



# The Impact of Military Communication and Leadership on the Outcome of Defensive Battles During World War II

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The Impact of Military Communication and Leadership on the  
Outcome of Defensive Battles during World War II

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A Thesis in the Field of History

for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

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## Abstract

Effective communication and good leadership have a significant impact on the result of military battles. Communication and leadership, within military protocol, are key to the result. The history books have demonstrated inconsistencies in the treatment of officers in command of defensive battles that were lost or although ultimately victorious, should have been prevented. They were not held accountable to the same standards. History has been benevolent to the American generals of World War II (WWII) allowing them to retire at their highest rank with the exception of Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, the Navy commander of Pearl Harbor, and Lieutenant General Walter C. Short, commander of the Army's Hawaiian Department. This thesis will address what these inconsistencies say about communication and leadership within the military by examining the Pearl Harbor attack along with four other significant defensive battles fought by the United States (U.S.) during World War II. In addition to the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the attacks on the Philippine Islands, and Savo Island in the Pacific, the Battle of Sidi Bou Zid and Kasserine Pass in the Tunisia Campaign in Africa, and the Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes in Europe will be examined. The analysis of World War II defensive battles will demonstrate what effect, if any, communication and leadership had on the outcome of these battles and the treatment of the commanders involved.

## Dedication

In memory of Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and Lieutenant General Walter C. Short

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# I

## Introduction

War is a military act to the extent that military forces are needed to carry out a political goal. It is not waged with words or promises but rather with the grim realities of hardship, danger, and killing.<sup>1</sup> War involves the use of force to make the enemy yield. In principle, it has changed very little since the beginning of recorded history. Mechanized warfare is only an evolution of men against men since machines are only masses of inert metal without the men who man them and give them life. When facing a major decision, a military commander must rely on past experience and training to act immediately with very little time for reflection.<sup>2</sup> Defensive warfare has been one of the most baffling arenas for military leaders.<sup>3</sup> It requires imaginative commanders who have found ways to avoid being surprised and to overcome the challenging problem of an inferior force engaging in conflict with a superior force.<sup>4</sup> Inconsistencies in the treatment of officers in command of defensive battles that were lost has been demonstrated throughout history. This thesis will address what these inconsistencies say about communication and leadership within the military by examining five significant defensive

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest J. King and Walter Muir Whitehill, *Fleet Admiral King: A Naval Record* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1952), 346.

<sup>2</sup> Ernest J. King introduction to *Fleet Admiral King: A Naval Record* by Ernest J. King and Walter Muir Whitehill (New York: W. W. Norton, 1952), viii.

<sup>3</sup> Bevin Alexander, *How Wars Are Won: The 13 Rules of War from Ancient Greece to the War on Terror* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2002), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander, *How Wars Are Won*, 47.

battles fought by the United States (U.S.) during World War II (WWII). The battles include the attacks on Pearl Harbor, the Philippine Islands, and Savo Island in the Pacific, the Battle of Sidi Bou Zid and Kasserine Pass in the Tunisia Campaign in Africa, and the Battle of the Bulge in Europe.

The battles examined involve various theatres of the war, which helps demonstrate the dimension of the conflict and the origin of the differences that were no longer negotiable. According to the British military historian and writer John Keegan, “The Second World War, when it came in 1939, was unquestionably the outcome of the First, and in large measure its continuation.”<sup>5</sup> Keegan described the war as “the greatest event in the history of mankind.”<sup>6</sup> World War II was, without question, the largest and most violent conflict in human history.<sup>7</sup> It engulfed much of the world in sheer terror and it was fought on the sea, in the air, and on every continent over several diverse theaters of operation by millions of soldiers for approximately six years.<sup>8</sup> The highest recorded number of troops mobilized by all nations involved in the military combat was 72,928,999. In addition, there were millions more civilians participating in partisan, guerrilla, and resistance activity and in the industrial production of war-related equipment. Although some of the labor was voluntary, others were forced to work as slave laborers.<sup>9</sup> Several

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<sup>5</sup> John Keegan, *The First World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 9.

<sup>6</sup> Tom Brokaw, foreword to *The New York Times Complete World War II: The Coverage of the Entire Conflict* ed. Richard Overy (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal, 2016), vi.

<sup>7</sup> Gordon R. Sullivan, introduction to *Ardennes-Alsace: The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II*, by Roger Cirillo (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 2005), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Sullivan, introduction to *Ardennes-Alsace-The U.S. Army Campaigns*, by Cirillo, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Alan Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People of World War II* (New York: Permuted Press, 2018), 7.



millions of people lost their lives and more civilians died than military personnel.<sup>10</sup> World War II was the deadliest war in history resulting in fifty to eighty million deaths.<sup>11</sup> Due to the nature of warfare, an exact figure can never be firmly established.<sup>12</sup> It was the world's worst catastrophe involving countless people, both soldiers and civilians, from a multitude of countries.<sup>13</sup> When viewing the war from a larger perspective, also at risk was the outcome of a war between the forces of democratic civilization and those of mass-murdering Nazi totalitarianism.<sup>14</sup> This concept of the Nazi assault on world peace as an illegal enterprise, was the fundamental premise for the Nuremberg international trials of Nazi criminals.<sup>15</sup> Robert H. Jackson, nominated by Roosevelt in 1941 to serve as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, was among those whose arguments convinced the president that captured Nazi leaders should be tried and, if convicted of war crimes, punished through a lawful trial process as opposed to simply shooting them as the British and the Soviets, in addition to many senior American officials, were advocating.<sup>16</sup> The Nazis were also responsible for the persecution and systematic

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<sup>10</sup> Christopher H. Sterling, "Preface," in *Military Communications: From Ancient Times to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Christopher H. Sterling (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008), xv.

<sup>11</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 18.

<sup>12</sup> John Keegan, *The Second World War* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 590.

<sup>13</sup> Herman Wouk, *War and Remembrance*, vol. 2 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), 1124.

<sup>14</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 175.

<sup>15</sup> John Q. Barrett, ed. *That Man: An Insider's Portrait of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 103.

<sup>16</sup> John Q. Barrett, introduction to *That Man: An Insider's Portrait of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, ed. John Q. Barrett (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), XVII-XVIII.

mass murder of millions of innocent and defenseless Jewish men, women, and children.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, medical research was performed with Dr. Mengele's research at Auschwitz receiving the most attention. Medicine and science were distorted and practiced on unwilling subjects, often producing lethal consequences.<sup>18</sup> The Nazis also engaged in another type of aggression aimed at the culture of the people and countries they occupied by plundering their art collections and other valuable treasures.<sup>19</sup> The Japanese were also guilty of terrifying war crimes. Their ranking officers wanted American blood and promoted the practice of executing Allied airmen without a trial. The final set of executions involved fifteen airmen that actually took place after the war had ended. A conspiracy to conceal the murders emerged after the war and the Western Army command felt it was impossible to ever determine what had really happened.<sup>20</sup> Historians will continue to study World War II always wondering how such a lethal war that was built on genocide and ended with two nuclear detonations could have engulfed the core of Western civilization and the immense Pacific Ocean.<sup>21</sup>

World War II warfare demanded effective communication with great mobility and flexibility to make it possible for numerous autonomous elements to work together efficiently

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<sup>17</sup> Eric A. Johnson. *Nazi Terror: The Gestapo, Jews, and Ordinary Germans* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 459.

<sup>18</sup> David G. Marwell, *Mengele: Unmasking the "Angel of Death"* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2020), 64.

<sup>19</sup> Robert M. Edsel with Bret Witter, *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves, and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2009), 9.

<sup>20</sup> Marc Landas, *The Fallen: A True Story of American POW's and Japanese Wartime Atrocities* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2004), 54-55.

<sup>21</sup> Brokaw, foreword to *The New York Times Complete World War II*, vi.

despite being far apart.<sup>22</sup> Communication has been essential to the process of military combat throughout history.<sup>23</sup> Hitler understood the importance of communication in the form of propaganda to promote beliefs and ideology. In *Mein Kampf* he wrote, “It was not until the [First World] War that it became evident what significant results could be obtained by a correct application of propaganda.”<sup>24</sup> When Hitler became chancellor in 1933, one of his first initiatives was to formally create a Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda and he appointed Joseph Goebbels as its minister.<sup>25</sup> Goebbels introduced the Nazi salute, which was inspired by Mussolini’s Roman salute, along with the salutation “*Heil Hitler!*” Goebbels was more responsible for the creation of Hitler’s public image than any other person except for Adolf Hitler himself.<sup>26</sup> He regulated the media and arts and therefore integrated propaganda into general culture. Goebbels worked with creative writers, artists and most notably film makers to produce propaganda that was both entertaining and aesthetically appealing. The most notable example of this is *Triumph of the Will*, the chronicle of the 1934 Nazi Party Congress at Nuremburg, filmed by the notable documentarian Leni Riefenstahl. Goebbels perceived his role as that of a salesman with his wares being Adolf Hitler and National Socialism.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Alexander, *How Wars Are Won*, 14-16.

<sup>23</sup> Sterling, “Preface,” xv.

<sup>24</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 151.

<sup>25</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 152.

<sup>26</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 151.

<sup>27</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 152.

In America, the motion picture was also recognized as significant in contributing towards the war effort. The Hollywood movie business was considered the country's most significant culture-making industry.<sup>28</sup> Initially the film industry avoided making politicized statements regarding the dictators or the potential threat they posed to democratic governments despite the fact that most of the studio heads were Jewish. Although the moviemakers never liked Hitler, they did not want to openly oppose him either. However, in 1936 actors and screenwriters began to criticize totalitarianism and promote democracy. The debate over the appropriate American response to autocracy found members of the motion picture industry changing from public apathy concerning fascism and the possibility of war to openly condemning the dictators and urging the United States to oppose them.<sup>29</sup> To understand Americans' perception of the war requires awareness of Hollywood's actions during the late 1930s and early 1940s.<sup>30</sup> Hollywood played a significant role during this era more than at any other time, and it influenced the global perspective of a generation that had far less connections to the outside world than what currently exists.<sup>31</sup> The movie industry's role in preparing Americans to fight should never be minimized.<sup>32</sup> Hollywood played an essential role in preparing the United States for war.<sup>33</sup> Many of the movie stars also signed up for military service including Jimmy Stewart who enlisted in the Army Air

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<sup>28</sup> David Welky, *The Moguls and the Dictators: Hollywood and the Coming of World War II* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008), 4.

<sup>29</sup> Welky, *The Moguls and the Dictators*, 2.

<sup>30</sup> Welky, *The Moguls and the Dictators*, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Welky, *The Moguls and the Dictators*, 4.

<sup>32</sup> Welky, *The Moguls and the Dictators*, 5.

<sup>33</sup> Welky, *The Moguls and the Dictators*, 3.

Corps. He flew twenty combat missions over Europe and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal, and the Croix de Guerre. He was promoted to colonel prior to the end of the war.<sup>34</sup>

Immediately following the declaration of war, the War Activities Committee of the Motion Picture Industry was created so the screen could effectively help support the victory program.<sup>35</sup> Five of Hollywood's most legendary directors beginning with John Ford, who oversaw the creation of a group he named the Naval Volunteer Photographic Unit, volunteered their filmmaking talents to the military. Ford felt that if war was inevitable, it was important to record it and that should not be done by amateurs or War Department officials. Therefore, he began training camera operators, sound technicians, and editors to perform their responsibilities in close quarters under wartime conditions.<sup>36</sup> The other directors who volunteered their services included Frank Capra, John Huston, George Stevens, and William Wyler.<sup>37</sup> They were all seeking adventure but more importantly, they were attempting to find relevance in a world that had become harsher and more terrifying than anything their studio heads would have permitted them to depict on film.<sup>38</sup> In February 1943 General Marshall met with Frank Capra to give him

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<sup>34</sup> Welky, *The Moguls and the Dictators*, 276.

<sup>35</sup> Anthony Slide, *Inside the Hollywood Fan Magazine: A History of Star Makers, Fabricators, and Gossip Mongers* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010), 138.

<sup>36</sup> Mark Harris, *Five Came Back: A Story of Hollywood and the Second World War* (New York: Penguin Press, 2014), 2.

<sup>37</sup> Harris, *Five Came Back*, 4-7.

<sup>38</sup> Harris, *Five Came Back*, 5.

his initial assignment that became the *Why We Fight* series of movies, which was considered the most significant filmed propaganda of World War II.<sup>39</sup>

Even the fan magazines contributed to the nationwide war effort. Their initial coverage, which began in January or February 1942, included all branches of the service and was mainly dedicated to photographs of movie stars in uniforms. The cover of the August 1942 issue of *Photoplay* featured photographs of several male stars in the armed forces. In their April 1943 issue, a two-page spread featured 120 Hollywood players currently serving in the military. Their June 1943 issue included an article written by Col. Darryl F. Zanuck, the production head of Twentieth Century-Fox, regarding the war on the North African battle front. *Movie Stars Parade* included a regular “Stars ’n’ Stripes” column and in December 1943 *Modern Screen* recognized some actors including George Reeves, Edmond O’Brien, and Ray Middleton who joined the Army Air Force and had just returned to Hollywood to appear in the movie *Winged Victory*, a salute to the Air Force.<sup>40</sup>

It is often questioned how Nazism could have spread throughout Germany. However, when considering the relocation of more than 110,000 people of Japanese ancestry from West Coast areas who were mostly U.S. citizens by the United States following the Pearl Harbor attack, it becomes apparent how easily patriotism can evolve into officially sanctioned racism.<sup>41</sup> The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor caused Americans to become suspicious of citizens of Japanese descent. Their internment, ordered by President Roosevelt, is considered to have

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<sup>39</sup> Harris, *Five Came Back*, 113.

<sup>40</sup> Slide, *Inside the Hollywood Fan Magazine*, 138.

<sup>41</sup> Robert K. Wittman and David Kinney, *The Devil’s Diary: Alfred Rosenberg and the Stolen Secrets of the Third Reich* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016), 53.

resulted solely from racism since FBI investigations found no evidence that they posed any risk to the country's security.<sup>42</sup> Their only offense was their race presently violated American concepts of fairness and justice.<sup>43</sup> Roosevelt realized their relocation was a gross violation of civil rights. He justified his abuse of Japanese civil liberties by stating that in times of war, national security has a higher priority over adherence to domestic freedoms.<sup>44</sup>

Although Goebbels had been vital to the rise of Hitler and Nazism, he did not feel that instigating a war was wise. However, when the war began on September 1, 1939, with the invasion of Poland, he began a program of propaganda aimed at undermining the morale of Germany's enemies and promoting myths of invincibility for exceptional German generals such as Erwin Rommel to intimidate enemy troops.<sup>45</sup> Goebbels also hired Axis Sally, an American named Mildred Gillars, and Lord Haw Haw, an American-born Englishman named William Joyce, to broadcast propaganda intended to lower the morale of British and American troops.<sup>46</sup>

Military communications have been necessary for victory although they have seldom been able to ward off defeat.<sup>47</sup> Improving modes of communication had a significant role in all theaters of the war. Code-breaking and signals intelligence played a much greater part in World War II than in World War I and contributed greatly to the Allied victory in 1945. A key factor in

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<sup>42</sup> Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Political Life* (New York: Viking, 2017), 454-456.

<sup>43</sup> Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 514.

<sup>44</sup> Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 454-455.

<sup>45</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 153.

<sup>46</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 153.

<sup>47</sup> Sterling, "Preface," xv.

their victory was the Allies' ability to research, develop, mass produce, and apply the most advanced electronic technology, but military intelligence only becomes an effective tool when it is combined with force.<sup>48</sup> During the interwar years between World War I and World War II, the Army Signal Corps developed critical items such as radar, FM radio, the teletypewriter, which was faster and more versatile than the older Morse code systems, and the walkie-talkie, which enabled soldiers to have portable battlefield communications.<sup>49</sup>

Throughout the war, Germany and Japan relied on technology-based radios and other electrical equipment that had been developed between 1937-1940. The Axis countries lacked the industrial infrastructure required to continue the effort necessary to produce the cutting-edge technology needed over the duration of a war that lasted several years. In a global war where air power and ground mobility are critical, the Allied nations had the advantage with the use of continually improving radio and other communication technology that provided a variety of new transmission modes. Although in the end it was industrial and military force that defeated Germany and Japan, Allied communications superiority was an essential part of the eventual victory. World War II could not have been fought without contemporary communications technologies. The battlefields over which the armed forces fought were much larger and could move more quickly than traditional methods of communicating could have managed.<sup>50</sup> The importance of communication facilities was demonstrated by General Eisenhower at the end of

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<sup>48</sup> Christopher H. Sterling, "World War II," in *Military Communications: From Ancient Times to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Christopher H. Sterling (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 519.

<sup>49</sup> Rebecca Robbins Raines, "Army Signal Corps," in *Military Communications: From Ancient Times to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Christopher H. Sterling (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 37.

<sup>50</sup> Sterling, "World War II," 519-521.



World War II. In his detailed May 1945 instructions to German naval officials he emphasized that communications resources must be identified and turned over to the Allies.<sup>51</sup>

The Japanese fleet established radio security by requiring total radio silence when sailing to attack Hawaii in December 1941.<sup>52</sup> The attack on America's Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, by the Japanese was a significant communication failure for the United States. It is regarded by many as "the worst failure of military communications in the nation's history."<sup>53</sup> The Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor and the Philippine Islands have many similarities, yet there was great disparity in how the commanders in Hawaii were treated as compared to those in the Philippine Islands. Following the Pearl Harbor attack, Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, commander in chief of the United States Fleet and the U.S. Pacific Fleet, along with General Walter C. Short, commander of the U.S. Army's Hawaiian Department, were charged with dereliction of duty and consequently relieved of their duties. They were indirectly forced to retire at the two-star rank.<sup>54</sup> Yet, only hours after the Pearl Harbor attack, General Douglas MacArthur, commander of the Philippines, who played a significant role in the Pacific theater during World War II, experienced a similar attack and defeat without incurring comparable consequences to his reputation. Also, in the Battle of Savo Island, August 8-9, 1942,

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<sup>51</sup> Christopher H. Sterling, "Germany: Navy," in *Military Communications: From Ancient Times to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Christopher H. Sterling (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 190.

<sup>52</sup> Sterling, "World War II," 521.

<sup>53</sup> Christopher H. Sterling, "Pearl Harbor, Hawaii," in *Military Communications: From Ancient Times to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Christopher H. Sterling (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 347.

<sup>54</sup> Donald M. Goldstein, foreword to *Kimmel, Short, and Pearl Harbor: The Final Report Revealed*, by Fred Borch and Daniel Martinez (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005), viii.

the Allied covering force off Guadalcanal under the command of Richard Kelly Turner, was assaulted by Japanese forces commanded by Rear Admiral Gunichi Mikawa. The battle was a humiliating defeat for the Allies and except for Pearl Harbor, is actually considered the worst defeat in the history of the United States Navy. It was so bad that the American government decided it was best to keep the outcome an official secret.<sup>55</sup>

Similarly, in February 1943, Allied forces in Tunisia under the command of General Fredendall were attacked and defeated by the Germans in the Battle of Sidi Bou Zid. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, a five-star general in the United States Army, and the Supreme Allied Commander in North Africa, had selected General Fredendall to succeed Mark Clark as II Corps commander.<sup>56</sup> Although Eisenhower regretted his selection of Fredendall for the command, he blamed himself for the defeat, saying he had underestimated French vulnerability and stretched the Allied line to the breaking point.<sup>57</sup> General Fredendall was replaced by General George S. Patton.<sup>58</sup> After the Allied victory in Africa, Eisenhower served as commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe.<sup>59</sup> In this capacity, he commanded the greatest and most important military effort in the history of military warfare. Eisenhower commanded millions of American, British, and Free French troops in what he referred to as the “crusade in Europe” to

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<sup>55</sup> Craig L. Symonds, *World War II at Sea: A Global History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 306-310.

<sup>56</sup> “Lloyd Ralston Fredendall,” <https://prabook.com/web/lloyd.fredendall/1093410>.

<sup>57</sup> Rick Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942-1943* (New York: Henry Holt, 2002), 391.

<sup>58</sup> Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, 401.

<sup>59</sup> B. H. Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1999), 642.

defeat Nazi Germany and its allies and liberate Europe.<sup>60</sup> Yet, he appeared blind to the possibility of a German counterattack in the Ardennes despite numerous warnings. Although the Allied forces were caught completely off-guard, Eisenhower was not disciplined for the Battle of the Bulge as was the case for the Battle of Sidi Bou Zid.<sup>61</sup>

Admiral Kimmel and General Short lived the remainder of their lives in public shame whereas General MacArthur became a millionaire and was awarded the Medal of Honor, and General Eisenhower went on to become the 34<sup>th</sup> president of the United States from 1953 to 1961.<sup>62</sup> Also, towards the end of the war, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had decided that MacArthur would be responsible for the ground troops in the proposed operations against the Japanese homeland.<sup>63</sup> General Fredendall was promoted to lieutenant general in June 1943 and was given command of a training army in Tennessee along with a hero's welcome home.<sup>64</sup> Admiral Turner had been selected to command the amphibious component of the invasion of Japan, but the assignment became unnecessary since the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan caused WWII to end in August 1945.<sup>65</sup>

Admiral Kimmel and General Short were treated much differently from General MacArthur, General Eisenhower, General Fredendall, and Admiral Turner when all of them were

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<sup>60</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 169.

<sup>61</sup> Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, 642.

<sup>62</sup> James Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor: Scapegoats, a False Hero and the Myth of Surprise Attack* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2017), 5.

<sup>63</sup> King and Whitehill, *Fleet Admiral King*, 598.

<sup>64</sup> Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, 400.

<sup>65</sup> "Richard Turner," [https://ww2db.com/person\\_bio.php?person\\_id=82](https://ww2db.com/person_bio.php?person_id=82).

in command of defensive battles that went poorly. The ancient Carthaginians often punished their defeated generals with crucifixion, which seems extremely severe.<sup>66</sup> Yet when considering the harsh punishment imposed on defeated generals during ancient times it causes one to wonder why no mention of accountability was directed towards General MacArthur, General Eisenhower, General Fredendall, and Admiral Turner when Admiral Kimmel and General Short were emotionally crucified.

My hypothesis is that Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and General Walter C. Short had performed their duties competently and professionally. They were simply scapegoats while General MacArthur, General Eisenhower, General Fredendall, and Admiral Turner were regarded as heroes despite experiencing similar failures. The Pearl Harbor attack was not the result of their dereliction of duty but rather resulted from the military communication failures of the Washington leadership.

My resources incorporate primary and secondary sources including newspaper articles from that period, the papers of Admiral Kimmel, and books. Secondary sources are drawn from various time periods to provide a different perspective as these battles continue to be researched and interpreted differently over time since biases can impact and shape the historical record. Therefore, the date of the publication as well as when the research was actually conducted will be considered. The depth of the material will also be considered to determine whether the information source adequately covers the topic.

The foundation of military law in the United States is the Constitution. It establishes the President as the commander in chief of the armed forces and it provides Congress with the responsibility of making rules to regulate the military. In World War II, there were more than

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<sup>66</sup> Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, 399.

sixteen million men and women serving in the United States armed forces, most of whom were ordinary citizens who volunteered or were drafted. During the war, the military justice system appeared much different than it currently does. It did not provide the accused with the protections provided by the civilian court system which was displayed in the military hearings of Admiral Kimmel and General Short in regards to the Pearl Harbor disaster. This resulted in a total of about eighty thousand felony court convictions during World War II causing many U.S. citizens to disapprove of the way criminal law was being applied in the military. After the war, many organizations including the American Bar Association and the American Legion made proposals to improve the military criminal legal system and Congressional hearings on military justice also began.<sup>67</sup>

The most significant link in our nation's military chain of command is accountability, but this critical link is not maintained or strengthened by randomly placing blame. As the situation with Admiral Kimmel and General Short demonstrates, a lack of accountability would pose a serious threat to the integrity of any chain of command and the unparalleled military honor of our nation.<sup>68</sup> Admiral Kimmel had only been in command of the United States Pacific Fleet since February 1, 1941. He replaced Admiral James O. Richardson who was relieved of his command by Roosevelt due to his strong objection to the President's decision to relocate the Pacific battleship fleet from California to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.<sup>69</sup> In October 1940, Richardson had

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<sup>67</sup> "Military Justice Overview," *Judge Advocate Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps*, n.d., <https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/sja/Branches/Military-Justice-Branch-JMJ/Military-Justice/>.

<sup>68</sup> William V. Roth Jr., "Pearl Harbor's Scapegoats," *Wall Street Journal*, June 11, 1999, A19. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Wall Street Journal.

<sup>69</sup> Symonds, *World War II at Sea*, 184.

urged Roosevelt to keep the fleet based on the West Coast in San Diego feeling it could be prepared for war much more efficiently there as opposed to Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.<sup>70</sup> However, after 1940 the Pacific Fleet was based on Pearl Harbor for diplomatic reasons.<sup>71</sup>

Pearl Harbor in Oahu is more than 2,000 miles from the California coast and 3,300 miles from Japan. Therefore, the Pearl Harbor defenses were surprised due to the sheer boldness of this venture.<sup>72</sup> Within only ten months prior to the Pearl Harbor attack, Admiral Kimmel had trained the fleet to a level of maximum proficiency and readiness with the ships, aircraft, and weapons the military had allocated to him.<sup>73</sup> Admiral Kimmel and General Short did their best under the circumstances but they had not received communication from Washington that was critical to effectively anticipate and meet the challenges of the situation. Also, Admiral Kimmel was criticized for not being more innovative in his approach to addressing the possible implications of the world situation. However, he was a graduate of the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis where innovative thinking was discouraged in favor of adherence to standard procedures as detailed in their manuals.<sup>74</sup> Most importantly, Admiral Kimmel and General Short had devoted their lives to the service of the United States yet their careers ended abruptly without their contribution being recognized or validated.

