

How did the attacks on **Pearl Harbor** in 1941 and on **Darwin** in 1942 affect the **relationship between Australia** and the **United States of America**?

| Poem & Accompanying Essay

**BOMBS FLAGGED**

Upon sunrises different and soils an ocean apart  
Innocents milled unbeknownst to terror not far  
'Til gold skies high above became bitter grey  
Jets swarmed the coasts and tore past the gates

The sun lit the seas, bombs fell from the sky  
The wind roared and raged yet could not hide the cries  
As thousands, hundreds bled on the shore,  
Blue, red, blue, red macabre painting the dawn

Though separated by days, days, and an ocean between  
Two nations bound together, blood sewing the seams  
True, it had been bombs that fell from the sky,  
Yet embedded in those nations were the stars of that night

By: Ianna Lalim

Relevance of 'Bombs Flagged' | Reflective Essay

December 7<sup>th</sup> 1941 marks the day that Japan bombed U.S (United States of America) naval base, Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii. The aim was to ensure the U.S could not terminate Japan's infiltration across the South Pacific by destroying the Pacific Fleet. In the battle known as 'Pearl Harbor' thousands of lives were lost and the U.S was spurred to officially enter World War II (History, 2018). Only two months later Australian city Darwin was dealt the same hand by the Japanese (National Archives of Australia, 2018). It was done with the intent of preventing Allied interference in Japan's invasion of Timor in the Pacific by denying them Darwin as a base (Brown, 2012). My poem 'Bombs Flagged' describes these synonymous events and how their sameness affected the relationship between the U.S and Australia.

'Bombs Flagged' is entwined with metaphors. The opening line, "Upon sunrises different and soils an ocean apart", describes the fact that Pearl Harbor and the Bombing of Darwin occurred at different times and in different locations but it has another underlying meaning. The imagery implies the initial distance between the site's nations figuratively as well. The nations' loyalties in major wars demonstrate this over the last century. In World War I Australia fought with the Allies to support the British Empire, with the Prime Minister of the time stating it would last "to the last man and the last shilling" (Civics and Citizenship Education, 2018). Following the tethering bombings inflicted on the U.S and Australia, however, the two nations have largely fought together. The U.S and Australia were the first nations to send soldiers from all three armed services to defend South Korea during the Korean War (Australian War Memorial, 2018). The outbreak of the Korean War led to the U.S, Australia, and New Zealand signing a security treaty, ANZUS, which was ratified in 1952. In 1986 the U.S's obligations to New Zealand under the treaty were suspended due to disagreement. However, the U.S and Australia remain bound (Office of the Historian, 2018). This bond has held since World War I in every significant conflict, and true to the poem's description, "Two nations bound together, blood sewing the seams" (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 2017).

Perhaps the most significant metaphor and imagery is that surrounding the nations' flags. "Blue, red, blue, red macabre painting the dawn" is both a literal depiction of blood in the ocean and a nod to the shared blue and red colouring of the U.S and Australian flags. It is symbolism for the many shared values, cultures, and goals of the nations, which have only become more entwined since the bombing occurred. The poem concludes with "True, it had been bombs that fell from the sky,

Yet embedded in those nations were the stars of that night” thereby completing the imagery of the flags with the stars they both have. More significantly is the stars’ symbolism of the emerging relationship between the nations. Both nations were inflicted with sorrow and yet in that dark time emerged with a steadfast and stronger relationship between them.

‘Bombs Flagged’ provides an apt depiction of the bombings of Pearl Harbor and Darwin during World War Two. It explores the way that sorrow can tether two nations and thereby, how the bombings affected the relationship between Australia and the U.S. The bombings that were dealt with the intent of thwarting peace in the Pacific resulted in a relationship that has instead become integral to peace in the Pacific.

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