS Helena with Adrian on board) was moved to Oahu's Pearl Harbor in the Territory of Hawaii. When this move occurred, Japan perceived it as a threat to their security and a convenient location to be used by the USA to launch an attack on Tokyo. Relations with Japan worsened when President Roosevelt banned exports of metals, metal products, and aviation fuel to Japan. The President also signed a secret order allowing former military personnel to fight in China against the Japanese. This left Japan with a choice of giving in to the USA and leaving China as they waited for their resources to run out or go on the attack to seize what they wanted.

Naval Commander Isoroku Yamamoto believed that Japan could not defeat the Americans in a long war but that the answer lay in a surprise attack on the US Navy.

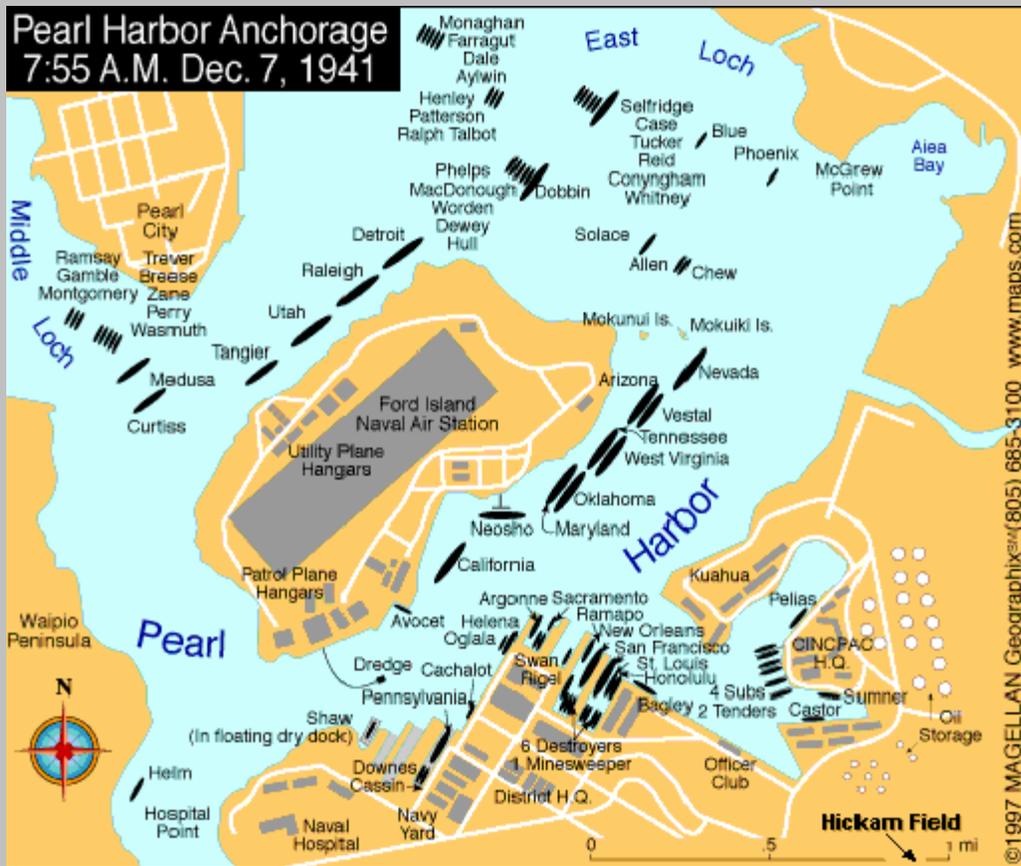
How did the Japanese know what was happening in Pearl Harbor?

Before the attack on December 7, 1941, there were quite a few Japanese spies watching the US military installations. Since there were about 160,000 people of Japanese descent already living in Hawaii, it was impossible to tell friend from foe.

One of the most important spies was Takeo Yoshikawa (seen here), a young man introduced as a junior diplomat. He actually was a Japanese naval reserve ensign sent to spy. He had a location above Pearl Harbor with a great view of the US military installations; and used two telescopes to watch. He and his spy network sent reports twice weekly to Japan until the attack occurred.



The most closely watched were the battleships and airfields. Americans believed that problems would come from sabotage or a sea invasion. By placing the Navy in a harbor having a narrow neck with the battleships closest to the entrance, it was hoped that the harbor would provide protection. "Battleship Row" can be seen in the diagram below above the word "harbor" written in blue. The only battleship in the area not in the group was the Pennsylvania that was in dry dock. Note: Battleships are named after states. Also, by placing the airplanes together on the airfields, they could be more easily watched for saboteurs. Both these plans would backfire on the Americans. The Japanese, through their spy network, knew all of this; so as they devised an attack plan, it had to be the opposite of what was expected.



Hickam Field

Wrong place, wrong time

On November 26, 1941 the Helena was scheduled to escort three Standard Oil tankers to Vladivostok, Russia, located between China and the Sea of Japan. Because the Helena had problems with an anchor windlass, they remained in Hawaii while the USS Boise, another light cruiser took its place. When war broke out 11 days later, the Boise, now cruising around the Philippines was reassigned to the Asiatic Fleet.

During the first week of December, the Helena was docked at pier 1010 which was normally occupied by the battleship the USS Pennsylvania, flagship of the Pacific Fleet. The Pennsylvania was in dry-dock getting some repairs done and for some reason, the Navy chose to park the Helena in its place. It was docked with its left side against the pier. The USS Oglala, a very old passenger ship launched in 1907 and converted into a mine layer, was tied directly to the Helena and was involved with off-loading ammunition.



Though this picture was taken October 13, 1941 two months before the attack, pier 1010, so named because it was 1,010 feet long, can be clearly seen. It was a long, open-sided pier.

Because the intelligence sent back to Japan by the spy network was a few days old, the bombers were told to focus on pier 1010 expecting the Pennsylvania to be moored in that position. Unluckily for the Helena and the Oglala, they were in the wrong place at the wrong time!

Prior to the attack, the fleet's duties consisted of patrolling the areas around Hawaii and practicing maneuvers and gunnery exercises. The fleet was divided into two groups that rotated between patrolling and being in port. A group would leave on a Monday, staying out for 12 days, and returning on Friday. That meant that every third weekend the entire Pacific fleet would be in port. This schedule was adhered to for over a year.

Our position on several issues made us vulnerable for the type of attack Japan would make:

- *Due to the perceived threat of sabotage, planes at the air fields were bunched together for surveillance and protection, making them more easily destroyed in a bombing raid.

- *Because of the predictable fleet cycle the spies had observed, the Japanese knew the whole fleet would be anchored in the harbor December 6th and 7th.

- *Because the navy felt that the shallow harbor was safe from torpedoes, Japan developed a special shallow depth torpedo with wooden fins that could be dropped from planes.

Therefore, there were no torpedo nets in use anywhere in the harbor.

- *All of the ammunition boxes on board the ships were locked due to peacetime regulations.



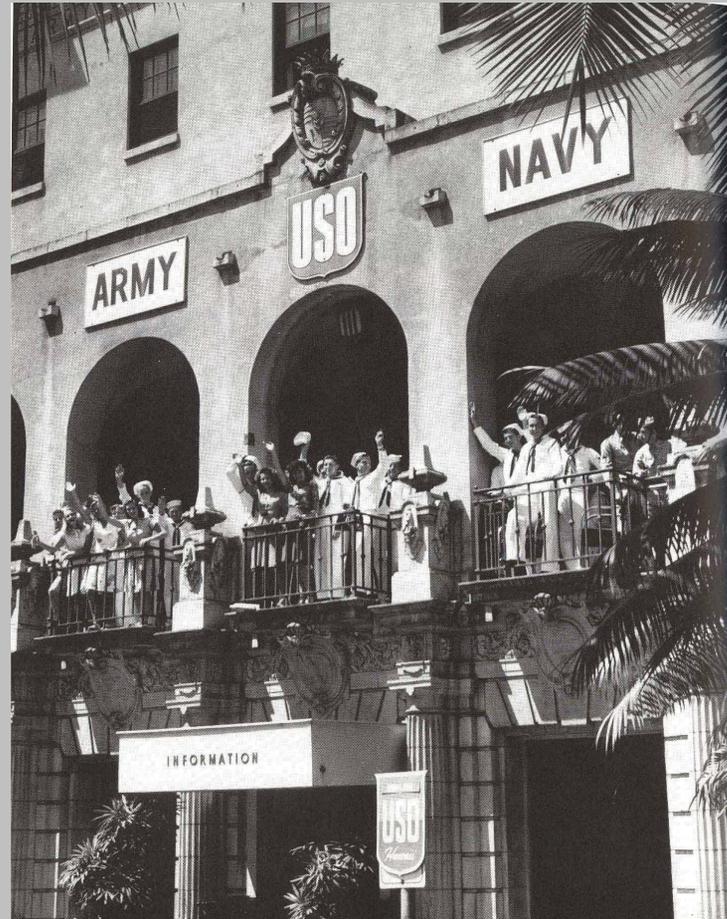
USS Helena

Why was there no warning?

