

THE UNKNOWN SACRIFICES AT PEARL HARBOR

SCAPEGOATING KIMMEL & SHORT

MOTIVES BEHIND THE BETRAYAL

251



OUR NATION SUCCEEDS AGAIN IN FINDING A SCAPEGOAT AND RUINING HIS LIFE

"TO PROTECT THE GUILTY AND CONVICT THE INNOCENT"
PROTECT THE POLITICIANS - SCREW THE MILITARY

SOMEONE HAS "TO TAKE THE FALL"

NOTE: This article is an updated version of Article 195, same subject, and contains more data as well.

Pearl Harbor's secrets had been successfully preserved before the fact — but what about after? People around the nation, including some vocal congressmen, asked why America had been caught off guard.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt said he would appoint an investigatory commission. Supreme Court Justice Owen Roberts — a pro-British internationalist friendly with FDR — was selected to head it. Also appointed to the group: Major General Frank McCoy, General George Marshall's close friend for 30 years; Brigadier General Joseph McNarney, who was on Marshall's staff and chosen on his recommendation; retired Rear Admiral Joseph Reeves, whom FDR had given a job in lend-lease; and Admiral William Standley, a former fleet commander. Only the last seemed to have no obvious fraternity with the Washington set.

The commission conducted only two to three days of hearings in Washington. Admiral Standley, arriving late, was startled by the inquiry's chummy atmosphere. Admiral Harold Stark and General Marshall were asked no difficult or embarrassing questions. Furthermore, all testimony was taken unsworn and unrecorded — an irregularity that, at Standley's urging, was corrected.

The commission then flew to Hawaii, where it remained 19 days. When Admiral Husband Kimmel was summoned, he brought a fellow officer to act as counsel. Justice Roberts disallowed this because the investigation was not a trial, and the admiral was not a defendant.

Because Kimmel and General Walter Short were not formally "on trial," they were also denied all traditional rights of defendants: to ask questions and cross-examine witnesses. Kimmel was also shocked that the proceeding's stenographers — one a teenager, the other with almost no court experience — omitted much of his testimony and left other parts badly garbled. Permission to correct the errors — other than adding footnotes to the end of the commission's report — was refused.

The Roberts Commission laid the blame for Pearl Harbor on the Hawaiian commanders.

They had underestimated the importance of the November 27th warning; they had not taken sufficient defensive or surveillance actions; they were guilty of "dereliction of duty." On the other hand, it said, Stark and Marshall had discharged their duties in exemplary fashion. Incredibly, the report's section declaring this was first submitted to Stark and Marshall for revisions and approval.

Admiral Standley dissented from the findings but did not write a minority opinion after being told that doing so might jeopardize the war effort by lowering the nation's confidence in its leaders.

Standley would later call Roberts' handling of the investigation "as crooked as a snake." Admiral J.O. Richardson, Kimmel's predecessor as Pacific Fleet commander, said of the report: "It is the most unfair, unjust, and deceptively dishonest document ever printed by the Government Printing Office." Admiral William "Bull" Halsey, one of World War II's foremost heroes, wrote, "I have always considered Admiral Kimmel and General Short to be splendid officers who were thrown to the wolves as scapegoats for something over which they had no control."

Roberts brought a final copy of the report to FDR. The president read it and delightedly tossed it to a secretary, saying, "Give that in full to the papers for their Sunday editions." America's outrage now fell on Kimmel and Short. They were traitors, it was said; they should be shot! The two were inundated with hate mail and death threats. The press, with its ageless capacity to manufacture villains, stretched the commission's slurs. Even the wives of the commanders were subject to vicious canards.

There was a great outcry for court-martials. The Roosevelt administration, of course, did not desire that — in an orthodox courtroom, a sharp defense attorney might start digging into Washington's secrets. They contemplated simply retiring Kimmel and Short — but to a gallows-hungry public, that, ironically, would look like they were covering for them. So the issue was sidestepped by again invoking security concerns due to the war effort. It was announced that court-martials would be held — but postponed "until the public interest and safety would permit."

