

IN REPLY  
REFER TO:

A12/A16 (401)

U. S. S. PHELPS

(Ck)

% Fleet Post Office  
Pearl Harbor, T. H.

December 30, 1941.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

From: Commanding Officer.  
To : The Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Offensive Measures taken during Air Raid by  
Japanese Forces on Pearl Harbor, December 7,  
1941 - Report of.

Reference: (a) CincPAC despatch 102102, December 1941.

1. On December 7, 1941, this vessel was moored in a nest of destroyers alongside the U.S.S. DOBBIN in berth X-2, undergoing tender overhaul. The order of ships, starboard to port, was DOBBIN, WORDEN, HULL, DEWEY, PHELPS and MacDONOUGH. A "cold iron" watch was being stood in the Engineering Department. The ship was receiving steam, electricity, fresh and flushing water from the DOBBIN.

2. At 0758 the gangway watch observed bombs being dropped from planes diving on Ford Island and on ships moored in vicinity of the U.S.S. UTAH.

3. The ship went to general quarters at once (0758) and shifted the electric load from the tender to #1 and #2 Emergency Diesel Generators. The forward 1.10 mount commenced firing at 0802. The after 1.10 mount opened fire at approximately 0815, it having been necessary to reassemble portions of the breech mechanisms which had been removed for overhaul. The gun captains of both these mounts showed splendid initiative in opening fire as soon as their mounts were sufficiently manned. Fire from the .50 caliber mounts was hampered by proximity of adjacent ships.

4. Orders were given to light fires under #1 and #2 boilers and close up #3 and #4 boilers which were open for cleaning steam sides of superheaters. Fires were lighted under #1 and #2 boilers at 0825; and at 1040 and 1214 for #3 and #4 boilers, respectively. At 1250 all four boilers were on the line.

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5. At 0926 the ship got underway, with boiler power for 26 knots, and stood out to sea via the North Channel. At 0950 the ship cleared the entrance buoys and stood south with general orders to conduct anti-submarine search in the Off Shore Patrol area. At this time the QG apparatus was reported back in commission.

6. At 1000 joined the ST. LOUIS as inner anti-submarine screen and operated with that vessel, the MONTGOMERY, LAMSON and BLUE until the detachment joined the Task Force Commander, Comdesbatfor in DETROIT, at approximately 1305.

7. Thereafter the vessel operated as directed by Comdesron ONE in WORDEN until its return to Pearl Harbor on December 8, 1941.

8. Damage sustained: None.

9. Casualties to personnel: None

10. Damage inflicted:

(a) Two planes (torpedo planes?) of a nine plane formation which came out of the smoke cloud of the burning battleships and flew at an altitude of about 100 feet over Ford Island under fire of the after 1.10" mount, were observed to catch fire when they reached the North Channel. These planes were probably under fire from other vessels also. They were not observed to crash.

(b) One plane (VB or VF) flying northwestward at an altitude of 200 feet under fire of the forward 1.10" mount caught fire and crashed ashore somewhere to the northward. Because of the extremely short range and apparent accuracy of the fire, it appears that credit for this plane can be claimed by the PHELPS.

(c) Several other strafing and dive bombing targets were engaged by both 1.10" mounts; planes invariably sheered off.

11. Conduct of personnel: The conduct of all hands was exemplary and deserving of the highest praise. Their initiative, willingness and coolness under fire were remarkable. No important item was left undone and every evolution required of them was accomplished smartly and enthusiastically.

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12. Special mention is made in case of the following personnel:

(a) Lieutenant B.E.S. Trippensee, U.S.N., Engineer Officer, showed splendid initiative in coordinating the many details required to prepare the ship for getting underway under stress of attack. He was the senior officer on board and when ready, he took the ship out (0926) and operated as described in paragraph 5, 6, and 7. The ship was handled smartly and intelligently throughout, he personally conning the ship almost continuously for a period of 33 hours. Lieutenant's Trippensee's action is worthy of the highest praise.

(b) Ensign F. E. Bell, D-V(G), U.S.N.R., attached to the staff of Comdesron ONE, who assumed the duties of Communication Officer and whose knowledge of communications was invaluable.

(c) Leslie T. LOVETT, 380 34 90, GMlc, U.S.N., and John H.W. COTES, 371 83 63, GMlc, U.S.N., gun captains of the 1.10" gun mounts, who controlled the fire of these weapons, opening fire upon their own initiative within a few minutes of the commencement of the attack. The action of LOVETT will be made the subject of a special request for advancement in rating.

(d) Bert ELLSTROM, 368 09 63, CWT(AA), U.S.N. and Edgar S. DeWitt, 371 52 24, CWT(PA), U.S.N., who directed the re-assembly of the fireroom auxiliaries and boilers which were being repaired.

(e) Ralph WITON, 305 25 74, TMlc, U.S.N., who directed the work of the torpedemen, succeeding getting one torpedo ready for firing in spite of heavy weather which made running of torpedoes out of tubes extremely hazardous and difficult. He subsequently succeeded in getting six other torpedoes partially ready.

(f) Joe S. Harrison, 380 55 94, EMlc, U.S.N., whose initiative in shifting the electric load from the DOBBIN to the Emergency Diesel generators added greatly to the early fighting efficiency of the ship.

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E. L. Beck