

October 14, 1999

**TO: THE HONORABLE WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES**

**FROM:**

**THOMAS H. MOORER**  
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)  
Former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff  
Former Chief of Naval Operations

**WILLIAM J. CROWE**  
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)  
Former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

**J. L. HOLLOWAY III**  
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)  
Former Chief of Naval Operations

**ELMO R. ZUMWALT**  
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)  
Former Chief of Naval Operations

**CARLISLE A.H. TROST**  
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)  
Former Chief of Naval Operations

**ANDREW J. GOODPASTER**  
General, U.S. Army (Ret.)  
Former SACEUR

**WILLIAM J. McCAFFREY**  
General, U.S. Army (Ret.)  
Former Army Inspector General

Dear President Clinton:

On May 25 of this year, the members of the United States Senate delivered a bi-partisan vote in support of the enclosed Amendment to the Senate Defense Authorization Bill, appealing to you to advance posthumously on the retired list Admiral Husband Kimmel and General Walter Short, the Hawaii commanders unjustly accused of dereliction of duty in, and sole responsibility for, the disastrous attack on Pearl Harbor.

We would most deeply appreciate the opportunity to visit with you, at a time and place convenient to you, for the purpose of clarifying the issues that are relevant to your decision. The focal issue, perhaps the only issue, is one of justice and fairness.

Kimmel and Short were singled out for exclusion from the benefits and privileges of the Officer Personnel Act of 1947, which provided for the retirement of flag-level World War II officers at their highest wartime ranks; all others eligible have so benefited. That sole exclusion has perpetuated the myth of their responsibility for the success of the Japanese attack; this, despite their exoneration by numerous official inquiries and countless credible historians.

The time is long overdue to correct this gross injustice against two fine military careerists -- an injustice that continues to negate and deny the principles on which our nation was founded.

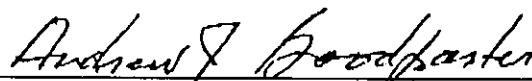
The generation following that of Admiral Kimmel and General Short -- the last generation to have intimate knowledge of the circumstances that led to their condemnation, as well as the subsequent resistance of the government bureaucracy to the persistent cry for justice -- is passing into history.

Mr. President, we ask one final opportunity to be heard before those voices are lost. Please have your Scheduling Secretary contact Adm. J. L. Holloway III, Chairman, Naval Historical Foundation, at 202/678-4333 to coordinate a visit with you.

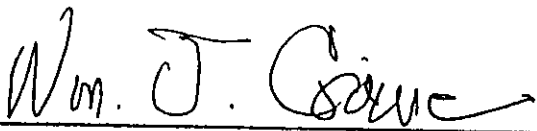
Respectfully,



Admiral Thomas H. Moorer (USN, Ret.)



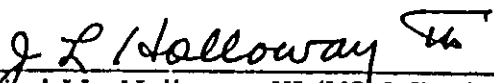
General Andrew J. Goodpaster (USA, Ret.)



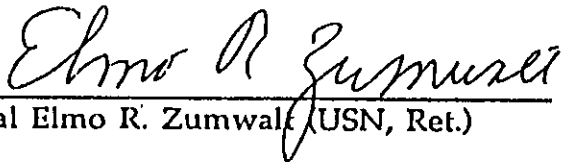
Admiral William J. Crowe (USN, Ret.)



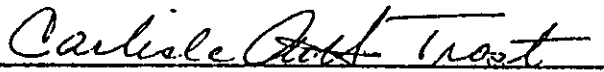
General William J. McCaffrey (USA, Ret.)



Admiral J.L. Holloway III (USN, Ret.)



Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt (USN, Ret.)



Admiral Carlisle A.H. Trost (USN, Ret.)

S. 1059: The Defense Authorization Bill for FY 2000

**SEC. 582. POSTHUMOUS ADVANCEMENT OF REAR ADMIRAL (RETIRED) HUSBAND E. KIMMEL AND MAJOR GENERAL (RETIRED) WALTER C. SHORT ON RETIRED LISTS.**

(a) FINDINGS- Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The late Rear Admiral (retired) Husband E. Kimmel , formerly serving in the grade of admiral as the Commander in Chief of the United States Fleet and the Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Fleet, had an excellent and unassailable record throughout his career in the United States Navy prior to the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.

(2) The late Major General (retired) Walter C. Short, formerly serving in the grade of lieutenant general as the Commander of the United States Army Hawaiian Department, had an excellent and unassailable record throughout his career in the United States Army prior to the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.

