

Notes 26N, Copy 2

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Interview with Mr. Henry C. Clausen, San Francisco, October 27, 1960 by FCP

Mr. Clausen told me that he was a Republican, that before the war he had been an Assistant District Attorney in California and that he was a reserve officer. He was called into the Army and was assigned to the JAG Department. One of his assignments was to investigate certain derelictions by the Lockland (Laughlin?) Engineers in Ohio. The Truman Committee had uncovered evidence of corruption and wanted a trial. General Arnold wanted the thing checked on. I went to see Mr. Truman who turned me, over to the council of his Committee, (Hugh Fulton) now in New York. I had access to Senator Truman's files. The trial went on for weeks in Cincinnati. Truman uncovered a number of engines overseas. They were rusting when found. Cols. Gulick, Ryan, and Buchman were the defendants. The law member of the court martial was Judge McCook. We convicted the man. Truman sent a letter commending me to the JAG (Crater). It had an impact on him.

When the Army Pearl Harbor Board was set up I was attached to it. Another member of the Staff was Col. West, head of the JA Department at West Point. The three members of the Board were General Grunert, Russell and Frank. Frank had Harry Fulman? Put on the Staff. They held their hearings in Washington. The Generals have their own way of going at things. They went to the Munitions Building and were all set to have Marshall and Stimson appear. When Marshall appeared he asked for a recess. Being a trained Army man he wanted to talk with the starred Generals. So West, Clausen and Fulman excused themselves. The others sat and talked. After a time we went back and the questioning resumed. The testimony from Marshall revolved first around what intelligence was available prior to Pearl Harbor. This was answered by him and you can read it in the minutes. The same thing was done with Stimson. They next talked to Miles. Then we went to San Francisco and some days were taken up in taking testimony. The Wyman thing got mixed in there for no good reason. Then we went to Hawaii and I remember thinking that had we been the Japanese we could have had Pearl Harbor all over again. Our arrival surprised them. No one knew we were coming and there was no one to meet us. We went to Ft. Shafter for two weeks and then went home.

My function was to ask questions. I more or less mopped up. Grunert allowed opinions to be introduced. Then we wrote our report. As you know, it's critical of Marshall and others. The Navy also had a Board (Admiral Murphon?). The Navy cooperated by sending personnel over to help us. When we were about through we discovered according to them, the results of the super-duper code-cracking procedure. We were nearly finished with our report. Instead of going back and saying the job is abortive the Board completed its report. Soon afterwards we took it in and dumped it in Harvey Bundy's lap. What to do with it. It got in the newspapers and the News accused Marshall.

Then I was sent to help the Judge Advocate General write a report on the report. My office was actually a safe with the outer door a safe door. I told General Bissell's men to stay away from me and not pull any hanky-panky I said, "Don't listen in on the telephone".

Stimson one day called General Cramer to come to see him and General Cramer called me. We went to Stimson's office and discussed the report of the Board, what action should be taken. The Board was highly critical of Marshall and Gerow and Short. Kramer had nothing concrete.

Stimson turned to me and asked for my suggestions. I said we should investigate the code cracking business, that the report was abortive and in-complete. He said probably Marshall had told the Generals about this when we were sent out of the room. I remember that Stimson said, walking to the window and looking out, "When I was Asst. U.S. Attorney, I would have all the information when I questioned the witness and if he didn't answer I would pitch him out the window". I said I had done the same thing as attorney. Stimson said, "You go back and question all of them". I asked, "What would you do with General Marshall?" Cramer was a non-committal. He said if he had a complete report that would mean that there might be a trial of General Short. I said if I were a defense council in such case I would demand an open hearing and try to get a trial of General Marshall, but since the war was going on I didn't try short on the grounds that it would give aid and comfort to the enemy. I would do what Secretary Cameron did during the Civil War, give an administrative reprimand. In this case a man cannot demand a trial. Then Stimson directed me to take testimony. He said to Kramer, "These men are all over the world". Cramer said, work it outwit Bundy". He said, 'We are supposed to be helping Congress because this is a hearing for Secretary of War for Congress. Don't complicate it. Make it fact finding. I will get all the information on super-duper code cracking.

In the interrogations a man who impressed me was Gerow. He was a fine man, a good man. We brought him back from Europe in the middle of the campaign. He talked openly and accepted responsibility. When he got through he said he needed a car and I said I would get him an Army car and he said, "No". Said he didn't want any adverse criticism.

Short's failure lay in not understanding the alert. He sent a statement to the Operations Division and it should have meant he was making a mistake. Gerow took full blame.

In getting testimony I found that I would have to get people to divulge the code cracking operation and I knew that G-2 people would not want to divulge it. So I wrote out an authorization for Stimson to sign and took it to Bissell. Bissell said he had a good mind to get in touch with the Chief of Staff. I said I didn't think I would do that. I called in Clarke who said give it to him. I asked how I should operate. They took me to some room and gave me an oath. It meant, of course, that I couldn't reveal to anybody what I had found out.

I got copies of the decrypts. I decided to take them and show them to people because they were the same as credentials. I had a full set. [In here somewhere he mentioned that there was not a full set in the White House because, as a result of finding that the messages were sometimes thrown in the wastebasket, Bratton got in the habit of showing them to FDR and then bringing them back)

I started with Handy, next to Miles. I uncovered leads and then I went out. Wherever I went I had decrypts. I took testimony from General Mack.

