

## **MARSHALL'S DECEPTION**

(Compiled by Tom Kimmel)

The following account of General Marshall's three appearances as a witness before the Army Pearl Harbor Board (APHB) is excerpted and quoted entirely from General Henry Russell's 160 page book, *Pearl Harbor Story*, which he wrote in 1944 and 1945, but did not publish. His heirs recognized its importance and published it in 2001. It is a remarkable firsthand account of how the APHB stumbled across the truth of the Pearl Harbor story, tried to ignore it, but could not. General Russell was a member of the APHB, along with its President General George Grunert, and General Walter Frank. The entirety of General Russell's book is strongly recommended for anyone interested in national defense, leadership, investigations, or the rule of law. This account explains why.

### **The APHB Prepares for Marshall's First Appearance as a Witness**

"My chief interest centered in the testimony of General Marshall, as the responsible head of the War Department. To my disappointment I discovered that such testimony as he gave [to the Roberts Commission in 1941] had been omitted from the record. There was a brief statement that General Marshall had appeared before the Board [referring here to the Roberts Commission] and had described certain operations of the War Department; that these operations were of such secret nature that the Commission had felt justified in omitting them from its record. I must admit that I read this with some suspicions. General Marshall's technique in his appearance before public boards, particularly Congressional committees, was well known to me, and I have heard others refer to it. In advance he acquaints himself with what such bodies may desire and determines what he is willing to tell them. When he appears before the group, he immediately launches into a discussion of the subject and relies on his great powers of salesmanship to overwhelm the body to which he is talking. Ordinarily when he has finished with his discussion those to whom he was talking are overcome and excuse him. For the lack of a better term, we might describe this technique as the 'Congressional Brush-off.' [pp.34-35]. . . .

"In the examination of General Marshall and a few others we were handicapped by General Grunert's directive that all questions be written and submitted to them well in advance of their appearance to testify. Every trial lawyer knows the value [of] being able to examine witnesses without notifying them in advance of the information sought. There is no time to think about the answers to be given or the effect of such answers on the witness making them. In the case of General Marshall the advantages of impromptu examination may have been unimportant. He is a very intelligent and skillful witness. This, coupled with the fact that he was the Chief of Staff of the Army and, replying to officers of his command, permitted him to get into the record such facts as he desired the Board to have. Occasionally, when faced with direct questions from which he could not escape, he made direct answers. Generally he was very evasive.

"I prepared a memorandum describing the procedure we would follow when Marshall was called, and setting forth the questions that we wanted him to answer. This memorandum was sent to Marshall's office,

and a day was agreed upon when the Board, with its assistants, would go to that office to take the testimony.

### **Marshall's First Appearance as a Witness before the APHB**

"On the appointed day a small automobile caravan. . . went to the General's office. Since I had been designated to investigate the War Department, it became my duty to examine Marshall. I had outlined very clearly the things that the Board wanted to know from him. The most important information desired was what he knew about the intentions and plans of the Japanese in the fall of 1941 and what part of this information he passed on to Short [General Walter S. Short, the head of the Army's Hawaiian Command]. . . . After some preliminaries in which the Board and General Marshall passed pleasantries, General Grunert announced that I would conduct the examination. I began by asking questions relating to what Marshall knew about Japanese plans and intentions, referring to the growing tensity in our relations with the Japanese Empire during the fall of 1941. As I now recall, I had asked one or two questions about relations between the War and State Departments when Marshall appeared somewhat vexed by my line of questioning and manifested some signs of irritation at me. In all events, he requested that every one leave the room with the exception of the three members of the Board, a Brig. Gen. Nelson, who was apparently an assistant to Marshall, and McNarney, remained in the room also.

"Alone with the Board, Marshall related to us what he described as information, almost too secret for him to talk about. It dealt with the breaking of the Japanese code. Dramatically, Marshall described the transcending value of the information that was being obtained as a result of deciphering Japanese messages.

"I am not certain about the effect of Marshall's statement on the other members of the Board. I must admit that I was under his spell. I was very greatly impressed with his descriptions of the importance of maintaining the highest secrecy about our breaking the Japanese code.

