

***The Woman with a Purple Heart* by Diane Hanks**

Like many recent novels, this book brings to life an overlooked part of WW II history. The attack on Pearl Harbor is almost familiar to me, through the many, many first-hand accounts I have read as well as the fictional accounts based on the facts of that fateful day. Yet this one was different, as it recounts the story of Annie Fox, the first woman awarded the Purple Heart, who won that distinction through her inspired efforts on that day and those that followed, as she organized the medical triage and treatment for thousands of wounded soldiers, sailors, and airmen.

Hickam Field seemed to be a step into early retirement to Fox, who had served over 20 years in the Philippines and felt demoted to be put in charge of the small clinic there. Yet it all changed dramatically on December 7, 1941, when Hickam was the closest treatment center for the survivors of the Japanese attack. As the hours wore on and the wounded and dying arrived in a seemingly endless stream, Fox was quick-thinking and sought out help from any nurses she could find, including those running a clinic who happened to be first or second generation Americans of Japanese descent. Plus, she brought in nearby prostitutes to donate blood and to help the nurses.

I was left with renewed appreciation of the bravery of Fox and the thousands involved that day, as well as more knowledge of the tragedies that accompanied that tragic Day of Infamy that I thought I knew well. Great historical fiction, the book is based on true events.