Sufficient delay would also cause the three-year statute of limitations that applied in such cases to elapse. But that was the last thing Kimmel and Short wanted; court-martial was the only means of clearing themselves. Thus they voluntarily waived the statute of limitations.

THEIR DAY IN COURT

By 1944, the Allies were winning, and national security would no longer wash as a barrier to trials. A congressional act mandated the court-martials. At last, the former Hawaiian commanders would have their day in court.

In August, the Naval Court of Inquiry opened. A source inside the Navy Department had already tipped Kimmel and his attorneys about the scores of Magic intercepts kept from the admiral in 1941. One of the attorneys, a former Navy captain, managed to get at the Department's files and authenticated the existence of many. Obtaining their release was another matter. Obstruction after obstruction appeared — until Kimmel tried a ploy. Walking out of the courtroom, he bellowed to his lawyer that they would have to tell the press that important evidence was being withheld.

By the next day, the requested intercepts had been delivered — 43 in all. The admirals on the Court listened to them being read with looks of horror and disbelief. Two of the admirals flung their pencils down. More than 2,000 died at Pearl Harbor because those messages had been withheld. Navy Department officers gave additional testimony. After nearly three months, the inquiry was finished.

The verdict of the Roberts Commission was overturned. Admiral Kimmel was exonerated on all charges. Admiral Stark — who had rejected pleas of juniors to notify Hawaii on the morning of the attack — was severely censured.

News of the intercepts leaked to the Army Pearl Harbor Board, convening at the same time. The Board secured copies of Magic from War Department files. The Board's conclusions still expressed modest criticism of General Short but found overwhelming guilt in General Marshall and his Chief of War Plans, General Gerow.

Its report ended with this statement: "Up to the morning of December 7, 1941, everything that the Japanese were planning to do was known to the United States except [Tokyo's final diplomatic message] the very hour and minute when bombs were falling on Pearl Harbor."

Criticism of the president, incidentally, was forbidden to the proceedings as beyond their jurisdiction. But FDR held ultimate responsibility for Pearl Harbor, and the warnings he had received – some of which have only recently come to light – far exceeded anything they might have dreamed.

Naturally, the inquiry findings wrought dismay in the administration and Pentagon. But a solution was swiftly concocted. It was announced that, in the interest of national security, the court-martial results would not become public until the war's end. (This would give Washington time to conduct "new" investigations.) Navy Secretary Knox told the press that the Naval Court of Inquiry had marked its conclusions "secret," and therefore nothing could be published. A stunned Admiral Orin Murfin, who had presided over the Court, protested to the Secretary. It was true that the breaking of Japan's diplomatic code was not for public knowledge – but, he pointed out, the Court had only marked part of its determinations secret. Charles Rugg, Kimmel's attorney, telegraphed Knox demanding to know how the "innocent" verdict granted the admiral could be deemed classified. Nevertheless, the reports were suppressed.



MORE STAGED SHOWS

Washington now explained that it would conduct additional inquiries supplementing the court-martials. Henry Stimson picked Lieutenant Colonel Henry Clausen – known to disagree with the Army Board findings – to carry out the War Department's investigation. The Navy Secretary appointed Admiral W. Kent Hewitt. Hewitt's role, however, was largely titular; most of the operation was carried out by John Sonnett, a special assistant to the Navy Secretary.

The game rules were reminiscent of those of the Roberts Commission. Kimmel and his attorneys were refused permission to attend the Hewitt Inquiry which operated under this directive:

Except that the testimony you take should be taken under oath to be on equal status in this respect with the testimony previously taken, you will conduct your examination in an informal manner and without regard to legal or formal requirements.

Not surprisingly, witnesses who testified against Washington during the court-martials now reversed themselves. Colonel Rufus Bratton had informed the Army Pearl Harbor Board that on December 6, 1941, he had delivered the first 13 parts of Japan's terminative message to General Marshall via his secretary, and to General Gerow.