"I waited with much interest, nevertheless, for him to tell us what the War Department had discovered about Japanese plans and intentions in 1941 by virtue of having access to Japanese diplomatic exchanges. In this field we were greatly disappointed. Marshall used a lot of words, but said little. He discussed a day. This day was a sort of roving day, very indefinite. It moved around in November and finally passed over into December. Something was going to happen on that day. This something would be produced by Japanese activity. What it was, Marshall never said. I remember asking him on two occasions if it was true that the War Department knew that the Japanese were thinking about some day late in November or early December, but did not know the exact significance of that day. Each time Marshall replied that it was true. The picture of Marshall during his secret conference with members of the Board remains entirely clear in my mind. He was a most impressive figure. Words came to him with great readiness. He spoke with a most intense earnestness. I had always regarded Marshall as a very intellectual man. On this day Marshall, the super-salesman, was at his magnificent best.

"When he had finished his discussion he sent for the reporters and assistants. When they returned, with an air of finality, he wanted to know if he could be of further help to the Board. In the interim while the Board was reassembling, I recovered from the spell of Marshall's speech and was now back out of the stratosphere and in the

Pentagon. I realized that the two main questions that the Board wanted to ask Marshall had not been answered. I remained curious about Marshall's knowledge of Japanese plans and intentions in 1941, and what he had passed on to Short. [pp.46-48]. . . .

"When he had finished the major portion of the examination I realized that we had made little progress in determining what Marshall knew about the Japanese plans and intentions in the late fall of 1941. So far as the evidence developed disclosed, he had told Short practically nothing. The nature of the examination had been such as to require a complete disclosure of everything that Marshall had sent Short. [p.50]. . . .

"I then turned to an examination of Marshall about the ['War-Warning'] message of November 27 (472) and Short's reply thereto. I do not recall that he described his relation to 472. He was very hazy about having seen Short's sabotage reply. . . . It was his assumption that he had seen the Short reply. He stated that whether he saw the Short reply or not, his responsibility in connection with it could not be escaped.

"In referring to questions about the form and substance of 472, he made the tremendously important statement that we will stand on the record as written. He realized then that he was on the defensive. He did not wish to discuss the probable effect of the limitations and restrictions in 472 on Short's thinking.

"Toward the end of the examination, General Marshall lost interest in it. He began to watch the clock rather regularly and stated that he had some meeting which he was forced to attend. It was with important representatives of foreign countries.

"When we left his office, I realized that the 'brush-off' technique had been applied; that a great part of the time had been consumed by Marshall in reading meaningless correspondence, and all for a purpose. [p.51]. . . .

"As a witness, Short was the exact opposite of Marshall. Both men have very keen intellects and quick minds. Marshall had employed his to evade direct questions and to give the Board only such information as he wanted it to have. Short testified readily [p.64]. . . .

"Why Marshall went as far as he did without telling the Board the entire truth remains a mystery. [p.93]. . . .

"Intercepted Japanese messages had been withheld from the Board by the War Department and I could see but one reason, to wit: Marshall and his close associates on the General Staff did not want the Army Pearl Harbor Board to know that they were in possession of so much important information, none of which had been sent to Short on the Islands. [p.98]. . . .

### **Marshall's Second Appearance as a Witness before the APHB**

"The reappearance of General Marshall before the Board as a witness resulted from testimony given by Admiral Kimmel [the Commander of the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor during the attack], who was before the Board prior to its departure for San Francisco, and Honolulu. . . . When he had answered the questions propounded by the members of the Board, General Grunert asked him if he had anything else to say before being excused. This was in keeping with General Grunert's usual custom. Thereupon, Kimmel produced a written statement that he read into the record. It was perfectly obvious that he was laboring under emotional strain as he began the reading. The charges that Kimmel made against

the War and Navy Departments were sensational. In substance, they were that the War and Navy Departments knew Japan had fixed a deadline as of November 25, subsequently extending it for a few days, for the signing of an agreement between the Japanese Empire and the American Government, and that if such an agreement was not reached we might expect an attack by Japan. He also charged that the Secretary of State delivered an ultimatum to the Japanese Government on the 26th of November, 1941, notwithstanding a recommendation against such action by the Chief of Staff of the Army, and the Chief of Naval operations. He charged that the War and Navy Departments knew for several days before the attack at Pearl Harbor that Japan expected to go to war with us and probably would direct an attack against the fleet at Pearl Harbor. He said that several hours before the attack came the War and Navy Departments knew the exact time when it would happen.

