

# Board Condemns High US Officers For Hawaii Attack Debacle

## Inquiry Board Says US Vessel Sank Jap Sub

### Dereliction of Duty Charged to Kimmel and Short in Report

(Continued from page 1)

The board which conducted the inquiry was headed by Associate Justice Owen J. Roberts, on leave from the supreme court. Its other members were Admirals William H. Standley and J. M. Reeves, both retired, Major Gen. Frank R. McCoy, retired, and Brig. Gen. Joseph T. McNary, an active air corps officer.

The two officers in question, Short and Kimmel, were relieved of their commands ten days after the attack. What is now in store for them was a matter of conjecture. Under navy and army regulations, they may be dismissed by the president for "dereliction of duty," in which event they have the right to appeal for a court martial.

The board took exhaustive testimony, even advertising for witnesses who might have some light to throw upon the incident. In addition, it examined stacks of documentary evidence.

In the latter, it found that as early as Jan. 24, 1941, Secretary of the Navy Knox told Secretary of War Stimson that the increased gravity of the American-Japanese situation required a re-study of defense plans for the Pacific area.

"If war eventuates," Knox wrote, "it is believed easily possible that hostilities would be initiated by a surprise attack upon the fleet or naval base at Pearl Harbor."

This, he said, held "inherent possibilities of a major disaster." In the order of their importance, and probability, he listed the "dangers" as air bombing attack, air torpedo plane attack, sabotage, submarine attack, mining, bombardment.

The letter was forwarded to Short and Kimmel with orders to cooperate in making suggested measures effective.

Beginning with Nov. 27, 1941, a succession of messages was sent to Kimmel and Short emphasizing the danger of the situation including one from Admiral Harold Stark, the chief of naval operations to Kimmel "which," the board said, "stated in substance that the dispatch was considered a war warning."

It directed a defensive deployment of fleet task forces, and reported a probability of aggressive Japanese action against the Philippines, Thailand, the Kra peninsula or Borneo. Kimmel showed the message to Short, but at the time of the hearing, the latter had no independent recollection of it although he felt sure it had been shown to him.

On the third, fourth and sixth of December three messages went from Washington to Kimmel, stating it was believed certain that Japanese consulates were destroying their codes because of the tense situation and burning secret documents. Naval forces in the far Pacific were ordered to do likewise.

"The foregoing messages did not create in the minds of the responsible officers in the Hawaiian area apprehension as to probable imminence of air raids," the board said.

"On the contrary, they only served to emphasize in their minds the danger from sabotage and surprise submarine attack. The necessity for taking a state of war readiness would have been required to avert or meet an air raid attack was not considered."

On Dec. 1, the director of naval intelligence issued a bulletin, saying that Japanese fleet movements "indicated clearly that extensive preparations are under way for hostilities."

After telling of the deployment of other Japanese fleet units, it added that the major capital ship strength remains in home waters as well as the greatest portion of the carriers.

To this the board appended its interpretation that: "The naval intelligence services in Hawaii, due to lack of information indicating that the bulk of the Japanese carriers were at sea, concluded they were in home ports."

A last warning was sent from Washington one hour and 22 min-

## Board Fixes Blame in Hawaii Debacle



This board of inquiry (above) Saturday fixed the blame for the failure of Hawaii's defenders to be on the alert when the Japs attacked Dec. 7, in a 10,000-word report to President Roosevelt. (Left to right), Brig. Gen. Joseph T. McNary, Admiral William H. Standley, Associate Justice Owen J. Roberts of the supreme court, Rear Admiral Joseph M. Reeves and Maj. Gen. Frank Ross McCoy.

utes before the attack advising that an almost "immediate break in relations" was expected. Every effort was made to expedite it, but it did not arrive in time "due to conditions beyond the control of every one concerned."

On Nov. 27, Short ordered one of three forms of alert into effect. It was "alert number one" "against acts of sabotage and uprisings within the islands, with no threat from without." (Alert number two was directed at defense against attacks by submarines, surface vessels or aircraft. Alert number three required the occupation of all positions for maximum defense.)

No "inshore" aerial patrol was in effect prior to Dec. 7, the board found, except such as might be incidental to training and maneuvers, and that took place only on weekdays, during the hours of daylight. The same situation applied to reconnaissances far off shore.