Washington, DC: Saturday, December 6. Late in the day the code-breaking service began intercepting and decoding a 14 part message between Japan and its diplomats in Washington. Thirteen of the parts were decoded. On Sunday morning the final part was decoded at 9:00 in the morning Washington time – several hours before the attack. In it, Japan was breaking off diplomatic ties. This was a sure sign of war.

Washington sent out an alert to Hawaii but used commercial telegraph because radio contact with Hawaii was temporarily not working. This delay prevented the alert from arriving at military headquarters in Hawaii until noon – four hours after the attack had begun.

At 7:02 Hawaii time, two radio operators in Oahu's radar station on the north shore detected incoming planes. Though they felt like there were a lot of them, the officer they informed told them to disregard what radar was telling them. He thought they were American B-17 bombers coming in from the west coast of the USA.



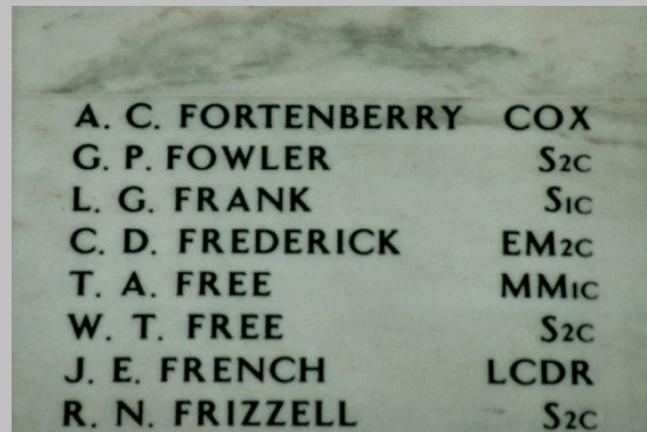
USO on Oahu

On the evening of December 6, Adrian visited his cousin, Alvie Fortenberry who was stationed on the battleship USS Arizona. He had joined the Navy on December 16, 1939 from the Receiving Station in New Orleans, LA. Like Adrian, he grew up in Pike County, Mississippi.

The Arizona and all the other battleships were the prime targets for the Japanese planes. On December 7 at 8:06 in the morning, a bomb hit the powder magazine, and the Arizona pretty much blew apart. She lost 1,177 of her crew of 1,400. Alvie went down with his ship. His name is listed at the top of the fourth column on the wall at the Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor.



On a personal note, John and I visited Pearl Harbor and the Arizona Memorial in the summer of 1997. At that time, there were quite a few survivors still alive, and before each tour one would speak. The old guy talking to us reminded me a lot of Daddy, who had just died the year before. It was an emotionally difficult time, but I am glad I went. Photo: Me standing next to the Arizona's anchor.



Pearl Harbor

December 7, 1941

An unforgettable 23rd birthday!

Sunday morning, December 7, 1941 dawned with clear skies, a light breeze, and a temperature in the 70s.

While in port, Sunday mornings usually had a "holiday" feel to them. The crew on board not on duty took the opportunity to begin the day a little slower. Between 7 and 8 that Sunday morning, crew members could be found sleeping late, reading in the berths or on deck, or eating a "late" breakfast. As with the other ships in port, about half the crew had been given liberty, and they were still on shore. Quite a few were at Camp Andrews for R and R. Only a few had to be on duty in the engineering areas and signal room.

Photo # 80-G-71198 Japanese planes prepare to take off to attack Pearl Harbor, 7 Dec. 1941



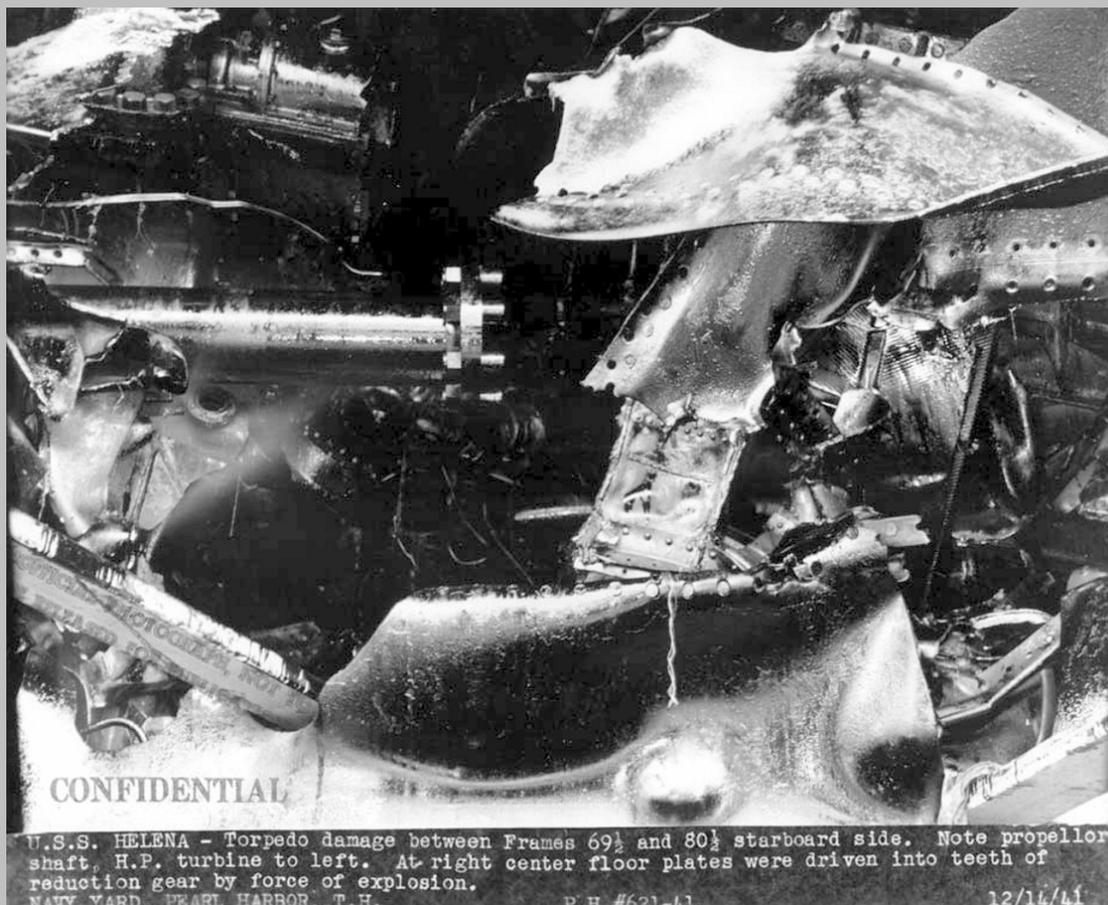
At this point in development, planes were not able to fly from Japan to Hawaii without refueling so the Japanese moved over 350 airplanes on 6 aircraft carriers to within 200 miles of Pearl Harbor. The attack was to be in two waves with the first wave focused on air fields and battleships.

There was a lot of fog out at sea, but the Japanese did not have to worry about finding Oahu and Pearl Harbor. As it turned out, the popular radio station that broadcast from Honolulu actually provided the attackers a "homing" device for finding the fleet. All they had to do was follow the radio signal!

In addition to attacking Pearl Harbor, the Japanese also struck Hong Kong, Guam, the Philippine Islands, and Wake Island on December 7.

At 7:57, the Helena's general alarm was sounded to man battle stations. Due to good military training, the order to report was followed; but many wondered why they were having a drill on a Sunday morning, and most thought that someone had tripped the alarm. Those on deck knew it was not a drill because they could see the planes coming and bombs being dropped on Ford Island.

At 7:58, a huge explosion caused the Helena to lift 2 or 3 feet on the starboard (right) side. This was the side where the USS Oglala was tied. Because the Oglala had recently off loaded the ammunition from their hold, they were riding high in the water. The torpedo went under it and struck the Helena about 18 feet below the waterline. The hole from the torpedo flooded several boiler rooms, fifteen fuel tanks, and the ship's generator which caused a temporary loss of power. It was large enough for a car to drive through. The blast also blew the riveted seams apart on the left side of the Oglala causing it to sink within two hours.





Unusual record of events!

R. W. Husong (Machinist mate 1st class) is holding the clock that stopped at the time power on the ship was lost when the torpedo struck the Helena. During this time, clocks were not run by batteries as they are today.

