**Pearl Harbor - Student Information Sheet**

For each source, there are questions attached to help you grasp the more important ideas as you read through them. Your teacher will probably ask you to read through several of the sources.

**Oral Histories**

[*Lieutenant Ruth Erickson, NC, USN*](http://www.history.navy.mil/branches/teach/pearl/real/oral2.htm) was a nurse at Naval Hospital Pearl Harbor during the attack on 7 December, 1941

* What was the reaction of the nurses and doctors upon realizing that Pearl Harbor was being attacked?
* What was the situation in the hospital at the time of the attack? What was the biggest problem that the hospital faced?
* What were some of the injuries that naval personnel received? To what extent were they serious?
* How do you think she felt about the Pearl Harbor attack?

[*Captain John E. Lacouture, USN*](http://www.history.navy.mil/branches/teach/pearl/real/oral2.htm)was the Assistant Engineer on USS *Blue* (DD-387) at Pearl Harbor during the Japanese attack on 7 December 1941.

* What was life like the night before the Japanese attacked on Pearl Harbor? Did anyone suspect an attack? What evidence is there to support your view?
* Can you describe the damages inflicted on the ships as a result of the attack?
* List the sequence of events during the Japanese attack. What specifically happened to USS *Nevada*? Why did USS *Blue* sink?
* How do you think he felt about the Pearl Harbor attack?

[*Lieutenant Commander S.G. Fuqua*](http://www.history.navy.mil/branches/teach/pearl/real/oral3.htm)was aboard USS *Arizona* at the time of the attack.

* What was LCDR Fuqua doing at the time of the attack?
* Can you describe or illustrate the Japanese plan of attack?
* Describe the condition of USS *Arizona*.
* How do you think he felt about the Pearl Harbor attack?

[*Corporal B.C. Nightingale, USMC*](http://www.history.navy.mil/branches/teach/pearl/real/oral3.htm) was aboard USS *Arizona* at the time of the attack.

* What was Corporal Nightingale doing at the time of the attack?
* What was happening to USS *Arizona?*
* How did Corporal Nightingale managed to survive the attack? How did some of his other shipmates die?
* How do you think he felt about the Pearl Harbor attack?

[*Lieutenant Commander T.T. Beattie*](http://www.history.navy.mil/branches/teach/pearl/real/oral3.htm) was aboard USS *West Virginia* at the time of the attack.

* What was LCDR Beattie doing at the time of the attack?
* What happened to the communication system at the time of the attack? What did they resort to?
* Describe what happened to USS *West Virginia*
* How do you think he felt about the Pearl Harbor attack?

[*Pay Clerk D.L. Westfall*](http://www.history.navy.mil/branches/teach/pearl/real/oral3.htm)was USS *Oklahoma* at the time of the attack.

* Describe the conditions inside USS *Oklahoma.*
* Describe what was happening to USS *Oklahoma.*
* What happened to Pay Clerk Westfall at the time of the attack? Why?
* How do you think he felt about the Pearl Harbor attack?

**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY - NAVAL HISTORY & HERITAGE COMMAND**

**Reports by Survivors of Pearl Harbor Attack**

**Source**: Wallin, Homer N. *Pearl Harbor: Why, How, Fleet Salvage and Final Appraisal*. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1968): 297-327.

Note: Some of these accounts are copies of enclosures attached to the action reports of individual ships.

**USS *Arizona***

Lieutenant Commander S. G. Fuqua wrote as follows:

I was in the ward room eating breakfast about 0755 when a short signal on the ship's air raid alarm was made. I immediately went to the phone and called the Officer-of-the-Deck to sound general quarters and then shortly thereafter ran up to the starboard side of the quarter deck to see if he had received word. On coming out of the ward room hatch on the port side, I saw a Japanese plane go by, the machine guns firing, at an altitude of about 100 feet. As I was running forward on the starboard side of the quarter deck, approximately by the starboard gangway, I was apparently knocked out by the blast of a bomb which I learned later had struck the face plate of #4 turret on the starboard side and had glanced off and gone through the deck just forward of the captain's hatch, penetrating the decks and exploding on the third deck. When I came to and got up off the deck, the ship was a mass of flames amidships on the boat deck and the deck aft was awash to about frame 90. The anti-aircraft battery and machine guns apparently were still firing at this time. Some of the *Arizona* boats had pulled clear of the oil and were lying off the stern.

