

Short Puts Dec. 7, '41, Blame On War Department, Navy

*Told Roberts Commission He Depended on
Them for Data, That He Expected Army
in Washington to Let Him Know of Crisis*

By THOMAS J. HAMILTON

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 1—Maj. Gen. Walter C. Short, who was relieved of the Army command in the Hawaiian Islands after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, considered the War Department and naval authorities in Hawaii responsible for his failure to take precautions against any enemy action, except sabotage.

General Short told the Roberts commission, in testimony released today by the Congressional Committee Investigating Pearl Harbor, that his estimate of the situation before the Japanese struck was "that the War Department would let me know of a crisis and that the Navy would let me know of the presence of any carriers in Hawaiian waters, and without that there couldn't be an air attack."

He was convinced that the Japanese would have to use carriers, not land-based aircraft, the General asserted, because the nearest Japanese island is 2,100 miles from Pearl Harbor. Since he had no agents or other means of obtaining

information outside his command, he was dependent on newspapers, dispatches from the War Department, or information provided by Navy commanders in Hawaii, he added.

General Short, who is expected to follow the same line of defense when he appears before the Congressional committee, criticized the War Department (he did not refer directly to the then Chief of Staff, Gen. George C. Marshall) for not telephoning him the final warning message of the Japanese ultimatum, instead of sending it by commercial cable.

General Marshall has told the committee that, in general, overseas telephone conversations were not considered safe from a security angle, but General Short insisted that he had a "scrambler" machine, and that "while they are not considered as safe as code, they are reasonably safe."

Recalling that the warning message was filed in Washington at

Continued on Page 2, Column 4

Short Puts Pearl Harbor Blame on War Department

Continued From Page 1

6:48 A. M. (Honolulu time) and was not decoded and delivered to his adjutant general until 2:58 P. M., Dec. 7, hours after the Japanese had attacked, General Short said that he assumed the information was available at the War Department by 5:45 A. M. The raid began at 7:55, and General Short asserted:

"If they had telephoned me urgent, telephoned the (Signal) Corps in clear, I could have had the information at 6 o'clock in the morning without any question at all because we talk repeatedly and when we get the call through I receive these things in around fifteen minutes.

"When the War Department sent this message they still had the feeling that extreme secrecy in not letting the Japanese know that they had broken their code, or how they had gotten this information, was more important than the speed of transmission of this message to me, because otherwise they wouldn't send it by code, which anybody knows takes hours longer; that they were trying to maintain secrecy, and in attempting to maintain secrecy they did not get the message to me until seven hours after the attack.

"I think it an extremely important point to consider."

On Nov. 27, 1941, General Marshall told General Short that "negotiations with Japan appear to be terminated to all practical purposes" and directed him to undertake such reconnaissance and other measures as he deemed necessary, but without alarming the civil population or disclosing the intent.

Gives Reasons for His Actions

Explaining why he had invoked Alert 1, solely against sabotage, instead of Alert 2, against air attack, or Alert 3, against an all-out

attack, General Short gave these three reasons:

"There was a strong possibility of sabotage, though none of an uprising in the Hawaiian islands. Individual sabotage was the thing that I feared, more than anything else."

"I had no information to indicate an attack, so it did not seem essential to prepare against a real attack. The sabotage was a direct possibility."

"If I ordered Alert 2 and Alert 3, I interfered very seriously with the training. Number 2 would have interfered seriously particularly with the air and anti-aircraft training, number 3 would have interfered seriously with all training."

The general said that under the more serious alerts, bomber aircraft would have been sent to outlying Hawaiian Islands, with fighters dispersed at airfields on Oahu, and that the lack of fences around Oahu airfields (for which he had asked funds of the War Department) made it necessary under Alert 1 to group the planes together for adequate protection against sabotage.

The need for training was serious because bomber crews were ferrying planes to the Philippines, and both these and his ground troops came out from the United States without sufficient preparation, he added.

General Short also argued that the reply from Washington to his message on anti-sabotage precautions, as well as the fact that planes were arriving from the United States with skeleton crews and machine guns not ready for use, led him to believe that the War Department did not expect an attack on the Hawaiian Islands.

No Objection Made, He Says

"You will notice," he said, "they made no objection whatever to my wire where I stated I was alerted for sabotage. If they had any idea that that was not a correct order, they had all the opportunity

from Nov. 27 to Dec. 7 to come back and say:

"We do not consider the action taken by you as sufficient, and that you should instead take action to defend yourself against air attack."

"In other words, I took it as a tacit agreement with the course I had taken and that there was no objection raised, and I cannot see how I could draw any other conclusion."

General Short said that his other principal source of information was the Navy, and he stressed that Vice Admiral Charles H. McMorris, then Chief of Staff to Rear Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet in 1941, had told him in Admiral Kimmel's presence a few days before the raid that a Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor was not probable.

Under an Army-Navy agreement, he added, the Navy was in charge of long-distance reconnaissance, but was entitled to ask the Army for patrol planes if it needed them. General Short said that the Navy's failure to ask him for additional planes after the warning messages was a further reason for his not believing that it expected trouble at Pearl Harbor.

In addition, the general said, in the days before Pearl Harbor, the Navy was discussing the replacement by Army forces of the Marine garrisons and aviators on Wake, Midway, and Canton Islands in order to provide an expeditionary force against the Japanese-held mandated islands. He assumed that the Navy's roaming task forces were told of all movements of Japanese warships in the neighborhood.

General Short was examined vigorously by members of the commission, on the duty of an Army commander to make certain of the defense of his command, but he argued that the long-distance reconnaissance planes were under the tactical command of the Navy, including those furnished by the

Army, and that he considered that it was not his duty to question Admiral Kimmel on the way he was carrying out the assignment.

General Short also discussed the radar warning that an Army station received of the approach of the Japanese planes from the north of Oahu, and said he had instituted a 4 to 7 A. M. watch in the interceptor command following the Nov. 27 message.

On the morning of the attack an inexperienced officer who had remained on duty after 7 o'clock told the radar operator to disregard the finding. General Short admitted that it would have been "immensely better" if he had ordered the aircraft warning service to operate until 8 or 9 o'clock.

Attack on Sunday Expected

General Short also acknowledged that he had expected the Japanese, if they did attack, to strike around dawn, and to select a Sunday because of the greater element of surprise. He insisted, however, that even if the radar warning had been heeded, the low-flying Japanese torpedo planes would have got through to attack the fleet.

But the Army was not expecting an attack, and he recalled the statement of an artillery officer, who saw the Japanese planes bombing the Oahu airfields and thought Marine pilots were practicing.

General Short, the transcript showed, had to answer some sharp questions from Admiral William H. Standley, Rear Admiral Joseph M. Reeves, and Maj. Gen. Frank R. McCoy, who were service members of the Roberts Commission.

They asked him particularly about newspaper reports that the effectiveness of top Army officers at Pearl Harbor was affected by drinking on the night before, and that he had issued week end passes as usual.

General Short defended the behavior of his subordinates, but admitted that despite the alert, he

China Swings to Right, But Only in Traffic Rules

ment's proposal yesterday is a broader plan of dealing with the Communists, enunciated by the Generalissimo in his New Year's