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<sup>70</sup> Husband E. Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story* (Chicago: Henry Regency, 1955), 7.

<sup>71</sup> W. D. Puleston, *The Influence of Sea Power in World War II* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1970), 28.

<sup>72</sup> John Creswell, *Sea Warfare 1939-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 111-113.

<sup>73</sup> Michael Gannon, *Pearl Harbor Betrayed: The True Story of a Man and a Nation under Attack* (New York: Henry Holt, 2001), 11.

<sup>74</sup> Gannon, *Pearl Harbor Betrayed*, 56.

## II

### Definition of Terms

*Allied Expeditionary Forces.* Allied forces in northwest Europe from late 1943 until the end of World War II.

*Battle of the Bulge.* A German offensive also referred to as the Ardennes counteroffensive that took place from December 16, 1944 to January 25, 1945. It was the last major German offensive on the Western Front during World War II. The battle exhausted German resources on the Western Front and caused the Western Allied defensive plans to be delayed by five or six weeks.

*Battle of Kasserine Pass.* A series of battles that took place during the Tunisia Campaign in Africa in 1943 during World War II. It was the first major engagement between American and Axis forces. Inexperienced and poorly led American troops were defeated and pushed back over 50 miles. It is considered one of the worst disasters ever incurred by the United States Army. This resulted in the U.S. Army making sweeping changes in their unit organization and replacing commanders and some equipment.

*Battle of the Philippine Islands.* The conquest of the Philippine Islands by Japan during World War II from December 1941 to May 1942. The battle lasted for seven months until American and Filipino forces cut off from supplies, fighting with obsolete equipment, and without air or naval support, were forced to surrender.

*Battle of Sidi Bou Zid.* A battle that took place during the Tunisia Campaign in Africa from February 14–17, 1943, during World War II. The United States 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division was ambushed and defeated by the German Afrika Korps at the city of Sidi Bou Zid. It enabled the Axis to recapture the strategically important town of Sbeitla located in central Tunisia.

*Battleship Row.* The grouping of eight U.S. battleships in port at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii when the Japanese attacked on December 7, 1941. Battleship Row bore the brunt of the Japanese surprise attack.

*Commonwealth.* The special status of a country as a self-governing, autonomous political unit voluntarily associated with the United States.

*Counterattack.* An attack by a defending force against an enemy attacking force for the purpose of regaining ground lost or to cut off or destroy enemy advancing units.

*Court Martial.* A military court to determine the guilt of members of the armed forces subject to military law, and, if the defendant is found guilty, to decide the punishment.

*Cryptanalyst.* An expert in deciphering coded messages without prior knowledge of the key.

*(D).* A member of the Democratic Party.



*Defensive Position.* Part of a defensive area that is physically occupied by troops and weapons.

*Dorn Report.* A review conducted in 1995 by the Department of Defense that was initiated by the family of Admiral Kimmel and their champion, Senator Strom Thurmond to advise whether the actions taken towards Admiral Kimmel and General Short for the Pearl Harbor disaster on December 7, 1941, were excessively harsh, and if so, whether posthumous advancement in rank is the appropriate remedy.

*G-2.* The military intelligence staff of a unit in the United States Army that played an important role during World War II, both in aiding fighting forces and in special missions.

*MAGIC.* The code name given to the United States efforts to break Japanese military and diplomatic codes during World War II.

*Nuremberg Trials.* A series of military tribunals held after World War II by the Allied forces for the purpose of bringing Nazi war criminals to justice under international law and the laws of war that took place from November 20, 1945 to October 1, 1946.

*ONI.* The Office of Naval Intelligence is the military intelligence agency of the United States Navy. It is the oldest member of the United States Intelligence Community and serves as the nation's premier source of maritime intelligence.

*Pearl Harbor.* A harbor near Honolulu on Oahu, in Hawaii. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese made a surprise attack on the United States naval base and other military installations there. The incident caused the United States to enter World War II.

*Plan Orange.* The original plan for the defense of the Philippine Islands that called for falling back to prepared defenses in Bataan. General MacArthur did not carry out this plan but instead decided to confront the Japanese invaders on the beach.

*(R).* A member of the Republican Party.

*SHAEF.* Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force.

*Territory.* A part of the United States that has not been admitted as a state.

*USAFFE.* United States Army Forces in the Far East.

*U.S.O.* United Service Organizations. A nonprofit, charitable corporation chartered by Congress that relies on donations from individuals, organizations and corporations to support its programs.

### III

#### The Global Stage

In 1929, Winston Churchill concluded, “The story of the human race is war.”<sup>75</sup> The events of the twentieth century certainly seemed to confirm that. In the years leading up to United States involvement in World War II, the global situation was becoming increasingly critical. Many Americans continued to adhere to isolationism and were disillusioned by the unsuccessful commitment to make “the world safe for democracy” in World War I.<sup>76</sup> They were reluctant to acknowledge that the Axis nations posed any threat to the United States. The most prominent advocate for isolationism and America First was Charles A. Lindbergh. Several members of Congress were also isolationists and this had a significant impact on the legislative problems.<sup>77</sup>

In 1940, American leadership was anticipating involvement in another world war; the second within the 20<sup>th</sup> century despite Roosevelt repeatedly stating throughout his presidential campaign that he would “not send their sons to fight in foreign wars.”<sup>78</sup> In response to the

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<sup>75</sup> Andrew Roberts, *Leadership in War: Essential Lessons from Those Who Made History* (New York: Viking, 2019), 199.

<sup>76</sup> Robert B. Stinnett, *Day of Deceit: The Truth about FDR and Pearl Harbor* (New York: Touchstone, 2000), xiii.

<sup>77</sup> Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon, introduction to *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict of History* by Gordon W. Prange with Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986), xi.

<sup>78</sup> Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*, xiii.

escalating global threat, on May 16, 1940, Roosevelt presented Congress with a proposal to immediately begin to build at least 50,000 military airplanes a year to be used to support the British war effort.<sup>79</sup> Shortly thereafter, on July 19, 1940, with France defeated, Britain struggling to survive, and Japan continuing its aggressive expansion southward, Roosevelt signed the Two Ocean Naval Expansion Act which authorized the largest naval expansion ever granted.<sup>80</sup> The bill called for the building of an immense Atlantic and Pacific fleet organized around aircraft carriers that would provide the U.S. Navy with the ability to globally strike at America's enemies.<sup>81</sup> Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy, never underrated to Americans the great danger that the Axis presented. On May 16, 1941, while addressing the Naval War College graduating class he stated that "it is utterly impossible to exaggerate the mortal danger of our country in this moment of history."<sup>82</sup>

Japan aspired to build an empire but it was deficient in natural resources. This drove their ambition to acquire the wealth of Southeast Asia.<sup>83</sup> The Japanese encountered four barriers to achieving their ambitions in the Pacific. They included the French in Indo-China, the British in Singapore who were supported somewhat by the Dutch in the East Indies, the increasing strength of the Far Eastern Air Force in the Philippines, and finally the American Pacific Fleet.<sup>84</sup> Japan's

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<sup>79</sup> Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich at War* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009), 242.

<sup>80</sup> Gannon, *Pearl Harbor Betrayed*, 41.

<sup>81</sup> Evans, *The Third Reich at War*, 242.

<sup>82</sup> Gordon W. Prange with Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon, *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict of History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986), 227-228.

<sup>83</sup> John W. Lambert and Norman Polmar, *Defenseless: Command Failure at Pearl Harbor* (St. Paul: MBI Publishing, 2003), 129.

<sup>84</sup> Ward Rutherford, *Fall of the Philippines* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971), 27.

Emperor Hirohito could do little to oppose the rise to power of right-wing militarists within his government but he did nothing and instead chose to remain silent.<sup>85</sup> In July 1941, Hideki Tojo was appointed as Japan's minister of war.<sup>86</sup> Aside from Adolf Hitler, there was no man the people of the Allied nations spoke about so poorly.<sup>87</sup> Tojo asserted that Japan's problems were due to the United States embargo put in place by Roosevelt on the export of U.S. goods to Japan, especially oil and steel.<sup>88</sup>

It has been debated that Roosevelt's deepest failure was his lack of attention to Asian matters and his unwillingness to use diplomacy in his dealings with Japan. A little appeasement may have produced rich rewards.<sup>89</sup> The situation was challenging because Roosevelt received conflicting advice throughout the winter and spring of 1940. Some members of his administration were encouraging him to increase the pressure on Japan and embargo the shipment of oil. This was devastating to Japan since they had been receiving eighty percent of their petroleum from the United States. Secretary of State Hull and the military were encouraging Roosevelt to go slow. Hull was encouraging Roosevelt to continue negotiations. Marshall and Stark were concerned that if Japan's oil supply was cut off the country would have to pursue other sources and that could threaten the Dutch East Indies, Burma, Malaya, and the

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<sup>85</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 39.

<sup>86</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 57.

<sup>87</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 54.

<sup>88</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 57.

<sup>89</sup> David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 525.

Philippines. Aside from the United States not being prepared to go to war with Japan, a military conflict with Japan would impair efforts to support Britain.<sup>90</sup> The two principles that American diplomacy had adhered to during the two years prior to the war included insisting that Japan withdraw from China and also that Japan discontinue their Southeast Asian initiatives.<sup>91</sup>

Most Americans believe that the United States entered World War II because the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. However, Pearl Harbor was attacked because President Roosevelt, with the assistance of the Democratic majority in both Houses, passed the Lend-Lease Act in 1941 nine months prior to the Pearl Harbor attack. This act of Congress allowed the United States to supply unlimited military aid to any nation at war with any country that was included in the Tripartite Pact, all at the expense of the American taxpayer. Weapons were sent to Great Britain, Greece, and Russia as they fought Germany.<sup>92</sup> However, initially the supplies sent to Russia were minimal. It was not until mid-1943 that Russia began to receive large quantities of supplies from the Western Allies.<sup>93</sup> Supplies were also delivered to Chiang Kai-Shek in China using the Burma Road and air transport as he fought Japan. However, supplying American military aid to these countries at war was a violation of international law and Japan's Pearl Harbor attack was a natural response.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Jean Edward Smith, *FDR* (New York: Random House, 2007), 511.

<sup>91</sup> Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 515.

<sup>92</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 5-6.

<sup>93</sup> Chilton Foliat, introduction to *Winston's War: Churchill, 1940-1945* by Max Hastings (New York: Vintage Books, 2009), 6.

<sup>94</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 5-6.

By the summer of 1941, the threat of a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was imminent due to the severe economic sanctions, especially the oil embargo the United States had imposed on Japan in June. The economic sanctions were issued in an attempt to curtail the Japanese expansionist policy in Asia and the Pacific and to reduce their continued military presence in China.<sup>95</sup> However, in so doing, the United States had severed the energy source of a powerful enemy without predicting the violent consequences that would result.<sup>96</sup> During the final months of 1941, most of Southeast Asia was about to fall to the Japanese who appeared to have huge naval advantages with more carriers, naval aircraft, and well-trained crews than any of the Allied nations.<sup>97</sup> Also, the majority of Europe was under Nazi rule.<sup>98</sup> Although Winston Churchill's repeated warnings in regards to the rise of Hitler were for the most part ignored by the British people, when Nazi Germany overran Europe, he led the British people in taking a firm stand against Nazi aggression that not only saved Great Britain, but civilization itself.<sup>99</sup> The majority in the U.S. government and military believed that war was now inevitable. It was only the time and place that remained doubtful. Although Washington was planning for a two-ocean war, its

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<sup>95</sup> Abraham Ben-Zvi, "The Study of Surprise Attacks," *British Journal of International Studies* 5, no. 2 (July 1979): 131, [www.jstor.org/stable/20096859](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20096859).

<sup>96</sup> Charles Maechling, "Pearl Harbor: The First Energy War," *History Today* (December 2000): 45-47.

<sup>97</sup> Christopher H. Sterling, "Japan: Navy (*Nippon Teikoku Kaigun*)," in *Military Communications: From Ancient Times to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Christopher H. Sterling (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 254.

<sup>98</sup> Paul S. Burtness and Warren U. Ober, "President Roosevelt, Admiral Stark, and the Unsent Warning to Pearl Harbor: A Research Note," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* (2011): 582.

<sup>99</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 27.

citizens remained devoted to isolationism.<sup>100</sup> However, Roosevelt felt the fate of the Western World was dependent on America entering the war to save civilization from Nazi domination.<sup>101</sup> Yet, he was determined that the United States would not fire the first shot in response to the German U-boats in the Atlantic and Japanese aggression in the Pacific.<sup>102</sup>

On November 25, 1941, a secret White House conference was convened. Secretary of War Stimson recalls Roosevelt asking how the Japanese could be maneuvered into being the first to attack without Americans incurring significant damage. Both he and Roosevelt believed the Japanese had to be the aggressors to have the full support of the American people. The Vacant Sea Order was issued that day which cleared shipping out of the path of the Japanese carrier force to prevent accidental discovery since Roosevelt knew the Japanese task force was coming. On November 27, 1941, war warnings were sent to the Pacific commands but they were weak and ambiguous and did not reveal anything compared to what Washington actually knew.<sup>103</sup>

In 1941, the U.S.O. was created as was the comic book character “Captain America.” Also, in that year Bulova watches aired the first television commercial and in Chicago an organ was played at a baseball game for the first time.<sup>104</sup> Although several newspaper reports speculated on the intent of the Japanese, nearly all concluded that Japan lacked the industrial capacity to wage decisive naval action in the Pacific and America’s Pacific Fleet was superior to

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<sup>100</sup> Lambert and Polmar, *Defenseless: Command Failure*, 129.

<sup>101</sup> Burtness and Ober, “President Roosevelt, Admiral Stark,” 583.

<sup>102</sup> Symonds, *World War II at Sea*, 203.

<sup>103</sup> James Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 1.

<sup>104</sup> Craig Shirley, *December 1941: 31 Days that Changed America and Saved the World* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011), vii.



the Japanese.<sup>105</sup> Even as late as December 1, 1941, with the rest of the world at war, the United States felt protected by two great oceans and Americans wanted to enjoy the renewed prosperity that was just beginning after the Great Depression.<sup>106</sup> However, this dream was about to be shattered since in 1941, the United States entered World War II against the Axis powers including Japan, Germany, and Italy causing a radical change in the United States that would last forever.<sup>107</sup> The American public had no idea of how drastically their lives were about to change and how these events would shape history. Against this background of global events, an isolationist America was about to be hurled into a war of immense proportion. The nation would incur immeasurable cost and many tribulations and disasters.<sup>108</sup> Failed communications, ignored intelligence, and poor military planning were the underlying factors that caused American defeats in World War II.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Shirley, *December 1941: 31 Days*, 5.

<sup>106</sup> Shirley, *December 1941: 31 Days*, 3.

<sup>107</sup> Shirley, *December 1941: 31 Days*, vii.

<sup>108</sup> Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 441.

<sup>109</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 5.

## IV

### Pearl Harbor

World War II had been raging in Europe for more than two years before it came to the United States on December 7, 1941, at 7:55 a.m. (Hawaiian time), when Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese on a beautiful Sunday morning prior to any declaration of war.<sup>110</sup> There were ninety-four ships of the United States Navy present in Pearl Harbor on that fateful morning.<sup>111</sup> Two waves of Japanese naval aircraft from six of their carriers, totaling 353 planes, under the direction of lead pilot Lieutenant Commander Matsuo Fuchida, attacked U.S. facilities on Oahu, Hawaii. He transmitted the signal Tora, Tora, Tora (Tiger, Tiger, Tiger) to the Japanese carriers after the Japanese had pulled off a complete surprise.<sup>112</sup> The attack lasted until all the planes retired at 9:45 a.m. The naval base at Pearl Harbor was hit along with Hickam and Wheeler Army Air Fields, Schofield Barracks, and other installations. Battleship Row incurred great devastation. Seven of the eight battleships stationed in the port were sunk or seriously damaged.<sup>113</sup> The battleship *Arizona* was destroyed, the *Oklahoma* capsized, and the *West Virginia* and *California* sunk. The battleships *Nevada*, *Tennessee*, *Maryland*, and *Pennsylvania*

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<sup>110</sup> Andrew Roberts, *Churchill: Walking with Destiny* (New York: Viking, 2018), 692.

<sup>111</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 508.

<sup>112</sup> Michael Walsh, "Wreckage-Strewn Ford Island Naval Air Station," in *The Faces of World War II* by Max Hastings (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2012), 121.

<sup>113</sup> Roberts, *Churchill: Walking with Destiny*, 692.

incurred damage, along with the heavy cruiser *New Orleans* and the light cruisers *Honolulu*, *Raleigh*, and *Helena*. In addition, three destroyers and other support ships were damaged, resulting in 19 ships in total being lost.<sup>114</sup> However, the human losses, which included 2,403 casualties and 1,178 wounded, were the most tragic of all.<sup>115</sup> More Americans died from the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor than had lost their lives in the entire war of 1812.<sup>116</sup> The breakdown of casualties by branch of the service included 2,008 Navy personnel, 218 Army personnel, 109 Marines, and 68 civilians. The wounded included 710 Navy personnel, 364 Army personnel, 69 Marines, and 35 civilians.<sup>117</sup> On the *Arizona*, 1,177 Navy and Marine personnel died, which was nearly half the total number of fatalities incurred the entire day at Pearl Harbor. It remains the largest number of fatal casualties from any warship in the history of the U.S. Navy. Most of the *Arizona*'s dead remain entombed in the ship that continues to seep droplets of fuel to the surface.<sup>118</sup>

The soldiers and Marines on the island fought desperately to defend their positions using rifles and machine guns, but only two U.S. fighter planes were able to get into the air during the attack.<sup>119</sup> Japanese planes shot down U.S. planes arriving back at the base, and attacked the

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<sup>114</sup> Raymond K. Bluhm Jr., ed., *World War II: A Chronology of War* (New York: Universe Publishing, 2017), 62.

<sup>115</sup> Gannon, *Pearl Harbor Betrayed*, 10.

<sup>116</sup> Michael Beschloss, *Presidents of War* (New York: Crown, 2018), 384.

<sup>117</sup> James Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 11.

<sup>118</sup> Gannon, *Pearl Harbor Betrayed*, 9.

<sup>119</sup> Douglas Niles, "Pearl Harbor," in *How to Lose a Battle: Foolish Plans and Great Military Blunders*, ed. Bill Fawcett (New York: Harper, 2006), 257.

airfields, destroying nearly 200 parked aircrafts. The Navy lost 93 planes with an additional 31 damaged while the Army lost 96 aircraft and 128 more were damaged.<sup>120</sup> When the attack ended, Pearl Harbor experienced an unsettling calm because no one felt certain it was entirely done.<sup>121</sup>

The Japanese government had made the decision for war in October 1941 to gain access to the resources of South Asia.<sup>122</sup> The attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet in its base at Pearl Harbor had been planned by the Japanese naval strategist Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto.<sup>123</sup> Aside from Adolf Hitler, there was no other single individual who had a more profound impact on the outbreak and course of World War II than Yamamoto. Although the Pearl Harbor attack ranks among the greatest tactical triumphs of the war, it is also regarded as the single most consequential strategic defeat.<sup>124</sup> The planned attack which was intended to be coordinated with Japan's formal declaration of war, called for a statement from the Japanese notifying the United States that war had been declared. This was to be delivered to Washington an hour before the attack with diplomatic efforts to have been broken off minutes before the attack began. Attacking while still at peace was one aspect of the attack that did not go according to schedule and because of it, the war will of the American people was stimulated as neutrality was immediately abandoned.<sup>125</sup> The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor prior to a formal declaration of war helped

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<sup>120</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 11.

<sup>121</sup> Elizabeth Mullener, *War Stories: Remembering World War II* (New York: Berkley Books, 2002), 32.

<sup>122</sup> Craig L. Symonds, *The Battle of Midway* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 36.

<sup>123</sup> Emily S. Rosenberg, *A Date Which Will Live: Pearl Harbor in American Memory* (London: Duke University Press, 2003), 17.

<sup>124</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 45.

<sup>125</sup> Roberts, *Churchill: Walking with Destiny*, 692.

ensure the ultimate defeat of Japan in the Asia-Pacific region and of Germany in the European-Atlantic region.<sup>126</sup>

After Pearl Harbor, there were ten operational Japanese battleships in the Pacific to America's two.<sup>127</sup> Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, commented that with the United States having only two effective ships in the Pacific, they had lost command of the sea in the Pacific, causing the naval situation to become critical.<sup>128</sup> This is important because control of the sea was used to gain control of the land that ultimately enabled the Allies to demand unconditional surrender of the Axis Powers.<sup>129</sup> Yet, despite all the death and destruction, Americans were still very fortunate that at the time of the attack only the battleships and not the aircraft carriers were in port. Admiral Yamamoto stated the reason for the attack was to drive Britain and America out of Greater East Asia yet he realized the dire far-sighted consequences of this for Japan and therefore he did not share in the jubilation experienced by his comrades following the attack.<sup>130</sup> He remarked to his subordinates, "I feel all we have done is to awake a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve."<sup>131</sup> He had prophetically warned against the industrial might of the United States. His statement was very true and he lived to witness his

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<sup>126</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 45.

<sup>127</sup> Roberts, *Churchill: Walking with Destiny* 693.

<sup>128</sup> Roberts, *Churchill: Walking with Destiny* 694.

<sup>129</sup> Puleston, *The Influence of Sea Power*, vii.

<sup>130</sup> Antony Beevor, *The Second World War* (New York: Little, Brown, 2012), 306.

<sup>131</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 51.

fears becoming reality. He died in April 1943, when U.S. P-38 Lightnings deliberately shot down his plane while he was touring Japanese forces in Bougainville.<sup>132</sup>

To refer to Pearl Harbor as a battle is an exaggeration since it was actually a great tactical victory for the Japanese that had been delivered with ruthless efficiency. The surprise attack was a tactic that Japan had used in all the modern wars it had waged.<sup>133</sup> Yet, the United States was stunned and angry. The effect all over America was profound with every trace of isolationism or pacifism giving way to national unity.<sup>134</sup> From among the shattered fleet hidden amidst the fire and smoke emerged the vengeance of the United States of America.<sup>135</sup> “Remember Pearl Harbor!” became the nations’ call to arms that united a divided country to inflict revenge against Japan, Germany, and Italy.<sup>136</sup> The incident infuriated the entire nation now united in moral outrage and converted it into the greatest war machine the world had ever seen.<sup>137</sup> With the United States declaring war on Japan on December 8, 1941, Roosevelt and his industrial advisers initiated a “victory program” designed to produce an enormous output of munitions. The United

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<sup>132</sup> Charles W. Sasser, *Two Fronts, One War: Dramatic Eyewitness Accounts of Major Events in the European and Pacific Theaters of Operations on Land, Sea and Air in WWII* (London: Frontline Books, 2014), 94.

<sup>133</sup> Niles, “Pearl Harbor,” 260.

<sup>134</sup> Richard Overy, ed., *The New York Times Complete World War II: The Coverage of the Entire Conflict*, foreword to ““Japanese Attack Unites America” November – December 1941” (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal, 2016), 209.

<sup>135</sup> Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War*, 509.

<sup>136</sup> John Costello, *Days of Infamy: MacArthur, Roosevelt, Churchill – The Shocking Truth Revealed* (New York: Pocket Books, 1994), 1.

<sup>137</sup> Niles, “Pearl Harbor,” 258.

States became the “Arsenal of Democracy” as it launched the “Battle of Production.”<sup>138</sup> In 1940, Walter Reuther, an American leader of organized labor, stated, “England’s battles, it used to be said, were won on the playing fields of Eton. This plan is put forward in the belief that America’s can be won on the assembly lines of Detroit.”<sup>139</sup> This was finally achieved in 1944 when a large number of ships, planes, weapons and equipment produced as a result of the U.S. industrial mobilization initiative armed Allied forces on a scale that was unprecedented.<sup>140</sup>

The industrial mobilization initiative proved to be extremely necessary since on December 11, 1941, Adolf Hitler officially declared war on the United States in response to the United States declaring war on Japan on December 8. However, Germany’s declaration of war was merely a formality considering that on the morning of December 8, Hitler had given the German Navy orders to attack American ships regardless of where they were found.<sup>141</sup> Joachim von Ribbentrop, the Foreign Minister of Nazi Germany from 1938 until 1945, stated, “A great power doesn’t let itself have war declared on it, it declares war itself.”<sup>142</sup> However, Nicolaus von Below, an officer in the German Luftwaffe and an adjutant to Hitler wrote that he was “very alarmed by this step. It showed his [Hitler’s] total ignorance of America’s potential which had,

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<sup>138</sup> Hanson W. Baldwin, “Our ‘Arsenal of Democracy’ Begins to Function Arms Output for Ourselves and Others Has Now Assumed Impressive Size,” in *The New York Times Complete World War II: The Coverage of the Entire Conflict*, ed. Richard Overy (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal, 2016), 210-211.

