

USS Arizona's Last Band – The History of U.S. Navy Band Number 22

Preface

For many years after my brother, Clyde Richard Williams, was murdered at Pearl Harbor, I needed only to say, “My brother was a member of the USS *Arizona* band,” and people would reply, “I am so sorry—that was horrible!” There was no need for me to elaborate further. Everyone knew that the *Arizona* was blown up on Sunday, December 7 1941, at Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, when Japan conducted her sneak attack on the United States.

And everyone knew the story of *Arizona*'s band—how, when air alert sounded that morning, her bandsmen had run down to their battle stations in the ammunition hold. How they had just arrived when the ammunition in the hold exploded with a mighty blast, killing all twenty-one members of the band.

Everyone knew the band's story because the United States Navy had told us about it on April 1, 1942, four months after the attack. All the newspapers in our country ran the Navy's press release, and the band's story was repeated for many years in speeches and articles.

For the past ten years, however, it has become obvious that the true facts of the band's life story have succumbed to half-truths and fables. Now, when I say, “My brother was a member of the USS *Arizona* band,” people usually say, “Oh yes, I've heard of that band. It's musicians were in bed asleep that morning!”

Our family first heard the “asleep in bed” fable on Memorial Day, 1982, when my husband and I took my mother to Pearl Harbor for her first visit to the *Arizona* Memorial. There is entombed whatever remains of her son. As we sat in the theatre of the visitors' center watching their film, suddenly there was a picture of *Arizona*'s band! And there was our Clyde, looking out at us with his familiar half-smile. We were stunned.

Even more stunning to us, however, was the story the narrator was telling. How the *Arizona* band had played so well the night before and had gotten back to the ship so late that the Navy had let the musicians sleep late the morning of December 7. And how all the bandsmen were still in bed asleep when the attack began, and so they had all died!

What a picture that conjured up for us! The U.S. Navy, to which we had entrusted our beloved Clyde, being so kind and gracious to him on his last morning on earth.

And what a comforting thought that was for us! After forty-one years of struggling to accept the horror of the last few minutes of life of our *Arizona* bandsmen, we could now put them to rest in such a serene, peaceful manner. We would love to believe that story—we would like nothing better than to know that the band really was still in bed. There is certainly nothing wrong with having a morning off from duty and being able to lie abed, basking in the luxury of not having to get up yet. All of us have done that all our lives, whenever the opportunity presented itself. Yes, the picture of our bandsmen lying on their innerspring mattresses, totally oblivious, when the *Arizona* suddenly blew up and snuffed out their lives, with no warning and with no pain, is something we could live with much more easily than that which really transpired that morning.

But what hogwash! That was a United States Navy Band—not fancy members of some elite finishing school. *Arizona*'s last band operated under the same rules and regulations which govern all sailors, rules which have been set down by the Navy for

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many years. The band had its assigned duties and bandsmen were expected to perform them. The Navy has its own way of seeing that its rules are enforced.

Therefore, we knew that the comforting picture of *Arizona's* musicians lying peacefully in their beds until late that morning could not be true, for the simple reason that her band members did not ever have any beds on the *Arizona*.

They ate and slept in the same compartment. And they slept, not in comfortable beds, but in hammocks, which were swung from hooks each night. Their hammocks were taken down early each morning, rolled up, and stored. The tables for eating, which had been suspended from the ceiling the night before, were then lowered to the deck.

There was never any deviation from that schedule. The tables were down in the daytime—the hammocks were down at night. Never were the two down at the same time.

The Navy even furnished an alarm clock to tell the musicians when it was time to get up. That clock, in the form of the master-at-arms, stalked around carrying a big stick, the better to whack sailors on the rump when they did not jump out of their hammocks fast enough to suit him. It was a very effective system.

There was no sleeping late for the bandsmen—ever. There was no crawling back into their hammocks for another forty winks—the hammocks were just not there anymore.

