

"Pearl Harbor Remembered"

Carroll County Times article for 7 December 1997

By Jay A. Graybeal

Fifty-six years ago was unlike any Sunday morning in the nation's history. Japanese aircraft attacked American installations at Pearl Harbor and America was at war against the Axis powers. This newspaper's editor, H. P. Gorsuch, devoted his December 12th "First Page Editorial" to the attack and also gave some advice to concerned citizens:

"Japan, that has claimed it was seeking an agreement with the United States that would insure a peaceful solution of the issues of recent months between the two nations and as camouflage for its long planned purpose and gain time for the unprovoked attacks sent a special envoy for the pretended and false purpose of continuing negotiations for a peaceful settlement, last Sunday declared war on the United States followed immediately by attacks that resulted in killing and wounding thousands of American soldiers and sailors, destroying a large number of planes, tanks, other war equipment and sinking and damaging our ships. By this treacherous action, the war lords of Japan with Hitler as they ally have proven Japan justly deserves the reputation that has in recent years so often been given it. As a cunning, artful, crafty, unprincipled, false, insincere nation that does not hesitate to use treachery, subterfuge, duplicity or foul play to gain its objectives.

While its initial attacks on Hawaii and the Philippines were successful, it will soon learn the power and determination of a United America is very different from the defenses on last Sunday when the sudden and unexpected attacks were made.

It has been said that our army and navy were not alert, were asleep on Sunday, but if these be true it is the only and last time it will be asleep. Every soldier and sailor from the highest officer to the private is wide awake, and the Japs exultation over successes will be short lived.

The President said Tuesday night that the United States will win this unprovoked war, but it will be a long and hard war with the threat of a triple enemy attack. He spoke of the sacrifice, the suffering, the sorrow, the toll of lives and money the war will cost, but there is no alternative if our country and government, and our freedom is to be preserved. He asked for the full support of every loyal man, woman and child in this darkest day and gravest emergency in the history of our nation.

That this united support will be given is not doubted.

The news of the war since Sunday has been meager, Japan claimed no victories Monday or Tuesday, but on Wednesday Britain lost two of her largest, newest and mightiest battleships, the Prince of Wales and the Repulse, sunk by the Japanese, off Malaya.

Yes, this war will mean all and more than the President said, in sacrifice, suffering, sorrow and it will test not only our patriotism, but our ability to keep our feet on the ground, to do our full part be it small or large, not to get panicky at the reports many of which will be false and without foundation as was the one that German planes were flying over New York on Tuesday.

It is a war that will touch every city, town, village, hamlet, community in the United States, and a personal touch in hundreds of thousands of homes.

There are a number of Carroll county boys in the army now in Hawaii and on the ships of the Pacific fleet. Trust that none of them are among the casualties of the attacks on Sunday.

The Governor of Maryland has ordered the State Guard of which company C., Carroll county, is a unit be subject to call for guard duty. Now two men of Co. C. are on guard duty at the Armory each day and night. The company has more than 50 men, the minimum quota and will be mustered in on Monday, and can then be sent to any part of the State that may need protection. This brings another realization to Carroll county that we are at war.

The purpose of the State Guard was for local and home protection only, but all has changed since last Sunday."

Mr. Gorsuch noted that some local men had been at Pearl Harbor during the attack. Not surprisingly, in the aftermath of the attack, news about them took some time to appear in our local papers. The January 2, 1942 issue of the Democratic Advocate carried stories about two servicemen who had been through the attack. An Emmitsburg family had just received a letter from their son dated December 10th saying that he was safe. A week earlier the family had been notified by the War Department that he had been killed in the attack. The second article noted that a concerned Mt. Airy mother had not yet heard from her son, a sailor on the destroyer USS Downes reported sunk in the attack. He too had fortunately survived to remember Pearl Harbor.

Photo caption: "Remember Pearl Harbor" became a popular slogan and was widely used throughout the war to encourage citizens to contribute to the war effort. This drawing to promote the sale of war bonds was originally published in the Kansas City Star newspaper and later appeared in the Democratic Advocate of December 4, 1942. Historical Society of Carroll County.