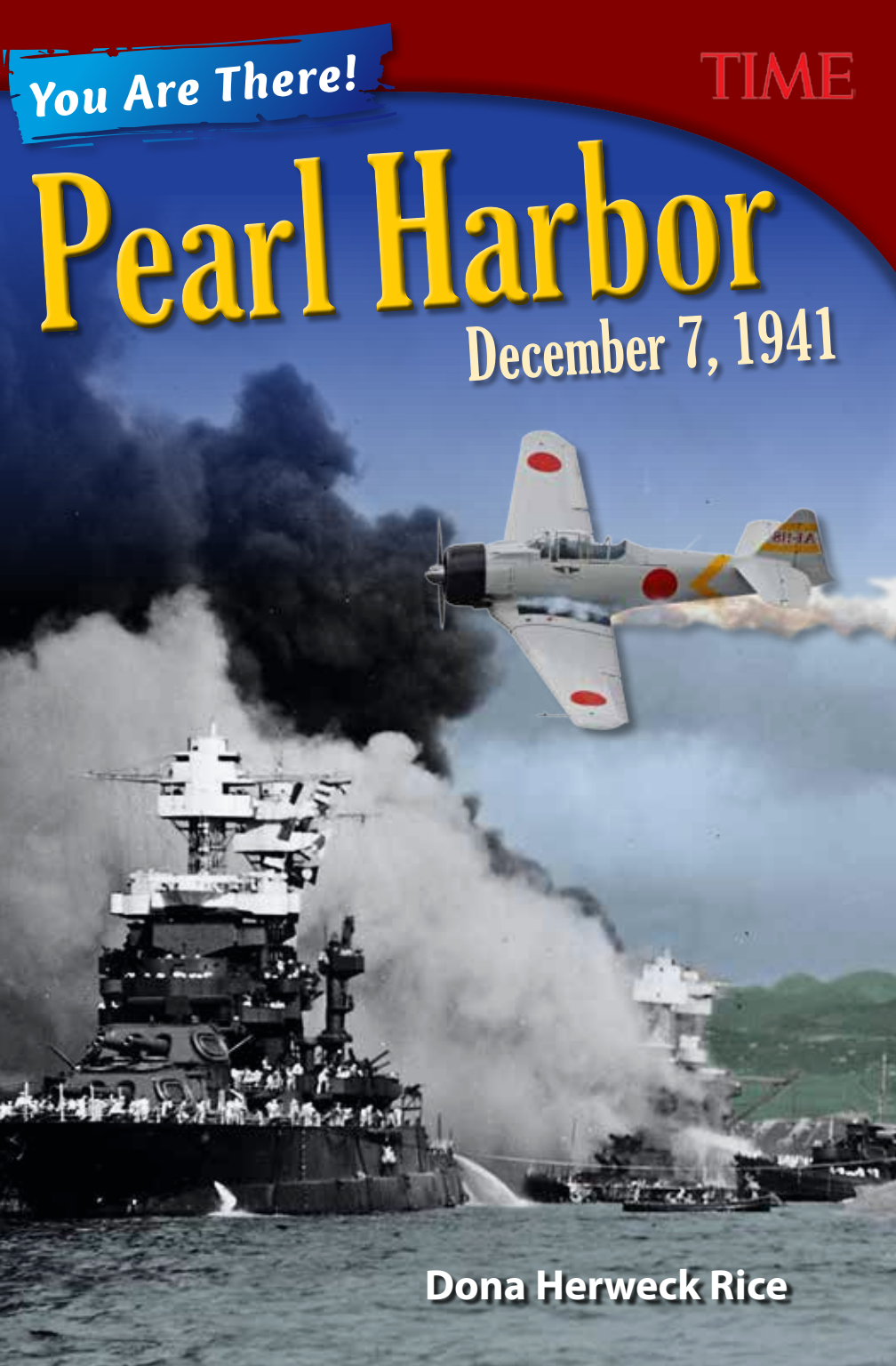
You Are There!

