

Hawaii, 1941



In this packet, we will be learning about it was like to live in Hawaii during World War II from a kid's eye view! Our activities will make you think about the different sacrifices and challenges a family might face living on the front lines of the American Home Front.

Contact the National Museum of the U.S. Navy for Field Trip and School Visit opportunities!

*This packet is intended for elementary schools, to be used in groups of three or fewer and/or individually.



NATIONAL MUSEUM of the
UNITED STATES NAVY

Imagine it's 1941...

You are ten years old. Your best friend had to move to Hawaii a few weeks ago because her dad is in the U.S. Navy. Even though you have a telephone, calling Hawaii is way too expensive for you to talk on the phone. Instead, you have to write letters to keep in touch. Getting mail from Hawaii can take a long time, so you have to wait patiently to hear what's going on in your friend's new home.

November 10, 1941

Dear Alex,

I finally got your letter. I miss you a lot too! We've finally unpacked all of our things from our old house.

You sure had a lot of questions to ask about what living in Hawaii is like! First of all, the city we're living in is called Honolulu, which is the capital and the biggest city on the island of Oahu. And Mark Mitchell was wrong - Hawaii is not a state, it's a U.S. territory. It might become a state someday though. There are lots of beautiful beaches, birds, and plants. It really is like living in paradise!

Lots of different people call Hawaii home. I have classmates whose families originally came from all over Asia, Europe, and even Native Hawaiians - descendants of the first people to settle Hawaii thousands of years ago! My dad said that 37% of the people living in Hawaii are Japanese or Japanese Americans.

Many of the kids I go to school with also have family members in the military. Some of them are civilian contractors, but some of them are enlisted or officers, like my dad! He's stationed at the Naval Base at Pearl Harbor, but the Army, Army Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard have troops stationed here too. It's a lot of fun watching people walk around in their uniforms.

We've been trying a lot of different foods since we moved here. My mom is even talking about roasting a pig in the traditional Hawaiian style for Thanksgiving! Won't that be neat? I'll send you a picture if she'll let me use our camera and we have enough film.

Write back soon! I can't wait to hear what's been going on back home.

Sam



Activity: Hawaiian Vocabulary

Did you know?
There are 13 letters in the Hawaiian alphabet!

The Hawaiian language is still spoken by Native Hawaiians and others who call the islands home. Although it was banned from being taught in public or private schools in 1896, families and teachers kept the language alive by speaking it in homes and outside of the classroom.

More modern efforts have helped the language make an important comeback, with about 24,000 people speaking it fluently according to the 2011 US Census. Today there are schools that teach only in Hawaiian so that children can learn their native language, and Hawaiian radio stations host programs spoken only in Hawaiian.

Here are some Hawaiian words and phrases you might hear people use when visiting the island. Learning at least how to say hello and thank you in the native language is polite when traveling!

A'ole pilikia – you're welcome
Aloha – hello, goodbye
E Komo Mai – welcome!
Haole – outsider, white person
Hoaloha – friend
Honu – turtle
Kahuna – expert, a priest, minister or expert at any profession
Kama'āina – a long time resident of Hawaii
Kapu – sacred
Keiki – child
Lanai – porch, patio, or balcony
Mahalo – thank you
Makua – parent
Malihini – new comer, visitor
Moana – ocean
Moku – island
Nani – beautiful
Nui – big
'Ohana – family
Wai – water
Wahine – woman



Attack on Pearl Harbor



The attack happened early Sunday morning in Hawaii, but most people on the mainland heard the first reports of the attack in the afternoon thanks to the time difference. Many Americans have no idea where Pearl Harbor is. You might be able to tell your confused neighbors it's in Hawaii – where your friend lives. Most people are very worried and very angry about the attack. It feels like forever before you find out for sure that your friend is okay.

December 7, 1941

Dear Alex,

Something horrible happened today. I hope you can read my handwriting – my hands are still shaking.