I said to General Mack on taking testimony that he had seen the decrypts. He said, "Did you tell this to the Board when we were outside?" I said, "Yes". I said it looks like you did yourself a disservice. The implication in this report is that you did not have this information and that it has just been discovered and that you had failed to tell.

It was grossly unfair that the three Generals should criticize Marshall about the non-disclosures when he had actually given them this information secret.

[I was told that they considered the keeping secret of the code-breaking so important that on one occasion they decided not to divert a convoy to avert a possible attack, for fear it would disclose our knowledge]

I once asked, 'Why did you select these three - Grunert who had been replaced in the Philippines during MacArthur [G was now in a Service Command] and had felt put out, why Frank, who had just been relieved as CG of the Air Service Command and lost his 3rd star, why Russell, who had been a National Guard Major General and cousin of Senator R.ard had been relieved of his Division. If you had tried to pick three who were more likely to be against you, it would have been hard to find.' He said, "I picked them on the basis of availability". I remember when I talked to him he was all spruced up. He was on his way to West Point. He chatted. He didn't put questions to me, I put them to him. It was a great injustice to criticize him for holding back information when he had actually told about the codes under secrecy. It was very unfair to him.

I assembled information into a thick volume and took it to Handy. Later McCloy phoned me and wanted to know if I would come down to see Gen. Handy. He asked if I would be the attorney to General Marshall. I said I would be glad to, but asked if it would be wise. Would it not throw doubt on the objectivity of my report. Anything favorable to him would be questioned on the ground that I was an advocate. However, I was kept with the Army Board. I wanted out as soon as the war ended and Stimson agreed that I would be released. Duncan was assigned as Council for General M.

When the Congressional inquiry started I was kept on the stand from 10 in the morning until 11 that night. They tried to discredit my testimony. They suggested that I had led several people to change their stories. Some of the Republican members felt they had to discredit me. So once when they were hammering at me I said, "Did you know I am a Republican?" They all laughed.

There was a lot of talk about my getting Bratton to change his testimony. I recall that going from Paris to Berlin I had virtually commandeered a British car. A fine British Colonel gave me his car. I left my decrypts in Paris in a safe. As I was en route to Berlin I saw Col. B passing me. I stopped him and talked to him. He was a guest of General Parks [a fine man]. Bratton and I understood each other. I said I left the decrypts in Paris. The Potsdam Conference was then starting. I said where can we go over the decrypts. He said Paris. They said later that I got Bratton to change his testimony. He was sitting by me. It was ludicrous. So I said to the Committee, "Don't you think it would be a pretty hard job for me to make that man do anything". I knew I was not going any further, that a Colonelcy was all I could get. [Check on John Sonnett of the firm of Kale, Docking? & Rindellin New York]

General Marshall was not fair to himself for a historian's purpose. He was not fair to himself in the way that he handled this whole business. His approach was naive. The fact that he would ask Handey, he must have done so, to ask me to represent him showed this. He failed to make the answers which he could have made to the Board's criticism. He preferred to leave it to History. He should have had proper council and have hammered home his points.

The great thing that came out of this whole shebang was CIA. He said he was told once by an Army Intelligence man that if he wanted information from the U.S. Navy he had to swap them some information they wanted from the British Navy. It was like dealing with a Rumanian rug merchant.

Keefe was on the Congressional Committee, also Sharp. Clausen recalled that in typing up some testimony he had misspelled Sharp's name and Keefe asked if this was an indication of his accuracy. Clausen answered that Andrew Jackson had once said it was a poor mind which could spell only one way. He said that Brewster was very nasty but didn't know the facts. Ferguson was not too bad. He had been on the Truman Committee and went with Clausen during the investigations.

I think Bratton got his alibi too quickly. He felt hurt because others got stars and he didn't. Comments: The code cracking was worth armies and armies and armies. They even did not divert convoys to safeguard.

Flynn attacked me. I was going to sue him for libel but Stimson and Bundy said, "No".

According to the precepts of warfare the Army Commander was supposed to prepare for the worst. We finally jockeyed Short, who was now a broken man, into answering this question: Now you know all that was available in Washington. What was it that they had which you needed further to put you on a war alert? He said the order to burn the Japanese code. Then we asked Kimmel the same question. He said he needed to know that they were asking about ship and harbor reports. Yet the reports showed that Shorthand the information Kimmel said he knew and Kimmel had the information Short wanted. I would stress this.

I remember when the investigation started someone said the Navy has outranked us again. The opposite number is Admiral Hewitt. I went over to see him. He told me that Commander Sonnett would conduct the legal phases. Sonnett was a fine chap. The Navy prepared its people much better than the Army did.

Marshall didn't prepare himself. During part of the questioning he was interrupted by battle reports coming in. In a final testimony he was preparing to go on the China Mission. In talking with him I had a sense of truthfulness in what he said. He failed to prepare his testimony adequately and thus did himself a disservice.

If you ask, did Washington send to Hawaii the information which was required, the answer is, "Yes".

The causes of Pearl Harbor were multiple. You can't isolate them. It was not Short's fault, nor Kimmel's, nor Gerow's fault, multiple. It grew out of the fact that we are the kind of people we are. However, Washington had the right to assume that a Commander would go on war alert under the circumstances which existed because of the tradition which existed that Commanders would do so under the conditions which were present in 1941.