

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT  
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GHOST OF PEARL HARBOR

Remember that epic Sunday afternoon when radio commentators briefly interrupted the program to say that Pearl Harbor had been attacked by the Japs. Gradually came the details- enough to shock the national conscience and stir our militancy to the boiling point. It also stimulated the inquisitive sense for which we are noted. Why? How? Where was the military and naval reconnaissance? Why were we taken by surprise? We as a people wanted to know. There followed the appointment of a special committee of which Justice Roberts of the Supreme Court was chairman. The committee journeyed to Hawaii. It examined witnesses. On Jan. 23, 1942 it filed a report. Pearl Harbor was of course immortalized by the sacrifice of thousands of young men but it seemed that further light on the disaster must wait until the end of the war.

KIMMEL AND SHORT

Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and General Walter C. Short were relieved of their commands. They were sent back home to await the end of the war and such disposition of their cases as might ultimately be decreed by those in authority. They were so easily accused of neglect of duty. Their court martial was demanded. The demand subsided. They languished at home. They were not of this war any longer. They were growing older. They had the pleasure of reading articles and comments on the Pearl Harbor disaster. The military and naval code prohibited them from making reply. They might die. In their lifetime, the record might never be cleared. But no matter. They must wait.

ANOTHER SHORT APPEARS

There was another Short - no kin of General Short. In fact, they have never seen each other. The other Short was from the Ozarks in Missouri. He was a Congressman. He is a member of the Military Affairs Committee of the House. He believed in action - now. He introduced a resolution. It called for investigation and court martial. Action should be taken at once. Nobody cared to dispute the virtue of the resolution. These men should have their day in court. But a political factor intruded. Should it come before or after November. The resolution could pass both houses of Congress, provided that action came after November. The date was the controversial factor. It was then agreed that the court martial action should come by December 7th 1944. And so the resolution passed. For the moment, the ghost of Pearl Harbor had been laid.

BUT HAD IT?

Some speeches were made in Congress. One by Representative Scott of Pa. He asked 24 specific questions about Pearl Harbor which could be answered and throw light on the matter without prejudicing future court martial action. Admiral Kimmel suddenly spoke up. A critical article in a popular magazine by a U.S. Senator stirred his ire. There was another speech. This time by Rep. Harness of Indiana. He "alleged" that 72 hours before Pearl Harbor, the Australian government notified Washington that a Japanese aircraft carrier task force was enroute to Hawaii. Also 48 hours before. Also 24 hours before. Prime Minister Curtin of Australia was consulted. He denied it. The Majority Leader Mr. McCormack of Mass. uttered this denial in Congress in the form of a speech. The ghost of Pearl Harbor was riding again.

### THEN COMES CHURCH

Then came Rep. Church of Illinois. He made a speech on the floor of Congress on the last day of the session. It was not especially spectacular. But it was accompanied by an affidavit. Yes, it was a signed and acknowledged affidavit by a Washington business man. His name is Graves. He is a graduate of West Point. He served his country and then retired to engage in business. He had been invited to a dinner on Dec. 7, 1943. It was the second anniversary of Pearl Harbor. Senators and dignitaries were there. The Australian Minister to the United States was there. The Australian Minister made an off-the-record statement. Mr. Graves made a sworn statement as to what the Australian Minister said. Mr. Graves alleges that Sir Owen Dixon, the Australian Minister said that 72 hours before Pearl Harbor, while he was in control of coastal shipping in Australian waters, he received a flash from naval intelligence that a Japanese task force was at sea and that Australia should prepare for an attack; that 24 hours later, this was confirmed with a later opinion that the task force was not aimed at Australia but perhaps at some American possession. And so the ghost of Pearl Harbor rides again.

### QUERY

Suppose the warning had been received and heeded? Suppose Pearl Harbor had not occurred? There might have been no declaration of war. What would have been the course of our destiny? Futile speculations of course - but interesting.