TIME

Pearl Harbor

December 7, 1941



Dona Herweck Rice

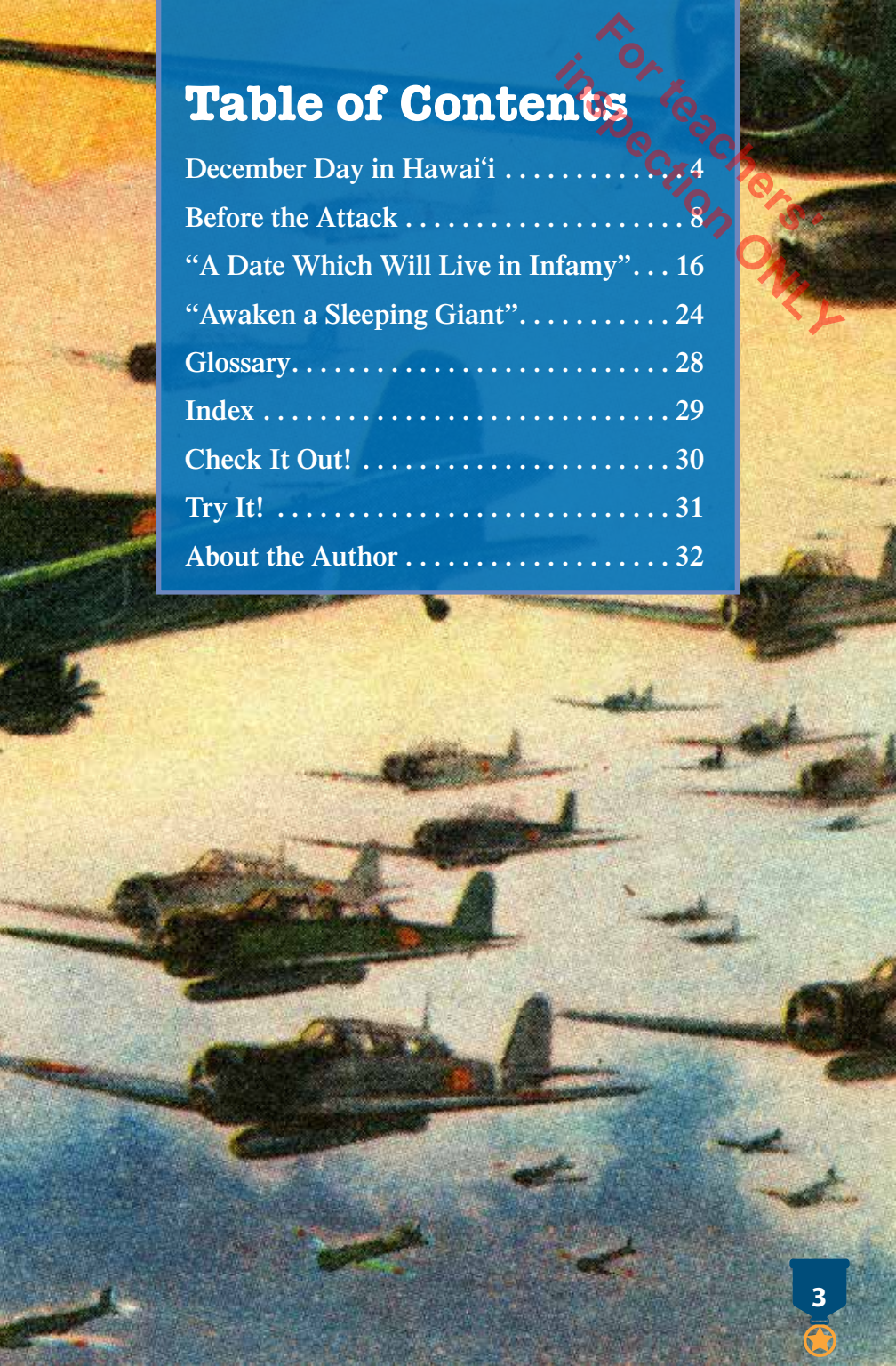


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December Day in Hawai‘i

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The sun rises over the calm and quiet United States Naval Base at Pearl Harbor on the island of O‘ahu, Hawai‘i. It is Sunday, and many of the military men and women are on leave for the weekend. Most offices and shops are closed. Still, the base hums as the **military personnel** stationed there go about their daily routines, whether servicing the vessels and planes that are critical to U.S. military strength or simply enjoying some much-deserved leisure.