(3) Numerous investigations following the attack on Pearl Harbor have documented that then Admiral Kimmel and then Lieutenant General Short were not provided necessary and critical intelligence that was available, that foretold of war with Japan, that warned of imminent attack, and that would have alerted them to prepare for the attack, including such essential communiques as the Japanese Pearl Harbor Bomb Plot message of September 24, 1941, and the message sent from the Imperial Japanese Foreign Ministry to the Japanese Ambassador in the United States from December 6-7, 1941, known as the Fourteen-Part Message.

(4) On December 16, 1941, Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short were relieved of their commands and returned to their permanent ranks of rear admiral and major general.

(5) Admiral William Harrison Standley, who served as a member of the investigating commission known as the Roberts Commission that accused Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short of 'dereliction of duty' only six weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor, later disavowed the report maintaining that 'these two officers were martyred' and 'if they had been brought to trial, both would have been cleared of the charge'.

(6) On October 19, 1944, a Naval Court of Inquiry--

(A) exonerated Admiral Kimmel on the grounds that his military decisions and the disposition of his forces at the time of the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor were proper 'by virtue of the information that Admiral Kimmel had at hand which indicated neither the probability nor the imminence of an air attack on Pearl Harbor';

(B) criticized the higher command for not sharing with Admiral Kimmel 'during the very critical period of 26 November to 7 December 1941, important information . . . regarding the Japanese situation'; and

(C) concluded that the Japanese attack and its outcome was attributable to no serious fault on the part of anyone in the naval service.

(7) On June 15, 1944, an investigation conducted by Admiral T. C. Hart at the direction of the Secretary of the Navy produced evidence, subsequently confirmed, that essential intelligence concerning Japanese intentions and war plans was available in Washington but was not shared with Admiral Kimmel .

(8) On October 20, 1944, the Army Pearl Harbor Board of Investigation determined that--

(A) Lieutenant General Short had not been kept 'fully advised of the growing tenseness of the Japanese situation which indicated an increasing necessity for better preparation for war';

(B) detailed information and intelligence about Japanese intentions and war plans were available in 'abundance', but were not shared with Lieutenant General Short's Hawaii command; and

(C) Lieutenant General Short was not provided 'on the evening of December 6th and the early morning of December 7th, the critical information indicating an almost immediate break with Japan, though there was ample time to have accomplished this'.

(9) The reports by both the Naval Court of Inquiry and the Army Pearl Harbor Board of Investigation were kept secret, and Rear Admiral (retired) Kimmel and Major General (retired) Short were denied their requests to defend themselves through trial by court-martial.

(10) The joint committee of Congress that was established to investigate the conduct of Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short completed, on May 31, 1946, a 1,075-page report which included the conclusions of the committee that the two officers had not been guilty of dereliction of duty.

(11) The Officer Personnel Act of 1947, in establishing a promotion system for the Navy and the Army, provided a legal basis for the President to honor any officer of the Armed Forces of the United States who served his country as a senior commander during World War II with a placement of that officer, with the advice and consent of the Senate, on the retired list with the highest grade held while on the active duty list.

(12) On April 27, 1954, the then Chief of Naval Personnel, Admiral J. L. Holloway, Jr., recommended that Rear Admiral Kimmel be advanced in rank in accordance with the provisions of the Officer Personnel Act of 1947.

(13) On November 13, 1991, a majority of the members of the Board for the Correction of Military Records of the Department of the Army found that the late Major General (retired) Short 'was unjustly held responsible for the Pearl Harbor disaster' and that 'it would be equitable and just' to advance him to the rank of lieutenant general on the retired list'.

(14) In October 1994, the then Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Carlisle Trost, withdrew his 1988 recommendation against the advancement of Rear Admiral (retired) Kimmel (by then deceased) and recommended that the case of Rear Admiral Kimmel be reopened.

(15) Although the Dorn Report, a report on the results of a Department of Defense study that was issued on December 15, 1995, did not provide support for an advancement of the late Rear Admiral (retired) Kimmel or the late Major General (retired) Short in grade, it did set forth as a conclusion of the study that 'responsibility for the Pearl Harbor disaster should not fall solely on the shoulders of Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short, it should be broadly shared'.

(16) The Dorn Report found--

(A) that 'Army and Navy officials in Washington were privy to intercepted Japanese diplomatic communications...which provided crucial confirmation of the imminence of war';

(B) that 'the evidence of the handling of these messages in Washington reveals some ineptitude, some unwarranted assumptions and misestimations, limited coordination, ambiguous language, and lack of clarification and follow-up at higher levels'; and

(C) that 'together, these characteristics resulted in failure...to appreciate fully and to convey to the commanders in Hawaii the sense of focus and urgency that these intercepts should have engendered'.