I was eating my breakfast when this horrible droning noise started overhead. My big brother Gene came running back inside and yelled for us all to come outside. There were HUNDREDS of planes overhead, flying so low they were almost touching the tree tops. We could see the red circles on their wings – they were Japanese planes!

We could see the big black columns of smoke coming from Pearl Harbor. We could hear the explosions as the bombs dropped and then American anti-aircraft fire working to shoot down the planes. My mom made us come back inside and we all hid under the kitchen table listening to the radio.

My dad is OK. He wasn't at the base when the attack happened, but he ran down there to see what he could do to help. He's back down there now.

No one knows for sure how many people might be hurt or killed, but it sounds like the answer is a lot. Some civilian buildings got damaged too. It's horrible to think even kids like us aren't safe.

We are very, very scared. Some people think the Japanese might come back, or maybe they'll even try to invade!

Write soon. I wish I was back home with you.

Sam



Big Changes in Paradise

President Franklin Roosevelt declared war on Japan immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor. On December 13, martial law was declared in Hawaii. Strict blackout rules and curfews went into effect, controlling how many people would be outside during the night. The government enforced new rules about photography, making sure no unauthorized pictures of the island's defenses or ships were available to the enemy.

Although the government wanted to intern Japanese Americans and Japanese citizens living in Hawaii, there were too many living on the islands to interning them practical. They were still considered important to Hawaii's economy, and many were allowed to keep their pre-war jobs. However, Japanese Americans and other Asian Americans still experienced discrimination during the war, as other citizens blamed them for the attack and questioned if they were truly loyal to the United States. Beginning in February of 1942, Japanese Americans living on the West Coast of the United States were forced from their homes and businesses into internment camps until after the war had ended.

January 15, 1942

Dear Alex,

We've been under martial law for almost a month now. We have to carry I.D. cards with us everywhere we go, and we've been issued gas masks. My dad and Gene are building a bomb shelter in our yard. They're putting up rolls of barbed all along the beaches. It doesn't look like paradise here anymore. Everyone is careful to stay inside during blackout hours so they don't get shot by accident.

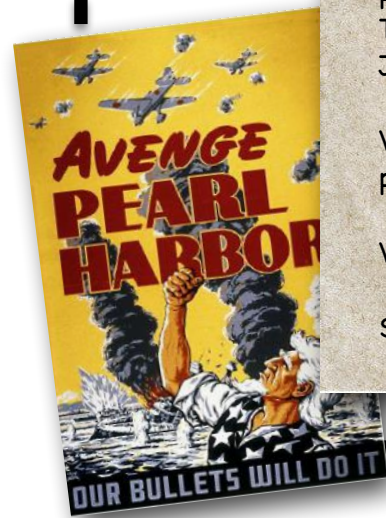
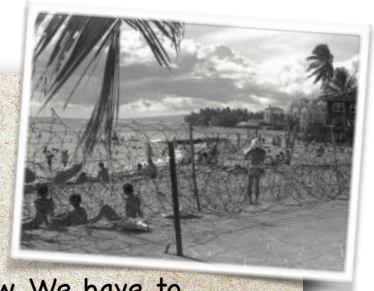
A few of my classmates have already gone back to the mainland because their families think they'll be safer there. Some of their dads are still staying here because they're in the Navy or the Army, which means they don't know when their families will be together again.

You said you had heard that they were going to start rounding up anyone Japanese and taking them away somewhere. I don't know if they're going to do that here, and I don't know if they should, either. My classmates are as American as we are, and they're just as upset about the attack. It's not as if they were flying those planes! But some people have been saying really awful things about all Japanese people. They've even started destroying furniture and bowls they bought from Japan before the war.

What do you think? Is it fair for them to be blamed for the actions of people they've never even met?

Write back soon. My mother says to tell your mother she says hello.

Sam



Homefront Heroes

During World War II, it wasn't just the military that quickly prepared for action. Everyone mobilized to help win the war as quickly as possible in whatever ways they could.