Now in Germany, Bratton was flagged down on the Autobahn by Clausen, who handed him affidavits from Marshall, his secretary, and Gerow denying the deliveries were ever made. Confronted with denial by the Army Chief of Staff himself, Bratton recanted. Other officers, their memories similarly "refreshed," retracted their statements about seeing the "winds" message; now, it seemed, the message never existed! All of these individuals faced a dilemma. They were career military men. They knew telling the truth would pit them against the Army Chief of Staff and end all hope of promotion.

But one man wouldn't bend — Captain Laurance Safford, father of naval cryptography. Safford had overseen that branch of naval intelligence for many years. He invented some 20 cryptographic devices, including the most advanced used by our armed forces. For his work, he was ultimately awarded the Legion of Merit.

Safford, who had testified before the Naval Inquiry that he had seen the "winds" message, was confronted by Sonnett. Safford wrote of this meeting: "His purpose seemed to be to refute testimony (before earlier investigations) that was unfavorable to anyone in Washington, to beguile 'hostile' witnesses into changing their stories...." In a memorandum written immediately after the encounter, Safford recorded some of Sonnett's verbal prods, such as: "It is very doubtful that there ever was a Winds Execute [message]"; "It is no reflection on your veracity to change your testimony"; and, "It is no reflection on your mentality to have your memory play you tricks — after such a long period." Safford realized a colossal cover-up was underway, but was not surprised. He had already discovered that all copies of the "winds" message in Navy files, along with other important Pearl Harbor memos, had been destroyed. Indeed, just four days after Pearl Harbor, Rear Admiral Leigh Noyes, director of naval communications, told his subordinates: "Destroy all notes or anything in writing." This was an illegal order — naval memoranda belonged to the American people and could not be destroyed except by congressional authority. Stories circulated of a similar information purge in the War Department. Some files, however, escaped destruction.

The Clausen and Hewitt inquiries pleased Washington. Armed with fresh sophistries, the administration now publicized highly revamped versions of the court-martial findings. The dual Army/Navy announcement came on August 29, 1945 - the very day American troops arrived in Japan when a rejoicing public was unlikely to care about Pearl Harbor's origins. The War Secretary's report shifted the blame back to Short while saying of General Marshall that "throughout this matter, he acted with his usual great skill, energy and efficiency." It admitted the Army Board had criticized Marshall, but said this was completely unjustified. The Navy Secretary's statement again imputed guilt to Kimmel, while asserting that Washington had not been negligent in keeping him informed. It did acknowledge that Admiral Stark had failed to exercise "superior judgment."

Consequently, Americans never really understood what the court-martials had determined. Of course, anyone wanting to learn for himself could do so when the government released the official record of the hearings connected with Pearl Harbor — if he didn't mind wading through 40 volumes!

CONGRESS ENTERS THE SCENE

Only one obstacle now remained to burying Pearl Harbor. Congress had long made noises about conducting its investigation; with the war over, it was sure to do so.

To nip any threat in the bud, the administration sent a bill to both the House and Senate forbidding disclosure of coded materials. It was promptly passed by the Senate, whose members had never heard of Magic and had no idea that the bill would hamstring their forthcoming investigation.

Admiral Kimmel read about the bill in the papers. He and his attorneys notified the press and congressmen about the measure's implications. As a result, the House voted it down and the Senate rescinded it.

Capitol Hill's Pearl Harbor probe began in November 1945, when the Joint Congressional Committee assembled. It comprised six Democrats and four Republicans. A split along party lines quickly emerged.

The Democrats knew that, even though Roosevelt had recently died, a Pearl Harbor scandal could devastate them at the ballot box. But so long as all six Democrats maintained unswerving party loyalty, a majority decision favoring the administration was inevitable.

The Democrats used their edge to jockey things their way. The counsel chosen for the committee was a Democrat who previously served with Henry Stimson; his assistant was a former New Dealer working for the law firm of Dean Acheson, the undersecretary of State. A majority vote determined what evidence the committee would review.

Several witnesses Kimmel wanted to be introduced were never called.