As for the fable of *Arizona's* band playing so well the night of December 6, the families of the bandsmen have known since early 1942 just where *Arizona's* musicians were on their last night, what they did, and to whom they talked. After all, we had a vested interest in learning the true facts of the band's activities as quickly as we could. We came to realize early on that we would not receive much information from official sources, and that anything we learned would come from our hard work and from the kindness of strangers.

Not only did the band not play anywhere the night of December 6, its members were not late getting back to the ship. They were on board by the usual 1:00 A.M., as required of all unmarried sailors at Pearl Harbor.

But friends continued to return from Pearl Harbor relating the “band was asleep” fable.

Unfortunately, if we repeat an untruth over and over, year after year, it becomes firmly engraved into the history of a nation.

But what a disservice to those very talented musicians, whose only sin was to follow orders and perform their duties as they had been trained.

Cannot we say something about how that band was famous all over the Pacific Fleet as the best military band our servicemen had every heard?

Cannot we say something about how those twenty-one men had spent their entire lives studying and training to become the proficient band everyone so admired?

Cannot we remember them as young men who were cheated out of their lives before their lives every really began?

Is our only memorial to that group of men to remain forever a lie?

Those men all had loving families back home who still remember them and who did not rest until they had ferreted out their story, but it seemed to me that no one else knew or cared.

Perhaps that was our fault. The families of the *Arizona* bandsmen have seldom talked to outsiders about our private grief, preferring to bear our pain in silence. The

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mothers wrote extensively to each other for years after the attack, pouring out their grief to one another. They were fully aware that nobody in the world who had not experienced such a loss could possibly understand the suffering they were enduring.

Gradually it dawned on me that perhaps, if the band's story was ever to be written, it would require some action on my part.

Research material was no problem. My parents preserved all my brother's letters to us from the time he entered the U.S. Navy until his death. They also saved the letters which were written to them after the attack by the parents of his fellow musicians. All this material, plus many, many articles, books, letters, and photographs pertaining to Pearl Harbor, was entrusted to me many years ago for safekeeping.

Not only did my parents preserve these papers, they also went to great lengths in the early years to search out the facts of their son's death, and to document the sources.

But how could I take on such a personally painful task?

How could I spend several years researching and writing about the intimate feelings of those boys and their families? How could I open up again the unspeakable pain and horror which we endured for so long after Pearl Harbor?

It appeared I had two choices. I could leave the *Arizona* band with the epitaph of "They were in their beds asleep" or I could muster the courage from somewhere to tell their true story.

Little by little, with much soul-searching, I developed the obsessive drive necessary to undertake such a project. I felt bolstered by some unseen force. I could almost hear my parents, long since gone, saying, "Go for it, Molly." And I could feel the band boys urging me on, assuring me that "you can do it!"

Finally, in January 1993, I surrendered and began this book.

And I was right—it took all the courage I could muster to open those many boxes of letters, written more than fifty years ago, and to start putting them in some sort of order.

I had not read my brother's letters since he first wrote them to us in 1940 and 1941. Since I moved from our hometown in January 1942, I had never read the letters the parents of the other *Arizona* bandsmen had written to my parents.

Just to read, sort, and copy those letters, written so long ago, proved extremely difficult. It was not long before I learned that it is possible to type with tears running down one's face!

In the beginning, I was grateful for my fury and indignation about the untruths being told about the band—it drove me on, when it would have been so easy to throw up my hands and say, "Enough! This is just too painful."

Before long, however, my fury dissolved into humility. Everywhere I turned, friends and total strangers were enthusiastic and encouraging. Everyone, it seemed, was eager to help. Always, if they could not answer my questions, they suggested someone else who might know, until I had a large network of people all over the country, trying to remember events that happened so long ago!

It was extremely comforting to find that so many people really did care and wanted to know the true facts about the *Arizona* band.

My pride in the band grew with each interview, as former servicemen told me how good the *Arizona* band was and how much they always enjoyed listening to it. They

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assured me over and over that the *Arizona* band was not only the best band in the Pacific Fleet, it was the best in the whole Navy!

