

# Pacific Theatre

## Part 4

“In which we investigate infamous days”

By Lestrade aka Unpopular Opinion

Miles: Part 4 will be published in three parts, to build up the tension.

First published: May 20, 2022

*There's no freedom of speech in the UK but I'll say my opinion anyway*



Hello again! To recap, initially this series came about from me reading about the Aleutian Islands campaign on Wikipedia and becoming increasingly incredulous the more I read. I'd never been taught about that part of World War 2 (my history teacher was obsessed with talking about Schleswig-Holstein, I have no idea why, possibly to make World War 2 as boring as possible) and was delighted to find an overstuffed pinata of nonsense that fell apart just by reading it through and asking basic questions. The logical follow-up was to think “OK, so what else was fudged?” and to look at the wider Pacific campaign in more detail.

Of course, I will not pretend to be a learned historian or greybeard scholar, so expected that any major inconsistencies or nonsense would already be uncovered in the hundreds of books, documentaries and interviews about the Pacific campaign over the decades since the conflict ended. I thought I might get lucky and spot one or two things, but really, what could I possibly add? Instead what I have found is that once you start picking at it, the whole thing messily implodes.

I was intending to next do a “road trip” of the Americans fighting across the Pacific and start talking about Wake Island, Midway and so on but a sort of cosmic incident happened, wherein the Muses\*

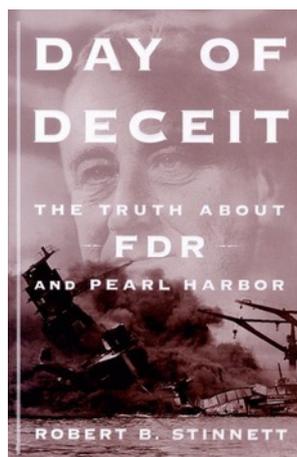
metaphorically grabbed me by the collar and hurled me through a wall. When I picked myself up I found myself in a cavern entirely full of Pearl Harbour revelations. It was honestly like things just kept popping up and waving at me and I merely needed to list them. Initially I tried to ignore it, get back on track and do Pearl Harbour later but of course one shouldn't fight the flow and I ended up writing about what they wanted me to write about instead.

I want to head off the inevitable comments this series will provoke of “You limey bastard, my father/grandfather died in X and he was a hero”. I would like to clarify upfront that many people did indeed die or were injured in the Pacific campaign, including at Pearl Harbour and **I intend no insult to the various military personnel and civilians who were hurt or killed in the conflict.** What I am trying to do is get a finer delineation between what actually happened and what the military/Phoenixian narrative tells us happened. To use an analogy: you have full fat milk and semi skimmed milk. The “full fat” fraud in this conflict would be cases like the bombing of Dutch Harbour or the battle of Iwo Jima which are absolute nonsense from start to finish. These are essentially pieces of fiction, not backed by anything but bluster.

The “semi skimmed” fraud in this are the various battles where military personnel of the USA were pitted against their equivalents in the Imperial Japanese Army in what I would describe as controlled skirmishes. There are various aspects of these incidents that show they are “padded” (e.g. exaggerated death numbers, faked photographs, completely illogical battle plans, obviously fictional prose inserted into the battle account etc.) and although men died we note the stage-managed nature of the thing and, perhaps more importantly, do not find an actual existential conflict between two nations properly going at each other, to the death.

Anyway, prologue over. Today we're looking at [the attack on Pearl Harbour](#) on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December, 1941. The first thing to understand is that the US government used the naval facility as bait and wanted Japan to attack it as then they would have an occasion for war. They knew the attack was coming as they had already decoded the Japanese military's communications (and we'll get into more warnings they had later), so the whole “sneak attack” narrative is baloney.

One book you could check out with more on this would be Day of Deceit, by Robert Stinnett. You can pilfer a copy [here](#).



