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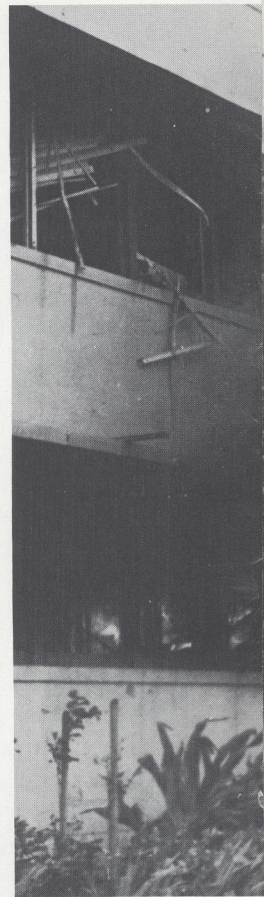
Hickam Field, 7 December 1941 —

The First U.S. Army Air Corps Flying Fortress (B-17D) Combat Mission in World War II

by Harold S. Kaye

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A heavily damaged B-17 Flying Fortress after the attack, with engines stripped off. (Photo, Steve Costande)



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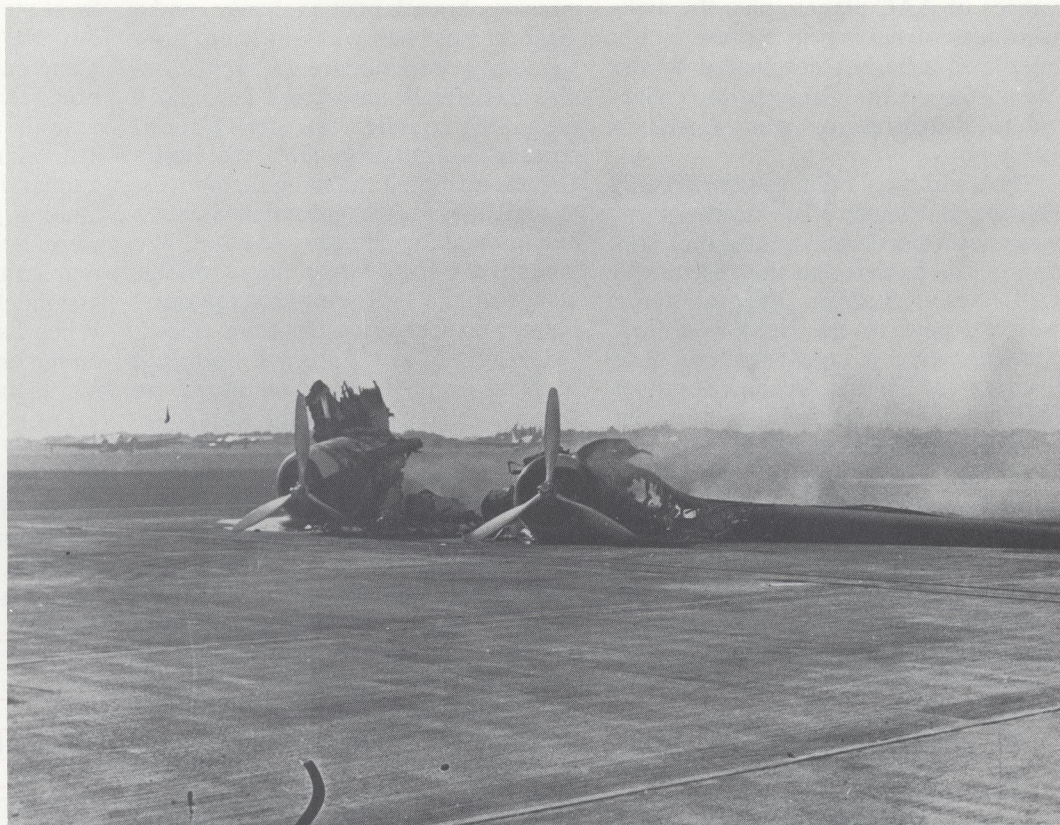
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A heavily damaged B-17 Flying Fortress after the attack, with engines stripped off. (Photo, Steve Costande)



A B-18 bomber destroyed on the flightline; the still-smoking, dispersed planes are in the background. (Photo, Steve Costande)



A dull thud shook me out of a sound sleep and brought me up on one elbow. I looked around and noticed several men who were awakened by the same noise. Others were still sleeping. Some beds were empty because the absent men were either off on weekend pass or had the initiative to get up for breakfast. Even though I had been asleep, the noise somehow communicated to me a sense of urgency and direction, and I instinctively felt that it was important and that it came from Pearl Harbor. From the questioning looks on the faces around me, it may have occurred to the other men as well. Someone, however, made the comment that it was a blasting noise made by our Navy and, with my senses lulled by this remark, I laid my head back on the pillow. It was Sunday morning, 7 December 1941, at Hickam Field, Oahu, Territory of Hawaii (T.H.).

