

REPORT OF NAVY COURT OF INQUIRY

[1156] Under date of 13 July, 1944, this Court of Inquiry was ordered by the Secretary of the Navy to inquire into all circumstances connected with the attack made by the Japanese armed forces on Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, on 7 December, 1941, to include in its findings a full statement of facts deemed to be established, to give its opinion as to whether any offenses have been committed or serious blame incurred on the part of any person or persons in the naval service and, in case its opinion be that offenses have been committed or serious blame incurred, to specifically recommend what further proceedings should be had.

The Court convened on 24 July, 1944, and since then has held daily sessions almost continuously in Washington, San Francisco, and Pearl Harbor, having called and examined numerous witnesses from the State, War, and Navy Departments.

The Court, having thoroughly inquired into all facts and circumstances in connection with the attack by the Japanese armed forces on Pearl Harbor on 7 December, 1941, and having considered all evidence adduced, finds as follows:

FINDINGS OF FACTS

I

Pearl Harbor is situated on the Island of Oahu, near the city of Honolulu, the capital of the Territory of Hawaii, distant 2100 miles from San Francisco. It is the only permanent outlying United States Naval Base in the Eastern Pacific. It possesses great strategic importance as a point from which naval operations in defense of the Western United States can be conducted, and offensive operations against an enemy to the Westward launched and supported. The United States possesses no base on the West Coast of the United States that meets these requirements to an equivalent extent.

II

Prior to 1940 certain subdivisions of the Pacific Fleet and, beginning in May, 1940, the entire Fleet operated in the [1157] Hawaiian area with Pearl Harbor as a base. In May, 1941, three battleships, one aircraft carrier, four cruisers, and nine destroyers were detached from the Pacific Fleet and transferred to the Atlantic.

For the purpose of conducting exercises and maneuvers at sea designed to increase efficiency and readiness for war, the remaining major vessels of the Pacific Fleet were organized in three main Task Forces. The operating schedule was so arranged that there was always at least one of these Task Forces, and usually two, at sea. Frequently, during Fleet maneuvers, the entire available Fleet was at sea.

The vessels and the Fleet planes thus rotated their scheduled periods in port, periods essential to the mobility of the Fleet for purposes impossible of achievement at sea. At no time during 1941 were all the vessels of the Fleet in Pearl Harbor.

The operating schedule in effect on 7 December, 1941, was issued in September, 1941. In accordance with its provisions Task Force One, under the command of Vice Admiral W. S. Pye, U. S. N., and part of Task Force Two were in Pearl Harbor at the time of the attack. Task Force Three, under the command of Vice Admiral Wilson Brown, U. S. N., was at sea, engaged chiefly in escorting the aircraft carrier LEXINGTON to Midway to which point planes were being ferried. Part of Task Force Two, under the command of Vice Admiral W. F. Halsey, Jr., U. S. N., and including the aircraft carrier ENTERPRISE, was returning from ferrying planes to Wake.

[1158] Task Force One included the preponderance of the battleship strength of the Fleet. The three battleships of Task Force Two had been left behind in Pearl Harbor because their slow speed did not permit them to accompany the ENTERPRISE to Wake. It was purely a coincidence that all battleships of the Pacific Fleet, except one undergoing overhaul at the Puget Sound Navy Yard, were in Pearl Harbor on 7 December.

III

Beginning at 0755, Honolulu time, on 7 December, 1941, an attack was delivered from the northward of Oahu by Japanese carrier aircraft against units of the United States Pacific Fleet then moored and anchored inside the Pearl Harbor Naval Base, against Army and Navy aircraft, and against shore installations on the Island of Oahu. An attack delivered simultaneously by Japanese midget submarines was without effect. The details of these attacks and the extent of the loss of life and of the damage inflicted by Japanese aircraft have since been made matters of public record.

Within the same 24 hours the Japanese also delivered attacks on the Philippines, Wake and Guam, as well as on Hong Kong and Malaya. The attack on Pearl Harbor cannot be disassociated from these. All were the reprehensible acts of a warrior nation, war-minded and geared to war through having been engaged in hostilities for the past four years, and long known to have aggressive designs for the dominance of the Far East. The United States was then at peace with all nations and for more than 20 years had not engaged in [1159] hostilities.

In time of peace it is a difficult and complicated matter for the United States to prevent an attack by another nation because of the constitutional requirement that, prior to a declaration of war by the Congress, no blow may be struck until after a hostile attack has been delivered. This is a military consideration which gives to a dishonorable potential enemy the advantage of the initiative, deprives the United States of an opportunity to employ the offensive as a means of defense, and places great additional responsibility on the shoulders of commanders afloat in situations where instant action, or its absence, may entail momentous consequences.

IV

From 1 August, 1939, to 25 March, 1942, the Chief of Naval Operations, charged by law under the Secretary of the Navy with the operations of the Fleet and with the preparation and readiness of plans for its use in war, was Admiral Harold R. Stark, U. S. N. The Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet from 1 February to 17 December, 1941, was Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, U. S. N. The Commanding General of the Hawaiian Department from 7 February to 17 December, 1941, was Lieut. General Walter C. Short, U. S. A. The Commandant of the 14th Naval District from 11 April, 1940, until 1 April, 1942, was Rear Admiral Claude C. Bloch, U. S. N. He was an immediate subordinate of Admiral Kimmel and was charged by him with the task of assisting the Army in [1160] protecting Pearl Harbor. With respect to those duties connected with the defense of Pearl Harbor, Rear Admiral Bloch's responsibility was solely to Admiral Kimmel. It is an established fact that this responsibility was discharged to the complete satisfaction of the latter.

V

Admiral Kimmel and Lieut. General Short were personal friends. They met frequently, both socially and officially. Their relations were cordial and cooperative in every respect and, in general, this was true as regards their subordinates. They frequently conferred with each other on official matters of common interest, and invariably did so when messages were received by either which had any bearing on the development of the United States-Japanese situation, or on their several plans in preparing for war. Each was mindful of his own responsibility and of the responsibilities vested in the other. Each was informed of measures being undertaken by the other in the defense of the Base to a degree sufficient for all useful purposes.

VI

For some time preceding the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States, engaged in the protection of shipping and the patrolling of sea lanes in the Atlantic, was passing through the preliminary stage of a transition from a state of national military unpreparedness to an ability to cope successfully with two resourceful and fully prepared enemies. The vigorous and convincing representations made by Admiral [1161] Stark before Congressional committees, beginning in January, 1940, showed clearly that the Navy was unprepared for war and greatly needed ships, planes, and men. These representations, linked with the fall of France, resulted in an Act of Congress in June, 1940, whereby appropriations were voted for practically doubling the size of our Navy.

During all of 1941 and for some time thereafter the problem confronting both the Chief of Naval Operations and the Chief of Staff, U. S. Army, was one of expansion and of distributing, to the best advantage, the limited supply of ships, planes, guns, and men and intensifying the training of personnel while production was being stepped up.

Under date of 30 December, 1940, Rear Admiral Bloch, Commanding the 14th Naval District and the Navy Yard, Pearl Harbor, after conference with Admiral Richardson, the then Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, and Lieut. General Herron, the then Commanding General Hawaiian Department, initiated correspondence addressed to the Chief of Naval Operations in which he set forth the inability of the 14th Naval District to meet a hostile attack with the equipment and forces at hand. He pointed out that, as Naval Base Defense Officer, he had no planes for distant reconnaissance. He gave as his opinion that neither in numbers nor types were the Army bombers satisfactory for the purpose intended. He invited attention to the serious deficiency on the part of the Army with regard to both fighting planes and anti-aircraft guns. He noted also that an anti-aircraft warning system planned [1162] by the Army was scheduled for completion at an indefinite time in the future.