"When Kimmel finished reading, I discovered that both Generals Grunert and Frank were looking at me. Doubtless they were thinking that my investigation of what the War Department knew prior to the attack had been very poorly done. There was certainly some justification for this position, in the light of the testimony that Admiral Kimmel had just given. Since the investigation of the War Department was in my field, I asked Admiral Kimmel if he would reappear at some subsequent time and tell the Board the source of this startling information. To this he replied that to the extent that such testimony would not divulge any confidences, he would be glad to comply with the Board's request. I realized that it was a very unusual situation for a group of army officers to be driven to the Navy Department or its officers to discover things that should have been available from the files of the War Department.

"It was my purpose then to recommend the recall of Admiral Kimmel, unless the War Department enlightened us fully on the charges made by the Admiral.

"One afternoon during our stay at San Francisco, General Grunert called me into his office, saying he had been reading General Marshall's testimony and considering it in connection with the charges of Admiral Kimmel. Grunert had reached the conclusion that Marshall should be told of the Kimmel testimony, and given an opportunity to refute it or agree with it. A memorandum was then prepared and mailed to General Marshall, calling his attention to the evidence then in the record containing such serious charges against the War Department. Using the Kimmel testimony as a basis for the memorandum, questions were submitted to General Marshall, out-lining subjects that the Board desired him to discuss, if he elected to testify again. Upon receipt of the memorandum, General Marshall wired the Board at San Francisco that he would appear before the Board upon its return to Washington.

"He came over to the Munitions Building shortly after our return to Washington, but after delivery to us of the intercepted Japanese messages by the office of G-2. At the beginning of his testimony, he stated that upon receipt of our San Francisco memorandum he knew that we had been told about these messages. It was his attitude to place full responsibility for the withholding of these messages on the office of G-2.

"On this second appearance, General Marshall, in the main, followed the same policy as when he first came before the Board. He selected certain of the questions in the memorandum and talked about them. I was most anxious that he confine himself to matters which he had not discussed before, and those in which the Board was so intensely interested. It was my personal desire to know why the War Department

had sent Short so little of the abundant information which it had, and further why the War Department did nothing to discover the condition of readiness of Short's troops prior to the attack. It will be remembered that Short had reported to the War Department that he had alerted his entire command for sabotage. I thought Marshall should deal with those matters which went to the very heart of the investigation and which would control the Board in its findings of derelictions. He discussed the great necessity for security and the lack of security consciousness on the part of the American people and the Army. He referred to criticisms of our failure to guard military secrets by the British. These were his reasons for not sending Short more information. He feared that the Japanese might break our code and discover that we were intercepting their messages.

"After some time, probably two hours of the procedure just described, General Grunert looked at the clock and turned to me and asked if I could finish my examination of Marshall in the fifteen minutes remaining before General Marshall would have to leave to attend another conference. It was the same old story of the very busy Marshall.

"I stated emphatically that I had accomplished little and that in my opinion the record was incomplete and would remain incomplete until we had General Marshall's opinions on certain material facts. That I had made every effort to get them to this time, but had been unsuccessful.

"In reply to this statement, General Marshall said he would answer any questions that I asked. I then asked him if it would not have been perfectly safe for him to have dispatched the critical information about Japanese intentions to General Short by courier. He stated it would have been safe and feasible, but not wise. I have never known what he meant. He hurried away.

"Before his departure, he requested that we prepare such written questions as would elicit the desired information and send them to him for consideration. General Grunert then told me I could prepare the questions that I wanted to ask the Chief of Staff and submit them to him. If they appeared material and pertinent, he would pass them along to the Chief of Staff for consideration. To this I replied that if my questions were to be censored, I desired to dictate them into the record and have them stricken from the record if the majority of the Board thought best. In all events, the second appearance of General Marshall ended with little accomplished.

"At this point, I was somewhat disappointed, if not disgusted, with the conduct of General Marshall as the Chief of Staff of the Army. Throughout he had adopted an attitude of evasion and attempted to meet requests for information by speechmaking. I expressed myself to the Board in a very vigorous manner, which probably had some results, as will be noted when we come to tell about his third appearance before the Board. [pp.99-102]. . . .

### **General Marshall's 3rd and Final Appearance before the APHB**

"In compliance with General Grunert's instructions, I prepared questions to be answered by General Marshall. They were in writing and sent to the office of the Chief of Staff. This procedure, from the beginning, was very distasteful to me. Since the Board had gotten so much material information, and Marshall had become so involved in the Pearl Harbor disaster, I could see no good reason for continuing to baby him. Nevertheless I wanted to get his definite statements in the

record on the few material things which we now knew had caused or contributed to the Pearl Harbor disaster. After a long investigation and a consideration of a lot of immaterial data, the Board had about reached the heart of the entire matter.