<sup>139</sup> A. J. Baime, *The Arsenal of Democracy: FDR, Detroit, and an Epic Quest to Arm an America at War* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014), 75.

<sup>140</sup> Max Hastings, *Winston’s War: Churchill, 1940-1945* (New York: Vintage Books, 2009), 297.

<sup>141</sup> Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War*, 509-510.

<sup>142</sup> Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 441.

after all, already determined the outcome of one war in our century.”<sup>143</sup> On the afternoon of December 11, Hitler made a long speech to the Reichstag where he stated that the war between Germany and the United States was inevitable because Roosevelt had always wanted that to happen.<sup>144</sup>

John Kenneth Galbraith, an economist, public official, diplomat and a part of Roosevelt’s “think tank” at the time, supported Hitler’s belief. He stated that Roosevelt was determined to provide the utmost help to Britain. After Austria and Czechoslovakia, Roosevelt was certain the United States would have to become involved despite the fact that due to the mood of some of the country, that would be extremely challenging. Hitler’s declaration of war on the United States created a feeling of relief in Washington because there was finally citizen support to go to war. Despite popular belief on the negative impact of war, Galbraith felt Germany’s declaration of war ultimately saved Europe.<sup>145</sup>

According to Albert Speer, an architect who was the Minister of Armaments and War Production in Nazi Germany during most of World War II, Hitler’s fatal mistakes were due to his ignorance in regards to foreign countries. However, Hitler’s move was consistent with his policy since, as he stated in the Reichstag: “We always strike first.”<sup>146</sup> Also, Hitler believed that Roosevelt would concentrate on Japan and therefore, America’s huge industrial potential would

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<sup>143</sup> Gitta Sereny, *Albert Speer: His Battle with the Truth* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 267.

<sup>144</sup> Sereny, *Albert Speer: His Battle*, 267.

<sup>145</sup> Sereny, *Albert Speer: His Battle*, 267-268.

<sup>146</sup> Sereny, *Albert Speer: His Battle*, 268.



not be focused on Germany.<sup>147</sup> Winston Churchill also feared that the Japanese attack might cause Roosevelt and his military advisers to focus the majority of the U.S. forces on Japan.<sup>148</sup> Despite the tremendous impact Pearl Harbor had on the United States, that was not the case. Roosevelt remained steadfast in his war strategy of trying to defeat “Germany first.”<sup>149</sup> Roosevelt was unwavering in his conviction that Germany, not Japan, was the real dangerous adversary.<sup>150</sup> For Roosevelt, the Pearl Harbor attack was the catalyst that enabled America to enter the war with the support of its citizens. Although he considered this crucial to save civilization, he did not want the United States to be responsible for initiating the conflict.

Stephen Ambrose stated, “the impact of Pearl Harbor can never be overstated. It changed the world and it changed America forever.”<sup>151</sup> Following World War I, the United States had supported a policy of isolation and neutrality. Pearl Harbor changed American foreign policy overnight. Isolationism was no longer a practical policy. America had never been so unified.<sup>152</sup> The attack drove the United States into the world and it infiltrated the souls of an entire generation of Americans.<sup>153</sup> Pearl Harbor converted the issue of compromise into a

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<sup>147</sup> Sereny, *Albert Speer: His Battle*, 268.

<sup>148</sup> David L. Roll, *George Marshall: Defender of the Republic* (New York: Caliber, 2019), 195.

<sup>149</sup> Roll, *George Marshall*, 195.

<sup>150</sup> Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 524-525.

<sup>151</sup> Mullener, *War Stories*, 29.

<sup>152</sup> Shirley, *December 1941: 31 Days*, ix.

<sup>153</sup> Mullener, *War Stories*, 29.

struggle for survival.<sup>154</sup> President Roosevelt said, “Every single man, woman, and child is a partner in the most tremendous undertaking of our American history.”<sup>155</sup> The United States had not faced a long period of defeat by a foreign military force since the War of 1812.<sup>156</sup>

Public opinion was ignited by the Pearl Harbor attack that created a sense of humiliation, injured racial pride, and an endless search for scapegoats.<sup>157</sup> Immediately Americans were looking for someone to blame and demanding a reorganization in the high command of the defense department.<sup>158</sup> Many Americans regarded Japan as an inferior power that would not have been capable of inflicting such damage on the United States unless someone had failed in performing their duties or had committed treason.<sup>159</sup>

Roosevelt realized that his war leadership would be tarnished from the beginning if Americans blamed him for the Pearl Harbor disaster. If they believed his administration had advance knowledge of the impending attack and allowed it to happen to encourage Americans to support entry into World War II, they would have been outraged. Therefore, he quickly took action to ensure that serious blame for the disaster was not placed on himself, Henry Stimson, U.S. Secretary of War, George Marshall, Chief of Staff U.S. Army, or William Knox, the

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<sup>154</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 3.

<sup>155</sup> A. J. Baime. *The Arsenal of Democracy*, epigraph following copyright page.

<sup>156</sup> Beschloss, *Presidents of War*, 392.

<sup>157</sup> Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 524.

<sup>158</sup> “Dingell Urges Court-Martial for Officers He Says Were ‘Napping at Pearl Harbor,’” *New York Times*, December 9, 1941, 7, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

<sup>159</sup> Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 524.

Secretary of the Navy, since they would have to lead the country in the war. Instead, the blame was placed on Admiral Kimmel and General Short, the commanders in Hawaii.<sup>160</sup>

On December 8, 1941, Representative John D. Dingell of Michigan felt court-martial proceedings were in order against Admiral Kimmel and General Short.<sup>161</sup> To appease the American public who were demanding answers, Kimmel and Short were suddenly dismissed from their posts.<sup>162</sup> On December 17, 1941, ten days after the attack, they were relieved of their commands on the grounds of dereliction of duty and lack of preparedness, as well as their failure to change the culture of Pearl Harbor that caused the defense failure.<sup>163</sup> On February 7, 1942, they both applied for retirement, feeling a voluntary retirement was preferable to facing court-martial proceedings.<sup>164</sup> Next, Roosevelt appointed a commission to determine who in the military government should be held accountable to avoid Republicans demanding a congressional investigation.<sup>165</sup> The Roberts Commission resulted along with eight additional investigations.

The cause of the Pearl Harbor disaster, which is considered the biggest military disaster in American history, is one of the most debatable issues in United States history as the

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<sup>160</sup> Beschloss, *Presidents of War*, 392.

<sup>161</sup> “Dingell Urges Court-Martial for Officers He Says Were ‘Napping at Pearl Harbor,’” *New York Times*, December 9, 1941, 7, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

<sup>162</sup> Beschloss, *Presidents of War*, 392.

<sup>163</sup> “Kimmel Has ‘No Plans’: Admiral Silent on Pearl Harbor Report of Roberts Inquiry,” *New York Times*, January 28, 1942, 5, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

<sup>164</sup> “Kimmel and Short Ask Retirement,” *New York Times*, February 8, 1942, 4, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

<sup>165</sup> Beschloss, *Presidents of War*, 392.

investigations of them will demonstrate.<sup>166</sup> The key question is that which was posed by Senator Tom Connally, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: “How did it happen that our warships were caught like lame ducks in Pearl Harbor?”<sup>167</sup> He said to Roosevelt that he “could not understand why we were taken off our guard” at Pearl Harbor.<sup>168</sup> He continued to ask Roosevelt, “Mr. President, how could this thing happen?”<sup>169</sup>

The Japanese were successful at launching a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor due to a breakdown in communications in Washington and the failure of the United States to transmit the entire intelligence situation to the Hawaiian commanders. On November 28, 1941, Admiral Stark had radioed the Pacific Fleet to “be prepared” to enact the offensive move to the Marshalls should the threat of hostilities become critical. Therefore, Admiral Stark assumed that Admiral Kimmel would realize that the United States was moving closer to war with Japan and would act on the initiative and move the Pacific Fleet out of Pearl Harbor. Nobody in the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) or military intelligence (G-2) realized that the Fleet remained in Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. It was assumed they had all gone out to sea because that was part of the war plan and they had received a war warning according to Colonel Rufus S. Bratton of U.S. Army Intelligence.<sup>170</sup> However, Kimmel stated that the fuel problem impacted every decision.

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<sup>166</sup> Henry C. Clausen and Bruce Lee, *Pearl Harbor: Final Judgment* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1992), 1.

<sup>167</sup> Doris Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 293.

<sup>168</sup> Beschloss, *Presidents of War*, 386.

<sup>169</sup> Beschloss, *Presidents of War*, 386.

<sup>170</sup> John Costello, *The Pacific War 1941-1945* (New York: Quill, 1981), 655.

Washington had provided him with only four oil tankers which enabled only a third of the fleet to be at sea. The fuel shortages and the facilities for delivering the fuel to the ships made it necessary to keep two task forces in Pearl Harbor simultaneously and only one at sea. At the time of the attack, the aircraft carriers, the most valuable part of the fleet, were outside of Pearl Harbor. Admiral Kimmel went on to state unless an attack on Pearl Harbor was regarded as imminent, it was not advisable to keep the entire fleet at sea because it would require sending detachments into Pearl Harbor at night to fuel them. This is risky even if there had been adequate fuel reserves since it restricts the task forces to a small area and therefore increases their vulnerability to a submarine attack.<sup>171</sup>

Captain T. S. Wilkinson, the head of Naval Intelligence, believed that even if the Fleet remained in Pearl Harbor, “an approaching force would be detected before it could get into attack range.”<sup>172</sup> However, additional planes were required to maintain a 360-degree patrol of the approaches to Pearl Harbor. Without them, the commander of the Hawaiian Department, General Short, and the commander of the Hawaiian Coastal Frontier, Admiral Bloch, had no ability to direct distant air reconnaissance missions from Oahu. Although these planes had repeatedly been promised to the commanders, they were never delivered. The War Department had allocated 180 flying fortresses (B-17’s) for Hawaii but General Short had actually received only twelve of these planes in Hawaii prior to the Pearl Harbor attack and only six of them were in flying condition. In addition, on paper the Navy Department had allocated approximately 100 patrol planes to the commandant of the 14<sup>th</sup> Naval District but he never received a single one. As a

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<sup>171</sup> Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel’s Story*, 28.

<sup>172</sup> Costello, *The Pacific War*, 655.

result, the base defense against air attack relied on the ability to borrow fleet patrol planes for distant searches. These planes were frequently based on the outlying islands like Midway or Wake and they were required to train with the fleet and search areas in which their fleet operated. This restricted their availability to provide a distant search from Oahu to only if and when their fleet did not require them to conduct their own operations, whether they were regarded as actual or impending. Also, the number of planes was not adequate to provide thorough coverage for distant searches. It was able to cover only about one fourth of the area that could potentially be threatened by hostile forces. A search could only occur when there was information that a carrier strike against the islands was imminent within very narrow time constraints. This plan provided minimal assistance but at the time, it was the only one possible. The department was notified that due to limited forces, defensive measures would only be effective if they were informed within a very narrow time frame as to when to expect the attack.<sup>173</sup> This would not have been helpful for the Pearl Harbor commanders because Washington anticipated that the initial attack would be MacArthur's forces in the Philippine Islands instead of the Pacific Fleet in Hawaii.<sup>174</sup>

The attack on Pearl Harbor was a failure of imagination because no one ever really thought that it was possible for the Japanese to sail thousands of miles undetected and launch an attack on Pearl Harbor. Americans did not think the Japanese were cunning enough to attempt such an attack and the Japanese succeeded due to the failure of the powerful in Washington, both civilian and military, to imagine they would ever attempt it.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*, 14-15.

<sup>174</sup> Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 333.

<sup>175</sup> Shirley, *December 1941: 31 Days*, 537.

Nonetheless, Roosevelt realized there was a national demand for immediate answers. Self-interest also played a significant role. He wanted to divest himself of any blame for the casualties and heavy damage that had resulted.<sup>176</sup> Between 1941 and 1946 the United States government conducted nine official inquiries into the Pearl Harbor attack followed by a tenth in 1995 conducted by the Department of Defense and referred to as the Dorn Report. These investigations took place to determine what exactly happened and if anyone was responsible.<sup>177</sup> They began when the Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox was directed by President Roosevelt to go to Pearl Harbor on December 9, 1941, to survey the damage and make a report to the President. This was more like a one-man survey than a formal inquiry, but it took courage to go to Pearl Harbor at that time. Many people considered it risky because there was the possibility that the Japanese may return.<sup>178</sup>

Knox created two reports, one was made public while the other was classified as Top Secret. In the public report, the damage was minimized to prevent providing valuable information to the enemy. The secret report provided much more detailed information. Some of the major findings of the Knox investigation provided answers to the critical questions posed by Senator Connally.

The report indicated that on the morning of December 7, 1941, the U.S. armed forces at Pearl Harbor were completely unprepared for war because neither Admiral Kimmel or General

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<sup>176</sup> Edward L. Beach, *Scapegoats: A Defense of Kimmel and Short at Pearl Harbor* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995), 110.

<sup>177</sup> Goldstein and Dillon, introduction to *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict*, by Prange with Goldstein and Dillon, ix.

<sup>178</sup> Prange with Goldstein and Dillon, *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict*, 227-228.

Short considered an air attack on Pearl Harbor as likely.<sup>179</sup> As Secretary Knox explained to Roosevelt, both Kimmel and Short felt that an attack would occur in the Far East, closer to Japan's base of operations. As a result, the entire base was unprepared. The aircraft batteries were unmanned and the sentries at the radar station went off duty at 7 a.m. that morning. Historian William Emerson explained that a great military base requires years of planning and coordination. None of this had happened at Pearl Harbor yet because until the early summer of 1940, when it was decided to base the fleet there, it had only been a minor naval base. In January 1941, Rear Admiral Patrick Bellinger warned that the base lacked adequate planes, equipment, material, personnel, and facilities. When attacked, there were not enough anti-aircraft artillery or fighter planes.<sup>180</sup>

Yet, despite these challenges, on the morning of December 7, 1941, there were two tactical warnings of the impending attack that went unrecognized by the Pearl Harbor commanders.<sup>181</sup> The first involved radar. Pearl Harbor had been protected by radar since August 1941 when a British radar set had been installed on the northern coast of Oahu at Opana Point. It regularly monitored movements in the sea area it covered.<sup>182</sup> Although the Battle of Britain in 1940 had demonstrated the value of radar, General Short disregarded radar as an early warning tool because he considered an attack on Hawaii as impossible.<sup>183</sup> On the morning of December 7,

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<sup>179</sup> The Knox Report," [www.ibiblio.org/pha/pha/knox/knox\\_o.html](http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/pha/knox/knox_o.html).

<sup>180</sup> Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 293-294.

<sup>181</sup> Borch and Martinez, *Kimmel, Short, and Pearl Harbor*, 63.

<sup>182</sup> Keegan, *The Second World War*, 254.

<sup>183</sup> Borch and Martinez, *Kimmel, Short, and Pearl Harbor*, 62.



the radar was scheduled to shut down at 7 a.m. but shortly after 7 a.m. just as the radar operator was about to shut down, he noticed the echo on the radar screen indicated the approach of the largest concentration of aircraft he had ever seen. When the operator notified the naval duty watch officer at Pearl Harbor he was told ‘not to worry about it’ because the officer had mistakenly concluded the radar screen was just showing the flight of B-17 Flying Fortresses from California that were scheduled to land shortly at Hickam Field. However, it was actually the first flight of Nagumo’s air striking force that had been released 200 miles from Oahu. When detected on the radar, the planes were about 137 miles from their target at Battleship Row which was less than one hour of flying time.<sup>184</sup> Also, on the morning of December 7 at 6:40 a.m., the USS *Ward* sunk a Japanese midget submarine as it attempted to infiltrate Pearl Harbor. The skipper, Lieutenant Commander William W. Outerbridge, immediately radioed the incident to the Fourteenth Naval District and the message was received at 6:54 a.m. Most battleships at anchor and other vessels maintaining routine radio guard at Pearl Harbor were also able to hear the *Ward’s* transmission. However, instead of recognizing it as a tactical warning and employing air reconnaissance, the commanders and their staffs were still debating its significance as the first wave of Zeros began to appear over the island. The disregard of these tactical warnings demonstrates the “mental paralysis” that existed in both the Army and Navy at all levels at Pearl Harbor.<sup>185</sup> The conviction that a Japanese attack was not probable resulted in a lack of American readiness for war in the Pacific during December 1941.<sup>186</sup> This situation appears to be very similar to that which was encountered by Eisenhower in the Battle of the Bulge.

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<sup>184</sup> Keegan, *The Second World War*, 254-255.

<sup>185</sup> Borch and Martinez, *Kimmel, Short, and Pearl Harbor*, 63.

<sup>186</sup> Keegan, *The Second World War*, 254.

The belief of Kimmel and Short that an attack on Pearl Harbor was unlikely was also supported by Winston Churchill. In his memoirs, he stated that until early 1941 the Japanese naval plan to wage war against the United States involved their main fleet engaging in battle in the waters near the Philippine Islands. Admiral Yamamoto, the Japanese commander in chief, conceived the alternate plan for a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. With the utmost secrecy, the revised plan for the attack went forward with the date set for Sunday, December 7 with the Japanese force sailing under the command of Admiral Nagumo.<sup>187</sup>

Reading coded messages has always been used to provide information regarding an enemy's intentions. Therefore, the controversial question ultimately becomes how well could the United States Navy (USN) decrypt and read Japanese naval movements in late 1941. On December 1, 1940, the Japanese navy changed codebooks. The United States Navy referred to the new codebook as JN-25B. The Imperial Japanese Navy sent the majority of its encrypted radio messages in this code and the Navy Department in Washington wanted the ability to read them. American efforts to decrypt Japan's primary naval code became the responsibility of Lieutenant John Lietwiler, the co-commander of Station Cast, a USN radio intelligence station located in the Philippines on the island of Corridor.<sup>188</sup> Japanese naval codes presented significant

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<sup>187</sup> Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War*, 508-509.

<sup>188</sup> Timothy Wilford, "Decoding Pearl Harbor: USN Cryptanalysis and the Challenge of JN-25B in 1941," *The Northern Mariner* XII, no. 1 (January, 2002): 18, [www.cnrs-scrn.org>northern\\_mariner>vol 12](http://www.cnrs-scrn.org/northern_mariner/vol%2012).

challenges to USN cryptanalysts in 1941.<sup>189</sup> The fact that cryptanalytic resources were limited to only peacetime forces prior to the Pearl Harbor attack created issues.<sup>190</sup>

Japanese diplomatic traffic was transmitted on Purple. American cryptanalysts had broken its code but Purple was only used to send instructions from the Japanese Foreign Office to its diplomats stationed abroad. These instructions did not contain details of pending war plans. Although by late 1941, the content of these messages seemed suspicious, suspicion does not constitute proof. American cryptanalysts were able to break JN- 25B.<sup>191</sup> However, the naval code had not been fully solved prior to December 7, 1941.<sup>192</sup> Also, naval war plans were necessary to supply proof but these plans were not included on JN-25B. Japanese radio security was extremely strict in the weeks prior to the Pearl Harbor attack. The Japanese striking force proceeded to their target while maintaining strict radio silence. Nagumo's fleet also took additional precautions by crossing the Pacific traveling inside the forward edge of a huge weather front which regularly crossed the Pacific. The clouds and rainstorms protected the fleet from being observed by conventional surveillance methods with the exception of radar.<sup>193</sup>

The Purple machine that deciphered intelligence was referred to as "Magic" because the deciphering team were considered magicians. It was unable to warn Kimmel and Short of the possibility of an attack on Pearl Harbor because the Japanese military did not inform their

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<sup>189</sup> Wilford, "Decoding Pearl Harbor," 24.

<sup>190</sup> Wilford, "Decoding Pearl Harbor," 19.

<sup>191</sup> Keegan, *The Second World War*, 254.

<sup>192</sup> Wilford, "Decoding Pearl Harbor," 20.

<sup>193</sup> Keegan, *The Second World War*, 254.

diplomats in Washington about the planned surprise attack. Although Americans were able to decipher the fourteen-part message, written in precisely worded English, stating the Japanese were ending negotiations, it did not provide specific warning of a naval attack. During this time, there were 181 code breakers working for the Army but this was expanding as the country's military administration was increasing.<sup>194</sup>

David Kahn, an American historian and author of *The Codebreakers*, has written extensively on the history of cryptography. He stated that in 1941, Admiral Kimmel had received enough MAGIC intercepts by the end of November to know war was a real possibility, but he stressed that any forewarning of the Pearl Harbor attack was impossible.<sup>195</sup> In 1991 Kahn wrote that the Navy's poor ability to decipher JN-25B was due to the navy's lack of cryptanalysts. He went on to state that even if the naval code had been fully solved and been able to be read prior to December 7, the Japanese would not have mentioned the planned attack.<sup>196</sup>

Although Kimmel and Short had received a general war warning on November 27, the special war warning sent by the War Department at midnight on December 7 to the Army was not received until hours after the attack had begun.<sup>197</sup> When Secretary Knox arrived at Pearl Harbor to investigate, his first question to Admiral Kimmel was: "Did you receive my message on Saturday night?"<sup>198</sup> Knox felt certain that a warning message had been sent to Kimmel the

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<sup>194</sup> Liza Mundy, *Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers of World War II* (New York: Hachette Books, 2017), 105.

<sup>195</sup> Wilford, "Decoding Pearl Harbor," 19-20.

<sup>196</sup> Wilford, "Decoding Pearl Harbor," 20.

<sup>197</sup> The Knox Report."

<sup>198</sup> Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*, 3.

night before the attack. Various investigations were conducted but their efforts failed to reveal any trace of the message. Admiral Kimmel felt that Knox's question is very significant because it indicates his awareness of the gravity of the situation and that a message had been sent the night before the attack. The reason for the message not being received has never been determined. Kimmel feels it must have resulted from the actions of a person of high authority.<sup>199</sup> However, the December 7 date must have been wrong because midnight December 7 in Washington, D.C. would have been eleven hours after the attack happened. It seems it should have read "midnight December 6th." This issue increases the confusion regarding the events in Washington during the twenty-four hours prior to the attack. Officially it was explained that Knox must have been referring to the message sent by George Marshall to General Short, along with instructions to share it with Kimmel, at about 11:30 a.m. on Sunday the seventh.<sup>200</sup> This message was dispatched at 11:52 a.m. Washington time which was 6:22 a.m. Pearl Harbor time on Sunday, December 7. It was sent non-priority by commercial circuit when a phone on General Marshall's desk provided direct connection to the headquarters of General Short in Hawaii. Admiral Stark, the Chief of Naval Operations could have also sent the message to Admiral Kimmel through the dependable and fast naval communication service but no attempt was made to do this.<sup>201</sup> The message was finally delivered by a Western Union motorcycle messenger hours after the attack. However, in his questioning of Kimmel and Short, Knox said, "Saturday night" and that message was never found despite an intensive search for it. Officially it was explained that Knox

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<sup>199</sup> Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*, 3.

<sup>200</sup> Beach, *Scapegoats: A Defense of Kimmel and Short*, 112-113.

<sup>201</sup> Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*, 4.

misspoke when he said “Saturday night” when he actually meant “noon on Sunday.” This incidence strains credibility since he should have been able to clearly remember a message of such critical importance. The mystery has never been explained but what is even more alarming is that whatever he said was removed from the report that was delivered to Roosevelt.<sup>202</sup> What is also puzzling is that if Marshall had gone to his office earlier on December 7 he could have examined the decoded messages sooner and sent a warning to Pearl Harbor by 9:30 a.m. Washington time. That would have given the commanders at Pearl Harbor four hours to prepare. It was totally uncharacteristic for Marshall to be that indifferent about decoded messages and why he was that morning, has never been explained.<sup>203</sup> The implications of these decisions were tremendous. Vague messages without follow-up to determine how the messages were interpreted proved disastrous.

In addition to receipt of the messages, Knox also stated that neither Kimmel or Short took measures to guard against a surprise air attack because the Navy was afraid of a submarine attack and the Army was worried about sabotage so their efforts focused on preparations to address those challenges. Knox also cited that in regards to the use of radar equipment, it was manned by the Army and although it was generally operated for a longer period of time, on December 7 it only operated from 4:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. as authorized by the Control Officer.<sup>204</sup>

When Knox returned to Washington he submitted a lengthy typed report to Roosevelt indicating that both Kimmel and Short would have to be relieved of their commands regardless

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<sup>202</sup> Beach, *Scapegoats: A Defense of Kimmel and Short*, 112-113.

<sup>203</sup> Paul S. Burtness and Warren U. Ober, “Communication Lapses Leading to the Pearl Harbor Disaster,” *The Historian* (2013): 758.