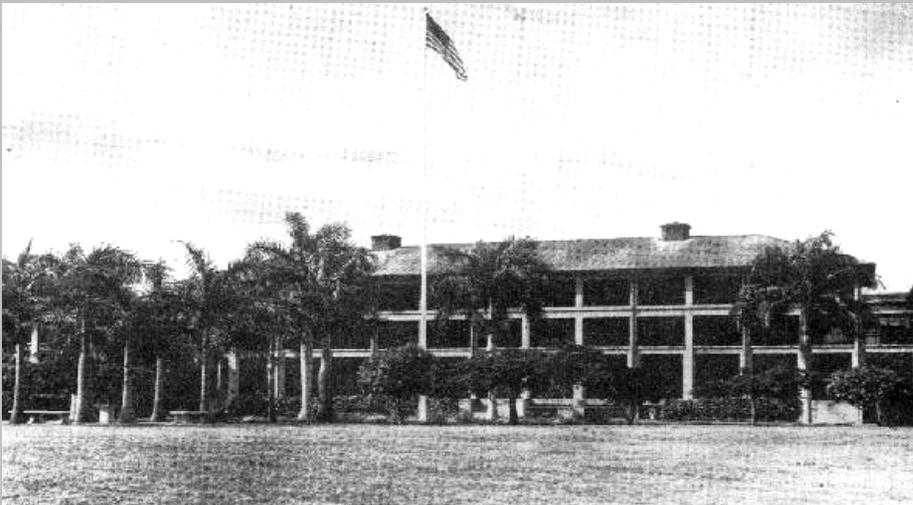
Strangely enough, this is an exact record of the moment Adrian was wounded.

Where was he, and what was he doing at the time of the attack?

Since Adrian never talked much about his experiences, I have pieced the story together from many sources.

Adrian and a bunk mate named James Shaw were below on their bunks reading comic books. The alarm sounded to report to battle stations. They both got up quickly. Shaw threw his comic on his bed and ran out the door while Adrian took the time to put his in his locker. By the time Adrian turned around and entered the hallway to go to his station, the torpedo struck the ship, causing him to fall after stepping through one of the hatch doors. As the flash blew through the hallway, most of the fire went over Adrian's body because he was somewhat protected by the framework around the hatch door. Without that framework around the door, he most likely would have died.

When Adrian made it to his station he was probably going into shock. His fellow sailors told him to get some medical help. Because of the chaos, he was told to get off the ship and find someone to take him to the Naval Hospital. He was the first person to leave the Helena, and in the ensuing battle was not officially logged off the ship. He made his way to shore and was taken to the hospital. His next memory was on December 10 when a Navy nurse was asking him to try to wake up. The hospital staff probably did not know who he was, and the Helena did not know for sure where he was. His burns were treated with tannic acid both as a mist and an ointment. He remained in the hospital until December 15.



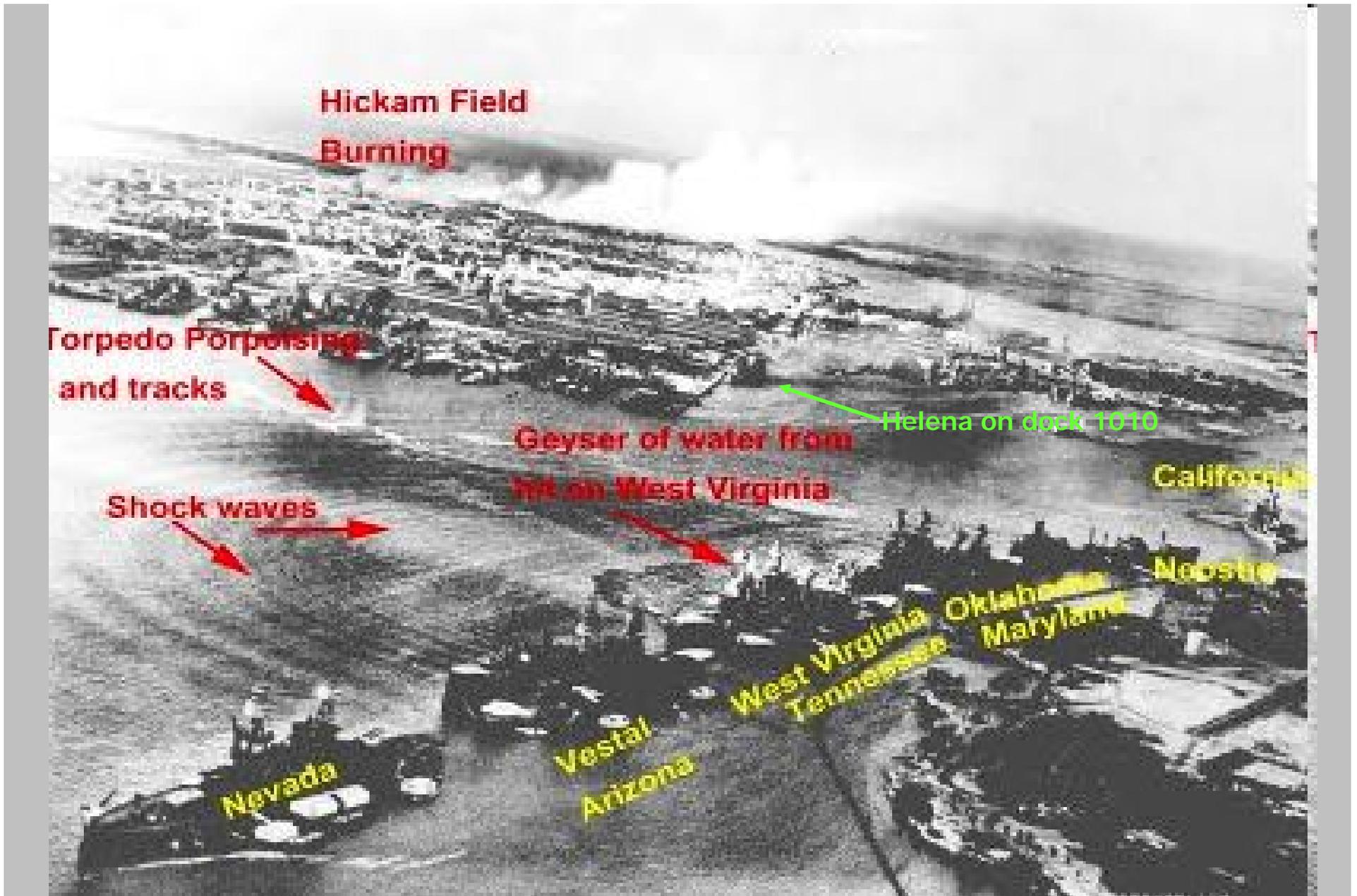
The US Naval Hospital at Pearl Harbor, summer of 1941, where the wounded from the USS Helena CL 50 were treated after the attack on December 7, 1941. 67 were wounded and 33 were killed on the Helena.

Photo # NH 50931 Japanese torpedo attack on "Battleship Row", Pearl Harbor, 7 Dec. 1941



Picture taken from a Japanese airplane.

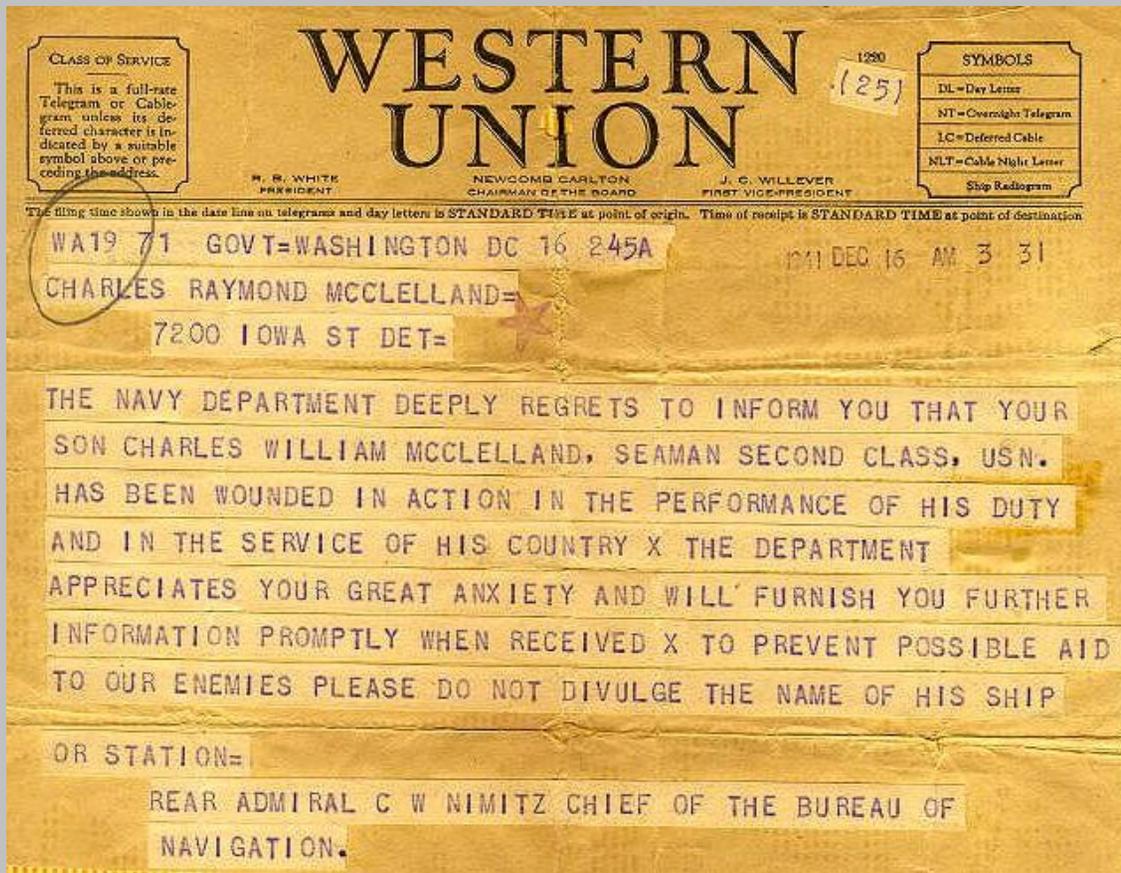
The [following slide](#) shows this same image but with labels to identify what you are seeing. I have added the green label showing the location of the Helena. The red and yellow labels were by someone else.