This letter was forwarded to the Navy Department by Admiral Richardson, by endorsement. He concurred in the opinion that the Army aircraft and anti-aircraft batteries were inadequate to protect the Fleet in Pearl Harbor against air attack, and urged that adequate local defense forces be provided. He further expressed the opinion that the forces provided should be sufficient for full protection, and should be independent of the presence or absence of ships of the Fleet.

Under date of 24 January, 1941, the Secretary of the Navy addressed a letter to the Secretary of War, based upon the representations made by the Commandant of the 14th Naval District and the recommendations of the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, and in general concurrence therewith. In this letter the belief was expressed that, *in case of war with Japan* hostilities might be initiated by a surprise attack upon the Fleet or on the naval base at Pearl Harbor. The dangers envisaged in the order of their importance and probability were considered to be: (1) Air bombing attack. (2) Air torpedo plane attack. (3) Sabotage. (4) Submarine attack. (5) Mining. (6) Bombardment by gunfire.

Defense against all but (1) and (2) being considered satisfactory, it was proposed that the Army assign the highest priority to the increase of pursuit aircraft and anti-aircraft artillery, and the establishment of an air warning net in Hawaii; also that the Army give consideration [1163] to the questions of balloon barrages, the employment of smoke, and other special devices for improving the defenses at Pearl Harbor; that local joint plans be drawn for defense against surprise aircraft raids; that there be agreement on appropriate degrees of joint readiness for immediate action against a surprise aircraft raid; and that joint exercises for defense against surprise aircraft raids be held.

The Secretary of War, under date of 7 February, 1941, expressed complete concurrence as to the importance of the subject and the urgency of making every possible preparation to meet such a hostile effort. He pointed out that the Hawaiian Department was the best equipped of all overseas Army departments and held a high priority for completion of its projected defenses because of the importance of giving full protection to the Fleet. He outlined the details of the Hawaiian project and stated the number of pursuit planes and anti-aircraft guns eventually to be supplied. He stated that the equipment for the aircraft warning system was expected to be delivered in

Hawaii in June, 1941, and that all arrangements for installation would have been made by the time the equipment was delivered.

Copies of these letters were furnished Admiral Kimmel, Lieut. General Short, and Rear Admiral Bloch.

In a letter dated 17 October, 1941, Rear Admiral Bloch reported to the Chief of Naval Operations that the only increment that had been made to the local defense forces during the past year, exclusive of net vessels, was the U.S.S. SACRAMENTO, an old gunboat of negligible gun power [1164] and low speed. He urged that the Department send a number of small fast craft equipped with listening gear and depth charges for anti-submarine purposes and further urged that he be sent two squadrons of VSO planes to be used for patrol against enemy submarines.

Admiral Kimmel forwarded this letter with the following endorsement:

There is a possibility that the reluctance or inability of the Department to furnish the Commandant, 14th Naval District, with forces adequate to his needs may be predicated upon a conception that, in an emergency, vessels of the U. S. Pacific Fleet may always be diverted for these purposes. If such be the case, the premise is so false as to hardly warrant refutation. A fleet, tied to its base by diversions to other purposes of light forces necessary for its security at sea is, in a real sense, no fleet at all. Moreover, this Fleet has been assigned, in the event of war, certain definite tasks, the vigorous prosecution of which requires not only all the units now assigned but as many more as can possibly be made available. The necessities of the case clearly warrant extraordinary measures in meeting the Commandant's needs.

The Chief of Naval Operations replied, under date of 25 November, 1941, that no additional vessels could be supplied for the present but that certain sub chasers, due for completion in May, 1942, had been tentatively assigned to the 14th Naval District, certain privately owned vessels might be expected at a future time, and that there were no additional airplanes available for assignment to the 14th Naval District.

It is a fact that, through 1941, the demand for munitions and war supplies exceeded the capacity of the nation and in all important commands there existed marged [1165] deficiencies in trained personnel and in material equipment and instruments of war. Although shortages were inevitable, it is a further fact that they had direct bearing upon the effectiveness of the defense of Pearl Harbor.

VII

On 5 November, 1941, the Chief of Naval Operations and the Chief of Staff, U. S. Army, submitted a joint memorandum to the President, recommending that no ultimatum be delivered to Japan at that time and giving, as one of the basic reasons the existing numerical superiority of the Japanese Fleet over the U. S. Pacific Fleet.

On 7 December, 1941, the U. S. Pacific Fleet was numerically inferior to the Japanese naval forces in both combatant and auxiliary vessels.

Aware of this existing weakness in relative fighting strength, and of the vigorous steps being taken by the United States to overcome deficiencies, Japan early sensed the advantage of striking before these steps could become effective. Her advantageous position was strength-

ened by her extensive espionage system which utilized her civilian, consular and diplomatic nationals throughout the world, and enabled her constantly to keep accurately informed of the U. S. naval building program and of the location and movements of U. S. naval vessels.

The topography of Oahu is peculiarly suited to the observation of Pearl Harbor and its activities. The local officials of the United States were unable to overcome Japan's advantage in this respect. It was impossible for [1166] them to prevent anyone from obtaining military information and, because of legal restrictions imposed by the Federal statutes, they could not interfere with the mails and the transmission of messages by radio, telegram, and cable.

In addition, having in mind Japan's traditional tendency to distort legitimate actions of a peaceful nation into deliberate threats to her own security and prestige, the War and Navy Departments were compelled to take every precaution to avoid offending her super-sensitive sensibilities. For example, as of 16 October, 1941, the Chief of Naval Operations directed the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, to "take such preparatory deployments as will not constitute provocative action against Japan" and, on 28 November, 1941, the War Department directed the Commanding General of the Hawaiian Department to "undertake no offensive action until Japan has committed an overt act".

In contrast to the ease with which Japanese in United States territory, particularly in Hawaii, were able to obtain and to transmit to Japan military information of value, every obstacle was placed in the way of such information being collected in Japan by foreign nationals.

As an instance of Japanese secretiveness and surveillance of foreigners, including those of the U. S. diplomatic services, the U. S. Naval attache in Tokyo was compelled to report to the Japanese Navy Department whenever he contemplated an excursion beyond the limits of the city, and he was closely watched at all times. He was effectively prevented from obtaining any information as to the type and [1167] number of Japanese ships under construction and the capacity of their naval shore establishments, as well as of the location and movements of Japanese ships.

It is a fact that the superiority of the Japanese Fleet and the ability of Japan to obtain military and naval information gave her an initial advantage not attainable by the United States up to 7 December, 1941.

VIII

A naval base exists solely for the support of the Fleet. The fundamental requirement that the strategic freedom of action of the Fleet must be assured demands that the defense of a permanent naval base be so effectively provided for and conducted as to remove any anxiety of the Fleet in regard to the security of the base, or for that of the vessels within its limits. Periodical visits to a base are necessarily made by mobile seagoing forces in order that logistics support may be provided and opportunity given for repair and replenishment, for rest and recreation, and for release of the personnel from a state of tension.

To superimpose upon these essentials the further requirements that the seagoing personnel shall have the additional responsibility for se-

curity from hostile action while within the limits of a permanent naval base, is to challenge a fundamental concept of naval warfare.

There is not, and there has not been, any lack of understanding on the part of the Army and Navy on this point. The defense of a permanent naval base is the direct responsibility of the Army. The Navy is expected to assist with the means provided the naval district within whose limits the permanent naval base is located and the defense of the base is a joint operation only to that extent. To be adequate, the defense must function effectively during the periods when the Commander-in-Chief and all the units of the Fleet are absent.

In the case of naval districts lying beyond the continental limits of the United States, the commandant of the district occupies a dual status. As commandant of the district, he is governed by all existing instructions relating to the duties of commandants of naval districts and is answerable direct to the Navy Department. He is also an officer of the Fleet and as such is under the Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet for such duties as the latter may designate.