Some relevant quotes from chapter 2 of the book:

*“As warfare raged in Europe and portions of Africa and Japan, Germany and Italy threatened countries in three continents, a memorandum circulated in Washington. **Originating in the Office of Naval Intelligence and addressed to two of FDR’s most trusted advisors, it suggested a shocking new American foreign policy. It called for provoking Japan into an overt act of war***

*against the United States. It was written by Lieutenant Commander Arthur H. McCollum, head of the Far East desk of the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI)”*

And:

*“Lieutenant Commander McCollum’s five-page memorandum of October 1940 (hereafter referred to as the **eight-action memo**) put forward a startling plan – a plan intended to engineer a situation that would mobilize a reluctant America into joining Britain’s struggle against the German armed forces then overrunning Europe. Its eight actions called for virtually inciting a Japanese attack on American ground, air, and naval forces in Hawaii, as well as on British and Dutch colonial outposts in the Pacific region.*

*Opinion polls in the summer of 1940 indicated that a **majority of Americans did not want the country involved in Europe’s wars.** Yet FDR’s military and State Department leaders agreed that a victorious Nazi Germany would threaten the national security of the United States. They felt that Americans needed a call to action.”*

The 8 steps drafted for the plan to provoke Japan into war were:

1. Make an arrangement with Britain for the use of British bases in the Pacific, particularly Singapore.
2. Make an arrangement with Holland for the use of base facilities and acquisition of supplies in the Dutch East Indies [now Indonesia].
3. Give all possible aid to the Chinese government of Chiang Kai-shek.
4. Send a division of long-range heavy cruisers to the Orient, Philippines, or Singapore.
5. Send two divisions of submarines to the Orient.
- 6. Keep the main strength of the US Fleet, now in the Pacific, in the vicinity of the Hawaiian Islands.**
7. Insist that the Dutch refuse to grant Japanese demands for undue economic concessions, particularly oil.
8. Completely embargo all trade with Japan, in collaboration with a similar embargo imposed by the British Empire

You can see the scanned copies of the plan in Appendix A of the book, which is a bit fiddly to post here because of image resolution, but again, you can grab a copy [here](#).

Anyway, our good friends at Naval Intelligence are working with the top levels of government to create a situation where Japan does something to American forces / territory and this then justifies a war against Japan – the reason for this is to justify America going into war in Europe against Germany. The American public did not want any of this but they needed the domestic support so they tricked them. Obviously this is rather unethical and a betrayal of the population but anyone used to reading a Miles Mathis article should know this is how it works by now.\*\*

The Americans tried provocation by buzzing Japanese waters with American naval forces:

*“From March through July 1941, White House records show that **FDR ignored international law and dispatched naval task groups into Japanese waters on three such pop-up cruises.** One of the most provocative was a sortie into the Bungo Strait south-east of Honshu, the principal access to Japan’s Inland Sea. The strait separates the home islands of Kyushu and Shikoku, and was a favoured operational area for the warships of the Imperial Japanese Navy in 1941.”*

The President (and the elite running America) then move the west coast fleet to be based at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii:

*“President Roosevelt brought about Action F – keep the United States Fleet based in Hawaiian waters – during an extended Oval Office luncheon with the fleet’s commander, Admiral James O. Richardson, and former Chief of Naval Operations Admiral William D. Leahy, a favoured presidential confidant. **When Richardson heard the proposal, he exploded: “Mr. President, senior officers of the Navy do not have the trust and confidence in the civilian leadership of this country that is essential for the successful prosecution of a war in the Pacific.”** Richardson did not approve of Roosevelt’s plan to place the fleet in harm’s way. He strongly disagreed with two of FDR’s lunchtime points: 1. **FDR’s willingness to sacrifice a ship of the Navy in order to provoke what he called a Japanese “mistake,”** and 2. **Richardson quoted the President as saying: “Sooner or later the Japanese would commit an overt act against the United States and the nation would be willing to enter the war.”**”*

You then had senior members of the US Navy arguing to return the fleet back to the west coast of the mainland US and getting blocked, by FDR:

*“McCollum’s concept for his memo’s Action F – keeping the fleet in Hawaiian waters – **had its beginning in April 1940, when major portions of the US fleet moved from their West Coast bases and joined warships of the Hawaiian Detachment (later named the Pacific Fleet) for an annual training exercise. Once the exercise was completed, Admiral Richardson planned to send the fleet (less the Hawaiian Detachment) back to the West Coast.**”*

Always a training exercise, right?

