

On Christmas Eve of 1941 Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, newly appointed by President Franklin Roosevelt as Commander of the Pacific Fleet, arrived at Pearl Harbor. The next day the Admiral reviewed the carnage and made some very prescient revelations that inspired his leadership in defeating the Japanese. The following is an excerpt from the book Reflections On Pearl Harbor by William H. Ewing describing Admiral Nimitz's epiphany.

"When Nimitz landed at Pearl Harbor on Christmas Eve, 1941, there was such a spirit of despair, dejection and defeat—you would have thought the Japanese had already won the war. On Christmas Day, 1941, Adm. Nimitz was given a boat tour of the destruction wrought on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. Afterwards, someone asked him, 'Well Admiral, what do you think after seeing all this destruction?' Admiral Nimitz's reply shocked everyone: 'The Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could ever make, or God was taking care of America.'

Nimitz explained:

Mistake number one: The Japanese attacked on Sunday morning. Nine out of every ten crewmen of those ships were ashore on leave. If those same ships had been lured to sea and been sunk, we would have lost 38,000 men instead of 3,800.

Mistake number two: When the Japanese saw all those battleships lined in a row, they got so carried away sinking those battleships, they never once bombed our dry docks opposite those ships. If they had destroyed our dry docks, we would have had to tow every one of those ships to America to be repaired. As it is now, the ships are in shallow water and can be raised. One tug can pull them over to the dry docks, and we can have them repaired and at sea by the time we could have towed them to America. And I already have crews ashore anxious to man those ships.

Mistake number three: Every drop of fuel in the Pacific theater of war is on top of the ground in storage tanks five miles away over that hill. One attack plane could have strafed those tanks and destroyed our fuel supply.

That's why I say the Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could make, or God was taking care of America."

1. Who made these observations about the Japanese mistakes on Dec. 7th, 1941?
-What was his position/command?
2. Summarize the three mistakes made by the Japanese.

3. Who did he credit with taking care of America?