Before the war, many married women did not have full time jobs. In the 1940's, it was considered more important for a woman to be home taking care of her children and doing household tasks than working. That changed very quickly once the war began. With men leaving their jobs to fight, factories, hospitals, farms, and even the military realized they needed women to help fill in the jobs men had left.

Civilian men did their part too. Civilian contractors with the Navy and Army worked hard to improve conditions on military bases, and other men volunteered to help during air raid and black out drills, as well as keep watch for enemy planes.

March 20, 1942

Dear Alex,

Everyone wants to get involved to help the war effort. Gene keeps begging Mom and Dad to join the Marines, but they say they won't let him until he finishes high school next year. My dad's upset he doesn't want to be in the Navy, but my mom's upset because she doesn't want him to get hurt!

Dad's going to have to ship out sometime soon. We don't know when, or where he'll end up going. Our next door neighbor Mr. Billows wishes he could enlist too, but he's too old and his knees are too bad. He's decided to help the war effort by being an air-raid warden. You can tell he's very proud even if he wishes he could be on the front lines.

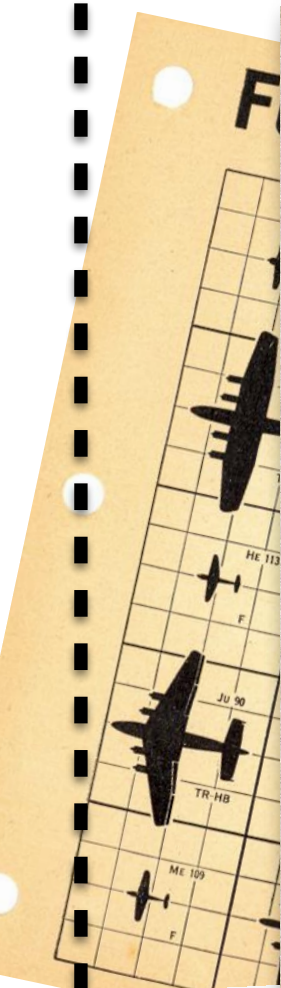
We don't have any aircraft factories in Hawaii like they do on the mainland, but my mother says there are still lots of ways for her to get involved, like working for the Red Cross or making care packages for soldiers. Some people are saying even the Army might start recruiting women to work in offices so more men can go off to fight.

She says this is going to mean big changes for us. She won't be able to come home and make dinner every night anymore, and she'll have a lot less time to play with Bobby and Rachel. I'm going to need to help out more around the house to make things easier for her.

What about you? Is anyone in your family going to help the war effort?

Write back soon!

Sam



Shipping Out

With the war on, many families needed to say goodbye to fathers, brothers, uncles, and cousins who were going off to war. Although some military personnel in Hawaii were able to stay with their families, others were shipped out to fight. Other family members were inspired to join the military after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Saying goodbye was very difficult, just as it is for military families today. Everyone worried that their loved ones might be hurt or even killed. To stay in touch, families would write letters and send care packages with treats to remind them of home.

To keep information safe, the government would read and **cancel** mail before it was sent out. This means anything that might be a secret would be cut or blacked out of a letter. Families usually weren't sure where their fathers and sons were fighting until long after the battle was over. Telegrams were also an important way to communicate. If anything happened to a service member, the government would deliver a telegram to their family to let them know they had been wounded or killed in action.



April 1, 1942

Dear Alex,

My dad shipped out a while ago. I wasn't sure if I was allowed to tell you exactly when in case any spies got their hands on this letter. I miss him a lot. This is a lot different from the other times he's been away from home. There wasn't a war going on the last time.

To write him letters, we use a special kind of paper called Victory Mail, or V Mail for short. It's much lighter than regular paper, and it can even be folded up to make its own envelope!

As you know, we need to be very careful what we write in our letters to him, and he needs to be even more careful writing back to us! If he says anything that might give the enemy information about his ship, the censors are going to cut it out. I overheard one sailor saying he was going to come up with a code to try and fool the censor so he could tell his girlfriend where he was, but I don't think that seems safe.