*“The fleet never returned. Washington slowly put the brakes on Richardson’s plan and issued **specious explanations for keeping the fleet in Hawaii.** Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles answered Richardson’s objections by predicting a “diplomatic disaster” if the fleet returned to the Pacific Coast. In late April, Welles’ rationale was touched on in a message sent to Richardson by Admiral Stark, who offered his own version of the potential “diplomatic disaster.” He told Richardson the fleet might receive instructions to remain in Hawaiian waters “in view of the possibility of Italy becoming an active belligerent and maybe you won’t.”*

***There was no adequate explanation for connecting Italian threats to the United States and basing the fleet in Hawaii.** The “might” and “maybe” in the dispatches **made no sense** to Richardson. He requested a meeting directly with Roosevelt. The admiral disagreed with what he sensed was the “Europe First” priority in the White House.*

*As commander of America’s major sea command, Richardson’s first duty was to carry out the orders of Roosevelt and his military chiefs. He reluctantly obeyed the orders but stated his objections for the record. He would not sacrifice his ships and men to what he saw as a flawed policy. Richardson listed five objections to basing the fleet in Hawaii:*

- Lack of fundamental training facilities.*
- Lack of large-scale ammunition and fuel supplies.*
- Lack of support craft such as tugs and repair ships.*
- Morale problems of men kept away from their families.*
- Lack of overhaul facilities such as dry docking and machine shops.*

*He objected in vain. **Roosevelt wanted the fleet kept in Hawaiian waters.** All Admiral Richardson received from his protests were more indecisive orders from the administration. A dispatch of May*

*4 is an example: IT LOOKS PROBABLE BUT NOT FINAL THAT THE FLEET WILL REMAIN IN HAWAIIAN WATERS FOR A SHORT TIME AFTER MAY 9TH.*

*He was particularly displeased on May 7, 1940, when he was ordered to issue a press release saying that he had asked to keep the fleet in Hawaii. "There was no logical reason for me to make such a request," Richardson wrote. "It made a perfect nitwit out of me."*

I could go on but you get the gist. It was completely forced and artificial to have the fleet stationed at Pearl Harbour and we know FDR and top Navy Intel were making this happen. Co-ordinating with the Dutch, the Portuguese and the British to deny Japan resources is interesting. Nothing to do with ethics mind you, Japan has already been stomping China for years and years at this point. This is purely about inciting a response from Japan to justify global warfare.

A rather important and overlooked fact is that the US wasn't blocking sale of oil to Japan:

*"The oil-licensing system was also a sham in that it did not apply to the refineries on America's West Coast. The White House essentially allowed Japan to obtain petroleum supplies sufficient to maintain its ability to make war. Japan's consul-general in San Francisco assured his government that the Roosevelt administration was not enforcing the embargo; oil and gasoline supplies were available. "All our export permits have been granted. These American agencies from whom the oil is bought go ahead and make suitable arrangements with the government authorities at Washington."*

*The consul-general wrote that he had purchased "special blend crude oil" and easily evaded Roosevelt's embargo. He then detailed Japanese purchases of over 44,000 tons (321,000 barrels) from the Associated Oil Company. In concluding his secret dispatch, the consul-general told Japan's military leaders: "American oil dealers in the San Francisco area selling to Mitsui and Mitsubishi, of which the principal one is the Associated Oil Company, feel that there will be no difficulty about continuing the shipment of ordinary gasoline to Japan."*

*The consul-general's "no difficulty" dispatch was routed to FDR on September 16, 1940. But no one in the White House enforced the petroleum embargo. Instead, export of oil to Japan received the green light. Japanese oil and gasoline tankers, with the tacit approval of the Administration, rushed back and forth across the Pacific loading up at oil refineries in Pacific Coast ports. Naval radio direction finders, on orders from Washington, tracked the tankers to the Japanese naval oil depot at Tokuyama, located at the southern tip of Honshu on the Suo Nada, an arm of the Inland Sea.*

*Between July 1940 and April 1941, during a period when American petroleum supplies were supposedly under embargo, nearly 9,200,000 barrels of gasoline were licensed for export to Japan. Approval for 2,000,000 additional barrels was pending late in April 1941. From October 1940 to December 1941, the Japanese tankers were under constant electronic surveillance by the Navy. Washington closely followed the tankers.*

