



HAWAII: Bombs and Barbed Wire

Nancy Uno

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December 7, 1941 we say is the day World War Two started for the United States. For my husband that date represents the day his life, as he knew it, ended for all time.

Boogie was his nickname : a Japanese-Hawaiian boy living on the Island of Maui, Hawaii. For his thirteenth birthday he was given a trip with his father by airplane to the neighboring island of Oahu. "Some good", he grinned, saying it was going to be the best two days of his life.

But instead of a holiday, he witnessed the horrific Japanese air attack. He saw the planes with the Rising Sun on the wings fly over Oahu in three waves setting Pearl Harbor aflame, sinking the USS Arizona and other ships, killing two thousand four hundred and three people. The presses of the Japanese language newspaper immediately were halted—putting his father out of his job. The Buddhist temples padlocked...priests deported. Japanese language school locked...teachers deported. Japanese doctors forbidden to practice. By nightfall Hawaii was in total blackout...the American citizens of Japanese ancestry ordered to sundown curfew.

Hawaii: Bombs and Barbed Wire is a novel that tells the heartbreaking ending of that paradise, not from the viewpoint of historians, but from the experiences of the children who lived it.

Two weeks following the attack, Boogie's brother was the first death on Maui. The little five year old child had to be given a quick and secretive cremation with only the family present because Japanese-Hawaiian locals were not allowed to assemble. His ashes were placed in a tomato soup can, the only available "urn". To commemorate those tragic years the ashes still rest in the vault of the Buddhist Temple in Wailuku in that can. Boogie and his family believe it a fitting Memorial to the time in Hawaii's history when there was no trust.

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