

HEWITT INQUIRY EXHIBIT No. 50

PATROL WING TWO,
U. S. NAVAL AIR STATION,
Pearl Harbor, T. H., 20 December 1941.

PW2/A16-3/0850

Confidential

From: The Commander Task Force NINE (Commander Patrol Wing TWO).

To: The Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Operations on December 7, 1941.

1. On Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, forces under my command were disposed as follows: Patrol Squadron TWENTY-ONE at Midway, Patrol Squadrons ELEVEN, TWELVE, FOURTEEN at Kaneohe, TWENTY-ONE, TWENTY-THREE AND TWENTY-FOUR at Pearl Harbor, all tenders except WRIGHT at Pearl Harbor; WRIGHT enroute to Pearl Harbor from Midway.

2. The condition of readiness in force was Baker 5 (50% of assigned aircraft on 4 hours notice) with machine guns and ammunition in all planes not undergoing maintenance work. In addition to the above, three squadrons (VP-21 at Midway, VP-23 at Pearl, and VP-11 at Kaneohe) were in condition Afirm 5 (100% of assigned aircraft on 4 hours notice). This was augmented by specific duty assignments on December 7 which required six planes from Patrol Squadrons FOURTEEN, TWENTY-FOUR and TWELVE to be ready for flight on 30 minutes notice.

The general orders listed above were modified by circumstances and planes actually ready for flight were as follows:

VP-21 7 planes—in the air conducting search 120° to 170° to 450 miles from Midway.
4 planes—on the surface at Midway armed each with 2 five hundred pound bombs and on 10 minutes notice.
VP-11 12 planes—ready for flight on 4 hours notice.
VP-12 6 planes ready for flight on 30 minutes notice.
5 planes ready for flight on 4 hours notice.
VP-14 3 planes in the air on morning security patrol armed with depth charges.
3 planes ready for flight on 30 minutes notice.
4 planes ready for flight on 4 hours notice.
VP-22 12 planes ready for flight on 4 hours notice.
VP-23 11 planes ready for flight on 4 hours notice.
VP-24 4 planes in the air conducting inter-type tactics with submarines.
1 plane ready for flight on 30 minutes notice.

Total 72 in the air or ready for flight in 4 hours or less.

In this connection it may be stated that the 4 hours notice was primarily set to permit rest and recreation of personnel and was in no wise, a criterion of material readiness. For example, one plane of VP-23, theoretically on 4 hours notice, was actually in the air 45 minutes after the first bomb dropped.

To summarize the foregoing, at the moment the first bomb dropped, aircraft of this command were in the following condition:

14—in the air (7 on a search from Midway).
58—on the surface ready for flight in four hours or less.
9—undergoing repairs.

81—Total.

Illustrative of the efforts made by personnel, one of the nine planes undergoing repairs took off for a search at 1335, local time, loaded with 4 one thousand pound bombs.

3. A narrative of events of the day follows:

Time (LCT)

0700 14-P-1 sank enemy submarine one mile off Pearl Harbor entrance.
0715 Message coded and transmitted to base.
0735 Message decoded and information received by Staff Duty Officer.
0737 Message relayed to Operations Officer.
0740 Relayed by telephone to Staff Duty Officer of Commander in Chief.
0750 Search plan drafted by Operations Officer.
0757 First bomb dropped near VP-22 hangar.

- 0758 Message ordered broadcasted to all ships present quote "AIR RAID PEARL HARBOR X THIS IS NO DRILL" unquote (An identical message was sent by Cincpac).
- 0800 Search plan transmitted by radio and telephone (Received by some of the planes in the air at 0805).

From this time on an accurate chronological account is impracticable.

The Commander Patrol Wing TWO arrived at the Operations Office during the first attack and approved the orders that had been issued. Telephonic communication with the various squadrons at Pearl Harbor was established in order to supplement and possibly accelerate the radio transmissions. As was usually the case, it was difficult to communicate with Kaneohe. The page printer had gone out of commission and it was quite difficult to obtain a telephonic connection. Immediately upon termination of the first attack, an endeavor was made to determine the sectors of the search actually being covered. It was determined, with some difficulty that, of all planes at the bases of Kaneohe and Pearl Harbor, only 3 were still in commission. These were dispatched to fill holidays in what appeared to be the most promising sectors for search. In addition, available planes from the Utility Wing were ordered out. The 2 planes still available for duty at Kaneohe were ordered by telephone to cover the sector between 280 and 300 degrees. The one plane still available at Pearl Harbor had some difficulty in being launched due to the wreckage and fires of other planes in the way. About this time the second attack came in. Fire was opened by tenders of this command and from machine guns mounted in planes on the ground or removed from the planes to extemporized mountings with greater arcs of fire. As a result of this second attack, all communications, radio, telephone and page printer were knocked out of commission. Immediate steps to restore communications were taken while the second attack was still underway and communications personnel, who unfortunately have not yet been identified, proceeded to repair the radio antenna during the height of the attack. Before the end of the second attack, radio communications were established by utilizing all the facilities available, including some of that uninjured on the tenders of this command. Shortly thereafter, telephonic communication was reestablished and information was received that the 2 planes at Kaneohe previously reported as ready for service had been destroyed. Accordingly, orders were issued for the 1 plane at Pearl Harbor, which had somehow escaped uninjured during the second attack, to cover the sector from 280 to 300 degrees. The Commander Patrol Wing ONE at Kaneohe felt that the orders to cover the sector 280 to 300, which had been transmitted to him by telephone for the 2 planes on the ground, required his taking action and he accordingly diverted 14-P-1 and 14-P-3 from the sectors that they had been searching. Information of this action was not received by me.