The fact that the Commandant of the 14th Naval District was thus designated as an officer of the Pacific Fleet is the circumstance that links the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, with the duty of assisting the Army in defending the permanent naval base of Pearl Harbor. Except for this, the chief responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, was for the readiness, the efficiency, and the security of the vessels of the Fleet while at sea. It is through gaining and maintaining control of vital sea areas that a Fleet contributes to the defense of the shore and its activities.

The defense of the permanent naval base of Pearl Harbor was the direct responsibility of the Army.

[1169]

IX

Under date of 27 February, 1941, the Commandant, 14th Naval District, Rear Admiral Bloch, in his capacity as Naval Base Defense Officer, issued an operations plan establishing security measures, including air defense and surface ship patrol, in order to cooperate with and assist the Army in protecting Pearl Harbor and safeguarding the Fleet.

Under date of 28 March, 1941, joint agreements were reached between Lieut. General Short and Rear Admiral Bloch, as to joint security measures for the protection of the Fleet and the Pearl Harbor Base. It was agreed that when the threat of a hostile raid or attack was considered sufficiently imminent to warrant such action, each commander was to take such preliminary steps as were necessary to make available without delay to the other commander such portion of the air forces at his disposal as the circumstances warranted.

Joint air attacks upon hostile *surface* vessels were to be executed under the tactical command of the Navy. The Army bombardment strength to participate in each such mission was to be determined by the Commander, Hawaiian Department, the number of bombardment planes released to Navy control to be the maximum practicable.

Defensive *air operations* over and in the immediate vicinity of Oahu were to be executed under the tactical command of the Army. The

Commandant, 14th Naval District, was to determine the Navy fighter strength to participate [1170] in these missions, the number of fighter aircraft released to Army control to be the maximum practicable.

When naval aircraft under the command of the Naval Base Defense Officer were insufficient for long-distance patrol and search operations, and Army aircraft were made available, the Army aircraft so made available were to be under the tactical control of the Naval commander directing the search operations.

The Naval Base Defense Officer was entirely without aircraft, either fighters or patrol planes, assigned permanently to him. He was compelled to rely upon Fleet aircraft for joint effort in conjunction with Army air units. The Commander Patrol Wing Two, Rear Admiral P. N. L. Bellinger, U. S. N., was by Admiral Kimmel placed under Rear Admiral Bloch's orders, and was by the latter directed to consult with the Army and to prepare a detailed naval participation air defense plan. Rear Admiral Bellinger thus was given the additional status of the Commander Naval Base Defense Air Force, while retaining his status as an air officer of the Fleet.

Under date of 31 March, 1941, plans were drawn up and jointly agreed upon by Rear Admiral Bellinger and Major General F. L. Martin, U. S. Army, Commanding Hawaiian Air Force. These plans were complete, and their concept was sound. Their basic defect lay in the fact that the naval participation depended entirely upon the availability of aircraft belonging to the Fleet. This circumstance was forced by necessity, but was at complete variance with the fundamental requirement that to be adequate, the defense of [1171] a permanent naval base must be independent of assistance from the Fleet.

The effectiveness of these plans depended entirely upon advance knowledge that an attack was to be expected within narrow limits of time and the plans were drawn with this as a premise. It was not possible for the Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet to make Fleet planes permanently available to the Naval Base Defense Officer, because of his own lack of planes, pilots, and crews and because of the demands of the Fleet in connection with Fleet operations at sea.

X

Shortly after assuming command of the Pacific Fleet, Admiral Kimmel issued specific comprehensive instructions as to the steps to be taken for the security of the Fleet in the operating sea areas. Aware of the inadequacy of the shore defenses of Pearl Harbor, he also required the vessels, while at the base, to assist to the limit of their resources. These instructions were revised and brought to date on 14 October, 1941, were given wide circulation within the Pacific Fleet, and were sent for information to other commands and to the Navy Department.

The security of the Pacific Fleet, operating in the Hawaiian Area and based on Pearl Harbor, was predicted on two assumptions:

(a) That no responsible foreign power will provoke war, under present existing conditions, by attack on the Fleet or Base, but that irresponsible and misguided nationals of such powers may attempt;

- [1172] (1) sabotage, on ships based in Pearl Harbor, from small craft.
(2) to block the entrance to Pearl Harbor by sinking an obstruction in the Channel.
(3) To lay magnetic or other mines in the approaches to Pearl Harbor.
(b) That a declaration of war may be preceded by:
(1) a surprise attack on ships in Pearl Harbor,
(2) a surprise submarine attack on ships in operating area,
(3) a combination of these two.

The measures prescribed to provide against these possibilities included continuous inshore, boom, and harbor patrols, intermittent patrol of the inner and offshore areas by destroyers, daily search of operating areas by air, the covering of sortie and entry, and daily sweeps for magnetic and anchored mines. The only entrance to Pearl Harbor was guarded by an anti-torpedo net.

The Task Forces operating at sea were screened protectively by aircraft and destroyers. Torpedo defense batteries were manned day and night, ammunition was at hand, and depth charges were ready for use. Water-tight integrity was maintained, horizon and surface battle lookouts were kept posted, the ships steamed darkened at night, and the use of the radio was restricted to a minimum.

Admiral Kimmel, recognizing the potentialities of the submarine as an instrument of stealthy attack, and believing that Japanese submarines were operating in Hawaiian waters, was of the opinion that this form of surprise attack against his Fleet was the one most likely to be employed by Japan. Therefore, he had issued, on his own responsibility, orders that all unidentified submarines discovered in Hawaiian waters [1173] were to be depth-charged and sunk. In so doing he exceeded his orders from higher authority and ran the risk of committing an overt act against Japan, but did so feeling that it is best to follow the rule "shoot first and explain afterwards".

Actually, in execution of these orders, a midget submarine was discovered in an operating area, attacked and destroyed by the combined efforts of a naval patrol plane and a destroyer of the inshore patrol, about 20 minutes prior to the air attack on the morning of 7 December. There was nothing, however, in the presence of a single submarine in the vicinity of Oahu to indicate that an air attack on Pearl Harbor was imminent.

It is a fact that the precautions taken by Admiral Kimmel for the security of his Fleet while at sea were adequate and effective. No naval units were either surprised or damaged while operating at sea in the Pacific prior to or on 7 December, 1941.

XI

While vessels of the United States Navy are lying in port, it is the invariable custom to keep on board a number of officers and men sufficient to provide for internal security, and to protect against fire and the entrance of water. The force so remaining on board is always balanced as to ranks and ratings so that all requirements can be met in case of emergency. A watch is maintained day and night.

In other than normal situations a "condition of readiness" is placed in effect. On the morning of 7 December considerably [1174] more than half of the Naval personnel were on board their ships in Pearl Harbor, more than ample to meet an emergency in port. Their

efficiency and their heroic behavior on that day are proof of their fitness for duty.

The Navy's practice in numbering its three prescribed "conditions of readiness" is opposite to the method adopted by the Hawaiian Department of the Army in numbering its "alerts". With the Army, the No. 3 alert represents the maximum state of readiness, while the Navy refers to that state as No. 1. In the interest of clarification, definition of the respective states of readiness is here set forth:

Army Alerts

No. 1. Defense against sabotage and uprisings. No threat from without.

No. 2. Security against attacks from hostile sub-surface, and aircraft, in addition to No. 1.

No. 3. Requires occupation of all field positions.

Navy Conditions of Readiness

No. 1. Entire crew, officers and men at battle stations. Action imminent.

No. 2. Provides the means of opening fire immediately with one-half the armament. Enemy believed to be in vicinity.

No. 3. Provides a means of opening fire with a portion of the secondary and anti-aircraft batteries in case of surprise encounter.

