

On Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese warplanes attacked the home base of the American Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, drawing the United States into World War II. More than 2,300 Americans were killed.

“Reports from Hawaii indicated that Honolulu had no warning of the attack,” The New York Times noted. “Japanese bombers, with the red circle of the Rising Sun of Japan on their wings, suddenly appeared, escorted by fighters. Flying high, they suddenly dive-bombed, attacking Pearl Harbor, the great Navy base, the Army’s Hickam Field and Ford Island. At least one torpedo plane was seen to launch a torpedo at warships in Pearl Harbor.”

The next day, President Franklin D. Roosevelt Congress, declaring that Dec. 7, 1941, was “a date which will live in infamy.” Within an hour, Congress declared war against Japan with only one dissenting voice.

On Dec. 11, Japan’s Axis allies, Germany and Italy, declared war on the United States. Congress immediately voted to respond in kind. “For the first time in its history,” The Times noted, “the United States finds itself at war against powers in both the Atlantic and the Pacific.”

Japan had hoped that the attack on Pearl Harbor would cripple the Pacific fleet and give Japan dominance over the Pacific. The United States, however, was able to recover from its losses and strike back against Japan. In April 1942, the U.S. launched a bombing mission, known as the Doolittle Raid, over Tokyo, a symbolic retaliation for Pearl Harbor that improved morale.

In June of that year, the United States Navy won a decisive victory over the Imperial Japanese Navy in the Battle of Midway, inflicting severe damage on the IJN fleet. After defeating Japan in prolonged fighting at Guadalcanal, the Americans went on the offensive in 1943 with an “island hopping” campaign. The United States won a number of fierce battles to secure islands from Japan and in 1945 captured the islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa near Japan. The Pacific War came to an end in August 1945 after the United States dropped atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

---

## Connect to Today:

In May 2011, President Obama compared the events of September 11, 2001, with Pearl Harbor: “Nearly 10 years ago, America suffered the worst attack on our shores since Pearl Harbor. This mass murder was planned by Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda network in Afghanistan, and signaled a new threat to our security ...” Read, then answer the questions in paragraph form at the bottom.

When President Obama delivered the news of Osama bin Laden’s death late Sunday night, many of those watching were doing more than watching.

For example, users of Instagram, a popular photo-sharing application for the iPhone, flooded the service with photos of Mr. Obama speaking, snapped from television and laptop screens — as if to say, “We are all a part of this.”

Word that the president would be making a statement prompted millions to turn on their televisions, but plenty of people also grabbed their smartphones, cracked open their laptops and powered on their iPads.

Twitter was abuzz with speculation about what the president might say. Some people joked that he might reveal news of alien contact or a giant meteor hurtling towards Earth. Others bemoaned the interruption of their favorite television shows. Mostly, they waited, anxiously.

During the speech, a deluge of stunned responses hit Facebook, with many expressing disbelief, surprise and approval.

Sean Garrett, the head of communications at Twitter, said there were 5,106 messages a second flowing through the site in response to the news.

The numbers were higher than those during the World Cup and the Super Bowl, which at its peak, generated 4,062 Tweets a second. Mr. Garrett said the highest volume of messages ever recorded on Twitter was during New Year’s Eve in Japan, when the service logged 6,000 a second at midnight.

Inevitably there were instant faux feeds on Twitter with satirical commentary about Bin Laden’s death, including Ghost Osama and Osama in Hell.

On Tumblr, the blogging service, the president’s speech became fodder for quick animation loops, and there were doctored images of Mr. Obama riding a unicorn, with rainbows shooting out of his hands.

Instagram users were soon posting photos of American flags. Some joined the crowds outside the White House and at ground zero in Manhattan. "You can basically follow what's happening from multiple perspectives," said Kevin Systrom, chief executive of Instagram.

Overall, the company saw 35 percent jump in the number of uploads typical of a late Sunday evening. In addition, some photographs that were posted to Twitter from Instagram were circulated on Twitter upwards of 1,000 times, Mr. Systrom said.

Path, another popular photo-sharing application for phones, said that more than 20 percent of the items posted to the service Sunday night were related to the Bin Laden news. Path lets users add keywords to their postings to categorize and filter them. Dave Morin, one of the founders of the company, said that "tv," "making," "history," and "surreal" were among the most popular tags used.

Sysomos, a social media monitoring company, said that within a few hours of Mr. Obama's speech on Sunday evening, it recorded more than 2 million mentions of bin Laden's death. That figure continued to swell overnight, said Nileshe Bansal, co-founder and chief technologist officer of the company, topping 3 million by early Monday.

"There were hundreds of tweets posted every second and a much larger number of people consuming that information," he said. "Social media is becoming the main medium for how this information is spreading. Of course, people are still watching television, reading the news, but social media is becoming a main medium."

Mr. Bansal said the company also noticed that messages on Twitter were being posted from a number of different countries, all over the map.

"It was a global phenomenon," he said. "Everyone was talking about it all over the world, not just the U.S. and Pakistan."

After President Obama's announcement, The New York Times reported on the deluge of personal reactions to the news on Facebook, Instagram, Path, Twitter and Tumblr.

**What are your thoughts on the relationship between big news events and what appears to be the public's increasing "urge to be part of the news" in social media forums? Do you think our perception of breaking news stories is different today than what people experienced when they heard about Pearl Harbor, for example, as a result of social media? Why or why not? Do you tend to share your own feelings and opinions about news events with other people online? Why or why not?**

**There are 3 questions here to be answered in paragraph form for 5 marks each.**

**Complete the Vein Diagram. You will have to research 9/11 a bit to do so. 10 marks**

# Compare and Contrast