<sup>204</sup> The Knox Report.”

of whether they were guilty of inefficiency because they were the commanders during a disastrous attack on their forces.<sup>205</sup> Based on these findings, President Roosevelt ordered the Roberts Commission to investigate the attack further.<sup>206</sup>

Following the Knox report, eight additional investigations were to follow. The formal investigation of Pearl Harbor by the federal government began on December 18, 1941, when President Roosevelt used Executive Order 8983 to authorize conducting an investigation of the disaster and appointed Associate Justice Owen J. Roberts, United States Supreme Court, to chair the committee and provide the report.<sup>207</sup> The Roberts Commission report along with the seven additional investigations of Pearl Harbor were as follows:<sup>208</sup>

1. The Roberts Commission, December 18, 1941 – January 23, 1942:

This Committee was established to determine the facts surrounding the Japanese attack and determine if any dereliction of duty occurred. MAGIC was discussed but who received it and the details of the reports were not included. Although the major political and military figures in Washington were exonerated, the committee was very harsh on the area commanders at Pearl Harbor, General Walter Short and Admiral Husband Kimmel. In addition to Justice Roberts, the committee members included Admirals William H. Standley and Joseph M. Reeves and Generals Frank R. McCoy and Joseph T. McNarney.

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<sup>205</sup> Beach, *Scapegoats: A Defense of Kimmel and Short*, 112.

<sup>206</sup> “The Knox Report.”

<sup>207</sup> “Executive Order 8983 Establishing a Commission to Investigate the Pearl Harbor Attack,” <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/executive-order-8983-establishing-commission-investigate-the-pearl-harbor-attack>.

<sup>208</sup> “Summary of Pearl Harbor Investigations – Axis History Forum,” <https://forum.axishistory.com/viewtopic.php?t=218446#p1972543>.

2. The Hart Inquiry, February 15, 1944 – June 15, 1944:

Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox ordered retired Admiral Thomas Hart, former commander of the Asiatic Fleet, to direct a one-man investigation on Pearl Harbor so that critical testimony would not become lost. The sole intent of the inquiry was to record the testimony of individuals involved in the attack and to obtain copies of all critical documents. This investigation did not empower Hart to assess blame or make recommendations. Therefore, no conclusions or findings were submitted.<sup>209</sup>

3. The Army Pearl Harbor Board, July 20, 1944 – October 20, 1944:

The army's adjutant general convened hearings in response to an act of Congress on July 13, 1944. Testimony from 151 witnesses were taken. The voting members of the board included Lieutenant General George Grunert and Major Generals Henry D. Russell and Walter H. Frank. MAGIC evidence was considered only during the last week of the hearings. The board censured Generals George Marshall and Leonard Gerow of the War Plans Division for not fully advising General Short of the situation. This decision may have been impacted by radio intercept information being downplayed in the investigation.

4. The Naval Court of Inquiry, July 24, 1944 – October 19, 1944:

The naval hearings were also in response to the congressional act of July 13, 1944. The hearings included testimony on MAGIC but it was classified and not released to the public. The inquiry completely exonerated Admiral Kimmel. Instead, Admiral Harold Stark, chief of naval operations in December, 1941, was blamed due to his failure to inform Admiral Kimmel of the seriousness of the situation prior to the attack.

5. The Clausen Investigation, November 23, 1944 – September 12, 1945:

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<sup>209</sup> Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*, 159.



The secretary of war directed a one-man inquiry conducted by Major Henry Clausen for the purpose of obtaining testimony to supplement the completed investigation conducted by the Army Board.

6. The Hewitt Inquiry, May 14, 1945 – July 11, 1945:

The navy secretary ordered Admiral Kent Hewitt to continue with the navy inquiry. The inquiry was similar to the Clausen investigation.

7. The Clarke Investigation, September 14-16, 1944 and July 13, 1945 – August 4, 1945:

The Secretary of War Henry Stimson ordered Colonel Carter Clarke, head of the Military Intelligence Division, to investigate the handling of communications by the military intelligence division prior to the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7.

8. Joint Congressional Hearings, November 15, 1945 – May 31, 1946:

These hearings were established by a Joint Congressional Resolution and were intended to be the most thorough of all the investigations into the Pearl Harbor attack. All pertinent classified documents, including the MAGIC translations, were released by the Truman administration for examination. All of the participants still living, except for the Secretary of War Stimson who was seriously ill, were examined. The committees' findings, consisting of forty volumes, were released in 1946. Within a single volume twelve findings were cited that delegated the blame among the Hawaiian area commanders and the War and Navy Departments. A minority report also cited Roosevelt but later concluded that the responsible parties included Secretary Stimson, Secretary Knox, General Marshall and General Gerow, Admiral Stark, and General Short and Admiral Kimmel. Senator Alben W. Barkley (D) served as chairman of the committee with Senator Jerry Cooper (D) acting as vice chairman. Other members of the Senate included

Senators Walter F. George (D), and Homer Ferguson (R). Members of the House of Representatives included J. Bayard Clark (D), John W. Murphy (D), Bertrand W. Gearhart(R), and Frank B. Keefe (R).

Out of all the investigations conducted, it was only the army and the navy inquiries that exonerated Admiral Kimmel and General Short of the majority of the charges. This was primarily because security information was made available to these boards that was not available to the civilian investigations. The findings of the army and navy boards blamed some in Washington which would have reflected badly on the current administration. Although the army and navy hearings were concluded shortly before the 1944 presidential election when Roosevelt was running for his fourth term, publication of the reports was delayed until after the elections fearing that releasing the findings prior to the elections may have caused the Republican candidate New York Governor Thomas E. Dewey to win. Roosevelt felt it would be in the public's best interest to seal up the reports.<sup>210</sup> The implications of only the army and the navy exonerating Admiral Kimmel and General Short seems to suggest the other investigations did not have access to all the evidence.

The last investigation conducted by the Joint Congressional Committee (JCC) completed in May 1946, was the most comprehensive. The JCC hearings submitted more than thirty-three thousand pages of reports printed in forty-one volumes. All of the investigations focused on what the army commander, General Short, and the navy commander, Admiral Kimmel, knew, when they were informed of it, and how they responded to it. There was very little attention directed towards what they *should* have been made aware of and why they had not been informed. At the

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<sup>210</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 8.

time, several high-ranking naval officers questioned this. They were not provided any answers then and there continue to be no answers today.<sup>211</sup>

Perhaps the only explanation is that in 1942 American public opinion, intensified by a critical media, was demanding an immediate scapegoat for the Pearl Harbor disaster. Although the army and navy commanders in Hawaii exerted great efforts to exonerate themselves, they quickly realized that their only contribution in history towards the World War II effort would be in assuming the role of a scapegoat for the catastrophe at Pearl Harbor. For example, in the Roberts Commission, Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts badgered both Kimmel and Short to the point it bordered on harassment whereas Marshall was treated with courteous respect. Testimony was taken in secret, examination of witnesses was not allowed, and neither Kimmel or Short were informed that they were defendants even though they were treated as such. Although they were both called to testify, they were not permitted to have a lawyer. The commission found Kimmel and Short to have been seriously derelict in their responsibilities. This was reported to Roosevelt who in turn directed that the report be given immediate and extensive publicity. Kimmel and Short were not aware they had even been accused until they read it in the papers. Although it was not fair, overriding circumstances may have allowed it to be considered helpful to the overall war effort which was the primary issue at the time with truth taking on a secondary role. However, from a historical perspective, truth must always remain the primary issue.<sup>212</sup> Admiral Standley, a member of the committee, later stated that the proceedings

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<sup>211</sup> Beach, *Scapegoats: A Defense of Kimmel and Short*, 110.

<sup>212</sup> Beach, *Scapegoats: A Defense of Kimmel and Short*, 111.

were a travesty of justice to Kimmel and Short. Yet, at the time, he had been willing to sign off on something he considered morally wrong.<sup>213</sup>

Additional inquiries were to take place but it was not possible to hold a Pearl Harbor inquiry until near the end of the war because the officers required as witnesses were performing important responsibilities at sea and the testimonies would have provided valuable information to the enemy. An inquiry was not held until the summer of 1945. Secretary of Defense James Forrestal told Admiral King that Admiral Stark should be relieved of his command in Europe because Forrestal felt that Admiral Stark and Admiral Kimmel were at fault for the Pearl Harbor disaster. Admiral King disagreed with these findings but regardless, Forrestal signed the order that relieved Stark of his European post.<sup>214</sup>

General Marshall was an honorable and upright chief of staff. While other military leaders falsely denied withholding information from field commanders, Marshall testified before a congressional committee that it was a routine practice to withhold vital information from commanders. World War II documents reveal that information was withheld from field commanders and it was also distorted to mislead them.<sup>215</sup> General Marshall was willing to admit that information was withheld and that was routine. After the war ended, General Marshall was cited by a congressional Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor attack for having held up sending information obtained from intercepted Japanese diplomatic messages to General Short, the U.S. Army commander in Hawaii. The congressional report also cited

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<sup>213</sup> Beach, *Scapegoats: A Defense of Kimmel and Short*, 114.

<sup>214</sup> King and Whitehill, *Fleet Admiral King*, 632.

<sup>215</sup> George Victor, *The Pearl Harbor Myth: Rethinking the Unthinkable* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2007), viii.

Marshall for being unaware as to how unprepared the Hawaiian Command was during November and December 1941. The report did not blame Marshall but instead placed the blame on key subordinates for not passing on critical information to their superiors, Marshall among them. General Marshall survived the scandal related to the Pearl Harbor disaster and went on to become a key figure in the planning of the D-Day invasion of the European continent called Operation Overlord.<sup>216</sup> General Marshall in the army had similar rank and responsibilities as Admiral Stark in the navy yet there seems to be disparity of justice between the army and the navy high commands since they were not held to the same standards. Instead, it appears that Marshall was held to lower standards.

The Pearl Harbor Committee released their final reports in July 1946. The findings of the majority report absolved General Marshall of any blame or responsibility for failure to warn General Short. However, the minority report did charge Marshall, along with others in Washington including Stimson, Gerow, and Roosevelt with “failure to perform the responsibilities indispensably essential to the defense of Pearl Harbor.”<sup>217</sup> This concluded the last of the investigations into the Pearl Harbor attack until 1995 when the Department of Defense conducted a review of the incident that came to be known as the Dorn Report. These findings seem to suggest that Roosevelt and members of his administration could have provided more information to the Pearl Harbor commanders.

Ineffective communication seems to have played a significant role in the Pearl Harbor disaster. It can have many devastating consequences including lack of preparedness that can lead

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<sup>216</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 202.

<sup>217</sup> Roll, *George Marshall*, 348.

to dereliction of duty resulting in casualties, insufficient equipment and lack of essential training on how to properly use it, and failure to anticipate and effectively react to an attack. Many wartime and postwar investigations of the Pearl Harbor disaster focused heavily on the poor state of communications that existed between the Army and Navy personnel on the island and communication failures that existed between the military leadership in Washington and the commanders in Hawaii. For example, the final warning sent by Washington that an attack might be imminent was sent via a commercial telegram that did not arrive in Hawaii until the attack was already underway. Yet, as stated previously, more efficient means of communication were readily available. The Army and the Navy branches of the service had divided up the task of protecting Pearl Harbor. Although this division of labor appeared to be a logical approach in 1940-1941, coordination between the services would have been far more effective.<sup>218</sup> There was also a lack of cooperation between the competitive Army and Navy commands. Generally, the commanders refused to share information and intelligence. They did not even have a common radio frequency but instead relied on couriers.<sup>219</sup> This wedge between their branches, who served the same government, was detrimental to the nation's security. Yet, it was because of security issues that they were not allowed to share information. In addition, a large part of the command failure at Pearl Harbor stemmed from interservice rivalry and suspicion. However, interservice rivalries are not uncommon within the military.<sup>220</sup> In fact, the rivalry between the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy was thought to be even more destructive to Japan's war effort.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Sterling, "Pearl Harbor, Hawaii," 347-348.

<sup>219</sup> Sterling, "Pearl Harbor, Hawaii," 347-348.

<sup>220</sup> Niles, "Pearl Harbor," 264.

<sup>221</sup> Niles, "Pearl Harbor," 264.

With regards to the relationship between the army and navy commanders at Pearl Harbor, Admiral Kimmel stated his relationship with General Short was friendly and they frequently discussed official matters involving them both. Kimmel stated they were both challenged by personnel and material shortages and the large influx of untrained officers and enlisted men.<sup>222</sup>

Admiral Kimmel stated that neither he nor General Short had any clear understanding that the Roosevelt Administration was addressing the issue of Japanese aggression in such a way that war with Japan was inevitable.<sup>223</sup> A few dozen government people were aware of the code breaking and the intelligence and warnings that they provided.<sup>224</sup> Although the Japanese achieved surprise with the Pearl Harbor attack, they failed at maintaining secrecy. Washington had received about 230 indications that Japan planned to attack Pearl Harbor. However, most of the warnings were in code with only a fraction of them decoded prior to the attack. It is unclear as to who knew what and when. The issue is which of the messages were decoded prior to the attack and how clear were they.<sup>225</sup> Admiral Kimmel struggled intensively to uncover and preserve the facts of the Pearl Harbor tragedy not only to relieve himself from the undeserved humiliation, but also to record the historic truth. The Naval Court of Inquiry, which assembled in the summer of 1944, was the only investigative tribunal that permitted Admiral Kimmel the traditional right to have counsel, introduce testimony, and examine and cross-examine witnesses. It was in the Naval Court that Admiral Kimmel and his counsel first received authorization to

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<sup>222</sup> Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*, 8-9.

<sup>223</sup> Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*, 2.

<sup>224</sup> Victor, *The Pearl Harbor Myth*, 2.

<sup>225</sup> Victor, *The Pearl Harbor Myth*, 10-11.

access the intercepted Japanese messages that had been withheld from him and General Short. When they read the information in these vital documents, they were horrified by the amount of information they did not receive on that fateful day. Admiral Kimmel discovered that Washington had been receiving vital information for three months prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor which had never been forwarded to either himself or General Short. Also, the information received during the ten days preceding the attack made it clear that the Japanese objective was Pearl Harbor. Yet the Hawaiian commanders did not receive any warning and none of the information was ever forwarded to them. The Naval Court completely vindicated Admiral Kimmel and preserved for history evidence as to where the responsibility for the Pearl Harbor tragedy rested.<sup>226</sup>

The consequences of Pearl Harbor mystified Fleet Admiral, United States Navy, Ernest J. King, commander in chief, United States Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations, 1941-1945. He felt the Roberts Commission had failed to reach the core of the matter, but had only created scapegoats to fulfill the public's demand for establishing responsibility for the Pearl Harbor tragedy. Admiral King felt that Admiral Kimmel and General Short had been renounced for political advantage, and that Admiral Stark also experienced a similar fate when in March 1942 Roosevelt announced that he would go to London as Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe. Although he remained in London for the remainder of the war and provided vital services to the Allied cause, it was essentially a demotion. As Chief of Naval Operations, Stark's role in relation to the Pearl Harbor attack had less responsibility than that of General Marshall as Chief of Staff of the Army. Previously the Joint Board and the Secretaries of War and Navy had approved the

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<sup>226</sup> Charles B. Rugg and Edward B. Hanify, foreword to *Admiral Kimmel's Story* by Husband E. Kimmel. (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1955), v-vii.



arrangement that the Army was responsible for the land defenses of the Hawaiian Islands which also included Pearl Harbor in addition to the ships in port there just like it had always been responsible for the defense of all United States harbors and ports. Admiral King was disgusted that the failure of the Army, and especially the Air Force, to discharge their responsibilities was “carefully glossed over” during the Roberts Commission.<sup>227</sup> King was never able to reconcile the difference in Roosevelt’s treatment of Admiral Stark and General Marshall in regards to the Pearl Harbor attack. Although General Marshall was able to remain in Washington as Chief of Staff of the Army, Admiral Stark was demoted and reassigned to London.<sup>228</sup>

While Admiral Stark was in London, he performed outstanding work involving delicate diplomatic negotiations dealing with the armed forces of the Allies. Yet, it appeared that this assignment had originally been created because Roosevelt desired to have Stark out of Washington for political reasons. Admiral King could never understand why political blame for the Pearl Harbor attack should have been attributed to Stark when no blame was ever attributed to Marshall who had the comparable position of Chief of Staff of the Army.<sup>229</sup>

Roosevelt, as a former assistant secretary of the Navy, never forgave Kimmel and Stark for the lack of preparedness at Pearl Harbor. He was having difficulty comprehending how the Navy could have been caught so unaware and unprepared. Yet, Admiral Stark was treated much differently than Admiral Kimmel. As stated previously, Kimmel was relieved of his command, reduced in rank to rear admiral, and required to retire. Stark was relieved of his position as chief

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<sup>227</sup> King and Whitehill, *Fleet Admiral King*, 356.

<sup>228</sup> King and Whitehill, *Fleet Admiral King*, 355-356.

<sup>229</sup> King and Whitehill, *Fleet Admiral King*, 632.

of naval operations, sent to England, and after a reasonable period of time, also forced into retirement.<sup>230</sup> Admiral Chester Nimitz was chosen by Roosevelt to replace Kimmel and Admiral Ernest W. King became chief of naval operations.<sup>231</sup>

The Pearl Harbor attack contains many significant lessons in regards to communication failures and effective military leadership, including the harmful effects that inter-service rivalries can create, especially in regards to the sharing of intelligence and the harmful effect that arrogance can have on leaders.<sup>232</sup> Failing to change the culture and acknowledge other options can also result in a lack of preparedness.

Historians have focused extensively on attempting to determine what was actually known and who knew it prior to the Pearl Harbor attack. One theory previously mentioned is that the president deliberately provoked the Japanese into firing the first shot aware of the possibility that Japan may attack without warning. Roosevelt decided to conceal his knowledge of the impending attack from the Hawaiian commanders to sway Congress and the American public to create a united America in support of the war effort.<sup>233</sup> However, if Roosevelt had been made aware of the impending attack on Pearl Harbor beforehand, he would have made every effort to reposition the fleet and disperse the airplanes to minimize damage. He would not have allowed such destruction and loss of life as a means of mobilizing the American people.<sup>234</sup> The author

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<sup>230</sup> Smith, *FDR*, 537.

<sup>231</sup> Smith, *FDR*, 537-538.

<sup>232</sup> Clausen and Lee, *Pearl Harbor: Final Judgment*, 8.

<sup>233</sup> Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 293.

<sup>234</sup> Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 293.

and historian Craig Shirley stated there is no evidence that Roosevelt manipulated events to get America into the war.<sup>235</sup> The authors Anthony Summers and Robbyn Swan also stated that their research into the Pearl Harbor attack did not reveal any acts of treachery.<sup>236</sup> Roosevelt had received warnings about Japanese activity which mentioned Hawaii but the idea was dismissed because it seemed farfetched. Thailand was believed to be the next Japanese move.<sup>237</sup>

Overall, it may be said that responsibility for the Pearl Harbor tragedy can never be fairly allocated. Its causes go beyond the action and omissions of dozens of individuals. They are buried among a myriad of assumptions and complacency. Marshall, as army chief of staff, accepted responsibility but that did not satisfy the American public or its politicians who always wanted to look deeper and precisely identify fault. Marshall stated that the joint congressional investigation “was intended to crucify Roosevelt, not to get me.”<sup>238</sup> The analysis of the American military in regard to Pearl Harbor stated “December 7, 1941...will live as one of the most brilliant military performances of all time. Superbly planned and superbly executed...”<sup>239</sup> It was a tragedy of politics and war involving human error, some occurring at high levels in Washington. There was a cover-up that was required at the time but most importantly, scapegoats were unjustly assigned the blame for the catastrophe.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Shirley, *December 1941: 31 Days*, 537.

<sup>236</sup> Anthony Summers and Robbyn Swan, *A Matter of Honor: Pearl Harbor: Betrayal, Blame, and a Family's Quest for Justice* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016), xi.

<sup>237</sup> Shirley, *December 1941: 31 Days*, 538.

<sup>238</sup> Roll, *George Marshall*, 348.

<sup>239</sup> Shirley, *December 1941: 31 Days*, 538.

<sup>240</sup> Summers and Swan, *A Matter of Honor*, xi.

Although Admiral Kimmel and General Short were highly criticized for their lack of preparedness, in all the discussions prior to the Pearl Harbor attack, the prevailing assumption always remained that an attack from Japan would be initiated from the south. It was repeatedly assumed that the Philippines were the most at risk of becoming the target of Japanese aggression.<sup>241</sup> By the end of November 1941, American forces throughout the Pacific had been placed on the highest alert. Although Pearl Harbor was included among the many places the Japanese may attack, once again, it was considered the least likely. Instead, years of speculation regarding Japan's military intentions had centered on China, Soviet Siberia, Malaya, Singapore, Hong Kong, the Dutch East Indies, Thailand, Indochina, and the Philippines as likely Japanese targets. On November 27, the navy's warnings specifically included "the Philippines, Thai or Kai (Malay) Peninsula, or possibly Borneo," as places for imminent hostilities.<sup>242</sup> Hawaii was discounted because it was so far from Japan and considered impregnable.<sup>243</sup> Another reason an attack on Pearl Harbor seemed unlikely was because torpedoes launched from aircraft tended to plunge too deep ending up in the mud on the ocean sea floor. Torpedoes required a certain depth of water to be successively fired. Pearl Harbor was very shallow at only thirty to forty-five feet so aerial torpedoes were not thought to pose a serious threat.<sup>244</sup> This judgment proved fatal because the Japanese had made modifications to the torpedo to overcome this problem.<sup>245</sup> Of the

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<sup>241</sup> Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 293.

<sup>242</sup> Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 525.

<sup>243</sup> Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 526.

<sup>244</sup> Summers and Swan, *A Matter of Honor*, 82,85.

<sup>245</sup> Keegan, *The Second World War*, 253.

thirty-six torpedoes launched by the Japanese, twenty-five successively struck U.S. ships. Kimmel had suggested shortly before he had assumed command of the fleet, that torpedo nets should be supplied to Pearl Harbor but none were ever received.<sup>246</sup> The Japanese were also hesitant to select Pearl Harbor as the attack site due to concerns that their fleet may be detected, which would compromise security. To address this concern, a Japanese liner sailed an experimental voyage in October 1941. The liner reported it had not seen another ship or airplane so the danger of a security compromise was dismissed.<sup>247</sup> Admiral Kimmel and General Short also testified to Congress that they were deliberately not informed regarding Japanese intentions and were provided only selective intelligence reports from Japan.<sup>248</sup> If there was an American “failure” at Pearl Harbor it was cumulative and had permeated the system resulting in strategic assumptions and priorities that were not fully thought out and were influenced by attitudes of racial superiority.<sup>249</sup> Also, for years, the United States Navy never admitted that they had broken Japan’s JN-25B code and had been able to read it to some degree since October 1941. Perhaps the reason the Navy denied the ability to read the code is because the Japanese used this code to transmit the final instructions to attack Pearl Harbor and this information was not forwarded to the Pearl Harbor commanders.<sup>250</sup> However, as was stated previously, even if the Japanese naval

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<sup>246</sup> Summers and Swan, *A Matter of Honor*, 82,85.

<sup>247</sup> Keegan, *The Second World War*, 253.

<sup>248</sup> Bret Baier with Catherine Whitney, *Three Days at the Brink: FDR’s Daring Gamble to Win World War II* (New York: William Morrow, 2019), 213.

<sup>249</sup> Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 526.

<sup>250</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 196.

code had been completely solved prior to December 7 enabling the messages to be read, the attack still would not have been foretold.<sup>251</sup>

The American public expressed little reaction to the revelation that Washington had received warnings of a Pearl Harbor attack. By 1946, Americans had accepted the established myth of Pearl Harbor. Namely, that Admiral Kimmel and General Short had disobeyed orders to defend Pearl Harbor and that the leaders in Washington had been deceived and had not anticipated the attack. Since 1946, historians have even been impacted by the myth, yet they remain unsure about its significance to the warning of a Pearl Harbor attack. Understanding what the warnings were, when they were received and who was aware of them is vital to understanding how the United States was suddenly plunged into World War II. Initially deceiving the public was for patriotic reasons but as the administration was increasingly challenged, it remained firm to the story despite the discovery of government records that contradicted it. The myth also states that the United States offered compromises to Japan but it was actually the Japanese who were offering compromises and concessions that the United States countered with increased demands.<sup>252</sup> What cannot be disputed is that Roosevelt's prophecy was realized. December 7, 1941, has without question lived in infamy.<sup>253</sup>

In 1961, Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, commander of the U.S. naval forces during the Battle of Midway Island and the Battle of the Philippine Sea, stated that he felt Admiral Kimmel and General Short were held accountable for Pearl Harbor to prevent the American people from

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<sup>251</sup> Wilford, "Decoding Pearl Harbor," 20.

<sup>252</sup> Victor, *The Pearl Harbor Myth*, 14-15.

<sup>253</sup> Victor, *The Pearl Harbor Myth*, 9.

losing confidence in their government in Washington. He went on to say that although this was perhaps justified at the time due to the critical circumstances that existed, “it does not justify forever damning these two fine officers.”<sup>254</sup>

Fleet Admiral William F. Halsey also never wavered in his belief that Admiral Kimmel was left “holding the bag” for something he did not know and was unable to control.<sup>255</sup> Admiral Kimmel credits Halsey’s continuous outspoken loyalty for helping to sustain him through the challenging years following the Pearl Harbor attack.<sup>256</sup>

The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 was an event so unexpected and so shocking that it became a turning point in the history of the United States. For Admiral Kimmel and General Short, who were relieved of their commands and forced to retire at the two-star rank, the experience was devastating both professionally and personally. The nine separate investigations of the incident that occurred from 1942 through 1946 all concluded, with the exception of one, that although they were not guilty of dereliction of duty, they were guilty of errors in judgment with none of the investigations recommending their ranks be restored.<sup>257</sup>

Over time, the families of Admiral Kimmel and General Short have continued in their struggle to have their ranks reinstated. In 1995, with the support of Senator Strom Thurmond, Edwin Dorn, who at that time was the Undersecretary of Defense responsible for manpower and readiness issues, was ordered to conduct another investigation of the Pearl Harbor disaster. The Dorn Report concluded that although Kimmel and Short were guilty of errors of judgment, they

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<sup>254</sup> Gannon, *Pearl Harbor Betrayed*, 261.