The alert in effect in the Hawaiian Department of the Army at the time of the attack was their No. 1. The condition of readiness of the vessels in Pearl Harbor at that time was an augmented Navy No. 3. This condition had been in effect for many months preceding that date. To assume [1175] a high condition of readiness in port and to man guns and stations which cannot be utilized in any circumstance, is to impose on the entire personnel an unjustified state of tension and to defeat the purpose for which the vessels have entered the base; i. e., to make repairs, to replenish supplies, to give the personnel rest and relaxation, and thus to prepare for operations at sea.

The same holds true with regard to the patrol planes of the Fleet, and to a small number of fighters that had been left behind by the absent carriers. They were part of the Fleet, engaged in daily operations and, when not operating, were undergoing overhaul or the crews were being rested in anticipation of further operations. At the time of and immediately prior to the attack on the morning of 7 December, 1941, some were in the air covering the movement of a task force, others were on 30 minutes notice, some others were on 4 hours notice, and the remainder were under overhaul.

These planes were not part of the permanent defense of Pearl Harbor. To have kept the crews awake and ready with engines warmed up, in the absence of any indication of an impending attack, would have been to undermine their further usefulness.

The Navy controlled none of the guns mounted on shore. The only means available to the vessels of the Fleet for contributing to their own defense against aircraft while in Pearl Harbor was their anti-aircraft batteries. The anti-aircraft batteries installed on the ships in Pearl Harbor were incapable of a volume of fire at all comparable to that of the batteries of the same ships today.

[1176] On all ships inside Pearl Harbor a considerable proportion of the anti-aircraft guns was kept manned day and night and with ammunition immediately at hand. Also, by prearrangement with the Army, there was in effect a system, correct as to its details, for the coordinating of the anti-aircraft fire of vessels of the Fleet in part with that of the Army on shore.

Existing Fleet orders provided for the establishment of air defense sectors within the Pearl Harbor area, and for the berthing of ships within the Harbor in such positions as to develop the maximum anti-aircraft gun fire in each sector, commensurate with the total number of ships of all types in port.

These orders were carried out to the letter. On the morning of the attack the vessels of the Fleet brought hostile planes, as they came within one or more of these air defense sectors, under heavy fire intensified within a very few moments by the full fire of the entire anti-aircraft batteries of all ships.

It is a fact that the Navy's condition of readiness in effect on the morning of 7 December, 1941, was that best suited to the circumstances then attending the vessels and patrol planes of the Pacific Fleet. A higher condition of readiness could have added little, if anything to their defense.

XII

An attack by carrier aircraft can be prevented only by intercepting and destroying the carrier prior to the launch- [1177] ing of planes. Once launched, the attacking planes can be prevented from inflicting damage only by other planes or anti-aircraft gunfire or both. Even when a determined air attack is intercepted, engaged by aircraft, and opposed by gunfire, some of the attacking planes rarely fail to get through and inflict damage.

To destroy an aircraft carrier before she can launch her planes requires that her location be known and that sufficient force, in the form of surface or underwater craft, or aircraft, or all three, be at hand. To have the necessary force at or near the point of intended launching in time to insure the destruction of the carrier, it is necessary that the carrier's presence in a general area, and within narrow limits of time, be known or predicted with reasonable accuracy. Even in time of war the fulfillment of this condition is difficult where vast sea areas are involved, and where both the point from which the carrier departs, as well as the fact of her departure, are unknown.

This was the case during the days immediately prior to 7 December 1941. Japanese carriers sailed at an unknown time from an unknown port. Their departure and whereabouts were a closely guarded Japanese secret and were likewise unknown, all rumors to the contrary notwithstanding.

Although the U. S. Ambassador to Japan reported, as of 27 January, 1941, that there was a rumor to the effect that a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor was planned, its authenticity was discounted in the Embassy for the reason that such an attack, if actually contemplated, would scarcely be likely to be a topic of conversation in Japan.

[1178] The Navy Department informed the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, of this rumor and stated that the Navy Department "places no credence in these rumors. Furthermore, based on known data regarding the present disposition and employment of Japanese naval and army forces, no move against Pearl Harbor appears imminent or planned for in the foreseeable future".

In time of war, an outlying naval base may be expected to become an enemy objective, sooner or later. It is an established fact, however, that no information of any sort was, at any time, either forwarded

or received from any source which would indicate that carriers or other ships were on their way to Hawaii during November or December, 1941.

The attack of 7 December, 1941, on Pearl Harbor, delivered under the circumstances then existing, was unpreventable. When it would take place was unpredictable.

XIII

Where a carrier's presence in a general area is not known in advance and is not predictable within narrow limits of time, there must be resort to procedure which will give warning of a hostile approach. The usual procedure employed by carriers bent on delivering a surprise attack, although by no means the only procedure possible, is to arrive about 700 miles from the objective at dark the night preceding the attack, steam at high speed during the night, and launch the planes at dawn, about 400 miles from the objective. It [1179] is this general procedure which establishes early morning as the time when an air attack is most likely to be delivered. The events of 7 December, 1941, point to the likelihood of this procedure having been followed by the Japanese.

The greatest degree of warning of an impending early morning air attack is obtained if the hostile carrier be sighted prior to dark the night before. In such event, a maximum warning of about twelve hours may be obtained. In the case of an island base, such as Pearl Harbor, it is necessary to cover the circumference of a circle of 700 miles radius each day (the direction from which the attack is expected being unknown) in order to obtain either positive or negative information.

Assuming 25 miles visibility (which in the Hawaiian area is not found everywhere nor always assured), an effective daily search requires the daily employment of 90 patrol planes which, in turn, requires that double or triple that number (180-270) be available, it being impossible to employ the same planes and crews every day, or even every other day.

If only the dawn circle of 400 mile radius is to be searched daily, the total number of planes required to be available is 100-150. The maximum warning is then reduced to about two hours.

Where planes are not available to cover all sectors, the selection of sectors to be omitted is left purely to chance and under such circumstances the advisability of the diversion of all planes from other duties is questionable unless there be information as to the fact of a hostile [1180] approach and of the direction, within reasonable limits, from which the approach is expected.

Neither surface ships nor submarines properly may be employed to perform this duty, even if the necessary number is available. The resulting dispersion of strength not only renders the Fleet incapable of performing its proper function, but exposes the units to destruction in detail. A defensive deployment of surface ships and submarines over an extensive sea area as a means of continuously guarding against a possible attack from an unknown quarter and at an unknown time, is not sound military procedure either in peace or in war.

It was the duty of Rear Admiral Bloch, when and if ordered by the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, to conduct long-range reconnaissance. The Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, for definite and sound reasons and after making provision for such reconnaissance in case of

emergency, specifically ordered that no routine long-range reconnaissance be undertaken and assumed full responsibility for this action. The omission of this reconnaissance was not due to oversight or neglect. It was the result of a military decision, reached after much deliberation and consultation with experienced officers, and after weighing the information at hand and all the factors involved.

In brief, the deciding factors were:

(a) The Naval Base Defense Officer, Rear Admiral Bloch, although charged with the conduct of the reconnaissance, had no patrol planes permanently assigned to his command.

[1181] (b) The only Naval patrol planes in the Hawaiian area were the 69 planes of Patrol Wing Two and these were handicapped by shortages of relief pilots and crews. They were a part of the Fleet, and not a part of the permanent defense of Pearl Harbor. The only other planes suitable and available for daily long range reconnaissance were six Army bombers.

(c) The task assigned the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, was to prepare his Fleet for war. War was known to be imminent (how imminent he did not know). The Fleet planes were being constantly employed in patrolling the operating areas in which the Fleet's preparations for war were being carried on. Diversion of these planes for reconnaissance or other purposes was not justified under existing circumstances and in the light of available information.

(d) If so diverted, the state of readiness of the Fleet for war would be reduced because of the enforced suspension of Fleet operations.

(e) The value of the Fleet patrol planes to the Fleet would be reduced seriously after a few days because of the inability of planes and crews to stand up under the demands of daily long-range reconnaissance.