*Transportation of the petroleum to Japan was monitored at Station SAIL, control centre for the Navy's West Coast Communications Intelligence Network (WCCI) near Seattle (SAIL being the Navy phonetic for the letter S – Seattle). Commercial radio facilities of Mackay Radio & Telegraph, Pan American Airways, RCA Communications, and Globe Wireless provided information used in the surveillance. This vast monitoring network extended along the entire West Coast from Imperial Beach, California, to Dutch Harbour, Alaska"*

So the official story of “they blocked oil sales” or had any kind of problem with what Japan was up to in China – nah, not true. The opposite: they were selling oil to and making money from the Japanese war effort, enabling them. I guess if they stopped oil sales the Japanese war machine might have actually slowed down – and they didn’t want that. Nice to see my old friend Dutch Harbour making a mention, this perhaps implies that Dutch Harbour is a Naval Intelligence facility, or at least is involved in that stuff. Note also how we’re pre-war and supposedly commercial/private telecommunications companies are already working side-by-side with the military. Think AT&T and the NSA in modern times.

We read on and learn that the military had full knowledge of the Japanese transmissions, thus meaning Pearl Harbour could not be a “surprise”:

***“During the last days of September and first week of **October** 1940, a team of Army and Navy cryptographers solved the two principal Japanese government code systems: Purple, the major diplomatic code, and portions of the Kaigun Ango, a series of twenty-nine separate Japanese naval operational codes used for radio contact with warships, merchant vessels, naval bases, and personnel in overseas posts, such as naval attachés. Much has been made of the Purple Code and far too little of the navy codes. Historians have made misleading references to the Purple Code by confusing its use and purpose. It was used solely by the Japanese Foreign Ministry for encoding diplomatic messages dispatched by radio between Tokyo and selected overseas embassies and consulates. In the United States, Japan issued the Purple system to its Washington embassy and to its consulate in Manila, but not to the Honolulu consulate. **The Purple Code was never used by the Japanese Navy.**”***

*Leading historical publications in the United States have confused readers by publishing erroneous details on Purple. **The truth of Pearl Harbour is found in the naval codes, not in the diplomatic codes.** As recently as December 1997, Naval History, a magazine published by the US Naval Institute, printed an article which claimed that the American naval victory at Midway resulted from breaking the Japanese Purple cipher. **In fact, however, the Midway victory came about because US Navy cryptographers had broken Japan’s Code Book D, one of the twenty-nine code systems in the Kaigun Ango.** Throughout 1941 and most of 1942, United States naval cryptographers and intercept operators referred to Code Book D as the 5-Num code, because a group of five numbers represented a Japanese word or phrase. Japan’s navy assigned thousands of different five-number combinations to represent their language for radio transmission purposes. On November 19, 1941, the five-number group for the carrier Akagi, the flagship of Japan’s Hawaii force, was 28494. It was up to US Navy code breakers to solve the meaning of 28494 (and subsequent revisions). **And they did, starting in **October** 1940.**”*

And:

***“Rear Admiral Royal Ingersoll, Assistant Chief of Naval Operations, revealed America’s ability to detect and predict Japan’s naval war strategy and tactical operations to the US Navy’s two Pacific commanders, Admirals James Richardson and Thomas Hart, in a letter dated October 4, 1940. Ingersoll was specific: **The Navy began tracking the movement and location of Japanese warships in October 1940. “Every major movement of the Orange (America’s code name for Japan) Fleet has been predicted, and a continuous flow of information concerning Orange diplomatic activities has been made available.”** He said that Navy cryptographers had solved the Japanese naval merchant ship code. **“The system itself is 99 percent readable,”** reported Ingersoll.”***

Apologies reader, that was a lot of quoting. I just wanted us to be on the same page here. America was provoking Japan and knew their ship movements while keeping the Imperial fleet fuelled for war. I am shocked that Michael Bay did not include this in his [seminal work](#) on the event.

Besides, even if they didn't have the Japanese communications decoded you would expect radar to rumble them. What does the mainstream say about this tricky detail?