Hickam Field, often misspelled "Hickham," was named after pioneer Army Air Corps (AAC) officer Lt. Col. Horace H. Hickam. Its predecessor, Luke Field, had been located on Ford Island in the middle of Pearl Harbor. But the technical ad-



Barracks wing on fire during attack. (Photo, Steve Costande)

vances of AAC planes, plus the awkwardness of having an airbase in the middle of a harbor dominated by the Navy, forced the Army to look elsewhere. Construction was started in 1937.

The field was built south of Pearl Harbor, but some of its northern environs still bordered the channel portion of the harbor and the rest of the U.S. Naval Station. Adjoining the western part of the field was Fort Kamehameha, a coast artillery base fronting the Pacific Ocean. South of Hickam was John Rodgers Airport (civilian) and still south of that was Honolulu. Just east of the field, Kamehameha Highway ran north and south from Pearl Harbor to Honolulu with a short branch leading into Hickam. And further east of that highway were the sugar-cane fields of Aiea leading into the foothills of the Koolau mountain range — the island spine of Oahu.

Still pristine, Hickam was newly built to accommodate the heavy bombers of the day. The runways were constructed in the shape of an isosceles triangle with a wide flightline and main runway No. 3 east and west. Another runway, No. 6, ran southeast toward John Rodgers Airport. A third runway, running northeast by southwest, completed the triangle. Cutting through the middle of the triangle was a taxi strip. Facing south, there were five sets of double hangars: one set, Nos. 2 and 4, to the left of the post operations building and control tower, and four sets, Nos. 3 and 5, 7 and 9, 11 and 13, and 15 and 17, to the right. Hangars numbered 4, 5, 9, 13, and 17 faced the flightline and runway No. 3. Behind the other set of hangars were railroad tracks and then the main thoroughfare, Hangar Avenue, which started from the Hickam main entrance and ended near the gigantic Hawaiian Air Depot building. Just back of Hangar Avenue was the pride of Hickam Field — the recently finished (January 1941), completely modern, million-dollar concrete barracks for enlisted men.

These barracks were built three stories high with wings projecting from each of four sides resembling a square hub with nine spokes: three facing the hangar line, two facing a baseball field to the west, two facing north toward Pearl Harbor, two facing east toward the parade ground. The hub contained barber and tailor shops, a medical dis-

pensary, branch post exchange, and a gigantic mess hall with sufficient floor space to accommodate six regulation-size basketball courts and feed 3,000 men. My outfit, the 4th Reconnaissance Squadron (H), 5th Bomb Group, occupied the wing facing west toward the parade ground nearest to and paralleling Hangar Avenue. We inhabited the first two floors of this wing with the 18th Wing Headquarters Squadron occupying the third floor.

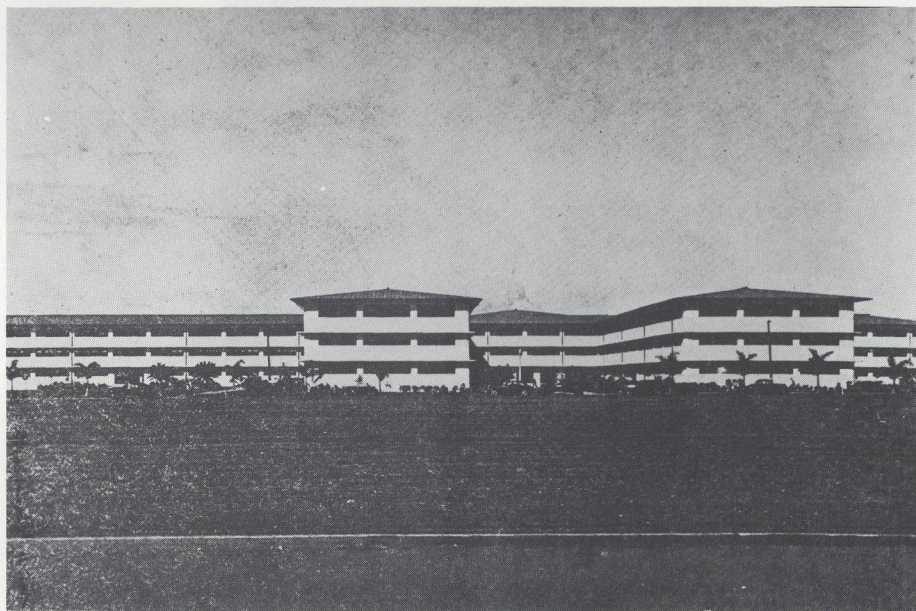
Lying on my bunk, I had just touched my head back to the pillow when a sharp slamming noise accompanied by the tinkle of falling glass set me upright. Someone yelled, "The Navy sure fouled up on that one!" The ensuing comments left no doubt amongst the men; our Navy was responsible. I swung my legs out of the covers and dressed quickly, sticking my feet into non-regulation Indian moccasins and slipping my coveralls over my undershorts. I had no undershirt or socks. While dressing I looked out the windows, which ran the length of the wall, and noticed a thick column of black smoke roiling up into the sky from the direction of Pearl Harbor. I went downstairs into the hallway which faced the entrance to the wing. A group of men were aimlessly milling around the supply and orderly rooms which led off the hallway. Confusion and bewilderment were on every face. Questions were being asked.