It is a fact that the use of Fleet patrol planes for daily long-range, all-around reconnaissance was not justified [1182] in the absence of information indicating that an attack was to be expected within narrow limits of time. It is a further fact that, even if justified, this was not possible with the inadequate number of Fleet planes available.

XIV

At the time of the attack, only a few vessels of the Pacific Fleet were fitted with radar. The radar of vessels berthed in a harbor such as Pearl Harbor, partially surrounded by high land, is of limited usefulness at best and does not provide the necessary warning of a hostile approach.

The shore-based radar on the Island of Oahu was an Army service and entirely under Army control. The original project called for 6 permanent (fixed) and 6 mobile installations. The fixed installations had not been completed by 7 December, 1941, and only 3 sets had been shipped to Oahu up to that time. On that day there were in operation 5 mobile sets located in selected positions, with equipment in efficient condition, but inadequately manned.

Training of personnel had started on 1 November, 1941. Lieut. General Short earlier had requested that the Navy assist in this training,

and 15 of his men had been sent to sea on vessels of the Fleet for that purpose. Admiral Kimmel also had detailed the Pacific Fleet Communication Officer as liaison officer with the Army. He could not supply six other naval officers requested for permanent duty in the Information Center of the air warning system because no officers were available for such detail.

During the second week of November, 1941, Commander [1183] W. G. Taylor, USNR, was, by Admiral Kimmel, detailed to the Army Interceptor Command for duty in an advisory capacity, in connection with the setting up of the Army air warning system. Commander Taylor had had experience with the British air warning system and was familiar with radar in the stage of its development that existed at that time.

On 24 November, 1941, he called a conference for the purpose of determining how quickly the Information Center could be made fully operative on a war-time basis, and to decide what additional personnel and equipment would be needed. Two naval officers and 6 Army officers were present at this conference.

The minutes of the conference, concurred in by all present, included an exhaustive statement of deficiencies and the steps to be taken for their remedy. Copies of the minutes were furnished the conferees and copies were forwarded to the Acting Commanding Officer of the Interceptor Command, and to the Acting Signal Officer, Headquarters, Hawaiian Department. Steps agreed upon as necessary for the improvement of the system had not become effective by 7 December, 1941.

The Army Interceptor Command was barely in the first stages of organization by 7 December. Four of its officers had been sent to school on the mainland in order to fit them for their new duties. Until 17 December, 1941, the organization was on a tentative basis only and the actual order setting up the Command was not issued until that date. One of the [1184] principal weaknesses of the Interceptor Command on 7 December, 1941, was that the Information Center had no provision for keeping track of planes in the air near and over Oahu, and for distinguishing between those friendly and those hostile.

Between 27 November and 7 December, 1941, the Air Warning System operated from 0400 to 0700, the basis for these hours being that the critical time of possible attack was considered to be from one hour before sunrise until two hours after sunrise. On week days training in the operation of the system also took place during working hours.

On the morning of 7 December the only officer in the Army Information Center was 1st Lieutenant (now Lt. Colonel) K. A. Tyler, Army Air Corps. He had received no previous instruction as to his duties, had been on duty there only once before, and on the morning in question was present only in the capacity of an observer for training. At 0715 that morning he received a call from the radar station at Opana, located in the northern part of the Island of Oahu, to the effect that a large number of planes, bearing approximately north, had been picked up on the screen. Assuming that these were friendly planes because he had heard indirectly that a flight of B-17s was en route from Hamilton Field, California, to Oahu, he did nothing about this report. These B-17s actually arrived over Oahu during the attack, and many of them were destroyed.

At the Opana station, where this report originated, Private Locard (now 1st Lieutenant) and Private Elliott [1185] (now sergeant) were on duty with instructions to observe and track flights and report them to the Information Center. Private Locard had had some previous training but Elliott none. The station was scheduled to shut down at 0700, but as the truck had not come to take these men to their camp for breakfast, Private Locard continued to operate the radar set in order to assist in the training of Elliott.

Shortly after 0700 there was picked up on the screen an unusually large flight of planes, coming in from a northerly direction at a distance of about 136 miles. Checking the equipment to make sure, Locard decided to call the Information Center and did so when the planes had come in to 132 miles. Having reported the fact to the Army officer on duty (1st Lt. Tyler), Locard and Elliott continued to track the planes in to twenty miles from Oahu, when they lost them due to distortion.

For information of this flight to have been of value as a warning, it would have been necessary for the planes first to have been promptly identified as hostile, and then their presence and their bearing and distance immediately reported to and received by higher authority, and disseminated throughout the Command. The organization and training of the Information Center and Communication System at this time was not such as to permit these important requirements to be fulfilled. Actually, the oncoming planes were not identified as hostile until the Japanese marking on their wings came into view.

[1186]

XV

The greatest damage to ships resulting from the attack of 7 December was that inflicted by torpedoes launched from Japanese torpedo planes. These torpedoes were designed specially for the form of attack in which they were used. Up to the time that the Japanese demonstrated the feasibility of delivering an attack from torpedo planes in relatively shallow water and under conditions of restricted length of approach, the best professional opinion in the United States and Great Britain was to the effect that such an attack was not practicable.

After a study had been made of the problem of protecting vessels in port against torpedo attack, the Chief of Naval Operations in a letter to the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, dated 15 February, 1941, stated that it was considered that the relatively shallow depth of water (about 45 feet) limited the need of anti-torpedo baffles in Pearl Harbor, and, in addition, that the congestion and the necessity for maneuvering room limited the practicability of the present type of baffles.

The letter further stated that certain limitations and considerations must be borne in mind in planning the installation of anti-torpedo baffles within harbors, among which were the following:

- (a) A minimum depth of water of seventy-five feet may be assumed necessary to successfully drop torpedoes from planes. One hundred and fifty feet of water is desired. The maximum height planes at present experimentally drop torpedoes is 250 feet. Launching speeds are between 120 and 150 knots. Desirable height [1187] for dropping is sixty feet or less. About two hundred yards of torpedo run is necessary before the exploding device is armed, but this may be altered.

(b) There should be ample maneuvering room available for vessels approaching and leaving berths.

(c) Ships should be able to get away on short notice.

(d) Room must be available inside the baffles for tugs, fuel oil barges and harbor craft to maneuver alongside individual ships.

(e) Baffles should be clear of cable areas, ferry routes, and channels used by shipping.

(f) Baffles should be sufficient distance from anchored vessels to insure the vessels' safety in case a torpedo explodes on striking a baffle.

(g) High land in the vicinity of an anchorage makes a successful airplane attack from the land side most difficult.

(h) Vulnerable areas in the baffles should be so placed as to compel attacking planes to come within effective range of anti-aircraft batteries before they can range their torpedoes.

(i) Availability of shore and ship anti-aircraft protection, balloon barrages, and aircraft protection.

(j) Availability of naturally well protected anchorages within a harbor from torpedo plane attack for a number of large ships. Where a large force such as a fleet is based, the installation of satisfactory baffles will be difficult because of the congestion.

On 13 June, 1941, the Chief of Naval Operations, in a letter to the Commandants of the various naval districts, modified limitation (a) by stating that recent developments had shown that United States and British torpedoes may be dropped from planes at heights as much as 300 feet and, in [1188] some cases, make initial dives of considerably less than 75 feet with excellent runs. This letter, however, did not modify the view expressed in the letter of 15 February as to the need for anti-torpedo baffles in Pearl Harbor.

Barrage balloons and smoke were also considered as means of defense but were rejected, the barrage balloons because they would interfere with the activity of U. S. aircraft, and the smoke because the strength of the prevailing winds would render it ineffective.

The specially designed Japanese torpedo and the technique for its use fell in the category of the so-called secret weapon, of which the robot bomb and the magnetic mine are examples. Such weapons always give to the originator an initial advantage which continues until the defense against them has been perfected.