I wish I did know more about where he was though. I've been looking at maps of the world a lot since the war started. I had never heard of most of the places people are fighting now before Pearl Harbor was attacked. Have you?

I wonder if any of the letters I've sent to you have been censored. You haven't mentioned anything when you write back. Tell me if they do!

Sam



Activity: Censor a Letter

It looks like Ensign Mulligan forgot that loose lips can sink ships! Help him censor his letter home to his sister so he won't put his fellow sailors at risk. Cross out anything you think might be dangerous for the enemy to know about.

Remember, the censors don't like seeing anything about troop or ship movements, specific battle locations, and the weather. Good luck!

Print the complete address in plain block letters in the pencil below, and your return address in the space provided. Use typewriter, dark ink, or pencil. Write plainly. Very small writing is not suitable.

No. _____

(Sender's _____
(Sender's _____
(Sender's _____

(CENSOR'S STAMP)

Dear Little Sis,

We have just pulled into port in Hawaii. It's such a beautiful island! I wish you and Mom could be here to see it. The weather is so nice here. It's been sunny and warm every day, except around two in the afternoon when it rains harder than it ever does back home.

I wasn't sure if I would like the food here - there's a lot of things from Asia we just don't have back home! - but it's all really delicious. Maybe when this war is over we should try to find out how to open our own Chinese restaurant. Wouldn't that be fun?

We had a big surprise when we saw what other ships were in port. The USS Enterprise is here! It's such a big ship. You've never seen anything like it. The scuttlebutt - that means rumor - around here is that it's going to be heading to the Solomon Islands. I don't know where those are, but I bet you can find them on a map.

I finally got the package Aunt Ethel sent me. She sent a few boxes of cookies which were all crumbs by the time they got here, but the crumbs sure tasted good!

Give Mom and Dad big hugs from me.

Much love,

Your Big Brother Teddy

V --- MAIL



What Can You Do?

Adults weren't the only ones who could help win the war – kids played their parts, too! There were many ways you and your friends, siblings and cousins could get involved. Different children's groups would host special programs, but you could also organize something on your own with anyone who might be interested in helping out.

Teachers would also keep their students informed about the war effort with geography lessons and allowing children to share updates about their family members with the class. This helped familiarize children with why the war was being fought, and what the countries involved were really like. Many children would never have heard of some of the distant islands and cities men were fighting in before.

April 25, 1942

Dear Alex,

You wanted to know how you can help the war effort. I've got lots of great ideas for you!

My Girl Scout troop is helping buy and sell war bonds, and they're running drives to collect scrap metal that could be recycled into planes and bullets. The Boy Scouts are doing it too! You can also join groups like the Junior Red Cross, where you can pack care packages for soldiers and civilians or help roll bandages. Some of my classmates are learning how to identify different aircraft so they can report any enemy planes they might see.

We're doing a lot of this stuff in school, too! My teacher is organizing ANOTHER scrap metal drive. It's hard to believe anyone still has scrap to give. She's also telling us we should help out by knitting socks or scarves to donate to soldiers fighting overseas.

And of course you can plant a victory garden! Ours is looking so beautiful. One of my favorite parts of the day is seeing how much the plants have grown. I can't wait to get some tomatoes.

Tell me if you need more ideas!

Sam



Guiding Question: Are activities like recycling, volunteering, or making donations only important during war time? How do you help your community today?

Activity: Victory Gardens

The government encouraged families to grow their own fruits and vegetables in a **victory garden**. By growing your own food at home, your family could help the government spend less money on food for troops on the front lines.

What vegetables would you grow in your victory garden? Draw your garden below! Or ask your parents if you can start your own garden.