I heard the first intimation that the planes now flying overhead were Japanese. Still, it didn't register in my mind. Some men were standing on the

front steps of the entrance and I went outside to join them. A low-flying plane came howling out of Pearl Harbor, thundered over the parade ground, and roared past our barracks. The plane was a two-seater with a gunner in the rear cockpit and fixed landing gear. Both pilot and gunner were helmeted and goggled and the rear gunner was frantically swiveling his machine-gun from side to side. When I saw the large red balls painted on the underwing, I finally understood it was Japanese.

Over on the right of the steps, kneeling near some bushes, a soldier was firing a bolt-action Springfield rifle. Down the sidewalk toward the hangar I saw another airman flattening himself with his back to a palm tree as if to escape a slanting rain. At this point, I witnessed an event that haunted me for years. For a long time I thought that it might have been my imagination, but it was not, nor was it a dream; this same incident was viewed by three other men. Looking between the operations building and Hangars No. 3 and 5, I saw a Japanese plane hit runway No. 3, sit there for a fraction of a second, and then take off again. It was as if the Japanese pilot wanted to touch American soil and go back to his carrier with a good story. Whatever his reason, it was a remarkable and brilliant feat of flying.

I thought it was safest to keep away from the entrance, so I went back inside. Every time a plane would roar past the barracks, the airmen on the front steps and those crowded next to



The Hickam Field barracks before 7 Dec. 1941 — the 4th Recon. Squadron occupied the first two floors of the left wing.

the entrance doors would come pelt-
ing back into the hallway. During one
of those inrushes, I saw my first
casualty. A tall soldier came walking
in from the outside with blood on his
forehead. It didn't look like a bullet
wound, more like a cut from shattered
glass or a flying stone. Unbeknownst
to me at the time, this incident, plus
the soldier operating the rifle outside,
was apparently witnessed by a Sgt.
H.E. Swinney.

I was joined by my best friend,
Stanely Foster, also a radio operator.
We decided to sit down in a corridor
next to the supply room with our backs
to the wall. We hadn't been sitting
there long before the First Sergeant of
my outfit came into the hallway from
his orderly room office and yelled for
any crewmen attached to the planes,
"Get your --- over to the flightline and
help disperse the planes!"

THESE were the first orders I
heard that morning. It was the
receipt and carrying out of this order
which determined the rest of my day's
activities. The order guided me from
aimless bewilderment to the sharp fo-
cus of duty. It did not have to be
obeyed, as confusion was so rife that
certain members of plane crews did
not show up for duty for two days. I
obeyed the order either from an in-
stilled reaction to duty or from a fear
of disciplinary action from higher
authority. For whatever reason, I got
up on my feet and prepared to go over
to the flightline.

I trotted toward our squadron's
hangar, No. 9, during a fortunate lull
in the attack. Cross Hangar Avenue,
my attention was caught by two men
on a motorcycle motioning to an offi-
cer sitting in the pilot's seat of a B-17D
Flying Fortress parked on the flight-
line between Hangars No. 5 and 9.
They sped away as I spotted the num-
ber on the tail and recognized it as the
plane I had flown in with my com-
manding officer of the 4th Recon-
naissance Squadron, Capt. Louis P.
Turner. Simultaneously, the pilot saw
me and waved to attract my attention.
He gestured to come over. As I ran
toward the plane, the downward
whine of the starter on the left out-
board engine commenced with its ac-
companying cough when the cylinders
caught and the prop turned over. Near-
ing the plane, I recognized Lt. Gordon
L. Kelley who had previously been
my co-pilot. He motioned me to come



The bombed and strafed barracks of the 4th Recon. Squadron.



on board; the side door opened and the
aerial engineer, S/Sergeant Young, let
down the stairs. I climbed aboard as
the other engines coughed into life.
When all were functioning, Kelley
taxied the plane to a dispersal
position.