(17) On July 21, 1997, Vice Admiral David C. Richardson (United States Navy, retired) responded to the Dorn Report with his own study which confirmed findings of the Naval Court of Inquiry and the Army Pearl Harbor Board of Investigation and established, among other facts, that the war effort in 1941 was undermined by a restrictive intelligence distribution policy, and the degree to which the commanders of the United States forces in Hawaii were not alerted about the impending attack on Hawaii was directly attributable to the withholding of intelligence from then Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short.

(18) Rear Admiral (retired) Kimmel and Major General (retired) Short are the only two officers eligible for advancement under the Officer Personnel Act of 1947 as senior World War II commanders who were excluded from the list of retired officers presented for advancement on the retired lists to their highest wartime ranks under that Act.

(19) This singular exclusion from advancement of Rear Admiral (retired) Kimmel and Major General (retired) Short from the Navy retired list and the Army retired list, respectively, serves only to perpetuate the myth that the senior commanders in Hawaii were derelict in their duty and responsible for the success of the attack on Pearl Harbor, and is a distinct and unacceptable expression of dishonor toward two of the finest officers who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States.

(20) Major General (retired) Walter Short died on September 23, 1949, and Rear Admiral (retired) Husband Kimmel died on May 14, 1968, without having been accorded the honor of being returned to their wartime ranks as were their fellow veterans of World War II.

(21) The Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, the Admiral Nimitz Foundation, the Naval Academy Alumni Association, the Retired Officers Association, the Pearl Harbor Commemorative Committee, and other associations and numerous

retired military officers have called for the rehabilitation of the reputations and honor of the late Rear Admiral (retired) Kimmel and the late Major General (retired) Short through their posthumous advancement on the retired lists to their highest wartime grades.

(b) REQUEST FOR ADVANCEMENT ON RETIRED LISTS- (1) The President is requested--

(A) to advance the late Rear Admiral (retired) Husband E. Kimmel to the grade of admiral on the retired list of the Navy; and

(B) to advance the late Major General (retired) Walter C. Short to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list of the Army.

(2) Any advancement in grade on a retired list requested under paragraph (1) shall not increase or otherwise modify the compensation or benefits from the United States to which any person is now or may in the future be entitled based upon the military service of the officer advanced.

(c) SENSE OF CONGRESS- It is the sense of Congress that--

(1) the late Rear Admiral (retired) Husband E. Kimmel performed his duties as Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Fleet, competently and professionally, and, therefore, the losses incurred by the United States in the attacks on the naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and other targets on the island of Oahu, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, were not a result of dereliction in the performance of those duties by the then Admiral Kimmel ; and

(2) the late Major General (retired) Walter C. Short performed his duties as Commanding General, Hawaiian Department, competently and professionally, and, therefore, the losses incurred by the United States in the attacks on Hickam Army Air Field and Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, and other targets on the island of Oahu, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, were not a result of dereliction in the performance of those duties by the then Lieutenant General Short.

**(Sample copy for letter to the President)**

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On May 25, 1999, members of the U.S. Senate voted to request that you nominate Admiral Husband Kimmel and General Walter Short for posthumous advancement on the retired list to their highest-held World War II ranks of four-star admiral and three-star general, respectively. I ask you to honor that request.

As you are aware, Kimmel and Short were in command of Navy and Army units at Hawaii at the time of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. Numerous official hearings and the work of many credible historians down through the decades have exonerated these officers of dereliction of duty charges initially levied at them, and have made it abundantly evident that they were scapegoated as being solely responsible for this disaster.

Even the most recent of these inquiries (1995) resulted in an official report by Undersecretary of Defense Edwin Dorn (the Dorn Report) which states, without equivocation, that "Responsibility for the Pearl Harbor disaster should not fall solely on the shoulders of Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short; it should be broadly shared."

Mr. President, tragically, that responsibility *did* fall solely on the shoulders of the Hawaiian commanders, and it remains there to this day. Their singular exclusion from the privileges granted under the Officer Personnel Act of 1947, whereby flag-level officers could retire at their highest-held ranks, has served only to perpetuate the myth of their guilt. They were the only two eligible officers not permitted to benefit under this Act.

This continues to act as a cloud of ignominy over their legacies. Perhaps more important, it is a contradiction of the American principle that calls for equal justice and fairness for all, as well as a blot on the honor of the U.S. military.

At present, some of our highest-ranking colleagues, both Army and Navy, have requested the opportunity to meet with you for the purpose of sharing their views with you on this matter. Again, in the interest of fairness and justice, Mr. President, I urge you to meet with these military careerists.

I also urge you to honor the request of the U.S. Senate by taking the necessary action to restore the reputations of two fine officers who were willing to fight and die for their country, but not to be humiliated by its government. Thank you.

Respectfully,