

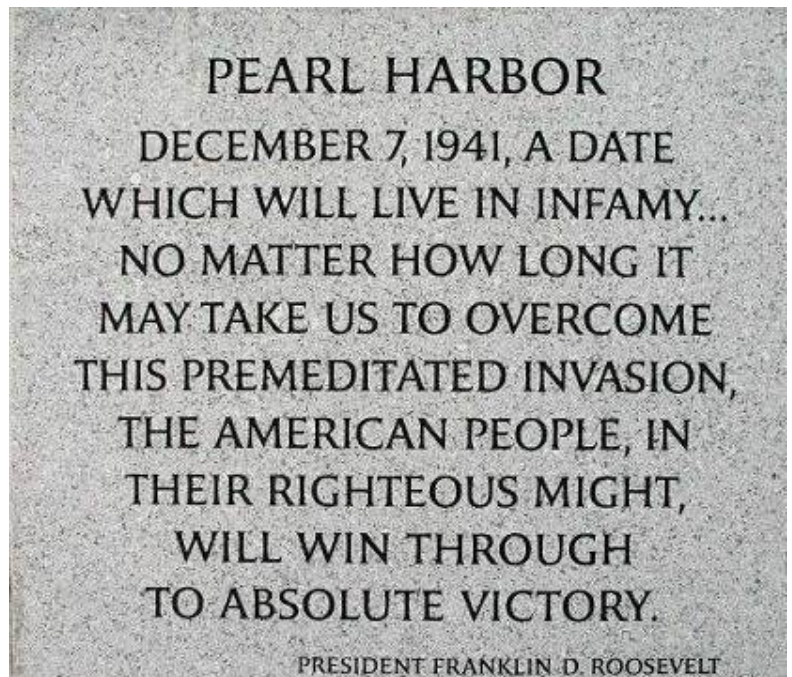


## World War II Memorial Inscription Controversy

The World War II Memorial Commission and the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) selected and approved the quotations found within the World War II Memorial. However, no one edited any of the quotations compiled from the various sources other than for compatibility within the spaces allotted. Unfortunately, a maliciously generated and widely distributed notion alleges the phrase “so help us God” appears at the end of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s December 8, 1941 address before a joint session of Congress and that the phrase was left off of one of the World War II Memorial quotations. This has spurred numerous inquiries about that one quotation in particular.

The claim has no validity. The ABMC exhaustively sought out some of the better World War II quotations and when it came time to decide which part of President Roosevelt’s address to use, the commission read the speech as well as listened to recordings of the President delivering it. During the address, Congress interrupted the President with applause several times, but the period of loudest cheering and most prolonged applause occurred during and following delivery of the sentence, “No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.” The clear choice existed as to what phrase to include for no other better constituted American resolve to achieve victory.

Following is a copy of the president’s address exactly as he delivered it. Highlighted in **BOLD, BLUE UPPER-CASE LETTERS** are the words the ABMC selected for inclusion in the World War II Memorial. Whenever one reads the entire speech, it becomes clear that the phrase “so help us God” neither appears at the end of the speech nor remains omitted from the phrase that actually exists within the memorial.



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ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
BROADCAST FROM THE CAPITOL,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
December 8, 1941—12.30 P.M., E.S.T.

MR. VICE PRESIDENT, AND MR. SPEAKER, AND MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: (TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:)

Yesterday, **DECEMBER 7, 1941 – A DATE WHICH WILL LIVE IN INFAMY** --the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

*The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in the American Island of Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to our Secretary of State a formal*

*reply to a recent American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or of armed attack.*

*It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.*

*The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. I regret to tell you that very many American lives have been lost. In addition American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.*

*Yesterday the Japanese Government also launched an attack against Malaya.*

*Last night Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong.*

*Last night Japanese forces attacked Guam.*

*Last night Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands.*

*Last night the Japanese attacked Wake Island.*

*And this morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island.*

*Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our nation.*

*As Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.*

*But always will our whole nation remember the character of the onslaught against us.*

***NO MATTER HOW LONG IT MAY TAKE US TO OVERCOME THIS PREMEDITATED INVASION, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, IN THEIR RIGHTEOUS MIGHT, WILL WIN THROUGH TO ABSOLUTE VICTORY.***

*I believe that I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us.*

*Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory and our interests are in grave danger.*

*With confidence in our armed forces—with the unbounding determination of our people—we will gain the inevitable triumph—so help us God.*

*I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December seventh, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.*

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

THE WHITE HOUSE

December 8, 1941.