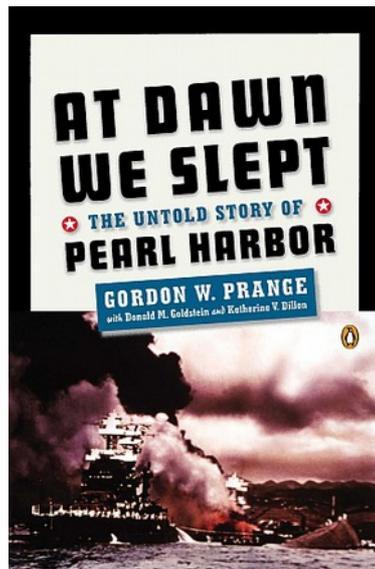
*Opana Point radar station.*

If we read the section on Wikipedia about "[approach and attack](#)" under the sub-section "First Wave Composition", we learn:

*"As the first wave approached Oahu, it was detected by the U.S. Army SCR-270 radar at Opana Point near the island's northern tip. This post had been in training mode for months, but was not yet operational.\*\*\* The operators, Privates George Elliot Jr. and Joseph Lockard, reported a target to Private Joseph P. McDonald, a private stationed at Fort Shafter's Intercept Center near Pearl Harbour. But Lieutenant Kermit A. Tyler, a newly assigned officer at the thinly manned Intercept Center, presumed it was the scheduled arrival of six B-17 bombers from California. The Japanese planes were approaching from a direction very close (only a few degrees difference) to the bombers, and while the operators had never seen a formation as large on radar, they neglected to tell Tyler of its size. Tyler, for security reasons, could not tell the operators of the six B-17s that were due (even though it was widely known)."*

Makes total sense. You're in the Army, manning a radar warning station, you see blips on the radar showing an approach of planes and you just think "Ah, probably some B-17's.". Obvious question: why not radio the planes to confirm? Or radio the base to let them know they're inbound?

We turn to the book “At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbour” by Gordon W Prange. This is the book quoted on Wikipedia regarding the absolute failure radar warning. You can grab a copy [here](#).



From Chapter 61, “Tora Tora Tora”:

*“Located near Kahuku Point on the northern tip of Oahu at 230 feet above sea level, Opana Mobile Radar Station was generally conceded to be the best of these sites. At 0400 Privates Joseph L. Lockard and George E. Elliott went on duty. The more experienced of the two in the radar field, Lockard instructed Elliott in use of the oscilloscope. At 0700 Lockard began to shut down the unit because that hour spelled the end of their morning’s work.”*

Apparently you don’t have one team hand over to another team. You just shut the whole radar warning system down. This seems dumb. It gets sillier from here.

*“Suddenly the oscilloscope picked up an image so peculiar that Lockard thought something must be wrong with the set, but a quick check proved otherwise. He took over from Elliott, deciding that **“it must be a flight of some sort.”** Elliott went to the plotting board. As of 0702, the flight appeared at 5 degrees north-east of azimuth at 132 miles. **It was enormous, “probably more than 50” planes.**”*

Cool, so they spotted the attack when it was miles away. You would expect them to phone this in (in a movie a cigar-chomping general would get a call and say “Oh my God” in a baritone, then it would cut to klaxons going off and men running to their planes, that sort of thing). Note that the first wave of the Japanese assault was 183 aircraft, so it’s unclear why Lockard and Elliott are saying “probably more than 50”.

*“Elliott suggested that they phone the reading to the Information Center. **At first Lockard demurred because the normal operating hours had ended.**”*

LOL, what? “I’ve finished my shift mate, I’m not sure I can be bothered to phone this in”!

*“But Elliott **persisted.** This would be a good test for the Information Center, being a non-scheduled exercise. Lockard then told him to go ahead and send it in. **This conversation covered seven or eight minutes, and the scope showed the blip about 20 to 25 miles nearer Oahu.**”*

*Elliott called the Information Center and reached Private Joseph McDonald, the switchboard operator. Thinking that he was alone, **the Information Center personnel having gone off duty,***

*McDonald took the message. As he glanced around to check the time, he spotted Lieutenant Kermit Tyler, the pursuit officer and assistant to the controller on duty that morning.*

***Tyler had pulled his first tour of duty as a pursuit officer on Wednesday, December 3 – his only on-the-job experience before December 7. The duties of a pursuit officer were “to assist the Controller in ordering planes to intercept enemy planes or supposed enemy planes, after the planes got in the air.”***

*Located at Fort Shafter, the Information Center lay several miles east of Pearl Harbour and about thirty miles south of the Opana Station. **During duty hours a group of plotters stood around a large table, marking on the map information telephoned from the various radar stations. But they recorded only the position of the plane or planes picked up on the radarscope. They had no way of distinguishing friend from foe. The controller and pursuit officer on duty could look down upon these activities from a large balcony at second-floor level.***

What, they can't radio the planes or check flight plan logs for that day? Come off it.