<sup>255</sup> Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel’s Story*, x.

<sup>256</sup> Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel’s Story*, x.

<sup>257</sup> Goldstein, foreword to *Kimmel, Short, and Pearl Harbor*, by Borch and Martinez, vii-viii.

were not solely responsible for the catastrophe. There were others both in Washington and on their staffs in Hawaii who also shared some of the blame. Despite this conclusion, the report did not recommend their ranks be restored. Their families have continued to make additional attempts to achieve this.<sup>258</sup> The issue is not whether their relief and demotion were lawful because they were, but rather whether they were fair when considering that other commanders also made big mistakes with devastating consequences, as the remainder of this thesis will show, without incurring similar punishment.<sup>259</sup> Therefore, their families continue to fight for their cause but thus far, Admiral Kimmel and General Short have not been exonerated.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Goldstein, foreword to *Kimmel, Short, and Pearl Harbor*, by Borch and Martinez, viii-ix.

<sup>259</sup> Gary D. Solis, review of *Kimmel, Short, and Pearl Harbor: The Final Report Revealed*, by Fred Borch and Daniel Martinez (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005), <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/187679>.

<sup>260</sup> Goldstein, foreword to *Kimmel, Short, and Pearl Harbor*, by Borch and Martinez, viii-ix.



## Battle of the Philippine Islands

Although the attack on Pearl Harbor is regarded as a singular event, it was actually just a portion of Japan's overall plan to open a wide front by which the Japanese Empire was attempting to extend its influence and possessions. These events would shape history. The Japanese fought with great persistence and courage. In less than two hours, Japanese forces attacked Siam, Malaya, and Hawaii. Four hours later Hong Kong was attacked. The Japanese were victorious everywhere. The landings on Malaya took place just a few minutes before the first bombers reached Hawaii.<sup>261</sup> Japan carried out their initial plan to coordinate the attack on Pearl Harbor with a simultaneous attack on the Philippine Islands, America's far eastern outpost.<sup>262</sup> This was to prevent providing the Americans with time to evacuate. The original plan had been to make them coincide but this was impossible since it was still dark in Formosa for several hours after sunrise in Hawaii. Therefore, the earliest the attacks could take place on the Philippine Islands was three hours after the assault on the Pacific Fleet.<sup>263</sup> Since Japan was conducting nearly simultaneous operations throughout the Pacific, it was also on December 7, 1941, that General Douglas MacArthur, the American commander in the Philippines, received three warnings from Washington along with a request that he reply to inform Washington of his current situation. However, he did not reply to any of the messages and when he received a direct

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<sup>261</sup> Sasser, *Two Fronts, One War*, 13.

<sup>262</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 170.

<sup>263</sup> Rutherford, *Fall of the Philippines*, 30.

call from Washington, he provided no excuses for not keeping Washington advised of his situation as he informed them that as of yet, he had not been attacked.<sup>264</sup> Washington seemed to be experiencing great difficulty in establishing communication with MacArthur.

Early in the morning of December 8, 1941, only about six hours after the beginning of the Pearl Harbor attack, but already the next day according to Philippine time, specially trained Japanese pilots flying from Formosa caught most of MacArthur's aircraft on the ground at Clark Field, located on the main island of Luzon, just as they had on Oahu. American air strength in the Philippines had been increased in 1941. On the day of the Japanese attack, there were 35 modern B-17 bombers, in addition to 220 fighters although they were not all in operating readiness.<sup>265</sup> The Japanese destroyed eighteen B-17 bombers, fifty-six fighters, and various types of other aircraft.<sup>266</sup>

Roosevelt felt the destruction of the majority of the Philippine Air Force was a warning of the eventual loss of the islands.<sup>267</sup> Japan's fighters and bombers went on to attack American air, infantry and naval bases in the Philippine Islands.<sup>268</sup> The remaining airplanes were withdrawn to Australia and Java by General Louis Brereton, commander of the U.S. Army Air Force (USAAF) in the Far East. With the withdrawal of the air force, Admiral Thomas Hart, commander of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, also withdrew to safe waters because without the air force,

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<sup>264</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 170.

<sup>265</sup> Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 17.

<sup>266</sup> Sasser, *Two Fronts, One War*, 13.

<sup>267</sup> Costello, *The Pacific War*, 655.

<sup>268</sup> Michael Norman and Elizabeth M. Norman, *Tears in the Darkness: The Story of the Bataan Death March and Its Aftermath* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), 3.

his ships would be vulnerable to destruction from enemy attacks.<sup>269</sup> Without the support of the air force or the navy, the Allied troops in the Philippines were now all on their own.<sup>270</sup>

All through December 1941, the Western Allies struggled under the successive victories made by the Japanese war machine. The Japanese conquest of the Philippine Islands that began on December 8, 1941, lasted for six months. On December 10, Japanese forces landed on the north coast of Luzon, the largest of the Philippine Islands. Another Japanese force landed on Luzon's southern coast two days later. A week after that, more than fifty thousand Japanese troops landed at Lingayen Gulf located on the west side of Luzon.<sup>271</sup>

The islands were defended by more than 130,000 American and Filipino troops, the majority of which were inexperienced and ill-trained.<sup>272</sup> Plan Orange, the defense of the Philippines, called for falling back to prepared defenses in Bataan, a small piece of land on the west coast of Manila Bay. However, General MacArthur decided to confront the Japanese invaders on the beach instead until the Navy could bring reinforcements and supplies from the United States. This was a bad strategy since due to the Pearl Harbor attack, there were no ships capable of delivering reinforcements to Bataan.<sup>273</sup> Eisenhower predicted that it would be a long time before reinforcements could be sent to the Philippines and MacArthur's troops were not in a position to hold out that long. Yet, Eisenhower told Marshall that we must do what we can for

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<sup>269</sup> Sasser, *Two Fronts, One War*, 13.

<sup>270</sup> Sasser, *Two Fronts, One War*, 14.

<sup>271</sup> Symonds, *World War II at Sea*, 216.

<sup>272</sup> Norman and Norman, *Tears in the Darkness*, 3.

<sup>273</sup> Symonds, *World War II at Sea*, 216.

the troops since although failure may be excused, abandonment will not. Marshall agreed as he gave Eisenhower responsibility for the Philippines and with that Marshall and Eisenhower “began a partnership that led to the greatest victory in American history since the Revolutionary War.”<sup>274</sup>

It soon became clear that Roosevelt was not going to use resources in defense of a territory that the U.S. Navy and Army Air Force had abandoned. It also became apparent that overcoming Hitler’s forces in Europe had a higher priority than defeating the Japanese. Unable to obtain supplies or reinforcements, MacArthur was doomed to eventual defeat.<sup>275</sup> In the end, the Japanese continued to push the Allied forces back until MacArthur was forced to fall back to Bataan anyways causing him to lose much of his equipment in the process.<sup>276</sup> It was a huge task to quickly shift supplies and MacArthur had disregarded proposals to do so before the war began because he regarded it as “passivity.” MacArthur began to implement the withdrawal on December 23, 1941.<sup>277</sup>

MacArthur had disobeyed the original plan of action and although he eventually received Washington’s approval to implement his alternative strategy, it was unrealistic under their present circumstances and failed resulting in the unnecessary loss of lives and equipment and the destruction of U.S. air power in the western Pacific. Nevertheless, MacArthur in addition to other senior American officers, was completely surprised by the Pearl Harbor attack and therefore, he

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<sup>274</sup> Roll, *George Marshall*, 195.

<sup>275</sup> Sasser, *Two Fronts, One War*, 14.

<sup>276</sup> Symonds, *World War II at Sea*, 216.

<sup>277</sup> Max Hastings, *Inferno: The World at War, 1939-1945* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), 227.

was not prepared to respond to the Japanese air attacks on Clark and Iba airfields in the Philippines the next day. Still, although MacArthur was very undermanned and underequipped, he skillfully defended the Philippines and personally commanded the defense of Bataan and the Manila Bay forts until he was ordered by President Roosevelt to evacuate to Australia. He was ridiculed by some members of the garrisons on Bataan and Corregidor where he had moved his headquarters, who referred to him as “Dugout Doug.”<sup>278</sup> Australia was now to become MacArthur’s base and the launching platform for the eventual liberation of the Philippines.<sup>279</sup>

Over the next few days following the attacks on Pearl Harbor and the Philippine Islands, Japan launched synchronized invasions of Malaya, Borneo, Thailand, Hong Kong, and the Dutch East Indies.<sup>280</sup> Within four months from December 1941 through the first months of 1942, the Japanese overran the British Solomon Islands, Bali, Timor, Dutch East Indies, Hong Kong, Malaya, the Philippines, U.S. bases at Guam and Wake Island, and they also bombed northern Australia. During this four month period, an extensive area that had been part of the Far East empires of the European powers, an area that encompassed more than 6,000 miles, was now under Japanese rule.<sup>281</sup> Japan’s main goal was to take all of the Dutch East Indies, along with Malaya and the Philippines, to sustain the oil, tin, and rubber supplies while using Singapore as its main naval base.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 184.

<sup>279</sup> Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 23.

<sup>280</sup> Roberts, *Churchill: Walking with Destiny*, 692.

<sup>281</sup> Sasser, *Two Fronts, One War*, 13.

<sup>282</sup> Michael Scott, *Scapegoats: Thirteen Victims of Military Injustice* (London: Elliott and Thompson, 2013), 138.

The Philippine Islands, which were acquired by the United States following the Spanish-American War of 1898, were the only major U.S. presence in the western Pacific.<sup>283</sup> In 1941, the Philippines were very valuable to both the Japanese and American generals and admirals who were preparing for a war in the Pacific that was considered inevitable. The islands had the best deep-water port in the southwest Pacific making it a strategic transit point.<sup>284</sup> Also, the Philippine Islands lay directly in the path to the oil and other raw materials the Japanese hoped to capture and exploit in Malaya and the East Indies.<sup>285</sup>

The Japanese anticipated a quick campaign to conquer the Philippines but the American and Filipino forces of General Douglas MacArthur's United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFEF) fought gallantly in the defense of Bataan and held out for four months against the Imperial Japanese Army, which by March 1942, controlled every other island in the Western Pacific besides the Philippines.<sup>286</sup> The Philippine garrison actually represented the second largest concentration of American Army forces stationed in the Pacific next to Hawaii.<sup>287</sup> However, as the Japanese overpowered American-Filipino opposition, MacArthur escaped from Corregidor in the Philippines and arrived in Australia on March 17, 1942, per orders from President Roosevelt which further deflated the morale of the Allied soldiers. He became the Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Area.<sup>288</sup> He controlled the ground and air forces defending the islands.

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<sup>283</sup> Sasser, *Two Fronts, One War*, 13.

<sup>284</sup> Norman and Norman, *Tears in the Darkness*, 3.

<sup>285</sup> Sasser, *Two Fronts, One War*, 13.

<sup>286</sup> Clayton Chun, *The Fall of the Philippines 1941-42* (Long Island City: Osprey, 2012), 26.

<sup>287</sup> Chun, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 15.

<sup>288</sup> Denis Warner, Peggy Warner, and Sadao Seno, *Disaster in the Pacific*:

However, MacArthur did not control the naval forces since there was no single commander of all the military forces in the Philippine Islands. This would create unity of command issues.<sup>289</sup>

The U.S. Navy gave a small group of cryptanalysts the opportunity to also sail that night by submarine to Australia. The British had worked on the Japanese naval code, JN-25B, and the British passed the key to the U.S. cryptanalyst on Corregidor before they left by submarine to go to Australia. In Melbourne they and their fellow navy codebreakers in Pearl Harbor and Washington along with a few Australian and British cryptanalysts were able to provide the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff with reliable, detailed forecasts of Japanese naval plans that were used to direct the Allied counteroffensive through New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. The intelligence enabled victory at Midway Island. However, not everyone, including General Douglas MacArthur, was convinced that the information was reliable.<sup>290</sup>

On April 5, 1942, the third day of the last Japanese offensive on Bataan, the Philippine commander General Jonathan Wainwright sent a radio message to General MacArthur in Australia. He informed MacArthur that the troops had been on half rations for three months and were now on even less than that which has resulted in significant loss of physical stamina and illness. However, before capitulating, since he had received orders from MacArthur not to surrender, Wainwright stated that he would carry out the operation MacArthur had suggested and counterattack the next day. Wainwright ordered Army General Edward P. King to reinforce the II Corps using units of General Albert Jones' I Corps and then attack northward in the direction

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*New Light on the Battle of Savo Island* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1992), 2.

<sup>289</sup> Chun, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 11.

<sup>290</sup> Warner, Warner, and Seno, *Disaster in the Pacific*, 2.

of Olongapo. Although King was stunned to have received such orders, he was required to notify Jones of the plan for I Corps since he would have to be answerable for failure to do so. The outspoken Jones responded to King that MacArthur's plan was "ridiculous."<sup>291</sup> MacArthur's subordinates seemed to be losing faith in his leadership skills.

MacArthur had sent a message to George Marshall indicating that when he had left the Philippines on March 11, he felt a serious shortage of supplies would not occur until after May 1. He also stated that he was completely opposed to capitulation of this command as visualized by Wainwright under any circumstances or conditions. King then made the decision to surrender but knowing that Wainwright had received "no surrender" orders from MacArthur, he decided to risk losing his own rank and not inform Wainwright that he had already contacted the Japanese. He did not want Wainwright to have to take responsibility for his decision to surrender.<sup>292</sup>

On April 9, 1942, without an air force to protect them or a navy to provide relief, the Battle of Bataan ended when the troops on Bataan under General Edward King surrendered to Japanese General Masaharu Homma.<sup>293</sup> General Wainwright's units on Corregidor located just off the coast held out for another month until surrendering on May 6, 1942. Although General Wainwright survived, he spent the remainder of the war in captivity.<sup>294</sup> More than 76,000 American and Filipino troops under American command laid down their weapons making it the

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<sup>291</sup> Donald J. Young, *The Fall of the Philippines: The Desperate Struggle Against the Japanese Invasion, 1941-1942* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2015), 133-135.

<sup>292</sup> Young, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 134-135.

<sup>293</sup> Warner, Warner, and Seno, *Disaster in the Pacific*, 1.

<sup>294</sup> Sasser, *Two Fronts, One War*, 15.



single largest defeat in American military history.<sup>295</sup> As the sick and starving prisoners of war were lined up by their Japanese captors and forced to walk sixty-two miles under the broiling sun to a railhead for the trip to the prison camp, they could not have possibly imagined what they were about to experience.<sup>296</sup> What history has referred to as the Bataan Death March is considered one of the worst atrocities in modern warfare.<sup>297</sup> It is regarded as one of the most notorious episodes in the annals of war.<sup>298</sup> The surrender of Bataan doomed Corregidor, the island located just south of the Bataan province in Luzon, and the last fortification of defense.<sup>299</sup>

After the Japanese invasion of the Philippines in December 1941, the Signal Corps played a significant role in supplying communications to support the joint Philippine and U.S. Army units defending Bataan and Corregidor. After the Allies surrendered in May 1942, a Signal Corps officer assisted in organizing the first guerrilla unit in the Visayas. This became the first resistance unit to establish radio contact with the American armed services. This enabled the Americans to receive vital information regarding the Japanese. This helped in the reconquest of the Philippines by the American military in early 1945.<sup>300</sup> Therefore, although positive communication contributed to final victory, MacArthur did not play a role in these efforts.

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<sup>295</sup> Norman and Norman, *Tears in the Darkness*, 4.

<sup>296</sup> Norman and Norman, *Tears in the Darkness*, 4.

<sup>297</sup> Young, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 144-145.

<sup>298</sup> Norman and Norman, *Tears in the Darkness*, 4.

<sup>299</sup> Warner, Warner, and Seno, *Disaster in the Pacific*, 1.

<sup>300</sup> Cliff Lord and Christopher H. Sterling, "Philippines," in *Military Communications: From Ancient Times to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Christopher H. Sterling (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 348-349.

Although the fall of the Philippines was one of the greatest losses for the United States at the beginning of World War II, the Pearl Harbor attack generally overshadowed it and is usually regarded as a more significant military event. In 1941, Hawaii and the Philippines were both under American control. Hawaii was a U.S. territory and the Philippines were a U.S. commonwealth. At Pearl Harbor, the Pacific Fleet had incurred substantial losses and the Hawaiian Air Force had its airfields devastated by Japanese aircraft. When the Japanese invaded the Philippines, they took control of both the land and its people. Also, an American Army division was lost, the Asiatic Fleet retreated out of the Philippines along with the destruction of the bomber and fighter force. Therefore, the fall of the Philippines was a greater defeat in terms of casualties and scope of combat yet it was not perceived that way and MacArthur was not held accountable for the outcome.<sup>301</sup> Despite the consequences of his command failures being far more devastating to the United States and the other Allied forces than the strategic consequences of the Pearl Harbor disaster, MacArthur was never considered responsible for the American military setbacks in the Pacific.<sup>302</sup> This was in sharp contrast to the Pearl Harbor commanders.

If the fall of the Philippine Islands was the result of local command failure and strategic miscalculation in Washington, the Pearl Harbor disaster was caused by an over-complacent command, which had not received adequate intelligence on the Japanese and were placed on alert too frequently. Beginning in August 1941, U.S. military attention and reinforcements had shifted from the Hawaiian Islands to the Philippines. Although this weakened the Hawaiian air defenses, it saved the U.S. Navy's two carriers since they were not at Pearl Harbor during the

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<sup>301</sup> Chun, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 5.

<sup>302</sup> Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 3.

time of the attack. These two carriers played a significant role in maintaining the American defense line in the Pacific.<sup>303</sup>

The Battle of the Philippine Islands is ironic in that the fall of the Philippines was a far greater catastrophe than Pearl Harbor and the Bataan Death March is considered one of the worst atrocities in modern history.<sup>304</sup> General Douglas MacArthur allowed the Philippines to fall into the hands of the Japanese, resulting in substantially higher casualties than those incurred at Pearl Harbor.<sup>305</sup> It is actually regarded as the mortal blow to the planned military defense of the Far East.<sup>306</sup> Yet MacArthur, after arriving in Australia from the Philippines, became Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Area.<sup>307</sup> Also, he was rewarded by being regarded as a national hero even though he did not respond to intelligence he had received while Kimmel and Short were relieved of their commands for failing to act on the same intelligence they had never received.<sup>308</sup> MacArthur's disregard of Plan Orange hastened the Allied defeat and caused the destruction of U.S. air power in the western Pacific.<sup>309</sup> Yet, while at least nine investigations followed Pearl Harbor calling to task the actions of Kimmel and Short, no one ever questioned MacArthur's actions.<sup>310</sup> There were no inquiries to determine why the Battle for the Philippine

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<sup>303</sup> Costello, *The Pacific War*, 655.

<sup>304</sup> Costello, *The Pacific War*, 655.

<sup>305</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 5.

<sup>306</sup> Costello, *The Pacific War*, 655.

<sup>307</sup> Warner, Warner, and Seno, *Disaster in the Pacific*, 2.

<sup>308</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 5.

<sup>309</sup> Symonds, *World War II at Sea*, 216.

<sup>310</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 5.

Islands had essentially been lost on the first day of the Pacific War. Instead MacArthur was acclaimed a hero and granted even greater responsibility despite the loss of lives, territory, and equipment that were incurred under his command.<sup>311</sup>

Some historians feel this was because he offered no apologies or explanations for the plight of the Philippine Islands. He had unshakable confidence in his decisions and he acted with such cool self-assurance that prospective critics could not threaten his image. Also, MacArthur had sent two urgent telegrams to Washington calling for help and requesting they review the approved strategy in the Far East. He regarded the Philippines as “the lotus of victory or defeat” whose fall would ultimately ensure the loss of Singapore and the Asian mainland.<sup>312</sup> In addition, in a telegram to Marshall he indicated that “If the Western Pacific is to be saved, it will have to be saved here and now.”<sup>313</sup> Stimson, Marshall, and Roosevelt were in agreement with MacArthur. Allied troops had to stand up and fight and “make every effort at whatever risk to keep MacArthur’s line open and that otherwise we would paralyze the activities of everybody in the Far East.”<sup>314</sup> This helps explain why, contrary to Kimmel and Short, MacArthur retained his command and was never forced to face an investigation into the reasons for the Japanese success in the Philippine Islands on December 8, 1941.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 5.

<sup>312</sup> Prange with Goldstein and Dillon, *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict*, 528.

<sup>313</sup> Prange with Goldstein and Dillon, *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict*, 528.

<sup>314</sup> Prange with Goldstein and Dillon, *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict*, 529.

<sup>315</sup> Prange with Goldstein and Dillon, *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict*, 529.

Another reason suggested as to why MacArthur did not become another scapegoat like Kimmel and Short is that with the United States having recently incurred two major defeats with Pearl Harbor and the Philippine Islands, the country was desperately in need of a symbol and a public hero. Americans were familiar with MacArthur due to his excellent World War I record and for having successively served as the Army's Chief of Staff under Hoover and Roosevelt with whom he had a close relationship. He had charisma and star quality, confidence in the cause, and he demonstrated strong leadership skills along with a sense of purpose that personified American opposition to Japanese aggression. Despite his failure in the Philippines, it was anticipated that he would be successful in the future and his eventual victories justified Americans faith in him.<sup>316</sup> As Supreme Commander of the Southwest Pacific forces, with few resources and men, he launched one of the most brilliant counteroffensives in military history.<sup>317</sup>

Kimmel, on the other hand, felt that MacArthur's retention was because the Washington administration could not downgrade all the outpost commanders since Americans would question that. Washington officials had to select one place to assign the blame and that was Hawaii since Americans were more familiar with Hawaii than the Philippines Islands. However, this argument fails to acknowledge that Oahu was critical to the defense of the West Coast of the United States and any offensive directed toward the Far East. It was essential that Hawaii be defended to protect American security.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Prange with Goldstein and Dillon, *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict*, 529-530.

<sup>317</sup> Shirley, *December 1941: 31 Days*, 542.

<sup>318</sup> Prange with Goldstein and Dillon, *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict*, 529.

Despite the controversy, Douglas MacArthur emerged larger than life, and larger than the life of any other World War II general. Without question, he is regarded as one of the most successful generals of the Second World War. He became master of amphibious strategy which was required for success in the Pacific. Despite his huge ego, brashness, and pursuit of glory, he was deeply concerned for the welfare of his troops and carefully planned his operations to be both effective against the enemy but also consistent with the objective of minimizing casualties. He was very successful at this especially when considering the fanatical nature of the Japanese troops. After the war was won, he had compassion for the Japanese and managed the occupation of Japan competently with the objective of changing Japan into a democracy.<sup>319</sup> He served as supreme commander of Allied occupation forces in Japan from 1945 to April 11, 1951.<sup>320</sup> MacArthur's military career ended in April 1951 when he was fired by President Harry Truman due to his handling of the Korean War.<sup>321</sup>

MacArthur's reputation would later be tainted because of the \$500,000 he was paid by President Quezon of the Philippines seemingly for his prewar efforts on Quezon's behalf. Although President Roosevelt and Secretary of War Stimson were both aware of it, they ignored it. MacArthur died in 1964 and in the late 1970s it was confirmed that in February 1942 Chase National Bank of New York accepted a deposit of \$500,000, approximately \$5 million in current value, into General MacArthur's personal account. The Washington administration had wanted Quezon evacuated after their move to Corregidor but MacArthur argued that attempting to get

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<sup>319</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 179.

<sup>320</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 187.

<sup>321</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 197.

him out of the country was too dangerous. Perhaps this payment was given to MacArthur to persuade him to try since Quezon and his family were evacuated on a U.S. submarine on February 20, 1942. This was the day following the confirmation by the Chase National Bank for the receipt of the funds by MacArthur.<sup>322</sup>

In the late 1970s, historian Carol Petillo found confirmation of the \$500,000 payment among the papers of General Richard Sutherland, who had served as MacArthur's Chief of Staff, that were located in the National Archives. Included among the papers was Quezon's "Executive Order No. 1" authorizing total payments of \$640,000 to MacArthur and his staff. In addition to MacArthur's \$500,000, Sutherland received \$75,000, General Richard Marshall, Jr., MacArthur's deputy chief of staff, received \$45,000 and Lieutenant Colonel Sidney Huff, MacArthur's personal aide, received \$20,000.<sup>323</sup>

Accepting payoffs is against U.S. Army regulation yet MacArthur did not appear to have any reservations about accepting the money while the Philippines were being overtaken as a result of his continuous errors. MacArthur also demanded and received an additional \$35,000 in personal expenses, dated December 28, 1941, during the final collapse of Manila, the capital of the Philippines. When Chase notified the War Department in February 1942 of the deposits, they were instructed to complete the transactions because the Roosevelt administration was desperate for heroes and did not want MacArthur's image tainted. Yet, despite all the medals and honors MacArthur bragged about for the rest of his life, he never mentioned the Quezon reward.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 197-198.

