

U.S.NAVY ASIATIC FLEET BASED IN MANILA BAY AND CAVITE NAVY YARD

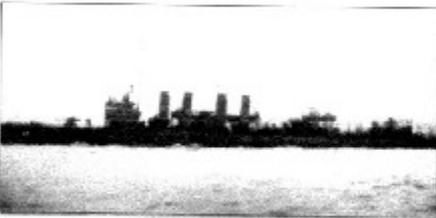
Commanded by Admiral C.Hart and Rear Admiral Francis Rockwell. The fleet consisted of: a Flagship, the cruiser Houston, one light cruiser, three destroyer divisions with 13 over-age four stack, flush deck destroyers of World War I vintage, and 17 submarines. Air elements of the fleet were under Patrol Wing 10, composed of 25 PBVs and four seaplane tenders. Patrol and miscellaneous craft included seven gun boats, one yacht, six large mine sweepers, two tankers and one ocean going tug. Additional ships, submarines, and planes were added just prior to WWII. The fleet was at anchor at Cebu when the Japanese attacked and immediately sailed for safer waters to the Dutch East Indies to conduct future sea warfare.



U.S.S. Houston Flagship of the Asiatic Fleet commanded by Admiral Hart.



U.S.S. William B. Preston-destroyer.



U.S.S. John D. Edwards-destroyer.



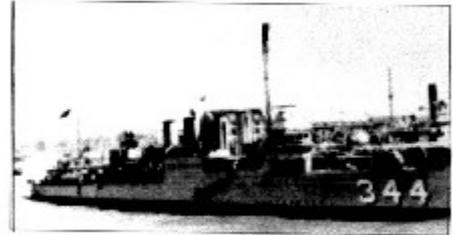
U.S.S. Langley-seaplane tender.



U.S.S. Peary-overage World War I destroyer.



Submarine tender U.S.S. Canopus



U.S.S. John D. Ford-destroyer.



PBV Naval Aircraft-32 in operation in the Philippines prior to WWII. Most were destroyed by Japanese forces soon after the attack on the Philippines on Dec. 7, 1941.

Naval forces assigned to the Asiatic fleet consisted of 1 heavy and 2 light cruisers, 13 overage destroyers, 32 PBV aircraft of patrol Wing 10, 29 submarines, 6 gunboats, 6 motor torpedo boats, and miscellaneous other vessels

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PHILIPPINE ISLANDS TOTALLY UNPREPARED FOR WAR

By 11:30 a.m. the bombers which had been sent aloft earlier, were back on the field being loaded with bombs for an attack on Formosa. Planes of the 20th Pursuit Sqdn. returned to Clark Field for refueling at the same time. At Nichols, the 17th Pursuit sqdn which had been covering Clark, was also landing to refuel. The 3rd and 34th Pursuit Squadrons were standing by at Iba and Del Carmen air fields.

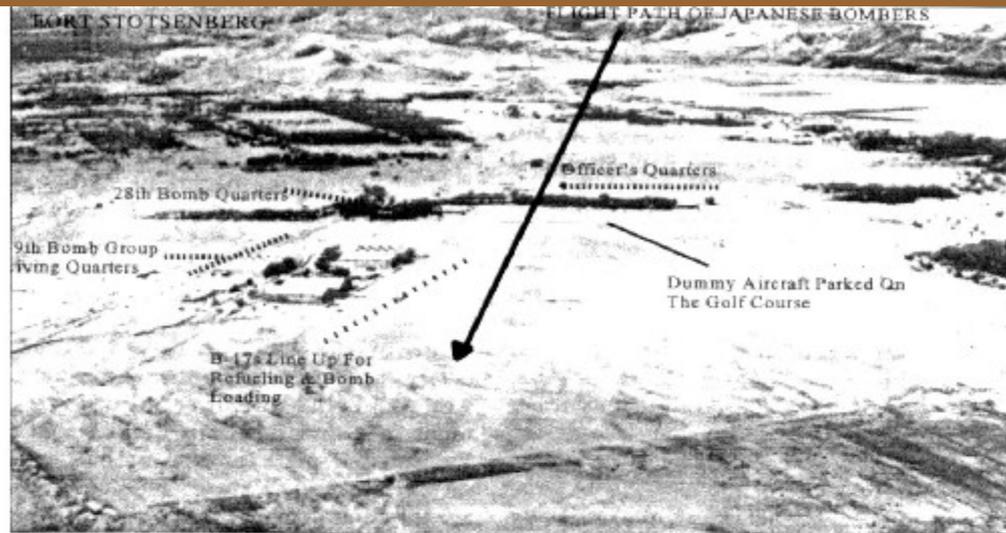
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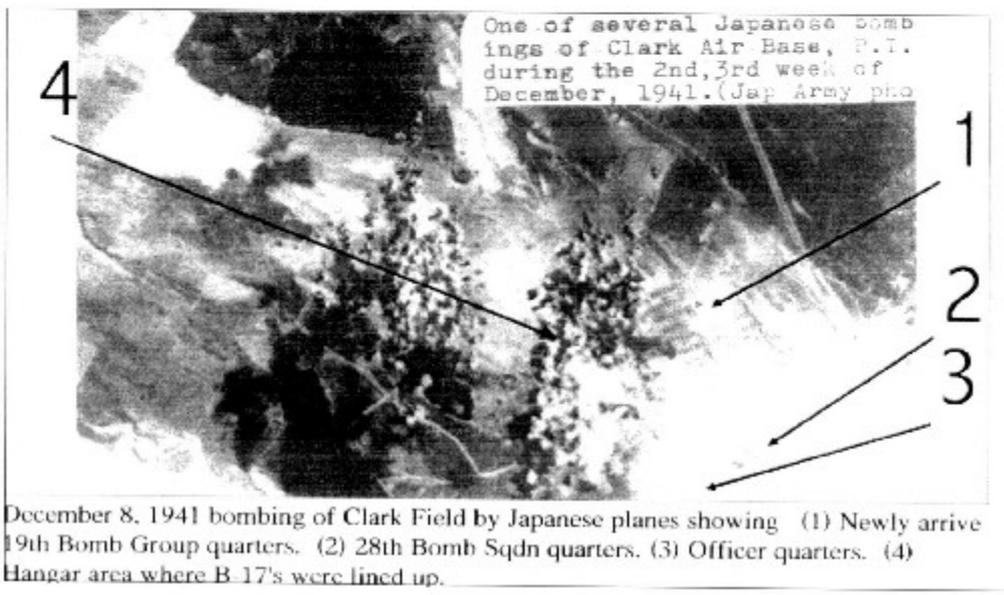
JAPAN ATTACKS CLARK AIR BASE DECEMBER 8, 1941--12:30 P.M.

