

**Reasons to Support the Advancement of
Rear Admiral Kimmel on the Retired List**

Admiral Kimmel was the only qualified flag officer not advanced to his highest held wartime rank in accordance with *The Officer Personnel Act of 1947*—certainly to an honorable man, a form of punishment. There are a myriad of reasons why the Admiral should be so advanced. Here are some of them:

1. The giants of WW II—Nimitz, Halsey, King, Spruance, Kinkaid, Burke, and a host of others have repeatedly expressed support for Admiral Kimmel;
2. Six former Chiefs of Naval Operations (CNO), two former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and a Director of Central Intelligence—Crowe, Moorer, Burke, Hayward, Holloway, Trost, Zumwalt, Turner—in addition to 26 other four-star admirals have supported this action in writing;
3. The only tribunal that accorded Rear Admiral Kimmel the opportunity to defend himself, the Naval Court of Inquiry, essentially exonerated him;
4. There is abundant new information since 1946, most never known to Rear Admiral Kimmel, or to investigators, that further justifies this action; and
5. The requested relief—posthumous advancement—is modest, but serves to overcome the last official stigma on this honorable man.

1. The giants of WW II—Nimitz, Halsey, King, Spruance, Kinkaid, Burke, and a host of others have repeatedly expressed support for Admiral Kimmel.

CNO Fleet Admiral Nimitz said and wrote:

"[Secretary of the Navy] Frank Knox was wrong in blaming Kimmel." (E. B. Potter, *Nimitz*, 1976, p.13.)

"Admiral Kimmel had been given no information which would justify interrupting a very urgent training schedule." (Nimitz & Potter, *SEAPOW*, 1960, p.650.)

Fleet Admiral Halsey wrote:

"I don't believe there was a flag officer in the Pacific Fleet who did not feel that Kimmel was an ideal man for the job. Unfortunately, even an ideal man can't do the job without proper tools, and Kimmel did not have them. "

Concerning Kimmel's decision to save his [36 available] aircraft for future combat and not to engage in token long-range reconnaissance without more threat information than was contained in the Nov 27th War Warning Message—"Any Admiral worth his stars would have made the same choice."

"Even then, I think everyone present knew that the disaster would be formally investigated, but I'll take my oath that not one of us would have guessed that the blame would fall on Kimmel, because not one of us thought he deserved it—any part of it. I want to emphasize my next statement. In all my experience, I have never known a Commander in Chief of any United States Fleet who worked harder, and under more adverse circumstances, to increase its efficiency and to prepare it for war; further, I know of no officer who might have been in command at that time who could have done more than Kimmel did. I also want to repeat and reemphasize the answer I made when the Roberts Commission asked me how I happened to be ready for the Japanese attack. I told them, 'Because of one man: Admiral Kimmel.'" (Admiral William F. Halsey, *Admiral Halsey's Story*, McGraw Hill, Inc., New York, 1947, pp. 70, 71, 82.)

CNO Fleet Admiral King wrote:

"The evidence adduced [against Kimmel] warrants neither trial by general court-martial nor *punishment in any form* [emphasis added]. . ." (King letter to Secretary of the Navy Sullivan, 7/14/48.)

"[The Roberts Commission] merely selected a scapegoat to satisfy the popular demand for fixing the responsibility for the Pearl Harbor debacle. Admiral Kimmel was not asked the important questions nor was he given the proper chance to speak for himself. In fact, he was sold down the river as a political expedient." (Thomas Buell, *Master of Seapower*, Naval Institute Press, 1980, p.350.)

Admiral Spruance, Commander of US forces at the Battle of Midway, wrote:

"I have always felt that Kimmel [was] held responsible for Pearl Harbor in order that the American people might have no reason to lose confidence in their Government in Washington. This was probably justifiable under the circumstances at that time, but it does not justify forever damning [this] fine officer." (Spruance letter to Samuel Eliot Morison, 11/29/61.)

Admiral Kinkaid, Commander of the Seventh Fleet at the Battle of Leyte Gulf, said:

"I always thought [Kimmel] was very unjustly treated . . . the proceedings [of the Roberts Commission] that went into the matters out

there were entirely illegal . . . [Kimmel was made a scapegoat]. That's what it was, undoubtedly. Nothing else." (Columbia University Oral History, 1961, p.77.)