<sup>323</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 198.

<sup>324</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 198.

There are some people who actually feel that MacArthur was paid off not to respond to the initial Japanese attacks in the hope of convincing the Japanese that the Philippines desired to stay neutral. That could possibly explain his refusal to empty warehouses of food and supplies in Manila for transport to Bataan as required by WPO-3, a series of United States Joint Army and Navy Board war plans referred to as War Plan Orange with the 3 that specified Japanese plans, until it was no longer possible, or his refusal to open fire upon Japanese occupied towns because it could harm civilians, along with his personal demand that all actions in the field performed by the lower commanders required his approval.<sup>325</sup>

Many questioned MacArthur's credibility including General Brereton, a lieutenant general in the United States Air Force. When his diaries were published in 1946, although he was respectful towards MacArthur, he details the events prior to and during the Philippine attack that described MacArthur's leadership as passive even during critical situations. The day Brereton's book went on sale, MacArthur issued a press release denouncing Brereton's diary as being nothing but lies. By condemning Brereton, MacArthur only embarrassed himself.<sup>326</sup>

Several years later, General Eisenhower who had served as MacArthur's aide for seven years, commented that MacArthur "was neither above nor below anything."<sup>327</sup> Eisenhower had been offered a payment of \$60,000 by Quezon but had refused the offer. He had the foresight to comprehend the potential implications of accepting a payoff.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 198.

<sup>326</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 198.

<sup>327</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 198.

<sup>328</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 198.



For historians, the battle for Bataan and the death march that followed became symbols. The former as a last stand and the later as an example of courage as the captured troops continued to walk. Although somewhat true, when the propaganda is removed, what is left is an example of miscarried morality and politics that generally underlie all appeal to arms that can often include bad leadership and empty promises. This battle also provides proof that once the first shot is fired, the rules of war are often replaced by war without mercy.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> Norman and Norman, *Tears in the Darkness*, 4-5.

## VI

### Battle of Savo Island

By the summer of 1942, the Allies also experienced another naval defeat in the Battle of Savo Island. On July 2, 1942, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered the Allied offensive in the Solomon Islands, referred to as Operation Watchtower, to begin.<sup>330</sup> The military campaign came to be known as the Battle of Guadalcanal because it took place on Guadalcanal, one of the southern Solomon Islands in the South Pacific. Guadalcanal marked the beginning of the American amphibious counteroffensives of World War II. The Joint Chiefs of Staff decided that an American offensive in the Pacific was required because the Japanese advance in that area posed a threat to the communications lifeline to Australia. American bases that were in the line of the Japanese offense were also threatened. Once it was confirmed that the Japanese were building an airfield on Guadalcanal, the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division received orders to seize the island.<sup>331</sup>

The United States strategy for the war in the Pacific involved a relatively simple set of tasks as compared with the Japanese plans which involved the invasion of multiple islands almost simultaneously. Americans focused on simply occupying the island, keeping the airfield

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<sup>330</sup> Mark Stille, *The Naval Battles for Guadalcanal 1942* (Long Island City: Osprey, 2013), 33.

<sup>331</sup> Joseph Mueller, "Guadalcanal," in *The Pacific War: From Pearl Harbor to Okinawa*, ed. Robert O'Neill (Oxford: Osprey, 2015), 86-87.

open, and responding to major Japanese reinforcement operations.<sup>332</sup> The essential part of the entire campaign was to maintain control of the sea approaches to Guadalcanal.<sup>333</sup>

The ultimate goal of Operation Watchtower was the capture of the Japanese base at Rabaul located on the island of New Britain but first, Henderson Field, the airfield on Guadalcanal, had to be seized. On August 7, 1942, the First Marine Division commanded by Lieutenant General Vandegrift, landed without incident and successfully secured the airfield by the next day. The Marines went on to capture the small island of Tulagi, with its natural harbor, along with the neighboring islands of Gavutu and Tanambogo that were defended and located across the sound from Guadalcanal.<sup>334</sup> To protect the transports and cargo ships unloading at the beach heads, one Australian and four American heavy cruisers and four destroyers were positioned to block the approaches to what became referred to as Iron Bottom Sound.<sup>335</sup> This was due to the large number of ship losses off Guadalcanal.<sup>336</sup> The landings completely surprised the Japanese. Their high command considered the immediate retaking of Guadalcanal a goal of the highest priority.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> Stille, *The Naval Battles for Guadalcanal*, 33.

<sup>333</sup> Dean C. Allard, foreword to *The Battles of Savo Island 9 August 1942 and the Eastern Solomons 23-25 August 1942*, by Winston B. Lewis (Washington, D.C.: Naval Historical Center, 1994), IV.

<sup>334</sup> Trent Hone, "Learning to Win: The Evolution of U.S. Navy Tactical Doctrine During the Guadalcanal Campaign," *Journal of Military History* 82 (July 2018): 817.

<sup>335</sup> Walter R. Borneman, *The Admirals: Nimitz, Halsey, Leahy, and King – The Five-Star Admirals Who Won the War at Sea* (New York: Little, Brown, 2012), 289.

<sup>336</sup> Mueller, "Guadalcanal," 86.

<sup>337</sup> Alison Sturgeon, ed., *World War II: The Definitive Visual History: From Blitzkrieg to the Atom Bomb* (New York: DK/Penguin Random House, 2015), 164.

The Japanese responded to the Allied landings instantly with attack planes and escorting fighters from Rabaul that flew over the invasion forces the afternoon of the landings. A strong Japanese counterattack continued with additional raids the next day. However, the air attacks were ineffective.<sup>338</sup> Therefore, during the late evening of August 8 and into the early morning hours of August 9, Japanese Rear Admiral Gunichi Mikawa who led the Japanese Eighth Fleet recently established at Rabaul, launched a surprise attack comprised of seven cruisers and one destroyer into Savo Sound.<sup>339</sup> In the early morning of Sunday, August 9, just after 1:43 a.m., a Japanese task force moved quickly and quietly into the Solomons and attacked U.S. and Allied naval ships.<sup>340</sup> The ensuing battle, known as the Battle of Savo Island, was unexpected and furious. The Allied ships reacted slowly, resulting in a devastating defeat for the U.S. Navy.<sup>341</sup>

In the Battle of Savo Island, part of the Guadalcanal Campaign, the overall commander of the Allied naval forces was U.S. Vice Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher. Rear Admiral Richmond K. Turner was the Commander of the Amphibious Force, South Pacific Force, also referred to as Task Force 62. He had appointed British Rear Admiral Victor Crutchley as his deputy.<sup>342</sup> In the battle, the U.S. Navy suffered the worst open-sea defeat in its history. Admiral Ernest J. King, chief of naval operations and commander in chief, U.S. Fleet, called it “the blackest day,”

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<sup>338</sup> Stille, *The Naval Battles for Guadalcanal*, 35.

<sup>339</sup> Williamson Murray and Allen R. Millett. *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 211.

<sup>340</sup> “Battle of Savo Island: Naval Defeat Stranded US Marines Guadalcanal,” <https://www.businessinsider.com/battle-of-savo-island-naval-defeat-stranded-us-marines-guadalcanal-2018-8>.

<sup>341</sup> Hone, “Learning to Win,” 818.

<sup>342</sup> Stille, *The Naval Battles for Guadalcanal*, 36.

and this opinion was widely shared and not just an exaggeration.<sup>343</sup> The incident was very demoralizing and set back Admiral King's policy of attack, attack, attack.<sup>344</sup>

The stunning victory achieved by the Japanese resulted from the lightning assault they launched that sunk four invaluable Allied heavy cruisers including the U.S. *Quincy*, *Astoria*, and *Vincennes*, along with the Royal Australian Navy's *Canberra* mortally wounding her captain, killing 1,077 sailors, and damaging other ships including the heavy cruiser *Chicago*.<sup>345</sup> Also, another consideration was that prior to the Japanese attack, the transports had not yet unloaded all the supplies needed to sustain the Marines that had landed on Guadalcanal.<sup>346</sup> The U.S. cruisers destroyed were protecting the transports that only two days before had started to land the First Marine Division at Guadalcanal and Tulagi.<sup>347</sup> Although some Allied ships managed to inflict minor hits on the Japanese, Mikawa's forces incurred very little damage and managed to escape essentially unharmed.<sup>348</sup> The Japanese had mastered the element of surprise, night fighting techniques, and the destructive power of their Long Lance torpedoes, then considered the most advanced, to achieve the utmost advantage.<sup>349</sup> Savo Island provided American naval forces with a painful lesson in the superiority of Japanese nighttime naval tactics.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> Warner, Warner, and Seno, *Disaster in the Pacific*, 3.

<sup>344</sup> Borneman, *The Admirals: Nimitz, Halsey*, 290.

<sup>345</sup> "Battle of Savo Island: Naval Defeat."

<sup>346</sup> Mueller, "Guadalcanal," 96.

<sup>347</sup> Warner, Warner, and Seno, *Disaster in the Pacific*, 3.

<sup>348</sup> Hone, "Learning to Win," 818.

<sup>349</sup> Sturgeon, ed., *World War II*, 164.

<sup>350</sup> Allard, foreword to *The Battles of Savo Island*, by Lewis, IV.

However, there were several human stresses involved in the disaster off Savo Island that should not be overlooked. The Allied crews were inexperienced and had not been adequately trained, especially in night fighting. Also, the Allied ships had not exercised together and therefore found it difficult to fight together.<sup>351</sup> Yet, despite these disadvantages, in the late afternoon of August 8, a long-range Hudson patrol plane that was a part of MacArthur's command from Milne Bay, had passed over the Japanese ships but the pilot's report was inaccurate and its transmission was delayed by more than nine hours due to the divided command structure in the Southwest Pacific. As a result, the patrol force of Catalinas and B-17s under the command of Rear Admiral John S. McCain, who in 1942 commanded all land-based air operations in support of the Guadalcanal campaign and was therefore responsible for air support and long-distance reconnaissance, did not conduct a follow-up search. Admiral Turner later called this oversight "a masterful failure of air reconnaissance."<sup>352</sup> As with the attack on Pearl Harbor, ineffective communication had resulted in a lack of preparedness and not training the troops for night encounters represents a failure to change the culture in response to current possible threats which again caused a lack of preparedness.

Following the Battle of Savo Island, the Japanese controlled the waters around Guadalcanal at night.<sup>353</sup> The incident caused the Guadalcanal operation to become doubtful. Admiral Nimitz had initially regarded this initiative as only requiring "about three days" of

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<sup>351</sup> Warner, Warner, and Seno, *Disaster in the Pacific*, 5.

<sup>352</sup> Symonds, *World War II at Sea*, 306-307.

<sup>353</sup> Stille, *The Naval Battles for Guadalcanal*, 33.

close-in carrier support.<sup>354</sup> Although it was initially regarded as a quick operation without much difficulty, it had become a desperate struggle to survive.<sup>355</sup> This battle clearly demonstrated to Allied planners that the Pacific war would be a brutal, island-hopping situation focused on violently taking essential air fields from Japanese control.<sup>356</sup>

It should be noted that the radar became the greatest possession the Americans had available in the night surface battles during the campaign. Although it had an important impact on several battles, at the beginning of the campaign American radars were somewhat primitive and commanders did not completely understand their purpose. However, radar proved to be vital in detecting approaching enemy vessels. The U.S. Navy was also developing ways to use radar to increase the effectiveness of night gunnery since visibility would no longer be an issue.<sup>357</sup>

In the aftermath of the battle, at Admiral King's discretion, an investigation regarding the conduct of the battle was initiated in December 1942. The board of inquiry, led by Admiral Arthur J. Hepburn, a former commander of the U.S. Fleet, was conducted by the U.S. Navy to determine what caused the defeat and whether blame should be placed on any individual engaged in the operation. Admiral Hepburn's report noted a long list of errors. An inadequate air search, along with poor communications, and failing to be adequately "battle minded" were cited.<sup>358</sup> However, it was determined that the primary cause of the defeat was the complete element of

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<sup>354</sup> Borneman, *The Admirals: Nimitz, Halsey*, 288.

<sup>355</sup> Warner, Warner, and Seno, *Disaster in the Pacific*, 5.

<sup>356</sup> Dale Dye, *The Pacific War: From Pearl Harbor to Okinawa*. (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2015), 8.

<sup>357</sup> Stille, *The Naval Battles for Guadalcanal*, 29.

<sup>358</sup> Symonds, *World War II at Sea*, 310.

surprise achieved by the Japanese. The question then became whether someone should have been held accountable for not anticipating it. The Hepburn report indicated that the United States had made omission errors that had impacted the outcome.<sup>359</sup> The surprise was successful due to the Allied vessels lack of training in night attacks, failure to correctly judge the meaning of enemy planes overhead just prior to the attack, placing too much confidence in radar, delaying the submission of contact reports, and not being informed that an effective air search had not occurred on August 8.<sup>360</sup> Although Turner was the senior officer present during the battle, he was not perceived as the culprit. Instead he was viewed as the victim. Crutchley was not blamed either but perhaps that was merely a gesture to maintain Allied harmony between the United States and Great Britain. Admiral King displayed a great deal of uncharacteristic empathy when he concluded that both men were placed in awkward positions yet they both performed their best with the means available to them.<sup>361</sup> Since communications and the conditions of readiness along with incorrect conceptions as to how to conduct this type of operation have since been corrected, the conduct of Rear Admiral R. K. Turner, U.S. Navy, and British Rear Admiral V. Crutchley, Royal Navy, were not found to be inefficient nor were they considered at fault in executing their parts of the operation. They simply found themselves in a difficult situation. Yet, they performed their best under this challenging position.<sup>362</sup> However, the sympathy King and Hepburn extended

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<sup>359</sup> Symonds, *World War II at Sea*, 310.

<sup>360</sup> Richard F. Newcomb. *The Battle of Savo Island* (New York: Henry Holt, 1961), 242-245.

<sup>361</sup> Symonds, *World War II at Sea*, 310.

<sup>362</sup> Newcomb. *The Battle of Savo Island*, 242-245.



to Turner and Crutchley was not extended to Fletcher.<sup>363</sup> Lastly, Admiral Hepburn recommended that the entire report should not be made public until after the end of the war.<sup>364</sup>

The Hepburn Report was treated as a dead issue per the advice of Captain George Russell. Flag officers with a good potential were limited and a full-scale inquiry that revealed all the facts might have destroyed the careers of not only Crutchley and Fletcher but also of Turner, who in later operations proved to be an excellent amphibious commander and perhaps even McCain who with Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher, led the carrier war when the kamikaze campaign was at its height. It would have also strained relations between Britain and the United States and the United States and Australia and that would have only been beneficial to Japan. There was much to be said for learning valuable lessons from previous mistakes and proceeding on with the war.<sup>365</sup> Yet, the response of the Hepburn Report investigating the Battle of Savo Island appears to be substantially different from the inquiries made into the Pearl Harbor attack even though both battles involved surprise attacks that resulted in Allied defeat with a substantial loss of human life along with ships and equipment.

The Guadalcanal Campaign was one of the most difficult campaigns of World War II. Although it began successfully for American forces with minimal initial opposition from the Japanese, that situation quickly changed and it became a lengthy battle of wills with both sides putting additional forces into the struggle.<sup>366</sup> The Battle of Guadalcanal was unique because it

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<sup>363</sup> Symonds, *World War II at Sea*, 310.

<sup>364</sup> Newcomb. *The Battle of Savo Island*, 242-245.

<sup>365</sup> Warner, Warner, and Seno. *Disaster in the Pacific*, 257.

<sup>366</sup> Allard, foreword to *The Battles of Savo Island*, by Lewis, III.

was among the longest in length in the Pacific theatre. The five-month campaign ended in overall victory despite the terrible defeat at Savo Island on August 8-9, 1942.<sup>367</sup> It took several months of fierce combat to drive the Japanese off the island and with that, the myth of Japanese invincibility in the Pacific was shattered.<sup>368</sup> Guadalcanal also became a model for jungle and naval warfare in the Pacific theatre during World War II. The American soldiers who invaded Guadalcanal were generally new volunteers without battle experience. However, a seasoned United States fighting force emerged from the battle. The most important gain for the Allies was possession of the island itself that they developed into one of the biggest advanced naval and air bases in the area. The island also acted as a springboard for other amphibious operations in the vicinity. The lines of communication with Australia were maintained. All of this resulted in total Army and Marine losses of 1,600 killed and 4,700 wounded with the Japanese losing 25,400 from all services. The naval losses resulted in each side losing about 25 major warships.<sup>369</sup>

The Battle of Savo Island, with the exception of the attack on Pearl Harbor, was the worst defeat in the history of the United States Navy. It was such a humiliating defeat that the American government determined it was best to keep the outcome an official secret and actually waited two months before acknowledging the disaster. The Battle of Savo Island included very sensitive issues that influenced Allied solidarity and morale at a crucial stage of the war. A public discussion over how the battle was handled was not something Britain, Australia, and the United States had the time to engage in.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>367</sup> “Battle of Savo Island: Naval Defeat.”

<sup>368</sup> Mueller, “Guadalcanal,” 86-87.

<sup>369</sup> Mueller, “Guadalcanal,” 111-112.

<sup>370</sup> Warner, Warner, and Seno. *Disaster in the Pacific*, 257.

Under the command of Rear Admiral Mikawa, the Japanese performed magnificently in the Battle of Savo Island.<sup>371</sup> They had caught the Allies completely and unbelievably unprepared.<sup>372</sup> However, Mikawa did not exploit his victory by attacking the American transport fleet after his victory at Savo Island.<sup>373</sup> Instead, he ordered a withdrawal at 2:25 a.m. on August 9, 1942, so as to be out of Allied aircraft range by daylight.<sup>374</sup> As a result, he became one of the most controversial Japanese leaders of World War II.<sup>375</sup> Also, despite the Savo Island disaster, Turner was not held responsible and his career was not jeopardized. He went on to help plan and execute amphibious operations against enemy positions in the south, central, and western Pacific contributing greatly to the ultimate victory. Towards the end of the war, he was selected to be the commander of the amphibious component in the invasion of Japan. However, this operation never occurred since the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan brought an abrupt end to World War II in August 1945.<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> Stille, *The Naval Battles for Guadalcanal*, 11.

<sup>372</sup> “Richard Turner.”

<sup>373</sup> Stille, *The Naval Battles for Guadalcanal*, 11.

<sup>374</sup> Symonds, *World War II at Sea*, 309.

<sup>375</sup> Stille, *The Naval Battles for Guadalcanal*, 11.

<sup>376</sup> “Richard Turner.”

## VII

### Battle of Sidi Bou Zid and Kasserine Pass

In addition to naval battles, there were also defensive army battles that were lost as was the case with the Battle of Sidi Bou Zid and the Battle of Kasserine Pass that were both a part of the Tunisia Campaign within Operation Torch, the invasion of Africa. The campaign that intended to drive the Axis forces from the northern coast of Africa, open the Mediterranean, and secure Allied traffic, was launched on Sunday, November 8, 1942. Over 100,000 troops from the United States and Great Britain landed ashore northwest Africa arriving along the Moroccan coast, at Oran, and Algiers.<sup>377</sup> American troops landed in Morocco and Algeria, while British troops went ashore near Oran.<sup>378</sup> There were nine landing sites along a 600 mile stretch on the coast of French North Africa. In addition to the troops, 430 tanks also landed. Three-quarters of the troops that landed, including six divisions that had never experienced combat, were Americans. The remainder were British.<sup>379</sup> The Battle of Sidi Bou Zid and the Battle of Kasserine Pass provide another example of battles that ended badly for American soldiers in World War II.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>377</sup> Roberts, *Churchill: Walking with Destiny*, 762.

<sup>378</sup> Stephen A. Ambrose, *The Victors: Eisenhower and His Boys: The Men of World War II* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 42.

<sup>379</sup> Roll, *George Marshall*, 258.

<sup>380</sup> Robert A. Newton, "Battle for Kasserine Pass: 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division Were Ambushed by the Afrika Corps at Sidi Bou Zid," *World War II* (September 2002), [www.historynet.com/battle-for-kasserine-pass-1st-armored-division-were-ambushed-by-the-afrika-corps-at-sidi-bou-zid.htm](http://www.historynet.com/battle-for-kasserine-pass-1st-armored-division-were-ambushed-by-the-afrika-corps-at-sidi-bou-zid.htm).

On February 14, 1943, near the Tunisian city of Sidi Bou Zid, American soldiers experienced a terrible Valentine's Day when a German counterattack created devastation.<sup>381</sup> The Battle of Kasserine Pass, the first major battle between American and German forces in World War II, took place from February 14 through February 17, 1943.<sup>382</sup> In the battle, the inexperienced United States 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, under the command of General Lloyd Fredendall, who had served in the Philippines and France during World War I, was ambushed by General von Arnim's Fifth Panzer Army, a part of the German Afrika Korps under the command of General Erwin Rommel, at the city of Sidi Bou Zid.<sup>383</sup> Rommel's objective was to divide the American and British in Tunisia and also to defeat the Americans in their first battle with the German army in the hope that this would give the Americans an inferiority complex. By February 16, 1943, Rommel had reached the Kasserine Pass. The inexperienced American troops had incurred major losses and Fredendall had essentially collapsed.<sup>384</sup>

General Fredendall's forces were defeated by General Rommel.<sup>385</sup> Within a week, American troops had been driven back eighty-five miles. This was further than the "bulge" created in the Battle of the Bulge that occurred in the Belgian Ardennes nearly two years later in December 1944. In terms of yardage lost, this battle may be regarded as the worst American

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<sup>381</sup> Newton, "Battle for Kasserine Pass."

<sup>382</sup> Newton, "Battle for Kasserine Pass."

<sup>383</sup> Sturgeon, ed., *World War II*, 187.

<sup>384</sup> Ambrose, *The Victors: Eisenhower*, 42.

<sup>385</sup> Ray Lambert and Jim DeFelice. *Every Man a Hero: A Memoir of D-Day, the First Wave at Omaha Beach, and a World at War* (New York: Harper Collins, 2019), 70.

defeat of the war. Eisenhower reported to Marshall, “Our people from the very highest to the very lowest have learned that this is not a child’s game.”<sup>386</sup> Eisenhower felt that despite the costly losses, the shock experienced by American troops after encountering the Wehrmacht on the offensive actually helped him instill in American troops the importance of eliminating complacency and incorporating battlefield discipline. The German panzers were very successful. They had achieved a decisive victory. Within just two days, the strength of the U.S. 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division had been substantially reduced. In the battle, they had lost 98 tanks, 57 halftracks, 29 artillery pieces and 500 men. The division also lost 100 of its highly trained tank crews. These were the darkest days in the history of the U.S. 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division.<sup>387</sup>

Many felt that the defeat was largely due to the fact that the Allied troops were inexperienced as compared to the Germans and were not yet familiar with war or how to kill.<sup>388</sup> Although this is partially true since the Americans had very little time to train, Fredendall had failed to deploy his forces effectively and he also neglected to provide leadership when Rommel attacked and the crisis ensued.<sup>389</sup> According to the military historian and writer Antony Beevor, Fredendall was a “disastrous commander.”<sup>390</sup> As the situation progressed from bad to worse, he continued to split his forces even further despite Eisenhower’s orders to the contrary. He rarely left his headquarters as he continued to order more and more attacks. At times his orders were

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<sup>386</sup> Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, 390.

<sup>387</sup> Newton, “Battle for Kasserine Pass.”

<sup>388</sup> Lambert and DeFelice. *Every Man a Hero*, 70.

<sup>389</sup> Murray and Millett. *A War to Be Won*, 400.

<sup>390</sup> Beevor, *The Second World War*, 411.

actually conflicting. In one instance this caused his infantry support, all inexperienced troops, to be bombed in their trucks by German Stuka dive bombers.<sup>391</sup> Fredendall had no idea what was going on at the front.<sup>392</sup> Situations similar to this must be what inspired Frederick the Great to state the “common soldier must fear his officer more than the enemy.”<sup>393</sup>

When General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander in North Africa and initially the commander of Operation Torch, made a belated command visit to Fredendall, he discovered that during the battle, the general had not correctly carried out his order for a standard deployment, and he had positioned his headquarters 80 miles behind the front, in a deep cave at Tebessa far from the battlefield, instead of being near the men under his command. Despite that, General Eisenhower did not formally reprimand Fredendall, but he did relieve him of his command of II Corps.<sup>394</sup> Considering that Fredendall had never left his command post once to visit the front and all his decisions were made on the basis of reviewing maps spread out in the operations room of his remote underground headquarters, it seems he was treated quite well.<sup>395</sup>

The American tactical defeat in the Battle of Sidi Bou Zid resulted in some personnel changes.<sup>396</sup> In March 1943, General Eisenhower appointed Major General George S. Patton to

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<sup>391</sup> Beevor, *The Second World War*, 411.

<sup>392</sup> Beevor, *The Second World War*, 411.

