

Over seventy years later, when you mention the Japanese attack on the United States and the beginning of World War II for the U.S., most people rightfully think of Pearl Harbor. But there was a lot more to the early days of the war than just Pearl Harbor.

On December 7, 1941, Japanese naval bombers took off from their base on Saipan, flew 100 miles to Guam, and bombed the island at 0827 local time, only hours after the strike on Pearl Harbor. Five hundred U.S. Sailors and Marines were stationed on Guam, armed with nothing larger than machine guns. The USS Penguin was sunk in the harbor, leaving only two old patrol craft and an oiler for naval defense.

Four Japanese destroyers carrying an invasion force were on the way, having set out on December 3. After Pearl Harbor, the Navy was in disarray, and in no position to try to stop that force.

On December 8, the invasion force landed and rapidly advanced toward the town of Agana (in the center of the map). A handful of Marines and the Insular Guard Force fought back, but were desperately outnumbered, leading the governor to surrender.

The U.S. Navy had an intercept site on Guam. PO2 Stu Faulkner was an intercept operator and "On the Roof Gang" graduate stationed on Guam. His memories remained vivid even 45 years later. He and the others had looked down at the harbor at dawn, after being up on the mountain all night trying to destroy a piece of equipment:

"...[T]he harbor where they entered, where everybody came in there on the ships. If I remember correctly, at that particular point in time, some building was on fire down there ... a storage house, or something. There'd be light, and here were all these little ants coming up. What they were, were soldiers and marines coming ashore. They were landing. Now, they landed other places, but this is where we could see them. And we thought, Oh, God. There goes our sleep."

Faulkner and the others hiding in the brush feared that they had to obey the call to surrender. They feared the Japanese could otherwise start abusing civilians to force any U.S. holdouts to surrender.

"So, we stood up. I know when I stood up and I looked...my God.... Over here, very, very close up the same slope, on top there, about every 10 foot was a soldier! They were already stationed there!"

The war was over for Stu Faulkner and the other Navy cryptologic personnel on Guam, although, in a sense, it was just beginning.

"[W]e were taken about the third day of the war. They moved us from Guam to Japan on February 15th, my birthday."