All personnel of the 28th Bomb Squadron had returned to their barracks to eat lunch. Upon leaving the dining room at approximately 12:30 p.m. we heard the sound of many airplane engines approaching the air field. As we looked up we saw a formation of airplanes approaching. A few mistakenly thought they were navy planes, but that thought was soon dispelled when bombs started to fall. We all scattered, seeking some sort of shelter. I saw a nearby rain water revetment about twelve inches deep and laid down in the ditch. The planes were dropping their explosives diagonally across the field. The explosives were loud and frightening. Then I heard the anti-aircraft guns of the 200th CA as they tried to down the Japanese bombers. Looking up I saw the shells exploding much below the bombers.

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Clark Field Air Base on December 8, 1941 at 12:30 PM



DISASTER!

We saw two formations of 27 bombers each as they passed over Clark Field. No sooner had the bombers left the area, Japanese fighter planes then strafed the entire area, delivering the final low with their low-level strafing attacks on the grounded B-17s, and on the P-40s with their full gasoline tanks. During the attack, three P-40s of the 20th Pursuit Sqdn managed to get in the air, but five more were blasted by bombs as they taxied for their take off. Thus, after one day of war, with its strength cut in half, the Far East Air Force had been eliminated as an effective fighting force. Of the modern combat aircraft only 17 of the original 35 B-17s remained on Mindnao. Fifty-three P-40s and three P-35s had been destroyed, and an additional 25 or 30 miscellaneous aircraft (B-10s, B-18s and observation planes) were gone. Casualties were 80 killed and 150 wounded. The Japanese lost 7 fighter planes.



B-18 medium bombers destroyed.



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WASHINGTON'S REACTION

The reaction from Washington headquarters of the Air Force was delayed but explosive, despite a radiogram from MacArthur stating that the losses had been “due to overwhelming superiority of enemy forces”. General Arnold, when he received the news of the losses in the Philippines, “could not help thinking that there must have been some mistake somewhere in my Air Force command.

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Planes destroyed at Clark Air Base by Japanese bombing on December 8, 1941.



DISASTER AT CLARK

With this smashing blow, the Japanese made obsolete the carefully prepared plans of defense in the event of war in the Pacific. In a remark to General Brerton, General Arnold asked “how in the hell an experienced airman like himself could get caught with his planes down”. The catastrophe of “Pearl Harbor” overshadowed the debacle at Clark Field and still obscures the ignominious defeat inflicted on the American Air Forces in the Philippines on the same day.

Hangar area where the B-17s were parked and being loaded with bombs for a mission to Formosa. Damage to the physical facilities of the air base were extensive.

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Hangar area of Clark Air Base after the December 8, 1941 Japanese attack.



Hangar and maintenance area wher B-17's were being serviced for a bombing run on Formosa.

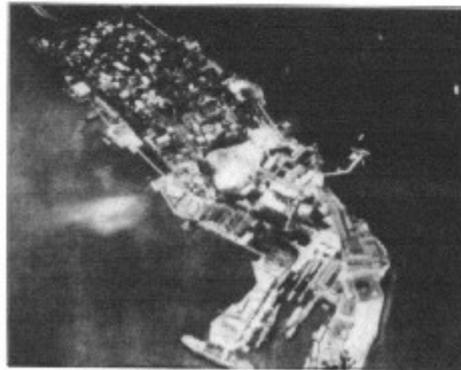
CAVITE NAVAL BASE

On December 10, 1941, two flights of Mitsubishi bombers flew high in flawless formation over the naval base. Their wings were colored a cloud white, the underside of their bodies of robin egg blue dropping their explosives at random on the facilities. The base was a shambles after the two bombing attacks on the same day.