It is a fact that by far the greatest portion of the damage inflicted by the Japanese on ships in Pearl Harbor was due to the secret development and employment of a specially designed torpedo.

XVI

Strained relations between the United States and Japan had existed and been a source of concern to this country for many months prior to 7 December, 1941. That the Japanese policy in the Far East was one of aggression had been well known for many years. Their program of expansion, which envisaged Japan as *the* dominating power in the Western Pacific, was in direct conflict with the policies of the United States [1189] and Great Britain, and opposed to agreements established by treaty.

At the instigation of the Japanese, negotiations were begun by the State Department on 12 May, 1941, looking to the peaceful settlement

of existing problems. On 17 November, 1941, the Japanese Ambassador in Washington was joined by Mr. Kurusu in the capacity of special envoy.

On 26 July, 1941, Japanese assets in the United States were frozen. The order freezing these assets required a system of licensing shipments to Japan, and no licenses were issued for oil or petroleum products.

There was a feeling on the part of U. S. officials that hostilities, unless prevented by some means, would become an actuality in the not distant future. They were familiar with the Japanese trait of attacking without declaration of war, as had been done against China in 1894, and against Russia in 1904.

The Secretary of State held numerous conferences with the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy, at which the negotiations with Japan were discussed. The Chief of the Army General Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations attended many of these conferences and were kept informed of the progress of these negotiations. At the same time efforts to improve the military position of the United States were being vigorously prosecuted.

On 16 October, 1941, the Chief of Naval Operations informed Admiral Kimmel by dispatch that a grave situation had been created by the resignation of the Japanese cabinet, [1190] that the new cabinet would probably be anti-American, that hostilities between Japan and Russia were a possibility, and that the Japanese might also attack the United States and Great Britain. In the same dispatch, Admiral Kimmel was directed to take precautions and to make such deployments as would not disclose strategic intentions, nor constitute provocative action against Japan.

On the following day, 17 October, 1941, Admiral Stark addressed a personal letter to Admiral Kimmel in which he stated, "Personally, I do not believe that the Japs are going to sail into us and the message I sent you (that of 16 October) merely stated the 'possibility'".

For the purpose of viewing the events of the succeeding months in their true relation to the events of 7 December, this date of 16 October, 1941, may well be taken as the beginning of a critical period which terminated in the attack of 7 December, 1941.

In accordance with the directive contained in the dispatch of 16 October, Admiral Kimmel made certain preparatory deployments, including the stationing of submarines off both Wake and Midway, the reinforcement of Johnston and Wake with additional Marines, ammunition, and stores, and the dispatch of additional Marines to Palmyra. He also placed on 12 hours' notice certain vessels of the Fleet which were in West Coast ports, held six submarines in readiness to depart for Japan, delayed the sailing of one battleship which was scheduled to visit a West Coast Navy Yard, and placed in [1191] effect additional security measures in the Fleet operating areas.

He reported to the Chief of Naval Operations the steps taken and received written approval of his action. He continued the measures which he had already placed in effect looking to readiness for war, preparation of the Pacific Fleet for war being his assigned task.

He did not interpret the dispatch of 16 October as directing or warranting that he abandon his preparations for war. He held daily conferences with his subordinate commanders and the members of his staff, all experienced officers of long service, and sought by every

means to ascertain wherein his interpretation might be incorrect. The consensus throughout was that no further steps were warranted by the information at hand.

On 24 November, 1941, Admiral Kimmel received a dispatch from the Chief of Naval Operations, addressed also to the Commander-in-Chief, Asiatic Fleet, and to Commandants of Naval districts with headquarters at San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, and Panama, which stated:

Chances of favorable outcome of negotiation with Japan very doubtful X This situation coupled with statements of Japanese Government and movements their naval and military forces indicate in our opinion that a surprise aggressive movement in any direction including attack on Philippines or Guam is a possibility X Chief of Staff has seen this dispatch concurs and requests action addressees to inform senior Army officers their areas X Utmost secrecy necessary in order not to complicate an already tense situation or precipitate Japanese action X Guam will be informed separately.

The contents of this dispatch were made known to Lieut. General Short and discussed with him.

[1192] The reaction on Admiral Kimmel and his advisers was to direct their attention to the Far East. They did not consider that the expression "a surprise aggressive movement in any direction" included the probability or imminence of attack in the Hawaiian area, specific mention having been made of the Philippines and Guam with no mention of Hawaii.

They recognized the capability of Japan to deliver a long-range surprise bombing attack and that she might attack without a declaration of war. They reasoned that she would not commit the strategic blunder of delivering a surprise attack on United States territory, the one course that irrevocably would unite the American people in war against Japan. Public opinion in the United States was far from being crystallized on the question of taking steps to curb her expansion in the Western Pacific.

Conceivably, Japan might well have taken aggressive action against British and Dutch possessions in the Far East, gaining the oil and other raw materials that she was seeking, without military interference from the United States. An attack elsewhere than in the Far East seemed, therefore, to be only a remote possibility and not enough of a probability to warrant abandonment of the preparation of the Fleet for war.

To continue these preparations was, therefore, Admiral Kimmel's decision, made on his own responsibility in the light of the information then available to him and in the knowledge that every precaution within his power, compatible [1193] with maintaining the Fleet in a state of readiness for war, had already been taken.

XVII

On 27 November, 1941, Admiral Kimmel received a dispatch from the Chief of Naval Operations, reading as follows:

This dispatch is to be considered a war warning. Negotiations with Japan looking toward stabilization of conditions in the Pacific have ceased and an aggressive move by Japan is expected within the next few days. The number and equipment of Japanese troops and the organization of naval task forces

indicates an amphibious expedition against either the Philippines, Thai or Kra Peninsula or possibly Borneo. Execute an appropriate defensive deployment preparatory to carrying out the tasks assigned. Inform District and Army authorities. A similar warning is being sent by War Department. Continental districts, Guam, Samoa directed take appropriate measures against sabotage.

This dispatch was sent also to the Commander-in-Chief, Asiatic Fleet, and has since become known as the "war warning message".

On the morning following the receipt of this dispatch, Admiral Kimmel discussed its contents with Lieut. General Short, Rear Admiral Bloch, the Flag officers of the Fleet present, and the members of his staff.

After much further study, Admiral Kimmel and his advisers interpreted the warning to mean that war was imminent, and that readiness to undertake active operations was expected. They were unable to read into it any indication that an attack against the Hawaiian area was to be expected, particular attention having been directed to the Japanese activities in the Far East, with objectives in that area [1194] specifically mentioned. No reference was made to the possibility of a surprise aggressive move "in any direction", as had been done in the dispatch of 24 November.

There was nothing to indicate that defensive measures should take precedence over all others. The "appropriate defensive deployment" that was directed was not interpreted as referring specifically to the Pacific Fleet, in view of the deployments of the Pacific Fleet already made in compliance with the directive contained in the dispatch of 16 October. In addition, since that date, a squadron of submarines had been sent to the Philippines, leaving only 5 in Pearl Harbor.

There were other considerations which no doubt influenced Admiral Kimmel. The Navy Department's dispatch of 30 November, addressed to the Commander-in-Chief, Asiatic Fleet, and sent to Admiral Kimmel for his information, ordered the Commander-in-Chief, Asiatic Fleet, to scout for information of Japanese movements in the China Sea. This appeared to indicate that the authorities in Washington expected hostilities to occur in the Far East, rather than elsewhere.

On 28 November the Chief of Naval Operations advised Admiral Kimmel that the Department had requested, and the Army had agreed to, the relief of Marine garrisons at Midway and Wake with Army troops, and the replacement of Marine planes with Army pursuit planes. This action, involving as it did a complicated problem and the movements of sizeable U. S. Naval forces westward to effect their transfer, was an indication of the fact that the authorities [1195] in the War and Navy Departments did not then expect a hostile movement toward the Hawaiian Islands.

