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Secret Missions and Superbombs

December 7, 1941, started out like any other quiet Sunday in Hawaii. People were getting out of bed and starting their days. Suddenly, the world changed forever. Hundreds of Japanese airplanes started bombing the U.S. military base at Pearl Harbor. The terrible surprise attack lasted for almost two hours. More than 2,400 people were killed. And, almost 1,200 more were wounded.

Before this day, the war in Europe seemed far away to people in the United States. But World War II was not just fought in Europe.



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There was an enemy in the Pacific, too. When, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor that day, it shocked the world.

For Americans, this day pushed them into a deadly war. For the world, it sparked the beginning of a **nuclear** (NOO-klee-uhr) era. Scientists created bombs that destroyed entire cities. These superbombs spared no one, including innocent (IN-nuh-suhnt) children. World War II was an ugly, vicious war. It changed millions of lives around the world.

After the attack, five battleships were sunk. Three others were damaged. And, many other ships needed repair.

The Japanese emperor, Hirohito (hear-oh-HEE-tow), led Japan into a war against the United States.

Just an Intermission

Some historians say that World War II was a continuation of World War I. There was just a long intermission in between!

Mad After World War I

Japan fought with the Allies during World War I. After that war, Japanese leaders were angry about the peace agreement. The leaders did not gain much territory. They wanted to make Japan a major world power.



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