

Sky Blue

By Diane Parker

As I stood at the rail looking up into the startling blue, clear sky, I let myself absorb the peacefulness of the moment. I breathed in the warm air, gusts of wind off the ocean blowing through my hair, blanketing my skin feeling a renewed freshness of life.

Below me, in the depths of ocean waters lies the USS Arizona. Its hull rusted, oil still leaking from its insides slowly up to the surface. I think about all the sons, fathers, uncles and brothers who lie in the quarters of the Arizona; it is a national gravesite.

I was short of two years old, when 79 years ago, the Arizona was bombed by the Imperial Japanese and it sank, along with its other sister ships, to the bottom of the Pacific Ocean's bay on December 7, 1941.

On that day the sun was shining, the sky a beautiful Hawaiian blue. The temperature was around 80 degrees. As I stood looking out over the bay I tried to imagine that blue sky on that infamous day.

I closed my eyes visioning the peacefulness but busyness of the daily activities on the ships docked. Sailors on their shifts working at whatever their assignments were for that beginning blue sky day.

In my mind it was too graphic, that horrible day at Pearl Harbor. The blue sky became red with the blood of hundreds of civilians, sailors and marines. The peacefulness of the bay was disrupted by the attack of Japanese fighter planes bombing the docked ships.

I turned and walked back to the other side where the Arizona lay now peacefully in its grave and stood looking over the rail down into the murky waters. As I said a silent prayer to those loved ones entombed in the hull, I saw a beautiful sea turtle swimming over the ship's bottom. It kept circling.

There was a catch in my throat; I didn't want to burst out sobbing, although tears threatened in my eyes. No matter that the turtle was fishing for food; I took it as a beautiful sign of peace for the lost souls in the USS Arizona. I looked up at the sky; it was so very blue, so pure ... and I turned towards my family who was there with me ... and we prepared to leave.