On 28 November, 1941, the Chief of Naval Operations repeated to Admiral Kimmel the information contained in a dispatch which the War Department, on 27 November, had transmitted to Lieut. General Short, and other Army addressees, to the effect that negotiations appeared to be terminated, that Japanese future action was unpredictable, that hostile action was possible at any moment, and that it was desirable that Japan commit the first overt act in case hostilities could not be avoided. Such measures as were undertaken were to be carried out so as not to alarm the civil population or disclose intent.

To this dispatch Lieut. General Short had replied on 27 November :

Report Department alerted against sabotage. Liaison with Navy.

The steps taken caused the Army planes to be grouped in such manner as to afford better protection against sabotage, although militating against their taking the air promptly. In the absence of a reply from the War Department, Lieut. General Short considered that the alert he had placed in effect was approved.

Lieut. General Short having, on 28 November, 1941, received instructions from the Adjutant General of the Army to take measures to protect military establishments, property, and equipment against sabotage, reported in detail the measures that he had taken and repeated the fact that he had placed in effect Alert (No. 1) against sabotage. He interpreted the dispatch from the Adjutant General as further [1196] indicating that his alert against sabotage constituted complete compliance with the War Department's wishes.

There was no mention in any of the dispatches received by Lieut. General Short, between 27 November and 7 December, 1941, of the possibility or probability of an attack against Oahu.

As further evidence of the prevailing sentiment against the likelihood of an immediate move toward Hawaii, it is a fact that a flight of B-17s from the Mainland arrived over Oahu during the attack of 7 December, without ammunition and with guns not ready for firing.

These considerations, and the sworn evidence of the witnesses testifying before the Court, establish the fact that although the attack of 7 December came as a surprise to high officials in the State, War, and Navy Departments, and to the Army and Navy in the Hawaiian area, there were good grounds for their belief that hostilities would begin in the Far East, rather than elsewhere.

XVIII

From 26 November to 7 December, 1941, conversations between our government and Japan did continue, notwithstanding the statement contained in the war warning message under date of 27 November, 1941, that "negotiations with Japan, looking toward stabilization of conditions in the Pacific have ceased."

This statement was based upon the note delivered by the State Department to the Japanese representatives on 26 November, a copy of which was furnished the Navy [1197] Department. It did not in itself discontinue negotiations and conversations, but, on the contrary, gave an "outline of proposed basis for agreement between the United States and Japan." The stipulations contained therein were drastic and were likely to be unacceptable to Japan.

The reply to this note was anxiously awaited by the high officials of the War and Navy Department because of the feeling that Japan would not accept the conditions presented, and that diplomatic relations would be severed or that war would be declared. The sending of the note therefore began the final phase of the critical period which culminated on 7 December.

Although it was stated in the press that a note had been delivered, none of its contents was given out to the public until after the attack. Admiral Kimmel had no knowledge of the existence of such a note nor of its contents until many months after the attack.

In a personal letter to Admiral Stark, dated 26 May, 1941, he had invited attention to the importance of keeping commanders, well removed from Washington, informed of developments and eventualities, stating:

The Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet is in a very difficult position. He is far removed from the seat of government, in a complex and rapidly changing situation. He is, as a rule, not informed as to the policy, or change of policy, reflected in current events and naval movements and, as a result, is unable to evaluate the possible effect upon his own situation. He is not even sure of what force will be available to him and has little voice in matters radically affecting his ability to carry out his assigned tasks. This lack of information is disturbing and tends to create uncertainty, a [1198] condition which directly contravenes that singleness of purpose and confidence in one's own course of action so necessary to the conduct of military operations.

It is realized that, on occasion, the rapid developments in the international picture, both diplomatic and military, and, perhaps, even the lack of knowledge of the military authorities themselves, may militate against the furnishing of timely information, but certainly the present situation is susceptible to marked improvement. Full and authoritative knowledge of current policies and objectives, even though necessarily late at times, would enable the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet to modify, adapt, or even re-orient his possible courses of action to conform to current concepts. This is particularly applicable to the current Pacific situation, where the necessities for intensive training of a partially trained Fleet must be carefully balanced against the desirability of interruption of this training by strategic dispositions, or otherwise, to meet impending eventualities. Moreover, due to this same factor of distance and time, the Department itself is not too well informed as to the local situation, particularly with regard to the status of current outlying island development, thus making it even more necessary that the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet be guided by broad policy and objectives rather than by categorical instructions.

It is suggested that it be made a cardinal principle that the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet be immediately informed of all important developments as they occur and by the quickest secure means available.

From time to time during this critical period there was received in the War and Navy Departments certain other important information bearing on the current situation. The testimony as to this information forms a part of the record of this Court. The details of this information are not discussed or analyzed in these findings, the Court having been informed that their disclosure would militate against the successful prosecution of the war.

[1199] This information was not transmitted to the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, nor to the Commanding General, Hawaiian Department. No facilities were available to them, either in the Fleet or in the Hawaiian area, which would enable them to obtain the information direct. They were dependent solely upon Washington for such information.

With regard to not transmitting this information, the stand taken by the Chief of Naval Operations was that the "war warning message" of 27 November completely covered the situation. The fact remains, however, that this message, standing alone, could not convey to the commanders in the field the picture as it was seen in Washington.

Only three other messages were received by the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, from the Chief of Naval Operations between 26 November and 7 December, one informing him that the Japanese had instructed diplomatic and consular posts in the Far East, Washington, and London to destroy certain codes, and the other two relative to the destruction of United States codes at Guam and outlying islands.

In the early forenoon of 7 December, Washington time, the War and Navy Departments had information which appeared to indicate that a break in diplomatic relations was imminent and, by inference and deduction, that an attack in the Hawaiian area could be expected soon. This information was embodied in a dispatch by the Chief of Staff, U. S. Army, who, after consulting with the Chief of Naval Operations by telephone, had it encoded and sent to the Commanding Generals in Panama, Manila, and Hawaii, with instructions that the naval authorities in those areas be informed of its contents.

[1200] The dispatch to Hawaii left Washington at 12:17 p. m., Washington time (6:47 a. m., Honolulu time) and arrived in Honolulu's RCA office at 7:33 a. m. (Honolulu time). Thus there remained but 22 minutes before the attack began for delivery, decoding, dissemination, and action. Lieut. General Short did not receive the decoded dispatch until the afternoon of 7 December, several hours after the attacking force had departed.

Had the telephone and plain language been used, this information could have been received in Hawaii about two hours before the attack began. Even in this event, however, there was no action open, nor means available, to Admiral Kimmel which could have stopped the attack, or which could have had other than negligible bearing upon its outcome. There was already in effect the condition of readiness best suited to the circumstances attending vessels within the limits of the Pearl Harbor Naval Base, and the Fleet planes at their air bases on Oahu.

XIX

It is a prime obligation of Command to keep subordinate commanders, particularly those in distant areas, constantly supplied with information. To fail to meet this obligation is to commit a military error.

It is a fact that Admiral Stark, as Chief of Naval Operations and responsible for the operation of the Fleet, and having important information in his possession during this critical period, especially on the morning of 7 December, failed to transmit this information to Admiral [1201] Kimmel, thus depriving the latter of a clear picture of the existing Japanese situation as seen in Washington.

OPINION

Based on Finding II, the Court is of the opinion that the presence of a large number of combatant vessels of the Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor on 7 December, 1941, was necessary, and that the information available to the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, did not require any departure from his operating and maintenance schedules.

Based on Finding III, the Court is of the opinion that the Constitutional requirement that, prior to a declaration of war by the Congress, no blow may be struck until after a hostile attack has been delivered, prevented the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, from taking offensive action as a means of defense in the event of Japanese vessels or planes appearing the Hawaiian area, and that it imposed upon him the responsibility of avoiding taking any action which might be construed as an overt act.

