

Teacher Tool 232: History in the First Person

Pearl Harbor Study Guide

Study Guide for US History 25: History in the First Person: The Legacy of Pearl Harbor

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HEC-TV Live! Presents
History in the First Person: The Legacy of Pearl Harbor

Original Air Date: December 6, 2011

Grade Levels: 5-12

Program Description:

What was it like to be serving at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941? What was it like to hear and see the planes coming and face their gunfire? What was it like to be in church that Sunday morning and hear of the attack? What was the mood of the country prior to the attack? Who wanted to enter the war and who wanted to remain out of it? How did all that change after the attack on December 7, 1941? What was the mood of the country as America entered the war after Pearl Harbor? How did America respond? Take a step back into history with those who lived and fought during this important moment in American life. Take your study of the history of America in war to the veterans who fought in them and other Americans who remember the events of the “day that will live in infamy.”

Through the course of this program, students hear from a survivor of the attack itself who was in the military serving at Pearl Harbor on that fateful day as well as Americans who saw the planes from their homes in Hawaii as they flew into the Harbor that day. They’ll also hear from others who remember what it was like to hear on the radio of the attack and how America responded as the war effort began. Students will also meet members of the USO (United Service Organization) as they share the origins of their organization in the wake of America’s entry into WWII as President Roosevelt authorized its creation.

Our focus in this program is to provide students the rare and important opportunity to speak directly with those who been first person witnesses to an historic event and learn first hand what that means. The program originated live from the USO at Lambert Airport in St. Louis as well as from Pacific Historic Parks in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. This project is a joint production from HEC-TV Live! and Pacific Historic Parks in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in collaboration with USO St. Louis. For more information about Pacific Historic Parks and curriculum materials related to the historic event commemorated there, please check out their website at <http://pacifichistoricparks.org/>. For more information about the USO, please check out their website at <http://www.uso.org/>.

Program Objectives:

1. The participant will gain a greater understanding of what it means to live and fight in wartime.
2. The participant will interact with individuals providing primary source accounts of recent world events.
3. The participant will meet people and hear stories from diverse perspectives.

Program Format:

I. Welcome and Introduction—Student groups and experts are introduced and welcomed to the program.

II. Historic Context of Country at Time of Attack—Students learn about America in November and December 1941, the threat of war and state of relations between U.S. and Japan, at that time, the positions of isolationists in America versus those wanting to get involved in the war, the state of America coming out of the Depression, etc. Students see still images and video of FDR’s “Day of Infamy” speech as well video of the attack and footage of the USS Arizona underwater. Student questions will be included in the conversation.

III. Survivor Story—Students hear from Robert Kinzler who was serving as a Morse Code radio operator for the Headquarters Company 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry (Tropical Lightning) Division at Schoefield Barracks, Oahu on December 7, 1941. His presentation will include images as well as his first person account. Student questions are included in the conversation.

IV. America’s Response—Next we talk about the country’s reaction and response to the attack. Topics include stories from individuals in Hawaii who witnessed the planes attacking from outside of Pearl Harbor and others who learned of the attack as they were at church that Sunday morning or listed to the radio. We also learn how Americans began enlisting in the Armed Forces in great numbers and about FDR’s call for an organization to care for them, and the USO came into being. We will learn about the USO, its history and mission. Video and still images will be included to supplement the topics discussed. Student questions are included in the conversation.

V. Summary and Closing—Including summary of topics discussed and final questions from students.

Program-Related Activity Suggestions:

1. Have students learn more about the USO by visiting their website at <http://www.uso.org/>.
2. Have students learn more about the attack on Pearl Harbor and Pacific Historic Parks that commemorates both the location and lessons of the attack by visiting their website at <http://pacifichistoricparks.org/>.
3. Have students learn more about the USS Arizona Memorial and Pearl Harbor at the National Park Service website, <http://www.nps.gov/valr/index.htm>.
4. Have students compare their previous understanding of what they thought they knew about America at the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor with their view of that situation after participating in the program. What surprised them the most? What reinforced what they already believed? What new insights did they gain into the military and wartime experience? Have students share their thoughts in class discussion, journal entries, or written reports.

Supplemental Resources:

More information about Pearl Harbor and the USS Arizona Memorial can be found at

<http://www.nps.gov/valr/index.htm> and <http://pacifichistoricparks.org/>.

More information about the USO can be found at <http://www.uso.org/>.

More information about World War II can be found at the National World War II Museum website,

<http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/index.html>.

More information about the United States Coast Guard can be found at <http://www.uscg.mil/>.

More information about the United States Army can be found at <http://www.army.mil/>

More information about the United States Navy can be found at <http://www.navy.mil/swf/index.asp>.

More information about the United States Marine Corps can be found at

<http://www.marines.mil/Pages/Default.aspx>.

More information about the United States Air Force can be found at <http://www.airforce.com/>.

More information about the National Guard can be found at <http://www.ng.mil/default.aspx>.

Featured National Standards (History):

Grades 5-12:

Historical Thinking Standards

2. Historical Comprehension

B. Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage by identifying who was involved, what happened, where it happened, what events led to these developments, and what consequences or outcomes followed.

C. Identify the central question(s) the historical narrative addresses and the purpose, perspective, or point of view from which it has been constructed.

F. Appreciate historical perspectives--(a) describing the past on its own terms, through the eyes and experiences of those who were there, as revealed through their literature, diaries, letters, debates, arts, artifacts, and the like; (b) considering the historical context in which the event unfolded--the values, outlook, options, and contingencies of that time and place; and (c) avoiding “present-mindedness,” judging the past solely in terms of present-day norms and values.

4. Historical Research Capabilities

A. Formulate historical questions from encounters with historical documents, eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifacts, photos, historical sites, art, architecture, and other records from the past.

B. Obtain historical data from a variety of sources, including: library and museum collections, historic sites, historical photos, journals, diaries, eyewitness accounts, newspapers, and the like; documentary films, oral testimony from living witnesses, censuses, tax records, city directories, statistical compilations, and economic indicators.

5. Historical Issues—Analysis and Decision-Making

A. Identify issues and problems in the past and analyze the interests, values, perspectives, and points of view of those involved in the situation.