I became more convinced that now it is time to tell the story of the *Arizona* band, and to tell it as accurately as possible. It is time to share the results of the research of the families of *Arizona*'s musicians.

We owe this to our twenty-one bandsmen; we owe it to their families; and we owe it to our nation's historical records.

Here, then, written in tears and with much love and respect, is the story of the very short life of the last band of the USS *Arizona*.

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Acknowledgements

This book is the culmination of many searches by the families of *Arizona*'s last bandmen, searches which began on December 7, 1941, and have remained ongoing to this day. Had it not been for those families' careful research and even more careful storage of the information they acquired, none of us would know the history of that talented group of musicians. That would have been a great loss.

Therefore, first and foremost, I want to thank all the parents of the *Arizona* bandmen for their part in preserving the history of that ill-fated band. By exchanging information and photographs of their sons so many years ago, they laid the foundation for this book.

Especially do I thank my parents, Dick and Jane Williams, whose only son, Musician Second Class Clyde Richard Williams, was a member of *Arizona*'s last band.

Also, I thank the living families of the bandmen, who were all so encouraging. They know firsthand our grief and were able to sympathize with me as I struggled so long with this book.

Robert Radford, the brother of Musician Second Class Neal (Mike) Radford of *Arizona*'s last band, sent a copy of his brother's letters. I am very grateful to Bob for his assistance.

Pauline Scruggs Ellis, whose brother, Musician Second Class Jack Leo Scruggs, was a member of *Arizona*'s last band, also sent her brother's letters. Since early 1942, the Scruggs family has shared photographs which Jack had sent them with other families.

I was also encouraged by the Reverend Kenneth Paul Bandy, brother of Musician Second Class Wayne Lynn Bandy of *Arizona*'s last band. I found the Bandy family by a miracle whose name is Delores Bertels.

Ruth Cadwell Sanders, who was Wayne Bandy's "girl back home," sent photographs of Wayne and other members of the band which had been sent to her by Jack Scruggs' mother in 1942.

By a strange coincidence, I found Elizabeth Haas Landeweer, the stepmother of Musician Second Class Curtis Junior Haas. My husband and I searched all over Kansas City for some person who could tell us about Curt's family, but had about given up. One day I went to the Wyandotte West Library of Kansas City, Kansas, to read microfilms of some old newspapers I had ordered regarding another bandman. David Thomas, the head of the audiovisual department, casually asked why I was reading such old newspapers. When I told him I was working on a book about the USS *Arizona* band, David remarked that his father had gone to school with a member of the *Arizona* band. Of course, that had to be Curt Haas.

David's father, Jerry Thomas, led me to Edna Scharz. Edna contacted Betty Jane Brown Miller, a friend of Elizabeth Haas Landeweer. Thanks to all those people, I have had many delightful conversations with Elizabeth. She is a very intelligent, talented person, and I have enjoyed knowing her.

Don Hurley, the brother of Musician Second Class Wendell Ray Hurley, was also very encouraging and sent Wendell's entire photograph album. Most of our favorite photos of my brother taken at Pearl Harbor came from Wendell Hurley's father in 1942, as he shared the pictures from his son's album with all of us.

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In addition to the families of the *Arizona* musicians, the assistance, interest, encouragement, kindness, and prayers of so many other people, both military and civilian, did much to ensure the completion of this book.

Personnel at the United States Navy School of Music, now no longer confined to the U.S. Navy, but training musicians for all the branches of the armed forces, could not have been more courteous. When we visited the school at Little Creek, Virginia, in 1993, the Commanding Officer was Commander Raymond A. Ascione and the Executive Officer was Lieutenant Mike Alverson. Lieutenant Alverson was very helpful in furnishing addresses of people who might assist me in my research.

Captain W. J. Phillips, who was Officer in Charge/Leader of the U.S. Navy Band, wrote a very encouraging letter through J. L. Barnes, Master Chief Musician.