Notice that Hickam Field was already hit as was the Helena. Adrian was probably still on board making his way to his battle station. This photo was taken by a Japanese pilot seconds before the line of battleships was hit by torpedoes.

Below is an image of the telegram sent to the parents of Charlie McClelland, also on the Helena. His brother, Jim (Mac) McClelland was a friend and fellow fire controlman on the Helena with Adrian.

Except for names and addresses, this would be identical to the copy of the telegraph Adrian's parents would have received. The Navy only changed the name and rank of the sailor.



When we were children, Reggie and I remember an old trunk in the basement that contained lots of love letters our parents had written to each other during the war. We loved to sneak to down there and go through the trunk and try to imagine our parents writing such mushy stuff! Among the things we remember reading was a telegram like this sent to Momma in New York. According to our recollections, that telegram said missing in action, not wounded. It was probably dated within a couple of days of the attack before Adrian woke up in the hospital. Some time in the late 1950's the basement flooded after a heavy rain and all the water logged papers were thrown away.

As you read this letter sent to the Navy by Sheldon Fortenberry, Adrian's uncle, you can see that the telegram reporting Adrian being wounded went to Mississippi instead of Georgia where Adrian's parents, Ferman and Mae Fortenberry were now living. The date of the original telegram was December 16, 1941, 9 days after the attack. It took two extra days for the message to make its way from Mississippi to Georgia. His parents had heard nothing until this time. It appears that the Navy did not send out much information about the wounded until the dust had settled. This would have made for an anxious 9 days for family members that knew their loved ones were stationed on a ship in Pearl Harbor.

MRS. ADA KNOX WOOD,
PRESIDENT

JOHN W. STONEY,
VICE-PRES.

SHELDON B. FORTINBERRY,
SECY. TREAS. & GEN. MGR.

THE A. A. WOOD & SONS COMPANY

MAKERS OF TOOLS AND MACHINERY

INCORPORATED 1899

P. O. BOX 937

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

December 18, 1941

DEC 23 1941

ALBERT A. WOOD
EDWARD P. WOOD
ALBERT P. WOOD
FOUNDERS

AIR MAIL

Navy Department
Washington, D. C.

Attention: Rear Admiral C. W. Nimitz,
Chief of the Bureau

Gentlemen:

Will you be good enough to refer to your wire of December 16th to Mr. F. E. Fortinberry reading as follows:

"THE NAVY DEPARTMENT DEEPLY REGRETS TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON ADRIAN WOODROW FORTINBERRY FIRE CONTROLMAN THIRD CLASS USN HAS BEEN WOUNDED IN ACTION IN THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS DUTY AND IN THE SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY. THE DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES YOUR GREAT ANXIETY AND WILL FURNISH YOU FURTHER INFORMATION PROMPTLY WHEN RECEIVED. TO PREVENT POSSIBLE AID TO OUR ENEMIES PLEASE DO NOT DIVULGE THE NAME OF HIS SHIP OR STATION."

and change your records so that any additional information available to you regarding Adrian can be sent direct to F. E. Fortinberry, Indian Creek Drive, Clarkston, Georgia.

You will note from the records that Adrian enlisted at Osyka, Mississippi, and for this reason the message of the 16th was, of course, sent to Osyka and Adrian's parents are very anxious that you be notified of their change of address since the date of Adrian's enlistment so that any further information regarding his condition may be sent to them at Clarkston and also in order that you may have this information for your records.

Thanking you, I am

Yours very truly,

S. B. Fortinberry
(Brother)

SBF:S

Copy to Mr. F. E. Fortinberry
Indian Creek Drive, Clarkston, Ga.

Name FORTINBERRY, Adrian Woodrow
(Name in full, surname to the left.)
No. 274 32 33 Rate FC(M)3c (A.A. / P.A.)
Date reported 18 September 1939
Ship or Station U.S.S. HELENA
From RS AT NEW YORK

7 Dec 1941: Trans. to USNH, Pearl Harbor, T.H., for treatment.

Date transferred 7 December 1941
To USNH, Pearl Harbor, T.H.
R.H. R.H. ENGLISH, Captain, USN, (VCB)
Signature and rank of Commanding Officer.
Date received 7 December, 1941.
Ship or Station U.S.S. HOSPITAL, Pearl Harbor, T.H.
From USS HELENA.
R.H. R. HAYDEN, Captain, (MC), USN.
Signature and rank of Commanding Officer. 4-6111

Navy record indicating Adrian's transfer to the Naval Hospital. This paper was filled out many days after the attack. Note: T.H. means Territory of Hawaii.

Name FORTINBERRY, Adrian Woodrow.
(Name in full, surname to the left.)
No. 274 32 33 Rate FC(M)3c. (A.A. / P.A.)
Date reported 7 December, 1941.
Ship or Station USN HOSPITAL, Pearl Harbor, T.H.
From USS HELENA.

Treatment completed, to duty.
NOT misconduct. Auth: Art.
D-7017 (i) Bunav Manual.

Date transferred December 15, 1941.
To USS HELENA
R.H. R. HAYDEN, CAPTAIN, (MC), USN.
Signature and rank of Commanding Officer.
Date received 15 December 1941
Ship or Station U.S.S. HELENA
From USNH, Pearl Harbor, T.H.
R.H. R.H. ENGLISH, Captain, USN, (VCB)
Signature and rank of Commanding Officer.

37052

Navy record indicating Adrian's transfer from the Naval Hospital back to the Helena. He was in the hospital 8 days.

(COPY)
AGREEMENT TO EXTEND ENLISTMENT

U. S. S. HELENA
Location Pearl Harbor, T.H.
Date 16 December 1941, C. S. C. No. --
I, Adrian Woodrow, FORTINBERRY
Ser. No. 274 32 33 Rate FC3c

having enlisted in the NAVY OF THE UNITED STATES for
FOUR years under a contract of
enlistment for which accepted at New Orleans, La.

and made on 18 December 1937 do hereby,
for the considerations mentioned therein, and in the Act
of Congress approved 22 August, 1912, solemnly swear
(or affirm) that I voluntarily agree to extend my said

enlistment for a period of TWO (2) full
years from the date of expiration thereof, subject to the
provisions and obligations of my said contract of enlistment
of which this, my voluntary agreement, shall form a part;
and I do further solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will bear
true faith and allegiance to the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
and that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against
all their enemies whomsoever; and that I will obey the orders
of the President of the United States, and the orders of the
officers appointed over me according to the rules and articles for
the government of the Navy.

Adrian Woodrow Fortinberry
(Signature)

SUBSCRIBED and sworn to before me this 16th

day of DECEMBER, A. D. 1941
and this contract is hereby perfected and accepted for and
in behalf of the United States. Service thereunder to
begin from the date following the date the original contract
of enlistment would have expired had it not been extended.

This is the first extension of current enlistment.

U. S. S. HELENA Pearl Harbor, T.H.
(Station) (Place)
V. C. BARRINGER, Jr., Comdr., USN
(Signature and rank) Commanding Officer.

EXAMINED and found physically qualified for extension
of enlistment: (Examination to be held just prior to expiration
of current enlistment.)

Date December 17, 1941

Station U. S. S. HELENA
J. S. MOORE, Lieut. (jg) (MC), USN
(Signature and rank) Medical Officer.

The enlistment described on the reverse side has this
date 17 December 1941 expired and
tomorrow the extension thereof as set forth will become
effective, the man having made good all time lost as prescribed
in the Act of 29 August, 1916 (as amended), as set forth below.

From: To: Elapsed Time:
NONE

Pearl Harbor, T.H.

(Location on effective date)

FINAL MARKS

Proficiency in rating 3.73

Conduct 4.0

Recommended for Good Conduct Medal Yes

Otherwise entitled to Honorable
(Character of discharge)

V. C. BARRINGER, Jr., Comdr., USN
(Signature and rank) Commanding Officer.

U. S. S. HELENA

(Station)

Travel allowance credited, 2162 \$ 106.10
(Miles) (Amount)

From Pearl Harbor, T.H.
(Place extension becomes effective)

To New Orleans, La.
(Place of acceptance, etc.)

Enlistment allowance credited, \$ 200.00

(Signature and rank) Disbursing Officer.

USS HELENA

(Station)

NOTES

- (1) The extension of enlistment must be entered into and accepted before the original enlistment has in fact expired.
- (2) Physical examination to be held just prior to expiration of enlistment.
- (3) When accepted, file original and one copy after last page 9 and forward one copy to the Bureau.
- (4) When extension becomes effective, forward original to the Bureau.
- (5) Upon cancellation of agreement, forward original to the Bureau with notation as to reason and authority for cancellation.