The Fleet Aviation Officer, Captain A. C. Davis, U. S. N., kept in constant touch by telephone and made many valuable suggestions. Various members of my staff maintained communications with Army information centers and requested that attempts be made to track the retiring Japanese planes by RADAR. Unfortunately, the CURTISS RADAR was placed out of commission by the damage sustained by that vessel. During the mid-afternoon, 14-P-2 reported being attacked by enemy planes and was thereafter not heard from for 2 or 3 hours. As it was felt that this plane had been shot down and a hole thus left in what appeared to be the most promising sector of the search, every effort was made, as additional planes from whatever source became available, to plug the gap.

All hands exerted their utmost efforts to get more planes ready for flight and to arm them for offensive action. Three more patrol planes were reported ready at Pearl Harbor and dispatched, each carrying 4 one thousand pound bombs. Thirteen SED planes, loaded with 500 pound bombs, came in from LEXINGTON and were pressed into service. Nine were dispatched to search a sector to the north, while the remaining 4 were ordered to attack 4 Japanese troop ships reported off Barbers Point. This report proved to be unfounded.

The accompanying charts indicate the search as actually conducted. The urgent necessity for conducting daily searches since December 7 and for putting all planes possible back in commission, together with urgency for immediate operations, have precluded an exhaustive analysis of the events of the day. Certain highlights however may be of interest:

All planes in commission had guns on board together with full allowances of service ammunition. During the first attack, fire was opened from the guns as mounted in the planes, and when it was discovered that these were not effective for fire from the ground due to structural interference, many personnel removed these guns from the planes and set them up on benches in vises and opened up an effective fire against the second attack. As nearly as can be determined, a total of 4 Japanese planes were shot down by personnel of patrol plane squadrons by this method.

Two planes of Utility Squadron One conducted an extensive search although these planes being of a noncombatant type were not equipped with machine guns. Despite the lack of defense against attacks by hostile aircraft, the pilots of these planes persisted in their search until the threatened exhaustion of their fuel forced their return to Pearl Harbor. The devotion to duty of these pilots will be made the subject of a special report.

These and numerous other instances of distinguished conduct occurred which Commander Task Force NINE has not yet had time to investigate.

4. Attention is invited to the following dispatches and mailgrams indicating the extensive searches conducted by units of this command during the period 30 November to 7 December 1941, from Wake and Midway:

Cincpac	280450	} of November.
	280447	
	040237	
ComTaskForce NINE	291124	} of December.
	292101	
	292103	
	302359	
	050323	of November.

P. N. L. BELLINGER.

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HEWITT INQUIRY PERIOD NO. 50 (A)

Classified outgoing

U. S. NAVAL COMMUNICATION SERVICE

CINCIPAC AND CINCPAC

From:
CINCIPAC
To:
COMTASKFOR 2
COM 14

Info To:
COMBATWING 2
COMBATFOR
COMBATFOR

Twelve planes during fight from two eleven are to base Wake accordance Myer 191825 of 19 November X. Enterprise provide transportation X. After departure Pearl on 25 Nov form Task Force Eight consisting of Enterprise Chester Northampton Salt Lake City and Denver six and four command task force two to Pearl Admiral Dismal with orders task force two carry out normal operations in Hawaiian area X proceed to arrive 200 miles 970 degrees from Wake at 0700 on 3 Dec X. ply off marine planes that vicinity and upon receiving info that planes have arrived Wake return Pearl X. Enroute to and from Wake pass through point about four hundred miles south of Midway X. Patrol planes from Midway and Wake will cover your route and provide security while at Wake X communications radio condition nineteen guard NPM primary Per continuously X. confidentially inform Wake that planes expected arrive there 0600 on 3 Dec and direct Wake report confidentially by coded dispatch when planes arrive there X. confidentially furnish this final arrival information to combatfor eight X. Wake submarine patrol tender triton will be advised X. Narwhal and Dolphin are enroute Pearl at 1200 got on 27 Nov they were about 300 miles east of Wake