"Means were available," the board said, "for distant reconnaissances which would have afforded a measure of security against a surprise air attack."

"General Short assumed the navy was conducting distant reconnaissance, but after seeing the warning messages of October and November from the war and navy departments, he made no further inquiry with respect to the work being conducted by the navy."

An anti-submarine and anti-torpedo net guards the entrance to Pearl Harbor. Customarily it was closed at night and open in the day time. On the morning of Dec. 7, it was opened at 4:58 for the entrance of two mine sweepers, and left open. A small Japanese submarine slipped in about 7 o'clock. It was sighted at 7:45 and sunk. The net was ordered closed at 8:40 a. m.

The Japanese force which struck at Pearl Harbor was estimated at 150 to 200 fighting planes. No additional alert was ordered after the submarine was discovered inside the harbor, and at 7:55 the planes struck. Most damage was caused by aerial torpedoes launched from planes.

"Immediately upon realizing that the Japanese were attacking," the board said, Short ordered alert number three.

Under the state of readiness which had been prescribed for army aircraft prior to the attack, they were required to be ready for flight only after four hours notice.

Moreover, to prevent a sabotage, they had been closely grouped on the flying fields, by plan, instead of being dispersed for greater ease in taking to the air.

Concentrated, they made an easy target for the Jap fliers, and the latter damaged or destroyed them to such an extent that "very few fighter planes were able to take the air" during the attack. A few, however, did get into the fight, with marked success.

At the time of Japan's surprise raid, Kimmel was both commander in chief of the United States fleet and commander of the Pacific fleet.

Subsequently, Rear Admiral Ernest J. King, who was commanding the Atlantic fleet, was named commander in chief of the entire fleet, and Rear Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, at the time chief of the navy's bureau of navigation, was appointed commander of the Pacific fleet.

Short was relieved and in his place President Roosevelt put Lieutenant General Delos C. Emons, who was then chief of the air force combat command,

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General Short, Admiral Kimmel, the commandant of the 14th naval district, Rear Admiral C. C. Black, their senior subordinates and principal staff officers had considered the possibility of air raids, the Roberts commission found, but "without exception they believed that the chances of such a raid while the Pacific fleet was based upon Pearl Harbor were practically nil."

The attack on December 7, the commission said, "was therefore a complete surprise to each of them."

The commission, discussing activities of Japanese spies and agents, said it was apparent now that the Japanese had obtained complete information through their intelligence service and apparently knew that no task force of the navy was anywhere in the sector northeast, north and northwest of the Hawaiian islands.

They evidently knew, the re-

port said, that no distant airplane reconnaissance was maintained in any sector and that up to December 6 no inshore air patrol was being maintained around Oahu island.

Furthermore, the report said, the Japanese knew the location of airfields, hangars, and other structures and where certain important naval vessels would be berthed.

"Their fliers had the most detailed maps, courses, and bearings, so that each could attack a given vessel or field," the commission said. "Each seems to have been given a specified mission."

The report gave no added details of the damage inflicted in the Japanese attack.

Secretary of the Navy Knox had reported earlier that one battleship, the Arizona, was sunk, along with the target ship Utah, three destroyers and a mine layer, and that several other vessels were damaged, including the battleship Oklahoma, which capsized. Army and navy dead were placed at nearly 3,000 with upwards of 900 wounded. Japanese losses, Knox said, were three submarines and 41 planes.

The Roberts report, apparently taking note from rumors that a large portion of the army and navy personnel in Hawaii had been on weekend leave as the attack began, said that officers and enlisted men of both services were present in sufficient number and were in fit condition to perform any duty. It added that the use of liquor on the evening before, except for a negligible number, did not affect their efficiency.

Among contributory causes to the success of the attack, the commission found were restrictions, such as those on wire tapping, which prevented effective counter-espionage. It noted, too, that warning messages had placed emphasis on the probability of Japanese action in the far east and on anti-sabotage measures.

The commission also listed as a contributory cause the failure of the war department to reply to a message relating to anti-sabotage measures taken by General Short and non receipt by the commanders in Hawaii, prior to the attack, of a warning message sent shortly before hostilities began.