Adrian's
reenlistment
papers were
signed the day
after returning
from the Naval
Hospital.

In the event of war or national emergency declared by the President to exist during my term of service I further oblige and subject myself to serve until six months after the end of the war or national emergency if so required by the Secretary of the Navy unless I voluntarily reenlist or extend my enlistment and I understand that when so detailed addition of one fourth pay as specified in RS 1422 is not applicable.

Adrian Woodrow Fortinberry
Adrian Woodrow, Fortinberry,
FC3c, U.S. Navy.

Though this reenlistment was written for two additional years, the war did not end for four years. If you read the oath taken by Adrian, once this reenlistment occurred in 1941, he had agreed to remain in the service until 6 months after the war. Luckily, he did not have to serve an additional six months after the war ended.

Name FORTINBERRY, Adrian Woodrow
No. 274 32 33 (Name in full, surname in full)
Rate FC(M)3c. (A.A.)
Date reported 15 December 1941
Ship U.S.S. HELENA
Station USNH, Pearl Harbor, T.H.
From _____

16 December 1941: Voluntarily executed an agreement to extend his current enlistment for a period of two (2) full years.

V.C. Barringer, Jr.
V.C. BARRINGER, Jr.,
Commander, U.S. Navy.

17 December 1941: Current enlistment has this date expired, and tomorrow an extension of two (2) full years will become effective. No time loss. Otherwise entitled to an Honorable Discharge. Is recommended for Good Conduct Medal.

V.C. Barringer, Jr.
V.C. BARRINGER, Jr.,
Commander, U.S. Navy.

17 December 1941: Completed four years net service for pay purposes this date.

V.C. Barringer, Jr.
V.C. BARRINGER, Jr.,
Commander, U.S. Navy.

Date transferred _____

To _____

Signature and rank of Commanding Officer.

Date received _____

Ship _____

or _____

Station _____

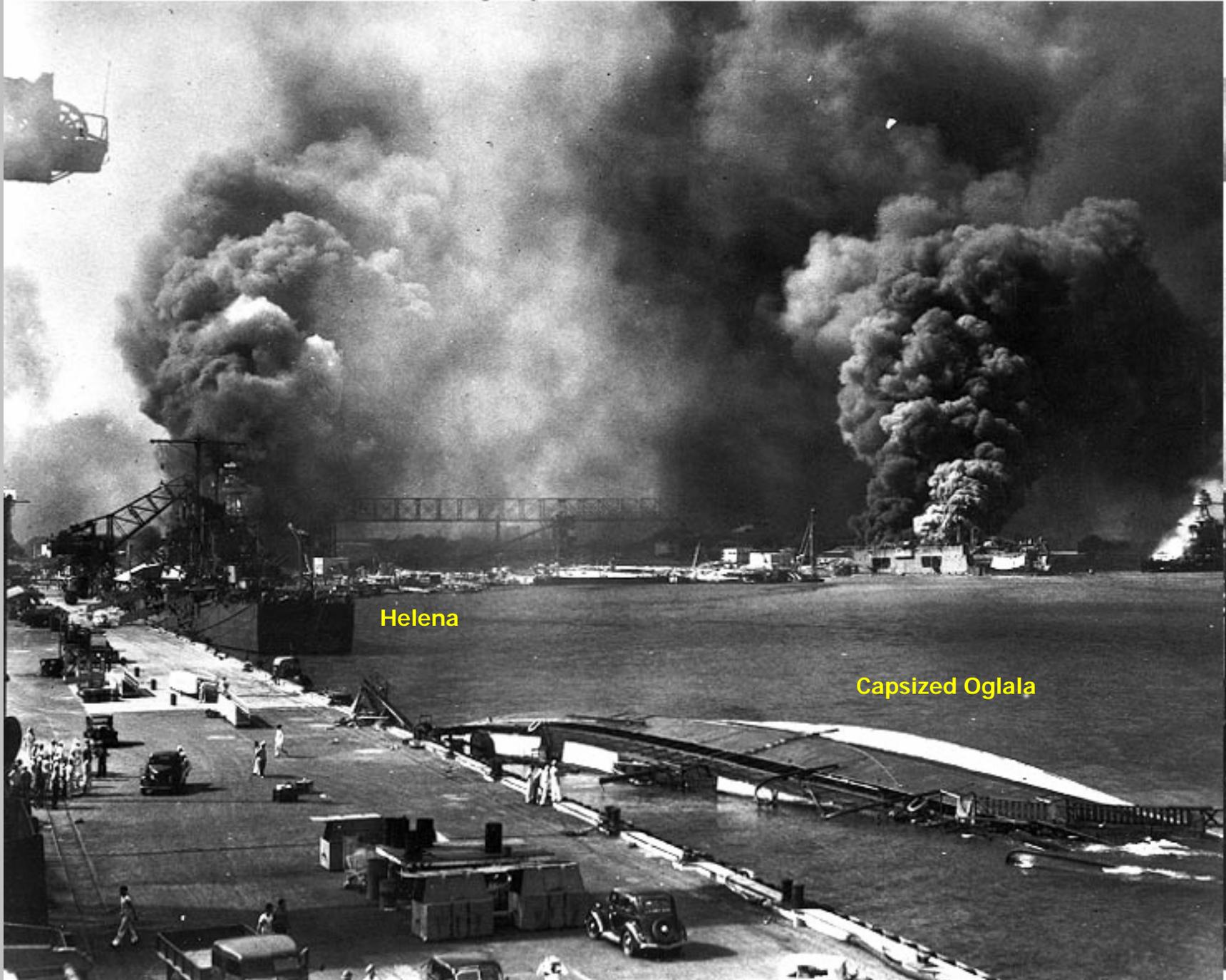
From _____

Signature and rank of Commanding Officer. 4-6111

Photo# 80-G-32953 7 December 1941
View down Pier 1010 toward the Pearl Harbor drydock.
USS Helena CL-50, center of the picture



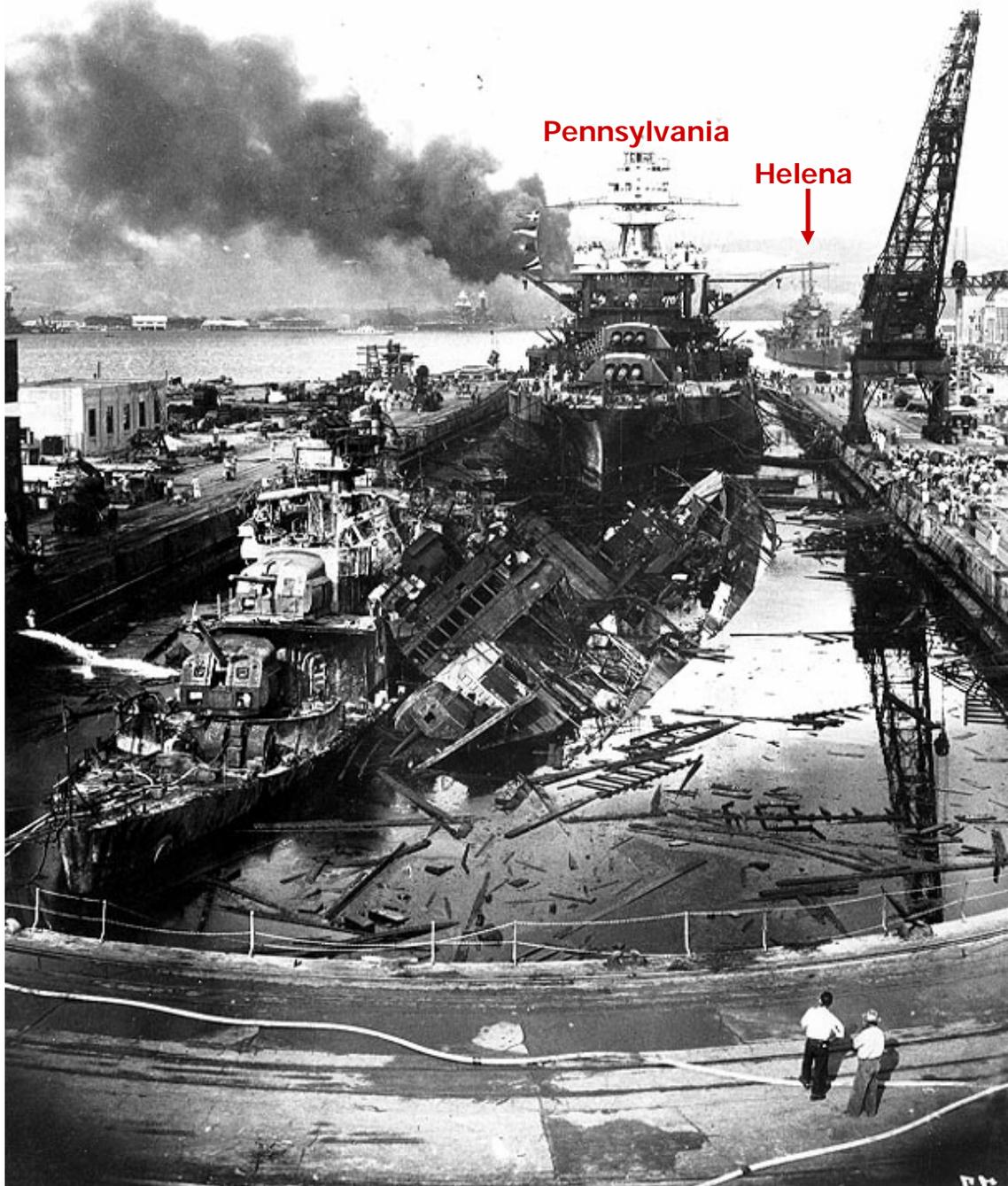
Photo # 80-G-474789 Burning ships in Pearl Harbor drydocks, 7 December 1941



Helena

Capsized Oglala

Photo # 80-G-19943 Wrecks of USS Downes & Cassin, 7 Dec. 1941



Once the Japanese realized where the Pennsylvania was, it did not take them long to start wrecking havoc. Below is the description the Navy documented about the photo.

