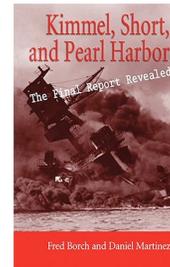


Review of the book
*Kimmel, Short, and Pearl Harbor,
The Final Report Revealed,*
by Fred Borch and Daniel Martinez,
Naval Institute Press, Annapolis 2005.



by Thomas Kimmel

Kimmel, Short, and Pearl Harbor, The Final Report Revealed, by Army attorney Fred Borch, and Park Ranger Daniel Martinez, purports to be revealing and final. It is neither, because it suffers the same shortcoming as the Dorn Report itself, which it annotates – none of the authors has any operational military experience, nor do they defer to those that do. Neither do historian promoters on the book’s dustcover, Messrs Goldstein, Love, Stillwell, or Polmar. In an apparent effort to offer some balance of opinion, a counterpoint paper by former COMSIXTHFLT, and D/CINCPAC Vice Admiral David Richardson is added as an appendix, but it is ignored.

The issue is this: Should Rear Admiral Kimmel and Major General Short, the commanders at Pearl Harbor during the attack, continue to be punitively excluded by the Navy and by the Army as the only flag and general officers, otherwise qualified, not to receive the benefit of the *Officer Personnel Act of 1947* – advancement to their highest temporary ranks held in World War II of admiral, and lieutenant general, respectively? The authors and dustcover promoters, except Mr. Stillwell (page 105), say yes. Giants of World War II, Nimitz, Halsey, Spruance, Kinkaid, and Burke say no. Admiral Richardson drives the point home in his counterpoint appendix. In fact, in writing, the United States Congress, the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, the Naval Academy Alumni Association, the Admiral Nimitz Foundation, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, six former Chiefs of Naval Operations, two former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, one former Director of Central Intelligence, thirty-three four-star admirals (seven already mentioned), and the official historian

of naval operations in World War II say no.

To the authors' credit the false allegation that Admiral Kimmel's "most grievous failure," was that he knew of and ignored advice regarding the direction and extent to which he should have ordered long-range air reconnaissance prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor is not made, as it was so recklessly made by the book's *Foreword* writer in 1981 in *At Dawn We Slept*, page 733, and again in 1986 in *Pearl Harbor, The Verdict of History*, page 441, in a chapter even titled, *His [Admiral Kimmel's] Most Grievous Failure* (see *Reopen the Kimmel Case*, by Michael Gannon, *Naval Institute of Proceedings*, December 1994). Less credit is due the authors for styling *At Dawn We Slept* as, "acknowledged by professional historians as the best single-volume history of Pearl Harbor." How can that be while still containing this most grievous error, which has never been acknowledged, let alone corrected, by its authors? Perhaps the most-dangerous sector myth that Admiral Nimitz tried so hard to kill in 1942 is finally dead – notwithstanding an effort to resurrect it by another contributing dustcover historian, Mr. Polmar, in his latest book.

The authors, page 12, inaccurately list the date and the attendees at the April 27, 1995 Thurmond Hearing, page 12. I, and others are left out, but see Admiral Richardson's appendix, page 124, for an accurate list and date (unfortunately, this appendix is not indexed). These errors are not of much moment until the authors state that, "Unfortunately for the Navy, [the General Counsel of the Navy] Steve Honigman had been too strident and combative in the meeting. Thurmond was now more convinced than ever that the Navy could not be fair." Actually Honigman was worse than strident. As the chief gatherer of facts for the attending Secretary of the Navy and the Deputy Secretary of Defense he was wrong on a key fact as he read what he styled "the *official* position of the Navy today" to Chairman Thurmond and all assembled. With great certainty he argued against Kimmel stating that Kimmel had been allowed to call and to cross-examine witnesses before the Joint Congressional Committee, which is flat wrong as I pointed out to Mr. Honigman in turn. The fact of the matter is that only one of the ten tribunals that investigated the attack accorded Admiral Kimmel the opportunity to call and to cross-examine witnesses, the Naval Court of Inquiry. Neither the Dorn Report, nor the authors mentioned this fact, let alone gave it any weight. What did the Naval Court of Inquiry find? You will not find out in the Dorn Report, or from the authors' annotations.