Kelley's dispersal point was not a
prepared position. He either picked it

at random or upon the receipt of an
order. Visualizing the two main run-
ways, No. 3 and 6, with the taxi strip
bisecting the middle, they looked like
the letter "A" lying on its side. The
dispersal position Kelley chose would
be in the enclosed position of the
above-mentioned letter "A." And the
nose of the plane faced Hangar No. 9

at an approximate 45° angle. This position is at variance from that described by the eventual pilot of the plane, Capt. Brooke E. Allen.

Allen declared that he and Kelley taxied one B-17D to a dispersal point next to the bomb dump. Because of mechanical failure and strafing, that plane was rendered inoperable. According to Allen, another B-17D (presumably ours) was then dispersed at the same position by people unknown. However, Kelley was not with Allen on the first plane, nor did we park at this position.

order and reported to whatever planes were available.

Our next task was to get the plane combat-ready because we had to start from scratch. There were no machine-guns or ammunition in the planes, and bombs had to be brought out from the bomb dump. Not being involved in any of the ordnance work, I found a "short-nosed" diagonal-cutting pliers and tried snipping off the jagged edges of the Alclad aluminum metal "skin" fractured by fragmentation bombs dropped or by bullets from Japanese planes in the first attack. It was use-

smoke, the plane disintegrated. Glancing toward the left, I saw a throttled-back B-17E Flying Fortress attempting to make a landing approach on runway No. 6. Perhaps 50 yards behind him, a Japanese fighter plane, with the leading edges of his wings winking furiously, was firing into the bomber. Either the pilot received instructions from the control tower or he realized what was happening because, with a sudden surge of power, the B-17E drew away from the Japanese fighter, made a climbing right turn over the ocean, and went



The bomb-damaged mess hall still smoking. (Photo, Steve Costande)

After Kelley parked our plane and "killed" the engines, I moved to the co-pilot's seat at his request. He was having trouble raising Hickam's control tower with the SCR-274-N Command Set. Everything seemed to check out; the dials on the receiver and transmitter were on the proper frequencies, but we couldn't get an answer. From our position, we were looking almost directly at the Tower. After several futile attempts, I left and joined the group of men who had gathered around the plane — a mixed bag of armorers, mechanics, and crewmen who had answered the 1st Sergeant's

less, however; the airplane metal was too tough. All this had taken place during the lull, from approximately 8:25 to 8:40 a.m.

SUDDENLY, someone yelled, "Get away from the plane; the 'Japs' are attacking again!" Again, I joined with Stan Foster. We ran about 30 yards from the plane, closer to runway No. 3, and stretched out on the ground. I propped myself up on one elbow.

Looking out toward Pearl Harbor, I saw a Japanese plane pulling out of a dive and, as he emerged from the

back into his approach. The Japanese plane, which seemed to have been left standing still by the B-17E's sudden spurt of speed, made no attempt at another pass but continued on its way. Landing nicely after this trial, the pilot brought the B-17E to a stop off the runway and the crew spilled out in a hurry. I noticed the plane was painted a dull brown color; ours were still silver-bright.

PFC Lorenz, an airplane mechanic lying near us, unexpectedly shouted, "Look up there!" I looked up and saw a V-shaped formation of 10 to 15 planes at about 8,000 feet. The group

was coming in from the ocean, flying west to east, and seemed directly in line with our barracks. Cottony-black balls of anti-aircraft (AA) fire from Fort Kamehameha and Pearl Harbor exploded woefully short of their mark, at least 2,000 feet below the planes. A salvo of bombs was suddenly released by the planes accompanied by a ripping, tearing noise like a gigantic bed-sheet being torn in half. The sun caught the bombs as they fell, picking highlights here and there as they dropped. As the bombs struck, our barracks seemed to rise in the air and then settle back with dust and smoke piling up from the sides. The ground beneath us shook with the concussion. The bombs had landed on the west side of the barracks, but from the east wings my eye was caught by a rush of soldiers pouring out of the barracks like a disrupted anthill. Some were still in their underclothes or pajamas.