Coercion prevented others from testifying. Major Warren J. Clear, who had warned the War Department in early 1941 that the Japanese were planning to attack a series of islands including Hawaii, was ordered not to appear before the committee. So was Chief Warrant Officer Ralph T. Briggs, the man who had originally intercepted the "winds" message at a United States monitoring station. He was summoned before his commanding officer, who forbade him to testify. "Perhaps someday you'll understand the reason for this," he was told. Briggs had a blind wife to support. He did not come forward as a witness.

The treatment of Lieutenant Commander Alwin Kramer was cruder. Kramer, who had been in charge of the Navy Department's Translation Section at the time of Pearl Harbor, and had once testified to having seen the "winds" message, was thrown into a psychiatric ward at Bethesda Naval Hospital. Representative Frank Keefe, a committee Republican, learned of this and vigorously protested. Kramer was told that his testimony had better change or he'd be in the ward for the rest of his life. The officer went before the committee but gave a confusing narrative that essentially denied the existence of the "winds" message.

Captain Laurance Safford, however, remained fearless in his revelations. A campaign to "nail" him was soon evidenced among committee Democrats. Congressman John Murphy, a former assistant DA, put him through a wringer of cross-examination. Safford's mail was read aloud before the committee to humiliate him. Artful polemics made the captain — naval cryptography's most eminent man — look forgetful on one hand, and vindictive toward superiors on the other.

Safford was accused of being the only one to believe in the "winds" message. No less than seven officers had acknowledged seeing it before having their memories "helped." Perhaps the browbeating of Safford helped inspire Colonel Otis Sadtler of the Signal Corps. During the Clausen investigation, Sadtler had recanted his testimony about the message. Now he came forward and corroborated Safford. (Any doubts about the "winds" affair have since been dispelled. As historian John Toland reports, both Japanese assistant naval attachés posted at the Washington embassy in 1941 have verified that the message was transmitted on December 4th, exactly as Safford said.)

The congressional investigation continued for over six months. In the end, all six Democrats held to the party. A majority decision was handed down on Pearl Harbor assigning most of the blame to the Hawaiian commanders, some blame to the War and Navy departments, and none at all to Roosevelt and his civilian administration.

That was the last major official inquiry into Japan's surprise attack. The lie of Kimmel and Short's fault was perpetuated and Washington's secrets sealed. Congress did conduct a "mini-probe" in 1995, at the urging of the families of General Short (died 1949) and Admiral Kimmel (died 1968). The families hoped to restore the ranks of their libeled, demoted fathers. The 1995 probe requested that the Pentagon reinvestigate Pearl Harbor in light of the new information. However, on December 1, 1995, Undersecretary of Defense Edwin Dorn concluded his investigation with these comments: "I cannot conclude that Admiral Kimmel and General Short were victims of unfair official actions and thus cannot conclude that the remedy of advancement on the retired list is in order."

However, on May 25, 1999, the U.S. Senate approved a resolution that Kimmel and Short had performed their duties "competently and professionally" and that our losses at Pearl Harbor were "not the result of dereliction of duty." "They were denied vital intelligence that was available in Washington," said Senator William V. Roth Jr. (R-Del.).

Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) called Kimmel and Short "the two final victims of Pearl Harbor."

MOTIVES BEHIND THE BETRAYAL

There are several interpretations of the facts surrounding Pearl Harbor. The first, as expressed by Jerry Bruckheimer, producer of the film Pearl Harbor, is to simply deny the overwhelming evidence.

A second interpretation: President Franklin D. Roosevelt, General George C. Marshall, and Admiral Harold Stark received the warnings and intercepts, but somehow "blundered" and forgot to warn Pearl Harbor.

However, there is too much evidence of deliberate calculation.

One does not become president of the United States or Army Chief of Staff through gross stupidity. It was FDR himself who said: "In politics, nothing happens by accident. If it happens, you can bet it was planned that way."

A third interpretation, now widely held, concedes that FDR, Marshall, and Stark knew of the attack but let it happen so the United States could enter World War II to oppose the spread of totalitarianism.

This view was even expressed in the documentary *Sacrifice at Pearl Harbor*, produced by cable's History Channel, which normally takes more orthodox positions on history.

