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**Subject:** Flash Traffic #12-2\_2011 - COMSUBPAC Dec. 7, 2011 Message  
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## Perch Base USSVI

# Flash Traffic - 12/07/2011

#12-2\_2011

## COMSUBPAC's Dec. 7, 2011 Message to the Fleet

### Commander, Submarine Forces Blog, December 7, 2011

Today marks the 70th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. At 0755 hours on Dec. 7, 1941, CDR Logan Ramsey looked out of a window of the Command Center on Ford Island, and saw a bomb being dropped from a low-flying aircraft. He ordered an un-encoded message be sent: AIR RAID ON PEARL HARBOR X THIS IS NOT DRILL. The U.S. was under attack.

In that moment, the world changed - the United States entered World War II.

The attack crippled the Surface Fleet with damage or total loss of 20 ships. Our submarines escaped that morning's attack unscathed – there was no damage to the four submarines in Pearl Harbor and the remaining 18 boats in the Submarines Pacific Fleet were not in homeport at the time. In addition, the Submarines Asiatic Fleet, which operated out of the Philippines, had 39 submarines.

Think about those submariners serving in the Pacific on that day. They were thrust into a world war with the training they had received, the ships they were assigned, and the weapons and sensors that the Navy had bought. They were ready in some aspects, and yet not ready in some very critical areas. That day, the Chief of Naval Operations declared unrestricted war. Previous assumptions about how war would be fought no longer applied; and submarine doctrine and training did not support the task at hand. New tactics needed to be developed by men brave enough to test them in battle. They were a resilient force that adapted and overcame the challenges confronting them – and of that we are extremely proud to this day.

Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz paid the Submarine Force its greatest compliment when he stated:

"It was to the Submarine Force that I looked to carry the load until our great industrial activity could produce the weapons we so sorely needed to carry the war to the enemy. It is to the everlasting honor and glory of our submarine personnel that they never failed us in our days of great peril."

And indeed they did not fail. This was a force of hunter-killers. It was a force that created legends the likes of CAPT John Cromwell, CDR Samuel Dealey, RADM Eugene Fluckey, LCDR Howard Gilmore, LCDR Slade Cutter, RADM Richard O'Kane, CAPT George Street and VADM Lawson Ramage. It was up to our boats to take the fight to the enemy and hold the line while the surface fleet repaired.

We know their story well:

- More than 1,600 war patrols
- 1,314 enemy ships destroyed – 5.3 million tons sunk
- 1.6% of the naval strength responsible for 55% of all enemy ships lost
- 16,000 submariners in the force – unfortunately 3,506 of who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

The world changed for the Submarine Force on December 7, 1941. The bravery demonstrated by those at Pearl Harbor on December 7th and by the submariners who took the fight to the enemy shaped who we are today. We must continue to honor this proud and rich heritage through formal ceremonies and traditions, but also through the embodiment of the warfighting spirit forged in battle, and our daily commitment to be ready! For at some point in the future, at a time and place that we may not be able to decide, one of our submarines will be in a position to execute a mission where success will rely on a single Commanding Officer and his crew. Every submariner must consistently ask themselves: Am I ready to fight?

Rear Admiral Frank Caldwell  
Commander, Submarine Force  
U.S. Pacific Fleet



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