"The Board and its assistants went to the office of the Chief of Staff. His attitude and conduct were entirely different from that on the two previous occasions when he had appeared as a witness. No longer was he the talkative salesman. Now he was the somewhat irritated executive, very brusque and direct in his answers, employing just as few words as possible. Apparently my criticisms of General Marshall about his treatment of the Board had reached him.

"One of the questions related to the joint note sent to the President by Marshall and Stark on the 27th of November. It will be recalled that in that memorandum Marshall and Stark had stated that the American, British and Dutch, in conference, had agreed that no counter-military measures be taken against the Japanese until the Japanese armed forces crossed a line described as west of 100° east, and south of 10° north. I asked General Marshall who was authorized to make an agreement with the British and Dutch for our Government to take counter-military measures when the Japanese armed forces crossed this line. His answer was, 'No one.' I regretted then and regret now that his answer was so short, and left so much to be desired. However, he was reading the questions that I had prepared and was giving the replies at the end of each question. We weren't permitted to examine him orally, as regrettable as that was.

"Turning to 472, the message of November 27, he was asked if in his opinion that message contained all of the enemy information and all of the instructions to Short necessary for Short's accomplishment of his mission. The answer was, 'Yes.' It had been my hope that he would discuss this message. His name appeared on the message and the Board should have had his views as to its clarity and completeness. Evidently he had not changed his views since his first appearance before the Board. He testified then, as has already been stated, that they, referring to Marshall and his associates, would stand on the record as written.

"He was then asked if in his opinion 472 was misunderstood and improperly interpreted by General Short, thereby failing in its accomplishment of the purpose intended. This elicited another categorical, 'Yes.' The next question, in his opinion, was Short's reply to 472 misunderstood or improperly interpreted in the War Department, thereby failing in its accomplishment of the purpose intended. To this Marshall answered rather evasively. The substance of the reply was that the Short message might not have been properly handled in the War Department. He had seen those two questions and, of course, knew the implications of his giving the identical answer to both of them. He avoided doing that.

"Next, did he know the condition of readiness of Short's forces between November 27 and December 7, 1941? He did not.

"Did he make any investigation to determine the condition of readiness of Short's troops during that period? He did not.

"We were anxious to get additional information on the meaning of placing the stamp of the Chief of Staff on Short's reply. Previously he had explained that presumptively he had seen Short's reply and had told us why he thought his pen or pencil notation was not entered. In this connection, we asked if the appearance of the stamped words 'Chief of Staff' on Short's message indicated to other staff members that the

Chief of Staff had seen the message and noted its contents. To this he replied that it did.

"On different occasions we had discussed the events of Sunday morning, December 7, with General Marshall. Originally he had testified that in keeping with his usual custom he came down to the War Department about 10.30 or 11 o'clock. Nothing was said about his having received a message that it was very urgent for him to hasten to his office. When he reached his office on that morning, he found on his desk that part of the memorandum of the Japanese rejecting Mr. Hull's proposals that had been received on the previous Saturday evening. For some reason, the final sentence of that memorandum and the order for delivery of the ultimatum, and breaking of the code machines, which had been received early Sunday morning, had been placed on his desk under the longer and less material memorandum.

"It was obvious that Marshall was stating his own defense in his oral testimony by failing to tell us that the message requesting that he go to his office immediately had been received. In this final testimony he said that he did not get Bratton's message until he was coming out of the shower bath. Describing the ride that he took as lasting about an hour, it was his opinion that he received Bratton's message about 9.30. He didn't attempt to account for the two hours that elapsed from the time he finished his bath until he was in his office. Only a few minutes was required to drive from his home to his office.

