

## Pearl Harbour ... and the Christian Connection

Mitsuo Fuchida was more excited than usual as he awoke that morning, Sunday December 7, 1941. As general commander of the air squadron, Mitsuo made last-minute checks on intelligence information before going to warm up his plane.

Three hundred and sixty Japanese planes led by Captain Fuchido headed toward Hawaii. He knew the objective of this mission: to surprise and cripple the American naval force in the Pacific.

The attack was fierce. The destruction left behind included 20 naval vessels, among them 8 enormous battleships with over 200 planes too. The human cost was over 2000 military and civilians killed and more than 1000 injured.

Captain Fuchido was the first over the target and the last to leave. It was his voice that sent his aircraft carrier the message, "Tora! Tora! Tora!" (Tiger! Tiger! Tiger!) This indicated the success of the surprise mission. The Americans were caught off guard!

After Pearl Harbour, Mitsuo had many close brushes with death including six crashes into the sea. Recovering on board after an appendectomy, the ship he was on was bombed and both his legs were broken when he was thrown into the sea by the force of explosions.

After the Battle of Midway he realised that he was the sole survivor of the seven Air Commanders and the thirty two squadron leaders who took part in the Pearl Harbour attack

It was not until the war was over that Mitsuo realised why God had kept him from death on so many occasions.

With his military career over he became more unhappy and depressed. This was further aggravated by his call to be a witness at the war crimes trials.

On his way to give evidence to a hearing, and as he got off a train, he was handed a leaflet entitled, "I was a Prisoner of Japan."

The leaflet, produced by the Pocket Testament League, was all about the experience of Jake DeShazer, who was held in a Japanese Prisoner of War Camp. In the leaflet, Jake described how he was cruelly treated. He told about his violent hatred for the Japanese guards.

The leaflet also told about the day, the prisoners in the camp were given Bibles. As Jake read one of the Bibles, he came to understand that the book was more than an historical story. Its message of love, grace and forgiveness became relevant to him right there in the camp and he accepted Jesus into his life. His life changed and his entire attitude toward his Japanese captors changed too. His hatred turned to love and concern, and he decided that should his country win the war, and he be set free, he would someday return to Japan to introduce others to this life-changing Bible. Jake DeShazer did return to Japan after the war as a missionary.

Now Mitsuo had Jake's story, printed in leaflet form, in his hand. It was all about a forgiveness he could not fully understand and could not explain.

Since the American had found that peace in the Bible, Mitsuo decided to purchase a Bible himself.

Eagerly Mitsuo read the Bible and sought help from the Pocket Testament League representative on how to become a Christian. Now he understood about the love of Jesus and for the first time he understood the meaning of Jesus dying as a substitute for his sin.

His actions at Pearl Harbor could not be changed but now Mitsuo was aware why God had kept him from harm. Now his mission was to tell others how they could overcome hatred in their hearts and minds.

Mitsuo learnt that Jesus is the only One who was powerful enough to change lives and inspire them with God's thoughts. Jesus was the only answer to Jake DeShazer's tormented life. He is the only answer for people today.

God's forgiveness is powerful and life-giving. When we feel the love and forgiveness of the cross deep down, it can really change our lives and be infectious too!

Is there someone who would benefit from your forgiveness today?

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# Question Brain Surf

TOPIC / OBSERVATION / QUESTION / PROBLEM

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**1.** Brain surf at least 7 questions (by yourself) or 11 questions (with others) about the story 'Pearl Harbour Attack'.

Try these:

How would it be different if .....

What are the reasons.....?

Suppose that.....?

What if.....?

What if we knew.....?

What is the purpose of.....?

What would change if.....?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

**2.** Start two questions that seem most interesting and discuss them for a few moments.

**3.** What new ideas do you have about the topic that you didn't have before?

1.

2.

