



Harbor's Unsung Heroes

Directions: Read the mini-biographies below about two individuals who played important roles during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Then, answer the close-reading questions that follow to show your understanding and insight.

Doris Miller

Doris "Dorie" Miller was an African American sailor serving aboard the USS *West Virginia* during the attack on Pearl Harbor. When bombs began to fall, Miller left his duties as a cook to help move wounded sailors to safety. Though he had never been trained to operate a machine gun, he took control of an anti-aircraft gun and fired at attacking planes until ordered to leave. His bravery earned him the Navy Cross-the first African American sailor to receive this honor-and he became a symbol of courage and equality in wartime America.

Admiral Husband E. Kimmel

Admiral Kimmel was the commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet when Pearl Harbor was attacked. Despite leading the naval forces, he was blamed for not being fully prepared for the surprise strike. After the attack, he was removed from command, though many historians later debated whether he was unfairly blamed. Kimmel spent the rest of his life defending his record and calling for a fair review of his actions. His story reminds us that leadership during crisis often brings both responsibility and controversy.

Close-Reading Questions:

1. What specific actions made Doris Miller a hero during the attack?
2. Why was Doris Miller's recognition especially significant in the context of the 1940s?
3. What role did Admiral Kimmel play before and during the attack on Pearl Harbor?
4. Why did Admiral Kimmel face criticism after the attack?
5. How do the two stories together show different kinds of heroism or responsibility?
6. Which person's story do you connect with more, and why? (Answer in 2-3 sentences.)