

Name _____ Group _____ Date _____

Reading 2: *The USS Arizona Memorial*

The USS *Arizona* is the final resting place for many of the ship's 1,177 crewmen who lost their lives on December 7, 1941. The 184-foot-long Memorial structure spanning the mid-portion of the sunken battleship consists of three sections: 1) the entry and assembly rooms, 2) a central area designed for ceremonies and general observation, and 3) the shrine room, where the names of those killed on the USS *Arizona* are engraved on the marble wall.

The primary concern of the U.S. Navy immediately after the attack had been to repair the damaged ships as quickly as possible. Early on, it became clear that the USS *Arizona* would never sail again. While other ships were restored, she lay under the water, a silent reminder of the "date which will live in infamy." When the navy began to consider raising the ship and recovering the dead, medical examiners advised that many of the men had been cremated by the blast and ensuing fire, and others would be unrecognizable after being submerged for a long time. The navy then decided to maintain the old custom of sailing men: those who die at sea are buried at sea. They would not, however, be forgotten.

The USS Arizona Memorial grew out of the desire to establish some sort of shrine at Pearl Harbor to honor those of the USS *Arizona* and all others who died in the attack. Suggestions for such a memorial began in 1943, but it was not until 1949, when the Territory of Hawaii established the Pacific War Memorial Commission, that the first concrete steps were taken to bring it about. Initial recognition came in 1950 when Admiral Arthur Radford, Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC), ordered that a flagstaff be erected over the sunken battleship. On the ninth anniversary of the attack, a commemorative plaque was placed at the base of the flagstaff.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who helped achieve Allied victory in Europe during World War II, approved the creation of the national Memorial in 1958. Its construction was completed in 1961 with private donations and public funds appropriated by Congress. The Memorial was dedicated in 1962.

According to its architect, Alfred Preis, the design of the Memorial, "wherein the structure sags in the center but stands strong and vigorous at the ends, expresses initial defeat and ultimate victory....The overall effect is one of serenity. Overtones of sadness have been omitted to permit the individual to contemplate his own personal responses...his innermost feelings."

Contrary to popular belief, the USS *Arizona* is no longer in commission. As a special tribute to the ship and her lost crew, the United States flag flies from the flagstaff, which is attached to the severed mainmast of the sunken battleship. The USS Arizona Memorial has come to commemorate all military personnel killed in the Pearl Harbor attack.

After reading the passage, respond to the following questions:

1. How did it happen that the USS *Arizona* became the focus of a memorial to honor all who died at Pearl Harbor? What special recognition is given to the USS *Arizona* at the Memorial site?

2. How was money raised to build the Memorial?

3. Do you think the architect accomplished his goal for the building? Why or why not?

Reading 2 was compiled from the National Park Service visitor's guide for the USS Arizona Memorial; and James P. Delgado, "USS Arizona Wreck" (Honolulu County, Hawaii) National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1988.