According to this latter interpretation, FDR sacrificed the fleet because Hitler had to be stopped. Otherwise, once the Germans and Japanese finished subduing Europe and Asia, they would turn on America, and conquer the whole world, with Hitler's troops eventually goose-stepping through New York City. Also, it is said, that FDR cared deeply about those suffering in Hitler's concentration camps. Only by inciting the Japanese to attack would America have the unity and resolve to support Roosevelt in these noble objectives.

This explanation, however, does not withstand scrutiny. The overextended Germans gave up any hope of invading Britain as feasible, and if the Germans were incapable of an amphibious assault across the English Channel, they certainly could not have launched one across the Atlantic. As Charles Lindbergh reasoned before Pearl Harbor: "Let us not be confused by this talk of invasion... Great armies must still cross oceans by ship... No foreign navy will dare approach within bombing range of our coasts. Let us stop this hysterical chatter of calamity and invasion."

The claim that Roosevelt was motivated by opposition to totalitarianism and concern for concentration camp victims is sharply contradicted by his support for Soviet dictator Josef Stalin. Like Hitler, Stalin was an international aggressor. Few remember that the 1939 invasion of Poland – World War II's immediate spark – was a joint invasion by Germany and the Soviet Union. In 1939-40, Stalin also invaded Finland, occupied Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, and annexed part of Romania. Furthermore, Stalin, like Hitler, slaughtered millions of his people, including some six million during the Ukrainian genocide (1932-33) alone. Nevertheless, FDR, without bothering with congressional approval, began bestowing lend-lease aid on Stalin in 1941, assistance that would ultimately amount to \$11 billion (more than \$100 billion in today's currency).

As former President Herbert Hoover recalled: "In June 1941, when Britain was safe from German invasion due to Hitler's diversion to attack Stalin, I urged that the gargantuan jest of all history would be our giving aid to the Soviet government. I urged that we should allow those two dictators to exhaust each other. I stated that the result of our assistance would be to spread Communism over the whole world.... The consequences have proved that I was right."



*Front page of Hawaii Tribune-Herald about a possible Japanese strike somewhere in Asia or the South Pacific, dated **November 30, 1941***

SENATE RESOLUTION – MAY 1998

57 YEARS AFTER THE PEARL HARBOR ATTACK

NON-BINDING SENATE & HOUSE RESOLUTION CLEARS BOTH ADM KIMMEL AND GEN SHORT OF ANY DERELICTION OF DUTY DURING THE PEARL HARBOR ATTACKS ON DECEMBER 7, 1941



Rear Admiral Husband E. Kimmel



Lt. General Walter C. Short.

WASHINGTON -MAY 25, 1998: *The Senate voted today to clear the names of the two senior military officers who were accused of dereliction of duty as a result of the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941.* The vote came after an emotional debate among the dwindling number of World War II veterans left in the Senate.

After the surprise attack, the two men were relieved of their commands and forced to retire from the military at reduced ranks, their reputations in tatters. A panel created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt accused them of dereliction of duty. *Both died decades ago.*

But in the 57 years since one of the nation's worst military disasters, several historians have described *Admiral Kimmel and General Short as scapegoats for failures among military commanders in Washington who were aware of intelligence reports suggesting an imminent Japanese attack.*

The intelligence, gathered in late 1941 from decoded Japanese radio interceptions, was not passed on to commanders in Hawaii.

"There is no longer any reason to perpetuate the cruel myth that Kimmel and Short were singularly responsible for the disaster at Pearl Harbor," said Senator William V. Roth Jr., Republican of Delaware, who has led the struggle to clear the names of the two officers and restore their wartime ranks.

"They were denied vital intelligence that was available in Washington," said Senator Roth, who was in the Army in World War II and is now 77. *"We're not rewriting history. We're just correcting the record."*

Senator Roth was pressed to offer the amendment by Admiral Kimmel's only surviving son, Edward, who is a constituent in Delaware. The House is expected to consider the amendment when it reviews the military spending bill.

