



DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF LEADERSHIP
UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY

**Resolution Regarding RADM Husband E. Kimmel, USN
and MGEN Walter C. Short, USA**

Whereas, after careful review of the information that has been made available in the last 64 years, it is our assessment that Admiral Husband Kimmel and Lieutenant General Walter Short were not the only ones who should have shouldered the responsibility for the events of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. There is ample evidence to indicate that these two commanders were not given all the information available at the time that pointed towards a high probability of an attack by Japanese forces. As respective Commanders of the Pacific Forces in Hawaii, they do bear the responsibility and accountability inherent in command, but their being singled out as solely responsible is an injustice as evidenced by subsequent inquiries.

Whereas, the pertinent information in the following paragraphs is duly noted.

Shortly after December 7, 1941, a Presidential Commission chaired by Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts was appointed to investigate the facts surrounding the Pearl Harbor attack. In recent years, reputable historians have readily conceded that the Commission conducted a hurried investigation, neglecting to review all available evidence and failed to obtain the testimony of many persons who could have provided substantive information. The Commission's report, issued in January 1942, was critical of Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short, charging them with "dereliction of duty." Although subsequent investigations discredited the Roberts Commission's findings, the Commission's report and attendant publicity have been the major factors in shaping public perception and preventing official action to correct the unfair treatment of Kimmel and Short. Admiral William Harrison Standley, who served as a member of the Roberts Commission, later disavowed the report, maintaining that "these two officers were martyred" and "if they had been brought to trial, both would have been cleared of the charge."

Shortly after the Robert's Commission's report was issued, Kimmel and Short were forced into retirement. Under U.S. law at that time, military officers could retire at a rank no higher than the senior authorized rank, which in the case of Admiral Kimmel was Rear Admiral, and in the case of Lieutenant General Short was Major General, both two star ranks.

Following the Roberts Commission report and his retirement, Admiral Kimmel repeatedly requested that he be tried by a Military Court Martial, which would have afforded him the opportunity for a full legal hearing in his case, including an opportunity to testify under oath and to call witnesses in his behalf. A court martial was never

convened, even though the U.S. Congress repeatedly extended the statute of limitations time limits at Admiral Kimmel's urging to permit this to occur.

Due to Admiral Kimmel's continued entreaties, the Congress directed the Navy Department to investigate the Pearl Harbor attack. A Naval Court of Inquiry was convened and on October 19, 1944; (1) exonerated Admiral Kimmel on the grounds that his military decisions and the disposition of his forces at the time of the December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor were proper "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;" (2) criticized the higher command for not sharing with Admiral Kimmel "during the very critical period of November 26 to December 7, 1941, important information . . . regarding the Japanese situation;" and (3) concluded that the Japanese attack and its outcome was attributable to no serious fault on the part of anyone in the naval service. On October 20, 1944, the Army Pearl Harbor Board of Investigation similarly concluded that Lieutenant General Short was not guilty of negligence in his duties. The reports by both the Naval Court of Inquiry and the Army Pearl Harbor Board of Investigation were kept secret, and Rear Admiral Kimmel and Major General Short were denied their requests to defend themselves through trial by court-martial.

The joint committee of Congress that was established to investigate the conduct of Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short completed, on May 31, 1946, a 1,075-page report that included the conclusions of the committee that the two officers had not been guilty of dereliction of duty.

It is significant that historical material, which has become available in recent years, irrefutably shows that Kimmel and Short were not provided information by their superiors in Washington, which would have alerted them that an attack on Hawaii was imminent. Specifically, numerous investigations following the attack on Pearl Harbor have documented that Kimmel and Short were not provided necessary and critical intelligence that was available, that foretold of war with Japan, that warned of imminent attack, and that would have alerted them to prepare for the attack, including such essential communiques as the Japanese Pearl Harbor Bomb Plot message of September 24, 1941, and the message sent from the Imperial Japanese foreign Ministry to the Japanese Ambassador in the United States from December 6 to 7, 1941, known as the Fourteen-Part Message. Also, On June 15, 1944, an investigation conducted by Admiral T. C. Hart at the direction of the Secretary of the Navy produced evidence, subsequently confirmed, that essential intelligence concerning Japanese intentions and war plans was available in Washington but was not shared with Admiral Kimmel.

