Context: On December 7, 1941, the American Naval Base in Pearl Harbor was brutally attacked by Japanese fighter planes. The Japanese had prospects on expanding their empire into Asia, and in order to do so, Japan needed to distract the United States. Instead of weakening America, the attack on Pearl Harbor led to a rise of unyielding nationalism throughout the United States. During the brutality, many individuals distinguished themselves and rose above the call of duty. Doris Miller was an African American man who was confined to working as a mess man on board the *U.S.S.* *Arizona.* Due to the color of his skin, Miller was told he would never be able to fight for his country alongside his fellow Americans. However, he finds his true calling in the Navy on one infamous day: December 7, 1941.

Dead. Definitely dead. He was the seventeenth body onboard the *U.S.S. Arizona* that never responded. My white uniform is freckled with red dots and splotches, and my black hands are fully covered in the same sticky red blood. Blood that is not mine. Nevertheless, kneeling next to the departed man, I look up. Japanese fighter planes litter the murky skies. The final breeze of the sweet Hawaiian air is quickly suppressed by the gray surroundings. Sounds of explosions and frantic screams echo in the harbor. The smell of death and burning flesh hang in the air. The world *must* be ending. No more than five minutes ago , the colorful Pearl Harbor had been the beautiful port I have come to love; however, it has quickly become a living inferno and resting place for so many American Naval sailors and crew members.

The same images can be seen copied throughout Pearl Harbor: fire, death, explosion,

murder. To my right, I witness the slaughter of countless men I have served below deck. To my left, a familiar sailor is retaliating against the air-raid by means of a machine gun. He is no match. We have no chance. The precious *Arizona* is going down, and the Japanese planes keep coming. The successful surprise attack on this early Sunday makes us all sitting ducks.

Suddenly, the sailor is blown back by a seemingly invisible force. I know better. A Japanese bullet is now lodged somewhere in his defenseless body. No one can help him now. Number eighteen. Death. How quickly it has become part of Pearl Harbor’s landscape.

I look up, yet again, searching for some sign from God. Instead, through the thick smog, I catch a glimpse of the newly risen sun. This sight is cut short as bullets pelt the metal deck and create ear splitting clanging noises all around me. There is no way I will survive this shooting. Miraculously enough, the wall of bullets surrounding me disappears. Now is my chance. There must be something I can do, or someway to possibly fight back. The gun.

Instinctively, I run to the machine gun. I stay crouched down, for I know it will only be a matter of seconds before another plane opens fire yet again on the *Arizona*. When I reach the gun, I rise up, grab the controls, and fire.

“Wow,” I think to myself. I am finally here. The color of my skin no longer binds me to the crew of the ship. Combat. I have always dreamed of fighting in combat. A rage of nationalism builds within my very core.

The next enemy plane I see is awaiting the same fate of so many others here in Pearl Harbor. I let a few shots off. So many fighter planes dance just outside the range of my gun. The planes are mocking me.

Cowards. How dare they enter my homeland. The land of the free. The home of the brave. I will have no mercy.

There’s one. Flying directly into my line of sight. My patriotic hands grip the metal gun. Any second now. Patience. I do not want to ruin my chance. Its moving into position. Coming right at me. It shoots.

Directly on target, I hold down the trigger…