I was delighted to find Doctor James M. Thurmond, who was Bandmaster-in-Charge of the U.S. Navy School of Music when the *Arizona* bandsmen attended in 1940 and 1941. He was most helpful in furnishing some of the history of the school and in asking other former bandsmen to assist me.

Nothing could have prepared me for the kindness, helpfulness, and encouragement of the men who survived the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941. At first I was hesitant to contact them, as I know how painful it must be for them to discuss that day. But they were most gracious, and I sincerely thank them. In particular, members of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, Inc. always found the name of someone who could help me.

I am grateful to the former students of the U.S. Navy School of Music who attended the school with the *Arizona* bandsmen. Most of the men I interviewed were also survivors of the Pearl Harbor attack, so not only did they know our bandsmen at the school, they also knew them at Pearl Harbor. It was personally a great comfort to me to talk with them, as they were the last friends our boys ever saw. They always had time to answer one more question. They sent me copies of material from their scrapbooks; they sent the names of other musicians who might help; they invariably cheered me on. They, more than anyone else, understood what I was trying to do. I want them to know how much I appreciate their kindness and assistance.

I also talked at length with other Navy and Marine musicians who were on ships or on shore at Pearl Harbor that day. Although they had attended different music schools than had the boys in the *Arizona* band, they all had heard them play at Pearl Harbor and remember them well.

Civilians, some of whom were not even alive in 1941, have been very interested in this book, and have helped in many ways. They are:

Ramona Corbin of the Kansas City, Kansas, Office of Senator Bob Dole, who helped expedite responses from government agencies.

Lorraine Marks Haislip, Historian of the USS *Arizona* Reunion Association, who was very generous in sharing material regarding the *Arizona* band.

Many special people helped me in my unsuccessful attempts to find other families of *Arizona*'s bandsmen.

In addition to the assistance provided by Jerry and David Thomas, Edna Scharz, and Betty Jane Brown Miller, the following people helped in my search for the family of Curtis Haas: Gus Leinkuler of the North Kansas City, Missouri, High School Library; Margaret McCoy, Archivist, Unity School of Christianity, Kansas City, Missouri; my

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friend, Sue Logan, of Harrisonville, Missouri; and Alvina Wells of the Bates County, Missouri, Historical Society.

Robert H. McCary of Birmingham, Alabama, helped me in my effort to find the family of Bill McCary. Although I called all the McCarys in Birmingham, including Robert, we were never able to find any family connection. I thank him, however, for his courtesy in looking through all his family records for me.

Mike Kelley and Janet Dagenais Brown of the Wichita State University Library, Wichita, Kansas, and Bill Ellington of the Wichita, Kansas, Public Library, searched long for me in our attempt to find the family of Bill Moorhouse.

Terry Linville, Jackie Williams, and Richard Del Real of the Webb Sanders Funeral Home, Lindsay, California; Jane Balmer of the Lindsay California, Cemetery; and Sue Palmer of Porter's Funeral Home in Kansas City, Kansas, all helped in my search for the family of Harvey Sanderson.

My cousins, Betty Gerow Ryan of Chicago, Illinois, and Kay Gerow Morris of Pasadena, Texas, tried very hard to find the family of Bobby Shaw.

Wanda Campbell, Jane Golden, Lawrence Houchin, Betty Mae Martin, Asa E. Streight, and Jess and Betty Winn, all present or former residents of Okmulgee, Oklahoma, helped me in various ways, as did my cousin, Frankie Morton, of Norman, Oklahoma.

Good friends Virginia and Emily Doughty of Chesapeake, Virginia, extended their hospitality to us when we visited the School of Music in Little Creek, Virginia.

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Many, many close friends, such as Steve and Mary Holloway, Bill and Nancy Byous, and the Reverend Ralph Culler, never tired of asking how the book was going, making sure that I did not stray far from the task at hand.

Our longtime friend, Fritz Kropf, of Kansas City, Kansas, a survivor of the Pearl Harbor attack, helped me find addresses for many of the men I wanted to contact.

My friend, Sister Frances Marie Grady of Kansas City, Missouri, insisted from the beginning that I must write this book. She made me see that the project was possible, even when I was not so sure.