The wrecked destroyers USS *Downes* (DD-375) and USS *Cassin* (DD-372) in Drydock One at the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard, soon after the end of the Japanese air attack. *Cassin* has capsized against *Downes*. USS *Pennsylvania* (BB-38) is astern, occupying the rest of the drydock. The torpedo-damaged cruiser USS *Helena* (CL-50) is in the right distance, beyond the crane. Visible in the center distance is the capsized USS *Oklahoma* (BB-37), with USS *Maryland* (BB-46) alongside. Smoke is from the sunken and burning USS *Arizona* (BB-39), out of view behind *Pennsylvania*. USS *California* (BB-44) is partially visible at the extreme left.

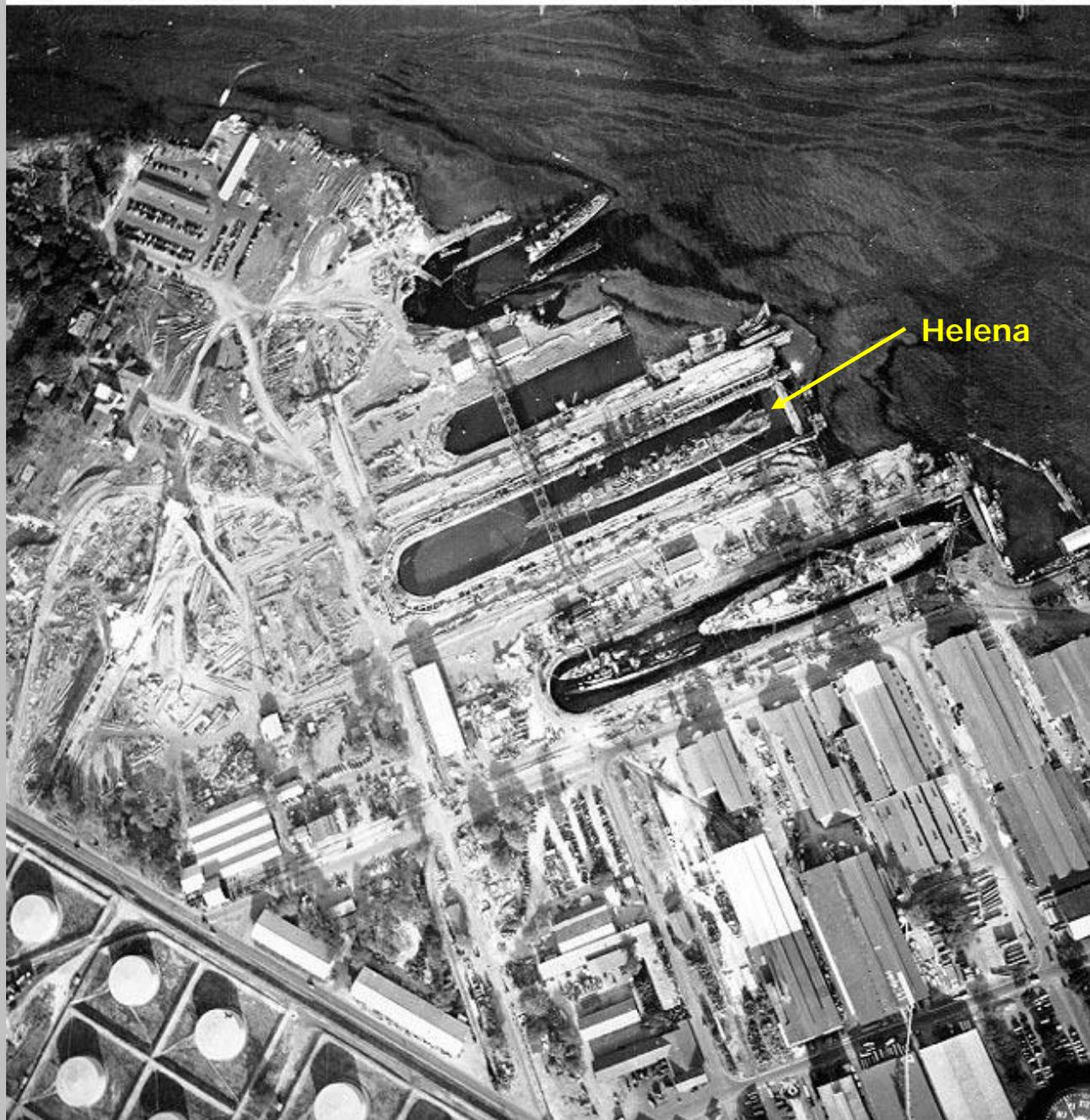
Photo # NH 96665 Damage on Pearl Harbor Navy Yard's 1010 dock after Japanese attack, Dec. 1941



Helena

**Bomb Damage to the Navy Yard Pearl Harbor 1010 Dock. December 1941.
That's the USS Helena CL 50 on the left.**

Photo # 80-G-387598 Aerial view of Pearl Harbor drydock area, 10 Dec. 1941



Picture of the Helena in dry dock taken December 10, 1941.

While docked as seen here, repairs were made to the Helena to close the hole, but extensive repairs could not be made in Hawaii. On January 5, 1942, the Helena left Hawaii to return to Mare Island, California to make the repairs necessary to return to service. The ship had to slowly make its way across the Pacific Ocean with only half its usual engine power.

What about Adrian's Helena friends?



Red Mayo

His hiking friend, Marvin (Red) Mayo FC3c died from 3rd degree burns due to high explosives and deck strafing. He was sent to the Pearl Harbor Morgue. The picture on the left is from the hike he and Adrian made on their first tour of duty in Hawaii.

Eugene (Dash) Fuzi, FC3c – also 3rd degree burns from high explosives and sent to hospital for disposition – evidently dead when they got to him. Before joining the Navy, he was a boxer and competed in the Golden Gloves competition. He had just returned to the Helena October 1 after attending “Optical School” in California. On left in picture below.

Jim McClelland – FC3c and Charlie McClelland Seaman first class. On the right in the picture with Fuzi is Jim. He and his brother Charlie (both on the Helena) were wounded during the attack.

Jim had severe burns, and when he recovered he was assigned to shore duty in San Diego.

Charlie (photo on next slide) had a severely broken leg that took months to heal but was later returned to Helena until it was sunk at Kula Gulf. Both he and his brother made it through the war.

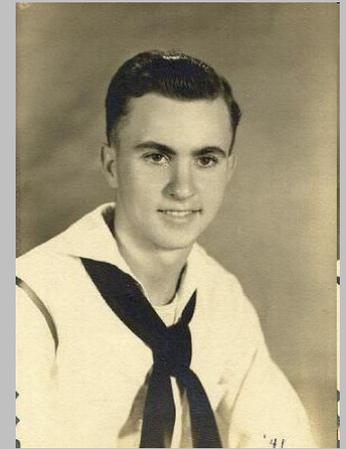
As events transpired, Charlie, like Adrian, was considered missing on December 7. According to Charlie's story “.... my parents were notified by the Navy department that I was missing in action. I was listed as missing because the sailor who took me off the ship didn't tell anyone. It wasn't until Dec.16 that my parents were informed that I was injured, but safe.” The telegram sent on December 16 was on a previous slide.



Eugene Fuzi and Jim McClelland
Waikiki Beach, Honolulu

Robert Flannery, also FC3c, died from 3rd degree burns due to high explosives and sent to the USNH for disposition.

James O. Shaw from North Carolina was a Gunner's Mate 3rd class. He was below deck reading comic books with Adrian. He went through the doorway and up the ladder before Adrian. Because his burns were so extensive, on December 30 he was placed on board the USS Harris to be transported to the Naval Hospital in California. He left the Helena in May of 1942 to attend mine school.



Charlie McClelland

Regis J. Bodecker, from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania His rank was Y1c (yeoman first class), and he died from 3rd degree burns. He has a headstone at Gettysburg National Cemetery.

Donald Brown (FC3c), shown here to the right, was not wounded on December 7. This picture is from Adrian's album and was taken in Camp Andrews during the Helena's first tour in Hawaii.