***“On this fateful morning, however, neither the controller nor the aircraft identification officer was on hand. Tyler began duty at 0400 with “seven or eight enlisted men.” But at 0700 on the dot, the plotters “folded up their equipment and left.” Thus, when Elliott’s call came in, the only individuals still present in the Information Center were Tyler and McDonald.”***

Again, I'm expected to believe the Army just clock off and walk out the door without any kind of shift change / staff handover? The hot food counter at your local supermarket is better organised than this. I assume Tyler is a variation of Taylor (i.e. of the families), interesting that he only started in his role a couple of days before the big event.

***“Impressed by Elliott’s report, McDonald suggested that Tyler take the phone. This time Lockard spoke with him. He gave Tyler “all the information that we had – the direction, the mileage, and the apparent size of whatever it was.” Tyler remembered that Lockard called the blips “the biggest sightings he had ever seen.”***

Again, simple situation here: we've spotted them, they are miles out, either radio the planes to confirm who they are OR just immediately raise the alarm.

***“It never crossed Tyler’s mind that this incoming flight could be enemy aircraft. It could have been planes from a Navy carrier. But almost immediately the report rang a bell in his memory. On the way to the Information Center that morning he had listened to some Hawaiian music. Tyler recalled that according to a bomber pilot friend, the station played this music all night whenever B-17s flew from the mainland to Hawaii, acting as a beam for the navigators.***

***So Tyler felt sure that Opana had picked up a flight of the big bombers. His first reaction was one of relief that the Flying Fortresses were coming from the right direction. In one respect Tyler was perfectly correct: Landon’s flight from California was approaching rapidly about 5 degrees off the Opana sighting. Of course, for security reasons Tyler could not explain his belief to Lockard and Elliott, so he merely replied, “Well, don’t worry about it.”***

No, no, no. No. This is absolutely ridiculous. What you're reading there is the post-hoc justification for why the guy in charge of the radar team reporting in the warning of inbound aircraft to Pearl Harbour that day gave them a stand down order. This “explanation” is dog ate my homework tier. We read on:

*“This was about 0720. At this point the Opana scope showed Fuchida’s first wave bearing 3 degrees, 74 miles away. **Once more Lockard wanted to shut down**, but Elliott insisted that they continue. So they kept on observing, posting their findings to an overlay chart and keeping a running log, until they lost the blips “due to distortion from a back wave from the mountains.” At 0739 they made the last report of this particular sighting as 41 degrees, 20 miles. **Lockard made one big mistake: He did not tell Tyler that the sighting contained more than fifty planes. If he had, Tyler could scarcely have mistaken it for a flight of B-17s. Such a number would represent a good slice of the entire American inventory of this type of bomber.**”*

Yeah whatever, maybe Tyler shouldn’t have assumed it was a B-17 flight without checking. Maybe he shouldn’t be operating on dream logic that because he “heard a song on the radio” that meant it was a B-17 flight. The stuff they expect you to believe!

*“Technically speaking, Tyler **erred in not telephoning Major Kenneth P. Bergquist, operations officer of the Fourteenth Pursuit Wing.** But from the practical standpoint, **it made little real difference.** Because of Short’s Alert No. 1, an alarm at this stage would have meant exactly the chance given by Ward’s submarine contact and no more – an opportunity to disperse planes, to break out ammunition, and move up to No. 2 or 3 alerts. **Neither at the time nor later in the day did anyone in the Army notify the Navy of the Opana sighting.** This was a serious error because this clear track would at least have revealed the direction of the Japanese carriers and saved the Navy’s later searchers a long, weary wild goose chase.”*

I think the people who died in Pearl Harbour would beg to differ that the Army raising the alarm when the Japanese were over 70 miles out would make little difference.

We return to Wikipedia:

*“As the first wave of planes approached Oahu, they encountered and shot down several U.S. aircraft. At least one of these radioed a somewhat incoherent warning. Other warnings from ships off the harbour entrance were still being processed or awaiting confirmation when the Japanese air assault began at 7:48 a.m. Hawaiian Time.”*

But I can do you better than a “mere” radar warning. How about the Americans spotting and destroying a Japanese submarine at the harbour entrance, over an hour before the attack?