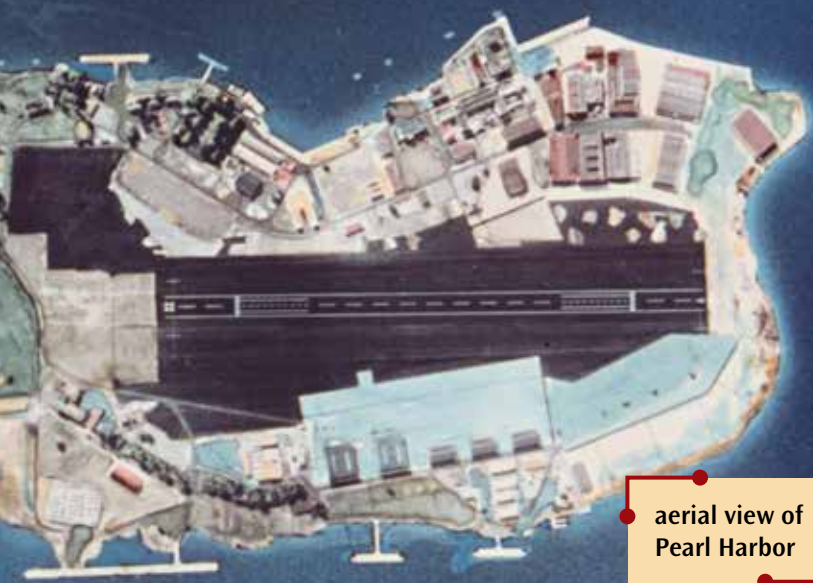
The U.S. military is growing in strength, developing the means and training to protect and defend the nation it serves. Knowing that wars are being **waged** brutally in Europe and the Pacific, U.S. armed forces are prepared, despite the nation's desire to stay isolated from the wars that seemingly have little to do with its concerns. The military is ready to deploy if it needs to. But government leaders are clear: this is not America's war.

The base wakes up that day under an expanse of blue sky, dotted with clouds. The sun shines brightly, and temperatures are expected to reach into the 80s. The military personnel have hopes of enjoying some of the Hawai‘ian sunshine before day's end. Plenty of folks back home on the mainland might be deep in snow and cold about this time, but December in Hawai‘i is almost always a paradise.

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Typical Day

Former Navy Captain Douglas G. Phillips, who was stationed at Pearl Harbor during the attack, later recounted, "I remember very well what I was doing [that morning]. It was my first day aboard. It was a beautiful sunny day. I was up and had breakfast—first one in the **wardroom**. Then I was up on deck admiring the scenery and was pretty happy."



aerial view of Pearl Harbor

At Service

On December 7, 1941, 17,567 men and 234 women were stationed at Pearl Harbor. Of the women, 200 were nurses.