CNO & Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Burke wrote:

"It is my judgment that you should approve this posthumous promotion and recommend it to the President . . . not because of the importance of this matter to the Kimmel family but because of the importance to the Navy as an institution." (Burke letter to Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, 7/24/91.)

Commander-in-Chief United States Fleet Richardson wrote:

"I consider that after Pearl Harbor, Admiral Kimmel received the rawest of raw deals. . . .

"I feel that, throughout this affair, Stark utterly failed to display the loyalty downward that every subordinate has a right to expect from his superior officer. . . .

"I consider that [CNO] Stark, in failing to pick up the telephone and give Kimmel a last-minute alert on the morning of Pearl Harbor, committed a major professional lapse I cannot conceive of how he could have treated Kimmel as he did

"The subordinates in a military organization can not stand with their arms raised in protective alertness forever. Some superior has to ring a bell that moves the subordinate...to the center of the ring. That bell was never rung by Kimmel's superiors in Washington. . . ."

"I cannot conceive of any honorable man being able to recall his service as a member of [the Roberts] Commission without great regret and the deepest feeling of shame. Its procedures should have outraged every American. I believe that the Report of the Roberts Commission was the most unfair, unjust, and deceptively dishonest document ever printed by the Government Printing Office." (J. O. Richardson, *On The Treadmill to Pearl Harbor*, 1973, pp. 450-451, 453-454.)

CNO Admiral Standley said and wrote:

"I knew from first hand experience the shortcomings of our base at Pearl Harbor, for which . . . Kimmel [was] in no way responsible. . . .

"I can't help regretting that Admiral Kimmel had to go. I have never seen the Fleet in a higher state of efficiency than was evidenced during the course of our investigations at Pearl Harbor. . . .

"I felt quite sure that nothing would be done to correct any inequities in punishment already administered or withheld. (William H. Standley, *Admiral Ambassador to Russia*, pp. 82, 83, 88.)

"Owen Roberts' performance [as chairman of the Roberts Commission of which Standley was a member] was crooked as a snake." (John Toland, *Infamy*, p. 337.)

Samuel Eliot Morison, official naval historian for WWII wrote:

"I have come out of this study with a more charitable feeling toward Gen. Short and Adm. Kimmel than I felt before. It seems to me that they are, to put it briefly, no more blamable than a number of people in Washington—Turner and Gerow, Marshall, Miles, [and] Wilkinson. If I were pushed to name one person as being more careless or stupid than all the rest it would be Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner.

"If you and your [Naval Academy Alumni Association] friends are getting up any sort of petition to have Admiral Kimmel's status restored or record changed, you can count on me to sign it. Mrs. [Roberta] Wohlstetter: Rand Corp. Report, which is largely responsible for changing my views, ought to be thanked." (Samuel Eliot Morison's 1961 Letter to Admiral Shafroth, P/USNAAA.)

Commander-in-Chief Asiatic Fleet Admiral Harry Yarnell wrote:

"The most disgraceful feature of the whole affair was the evident determination on the part of Washington to fasten the blame on the Hawaiian commanders. One of the strongest impressions of the affair is the lack of moral courage of anyone in Washington from the President down to accept in the slightest degree any blame for the tragedy in the face of overwhelming evidence that their incompetence and stupidity was entirely responsible for what happened. . . .

"Stark and Marshall could have raised their reputations greatly by candidly admitting that their failure to send vital information to Pearl Harbor was the cause of the disaster.

"Yet they tried to defend themselves by failures of memory and the absurd stand that Short and Kimmel had all the information that was necessary. (Admiral Yarnell letter to Charles Rugg, dated July 5, 1946, authors' file # 1934.)

Admiral Bellinger Testimony to the Hart Investigation

"Considering shortages and deficiencies, other necessary deployment of forces, such as expansion training and development of facilities, and lacking unity of command, little if any more in the way of readiness could be expected. It is believed that Admiral Kimmel saw this picture very realistically and I know of no man who, under the circumstances, could have done more." (26PHA140; Admiral Patrick Bellinger, Naval aviation legend and former Chief of Staff to CNO King.)

