

When war broke out in Europe in 1939 Japan decided to start **expanding** its **territory** to the Asian **mainland**. The Japanese **occupied** parts of China and **conquered** Indochina as well. The United States was against the Japanese **invasion** of Asia. They thought they could stop them by **halting** the sales of petroleum and other **raw materials** which the Japanese **desperately** needed. Japanese generals realized that only the United States had the power to stop them. The American Navy was so strong that it had to be **destroyed**.



On the morning of December 7, 1941 Japanese warplanes **attacked** U.S. warships at Pearl Harbour **naval base** in Hawaii. It came as a complete



*Attack on Pearl Harbour from a Japanese warplane*

surprise to the Americans . Within hours bombs and torpedoes sank six American ships and killed more than 2,000 Americans. The Japanese had **destroyed** the heart of the American **fleet**.

The next day the United States **declared** war on Japan and a few days later on the other Axis powers, Italy and Germany.

The **attack** on Pearl Harbour was the beginning of the War in the Pacific. On the same day the Japanese also **invaded** the Philippines and attacked Hongkong .In the first few months the Japanese were very successful and **captured** many important islands But in June 1942 the **tide turned**. A strong **fleet** of Japanese warships wanted to **capture** Midway Island . American warplanes **attacked** from **air-craft carriers** and **destroyed** much of the Japanese **fleet**.

## WORDS

- **aircraft carrier** = type of ship that planes can fly from and land on
- **attack** =to start using guns or bombs against an enemy in a war
- **capture** = to catch a person and keep them as prisoner
- **conquer** = to take control of land by fighting
- **declare war** = to say that you are officially at war with a country
- **desperately** = badly, very much
- **destroy** =to damage completely
- **expand** = to grow, to get bigger, to get more and more land
- **fleet** = a group of ships that belongs to the navy of a country
- **halt** = stop
- **invade** = to enter a country with an army and take control of it
- **mainland** = the main area of a country, not the islands
- **naval base** = a place where military people work and where many ships are kept
- **occupy** = to stay in another country with an army for a longer time
- **raw materials** = very important products that a country needs, like wood, oil, coal etc..
- **territory** = land
- **tide turned** = here: the Japanese started losing battles