The arguments did not sway another veteran of the war, Senator John W. Warner, Republican of Virginia, 72, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, who strongly opposed *the amendment offered by Senator Roth and his Democratic colleague from Delaware, Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr.*

Describing the Senate's action today as "tombstone promotions," Senator Warner noted that several formal Government investigations of Pearl Harbor had not cleared the names of Admiral Kimmel and General Short. *"What we are faced with here is one generation trying to provide revisionist history upon another," Mr. Warner said.*

Senator Warner, who volunteered for the Navy in 1944 as a teenager and is a decorated veteran of the Korean War, said it was a long tradition in the armed forces for commanders to be held "directly accountable" for the safety of troops under their commands.

The latest Pentagon study of Pearl Harbor, conducted in 1995 at the request of Congress, found that fault for the attack went well beyond Admiral Kimmel and General Short and should be "broadly shared."

Of the Senate's 10 World War II veterans, 5 voted with Senator Roth to clear the names of the two officers: Senators Jesse Helms, Republican of North Carolina; Daniel K. Inouye, Democrat of Hawaii; Frank R. Lautenberg, Democrat of New Jersey, Ernest F. Hollings, Democrat of South Carolina, and Strom Thurmond, Republican of South Carolina.

Senator Thurmond, 96, a retired general in the Army Reserve who parachuted into Normandy on D-Day and later served as chairman of the Armed Services Committee, said Admiral Kimmel and General Short were "the last victims" of Pearl Harbor.

The veterans of the war voting with Senator Warner against the amendment were Senators John H. Chafee, Republican of Rhode Island; Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Democrat of New York, and Ted Stevens, Republican of Alaska.

The Senate inquiry in 2000 issued a lengthy exoneration of Kimmel's conduct. Kimmel and his family fought for justice for decades. 36 Navy Admirals and the Pearl Harbor Survivors' Association, eventually demanded that the commanders' ranks be posthumously restored. In 2000, both houses of Congress passed a resolution recommending this action. The resolution, however, remains buried in the Defense Department. No action has been taken.

LACK OF PRESIDENTIAL SUPPORT

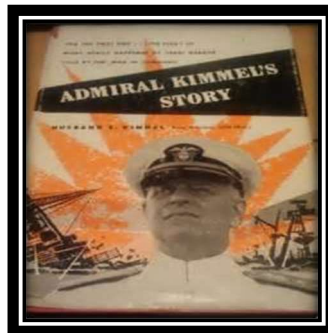
Even though both men have been exonerated by both the House and the Senate of the United States Congress the lack of Presidential support clouds the chance of any type of "Official" exoneration.

In 1994 Kimmel's family, including his grandson, South Carolina broadcaster Manning Kimmel IV, attempted for the third time to have Kimmel's four-star rank re-instated. President Bill Clinton turned down the request, as had Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan before him and George W. Bush and Barack Obama after him. In summary, the last 5 Presidents have refused to either "approve" or "act "on the resolution.

To this day, Admiral Kimmel and General Short have not been given back their former rank.

ADMIRAL KIMMEL'S BOOK

In his 1955 book, Admiral Kimmel's Story, Husband Kimmel summed up his view of the situation:



The deficiencies of Pearl Harbor as a fleet base were well known in the Navy Department. In an interview with Mr. Roosevelt in June 1941, in Washington, I outlined the weaknesses and concluded with the remark that the only answer was to have the fleet at sea if the Japs ever attacked.

I accepted the decision to base the fleet at Pearl Harbor in the firm belief that the Navy Department would supply me promptly with all pertinent information available and in particular with all information that indicated an attack on the fleet at Pearl Harbor.

The Navy Department thus engaged in a course of conduct that gave me the impression that intelligence from important intercepted Japanese messages ["Magic"] was being furnished to me. Under these circumstances, a failure to send me important information about this character was not merely a withholding of intelligence. It amounted to an affirmative misrepresentation.

Yet, the most vital information from the intercepted Japanese messages was withheld from me. This failure not only deprived me of essential facts. It misled me.

I was not supplied with any information on the intercepted messages showing that the Japanese government had divided Pearl Harbor into five areas and was seeking minute berthing information as to the berthing of ships of the fleet in those areas, which was vitally significant.

DISCLAIMER

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