At this time I attempted, with the assistance of the crews of #2 and #4 turrets to put out the fire which was coming from the boat deck and which had extended to the quarter deck. There was no water on the fire mains. However, about 14 C02s were obtained that were stowed on the port side and held the flames back from the quarter deck enabling us to pick up wounded who were running down the boat deck out of the flames. I placed about 70 wounded and injured in the boats which had been picked up off the deck aft and landed them at the Ford Island landing. This was completed about 0900 or 0930. Not knowing whether the Captain or the Admiral had ever reached the bridge, I had the Captain's hatch opened up, immediately after I came to, and sent officers Ensign G. B. Lennig, USNR. and Ensign J. D. Miller, USN down to search the Captain's and Admirals cabins to see if they were there. By this time the Captain's cabin and Admiral's cabin were about waist deep in water. A search of the two cabins revealed that the Admiral and Captain were not there. Knowing that they were on board I assume that they had proceeded to the bridge. All personnel but 3 or 4 men, turrets #3 and #4, were saved.

About 0900, seeing that all guns of the anti-aircraft and secondary battery were out of action and that the ship could not possibly be saved, I ordered all hands to abandon ship.

From information received from other personnel on board, a bomb had struck the forecastle, just about the time the air raid siren sounded at 0755. A short interval thereafter there was a terrific explosion on the forecastle, apparently from the bomb penetrating the magazine. Approximately 30 seconds later a bomb hit the boat deck, apparently just forward of the stack, one went down the stack, and one hit the face plate of #4 turret indirectly. The commanding officer of the USS. *Vestal* stated that 2 torpedoes passed under his vessel which was secured alongside the *Arizona*, and struck the *Arizona*.

The first attack occurred about 0755. I saw approximately 15 torpedo planes which had come in to the attack from the direction of the Navy Yard. These planes also strafed the ship after releasing their torpedoes. Shortly thereafter there was a dive bomber and strafing attack of about 30 planes. This attack was very determined, planes diving within 500 feet before releasing bombs, about 0900. There were about twelve planes in flight that I saw.

The personnel of the anti-aircraft and machine gun batteries on the *Arizona* lived up to the best traditions of the Navy. I could hear guns firing on the ship long after the boat deck was a mass of flames. I can not single out one individual who stood out in acts of heroism above the others as all of the personnel under my supervision conducted themselves with the greatest heroism and bravery.

Radioman's Mate Third Class, G. H. Lane wrote as follows:

When the attack started on December 7, 1941, it was just before 0800 and I was on the forecastle of the USS. *Arizona*. I saw torpedo planes, with the rising sun insignia under their wings, attacking ships ahead of us. General alarm was then sounded and we were all told to seek cover. I went aft to the aviation workshop and helped wake men who were still sleeping there and closed battle ports in the optical shop. The order came for all hands not assigned to anti-aircraft batteries to go to the third deck. I started for the third deck but just then General Quarters was sounded. I came back and started for my General Quarters station which is a repair station (patrol five). We were hit aft and also in one or two other places on the ship. Word came, "Fire in the Executive Officer's Office." Hurst, Bruns, Wentzlaff, and I manned a fire hose and went on the quarterdeck to connect it and fight the fire aft on the quarterdeck where the bomb had lilt us. Lieutenant Commander Fuqua was at his post on the quarterdeck where the bomb had hit us, I was on the nozzle end of the hose and told Hurst and Bruns to turn on the water. They did, but no water came. I turned around to see if the hose had any kinks in it and at that time there was an explosion which knocked me off the ship. I was taken aboard the *Nevada* where I was brought to my senses in a casemate (no. 3). I had been in the water because I was soaked with oil. The *Nevada* was underway and I helped handle powder for the 5 inch gun. When the *Nevada* was hit in the dry dock channel, the gun was put out and the ship was afire. I helped get wounded aft and fought fire until I was choked by smoke and fumes. They sent me from the *Nevada* to the *Solace* where I was put to bed and cuts and bruises treated. I couldn't see either until my eyes were washed out and treated. I was released from the *Solace* December 10, and was sent to Receiving Barracks where Mr. Fuqua told me to rejoin the aviation unit at Ford Island. I saw no signs of fear on the ship. Everyone was surprised and pretty mad.

