



Dawn of Infamy: A Sunken Ship, a Vanished Crew, and the Final Mystery of Pearl Harbor

Stephen Harding

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As the Pearl Harbor attack began, a U.S. cargo ship a thousand miles away in the middle of the vast Pacific Ocean mysteriously vanished along with her crew. What happened, and why?

On December 7, 1941, even as Japanese carrier-launched aircraft flew toward Pearl Harbor, a small American cargo ship chartered by the Army reported that it was under attack by a submarine halfway between Seattle and Honolulu. After that one cryptic message, the humble lumber carrier *Cynthia Olson* and her crew vanished without a trace, their disappearance all but forgotten as the mighty warships of the U.S. Pacific Fleet burned.

The story of the *Cynthia Olson*'s mid-ocean encounter with the Japanese submarine *I-26* is both a classic high-seas drama and one of the most enduring mysteries of World War II. Did *I-26*'s commander, Minoru Yokota, sink the freighter before the attack on Pearl Harbor began? Did the cargo ship's 35-man crew survive in lifeboats that drifted away into the vast Pacific, or were they machine-gunned to death? Was the *Cynthia Olson* the first American casualty of the Pacific War, and could her SOS have changed the course of history?

Based on years of research, *Dawn of Infamy* explores both the military and human aspects of the *Cynthia Olson* story, bringing to life a complex tale of courage, tenacity, hubris, and arrogance in the opening hours of America's war in the Pacific.

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