1. They found that there was not a scintilla of evidence to support a

charge of dereliction of duty against Admiral Kimmel;

2. They found that Admiral Kimmel committed no errors of judgment;
3. They approved of all of Admiral Kimmel's force dispositions on the basis of information that he was given;
4. The President of the Court, Admiral Murfin, opined that they thought Admiral Kimmel had done everything possible under the circumstances; and finally
5. They severely criticized Admiral Kimmel's only uniformed boss in the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Stark, for not keeping Kimmel properly informed.

The authors state, page 43, that "the [Naval] Court... concluded that the evidence was insufficient to warrant court-martial of Admiral Kimmel. . . . However, the evidence strongly suggested 'errors of judgment'." I challenge the authors, the dustcover historians, or anyone else to cite an example of where the Naval Court of Inquiry suggested any error of judgment by Admiral Kimmel. The authors mention, page 4, that in 1988 then Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Trost declined to support Rear Admiral Kimmel's advancement to four-star rank stating that "there is a vast difference between a degree of fault which does not warrant a punitive action and a level of performance which would warrant bestowal of a privilege," page 38. The authors fail to mention that Admiral Trost's 1988 opinion was prompted by flawed research from his Director of Naval History who relied on Mr. Goldstein's previously described *most grievous error*. Nor do the authors mention that, six years later the Kimmel Family finally gained access to the Director of Naval History's flawed memorandum, and pointed the errors out to CNO Admiral Trost, who then honorably wrote to Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton on October 4, 1994, withdrawing his memorandum to Secretary Webb, dated January 19, 1988, and asked that the case of Admiral Kimmel be reopened. "I believe such action is owed to the Admiral," he wrote, "to his sons, and to the Navy. No mistake should be allowed to stand in this sensitive matter, and I personally disavow my unwitting support of one (see *Reopen the Kimmel Case*, page 56)." Today Admiral Trost supports Rear Admiral Kimmel's advancement as does former Navy Secretary James Webb.

The authors state, page 83, that, “it is important to remember that no adverse action of *any kind* was ever taken against Kimmel or Short.” But see the authors’ bracketed addition to General Brooks’ description on General Short’s relief in time of war, page 9, “General Brooks viewed this relief as ‘sufficient [adverse] action against him.’ ” The Dorn Report cover letter, with the authors’ apparent approval, page 118, stated that, “The official treatment of Admiral Kimmel and General Short was substantially temperate.” General Frank of the Army Pearl Harbor Board (APHB) said that, “General Short had received a soldier’s greatest punishment, relief from his command, and retirement in time of war (*Pearl Harbor Story*, by General Henry Russell also of the APHB, page 160).” Recall that similar and less public adverse action against the commanding officer of the *USS Indianapolis* resulted in his 1968 suicide.

The authors report, pages 36 and 37, that, “There is little in the record to indicate why those decisions [not to advance Kimmel and Short] were reached. . . . Presumably decisions not to advance Admiral Kimmel and General Short were based on review of their performance at Pearl Harbor.” The authors point out that General Gerow was a member of a board that reviewed such matters. Whether or not General Gerow had a hand in reviewing advancement for Short is not revealed. Recall that the famous November 27th War Warning Message, which did not do the job either in the Philippines, or in Hawaii for whatever reason, was drafted by General Gerow, and should have given him sufficient reason to recuse himself from any advancement review consideration of Short. The authors take exception to the Dorn Report in only one instance, page 66. The Dorn Report said that, “Admiral Kimmel and General Short did not get tactical warning.” (Indeed, the Dorn Report goes so far as to argue that Admiral Kimmel was not entitled to tactical information from Washington, only strategic information, and that Admiral Kimmel committed error by relying on Washington for tactical information.) The authors say, “The Dorn Report is incorrect on this point,” because Admiral Kimmel received tactical warning when the *USS Ward* attacked a submarine at about 6:40 a.m. The authors fail to mention that the only reason the *Ward* attacked the submarine was because Kimmel countermanded CNO Stark’s standing order not to attack submarine contacts around Hawaii – see Admiral Kimmel’s Story, pages 74-77 for details (an excellent copy can be found at this link: <http://www.rooseveltmyth.com/KimmelStory/>). See notice at end of article. Should Admiral Kimmel be criticized, or praised for

firing the first shot?

