

Byrd's Eye View
A Public Service Column by
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REMEMBERING PEARL HARBOR

This December 7, 1965, the slogan, "Remember Pearl Harbor", is receiving renewed emphasis, for the naval installation at Pearl Harbor, on the island of Oahu, is the scene of quickening activity. Along with other U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Army, and Air Force bases in the Hawaiian Islands, that island bastion is serving as a springboard in the readying and deploying of American military units to regions of the Far East, where our national interests are under vicious attack. American fighting men departing to Pacific areas, for combat against hostile forces, is an old story at Pearl Harbor. Hawaiian Islanders have learned well and remember vividly the horrors of the days, less than 25 years ago, when Asiatic power interests, in a naked bid for conquest, slashed at island defenses in an effort to cripple fatally our military defenses.

The sunken battleship "Arizona", lying in Pearl Harbor with its entombed hundreds of American fighting men, serves as a constant reminder -- with the daily raising and lowering of the American flag keeping vivid the principles involved--that ceaseless vigilance is the price of life--that aggressors can only be stopped through cold military strength wisely guided by the will to act decisively to protect our national security wherever threatened.

The Pacific National Cemetery, in the Punchbowl crater of an extinct Hawaiian volcano overlooking Pearl Harbor, is the final resting place of almost 20,000 American military dead, and also of Ernie Pyle, the war correspondent, whose grave I visited while en route to the Far East as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. This memorial cemetery is eloquent proof that GI's, naval "gobs", and U.S. airmen have died on Pacific lands and waters, keeping the enemy far from our home shores. In the interim since WW II and the Korean Conflict, through functioning of divisions of the U.S. Army, hundreds of bodies have been reclaimed from places such as Saipan, Leyte, Okinawa, and Korea for final interment at

Punchbowl. And as the casualty lists from Viet Nam mount, another sad chapter in the history of the cemetery is being written. The tremendous tablets of the War Memorial to be dedicated at Punchbowl, in Honolulu, Hawaii, in early 1966, will doubtlessly have engraved on them the names of American fighting men who have lost their lives in protecting our latest "first line of defense"--in Pleiku or the Mekong Delta--thousands of miles from their home land.

From their bases in Hawaii, elements of the 1st Marine Air Wing and the U.S. Army 25th Infantry Division have already been deployed to bolster U.S. fighting forces in Viet Nam. U.S. Air Force B52's, under command of Pacific Headquarters at Pearl Harbor, and based on Guam, regularly raid Viet Namese battle areas. Guam-based nuclear powered submarines, manned by men whose families await them in quarters at Pearl Harbor, and who have perhaps taken refresher training in the diving tower at Pearl Harbor's submarine base, stand poised as silent, but lethal, emissaries dedicated to holding the enemy far from our home territories.

Pearl Harbor is this century's stark example to be pondered by thoughtful Americans -- that war, always grim and dirty, seldom can be fought at a time and place of a Nation's own choosing, if that Nation is indeed honorably and truly dedicated to peaceful pursuits. There are two hard lessons which Pearl Harbor has taught -- that our national security has its outer perimeters far across the Pacific in the lands and waters of the Asiatic Continent and that the vicissitudes of war are infinitely more unendurable for our citizenry when it is fought on American soil. Whether dangerously irresponsible and fuzzy thinking elements like it or not, the reality of Pearl Harbor is that it is possible for the United States to be attacked and critically injured.

Demonstrators parading in condemnation of our national policy in Viet Nam could more profitably employ their time studying contemporary American history--to remembering the lessons of Pearl Harbor.