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Out of the Blue

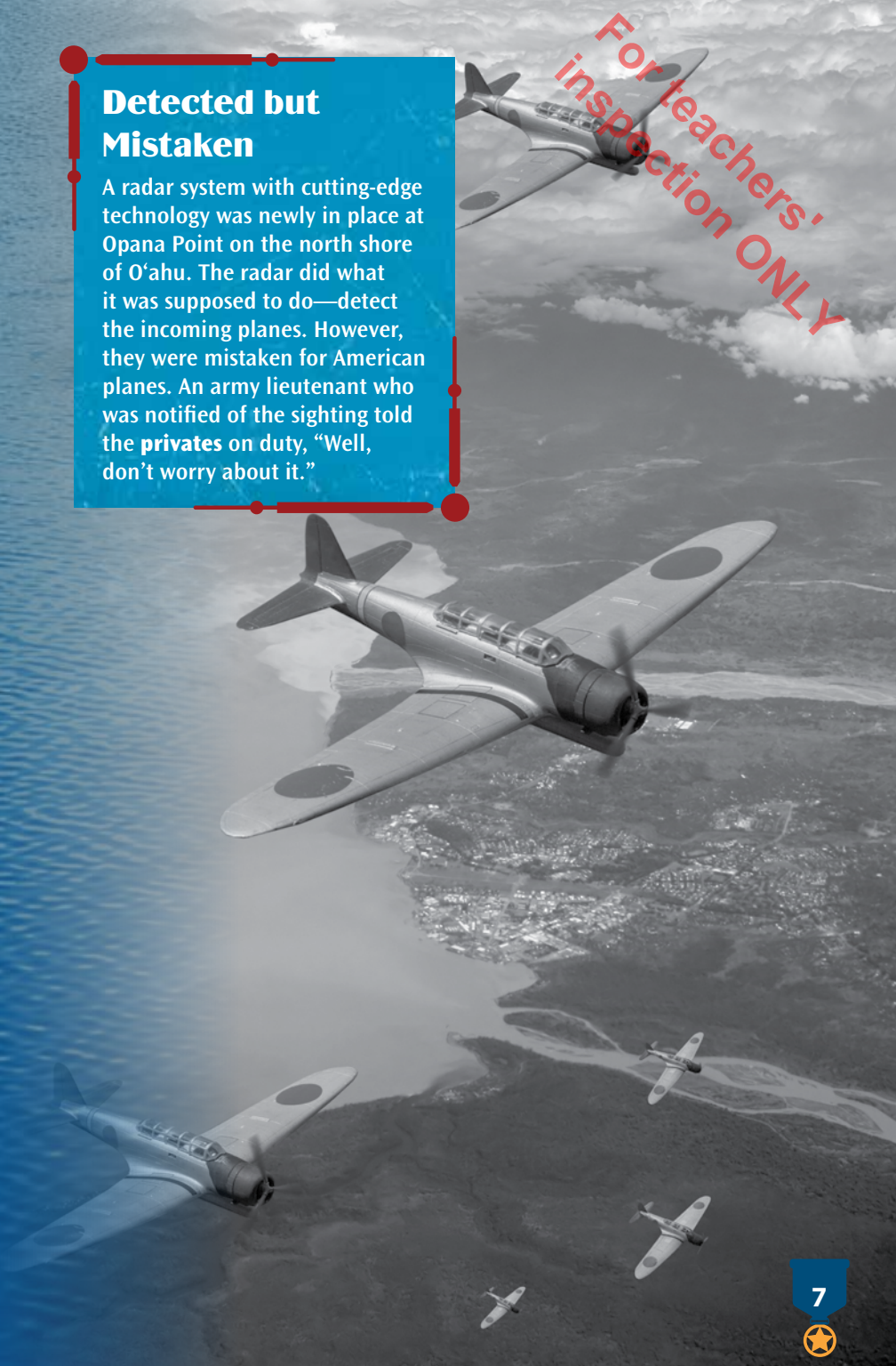
On this day, the necessary staff of sailors, soldiers, mechanics, nurses, and service people are at work bright and early, doing their duty for the country they serve. Although operating in smaller numbers than on a typical weekday, there is still a rhythm to their work, as befits any military station. Everyone can be counted on to do what he or she is tasked to do exactly when tasked to do it. In the military, you can rely on people and systems operating as expected. It's fundamental and essential. The men and women at Pearl Harbor certainly know this to be true.

Except on this day—December 7, 1941—it isn't. An unexpected sound breaks through the familiar clangs and hums of the station. It is the sound of engines in the air, coming in fast and low. The engines grow louder and louder until, dropping from the blue, a swarm of Japanese fighter planes thunders across the sky—and, without warning to the people of Oʻahu, rain destruction on Pearl Harbor.

Spy

Takeo Yoshikawa was a Japanese spy who reported from Hawai'i while posing as a **diplomat**. Through telegraph codes, he advised that the morning of December 7 would be an ideal time to attack, since many ships and planes would be docked and grounded at the harbor. In destroying them, Japan hoped to cripple the U.S. military.





Detected but Mistaken

A radar system with cutting-edge technology was newly in place at Opana Point on the north shore of O'ahu. The radar did what it was supposed to do—detect the incoming planes. However, they were mistaken for American planes. An army lieutenant who was notified of the sighting told the **privates** on duty, "Well, don't worry about it."

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Before the Attack

Let's push pause here.

To understand what happened on that **infamous** December day on the island paradise of Hawai'i, it's important to look at everything leading to it. Why Hawai'i? Why Pearl Harbor? And why did the Japanese attack?



People have called the Hawai'ian islands home for centuries. Before Europeans discovered Hawai'i, the people there lived under a monarchy and shared a rich culture. Traditional stories offer many explanations for how the islands were formed and how life evolved. One story is of the goddess Ka'ahupāhau who is said to protect Pearl Harbor. She was born human but transformed into a shark. She and her son (or brother—stories vary), Kahi'ukā, live in a cave at the harbor and protect the people and sea life from dangerous invaders.