When I went to Washington, D.C., in January 1942 at the age of twenty, I had, in less than two months, lost my brother in a horrible manner and had left home for the first time. I was only saved by some beautiful Government girls who had also left home at the same age. They were (and still are): Maggie Corder Runkle, Virginia Patton Doughty, June Cockrell Estabrook, and Ageline Calvert Pickett. I have treasured their friendship through all these years.

As I entered the mysterious world of self-publishing, I was guided and assisted by Darla Pennington, who did the typesetting for the book; Jean Staub, who did the proofreading; and David G. Plumer of Walsworth Publishing Company.

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My husband was a tower of strength during this work. He was always ready to drive me to check out yet another clue, or to do some chore around the house when I did not seem to be aware of the need.

And, as always, I have been strengthened by the love and encouragement of Omer, Peggy, and Willie Kent.

Although I freely acknowledge that many people have helped with this book, such assistance merely reflects their kindness. Certainly I do not suggest that they agree with all the statements in this book.

Especially I do not want to imply that all members of the families of the *Arizona* band agree with all the statements contained in this book. We have all formed different opinions over the years about who was responsible for the Pearl Harbor disaster and how the fiasco could have been avoided.

We stand as one, however, in our sorrow and regret for the unnecessary and untimely loss of our beloved *Arizona* bandsmen.

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Chapter 1 – They Didn't Have a Chance!

As far as the United States Navy can ascertain, it was the only U.S. Navy Band which was formed together, trained together, transferred together, reported aboard a ship together, fought together, and died together.

It was to become the best-known musical band in the Pacific Fleet, assigned to what was to become the most famous ship in the world.

Its members were equally proficient performing as a concert band, a dance band, a jazz band, or an orchestra.

They were the musicians of Band Number 22, serving aboard the battleship *Arizona* (BB-39).

Members of the ill-fated band were: Bandmaster Frederick William Kinney; Wayne Lynn Bandy, Oran Merrill Brabbzson; Ralph Warren Burdette, Harry Gregory Chernucha; Gerald Clinton Cox; Frank Norman Floege; Curtis Junior Haas; Bernard Thomas Hughes; Wendell Ray Hurley; Emmett Isaac Lynch; William Moore McCary; William Starks Moorhouse; Alexander Joseph Nadel; Neal Jason Radford; James Harvey Sanderson; Jack Leo Scruggs; Robert Kar Shaw; Charles William White; Ernest Hubert Whitson, Jr.; and Clyde Richard Williams, who was my brother.

At the time of their deaths, Bandmaster Kinney held the rate of Musician First Class; most of the other bandsmen held the rate of Musician Second Class.

Not much has been written about the *Arizona* band, and what has been written is seldom correct. The purpose of this book is to help you come to know its musicians and to understand what a terrible shock the loss of those twenty-one boys was to their families.

Unfortunately, the only way I can introduce you to the band is through these pages, since the bandsmen are no longer with us. The entire band, along with their Bandmaster, was blown up with their ship. They died together as heroes, and they deserve to be remembered forever.

When the Japanese conducted their sneak attack against the United States military installations at Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, they wrecked havoc on all our ships, planes, and buildings. Pearl Harbor was completely devastated, with much of our property there either damaged or destroyed.

But as bad as the damage was to our national property and to our national pride, it was nothing to the damage the Japanese did to the families of the 2,403 persons who were murdered that day. Property can be and was repaired or replaced, but the men lost that day were lost forever to their families and friends waiting back home.

To us, the deceased were not just cold statistics—they were our happy, fun-loving, handsome boys, real flesh-and-blood human beings, who were cheated out of their lives by the stupidity of greed.

This book does not deal with the causes of our unpreparedness at Pearl Harbor that day, nor does it deal with the technical details of our military forces there. Not having been a member of the armed forces and not having been at Pearl Harbor that day, I cannot add anything to the excellent books which have already been written about the attack.