<sup>393</sup> Edmund G. Howe and Franklin D. Jones, “Ethical Issues in Combat Psychiatry,” in *Textbook of Military Medicine: Military Psychiatry: Preparing for Peace in War*, ed. Russ Zajtchuk (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Surgeon General, 1994), 120.

<sup>394</sup> “Lloyd Ralston Fredendall.”

<sup>395</sup> Charles Whiting, *Kasserine: First Blood* (New York: Stein and Day, 1984), 168.

<sup>396</sup> Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 443.

take over General Fredendall's command. General Patton selected General Omar Bradley as his second in command. Although General Patton and General Bradley were two very different generals and therefore seemed like an improbable team, together they made effective decisions.<sup>397</sup> General Patton became one of the most feared of the American military commanders. The Germans were actually afraid of him.<sup>398</sup> After assuming command, Patton assisted in the defeat of the Axis forces in Tunisia.<sup>399</sup> On D-Day when he led the Allies and was finally able to break out of the beachhead, the Germans realized defeat in the West was now inevitable.<sup>400</sup> While addressing his troops he once stated "An army is a team. It lives, eats, sleeps, and fights as a team."<sup>401</sup> In a speech to his staff, Patton stated that in battle one can't afford to be a fool because "fools mean dead men."<sup>402</sup>

For several years, General Fredendall was severely criticized for the poor American performance at Sidi Bou Zid. Yet, like several of his subordinate commanders, he was overmatched and unsuccessful at making the transition from World War I's static operations to the modern mobile warfare of World War II.<sup>403</sup> However, included among the list of American

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<sup>397</sup> Lambert and DeFelice, *Every Man a Hero*, 70.

<sup>398</sup> William "Wild Bill" Guarnere and Edward "Babe" Heffron with Robyn Post, *Brothers in Battle, Best of Friends: Two WWII Paratroopers from the Original Band of Brothers Tell Their Story* (New York: Berkley Caliber, 2007), 93.

<sup>399</sup> Sturgeon, ed., *World War II*, 286.

<sup>400</sup> Peter Margaritis, *Countdown to D-Day: The German Perspective* (Philadelphia: Casemate Publishers, 2019), 587.

<sup>401</sup> Sturgeon, ed., *World War II*, 286.

<sup>402</sup> Sturgeon, ed., *World War II*, 286.

<sup>403</sup> Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, 390.



strategic and operational failures during World War II was that the high command did not respond quickly enough in demoting or relieving commanders such as General Fredendall who did not demonstrate the skills required to handle contemporary warfare.<sup>404</sup> Also, Allied failings were very evident throughout this campaign. There was a lack of coordination among the divisions along with frequent leadership changes which sometimes occurred twice daily. This poor state of affairs was supported by General Robinett, a legendary American World War II tank commander who served in Africa and was involved in the battle. After the war he wrote, “Possibly one would have to search all history to find a more jumbled command structure than that of the Allies in this operation.”<sup>405</sup> According to General Marshall, the Kasserine setback was essentially due to piecemeal deployment, which shattered unit cohesion, lengthy supply lines that caused the troops at the front to be short of required resources, and intelligence breakdowns.<sup>406</sup> Also, the tactical setback that occurred at Kasserine Pass should not have been completely unexpected considering the American troops had very little time to train for the landing.<sup>407</sup> Yet, General Marshall had a very clear idea of what comprised successful leadership in the military and he “insisted that a general officer be immediately relieved if found less than outstanding.”<sup>408</sup> It was essential to focus on one clear goal and who was best able to pursue it. When standards

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<sup>404</sup> Victor Davis Hanson, *The Second World Wars: How the First Global Conflict Was Fought and Won* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 444-445.

<sup>405</sup> Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, 390-391.

<sup>406</sup> Roll, *George Marshall*, 258.

<sup>407</sup> Murray and Millett. *A War to Be Won*, 300.

<sup>408</sup> Thomas E. Ricks, “What Ever Happened to Accountability,?” *Harvard Business Review* (October 2012). <https://hbr.org/2012/10/what-ever-happened-to-accountability>.

are not strictly maintained and incompetent performance is allowed to remain in the leadership ranks, the standards are lost as is the potential of the organization to continue to grow and become increasingly effective.<sup>409</sup>

According to Rommel, victory in battle, with the exception of significant variances in the number of troops and amount and quality of equipment along with the courage of the troops, does not rest solely on the victor's planning. The outcome of the battle cannot be entirely attributed to the merits of the victor. It is also attributable to the mistakes made by the defeated forces. He felt this rule was applicable to the African Campaign. Rommel stated that the requirements of mechanized warfare included speed of movement, flexibility, and close contact between those in command and the troops. He was astonished with the speed with which Americans adopted to modern warfare with all its complexities. Rommel felt in Tunisia, where he demonstrated his mastery of mobile operations, the Americans were forced to pay a high price to acquire their experience but it produced rich dividends.<sup>410</sup> A key marker of excellence for an army is adaptability. Leaders must be able to recognize a changing situation and effectively respond to it. Rommel, like the Allies and Axis enemies, noticed that given how much the U.S. forces had to learn in World War II, they did so very quickly.<sup>411</sup>

Kasserine Pass, in the long run, proved to be significant in setting the U.S. Army on the course to evolving into an effective military organization. It was unfortunate that several of the British senior officers failed to acknowledge that although Kasserine Pass brought to surface the

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<sup>409</sup> Ricks, "What Ever Happened to Accountability?."

<sup>410</sup> B. H. Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*. trans. Paul Findlay (New York: Da Capo Press, 1953), 519-521, 523.

<sup>411</sup> Ricks, "What Ever Happened to Accountability?."

initial problems experienced by the U.S. Army as it began rearmament, they were only temporary, and would soon be overcome with additional training and experience. Yet, because of the British senior officers refusal to acknowledge this, throughout the war they continued to underestimate the increasingly remarkable abilities demonstrated by the U.S. ground forces.<sup>412</sup>

Eisenhower was ultimately responsible for the loss in the Battle of Sidi Bou Zid and Kasserine Pass because he was not tough enough and on February 20, he publicly acknowledged this when he called together reporters for a press conference in Algiers and took “full responsibility for the defeat.”<sup>413</sup> He admitted that he had underestimated French vulnerability and had stretched the Allied line too thin to the breaking point. Other unacknowledged failings included that he had recommended, but not demanded, that Fredendall launch a vigorous counterattack on February 22.<sup>414</sup> Rommel had succeeded in getting through the Kasserine Pass on February 21 and Eisenhower considered this an opportunity to stop him while he was vulnerable due to the long, single supply line that ran through a narrow pass. Eisenhower urged Fredendall to launch an immediate counterattack on Rommel’s flanks with the objective of seizing the pass, cutting off the Afrika Korps, and destroying it. However, Fredendall disagreed with Eisenhower’s belief that Rommel had gone as far as possible. Instead Fredendall felt Rommel would attempt to launch one more attack and insisted on remaining on the defensive to meet it. Eisenhower’s belief proved to be correct and Rommel began his successful retreat that night and the Allies lost a fleeting opportunity to destroy the Afrika Korps.<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>412</sup> Murray and Millett. *A War to Be Won*, 300.

<sup>413</sup> Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, 391

<sup>414</sup> Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, 391

<sup>415</sup> Ambrose, *The Victors: Eisenhower*, 43.

Despite Fredendall's poor judgment, Eisenhower remains the man most responsible for the American deficiencies in this battle. He had allowed Fredendall to retain his command despite his serious and valid doubts. Eisenhower made it possible for a disordered command situation to continue and he had acknowledged intelligence reports based on insufficient sources. Also, by not ordering certain initiatives to be taken, he enabled Rommel to escape. Kasserine was Eisenhower's first actual battle and when considering the event as a whole, his overall performance was terrible. It was only American firepower and German shortages that prevented him from experiencing a humiliating defeat.<sup>416</sup> After the war, Eisenhower wrote "had I been willing at the end of November to admit temporary failure and pass to the defensive, no attack against us could have achieved even temporary success."<sup>417</sup> Yet, despite Eisenhower's role in the loss, in December 1943, he was assigned to command the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe.

General Fredendall, in spite of the fact that he had been relieved of his command after his devastating defeat in Africa, was actually promoted to lieutenant general in June 1943 since Eisenhower had nominated him for the promotion prior to the defeat and had never formally reprimanded him for the defeat. Fredendall was also assigned a training command of the Second Army at Memphis, Tennessee, and returned to the United States a hero.<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> Ambrose, *The Victors: Eisenhower*, 43-44.

<sup>417</sup> Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, 391.

<sup>418</sup> "Lloyd Ralston Fredendall."

## VIII

### The Battle of the Bulge

After General Eisenhower, along with General Montgomery's British Eighth Army, had defeated all Axis forces in the North African campaign by mid-May 1943, he commanded the campaigns in Sicily and Italy.<sup>419</sup> The tide of the war was beginning to turn with the Allied offensive making significant gains in the Pacific and Italy while the Germans were experiencing setbacks in Eastern Europe and North Africa.<sup>420</sup> On July 28, 1943, President Roosevelt stated, "The massed, angered forces of common humanity are on the march. They are going forward—on the Russian Front, in the vast Pacific area, and into Europe—converging upon their ultimate objectives: Berlin and Tokyo."<sup>421</sup>

By the late fall of 1943, Germany, initially regarded as the most powerful force in World War II, found itself struggling hard to protect its Third Reich. Although its armies remained strong, Germany had several powerful enemies aligned against them on several fronts. The German High Command was especially concerned about Western Europe due to the inevitable invasion of Europe by the Western Allies. Strategists on both sides felt that if the invasion was

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<sup>419</sup> Waqas Ali, "5 of the Largest Amphibious Invasions in Modern History," [www.warhistoryonline.com/military-vehicle-news/messerschmitt-bf-110-luftwaffes-airborne-artillery-night-fighter\\_pictures.html](http://www.warhistoryonline.com/military-vehicle-news/messerschmitt-bf-110-luftwaffes-airborne-artillery-night-fighter_pictures.html).

<sup>420</sup> Eileen Daspin and Michael Solomon, eds., *World War II in 500 Photographs* (New York: Liberty Street, 2016), 138.

<sup>421</sup> Daspin and Solomon, eds., *World War II in 500 Photographs*, 139.

successful, it would mark the beginning of the end for the Third Reich.<sup>422</sup> The German Field Marshall Erwin Rommel stated, “If we once manage to throw the British and Americans back into the sea it will be a long time before they return...”<sup>423</sup> In December 1943, General Eisenhower became the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force for the invasion of Normandy, the largest amphibious attack in history.<sup>424</sup> In September 1944, as the Western Powers continued to advance towards Germany, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) was predicting the end of the war by Christmas.<sup>425</sup>

However, after Hitler had survived the attempt made on his life by the von Stauffenberg Conspiracy, an assassination plot by Hitler’s own senior Wehrmacht officers, on July 20, 1944, he interpreted it as a sign from Providence that he must continue his work. On July 25, 1944, the BBC announced the war would only end if Germany accepted total and unconditional surrender. For Hitler, this left no option but to continue to fight to the bitter end. Therefore, it was late July when Hitler began to plan his final, desperate gamble to defeat the Allies in the West.<sup>426</sup>

Although the Allies realized the Germans might attempt a counterattack, since D-Day the U.S. Army had been conducting very successful offensive operations. As a result of this success, the spirits of American soldiers were lifted and they felt the enemy was no longer able to launch

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<sup>422</sup> Margaritis, *Countdown to D-Day*, xi.

<sup>423</sup> Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 453.

<sup>424</sup> Waqas Ali, “5 of the Largest Amphibious Invasions.”

<sup>425</sup> Roberts, *Churchill: Walking with Destiny*, 851.

<sup>426</sup> Alex Kershaw, *The Longest Winter: The Battle of the Bulge and the Epic Story of WWII’s Most Decorated Platoon* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2004), 3-7.

a significant counteroffensive. They also had the conviction that the war was nearly won.<sup>427</sup>

Therefore, by the end of 1944, Eisenhower faced a new problem called “victory fever” that created a sense of invulnerability due to the previous successes which in turn, generated complacency.<sup>428</sup> Once the Allied forces drove into Belgium there was a general tendency to relax. This attitude originated from the top and was driven down throughout the ranks.

Eisenhower’s inter-Allied Intelligence Staff reported to him that the Germans could not generate sufficient forces to challenge the Allied defense line and Eisenhower conveyed this information to his subordinates.<sup>429</sup> Therefore, their recent battlefield victories caused them to feel overconfident that they would be able to drive back the enemy should the situation arise. Also, Allied intelligence did not think it would be possible for the enemy to assemble the forces required to initiate a major assault.<sup>430</sup> They failed to acknowledge the Germans formidable ability for counter-attack. Furthermore, statistics made it evident that the German fighting soldier and his generals outperformed American, British, and Russian troops both offensively and defensively by a significant factor throughout World War II. The Allied victories were dependent on numerical superiority and their eventual complete control of the air.<sup>431</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> Hal C. Pattison foreword to the first printing *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge: U.S. Army in World War II: European Theater of Operations*, by Hugh M. Cole (Atlanta: Whitman Publishing, 2012), vii.

<sup>428</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 176.

<sup>429</sup> Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, 567.

<sup>430</sup> Roger Cirillo, *Ardennes-Alsace: The U.S. Campaigns of World War II* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 2005), 3.

<sup>431</sup> Andrew Roberts, *Masters and Commanders: How Four Titans Won the War in the West, 1941-1945* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), 581.

In early September 1944, Hitler assigned Goebbels with the task of raising twenty-five new divisions within the Home Army to support their western defenses. Between September 1 and October 15, 240,000 men were found. Also, despite the Allied bombing offensive following Normandy, in September 1944, German industry had produced the highest levels of war material output than in any other month of the war. This was the result of Speer's policy of dispersal of production and assembly away from the traditional areas. Despite these accomplishments, a great deal of self-delusion was required to consider this rebuilding and re-equipment as reparation for the catastrophic losses incurred by Germany in the summer of 1944. Hitler was a master of self-delusion and he remained adamant in his refusal to allow any of his commanders to surrender ground under any circumstances. On August 19, 1944, Hitler summoned Keitel, Jodl, and Speer to inform them to begin preparation for a major counteroffensive in the west planned for November when the night, fog, and snow would ground the Allied air forces and provide the conditions for a German victory.<sup>432</sup>

While the Americans did not feel a German counteroffensive was imminent, the Germans were very resourceful and desperate. Also, in *Mein Kampf (My Struggle)* Adolf Hitler stated, "Strength lies not in defense but in attack."<sup>433</sup> Hitler often exerted his influence on military operations during World War II by trying to gain or regain the initiative. Therefore, his attempt to launch an offensive to create a setback to the Allied advance should have been somewhat anticipated by the Allies.<sup>434</sup> Underestimating the Germans proved to be very dangerous. Not only

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<sup>432</sup> Keegan, *The Second World War*, 439-440.

<sup>433</sup> Cirillo, *Ardennes-Alsace*, 3.

<sup>434</sup> Cirillo, *Ardennes-Alsace*, 3.



were their weapons and equipment equal to the Allies, in some respects they were actually superior. The Germans also had the advantage of surprise.<sup>435</sup> One of the primary reasons the Germans choose the Ardennes, a 75-mile stretch along the front, as the area to launch their offensive was that it would have the benefit of surprise since the American high command considered it an unlikely place to counterattack due to its difficult terrain. For that reason, it was not a heavily fortified area along the Allied line. It was defended by exhausted U.S. divisions that were new to combat. The Germans relied on deception and the failure of Allied intelligence to realize the clues indicated German strength was focused on the Ardennes.<sup>436</sup>

Therefore, despite the Allied belief that it was not possible, Germany was building up new armies to strike a major offensive blow against the Western Powers. The Germans codenamed this extremely daring and dangerous offensive Watch on the Rhine.<sup>437</sup> During the afternoon of December 11, 1944, German division commanders who were to be involved in the offensive were gathered at Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt's headquarters in Ziegenberg Castle. They were ordered to remove their side arms, leave their briefcases, and board a bus. They were taken on a circuitous tour on a dark, rainy night that lasted about half an hour and ended when they arrived at *Adlerhorst*, which was only a three-minute drive from Ziegenberg Castle. When leaving the bus, the generals walked between a double row of armed SS guards, standing at attention, as they entered an underground conference room. They sat down around a large square table with an SS guard positioned behind each chair. Fritz Bayerlein, one of the

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<sup>435</sup> David Jordan, *Battle of the Bulge: Germany's Last Offensive December 1944-January 1945* (London: Amber Books, 2019), 59.

<sup>436</sup> Jordan, *Battle of the Bulge*, 59.

<sup>437</sup> Sturgeon, ed., *World War II*, 284.

generals, later commented he was afraid to even reach for his handkerchief. Hitler then entered the room with Keitel and Jodl and sat at a long narrow table at the end of the room. Next, he revealed his planned offensive and commented about the unusual bedfellows the war had aligned against Germany – “Ultra-capitalist states on one side; ultra-Marxist states on the other.” He went on to state that a celebrated victory would “bring down this artificial coalition with a crash.”<sup>438</sup>

Hitler’s initiative required a great deal of material and armaments. During the nights of December 13, 14, and 15 German armor, artillery, and infantry began to gradually move forward to their attack positions located along the Belgian-German-Luxembourg border. This force included more than 200,000 men assigned to thirteen infantry and seven panzer divisions in addition to 1,000 tanks and nearly 2,000 guns, all deployed along a 60-mile front. Their operational armor was actually equal to what was on the entire Eastern Front. A second wave also moved forward that contained more than five divisions. In addition, other troops followed in reserve and they were equipped with at least 450 more tanks.<sup>439</sup>

Although the war, from any realistic military perspective, had been lost, Hitler committed his remaining reserves to a final surprise counteroffensive.<sup>440</sup> At 5:30 a.m. on December 16, 1944, Adolf Hitler, against the advice of his generals who considered the plan way too ambitious, stunned the Western Allies by launching Field Marshal Walter Model’s Army Group B consisting of three armies composed of the newly formed Sixth Panzer Army made up of SS

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<sup>438</sup> Charles B. MacDonald, *A Time for Trumpets: The Untold Story of the Battle of the Bulge* (New York: Quill, 1985), 47.

<sup>439</sup> Cirillo, *Ardennes-Alsace*, 3.

<sup>440</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 25.

Panzer divisions and infantry, the Fifth Panzer Army and the Seventh Army against five divisions of the United States First Army, the weakest point in the Allied line.<sup>441</sup> The Germans began the attack before dawn with a 1,900-gun artillery barrage by 200,000 soldiers and 1,000 panzers. This show of force greatly outnumbered the barely 80,000 U.S. infantrymen, 240 tanks, and 400 artillery pieces that sparsely manned the Ardennes sector.<sup>442</sup>

The initial objective of the offensive was to disrupt the Western Allies by dividing them, gain crossings over the Meuse River, and continue advancing to Antwerp, which was the ultimate objective.<sup>443</sup> To execute this, the Germans were attempting to cut through the Allied forces, capture the port of Antwerp, a key Allied port and supply depot, and create an obstacle to Eisenhower's eastward advance towards Germany.<sup>444</sup> The purpose of this initiative was to split the British-Canadian armies from the American army which the Germans hoped would force a negotiated peace.<sup>445</sup> Hitler hoped these initiatives would enable him to accomplish his ultimate objective of destroying the Allied forces north of the Ardennes and securing Antwerp.<sup>446</sup> To accomplish this, German forces would have to capture the small Belgian town of Bastogne that

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<sup>441</sup> Sturgeon, ed., *World War II*, 284.

<sup>442</sup> Jerry D. Morelock, foreword to the Whitman Publishing Edition *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge: U.S. Army in World War II: European Theater of Operations*, by Hugh M. Cole (Atlanta: Whitman Publishing, 2012), ix.

<sup>443</sup> Sturgeon, ed., *World War II*, 284.

<sup>444</sup> Dick Winters with Cole C. Kingseed, *Beyond Band of Brothers* (New York: Berkley Caliber, 2006), 164-165.

<sup>445</sup> Pattison, foreword to the first printing *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, by Cole, vii.

<sup>446</sup> Stephen E. Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander: The War Years of Dwight D. Eisenhower* (New York: Anchor Books, 2012), 557.

served as a critical road junction within the Ardennes Forest or bypass the town and instead continue their advance on secondary roads since there were seven roads that branched out from the center of Bastogne. The Germans chose to capture Bastogne.<sup>447</sup> Although within the first 24 hours the panzers had broken through the largely inexperienced American units and were headed toward the Meuse River, which was partially linked to the capture of Bastogne, and the city of Antwerp, the German commanders were actually disappointed in their progress because Hitler had given the German 5<sup>th</sup> Panzer Army only 72 hours to reach the Meuse River. They were also astonished that the U.S. Army's VIII Corps fought so hard. Hitler's timetable was disrupted by the Americans display of courage and determination.<sup>448</sup> The element of surprise and the winter months were absolutely essential for the success of the German offensive since the winter weather and especially the winter fog made it challenging for the Allies to use their air power. This was critical to the success of the German attack due to the overwhelming supremacy of the Allied Air Force by late 1944.<sup>449</sup>

In March 1944, Allied air supremacy was enhanced with the introduction of the P-51 Mustang. The P-51 fighter was a new phenomenon. Equipped with drop tanks, external auxiliary fuel tanks, they were able to fly 600 miles from their British bases and even go beyond Berlin. The Eighth Air Force was no longer confined to attacks in France and the Low Countries. They now had fighter escort into Germany and were able to diminish the strength of the Luftwaffe.<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>447</sup> Winters with Kingseed, *Beyond Band of Brothers*, 164-165.

<sup>448</sup> Jordan, *Battle of the Bulge*, 6.

<sup>449</sup> Sturgeon, ed., *World War II*, 284.

<sup>450</sup> Keegan, *The Second World War*, 430.

Early German gains in the battle can be largely attributed to the attack catching the Allies completely by surprise and to the heroic actions of the German soldiers. Although under difficult circumstances due to weather conditions similar to Russia and impassible roads, they were forced to carry out a hopeless mission, as the law demanded of both Allied and German soldiers bound by orders and obedience to perform their duties.<sup>451</sup> However, just before Christmas 1944, the American units were becoming increasingly stronger and dominated the situation by fighting back with more and more determination.<sup>452</sup> On Christmas Eve the cloud cover finally cleared and ten thousand Allied planes attacked the German fortifications and by January 3, the Germans had been driven back.<sup>453</sup> The German Army's aggressive plan to capture the bridges over the Meuse River and go forward to Antwerp was stopped by counterattacking American forces, fuel shortages, and traffic jams. For Germany, there was no longer a glimmer of hope as the end and defeat became increasingly obvious.<sup>454</sup>

The extent of the German counter offensive caught Allied headquarters completely by surprise. The Allies missed numerous early warning signs of an offensive. Some American commanders, like General Eisenhower, disregarded reports of increased German activity near the Ardennes, and enemy prisoners who claimed that a major attack was about to be launched were also ignored.<sup>455</sup> As early as December 4, a captured German soldier had disclosed that a large

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<sup>451</sup> Will Fey, *Armor Battles of the Waffen-SS 1943-45*. trans. Henri Henschler (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 1990), 183.

<sup>452</sup> Fey, *Armor Battles*, 199.

<sup>453</sup> Jay Winik, *1944: FDR and the Year that Changed History* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015), 502.

<sup>454</sup> Fey, *Armor Battles*, 204.

<sup>455</sup> "8 Things You May Not Know About the Battle of the Bulge," [https:// www.history.com](https://www.history.com).

attack was being planned, and his disclosure was confirmed by several other German soldiers taken prisoner in the days that followed. They even revealed that the attack was planned for the week before Christmas.<sup>456</sup> Allied Intelligence had also been aware since October that the panzer divisions were being refit for new battles.<sup>457</sup>

However, despite ignoring initial reports, Eisenhower was the first of the senior Allied commanders to recognize that the German counterattack was more than merely a local initiative.<sup>458</sup> His prompt reaction contributed greatly to the ultimate American victory in the Battle of the Bulge. Within hours of being informed of the German offensive, Eisenhower ordered a reorientation of the entire front line. Reinforcements to critical points were quickly rushed in and he issued orders that brought in more than 600,000 American troops, 1,300 tanks, and 2,000 pieces of artillery to stop the German invasion and turn back the most powerful attack launched by Germany against the Western Allies in Europe during World War II. Yet, the critical fact in this situation is that the two divisions that Eisenhower held in SHAEF reserve were not alerted for moving to the scene of the battle until the evening of the next day, December 17.<sup>459</sup> Although Eisenhower's strategy was correct and effective for countering the enemy offensive, in the end, it was the determination of the American soldiers that must be credited with preventing the Germans from achieving the breakthrough they had gambled so much for.<sup>460</sup>

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com/news/8-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-battle-of-the-bulge.

<sup>456</sup> Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, 643.

<sup>457</sup> Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, 642.

<sup>458</sup> Winters with Kingseed, *Beyond Band of Brothers*, 164.

<sup>459</sup> Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, 642.

<sup>460</sup> Morelock, foreword to *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, by Cole, x.