Based on Finding V, the Court is of the opinion that the relations between Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, U. S. N., and Lieut. General Walter C. Short, U. S. Army, were friendly, cordial and cooperative, that there was no lack of interest, [1202] no lack of appreciation of responsibility, and no failure to cooperate on the part of either, and that each was cognizant of the measures being undertaken by the other for the defense of the Pearl Harbor Naval Base to the degree required by the common interest.

Based on Finding VI, the Court is of the opinion that the deficiencies in personnel and material which existed during 1941, had a direct adverse bearing upon the effectiveness of the defense of Pearl Harbor on and prior to 7 December.

Based on Finding VII, the Court is of the opinion that the superiority of the Japanese Fleet over the U. S. Pacific Fleet during the year 1941, and the ability of Japan to obtain military and naval information gave her an initial advantage not attainable by the United States up to 7 December, 1941.

Based on Finding VIII, the Court is of the opinion that the defense of the Pearl Harbor Naval Base was the direct responsibility of the Army, that the Navy was to assist only with the means provided the 14th Naval District, and that the defense of the base was a joint operation only to this extent. The Court is further of the opinion that the defense should have been such as to function effectively independently of the Fleet, in view of the fundamental requirement that the strategic freedom of action of the Fleet [1203] must be assured demands that the defense of a permanent naval base be so effectively provided for and conducted as to remove any anxiety of the Fleet in regard to the security of the base, or for that of the vessels within its limits.

Based on Findings IV, VIII and IX, the Court is of the opinion that the duties of Rear Admiral Claude C. Bloch, U. S. N., in connection with the defense of Pearl Harbor, were performed satisfactorily.

Based on Finding IX, the Court is of the opinion that the detailed Naval Participation Air Defense plans drawn up and jointly agreed upon were complete and sound in concept, but that they contained a basic defect in that naval participation depended entirely upon the availability of aircraft belonging to and being employed by the Fleet, and that on the morning of 7 December these plans were ineffective because they necessarily were drawn on the premise that there would be advance knowledge that an attack was to be expected within narrow limits of time, which was not the case on that morning.

The Court is further of the opinion that it was not possible for the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, to make his Fleet planes permanently available to the Naval Base Defense Officer in view of the need for their employment with the Fleet.

Based on Finding X, the Court is of the opinion that Admiral Kimmel's action, taken immediately after assuming command, in placing in effect comprehensive instructions for the security of the Pacific Fleet at sea and in the operating areas, is indicative of his appreciation of his responsibility for the security of the Fleet, and that the steps taken were adequate and effective.

Based on Finding XI, the Court is of the opinion that, by virtue of the information that Admiral Kimmel had at hand which indicated

neither the probability nor the imminence of an air attack on Pearl Harbor, and bearing in mind that he had not knowledge of the State Department's note of 26 November, the Navy's condition of readiness on the morning of 7 December, 1941, which resulted in the hostile planes being brought under heavy fire of the ships' anti-aircraft batteries as they came within range, was that best suited to the circumstances, although had all anti-aircraft batteries been manned in advance, the total damage inflicted on ships would have been lessened to a minor extent and to a degree which is problematical; and that, had the Fleet patrol planes, slow and unsuited for aerial combat, been in the air, they might have escaped and the number of these planes lost might thus have been reduced.

The Court is of the opinion, however, that only had it been known in advance that the attack would take place on [1204] 7 December, could there now be any basis for a conclusion as to the steps that might have been taken to lessen its ill effects, and that, beyond the fact that conditions were unsettled and that, therefore, anything might happen, there was nothing to distinguish one day from another in so far as expectation of attack is concerned.

It has been suggested that each day all naval planes should have been in the air, all naval personnel at their stations, and all anti-aircraft guns manned. The Court is of the opinion that the wisdom of this is questionable when it is considered that it could not be known *when* an attack would take place and that, to make sure, it would have been necessary to impose a state of tension on the personnel day after day, and to disrupt the maintenance and operating schedules of ships and planes beginning at an indefinite date between 16 October and 7 December.

Based on Finding XII, the Court is of the opinion that, as no information of any sort was at any time either forwarded or received from any source which would indicate that Japanese carriers or other Japanese ships were on their way to Hawaii during November or December, 1941, the attack of 7 December at Pearl Harbor, delivered under the circumstances then existing, was unpreventable and that when it would take place was unpredictable.

Based on Finding XIII, the Court is of the opinion that the action of the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, in ordering that no routine, long-range reconnaissance be undertaken was sound and that the use of Fleet patrol planes for daily, long-range, all-around reconnaissance was not possible with the inadequate number of Fleet planes available, and was not justified in the absence of any information indicating that an attack was to be expected in the Hawaiian area within narrow limits of time.

[1206] Based on Finding XIV, the Court is of the opinion that the shore-based air warning system, an Army service under the direct control of the Army, was ineffective on the morning of 7 December, in that there was no provision for keeping track of planes in the air near and over Oahu, and for distinguishing between those friendly and those hostile and that, because of this deficiency, a flight of planes which appeared on the radar screen shortly after 0700 was confused with a flight of Army B-17s en route from California, and that the information obtained by Army radar was valueless as a warning, because the planes could not be identified as hostile until the Japanese markings on their wings came into view.

Based on Finding XV, the Court is of the opinion that by far the greatest portion of the damage inflicted by the Japanese on ships in Pearl Harbor was due to specially designed Japanese torpedoes, the development and existence of which was unknown to the United States.

Based on Finding XVI, and particularly in view of the Chief of Naval Operations' approval of the precautions taken and the deployments made by Admiral Kimmel in accordance with the directive contained in the dispatch of 16 October, 1941, the Court is of the opinion that Admiral Kimmel's decision, made after receiving the dispatch of [1207] 24 November, to continue preparations of the Pacific Fleet for war, was sound in the light of the information then available to him.

Based on Finding XVII, the Court is of the opinion that, although the attack of 7 December came as a surprise, there were good grounds for the belief on the part of high officials in the State, War, and Navy Departments, and on the part of the Army and Navy in the Hawaiian area, that hostilities would begin in the Far East rather than elsewhere, and that the same considerations which influenced the sentiment of the authorities in Washington in this respect, support the interpretation which Admiral Kimmel placed upon the "war warning message" of 27 November, to the effect that this message directed attention away from Pearl Harbor rather than toward it.

Based on Findings XVIII and XIX, the Court is of the opinion that Admiral Harold R. Stark, U. S. N., Chief of Naval Operations and responsible for the operations of the Fleet, failed to display the sound judgment expected of him in that he did not transmit to Admiral Kimmel, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, during the very critical period 26 November to 7 December, important information which he had regarding the Japanese situation and, especially, in that, on the morning of 7 December, 1941, he did not transmit immediately [1208] the fact that a message had been received which appeared to indicate that a break in diplomatic relations was imminent, and that an attack in the Hawaiian area might be expected soon.

The Court is further of the opinion that, had this important information been conveyed to Admiral Kimmel, it is a matter of conjecture as to what action he would have taken.

Finally, based upon the facts established, the Court is of the opinion that no offenses have been committed nor serious blame incurred on the part of any person or persons in the naval service.

RECOMMENDATION

The Court recommends that no further proceedings be had in the matter.

ORIN G. MURFIN,
Admiral, U. S. Navy (Ret.),
President.

EDWARD C. KALBFUS,
Admiral, U. S. Navy (Ret.),
Member.

ADOLPHUS ANDREWS,
Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy (Ret.),
Member.

The Court having finished the inquiry, then at 4 p. m., [1209]
Thursday, October 19, 1944, adjourned to await the action of the Con-
vening Authority.

ORIN G. MURFIN,
Admiral, U. S. Navy (Ret.),
President.

HAROLD BIESEMEIER,
Captain, U. S. Navy,
Judge Advocate.