General Goodpaster wrote:

"With nothing less than our country's honor still at stake, may, we hope, finally restore to Admiral Kimmel and General Short the respect they deserve." (Michael Gannon, *Pearl Harbor Betrayed*, 2001, endorsement by General Andrew Goodpaster, NATO Commander (1969-1974), Former Superintendent West Point.)

Captain Ned Beach, USN, wrote:

"Kimmel and Short paid a high price for Pearl Harbor. They were deprived of their good names while others of equal or greater guilt—MacArthur, Marshall, Stark, even Roosevelt—were absolved or not even accused Now, half a century later, we have an obligation to address the question of truth and justice, one of the founding canons of our national system. Our country must not continue to perpetuate a lie." (Ned Beach, *Scapegoats*, 1995, book jacket; he survived 11 WW II submarine war patrols, circumnavigated the world submerged in *USS Triton*, and authored *Run Silent Run Deep*. Beach Hall is named after him.)

Captain Taussig, USN, on Pearl Harbor Radar wrote:

"I do not...think it strange that the so-called 'radar warning' was ignored, for, as Sir Winston might have put it, it had much to be ignored about. On 7 December 1941, this experimental equipment was extremely unreliable, mostly because it was, so to speak, 'false-return-prone.' A flight of gulls, for example, could snafu the entire system, and anyone purporting to see a 'flight of bombers' on an 'A-scope,' circa December 1941, was indeed a seer of great perception. One aircraft made the same mess on the scope as a hundred—and any number of boats, ships, and sea gulls could do the same thing." (Captain Joseph K. Taussig, Jr., USN (Ret.), "I Remember Pearl Harbor," *Naval Institute of Proceedings*, December 1972. Ensign Taussig was awarded the Navy Cross & Purple Heart for his actions on the *USS Nevada* during the attack.)

Captain Taussig, USN, on Pearl Harbor Guns

"In sum and substance, the Fleet actually lacked an anti-aircraft protection worthy of the name. It is, in fact, remarkable, that any Japanese aircraft were actually shot down by these batteries! This was not the fault of the crews. They were drilled incessantly, and performed perfectly. It was purely a matter of equipment the weaponry intended to defend against air attack was incapable of meeting the threat posed by the Japanese." (Captain Joseph K. Taussig, Jr., USN (Ret.), "I Remember Pearl Harbor," *Naval Institute of Proceedings*, December 1972.)

General Henry Russell, APHB Member wrote:

"I believed then and believe now that all those responsible for our defeat at Pearl Harbor should have been dealt with alike. If one was driven out of the Service all should have been. If one was forgiven, all should have been. To select an individual as a sacrifice for the sins of the group was not only unfair, but was downright despicable. To me the conduct of those in high places, after the attack, was dishonest and inexcusable." (Henry Russell, *Pearl Harbor Story*, 2001, p.160.)

Army Pearl Harbor Board Top Secret Report:

"Where information has a vital bearing upon actions to be taken by field commanders, and this information cannot be disclosed...to the field commanders, it is incumbent upon the War Department then to assume the responsibility for specific directions to the theater commanders. This is an exception to the admirable policy of... complete responsibility upon the...field commanders. Short [and Kimmel] got neither form of assistance from the War Department. The War Department had the information. All they had to do was either to give it to Short [or Kimmel] or give [them] directions based upon it." (3PHA1444, 39PHA221-230.)

2. Six former Chiefs of Naval Operations (CNO), two former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and a Director of Central Intelligence—Crowe, Moorer, Burke, Hayward, Holloway, Trost, Zumwalt, Turner—in addition to 26 other four-star admirals have supported this action in writing.

For a complete list of 4-star supporters see this website at:
<http://www.pearlharbor911attacks.com>

3. The only tribunal that accorded Rear Admiral Kimmel the opportunity to defend himself, the Naval Court of Inquiry, virtually exonerated him.