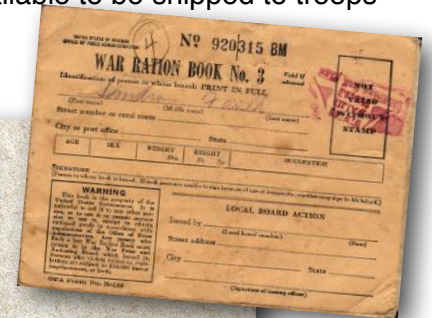
YOUR VICTORY GARDEN
counts more than ever!



Making Do With Less

There was one big way everyone could help with the war effort, no matter how old they were: **rationing**.

Right after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. government instituted a rationing system. Rationing is when only a certain amount of an object or product can be bought at a time. By limiting how much the American public could buy, the government could make sure enough material was available to be shipped to troops overseas.



May 20, 1942

Dear Alex,

My mom finally signed up to get our ration book. It has stamps inside that we have to give to the shop owner before they can give us what we're shopping for. Gene says they're going to ration everything from gasoline to typewriters, maybe even clothing! He says car companies are being ordered to make tanks and planes, which means no new cars for civilians until the end of the war.

And of course there's food. Sugar, coffee, red meat, cheese, fats, canned milk, canned fish, jam, butter, margarine... it makes you wonder what ISN'T rationed!

Plus, in Hawaii we have to worry about shortages. They aren't going to be running as many ships to the islands with supplies on them thanks to Japanese submarines. My mom is already worried that we're going to stand in long lines to get our food, only to find out that the store is out of what she wants to buy!

She says it means we're going to have to be very creative about what we put on the table. She found a great recipe for cookies that use honey instead of sugar that she said I should send to you. I wrote it on the back of this letter for you!

I guess even though it's annoying not to have sugar and margarine whenever we want, our troops fighting overseas need that stuff more than we do. Don't you think?

Let me know how the cookies turn out!

Sam



HOW TO SHOP WITH 1
... to Buy Canned, Bottled and
Dried Fruits, Juices



YOUR POINT ALLOWANCE MUST LAST FOR THE FULL RATION PERIOD
Plan How Many Points You Will Use Each Time Before You Shop

BUY EARLY IN THE WEEK

BUY EARLY IN THE DAY

Activity: Wartime Baking

Try out this real World War II era cookie recipe that doesn't use any sugar! Remember to ask for an adult's help when using the oven.

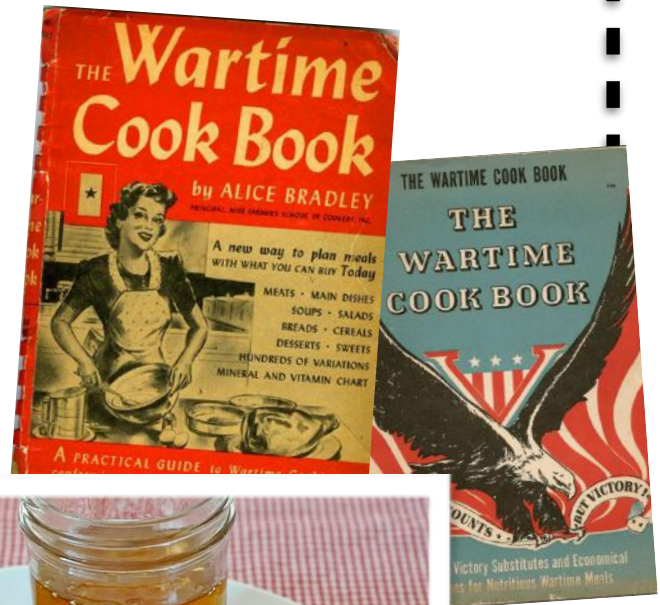
Honey Cookies

Ingredients:

- 1 3/4 cups flour, plus extra for dusting
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Equipment:

- Large mixing bowl
- Medium mixing bowl
- Spatula
- Rolling Pin
- Measuring Cups
- Measuring Spoons
- Plastic Wrap
- Cookie Cutters
- Baking Sheet



1. Combine flour, salt and baking powder in the medium sized mixing bowl. Make sure all the ingredients are well blended together.
2. In the large mixing bowl, mix the egg, shortening, honey, and vanilla together until they are well combined.
3. Slowly add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients. Mix until a dough has formed and all ingredients have been combined.
4. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator for 40 minutes. Chilling the dough will make it easier to roll out.
5. While the dough chills, preheat your oven to 375 degrees.
6. Lightly flour your work surface and roll out the dough until it is about 1/2 inch thick. Press your cookie cutter into the dough and place the cut out cookie on your baking sheet.
7. Once the sheet is full, ask an adult to help you place the tray in the oven for 10-15

minutes. Your cookies are ready when they are nice and golden.