Corporal B. C. Nightingale of the U.S. Marine Corps wrote as follows:

At approximately eight o'clock on the morning of December 7, 1941, I was leaving the breakfast table when the ship's siren for air defense sounded. Having no anti-aircraft battle station, I paid little attention to it. Suddenly I heard an explosion. I ran to the port door leading to the quarter deck and saw a bomb strike a barge of some sort alongside the *Nevada*, or in that vicinity. The marine color guard came in at this point saying we were being attacked. I could distinctly hear machine gun fire. I believe at this point our anti-aircraft battery opened up. We stood around awaiting orders of some kind. General Quarters sounded and I started for my battle station in secondary aft. As I passed through casement nine I noted the gun was manned and being trained out. The men seemed extremely calm and collected. I reached the boat deck and our anti-aircraft guns were in full action, firing very rapidly. I was about three quarters of the way to the first platform on the mast when it seemed as though a bomb struck our quarterdeck. I could hear shrapnel or fragments whistling past me. As soon as I reached the first platform, I saw Second Lieutenant Simonsen lying on his back with blood on his shirt front. I bent over him and taking him by the shoulders asked if there was anything I could do. He was dead, or so nearly so that speech was impossible. Seeing there was nothing I could do for the Lieutenant, I continued to my battle station.

When I arrived in secondary aft I reported to Major Shapley that Mr. Simonson had been hit and there was nothing to be done for him. There was a lot of talking going on and I shouted for silence which came immediately. I had only been there a short time when a terrible explosion caused the ship to shake violently. I looked at the boat deck and everything seemed aflame forward of the mainmast. I reported to the Major that the ship was aflame, which was rather needless, and after looking about, the Major ordered us to leave. I was the last man to leave secondary aft because I looked around and there was no one left. I followed the Major down the port side of the tripod mast. The railings, as we ascended, were very hot and as we reached the boat deck I noted that it was torn up and burned. The bodies of the dead were thick, and badly burned men were heading for the quarterdeck, only to fall apparently dead or badly wounded. The Major and I went between No. 3 and No. 4 turret to the starboard side and found Lieutenant Commander Fuqua ordering the men over the side and assisting the wounded. He seemed exceptionally calm and the Major stopped and they talked for a moment. Charred bodies were everywhere.

I made my way to the quay and started to remove my shoes when I suddenly found myself in the water. I think the concussion of a bomb threw me in. I started swimming for the pipe line which was about one hundred and fifty feet away. I was about half way when my strength gave out entirely. My clothes and shocked condition sapped my strength, and I was about to go under when Major Shapley started to swim by, and seeing my distress, grasped my shirt and told me to hang to his shoulders while be swam in. We were perhaps twenty-five feet from the pipe line when the Major's strength gave out and I saw he was floundering, so I loosened my grip on him and told him to make it alone. He stopped and grabbed me by the shirt and refused to let go. I would have drowned but for the Major. We finally reached the beach where a marine directed us to a bomb shelter, where I was given dry clothes and a place to rest.

Aviation Machinists Mate, First Class D. A. Graham wrote as follows:

On hearing the explosions and gun reports, Wentzlaff, E., A.O.M.2/c, came in saying we were being attacked and bombed by Jap planes. The air raid siren sounded, followed by the General Quarters alarm. I stepped outside the shop and started to my general quarters station on the quarterdeck, shouting "Let's go."

It seemed as though the magazines forward blew up while we were hooking up the fire hose, as the noise was followed by an awful "swish' and hot air blew out of the compartments, There had been bomb hits at the first start and yellowish smoke was pouring out of the hatches from below deck. There were lots of men coming out on the quarterdeck with every stitch of clothing and shoes blown off, painfully burned and shocked. Mr. Fuqua was the senior officer on deck and set an example for the men by being unperturbed, calm, cool, and collected, exemplifying the courage and traditions of an officer under fire. It seemed like the men painfully burned, shocked, and dazed, became inspired and took things in stride, seeing Mr. Fuqua, so unconcerned about the bombing and strafing, standing on the quarterdeck. There was no "going to pieces" or "growing panicky" noticeable, and he directed the moving of the wounded and burned men who were on the quarterdeck to the motor launches and boats. He gave orders to get the life rafts on #3 barbette down, supervised the loading of the wounded and burned casualties, assisted by Ensign J. D. Miller who set a very good example for a younger officer by being cool, calm, and collected.

The signal gang, quartermasters, and all hands on the bridge went up-- as the signal men were trying to put out a fire in the signal rack and grabbing signal flags out to hoist a signal, the whole bridge went up, flames enveloping and obscuring them from view as the flames shot upward twice as high as the tops. A bomb hit on the starboard side of the after 5 inch guns and anti-aircraft gun, and got most of the marine crew and anti-aircraft crews. It seemed as though one bomb hit the port after the anti-aircraft crew and came down through the casemate and Executive Officer's office.