The Dorn Report mentioned that Admiral Kimmel had received a report on December 2, 1941 that the Japanese aircraft carriers could not be located. The authors infer much from this, page 54, but, like the Dorn Report, do not mention that that situation was normal. As the Memorandum for the Roberts Commission from Lieutenant Commander E. T. Layton, Fleet Intelligence Officer Pacific Fleet, dated January 5, 1942, 17PHA2486, clearly stated, the failure to identify Japanese carrier traffic, on and after December first when the call signs changed, was not an unusual condition. During the six months preceding Pearl Harbor, there existed a total of one hundred and thirty-four days – in twelve separate periods, each ranging from nine to twenty-two days – when the location of the Japanese carriers from radio traffic analysis was uncertain. That was 74% of the time.

The vast majority of damage at Pearl Harbor was inflicted by air-dropped torpedoes in shallow water. The prevailing wisdom of the day was that ships in Pearl Harbor were immune from such shallow-water attack by air. The Dorn Report took Kimmel to task for not requesting torpedo nets, but neither the Dorn Report nor the authors made mention of Admiral King's endorsement to the Naval Court of Inquiry, that "the decision not to install torpedo baffles appears to have been made by the Navy Department [in Washington, DC]." Furthermore no mention was made in the Dorn Report, or by the authors, that the Navy Department had a secret report in its files, dated July 15, 1941 from its London Naval attach that the British had developed the capability to successfully air drop torpedoes in water as shallow as 24 feet. Obviously, this report would have radically changed Kimmel's estimate of the prevailing wisdom, but it was not furnished to Kimmel, or to any of the ten investigations, and was not declassified until 1998.

The authors discuss Henry Clausen's book, *Pearl Harbor, Final Judgement*, in considerable detail without mentioning that General Marshall's champion – not his critic – Clausen said, "Marshall... had caused perjured testimony to be presented to the [Army Pearl Harbor] Board. Marshall had ordered his subordinates to lie to the Army Board, and they had complied (35PHA101, and Pearl Harbor, Final Judgement, pages 193, 201). General Miles, head of Army intelligence, signed an affidavit admitting that he had lied to the APHB, and that Marshall had ordered it (35PHA102). General Gerow, the head of Army war plans also lied to the APHB. Marshall let stand testimony to the Roberts Commission by Admiral Ping Wilkinson, Director

of the Office of Naval Intelligence, that, “Care was taken [in Washington] to see that these two officers [Admiral Hart in the Philippines, and Admiral Kimmel in Hawaii] were kept fully advised as to developments. [Admiral Hart and Admiral Kimmel] had available to them the same [MAGIC] information [as we did] here [in Washington]. Admiral Stark, Admiral Turner, General Gerow, and General Miles also acquiesced to Admiral Wilkinson’s false testimony. The silence of the authors, the G historians, and the Dorn Report to admitted official perjury disappoints. Admiral Wilkinson killed himself in 1946 by accident or design.

Mr. Polmar recently told an audience at the Naval History Center in Washington, DC that, “[Admiral Kimmel and General Short] were harassed. . . and that was wrong. They were treated poorly, no question of that. And for that I think the Navy, the Army, Congress, the Country owes them an apology.” Admiral Kimmel dedicated the remainder of his long life to bringing the facts about Pearl Harbor to the American public. He was remarkably successful, but clearly much still needs to be done.

Notice:

The web-site <http://www.rooseveltmyth.com/> contains the entire text of the books: *Admiral Kimmels Story* by Admiral H.E. Kimmel, and of *The Final Secret of Pearl Harbor: the Washington Contribution to the Japanese Attack*, by Rear Admiral Robert A. Theobald. Any opinion expressed in the aforesaid web-site is not an opinion of the Kimmel family who declines any responsibility for them.