Welcoming the Troops

As the war continued, thousands of homesick American soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen came to Hawaii. Some were there for more training, while others were just stopping briefly before being shipped off to fight in the Pacific. Others served on bases and in military offices for the war and called Hawaii their home until the war was over. Although it could be fun being stationed in paradise, many of the troops stationed in Hawaii were young men and women barely out of high school who missed their own mothers and younger siblings. They were happy to make new friends who reminded them of home.

Hawaiian locals opened their homes and businesses to these service members. Children also helped entertain homesick troops who were new to Hawaii, or waiting to be shipped out somewhere else in the Pacific. This was true in other parts of the country too: you might put on a variety show with singing and dancing, or you could invite a friendly sailor to your house for a homecooked meal.

June 30, 1942

Dear Alex,

The island seems so busy now that all these new servicemen are coming in! There might be serviceWOMEN coming in too - I bet you've heard about how the Army started taking women recruits last month.

I made friends with a sailor who comes all the way from Kentucky. His name is Andrew. He said he had never seen the ocean before he joined the Navy. Can you imagine? He said he has a little sister around my age, and Mom invited him over for dinner on Monday. He was really happy to eat her food, even her ration friendly cake!

Some of my classmates have been talking about doing a show to help the troops' morale - that means finding a way to cheer them up and remind them of what they're fighting for! Kalani and Nohea want to teach some of us how to hula, a traditional Hawaiian dance. They say it would be a great way to lift their spirits and show them one of their favorite parts of being Hawaiian. I haven't decided what I would want to do yet. Maybe I could sing a song!

Have you tried to put on any shows? What do you think you would do if your school does a variety show?

Write back soon!

Sam



Activity: Plan a 1940's USO Show!

The USO – United Services Organization Inc. – is a nonprofit organization that organizes programming and live entertainment for service members and their families. Founded in 1941, members of the organization travelled around the world to provide entertainment to American troops. USO Shows during World War II featured famous entertainers along with local talent. They would perform dances, songs, and comedy routines for huge audiences.

Gather a group of friends and plan your own USO show. What talents could you all perform? Make a schedule of events below, and ask your family or other friends to be your audience. You can even decorate a stage and wear patriotic costumes to complete the look!

Song Suggestions:

1. Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy by the Andrews Sisters
2. America the Beautiful by Katherine Lee Bates
3. Don't Fence Me In by Bing Crosby
4. Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree by Glenn Miller and the Andrews Sisters



Life in Hawaii Today

World War II would continue until September of 1945. Millions of people lost their lives, and the United States lost over 300,000 service members. Pearl Harbor was the only major attack launched against United States civilians.

In 1959, Hawaii became the 50th state. Today, it is still a vibrant, diverse community with people from all over the world who call it home. Tourism is the island's biggest industry, with thousands of people coming to visit the islands' beautiful beaches, hiking trails, and communities each year.

Several of the important sites during the war are still there: Pearl Harbor, Hickam Airfield, and Fort Shafter are all still in use by the military today. Many you can visit to learn more about the history of the attack on Pearl Harbor and Hawaii during World War II.

Military families who call Hawaii home will still need to say goodbye to family members when they are deployed overseas. It is always difficult to be far away from a mom, dad, brother or sister serving in the military, but today, families can usually communicate with each other much more easily than they could during World War II. With the help of new technology like email and video calls, the distance can feel a little smaller.