Once the Helena docked in California for repairs in January of 1942, he was transferred to the USS Laffey (a destroyer). He died when the Laffey went down during the Battle of Guadalcanal. He has a marker at the American Cemetery in Manila. Because Adrian had written the word "dead" next to this picture, he must have heard that he went down with the Laffey.

Why these men? Adrian had made marks beside the first seven names on a list of Pearl Harbor wounded and dead. Brown was followed in order to see why "dead" had been written beside his name in Adrian's album.



HOME FROM PEARL HARBOR'S BLACK SUNDAY
Mrs. F. E. Fortenberry Greets Sailor Son.

My research uncovered that the man that wrote the article, Frank Daniel, was a journalist for the Atlanta Journal. At that time the Atlanta Journal was the evening paper and the Atlanta Constitution was the morning paper.

Once reaching California for repairs, many of the men were given leave to visit families. Adrian's leave, according to his military records was for 36 days and lasted from January 21, 1942 until February 27, 1942. According to his personal log shown below, he was in California only three days before leaving for New York. He and Wanda were in Brooklyn from January 23 until February 15. They left on February 15 and it took them two days to get to Georgia. They remained in Georgia until February 26 when he had to return to his ship.

The photo (shown here) and article on the next page appeared in either the Atlanta Journal or DeKalb County paper in late February of 1942. No one in the family seems to have a copy of the banner part of the paper, but we do know that article appeared on page 1, possibly of a local section.

LOG OF			
DEPARTED	19	42	ARRIVED
HONOLULU, T.H.	1/10/42	1/16/42	VALLEJO, CALIF.
VALLEJO, CALIF	1/20/42	1/23/42	NEW YORK, NY
NEW YORK	2/15/42	2/17/42	ATLANTA, GA.
ATLANTA, GA	2/26/42	3/1/42	VALLEJO, CALIF.

Family Reunion Greet Pearl Harbor Sailor

Adrian Fortenberry, Clarkston Youth,
Wounded in Battle on 23rd Birthday

By FRANK DANIEL

Mrs. F. E. Fortenberry was about the happiest mother in Clarkston or the whole State of Georgia Saturday night. Her son, Fire Controlman Adrian Fortenberry, who had been wounded at Pearl Harbor, got home on leave Saturday, little the worse, apparently, for his injuries—which were superficial.

Moreover, her son brought along his wife, the former Miss Wanda Werbicki, who has been living with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Werbicki, at 152 North Ninth Street, Brooklyn. After two weeks he will return to duty.

Adrian Fortenberry was 23 years old on December 7, the day he received his injuries from a torpedo blast. As it happens, December 7 is also the birthday of two of his younger brothers, Jack, who is 21, and Donald, who is 17. His youngest brother, Clyde, who is 15, was born December 15, and the brother just older than Adrian, whose name is Elmo, on December 5. Only the oldest of the six Fortenberry sons, Victor, aged 27, was not born in December. His birthday is February 11.

Whole Family to Gather

All the Fortenberry sons (there are no daughters) will assemble Sunday at their parents' home in honor of Adrian's return. Victor is coming from Mississippi, where he is a Government soil surveyor, and his wife and child are accompanying him. The second son and his wife and small daughter make their home with his parents at 206 Indian Creek Drive, Clarkston.

Jack, the 21-year-old son, had tried to enlist in both the Army and Navy, but has been turned

down because he lost a thumb as a child when he fell down and stuck his hand into a lawnmower. "Maybe they'll stop being so particular before long," he says hopefully.

Clyde, the youngest of the boys, carries The Atlanta Journal in his neighborhood. Now that there's a war he can't see any use in going to school. He thinks it's a shame the Navy doesn't enlist young men of 15.

Navy Orders Followed

Fire Controlman Adrian Fortenberry was diligently noncommittal Saturday night. He was acting under orders, and he was observing them strictly. He did not mention the name of the cruiser he was on. A photograph of the battleship Arkansas hung in the family living room, but Adrian insisted that he had been stationed on a cruiser, and returned to the United States aboard it after the Japanese attack.

He recalled the experience of the attack vividly enough, but again he was reticent. "Nobody was on topside," he said, "when the planes came over," which left you to infer that his ship had received warning before the attack. He saw the Jap planes, he said, but he didn't expand the

Pearl Harbor Sailor Greeted By Reunion

Continued From Page 1

statement. Fortenberry is believed to be the first participant in the Pearl Harbor battle to have returned to Atlanta.

The Pearl Harbor attack came just 10 days before Adrian's four-year enlistment expired. He had planned to leave the service and go to work in San Francisco shipyards, but America's entry into the war changed all that. His enlistment term has been extended two years. "I didn't have much choice in the matter," he admits, "but I wouldn't have gotten out anyway, with the country at war."

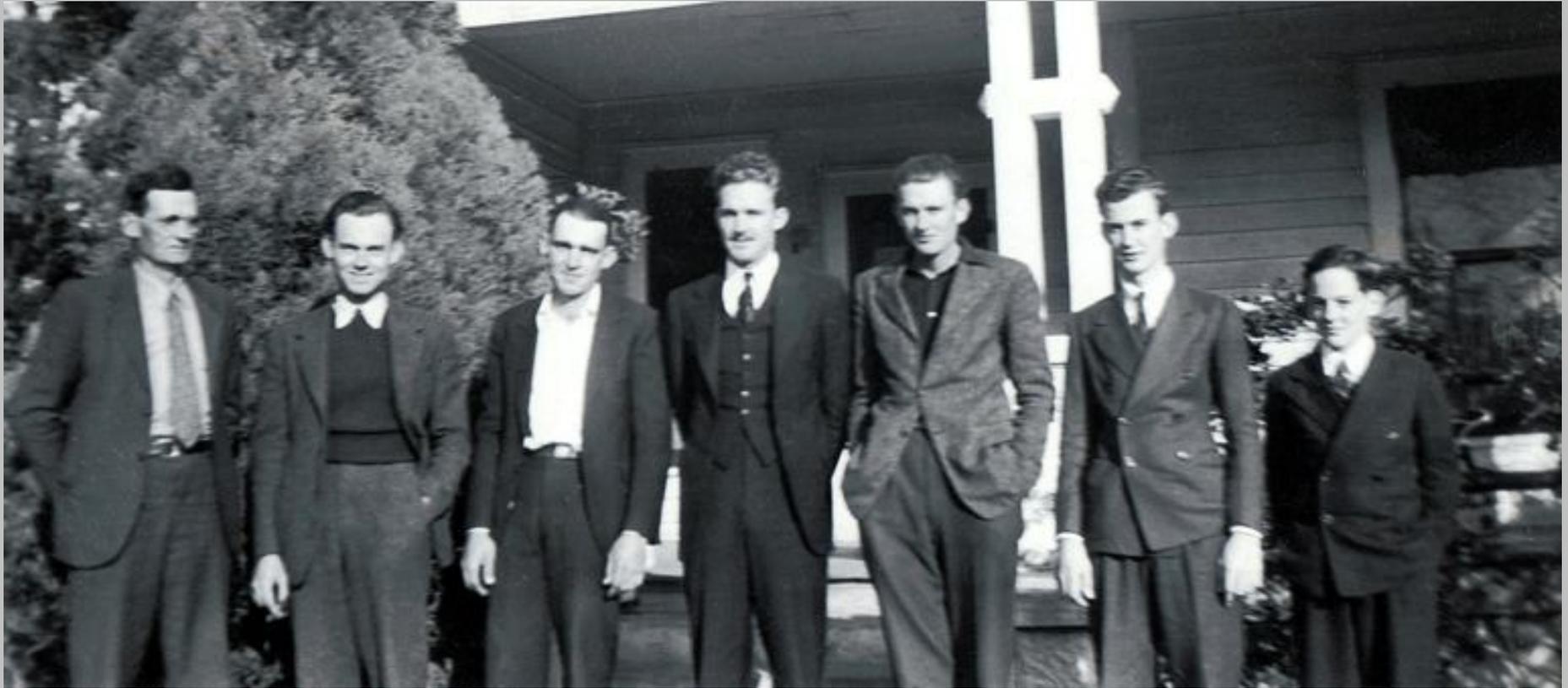
One Objection to Service

He had liked Pearl Harbor except for one thing, and that was that his wife was in Brooklyn. That, Mrs. Fortenberry declared in Brooklyn accent, was her only objection to the Navy, too. "Last year we had only 28 days together," she said. The year before was bad enough—they were together only four months then.

Her husband exhibited an unscarred cheek as the place where he was burned. It healed rapidly, he said. "I was able to shave again after two weeks." One consequence of the unshaven fortnight was still apparent. Fire Controlman Adrian Fortenberry, third class, came home with a hefty moustache.

Though the newspaper makes it sound like Adrian's wounds were of little consequence, it should be noted that he was in the hospital for 8 days. During the immediate aftermath of the attack, there were over 1200 wounded men. The hospital would not have kept him there so long if he could have returned to his ship. Anyone that knew Adrian would realize that he would have been embarrassed by the attention from the reporter and worked very hard to play down his experiences.