Subsequently, four actions by the Navy were germane:

(1) On April 27, 1954, the Chief of Naval Personnel, Admiral J. L. Holloway, Jr., recommended that Rear Admiral Kimmel be advanced in rank in accordance with the provisions of the Officer Personnel Act of 1947.

(2) On November 13, 1991, a majority of the members of the Board for the Correction of Military Records of the Department of the Army found that Major General

Short "was unjustly held responsible for the Pearl Harbor disaster" and that "it would be equitable and just" to advance him to the rank of lieutenant general on the retired list.

(3) In October 1994, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Carlisle Trost, withdrew his 1988 recommendation against the advancement of Rear Admiral Kimmel and recommended that his case be reopened.

(4) On July 21, 1997, Vice Admiral David C. Richardson (United States Navy, retired) responded to the Dorn Report with his own study which confirmed findings of the Naval Court of Inquiry and the Army Pearl Harbor Board of Investigation and established, among other facts, that the war effort in 1941 was undermined by a restrictive intelligence distribution policy, and the degree to which the commanders of the United States forces in Hawaii were not alerted about the impending attack on Hawaii was directly attributable to the withholding of intelligence from Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short.

Although a report on the results of a Department of Defense study, the Dorn Report, issued on December 15, 1995, did not provide support for an advancement of Rear Admiral Kimmel or Major General Short in grade, it did set forth as a conclusion of the study that "responsibility for the Pearl Harbor disaster should not fall solely on the shoulders of Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short, it should be broadly shared." The Dorn Report found: (1) that "Army and Navy officials in Washington were privy to intercepted Japanese diplomatic communications . . . which provided crucial confirmation of the imminence of war;" (2) that "the evidence of the handling of these messages in Washington reveals some ineptitude, some unwarranted assumptions and misestimations, limited coordination, ambiguous language, and lack of clarification and follow-up at higher levels;" and (3) that "together, these characteristics resulted in failure . . . to appreciate fully and to convey to the commanders in Hawaii the sense of focus and urgency that these intercepts should have engendered."

After World War II, U.S. law was changed to permit military officers to retire at the highest rank held while on active duty, upon nomination by the President of the United States and confirmation by the Senate. For reasons never explained, neither Admiral Kimmel nor Lieutenant General Short was nominated for promotion, the only World War II officers not so advanced.

At this point in time, nearly 65 years after the attack on Pearl Harbor, no action by the U.S. Government can fully rectify the injustices to Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short. A partial atonement can be achieved by posthumously promoting these two officers to the ranks they held at the time of the attack, promotions to which they are entitled by law.

Numerous distinguished bodies have passed resolutions recommending the posthumous promotions, including: The Naval Academy Alumni Association, The Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Pearl Harbor Survivor's Association, the Admiral Chester W. Nimitz Foundation, the Retired Officers Association, and the Pearl Harbor Commemorative Committee, and other associations and numerous retired military officers have called for the rehabilitation of the reputations and honor of Admiral

Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short through their posthumous advancement on the retired lists to their highest wartime grades. Admiral Arleigh Burke, USN (Ret.), former Chief of Naval Operations, sent a letter to the secretary of Defense in July 1991 recommending the posthumous promotion. In October 1991, 36 prominent Navy Admirals signed a letter to President Bush urging him to nominate Kimmel and Short to the U.S. Senate for posthumous promotion. And most recently, in 114 STAT. 1654 Public Law 106-398-Oct. 30, 2000, Section 546 of the National Defense Authorization for Fiscal Year 2001, the Senate included a "Sense of Congress" provision regarding the professional performances of Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short. This Act specifically stated that their duties had been performed competently and professionally and that the losses incurred by the United States in the attacks on the naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and other targets on Oahu, Hawaii on December 7, 1941 were not the result of dereliction of duty by either officer and requested that the President advance the late Rear Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and Major General Walter C. Short, to their highest wartime rank, on the retired lists of their respective service.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the United States Naval Academy Class of 1966 joins these distinguished bodies in urging that the President of the United States nominate to the U.S. Senate, Rear Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, USN, for posthumous promotion to Admiral, and Major General Walter C. Short, USA, for posthumous promotion to Lieutenant General.

Unanimously Adopted: 5 Nov 05, at U.S. Naval Academy. Annapolis. MD
date location

//S// Michael D. Haskins, VADM, USN (Ret.)
President, Class of 1966, United States Naval Academy