After the big explosion and "swish," the men painfully burned and wounded, dazed beyond comprehension, came out on the quarterdeck. I had to stop some of them from entering the flames later on and directed them over to the starboard side of the deck to the gangway for embarking, encouraging them to be calm.

The *Vestal*, tied up alongside the port side, did not seem to get hit hard and started to get underway, so I stood by to cast off lines on the quarterdeck portside and cast off their bow lines as the Lieutenant Commander on her wanted to save the line to tie up to one of the buoys. Assisted by a seaman from #4 turret, we rendered the bow line around and cast her off. Then getting the small life raft on #3 turret barbette port side off and over the port stern, the water and oil being on deck, and the ship settling fast, we got orders to embark in the motor boat at the starboard stern quarter, Lieutenant Commander Fuqua and a few others still being aboard. We landed at BOQ landing, Ford Island. Smith, B.M.2c, USN, boat coxswain, made many trips for wounded and burned men being delivered by Lieutenant Commander Fuqua, still on board.

Courage and performance of all hands was of the highest order imaginable, especially being handicapped by adverse conditions and shipmates being blown up alongside them. There was no disorder nor tendency to run around in confusion. The coolness and calm manner of Lieutenant Commander Fuqua and Ensign J. D. Miller instilled confidence in the surviving crew.

**USS *West Virginia***

Lieutenant Commander T. T. Beattie wrote as follows:

About five minutes to eight I was in the wardroom just finishing breakfast, when word came over the loud speaker from the officer-of-the-deck, "away fire and rescue party." This was followed immediately by a second announcement over the loud speaker, "Japanese are attacking, all hands General Quarters," and the general alarm was rung.

I heard several dull explosions coming from other battleships. Immediately I left the wardroom and ran up the starboard passageway to the bridge. The Captain was just ahead of me and proceeding in the same direction.

At this time the ship listed at least five or six degrees and was steadily listing more to port. The Captain and I went to the conning tower, our battle stations, and at this time dive bombing attacks started to take place and numerous explosions were felt throughout the ship. Upon testing our communications with central station and to the guns we found they were disrupted. I suggested to the Captain as long as no communications were in the battle conning tower that we leave there and attempt to establish messenger communication and try to save the ship. We went out on the starboard side of the bridge discussing what to do. During all this time extremely heavy bombing and strafing attacks occurred. The ship was constantly shaken by bomb hits.

The Captain doubled up with a groan and stated that he had been wounded. I saw that be had been hit in the stomach probably by a large piece of shrapnel and was very seriously wounded. He then sank to the deck and I loosened his collar. I then sent a messenger for a pharmacists mate to assist the Captain.

Just then the USS *Arizona's* forward magazines blew up with a tremendous explosion and large sheets of flame shot skyward, and I began to wonder about our own magazines and whether they were being flooded. I posted a man with the Captain and went down to the forecastle where a number of the crew and officers had gathered. I got hold of a chief turret captain to check immediately on the magazines and to flood them if they were not flooded at this time. Large sheets of flame and several fires started aft. Burning fuel oil from the USS *Arizona* floated down on the stern of the ship. Just then the gunnery officer, Lieutenant Commander Berthold, came aboard and I asked him to try to flood the forward magazines. Shortly thereafter I was informed that the after magazines were completely flooded but that they were unable to flood the forward magazines as the water was now almost to the main deck.

At about this time a large oil fire swept from the USS *Arizona* down the port side of the USS *West Virginia*. We had no water on board as the fire mains and machinery were out of commission and we were unable to do any fire fighting at all. I got into a motor launch to go to the stern of the ship to investigate the fire. The smoke was so heavy that I could not see aft of the bridge. As I got into the boat a sheet of flame swept on top of us and we barely managed to get free of the fire. I then had the boat take me aft. The burning oil on the water swept by the ship and I managed to return to the quarterdeck. I realized then that the ship was lost.

The attack lasted approximately thirty minutes. We were able to fire all our ready ammunition on the anti-aircraft batteries, but were unable to replenish it as the ship was flooded. I then told the men on the quarterdeck, with the exception of a small working party, to leave the ship. I believe at this time that all the wounded had been taken off the ship and it was extremely dangerous for anyone to remain aboard; that nothing could be done to save the ship and shells from the secondary batteries were constantly exploding due to the intensive heat of the fire midships.

The conduct of the crew and officers was outstanding. There was no confusion and every man and officer did his duty as well as he was able under the conditions.