Rather, this book has been written from the viewpoint of a group of civilians whose lives were forevermore changed when their loved ones perished that day.

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I had the pleasure of meeting all the *Arizona* band members. They were an exceptionally fine group of boys. I am only sorry that I could not have known them longer.

For more than fifty years, they have been honored as heroes. Their families have always appreciated the honors and have been very proud of them. But, like most heroes, our boys have not been alive to receive their honors, so it has been hollow glory for us. Medals, memorials, and honors, while well-deserved in this case, can never replace the warm loving sons and brothers. For after all, our boys can no longer hug us, laugh with us, cry with us, talk to us—and that we have missed very much.

I am aware that the U.S. Navy calls all its personnel “men,” and I am sure “old salts” will cringe every time I refer to the *Arizona* bandsmen as “boys.” The Navy is always so quick to tell us that it takes boys and turns them into men. No doubt they did so in that case—certainly the bandsmen of the *Arizona* died like men.

But since much of this book has been taken from letters written to each other for many years by their grieving families, and since all those families called them their “boys,” I have chosen to use the same term.

After all, they were “boys” when they left us—they never came back—so they have remained for us the age they were when we last saw them.

Most of the boys had been sailors less than a year. Nearly one half of them had joined the Navy when they reached the age of eighteen. All had requested entry into the United States Navy School of Music, and after an audition at the school in Washington, D.C., had been accepted. The audition was mandatory, since only accomplished musicians were permitted into the school. The U.S. Navy School of Music was not set up as a training school for amateurs.

The boys came to the school from the states on the East and West Coasts and from the Middle West—from Alabama, California, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, and the state of Washington.

By the time they died, they had become a close-knit professional group, writing home to their families how proud they were of their band and of their “pals.”

They were just embarking on a career in music. They dreamed they would someday be members of a big band, the likes of Glenn Miller. They were destined to be remembered always as members of a famous band, although neither they nor Glenn Miller lived to savor their fame.

Glenn Miller had his beloved “String of Pearls,” but the last band of the USS *Arizona* had only its one last, final Pearl—their despised Pearl Harbor.

Members of the *Arizona* band died together on December 7, 1941. Their idol, Major Glenn Miller, Director of the United States Air Force Band, died three years later—December 15, 1944—lost on a flight from England to Paris.

The *Arizona* band's last day of life began on a beautiful sunny, calm, quiet tropical morning, and ended less than two hours later in terror, with blood, smoke, fire, explosions, pain, and death.

For their families back home, the hardest part to bear has always been—how long did they live, how did they die, and did they suffer? Although we have devoted our lives to finding the answers to these questions, we still do not know.

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Caution must be used in writing about the Pearl Harbor attack, since so many books offer so many opposing opinions.

Everyone agrees, however, that without any warning, Japan attacked our military installations at Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu, Territory of Hawaii, at seven fifty-five on the morning of December 7, 1941.

The first wave of 183 Japanese airplanes, part of a total of 353 planes, bombed and strafed our military airfields, where the airplanes were conveniently lined up in straight rows, then moved to the ships moored at Pearl Harbor.

The Japanese then dropped bombs on our ships, which were also lined up in neat rows.

According to some sources, the *Arizona* was hit with a 1,756.9-pound armor-piercing bomb, especially made with the capability of penetrating the decks of ships before exploding.

The bomb penetrated *Arizona*'s deck, and by some twist of fate not totally agreed upon by historians now, caused her six main ammunition storage magazines at the front of the ship to explode.

At the beginning of the attack, when the air raid alert, followed by general quarters, was sounded on *Arizona*, her band members ran to their battle stations in the ammunition hold several decks below, as they had been trained to do. Just as they arrived at the ammunition hold and lined up at their assigned places to ensure the shells and bags of powder stayed on the hoists going to the big guns above, the ammunition hold blew up.

In that instant, the entire twenty-one piece band was gone.

Gone, too, were their hopes and dreams and the hopes and dreams of their families back home. For us, life as we knew it was over. Oh, we kept breathing, and we kept working, and we kept loving—but our lives were never quite so bright after that.

