

Editorial: The hard lessons of Pearl Harbor

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Leroy Barber grew up in rural New London, Wis., hunting and fishing with two of his brothers. He enlisted in the Navy, trained at the Great Lakes facility north of Chicago and was assigned to a battleship. Barber enjoyed being a sailor, missed his brothers and advised them to join up. The Navy made an exception to its rule against putting family members on one boat – a decision their father sought to reverse – but America was not at war, and Hawaii was about as far from Europe's fighting as you could get.

That's how the Barber boys, Malcolm, 22, Leroy, 21 and Randolph, 19, came to serve together as firemen on the USS Oklahoma. And that is how they died: together, on the morning of Dec. 7, 1941 – 75 years ago today – when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and drew America into World War II.

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