Foster suddenly hit me with his hand and screamed, "Look!" I turned my head and saw a plane seemingly diving right at us. In a panicky moment, I raised myself as if to run but dropped back to the ground, covering my head with my arms. The plane started firing, and the combined noise of bullets ricocheting off the runway and the roaring engine made a hellish sound. When the plane pulled away, we simultaneously noticed a drainage ditch with an embankment of earth to the left of our plane. We both started to run, and almost reached our sanctuary when someone cried, "Look out!" I looked over my shoulder and saw another Japanese fighter starting his run on the field. I leaped toward the mound of earth, hitting Stan who was slightly ahead of me. Both of us tumbled over to the other side. Finishing his dive, the plane was pulling up when PFC John Mikula, who courageously stayed with our plane, fired his .50-caliber machine-gun located at the waist position. The Japanese plane jerked slightly, dropped its nose, started to emit smoke, and went into a flat glide toward the ocean. With the tremendous crossfire going on at Hickam, it is difficult to say that Mikula alone shot the plane down, but it certainly seemed that way to me. We learned later that the plane crashed in Fort Kamehameha, killing several soldiers. And units at Fort Kamehameha also took credit for shooting the plane down.

It now seemed all clear again so we



A B-17 burning on the flightline during the attack. (Photo, Steve Costande)

rejoined the plane and started the serious business of getting it combat-ready. Some progress already had been made, but the pace was maddeningly slow because of the confusion. The engineer, radio compartment, and rear bottom tub hatches were removed from their positions, to be replaced with .50-caliber machine-guns. A .30-caliber machine-gun was positioned in the nose of the plane. A tug came out bearing more ammunition belts for the machine-guns. Kelley noted that he had ordered 14,000 rounds of .50-caliber ammunition loaded onto the plane. Knowing I had to fly, I went back to the hangar on the tug to pick up my parachute. Hangar No. 9 was a mess, but not as badly damaged as the adjoining No. 7 which had been heavily bombed. All the clocks were stopped at 7:55. I had no idea of the time that morning; I had never checked my watch. My search for parachutes was fruitless; the parachute section said that the chutes had been picked up and shipped out to our plane.

BACK at the plane, I checked the radio system, the SCR-287-A High-Powered Liaison Equipment. I snapped on the BC-348-B radio receiver and listened to the Hickam Field Transmitting frequency. Noth-

ing was coming in except background noise. I checked the BC-375-C radio transmitter. There were seven BC-306 antenna tuning units in the plane, one in the transmitter and six others mounted on the wall of the radio compartment. They covered a wide range of frequencies, from 350 to 12,500 kc. Because we seldom changed frequencies, the same tuning unit stayed in the transmitter. It was fortunate that we did not have a major change in frequency that day. A fragmentation bomb had exploded near the plane and had torn a hole on the side of the radio compartment where the other tuning units were mounted, and some were badly damaged.

The Sperry bombsight, always kept under tight security in a separate room in the hangar, was brought out and installed. And the process of loading the plane with bombs began as they finally arrived from the dump. Captain Allen said that he had our plane loaded with eight 500-pound bombs. Sergeant MacKay, an armorer, helped in the bomb loading and was positive that they were 600-pound bombs because Hickam Field only had 100-, 300-, 600-, 1,100-, and 2,000-pound bombs in storage. Technical Sgt. Glen H. McQueen, a crew chief (31st Bomb Sqdn., 5th Bomb. Gp.) claims that Hickam, indeed, had a few 500-pound



The bomb-damaged interior of HQ and HQ Squadron 5th Bomb Group hangar. (Photo, Steve Costande)

bombs with two types of fuses — one instantaneous and the other with a 10-second delayed action. Lieutenant Kelley, however, was positive that he supervised the loading of our plane and recalled four 500-pound bombs and an auxiliary gas tank placed in the bomb-bays. This meant that a gasoline truck would have had to come out to the plane, an event which I cannot recall.

And then the most inspiring sight of the morning took place. A flight of three Douglas A-20 twin-engine bombers took off on runway No. 3. Curiously, they took off from east to west. Almost invariably we took off in the opposite direction because of the winds which always seemed to come down off the Koolau Range. Although this formation of A-20s was said to have taken off at 11:27 a.m., the same time as the two heavy bombers, I believe that it was at least 30 minutes prior to our takeoff.

The process of assembling a crew to fly the plane was then begun. The combat crew concept had not yet evolved at Hickam Field. A training process constantly being employed by the AAC at Hickam only meant that the pilot, co-pilot, aerial engineer,

and radio operator were the set members of a crew. A bombardier, navigator, and photographer were utilized only on specific training assignments, and these personnel varied from mission to mission. We never carried gunners. We never mounted .50- or .30-caliber machine-guns unless it was a flying or dye-marked ocean target mission, and this was all too seldom.