Eventually we regained the song in our hearts, but it was always in a minor key after Pearl Harbor.

Arizona lost 1,177 of her 1,511 men. In all, 2,403 persons, military and civilians, were killed at Pearl Harbor that day.

The beautiful USS *Arizona* memorial at Pearl Harbor, now maintained by the United States National Park Service, honors the men killed that day. Beneath this Memorial is probably the last resting place for most of *Arizona*'s bandsmen.

Part of their families' lifetime sentence has been that any mention of "*Arizona*," "Pearl Harbor," or "December 7" has always caused a lurch in our very souls. So, to protect ourselves, most of us have wrapped the memory of our boys in soft cotton and stored it in our hearts. No one who did not suffer through such a tragedy could possibly understand our grief, and we soon learned not to try to explain.

But now it is time to tell the story of the USS *Arizona*'s last band, and to tell it as truthfully as possible.

Most of the boys' parents are gone now, and their siblings are scattered all over the country. This book is possible only because so many of the families of the boys kept every letter their sons wrote to them after they left home. Afterwards, as they became acquainted with each other, they shared that information. Without access to that material, I would have been hard-pressed to tell this story.

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Fortunately, we used the long distance telephone or Western Union for dire emergencies only in those days, and other fast communication systems had not yet been invented. It is thanks to our depression-induced frugality that most of our communication was done by letters, and that those letters were kept all these years.

While they were attending the U.S. Navy School of Music in Washington, D.C., some of the boys who lived on the East Coast took friends to their parents' homes for the weekend. After they graduated and went around to California, one of the boys whose family lived on the West Coast did the same, so some of the parents had met some of the boys. Some of the boys' sisters and mothers had visited them, either in Washington or in Long Beach, California. My parents and I had gone to Washington in May 1941 for the band's graduation from the School of Music, so I had met *Arizona's* band boys at a dance and at the dock when they embarked on their destiny.

But none of the parents had ever met any of the other parents before their sons' deaths. After December 7, they became a close support group for each other. In the absence of official word, the parents shared every bit of information they could uncover regarding their sons' last hours. And we finally came to know how our musicians died—know, but not to understand. Never did we understand.

Much has been written and continues to be written about that horrible day, and the military aspects of our "Day of Infamy" have been argued for over fifty years now, and no doubt will never be resolved.

For many years the families of the band boys could not understand why our government was so taken by surprise and why our musicians died so tragically. Some of the families accepted the verdict that Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and Lieutenant General Walter C. Short were somehow the only two persons who allowed Japan to sneak in uncontested and destroy our military installations. Others felt that the heads of those two men were being offered to the citizens of the United States on a silver platter, simply to protect the guilty.

We were a very different people in the thirties and the forties from what we are now. We were fiercely patriotic, and we believed our leaders to be honorable men. We trusted them. In those days, newspaper reporters did not reveal the private, personal lives of our leaders, and their human flaws were kept from us. So, if our leaders deemed it to be in the national interest to keep the facts of Pearl Harbor from us, we accepted that. We concentrated all our hatred on the "dirty Japs," as we were being taught.

From the beginning, the families grieved because, by the sneaky nature of the attack, our *Arizona* band boys did not have a chance.

After more than fifty years of reading all I could find about the many investigations and inquiries which have been conducted as our government searched for the cause of Pearl Harbor, I am left sick with fury.

If the average citizen cannot understand the extreme rivalry between our Army and Navy, you can imagine the agony of the victims' families as we gradually learned the many reasons for Japan's success in catching us so unprepared at Pearl Harbor.

It appears that, in addition to our enemies in Japan, we in this country were saddled with the jealousy, lies, coverups, and feuds between our Army and Navy; our president and the people; our president and Congress; our Congressmen and other members of Congress; high-ranking military officers and other high-ranking military officers; Democrats and Republicans; ad infinitum.

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So we were right from the start—2,403 American military men and civilians, including our twenty-one *Arizona* band members, did not have a chance!

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