However, the question continues to be raised as to why these significant warnings received so little attention. Despite all this movement of German troops and artillery, the December 15 daily situation report for the VIII Corps stated: “There is nothing to report.”<sup>461</sup> Although the Allied side appeared quiet, the Allied troops were actually situated in the path of two of Hitler’s armies.<sup>462</sup> Also, neither Montgomery nor Eisenhower nor any of the commanders under them imagined the threat of enemy interference in the pursuit of their offensive drive towards Germany. On the morning of December 16, 1944, Montgomery released the following statement to his troops in the 21<sup>st</sup> Army Group: “The enemy is at present fighting a defensive campaign on all fronts; his situation is such that he cannot stage major offensive operations.”<sup>463</sup> General Bradley, the commander of the American forces of the 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group, shared the same opinion.<sup>464</sup>

Apparently, much of it was due to disfunction within the Intelligence groups. The Intelligence head of the First Army was not on agreeable terms with the Operational head or with the Intelligence head of the Army Group. They failed to draw correct deductions from the facts gathered. The 8<sup>th</sup> Corps incorrectly concluded that the Germans were moving troops on the front to provide new troops with front-line experience.<sup>465</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Cirillo, *Ardennes-Alsace*, 3.

<sup>462</sup> Cirillo, *Ardennes-Alsace*, 3.

<sup>463</sup> Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, 639.

<sup>464</sup> Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, 639.

<sup>465</sup> Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, 643.

Intelligence failed to provide an accurate picture of the strength of the attack. Forrest Pogue stated four reasons for this in his intensive analysis of the failure of Allied intelligence to detect that Hitler had amassed numerous divisions for this offense.<sup>466</sup> This question continues to be challenging when considering the numerous divisions amassed for this offense actually exceeded the number of divisions used for the 1940 offensive campaign against France that caused the country's collapse.<sup>467</sup> First, aside from overconfidence and the belief that the war would be over by Christmas, Eisenhower and Bradley acknowledged that the Germans were capable of striking but they were uncertain as to where an attack would come. Therefore, they were reluctant to move their troops because it was impractical and it would disrupt their offensive plans.<sup>468</sup> The Allied aerial reconnaissance was unable to help identify German assembly areas due to the terrible weather conditions. Also, the Germans used radio-listening silence and communicated by phone to maintain secrecy when they were within their own borders. This hindered interception of their signal traffic.<sup>469</sup> The second reason for the intelligence failure was SHAEF's unwavering emphasis on an offensive strategy which became a significant downfall.<sup>470</sup> The Allies had been on the offensive for so long they no longer considered that the Germans would attempt to take the initiative. They embraced the military belief that "attack is the best defense" to prevent the enemy from striking back.<sup>471</sup> The third was

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<sup>466</sup> Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 554.

<sup>467</sup> Winters with Kingseed, *Beyond Band of Brothers*, 164.

<sup>468</sup> Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 554.

<sup>469</sup> Winters with Kingseed, *Beyond Band of Brothers*, 164.

<sup>470</sup> Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 555.

<sup>471</sup> Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, 643.



the mistaken belief that German Field Marshall von Rundstedt, who Hitler had reappointed as the commander in chief in the West, was controlling the strategy of the German forces.<sup>472</sup> He had the reputation of exercising caution and therefore would not place his troops in the open where they could face possible destruction from the Allied air force.<sup>473</sup> The Allies had anticipated that the Germans would launch an initiative that encompassed a more realistic estimate of Germany's current capabilities. They had envisioned von Rundstedt's primary goal would be to get across the Meuse River. This was in fact consistent with von Rundstedt's thinking.<sup>474</sup> However, in reality, von Rundstedt had nothing to do with launching the counterattack. He disagreed with the offensive actions and washed his hands of it leaving his subordinates to carry out the orders as best they could under the circumstances.<sup>475</sup> Lastly, Allied headquarters had greatly underestimated Germany's remaining military resources and their ability to continue waging war.<sup>476</sup> The Allies believed that the German fuel shortage would prevent any counterattack.<sup>477</sup> Of all these factors, the most important one was Eisenhower's unrelenting emphasis on the offensive.<sup>478</sup>

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<sup>472</sup> Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, 643.

<sup>473</sup> Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 555.

<sup>474</sup> Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 557.

<sup>475</sup> Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, 643-644.

<sup>476</sup> Winters with Kingseed, *Beyond Band of Brothers*, 164.

<sup>477</sup> Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 555.

<sup>478</sup> Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 555.

The Allied Higher Command's sluggishness at comprehending the situation can also be attributed to the slowness with which the information was returned to them during the battle. This was impacted by the German commando's infiltration through the shattered front disguised as American soldiers and cutting several of the telephone wires that ran back from the front.<sup>479</sup>

According to Stephen Ambrose, the German initiative was also such a shock because it was a foolish idea that never really had a chance of succeeding.<sup>480</sup> Also, in initiating this major thrust, the Germans appeared to be prepared and willing to employ their entire armored reserve in the hope of achieving success.<sup>481</sup> Yet, Eisenhower's planners were correct in predicting that Hitler did not have the ability to stop an Allied advance once the improving weather allowed the Allies to receive air support.<sup>482</sup>

Eisenhower announced that the enemy had "launched a rather ambitious counterattack east of the Luxembourg area where we have been holding very thinly."<sup>483</sup> Eisenhower's lack of strategic reserve posed the greatest problem.<sup>484</sup> Yet, he ended on a positive note stating that the Allies should not only be able to stop the thrust, but they should also be able to profit from it because if the Germans depleted their troops in a counterattack, they would only be asking for a quicker defeat.<sup>485</sup> By December 18, Eisenhower had completed his plans and he was ready to

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<sup>479</sup> Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, 642.

<sup>480</sup> Mullener, *War Stories*, 204.

<sup>481</sup> Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 557.

<sup>482</sup> Winters with Kingseed, *Beyond Band of Brothers*, 164.

<sup>483</sup> Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 556.

<sup>484</sup> Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 556.

<sup>485</sup> Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 556.

“take immediate action to check the enemy advance.”<sup>486</sup> When Eisenhower opened the meeting with the Allied high command he stated, “The present situation is to be regarded as one of opportunity for us and not of disaster.”<sup>487</sup> This would immediately be followed by the launch of a counteroffensive using all forces north of the Moselle.<sup>488</sup>

At one point during the battle, Montgomery would not allow Eisenhower to remove the 101<sup>st</sup> or 82<sup>nd</sup> off the line because he would then be forced to replenish with other troops and he did not want to lose the best he had. This was a mistake from the beginning and many soldiers lost their lives because of it. Several mistakes were made by men that never even heard a shot fired.<sup>489</sup> After a few weeks, the 101<sup>st</sup> were relieved and sent to Mourmelon where a division parade was held several weeks later. The entire 101<sup>st</sup> was awarded the Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation for their defense of Bastogne. They were the first division to ever receive such an honor. Eisenhower attended and he walked down the line congratulating some of the men personally.<sup>490</sup>

However, even though Eisenhower had made good decisions in regards to how to overcome the German offensive in the Battle of the Bulge, it would have been far better if he had listened to the warnings and prevented the German counteroffensive from initially inflicting such a devastating blow to the Allied advance that resulted in such a significant loss of life not just

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<sup>486</sup> Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 557.

<sup>487</sup> Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 558.

<sup>488</sup> Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 557.

<sup>489</sup> Guarnere and Heffron with Post, *Brothers in Battle, Best of Friends*, 179-180.

<sup>490</sup> “General Dwight D. Eisenhower,” <https://www.nps.gov/articles/general-eisenhower.htm>.

due to the enemy, but also due to the cold. Nevertheless, Eisenhower willingly accepted all the blame for it and he was correct in doing so. As the Supreme Commander, he did not correctly read the mind of the enemy commander. He failed to realize that it was Hitler, not von Rundstedt, that was directing the strategy and he failed to acknowledge that Hitler was capable of trying anything. Since Eisenhower held the top post of military command, he was the man responsible for the vulnerability of the line in the Ardennes for it was he who had demanded the offenses north and south of the area be maintained. His policies resulted in not having any general SHAEF reserves available.<sup>491</sup>

The Battle of the Bulge became the largest, costliest single battle ever fought by the United States Army.<sup>492</sup> General Eisenhower commanded the Allied forces in this battle that would be the last great counteroffensive in the West by the Germans in World War II.<sup>493</sup> It was the greatest battle fought by U.S. forces in the European Theater of World War II.<sup>494</sup> When the fifty mile German breakthrough referred to as the “bulge” was alleviated with the Allies regaining the ground they had lost by mid-January 1945, American forces had incurred 81,000 casualties while German casualties were in excess of 100,000 which included the majority of their armored reserves.<sup>495</sup> The American losses increase to 89,000 when including the wounded, missing, and captured, and, unfortunately, 3,000 civilians from Belgium and Luxembourg also

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<sup>491</sup> Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 555.

<sup>492</sup> “General Dwight D. Eisenhower.”

<sup>493</sup> Winters with Kingseed, *Beyond Band of Brothers*, 163-164.

<sup>494</sup> Morelock, foreword to *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, by Cole, x.

<sup>495</sup> Jordan, *Battle of the Bulge*, 186.

became casualties of the battle.<sup>496</sup> The battle was successful in bringing about irreparable damage to the German army in Western Europe as the Allies continued to advance to the Rhine.<sup>497</sup>

The attack did not end until January 25, 1945.<sup>498</sup> The Germans also referred to this battle as the Ardennes Offensive.<sup>499</sup> The Allies referred to it as the Battle of the Bulge due to the bulge-shaped frontline created by the German advance.<sup>500</sup> The Germans had succeeded in creating a wedge, referred to as a bulge, 70 miles wide and 50 miles deep that split American and British troops.<sup>501</sup> This was Hitler's last desperate offensive gamble to stop the Allies advance towards Germany and achieve victory in Western Europe.<sup>502</sup> If the Germans had been successful in capturing the Antwerp port, the course of the war in Europe may have been altered. The defeat of the German campaign secured the ultimate victory of the Allied forces in Western Europe.

Yet, despite the battlefield victories, some of the military leaders during World War II expressed some negative comments in regard to General Eisenhower. In early December 1944, Montgomery expressed disapproval in the overall progress of the European war effort. Eisenhower received a letter from Montgomery that made him "hot under the collar."<sup>503</sup> In the

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<sup>496</sup> Morelock, foreword to *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, by Cole, ix.

<sup>497</sup> Jordan, *Battle of the Bulge*, 186.

<sup>498</sup> Cirillo, *Ardennes-Alsace*, 51.

<sup>499</sup> Roberts, *Churchill: Walking with Destiny*, 851.

<sup>500</sup> Weinberg, *A World at Arm*, 720.

<sup>501</sup> Daspin and Solomon, eds., *World War II in 500 Photographs*, 200.

<sup>502</sup> "The Battle of the Bulge," <https://www.army.mil/botb/>.

<sup>503</sup> Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, 639.

letter, Montgomery was critical of Eisenhower's strategy and its failure thus far to cause the Germans to capitulate. He even went on to suggest that Eisenhower should turn over the executive command.<sup>504</sup> Also, General Patton joked that the "D.D." in Ike's name must mean "Divine Destiny" since he was continually promoted despite the fact that he had never actually commanded any troops in the field. In late 1944 and 1945, Eisenhower was also criticized for the broad front strategy he adopted for the invasion of Germany. Many felt this lengthened the war because scarce supplies were spread out too thinly rather than being massed at a point.<sup>505</sup>

However, Eisenhower's greatest skills were as a diplomat and military strategist. He was a new kind of military leader because he did not lead men directly into battle but rather led the commanders who led the men into battle. Eisenhower's command authority relied on the approval of those under his command. General Marshall regarded Eisenhower as a leader with the ability to offer realistic solutions in situations that appear hopeless.<sup>506</sup> Marshall recognized an exceptional combination of aptitude for strategy, a thorough understanding of logistics and organization, and a natural talent for military politics.<sup>507</sup> He had to implement policies in such a way that the war effort was advanced rather than hindered.<sup>508</sup> It was these abilities that can be attributed to Allied victories in North Africa and Europe and validated him as being one of the greatest military leaders in the world. Even critics of certain aspects of his management of the

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<sup>504</sup> Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, 639.

<sup>505</sup> Roberts, *Leadership in War*, 161-162, 164.

<sup>506</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 173.

<sup>507</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 174.

<sup>508</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 176.

European campaign acknowledge he was an indispensable military leader since there are few leaders who possessed the skill to unite such a complex and difficult alliance as the Allied nations in World War II.<sup>509</sup> He also had no intention of providing the Nazis with any refuge or hope. He despised the Germans and blamed them for World War II and the inhuman destructiveness that accompanied it. After visiting the Ohrdruf work camp he wrote to General Marshall, “The things I saw beggar description.”<sup>510</sup>

Eisenhower was without doubt a remarkable leader yet some of his decisions did have negative consequences. Despite Eisenhower’s disregard for the warning signs of a massive German offensive and some bad decisions that cost many lives, he was promoted to a Five-Star General on December 20, 1944.<sup>511</sup> After Germany surrendered on May 7, 1945, many regarded General Eisenhower as a great hero.<sup>512</sup> Yet, as in the Pearl Harbor attack, Eisenhower, like Kimmel and Short, was not anticipating an attack even though many feel there were sufficient warning signs indicating there was a large possibility of one. They were all caught by surprise, and both battles resulted in a significant loss of life. Yet, the consequences were extremely different. While Eisenhower emerged a hero, Kimmel and Short were publicly disgraced and at least so far, have never been pardoned.

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<sup>509</sup> Axelrod, *The 30 Most Influential People*, 177.

<sup>510</sup> Edsel with Witter, *The Monuments Men*, 307-308.

<sup>511</sup> “General Dwight D. Eisenhower.”

<sup>512</sup> “General Dwight D. Eisenhower.”

## IX

### Conclusion

During World War II, inconsistencies existed in the treatment of officers in command of defensive battles that were lost. Disastrous defensive military battles caused some commanders to become scapegoats while others maintained and actually enhanced their status and position within the military and among the American people. December 7, 2019, marked the 78<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, which led to the United States entering World War II. Since 1941, Pearl Harbor has become an icon in historical memory filled with powerful symbolism while at the same time continuing to become increasingly more visible in American culture.<sup>513</sup> It illustrates the necessity of military preparedness, the relevance of military and foreign policy vigilance, the deceit within the Roosevelt administration, and the unfair scapegoating of military officers.<sup>514</sup>

The Second World War was the largest and most complex war ever fought and America emerged from it as the only unchallenged superpower.<sup>515</sup> To understand the world in which we currently live, requires some understanding of it.<sup>516</sup> The world today is a product of World War II in more ways than you can imagine. The reason the United States has a policy of deterrence, a

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<sup>513</sup> Emily S. Rosenberg, *A Date Which Will Live*, 1-2.

<sup>514</sup> Emily S. Rosenberg, *A Date Which Will Live*, 6.

<sup>515</sup> Shirley, *December 1941: 31 Days*, 543.

<sup>516</sup> Keegan, *The Second World War*, 5.



CIA, missiles, and spy satellites is rooted in the Pearl Harbor attack. Strategic choices were made that generated monumental consequences. For example, although Pearl Harbor is considered a great Japanese victory, in the long run it proved to be a terrible mistake on their part that ultimately led to their downfall. The attack unified the United States and made Americans determined to fight to the bitter end. President Roosevelt would have been challenged attempting to convince Americans how critical and inevitable entering World War II had become since many people continued to regard it as a foreign war that did not concern the United States.<sup>517</sup> According to Stephen Ambrose, “The common man in America just wanted to wash his hands of the whole business.”<sup>518</sup> Roosevelt felt the only way to rally Americans to support entering the war was if our country was forced to resist an overt act of war directed towards the United States.<sup>519</sup> American’s reaction to the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor supported Roosevelt’s belief. Yet, a poll taken in September 1941 found that 67% of Americans felt it was better to risk war with Japan than allow the country to continue to grow more powerful.<sup>520</sup> Japanese military cables pointing towards hostilities had been intercepted and decoded but Roosevelt’s policy was that “The United States desires that Japan commit the first overt act.”<sup>521</sup> Although risky, Roosevelt’s policy was intended to obtain the Allied forces ultimate victory over the Axis powers that threatened civilization and the liberties Americans embraced.<sup>522</sup>

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<sup>517</sup> Mullener, *War Stories*, 29.

<sup>518</sup> Mullener, *War Stories*, 2.

<sup>519</sup> Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*, xiii.

<sup>520</sup> Beschloss, *Presidents of War*, 382.

<sup>521</sup> Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*, xiv.

<sup>522</sup> Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*, xiv.

History has demonstrated that “National disasters and their attendant shock need scapegoats,” and the Pearl Harbor disaster was no exception.<sup>523</sup> Admiral Husband Kimmel and General Walter Short were held accountable for the circumstances of the Pearl Harbor attack, many of which were out of their control. They were actually deprived of intelligence intercepted from the Japanese that may have increased their awareness of the potential risks they were facing in early December 1941.<sup>524</sup> In addition to not receiving the warning messages, they were also denied the supplies and equipment required to effectively operate the Pearl Harbor base. The commanders at Pearl Harbor were sacrificed to meet the political motivations of the day while MacArthur was rewarded. Their treatment may be regarded as disproportional especially when considering that the attacks on Pearl Harbor and the Philippines were so intertwined and similar. It is very disconcerting to think about the disparity between the treatment of the Hawaiian and Philippine commanders after their losses.<sup>525</sup> General Fredendall, General Eisenhower, and Admiral Turner were also in comparable situations without incurring similar consequences. This disparity of judgment was not only made by the administration but also by the media and the public.<sup>526</sup>

For example, newspaper articles can be biased and reflect the reporters’ views concerning an incident rather than simply reporting the facts as they occurred. Also, newspapers do not

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<sup>523</sup> Victor, *The Pearl Harbor Myth*, 1.

<sup>524</sup> Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*, xiv.

<sup>525</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 2.

<sup>526</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 8.

usually publish many historical articles since “that’s yesterday’s news.”<sup>527</sup> In addition, the research focused on the broader issues of communication and leadership within the military from the late 1930s to the mid-1940s to determine whether justice was applied throughout its ranks or only among the strong and powerful since crucial information was not shared with all the leaders.<sup>528</sup>

The research problem that addresses inconsistencies in the treatment of officers in command of defensive battles lost may be considered insignificant to most Americans. In the case of Pearl Harbor, there does not seem to be much interest in reviving a tragic national historical event except for those still hoping to right the wrong inflicted on Admiral Kimmel and General Short and restore the respect and honor they deserve. Americans justified the instant success of the surprise attack by saying it was due to neglect within our military. Admiral Kimmel and General Short should have expected such an attack and were, therefore, guilty as charged without anyone ever looking higher up for answers. Our country’s national obligation for justice was challenged by an inaccurate understanding of military tradition that believes that the commander of a defeated military force must always be blamed for the defeat.<sup>529</sup>

Since it was power and politics that essentially opened the door to war, the argument stressed what can be learned from these incidents that is currently applicable. The events addressed provide examples of America’s ongoing struggle for justice since scapegoats are a means of creating a unifying force to direct actions. Also, others in the military may have

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<sup>527</sup> Stephen E. Ambrose, foreword to *War Stories: Remembering World War II*, by Elizabeth Mullener (New York: Berkley Books, 2002), xvi.

<sup>528</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 8.

<sup>529</sup> Beach, *Scapegoats: A Defense of Kimmel and Short*, 5.

experienced, or may be currently experiencing, similar treatment as a scapegoat. Awareness of this issue will hopefully stop any current situations from continuing and prevent others from ever beginning.

These themes continue to be relevant because people are at the heart of great events and their fate is often determined by forces over which they have minimal or no control.<sup>530</sup> World War II continues to remain highly relevant. It still has much to teach us about military preparedness, global strategy, and combined operations in a coalition war against a common enemy.<sup>531</sup> Attempting to understand the past can provide important lessons in the present. History is full of changes that can be revolutionary, unexpected, and present both threats and opportunities. The politics can be difficult to predict since informal communication may also play a significant role among such high-ranking officials when dealing with critical situations. Therefore, in certain instances, official documents are not able to present an adequate picture. Commanders in war can be prevented from recording their views on paper due to policy, military security, or simply lack of time. Also, when they are recorded, the writings reflect the events as they appeared to be at the time without the benefit of hindsight. Unfortunately the steps taken that culminate in making important decisions are often times made very quickly due to great urgency and they only remain in the memories of the participants who were directly involved.<sup>532</sup> This makes it difficult to determine exactly who knew what due to a lack of evidence since the

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<sup>530</sup> Magnus Linklater, foreword to *Scapegoats: Thirteen Victims of Military Injustice*, by Michael Scott (London: Elliott and Thompson, 2013), x.

<sup>531</sup> Sullivan, introduction to *Ardennes-Alsace: The U.S. Army Campaigns*, by Cirillo, 2.

<sup>532</sup> King, introduction to *Fleet Admiral King*, vii.

channels of communication were not adhered to and much of the communication transpired without any record of it actually occurring.

Currently, it would be difficult for some of the experiences described in this investigation to occur. For example, the inability to recall critical phone conversations regarding military communications would no longer be considered an acceptable excuse. During World War II phone calls were not required to be recorded but now they generally are. The lessons from the past are important for contemporary strategic planning and are particularly relevant today.<sup>533</sup> An old axiom of war states that plans should focus on what the enemy is capable of doing rather than what the enemy will do.<sup>534</sup> Knowledge of the enemy is critical to understanding and acknowledging their strengths and weaknesses. War entails the loss of countless lives and concludes with catastrophic damage to both property and social values. Every time a nation goes to war the possibility of making fatal errors exists and no one can predict just how or where the errors may occur. Although war and its dangers should always be avoided, sometimes that is impossible either due to the justice of the cause or the aggression of the enemy. The entry into World War II was attributable to both. However, flexibility is essential to successful strategy which focuses on planning that incorporates the constant process of rethinking and questioning to avoid making drastic mistakes.<sup>535</sup> The debate still rages over its cause. Intriguing questions

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<sup>533</sup> Barry S. Strauss and Josiah Ober, *The Anatomy of Error: Ancient Military Disasters and Their Lessons for Modern Strategists* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), ix.

<sup>534</sup> Niles, "Pearl Harbor," 266.

<sup>535</sup> Strauss and Ober, *The Anatomy of Error*, 245-247.

that focus on the critical issues surrounding the controversy of how the catastrophe at Pearl Harbor could have occurred continue to exist.<sup>536</sup>

The significance of the defensive battles reviewed, aside from the treatment of officers in command of these battles, was the impact they had on ordinary lives. They brought some people together while they drove others apart. They scattered millions of people around the globe. For those who actually witnessed them, the battles impacted them for the remainder of their lives. They shaped their character and world view and established their values. They lived through times that fundamentally changed the world forever. There was no turning back.<sup>537</sup>

The Greeks believed that if you kept a hero's name in the public eye, the person would never die. Many of the political or military leaders from World War II seem to have achieved that immortality even though they often failed to effectively communicate with those considered responsible.<sup>538</sup> Chains of command can be weak or completely non-existent with orders that are imprecise and lead to catastrophic mistakes. When that happens, leaders want to avoid responsibility and almost always those further down the chain of command are blamed and condemned by the very people who should have tried to sustain them.<sup>539</sup> Following catastrophes, peoples' beliefs are challenged. Americans were questioning the credibility of the Roosevelt administration and whether the trust they had placed in their leaders was justified. Many people

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<sup>536</sup> Costello, *The Pacific War*, 655-657.

<sup>537</sup> Mullener, *War Stories*, xxii-xxiii.

<sup>538</sup> Guarnere and Heffron, with Post, *Brothers in Battle, Best of Friends*, 241.

<sup>539</sup> Linklater, foreword to *Scapegoats: Thirteen Victims*, by Scott, x.

were also afraid that the Japanese could invade the West Coast. In the effort to regain confidence, Americans sought people to blame for their unsettling situation.<sup>540</sup>

Wars are generally preceded by strategic decisions made that resulted from secret intelligence regarding enemy intentions.<sup>541</sup> American history has repeatedly shown that politics and truth do not always go together.<sup>542</sup> History at its core can be flawed, confused, and often dysfunctional.<sup>543</sup> Wars are initiated and fought with manipulation of information, generally for patriotic purposes, that can be misleading and promote national myths. After the war ends, the government's control of information diminishes but the patriotic myths linger long after they have served the situation that promoted them. Roosevelt's need to unite the nation and defend his administration is long past and should be put into perspective.<sup>544</sup> In a war, the penalty for a commanders' error of judgment can be devastating. The weight of the injustice they experienced continues to cloud the remainder of their lives as they continue to fight to restore their honor.<sup>545</sup> In the words of Daniel Webster, "A sense of duty pursues us ever....If we say the darkness shall cover us, in the darkness as in the light our obligations are yet with us. We cannot escape their power, nor fly from their presence."<sup>546</sup>

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<sup>540</sup> Victor, *The Pearl Harbor Myth*, 4.

<sup>541</sup> Victor, *The Pearl Harbor Myth*, 8.

<sup>542</sup> Johns, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, 198.

<sup>543</sup> Linklater, foreword to *Scapegoats: Thirteen Victims*, by Scott, xi.

<sup>544</sup> Victor, *The Pearl Harbor Myth*, 16.

<sup>545</sup> Scott, *Scapegoats: Thirteen Victims*, 305.

<sup>546</sup> Daniel Webster, *The Works of Daniel Webster*, vol. 6 (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1851), 105.

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