My pilot, Capt. Louis P. Turner, had gone back to the mainland about three weeks prior to the attack to help fly back new B-17E Flying Fortresses. Because Turner was absent, Capt. Brooke E. Allen became the acting CO of the 4th Reconnaissance Squadron. Our aerial engineer, S/Sgt. J.B. Young, had just been assigned to the plane. The other enlisted men, PFC J. Mikula, Sgt. J.A. MacKay, Jr. (correct name), and Cpl. J.S. "Jack" Mueller, who flew as gunners, were self-anointed, or as Sergeant MacKay declared, "Talked myself into the crew." Mikula, MacKay, and Mueller had seldom flown before, having been mechanics or armorers. Only the assigned members of a plane received flight pay (50 percent of base pay), and therefore, these volunteers would not

have previously flown as crew members. Most were in position when Captain Allen and a small entourage made their first appearance at our plane about 15 to 20 minutes prior to takeoff. Among the entourage were two additional members of the crew: the navigator, Lt. Robert J. Dorwart, and the bombardier, Sergeant Ernest (Henry Earnest?). Although the Form 1 lists only eight men on the crew, both Kelley and I think at least two, and possibly three, other men flew in the plane that day.

In any event, a force of three B-17D Flying Fortresses was assembled and taxied for takeoff on runway No. 3 going west to east. Allen claimed that the first plane was piloted by Lt. Al Seward. Kelley thought the pilot was a Captain Waldron. ✱ Whoever was the pilot, I watched the plane, through my radio compartment window, pick up speed going down the runway then suddenly veer off and come to a stop. According to Kelley, the tail wheel on that plane started to vibrate and the pilot told the co-pilot to lock the wheel, a standard procedure prior to takeoff. There were two levers on the floor between the two pilots — one locked the tail wheel, the other de-

pressed the elevators and locked them down. The co-pilot mistakenly grabbed the lever locking the elevators. The tail raised, ruining all four propellers, causing the plane to abort. Captain Allen came next, and we successfully took off on the same runway. After him came Capt. LaVerne G. "Blondie" Saunders (CO, 23rd Bomb Sqdn., 11th Bomb Gp). Saunders, however, declared that his was the first plane to take off, a feeling I had carried in my own mind for years. But whoever was first, each plane made the conventional right-hand turn into the flight pattern. Saunders recalled taking AA fire from Pearl Harbor on the way toward the ocean. I cannot recall any fire coming our way, but for days after the attack our plane had new holes every time we flew, from jittery gunners at Hickam, Pearl Harbor, and Fort Kamehameha. In the final analysis, only two B-17D Flying Fortresses took off that morning to represent the heavy bombardment might of the United States Army Air Corps.

The Form 1 notes our takeoff time as 10:30 a.m., but this was our navigator's later estimate. Because the last Japanese attack probably ended between 9:45 and 10:00 a.m., the 10:30 a.m. takeoff time listed was probably premature due to the amount of work involved in preparing the plane for its mission. Some historians think the takeoff time was 11:00 a.m., and that seems more reasonable. Conversely, the destroyer *Sicard* observed in its log that day: "At 11:33 a.m. another horizontal bombing raid."

The Japanese attackers were long gone by this time and thus the destroyer may have mistaken our bombers heading out to sea for enemy planes. This would place more credence on the 11:27 a.m. takeoff time noted in the Roberts Commission Report.

FRANKLY, I had no idea what direction we took in our pursuit of the Japanese carrier force. The thing I remember most about that flight was the cold; the bitter bone-aching cold. Apparently, we had climbed to about 8,000 to 10,000 feet and stayed there a very long time. The combination of the altitude, plus the removal of the radio compartment's hatchway and my scanty attire, made for an uncomfortable ride. I know we reached 10,000 feet because Lieutenant Kelley came through and told me to put on my

oxygen mask — a long-standing AAC regulation. I didn't understand why he had to tell me personally until a little later.

I had turned on my receiver and was listening to the Hickam Field frequency. In the background static, I could hear the chatter of high-speed continuous wave (CW) transmissions. I knew it wasn't from Hickam because it was too fast and I couldn't recognize the familiar Hickam radio operator's "fists" (every operator has a tell-tale sending characteristic). I could only surmise that it was our Navy radio operators. They were fast! We had been trained to send and receive 15 to 20 words per minute. Although most of us could do better than that, the Navy radiomen were operating at 50 to 60 words per minute or faster. And they could use "bugs" or "speed-keys," a vibrating manual transmitting unit used in a side-to-side manner and capable of high-speed CW transmission. We were not permitted to use those instruments but had to tap the up-and-down "key" which was affixed on the desk to the right of our receiver. I also turned on the transmitter again to see if the unit was operable. It was, but I decided not to contact Hickam Field unless they called me or we made a sighting. I made the

decision to keep radio silence. This was my choice because I received no orders to the contrary. I just felt that discretion was the best judgment. Besides, we had no codes.