Turn to Page 4, Column 1



February, 1942

From what I have been able to determine, this picture was probably taken at the family reunion mentioned in the newspaper article (probably February 22, 1942). Everett had come from Mississippi to celebrate with the family. In this picture, they are standing in birth order. Ferman (former Navy Gunner's Mate) with his 6 sons – Everett, Elmo, Adrian, Jack, Don, and Clyde. At the time Adrian was at home (early February) Clyde was 15 years old. Jack had not yet joined the Seabees and Don had not yet joined the Merchant Marine. This picture was taken in front of the house on Indian Creek in Clarkston where Ferman and Mae were living.



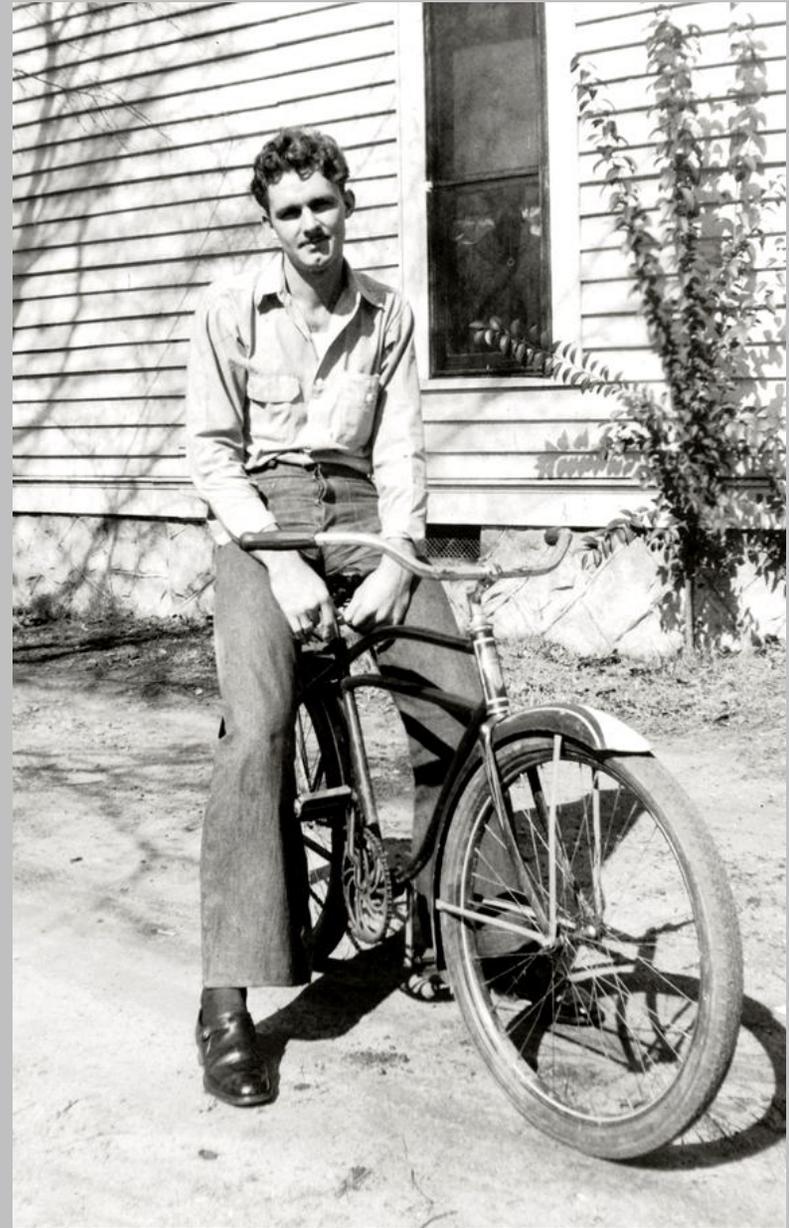
This picture was probably taken the same day as the previous one. Notice the shadows on the ground of the photographer and others. Adrian has on the same suit, and if you look carefully, the shrub behind the cedar tree on the left is exactly the same in both pictures. Look behind Elmo's head in the group picture.



Take a look at the dress that Wanda has on; it is the same as the previous photo. She is crocheting using very fine yarn from a spool at her feet. She may have been making baby clothes. Looking at the styling of this dress compared to others she wore during this time, it appears that Wanda was still pregnant in February of 1942.

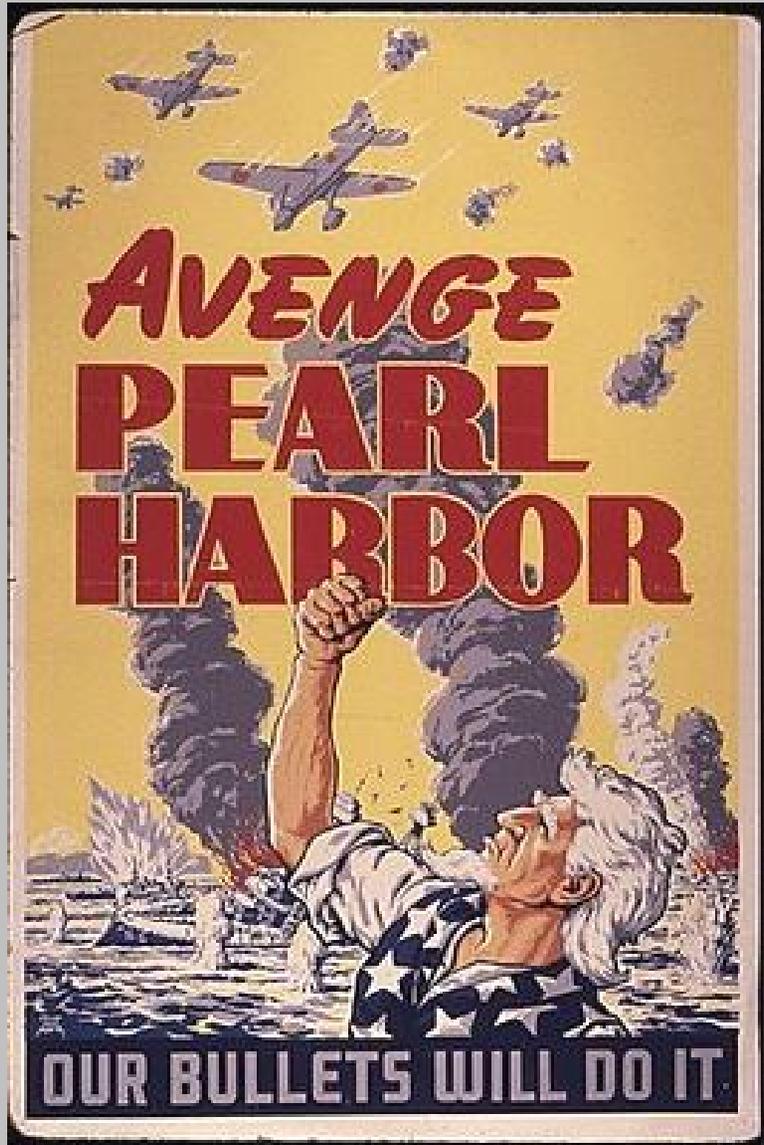
The old Clarkston School, which was located next door to the house on Indian Creek, is behind them.

If you notice the way Adrian is dressed in this picture you will see why I have placed the following two pictures with this same trip to Georgia.



Adrian and his niece, Pat. Notice the chairs in the left picture. They are the same ones in the same position as in the previous picture. On the back of these two pictures, Adrian had written "1942."

How did the American people learn about the attack on Pearl Harbor?



Of course, this was before television so the only mass communication possible was through newspapers and radio. On the afternoon of December 7, radio broadcasts were interrupted during popular Sunday afternoon programs to tell the American people what was happening.

The shock of the attack appalled Americans so much that the previous isolationist attitude ended and the nation unified in support of the president. Following Roosevelt's "day of infamy" speech given on December 8, an enormous influx of young volunteers flocked to the armed forces.

Imagine how Adrian's family felt upon hearing the news!



FDR's radio address – December 8

OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPH
NOT TO BE RELEASED
FOR PUBLICATION
NAVY YARD MARE ISLAND, CALIF

RESTRICTED



While he was on leave in New York and Georgia, Adrian was promoted from FC(M)3c to FC(M)2c on February 1, 1942. His name appears on the March 31, 1942 muster roll indicating that he was on board at that time.

Here is a picture of the newly repaired USS Helena ready to rejoin the action with the Pacific Fleet. When the Helena left port in July (when this picture was taken) she would never return. She sits underwater in Kula Gulf after being hit by three torpedoes in a night battle in the early hours of the morning on July 6, 1943.

Thankfully, Adrian was not on board when the Helena left never to return.

While Adrian was in Hawaii, Wanda wrote two poems. Both are dark and extremely disconcerting to read.

Two lines from one entitled "Hawaii My Hawaii" seem appropriate for a final remembrance of every sailor that was at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941:

**"Every hardened, sun-baked sailor had a sad, sad tale to tell,
How he sailed the fair Pacific, and landed straight in hell."**