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. Accordingly, the Naval Court of Inquiry found:

1. That there was not a scintilla of evidence to support a charge of dereliction of duty against Admiral Kimmel;
2. That Admiral Kimmel committed no errors of judgment;
3. That all of Admiral Kimmel's force dispositions were appropriate on the basis of information that he was given; and
4. The President of the Court, Admiral Murfin, opined that they thought Admiral Kimmel had done everything possible under the circumstances.

Lastly, the Court severely criticized Admiral Kimmel's only uniformed boss in the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Stark, for not keeping Kimmel properly informed.

The Navy Department refused to release the Court's findings.

In short, the Navy Department under its then leadership deliberately deprived Admiral Kimmel of the vindication to which its own formal process entitled him.

4. There is abundant new information since 1946, most never known to Rear Admiral Kimmel, or to investigators, that further justifies this action.

New extraordinary evidence exists. On this website at: <http://www.pearlharbor911attacks.com>, are three memoranda by Michael Gannon, Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of History from the University of Florida and author of *Pearl Harbor Betrayed - The True Story of a Man and a Nation Under Attack*, published in 2001, which sets forth three examples of such extraordinary evidence, which, each standing alone, more than justifies overturning decisions made more than 50 years ago.

Professor Gannon's three memoranda are:

- (1) "Admiral Kimmel and the Question of the Pacific Fleet's State of Readiness;"
- (2) "Admiral Kimmel and the Question of Distant Aerial Reconnaissance;" and
- (3) "Admiral Kimmel and the Question of Shallow Water Torpedoes."

These memoranda must be reviewed carefully. They shed new light on events which transpired more than 50 years ago, which, if known to the decision makers of that time, could easily have brought forth a contrary decision, and which, now, just as easily justify overturning the decision made more than 50 years ago.

5. The requested relief—posthumous advancement—is modest, but serves to overcome the last official stigma on this honorable man.

Admiral Kimmel is the only naval officer otherwise qualified under the *Officer Personnel Act of 1947* not to receive its benefit—retirement at his highest temporary rank in World War II.

The Dorn Report argues that, "Using advancement or promotion to compensate . . . for harsh treatment in the media, as a form of official apology or as a symbolic act . . . would be manifestly unfair to those who earned advancement based on performance, and would imply a double standard for advancement in the armed services. The highest retired grades to which an officer may aspire should not be conferred on anyone as an apology. Rather, those grades should be reserved for those officers whose performance stands out above others." (Dorn Report, page V-3.)

Apparently Dorn Committee investigators were not aware of the following three army major generals that were allowed to retire at their highest held temporary ranks achieved in World War II in accordance with provisions of the *Officer Personnel Act of 1947* in spite of performance.

Major General John Lucas

General Lucas's superiors expected some kind of offensive action from him at Anzio. Lucas instead strengthened his defenses. Winston Churchill said, "I had hoped we were hurling a wildcat into the shore, but all we got was a stranded whale." Historian John Keegan said, Lucas's actions "achieved the worst of both worlds, exposing his forces to risk without imposing any on the enemy." General Lucas was relieved of his command on February 23, 1942 and replaced by General Lucian Truscott.

Major General Henry Miller

Seven weeks before D-Day General Miller, a member of General Spaatz's Army Air Corps staff, drunk at a nightclub in London, Claridges, proceeded to take bets that the D-Day invasion would occur before June 15, 1944. General Spaatz placed General Miller under house arrest. General Eisenhower demoted General Miller to colonel and returned him to the States.

Major General Lloyd Fredenhall

"II Corps commander [at Kasserine Pass, North Africa] proved to be utterly incompetent, remaining in his headquarters some 80 miles from the front and failing even once to visit front line units prior to the German attack." General Fredenhall was relieved and replaced by General Patton. Kasserine Pass cost the Germans 2,000 men and the Allies about 10,000 men, of which 6,500 were Americans. (See Carlo D'este, *Eisenhower A Soldier's Life*, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 2002, pp. 394-400, 487, 503.)

The Dorn Report indicates there is nothing in the record to explain why Kimmel was excluded from the *Officer Personnel Act of 1947*. In this regard, it is interesting to note that not only did the Navy Department take this arbitrary action against Kimmel, it previously had gone so far as to threaten Kimmel's civilian employer with loss of Navy contracts, if he continued to employ Kimmel.