My radio operator's schooling in pre-war Hawaii was fundamental, if not rudimentary. Groups of men were sent from Hickam to Wheeler Field where AAC authorities had hastily set up a radio operator's school in the 6th Pursuit Squadron hangar. About three-quarters of the hangar was set aside for both living quarters and three or four jerry-built classrooms.

The class work for my group was set up with Morse code training in the morning in a room specifically designed for sending and receiving the dit-dahs. In the afternoon we had radio theory in other classrooms. This was very sketchy. There were no training manuals and very few handouts. There was no homework. We were never given any actual training in the equipment we would eventually use. And we never had any radio training flights in planes we were to fly. These classes lasted about three months, five days a week. There were no examinations except the ability to send and receive a minimum of 15 words per minute. And then back to our respective squadrons at Hickam. We had



Improvised machine-gun nests on the flightline alongside Hangar No. 4. Douglas A-20 bombers are in the background. (Photo, Steve Costande)

4217451 13 H.D. A.C. R-1820-65

HICKAM FIELD 5 ON B-17D 40-3072

S/Sgt. Young 4 Rec. (4)

PERSONNEL

CLASS	SERIAL NO.	NAME - RANK - ORGANIZATION	REMARKS	FLIGHT DATA
11	0-20465	Allen, B. Capt.	P	FROM: HICKAM 10:30
24	0-29919	Kelly, G. Lt.	C.P.	TO: HICKAM 18:00
21	0-29905	Dornier, J. Lt.	N	MISSION: WAR 7 7:30
16		Ernest, Sgt.	B	FROM:
16		Young, J.P. S/Sgt.	E	TO:
16	6981052	Mikula, J. PFC.	ME	MISSION:
16		Kopchitz, PFC.	RO.	FROM:
16	6148213	McKay, J.A. Sgt.	G	TO:
16		Mueller, J. S.Cpl.	G	MISSION:

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE

COPY OF REPORT OF THE FIRST JAPANESE ATTACK ON HICKAM FIELD

FLIGHT REPORT - OPERATIONS

CHECKED: [] TRANSCRIBED: []

LEGIBLE AND CORRECT

TOTAL FLIGHT TIME ENTERED ON FORM 1A

TOTAL FLIGHT TIME 7:30

Form 1 flight report of B-17D (4th Recon. Squadron) — origin of legend written on form is unknown. (Photo, John Mikula)

Chanute Field Radio School graduates in the 4th Reconnaissance Squadron and our schooling paled by comparison. I learned much from them and practically all by on-the-job training.

About an hour after takeoff, Saunders left our two-plane formation. Neither Allen nor Saunders could make contact with Hickam on their command sets. But they could talk to each other. The SCR-274-N was operating in our plane after all. After approximately two hours of flight, I heard a banging on the door separating the radio compartment from the bomb-bay. I opened the door and Young was standing on the catwalk. He was wearing a portable oxygen mask, but removed it and yelled above the din of the engines and the wind whistling through my open hatchway. "The interphone is out of order," he shouted; "see if you can fix it." He then closed the door. I went back to my position and flipped the switch on my RC-36 box to "interphone" and pressed the button on my T-17 microphone. No sound. Dead. The reason for Kelley's trip through the plane was

now obvious. I looked around for a screwdriver but couldn't find one in the radio compartment. I went to the door, which separated the radio compartment from the rear of the plane, opened it, and distinctly recall "Jack" Mueller's startled look as he swung around from his gun position. I shouted to Mueller that I needed a screwdriver. The startled look slowly left his face as he turned around and through blue-chilled lips asked the other gunners, MacKay and Mikula, if they had a screwdriver. They both shook their heads so I closed the door and went back to my position.

I was preparing to leave my desk and go up front and tell Young that I couldn't fix the interphone when the rear door opened and Mueller stuck his arm through; he had a small nail file in his hand. I took the nail file and went to the Interphone Amplifier Box BC-347 which housed the VT-99 tube. Inserting the broad end of the file into a screw, I attempted to open the cover. The file was too delicate, however, and bent as I twisted. While I struggled to turn the screw, the sharp end of

the file dug into the palm of my hand. The cold was so intense that I felt no pain. The point dug a small hole in my palm but there was very little bleeding. Still, the screws would not turn and I abandoned the job in despair. This was something important that I should have been able to do and I couldn't; I couldn't fix the interphone. The door to the bomb-bay opened and Young stuck his head through. He asked if I had fixed the interphone. I shook my head. In retrospect, I don't know what I could have done if the box had opened; I had no replacement tube, even if that was the problem.