'Okina

In the Hawai'ian language, there is a letter that looks similar to an apostrophe. It's called an *'okina*. The 'okina indicates a glottal stop, or brief pause. Think of the word "uh-oh." The break in the syllables is a glottal stop.



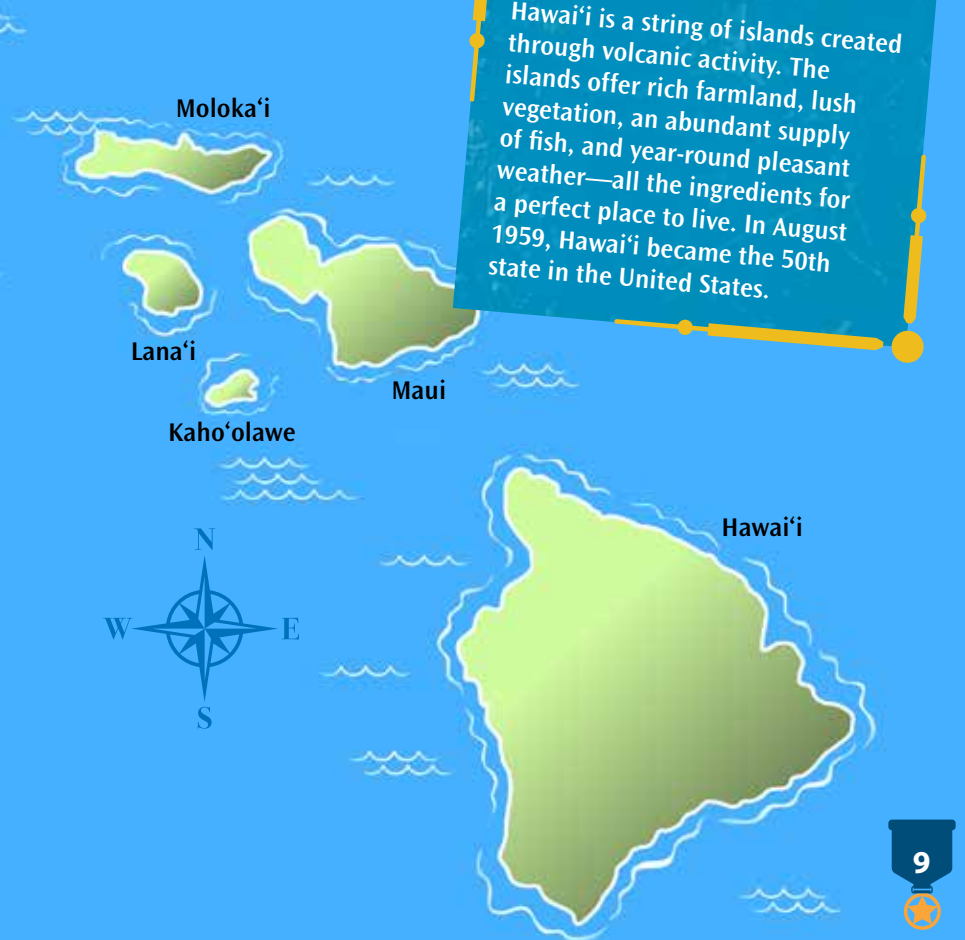
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The harbor was known as Wai Momi, "Water of Pearl," and was sometimes called Puʻuloa, "Long Hill." Until the twentieth century, when industrialization took root, it was rich with oysters and pearls.

In 1778, Captain James Cook of Britain sailed past the harbor, leaving it undisturbed. But in 1793, Captain William Brown sailed into the harbor on the *Butterworth*. He named the port Fair Haven.

About Hawaiʻi

Hawaiʻi is a string of islands created through volcanic activity. The islands offer rich farmland, lush vegetation, an abundant supply of fish, and year-round pleasant weather—all the ingredients for a perfect place to live. In August 1959, Hawaiʻi became the 50th state in the United States.



Reader's Guide

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1. What brought about the attack on Pearl Harbor?
2. Why did the United States wait so long to enter the war?
3. How do you think the people of Japan felt about the attack on December 7, 1941?
4. Was the U.S. government justified in forcibly relocating Japanese Americans as a response to the attack on Pearl Harbor? Why or why not?