"In another very material way, Marshall's testimony was in conflict with that of Bratton. Marshall testified that the Sunday morning message was on his desk under the Saturday night memorandum. Bratton was positive in his testimony that he had the Sunday morning message in his hand when Marshall came in and handed it to Marshall. Marshall testified that he called Stark on the telephone and learned that Stark also had before him the Saturday night memorandum, and the Sunday morning message. Stark didn't propose to do anything about them. No wonder the Navy Board found that Stark should never hold a position in the Navy again which required the exercise of superior judgment. In all events, Marshall disagreed with Stark, and hurried messages away to the overseas departments. He telephoned the Philippines because he expected the attack to be in that area. He wrote the message to Short and directed the signal officer to transmit it as quickly as possible. Some difficulty had been experienced in getting Honolulu on the radio and commercial telegraph and cables were employed to notify Short of what had reached the War Department the night before, and early Sunday morning. When this message reached Honolulu it was delivered to a boy to be carried to Short's headquarters some four or five miles away. The boy was pedaling a bicycle along the Hawaiian road with this message when the bombs began to fall.

"One of our last questions to General Marshall on his third appearance was, 'Who relieved General Short?' To this he replied, 'I did,' and then added, 'with the approval of the Secretary of War.' He was asked for a copy of the order. Petulantly, he threw it across the desk to me. It was a very brief order relieving Short, signed 'Marshall.' To me this was the most disappointing act that the investigation had developed. I expected him to testify in reply to the question, 'Who relieved Short,' that either he relieved him or that he relieved him under the direction of the President. Every one in the Army, who was familiar with conditions in the War Department and the relation between Mr. Stimson and the Chief of Staff Marshall, knew that Marshall's statement that Short was relieved with the consent and approval of the Secretary of War was, insofar as it related to the

consent of the Secretary of War, a feeble defense based on an effort to pass part of the responsibility for Short's relief to the Secretary of War. Marshall knew that his derelictions were equal to or greater than those of Short, and that military men, so long as they studied the catastrophe of Pearl Harbor, would censure Marshall's conduct in protecting his own official life by destroying that of his subordinate Short. If the Secretary of War could be made a party to the decision, Marshall's guilt in connection with Short's relief would be somewhat lessened. The truth of the matter is that the Secretary of War participated in the preparation of 472, and had seen Short's reply to the message. He too was guilty of dereliction and needed a defense badly. But more important is the fact that to all intents and purposes Marshall was not only the Chief of Staff, but the Secretary of War also. Mr. Stimson's childlike faith in and devotion to General Marshall remains a very great mystery to me, explainable only by the fact that he was very old and had been recalled to the important post of Secretary of War from a life of partial, if not complete retirement.

"Only a few days before Marshall testified about the approval of Short's removal by the Secretary of War, Mr. Stimson had told the Board that never at any time during World War II had he made any suggestions to General Marshall about the assignment of commanders or their relief. He had remained entirely aloof in these matters and left them exclusively to General Marshall.

"The atmosphere in the Chief of Staff's office on this my last visit to it was very tense. Everyone was tense, but the Chief of Staff's reactions to the Board's procedure was very clear. It was one of deep, but restrained hostility.

"I must admit that I was very much depressed as General Grunert and I drove back from the Pentagon to the Munitions Building. It seemed to me that our investigation had disclosed that leadership in the American Army was on a very low basis. En route to the Munitions Building, we passed the Memorial to President Lincoln. This Memorial is one of the impressive and inspiring places in our country. The spirit of Lincoln is very real. You can almost feel his presence when you are there. It ranks along with Jamestown in Virginia, and Washington's Tomb at Mount Vernon.

"I have never visited this Memorial without living again in memory those tragic years when the North and South were fighting. Always, I remember other great figures of those turbulent times. On this day, as we passed the Memorial, I recalled the picture of General Lee at Gettysburg. Walking on that battlefield, doubtless realizing the struggle between the Federals and Confederates, which had just been fought, was an end to the Southern Confederacy, he must have known that history would search for the causes of the failures. Lee, with admirable courage reflecting a great character, said, 'It was all my fault.' History does not agree with General Lee, and has written an entirely different verdict. Contrast that with the conduct of Marshall. His derelictions in the Pearl Harbor disaster were greater than those of Short, but Marshall's verdict was 'It's all your fault, get out.'

"Two defendants, Marshall and Short, were standing at the Bar of Public Opinion, for trial. One of the defendants, Marshall, having that power, judged Short guilty and executed him to draw attention away from himself.

"Lee had the first great requisite of leadership—character. He never understood why men regarded him so highly and followed him so unquestioningly. It was not necessary to establish a tremendous propaganda machine to impress those about Lee with his greatness.

"I can't conceive of any of the leaders of our Civil War—Grant, Jackson, and others—atoning for their own sins by sacrificing others.

"But our Army had changed; our concepts of leadership in the Army are different [pp.115-120]."