Kelley came back through again and said I could take off my oxygen mask. He also told the half-frozen gunners in the rear. Both times that Kelley had left the co-pilot seat, he accidentally pulled the ripcord on his chutes and released them. Fortunately, however, he had had 16 parachutes installed in the plane.

I looked out of the small window to the left of my position. The sun was starting to set. About 100 yards away,

a formation of two fighters flew on a parallel course to us at our altitude. I made a grab for my machine-gun and then stopped; the shape of the planes were familiar. They turned out to be our Navy planes providing escort or looking us over. The rhythm of the plane changed and I instinctively knew the bomb-bay doors were opened. What I didn't know is that we were jettisoning our bombs off Barber's Point.

Suddenly, in the twilight, we were preparing to land on runway No. 3. Allen, Kelley, and MacKay remember a large amount of incoming AA fire from our own land positions. In my isolated compartment, I had no knowledge of incoming fire. I remember an uneventful landing and then swinging off the concrete runway and onto the field.

Our Form 1 reveals that we landed at 1800 hours. Both Kelley and MacKay are convinced it was closer to 2000 hours. I recall it being dusk, as I could distinctly see the faces of the men awaiting our disembarkment. It would also be reasonable to assume that the Form 1 was more accurate in regards to the landing time rather than the confused, chaotic conditions characterizing the takeoff.

Cold and weary, I climbed stiffly out of our plane. We were surrounded by a large group of men. And now I felt the first glow of pride and heroism as the men gathered around us and spoke in admiring ways. They asked questions. "Did you see anything?" someone asked. "No," I answered. "I didn't see a thing."

Someone from our crew asked if we could find something to eat. I hadn't eaten since 6:00 p.m. the previous night. The enlisted men were told that Hickam Hospital had the only hot food, so we made our way there. Inside, the hospital was dimly lit and blankets were draped over the windows for blackout purposes. Apparently, families had been evacuated from their homes and were lodged in the hospital. Children were crying and women were talking in anxious voices. Others were lying quietly on mattresses on the floor. It looked and sounded like a sombre movie setting. Nevertheless, we ate some lukewarm stew and then walked back to the Hangar No. 9 operations room.

A hot rumor awaited our arrival. Japanese gliders were going to land! I went outside and looked up at the sky.

Scudding clouds were passing below the stars and with a stretched imagination one could visualize moving lights. All around the field men had set up improvised machine-gun nests for AA protection. These men were extremely trigger-happy; every time a tug would start up or a strange noise occurred, somebody would stutter their machine-gun arcing tracers into the dark sky.

Hickam's main landing lights suddenly snapped on and over the ocean swinging toward Fort Kamehameha were a group of airplane riding lights. I couldn't make out how many planes were in the formation. And just as quickly, Hickam's landing lights snapped off, there was a short pause, then someone near me screamed, "Japs!" Almost by cue, Pearl Harbor, Fort Kamehameha, and Hickam Field virtually exploded with AA fire. It was a tremendous display of firepower. I gave a startled look, ran back into the operations room, and dove under a desk. Actually, I thought bombs were also falling and bursting. But almost as quickly as it started, the AA fire stopped. We later learned there were six planes in the formation originating from the U.S.S. *Enterprise* some 100 miles out on the Pacific Ocean. Sadly, five planes were shot down; one landed on Ford Island and another pilot parachuted safely. The rest were killed. Because this event apparently took place at 1930 hours, the 1800 hours landing time indicated on the Form 1 is probably reinforced.

Sometime after this event I was ordered to be on the flightline at 4:30 a.m. and report to my plane for another mission. We were also told where to sleep. A blackout of memory occurs here because I next found myself in a NCO's home lying on a mattress placed on the floor. I was listening to a telephone conversation conducted between a Master Sergeant and his wife who had been evacuated to Honolulu. The Master Sergeant was trying to placate his wife and the conversation droned on and on. I was still cold from my flight. The shock of the attack and subsequent events had worn off and I began worrying about the takeoff the next morning. Clips of the 1938 movie "Dawn Patrol" flickered through my head. I began to feel my first fear of the day. Sleeping would be difficult.

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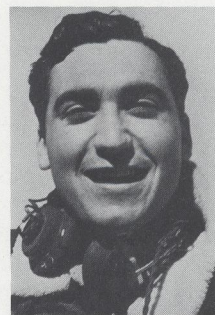
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