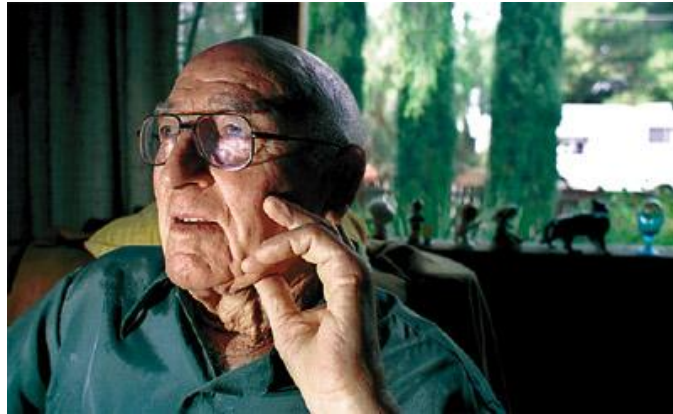




Kermit Tyler, a pilot during World War II, was in the radar information center at Ft. Shafter on the morning of December 7, 1941. Why was he there that day?

Daniel Martinez - chief historian for the National Park Service at Pearl Harbor - tells us more:

He was never trained for that job [as a radar information officer]. He had a walk-through the previous Wednesday, but had never spent a full day there.

The commanding general of Wheeler Field wanted young pilots to learn as much about the radar system as possible so they'd be more effective at intercepting enemy aircraft.

That's why Kermit Tyler was on duty at that office on December 7th.

Tyler did know that a group of B-17s were expected to land at Hickam Field around 8 AM on December 7th. They were flying to Hawaii from Hamilton Field, a military base north of San Francisco.

The radar operators thought the "blip" on their screen represented about 50 incoming planes, but they did not report the number of planes to Tyler.

Martinez tells us more about Tyler's experience and what it meant for him, and everyone else, after the Pearl Harbor attack:

We look for simple answers and Kermit Tyler fit in as the fall guy for the attack - that he was the one that didn't act properly, that he made a misjudgment.

Yet ... there's an exhibit panel on the North Shore of Oahu which tells the story of the radar readings which occurred on December 7th. A sidebar references Tyler's role and asks this question:

His assessment was based on deductive reasoning [about the incoming planes] with limited information and two days' experience. Would you have acted differently?

Kermit Tyler sometimes wondered about that very thing.

He lived a very long life. After he retired, he sometimes gave interviews about his role in concluding that the radar blip meant incoming American planes instead of Japanese planes. He was never found to be at fault and didn't fault himself for what happened that morning.

Sometimes he'd wake-up in the middle of the night, wondering. As he told a reporter for the *Star-Ledger* of Newark, during a 2007 interview:

I wake up at nights sometimes and think about it. But I don't feel guilty. I did all I could that morning.

Kermit Tyler died on the 23rd of January, 2010. He was 96 years old.

Credits:

Image of an older Kermit Tyler, online courtesy U.S. National Park Service.

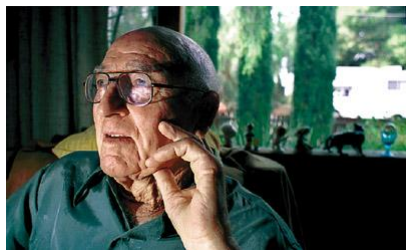
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Kermit-Tyler-Radar-Info-on-Incoming-Planes0>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Kermit-Tyler-Radar-Info-on-Incoming-Planes0>

Media Stream



Kermit Tyler - Radar Info on Incoming Planes

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