

# “When Destiny Commands”

by Ray Batvinis (1972-1997), *Society Historian*

“A Day that will live in infamy.” Today, every American instantly recognizes that most memorable phrase from President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s speech on Monday, December 8, 1941 before a joint session of Congress just one day after the surprise Japanese attack on the U.S. naval anchorage at Pearl Harbor, HI. Giving voice to an unspeakable tragedy that cost more than 2,400 lives, the president’s stirring remarks launched America into a war to the end with the Empire of Japan.

It was the history-making enormity of that event 75 years ago this month that brought together the FBI’s Honolulu Division with the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI for a conference on November 21, 2016. Following welcoming remarks by Paul Delacourt, the Special Agent in Charge, Daniel Martinez offered the audience a fascinating look at Japanese espionage in and around Honolulu in the days and weeks leading up to the attack. Mr. Martinez, an officer with the National Park Service, is the Chief Historian with the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument — the home of the USS Arizona Memorial.

His remarks focused on Tadeshi Morimura, a 27-year-old Japanese vice-consul who had only arrived at the consulate in March 1941. Morimura, was, in fact, Tadeshi Yoshikawa, a 1933 graduate of the Japanese naval academy and an intelligence officer. Precluded from active combat for health reasons, Yoshikawa moved into intelligence work in the mid-30s where he quickly began devouring every available source on the U.S. Navy and becoming his service’s top expert in the process.

As Mr. Martinez noted, Yoshikawa’s remarkable intelligence coup at Pearl Harbor violated no U.S. laws. His success came from what today’s intelligence professionals call “open source” collection. Using rented planes, he flew over U.S. Army Air Corps installations recording such things as types and numbers of aircraft, and repair facilities. Posing as a passenger aboard the Navy’s tugboat, he studied anchorage and ship locations all the while eavesdropping on casual conversations

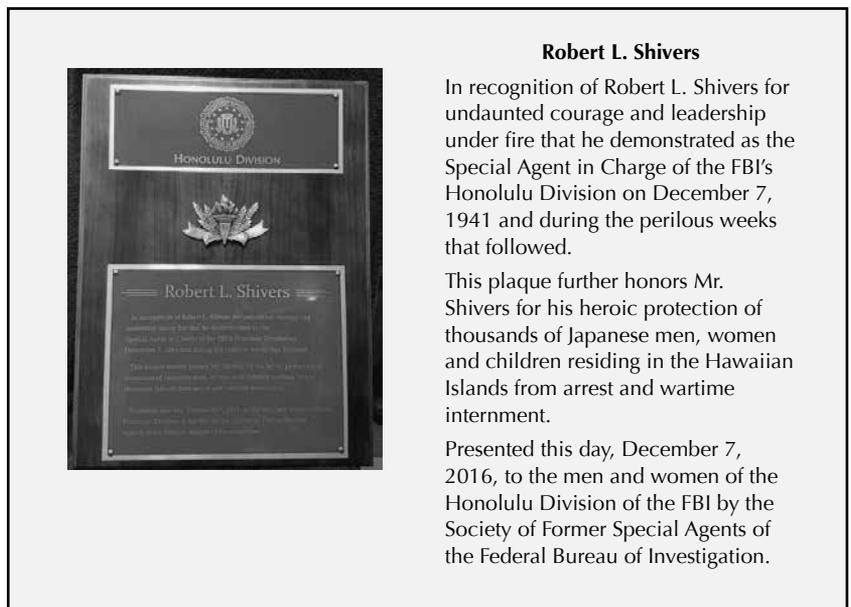
going on around him for valuable nuggets of information. And then there was his scrutiny of local newspapers reporting the daily departures and arrivals of navy ships, which he then matched with data collected from his second floor apartment window overlooking Pearl Harbor.

Just hours after the attack, FBI Agents assisted by the Honolulu Police Department rounded up the entire consulate staff and quarantined them until their later removal to the mainland. In 1942, they were repatriated to Japan as part of a diplomat exchange with no one ever suspecting the truth about “Mr. Morimura.” After reclaiming his true identity back in Tokyo, Yoshikawa resumed his intelligence work in the new war environment.

In my follow-on remarks, I tried to build on Mr. Martinez’s presentation by describing the difficult mission Robert L. Shivers faced in Hawaii. I reminded the audience that while U.S. military intelligence officials questioned the loyalty of the Japanese community in Hawaii, so too did Yoshikawa. In a 1960 memoir about his Honolulu mission, he suggested that Hawaii should have been the “easiest place” to conduct espionage with such a large Japanese population. What he found was just the opposite. “These men of influence and character who might have assisted me in my secret mission” he wrote, “were unanimously uncooperative.”

I ended with the thought that as the awful day approached, both the Japanese and U.S. governments did agree on one thing — neither trusted the Japanese community in Hawaii. Winston Churchill once said that when destiny commands — we must obey. Looking back today over the span of three quarters of a century, we now recognize that it was the destiny of an FBI Agent from Tennessee who saw beyond the irrational fears and prejudices of his fellow countrymen and in the end made the right call.

Following our formal remarks, the Society presented the Honolulu Division with a plaque honoring Mr. Shivers for his contributions to our nation’s history. We can all take pride in the fact that on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, this simple marker will be mounted in a place of honor. For years to come, it will serve as a continual reminder for all FBI employees and visitors of one man’s integrity, sense of fairness and human compassion.



Today Robert L. Shivers remains a hero to the local Japanese community and ranks among the most important figures in the history of the State of Hawaii.

NOTE: The writer expresses his appreciation to Bryan Tepper, the Society's Honolulu Chapter Chair, and those members who attended the ceremony for their contribution to the success of this project. He would also like to thank Jim Burns, the Society's Pacific Regional Vice-President.



Daniel Martinez, SAC Paul Delacourt and Ray Batvinis

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*For questions or further information contact:*

Lysa Price, Foundation Administrator, at 703/291-3736 or email: [foundation@socxfbi.org](mailto:foundation@socxfbi.org)

## PHOTO FROM THE FILES



Clarence M. Kelley and M. Thomas Clark, 1975

### Correction

In the November *Grapevine's* Member News section, the piece on Senior Airman Anthony Oldham should have read that he was the grandson of Anthony Oldman, not the son. We regret this error.