From chapter 60, “An Awful Urgency”:

*“Nevertheless, as the warning message got under way, the fates granted Oahu another alarm. **Antares, a stores and supply ship with a lighter in tow, moved slowly toward Pearl Harbour.** Her skipper, Commander Lawrence C. Grannis, awaited rendezvous with a tug which would bring Antares a harbour pilot to guide her home.*

***At precisely 0630 Grannis spotted a suspicious-looking object** “about 1500 yards on starboard quarter.” This thing did not resemble any submarine he had ever seen, but its conning tower was showing just out of the water. It seemed to be “obviously having depth control trouble and trying to go down.” So Grannis informed Ward of the sighting.*

*Lieutenant (j.g.) O. W. Goepner had Ward’s deck, for Outerbridge had turned in. **The destroyer’s helmsman was the first to see the strange object. He and Goepner decided that it was probably the conning tower of a submarine. However, “they had never seen anything like it” in the U.S. Navy.** “Captain, come on the bridge,” Goepner called to Outerbridge, who dressed and bounced*

out to have a look. She is going to follow the Antares in, whatever it is, he said to himself. It **“couldn’t be anything else” but a sub. But whose?**

Outerbridge ordered General Quarters at **0640**. Quickly his men brought up the ammunition and loaded the guns. All engines trembled as Ward lunged ahead full speed toward the sub. When the destroyer pulled up about fifty yards abeam the intruder, Outerbridge’s men commenced firing. The first round “missed, passing directly over the conning tower.” The second struck the submarine “at the waterline the junction of the hull and conning tower.” The craft heeled “over to starboard” and “appeared to slow and sink.” Then it apparently passed under Ward’s stern and ran into “a full pattern of depth charges,” set for about 100 feet. “The submarine sank in 1200 feet of water.”

**So, strangely enough, the first shot of the Battle of Oahu came from an American ship instead of a Japanese aircraft, and the first blood shed was Japanese. Just as Genda and Fuchida feared, a submarine had triggered premature action. But Japanese luck held together, pinned by misunderstanding and tied with red tape.”**

I’d never heard of this before, although maybe I was just ignorant. The story of Pearl Harbour I’d always heard only involved planes. Now I find out there was a destroyer vs. submarine battle an hour before the attack.

**“Outerbridge immediately reported his action to the Fourteenth Naval District watch officer: “We have dropped depth charges upon sub operating in defensive sea area.” Almost instantly he thought he should be more definite. So he reported a second time: “We have attacked fired upon and dropped depth charges upon submarine operating in defensive sea area.” Thus, whoever saw the report “would feel, well, he shot at something.” The Bishop Point Radio Station logged this in at 0653, one hour and two minutes before Fuchida and his airmen struck.”**

An hour and two minutes. We skip ahead:

**“Murphy was in his quarters dressing when Black phoned Kaminski’s report to him. He instructed Black, “While I’m finishing dressing, call him and see what he’s “doing about it and whether or not he’s called Admiral Bloch.” Thereupon Black “dialled and dialled,” but Kaminski’s line was busy. When Black informed Murphy accordingly, the latter said, “All right, you go to the office and start breaking out the charts and position of the various ships; I’ll dial one more time and then I’ll be over.” Murphy phoned, but **the line was still busy.** He then dialled the operator and instructed him to tell Kaminski to call him immediately and to break in on any conversation the district duty officer might be holding “unless it was of supreme importance.”**

Phones lines are busy. At 7am on a Sunday. This is another good excuse.

**“As Murphy walked into his office, the phone was ringing. It proved to be Lieutenant Commander Logan Ramsey of Patrol Wing Two. He passed along a report he had just received from the duty officer on Ford Island, Lieutenant Dick Ballinger. The latter advised that one of their planes “on intertype tactics” had “sunk a submerged submarine one mile off the entrance to Pearl Harbour.” Murphy replied, “That’s funny, we got the same sort of message from one of the DD’s on the inshore patrol.”**

**“Well,” answered Ramsey, “you had better get going and I’ll be down at my Operations Center soon.” Hanging up, Ramsey donned slacks and aloha shirt and drove to the administration building on Ford Island which housed the Operations Center. **He did not consider the morning’s reports “definite information of an enemy attack.”** But he drew up a search plan for the PBYs postulated upon the Naval Base Air Defense Operating Plan, which called for a search to the north-east sector**

as first priority because this was believed to be the most likely approach direction for a Japanese attack.

