

Poem, Bruce James Bradley, “Uncle Bruce”

By Bruce James Bradley

Note: “Uncle Bruce” refers to Seaman Second Class Bruce Dean Bradley who perished about the USS Arizona while in service to his country on December 7, 1941. He was 19 years old. Bruce James Bradley is his great nephew and namesake.

Were you at your station? Asleep in your bed?
When the enemy airplanes appeared overhead.
Did you see the planes come? Could you hear a loud roar?
Were the seconds like minutes or possibly more?

Your ship was ablaze and sunk by 8:10.
Were you awake and aware? Surely by then.
How did you react? What did you feel?
It must have been chaos - too strange to be real.

Did you see a flash? Did you hear the boom?
Did you know your ship would become your tomb?
As the bombs and the bullets were dropping like rain.

Did you cry out for help? Were you in great pain?
When the planes in the sky continued to drone.
Were you with others or were you alone?
Did you have a chance, to gather and pray?
Or did death come too fast on your final day?

They may be moot, these questions I've posed.
Their lives were lost, the chapter long closed.
But these questions I asked, are not without cause.
Asked not for answers, but to give us pause.
To frame our thoughts of this horrendous act.

Over 2000 lives lost is more than a fact.
They had feelings and thoughts on that fateful day,
The sailors that died in that gruesome way.

To frame our thoughts of this horrendous act.
Over 2000 lives lost is more than a fact.
They had feelings and thoughts on that fateful day,
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Their loss is still felt after all of these years.
Even today as we dab at our tears,
For Bruce and his mates in their barnacled grave.
The lives that were lost, that no one could save.

May they rest on their ship in eternal slumber,
Remembered by name and not just a number.