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Cavite Navy Yard practically demolished on December 10, 1941



Cavite Naval yard prior to bombing raid.



Cavite Naval Yard after the bombing on December 10, 1941

NICHOLS FIELD

Nichols Field, near Manila, was bombed rather extensively on December 10, 1941, destroying much of its physical facilities and many aircraft.



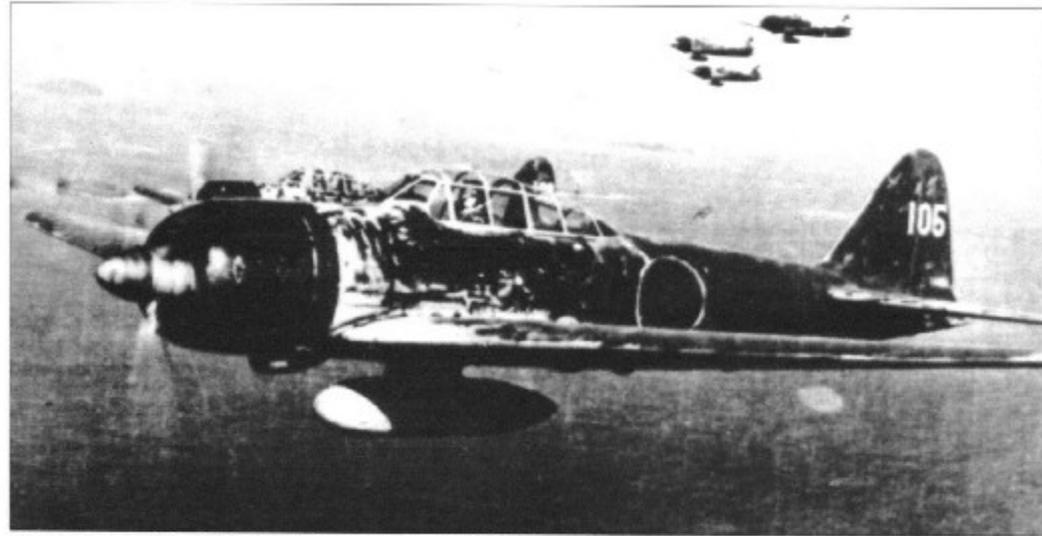
P-35's destroyed during December 10, 1941 air raid on Nichols Field.

P-35 fighter planes destroyed by the air raid on Nichols Field air base.



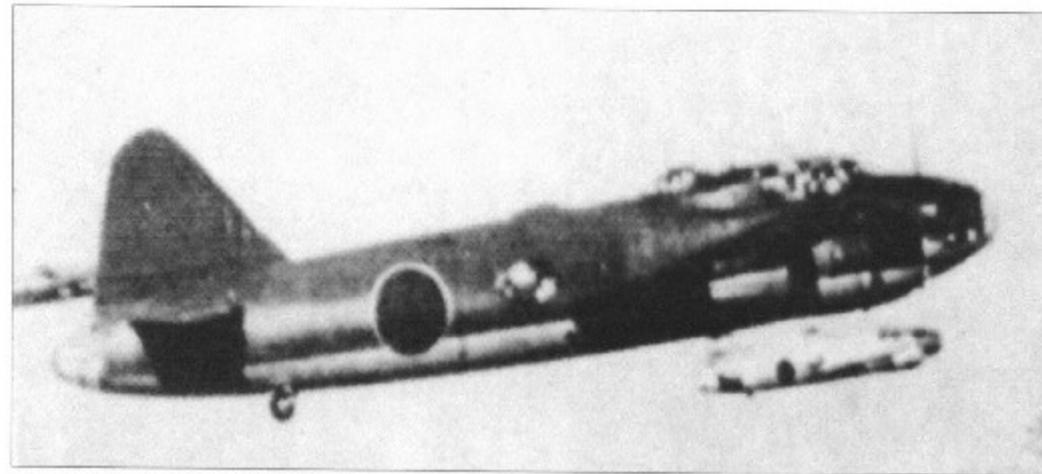
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The Japanese “Zero” type aircraft that ravaged Clark Field on December 8, 1941.



The Japanese “Zero” fighter plane that attacked Clark Air Base on December 8, 1941. It had a speed of 311 miles per hour with an armament of two cannon and two machine guns, however, it had very poor protection for the pilot.

The Mitsubishi G4M type bomber used extensively against the Philippine defense facilities during World War II.



Japanese Mitsubishi G4M “Betty” used in the attacks on the Philippine Islands. The bomber had a speed of approximately 265mph with a range of 2,262 miles and carried a bomb load of 2,205 lbs.

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