Ramsey had scarcely hung up when Kaminski called Murphy to report Ward's action. Murphy then telephoned Kimmel. The admiral had arisen at about 0700 to prepare for his golf game with Short. He had not yet dressed, shaved, or breakfasted when Murphy reached him, but he promptly replied, "I will be right down." Like Earle, Kimmel was **"not at all certain that this was a real attack."** He later explained, **"we had so many false reports of submarines in the outlying area, I thought, well, I would wait for verification of the report."** And so the previous cries of "Wolf!" threw Kimmel off stride at the very hour when the predators were heading for the fold."

Again, they had warning, the higher ups stood down.

**"Earle's first impression on hearing Kaminski's story was that this might be "just another of those false reports,"** so he requested Kaminski to send him confirmation. He also told him "to get in touch with the ready-duty destroyer and send her out at once and get ahold of the operations officer." At 0712 he called Bloch. **The two officers discussed the report for about "five or ten minutes to try to decide what was the reliability of this word and what steps should be taken. As the matter had been referred to the Commander in Chief," they decided to "wait further developments."**

**Despite Earle's not unnatural scepticism, we have here a picture of alert professionals at work, neither going off half-cocked nor taking the reports lightly.** Yet it is clear that the best intentions of all concerned strangled in telephone cord. By the time everyone had talked to everyone else a good half hour had passed. If the duty officer, either at CinCPAC Headquarters or at Ford Island, had possessed the authority to send out patrols and seek confirmation later, such action might have mitigated the damage soon to be suffered.

**The Navy's most serious error in this pre-attack submarine chapter of the Pearl Harbour story was its failure to advise the Army that a destroyer had sunk an obviously hostile submarine in the Defensive Sea Area.** The incident might have provided just the added weight needed to move the Hawaiian Department from the No. 1 alert to No. 2 or 3 because a submarine snooping near Pearl Harbour could scarcely have been charged up to local saboteurs."

You don't say. To recap, you had:

- ! Warnings from the radar station ignored.
- ! Warnings from US aircraft being shot down being ignored.
- ! Warnings from ships fighting submarines at the harbour entrance being ignored.

They even had the Japanese hit the Kaneohe airfield 9 minutes prior to the Pearl Harbour attack. Here's a [link](#), here's [another](#). How many sailors killed at Kaneohe? **18** [of course](#).

Anyway, by 7:48 (or maybe 7:55 I get different times from different sources) the Japanese reach the main base and begin the attack. From Wikipedia we read:

**"In the first-wave attack, about **eight** of the forty-nine 800 kg (1760 lb) armour-piercing bombs dropped hit their intended battleship targets. At least two of those bombs broke up on impact, another detonated before penetrating an unarmoured deck, and one was a dud. **Thirteen** of the forty torpedoes hit battleships, and four torpedoes hit other ships. **Men aboard U.S. ships awoke to the sounds of alarms, bombs exploding, and gunfire, prompting bleary-eyed men to dress as they ran to General Quarters stations.** (The famous message, "Air raid Pearl Harbour. This is not drill.",**

*was sent from the headquarters of Patrol Wing Two, the first senior Hawaiian command to respond.) The defenders were very unprepared. Ammunition lockers were locked, aircraft parked wing tip to wing tip in the open to prevent sabotage, guns unmanned (none of the Navy's 5"/38s, only a quarter of its machine guns, and only four of 31 Army batteries got in action)"*

That's right: to "prevent sabotage", they deactivated the defences and parked their planes in nice easy-to-bomb clusters. Can this be any more obvious?

Miles: there's also this to keep in mind as we proceed:



**I Love Warships**

1d · 🌐

Japanese model of Pearl Harbor, showing ships located as they were during the 7 December 1941 attack. This model was constructed after the attack for use in making a motion picture. The original photograph was brought back to the U.S. from Japan at the end of World War II by Rear Admiral John Shafroth.