It is true, the report asserted, that there was a deficiency in material for the Hawaiian area because of the enormous demand on the nation's munitions and war supplies. But this deficiency, the commission declared, "did not affect the critical fact of failure to take appropriate measures with the means available."

Secretaries Hull, Knox and Stimson, the heads of the state, navy and war departments, respectively, together with Admiral Stark, and the army chief of staff, General George C. Marshall, were said to have fulfilled their obligations.

The responsible commanders in the Hawaiian area, the report said, had "prepared plans, which, if adapted to and used for the existing emergency, would have been adequate."

"Had orders issued by the chief of staff and the chief of naval operations November 27, 1941, been complied with," the commission concluded, "the aircraft warning system should have been operating; the distant reconnaissance of the navy and the inshore air patrol of the army should have been maintained, the anti-aircraft batteries of the army and similar shore batteries of the navy, as well as additional anti-aircraft artillery located on vessels of the fleet in Pearl Harbor, should have been manned and supplied with ammunition, and a high state of readiness of aircraft should have been in effect."

"None of these conditions was in fact inaugurated or maintained, for the reason that the responsible commanders failed to consult and cooperate as to necessary action based upon the warnings and to adopt measures enjoined by the orders given them by the chiefs of the army and navy commands in Washington."

Both officers and men responded immediately when the attack began, the commission said, and exhibited "initiative, efficiency and bravery in meeting the raid."

But the army and navy commanders, the commission said, had failed to make "suitable dispositions" to meet an attack and had "failed properly to evaluate the seriousness of the situation."

"These errors of judgment," Roberts and his four associates declared, "were the effective causes for the success of the attack."

As a result of this letter, some steps were taken to provide additional measures for protection against air attack in Hawaii, the report said.

The report said it was believed the Japanese consulate at Honolulu served as the center of espionage activity, pointing out that last summer more than 200 Japanese consular agents were acting under the Japanese consul.

As for the attack itself, the commission said available information indicated either three or four aircraft carriers, supporting surface craft, and a few small submarines were employed and that these, except for the subs, approached from the north.

The USS Antares sighted a suspicious object off Pearl Harbor at 6:30 a. m. the day of the attack, the report continued, and this was identified as a small submarine, which was sunk by action of a naval patrol plane and the USS Ward. A report of this action reached the naval base watch officer at 7:12 a. m. and he notified his chief of staff, but no alert warnings were issued, the commission asserted. Forty three minutes later, at 7:55 a. m., the onslaught on Pearl Harbor began.

A second small Japanese submarine was sunk in the harbor after the attack started and a third grounded and captured.

Prior to December 7, the commission said, an anti-torpedo net across Pearl Harbor was closed only during hours of darkness on the theory that nearby vessels would detect any submarine approaching in daylight hours. Probably, the report said, a submarine entered around 7 a. m. the day of the attack.

An estimated 150 to 200 fighting, bombing, and torpedo planes were used against Pearl Harbor and nearby army stations, the commission said. It credited the torpedoes launched from planes with most of the damage to ships in the harbor.

Permanent installation of aircraft warning systems had not been completed on December 7, the commission said, but some temporary installations had been made and General Short had ordered them manned daily from 4 to 7 a. m.

The system shut down at 7 on the fateful Sunday but a non-commissioned officer who had been training was given permission to remain at one station and at 7:02, the board said, he discovered what he thought was "a large flight of planes" slightly east and north of Oahu and about 130 miles away.

This was reported to an army lieutenant at a central information center 18 minutes later, the report went on.

But it added that the lieutenant, who had been detailed there to familiarize himself with the system, assumed the planes were friendly and took no action since he had information that certain United States aircraft might be in the vicinity at the time.

The board said there was sufficient partially trained personnel available on November 27 to operate the warning system 24 hours a day. Admiral Kimmel, it said, assumed the system was being fully operated by the army, but had made no inquiry to confirm it despite receipts of warning messages from Washington.

Under a joint coastal frontier defense plan the navy was to conduct air reconnaissance radiating 700 to 800 miles from Oahu, once the plan became effective, the board said. No such flights were made prior to December 7 however except during drills and maneuvers, the board continued.

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