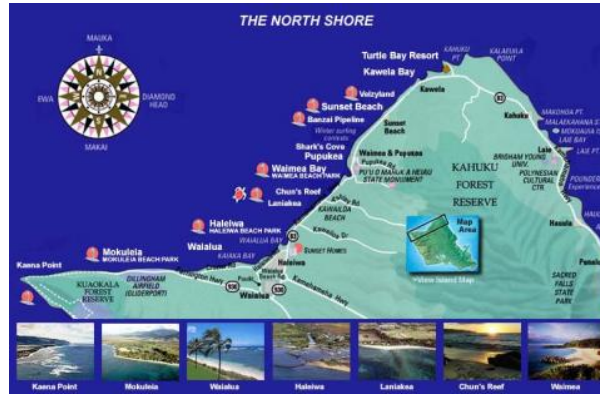


0. RADAR STATION at OPANA POINT - Story Preface

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- 2. THE FLEET AT PEARL HARBOR
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The Opana mobile radar site, along Oahu's north shore, is near Kawela Bay, off today's Kamehameha Highway. Surfers are allowed to ride the waves south of the area, but they are not allowed to surf near Opana Radar. Opana Radar Site is a National Historic Landmark. Click on the image for a better view.

Driving to work before 4 a.m. Sunday morning, December 7th, Lt. Kermit Tyler listened to KGMB, a local Hawaiian station. That was unusual. Normally the station was off the air until 7 a.m. Later, the Air Corps Lieutenant figured out why the station was still broadcasting:

I had a friend who was a bomber pilot, and he told me, anytime that they play this Hawaiian music all night long, it is a very good indication that our B-17s were coming over from the mainland, because they use it for homing.

When he arrived at work, Lt. Tyler learned that several B-17s en route from the mainland were indeed scheduled to arrive around 8 a.m. that morning. Brand new at his job, the Information Center's Pursuit Officer was responsible to "get planes in the air, to intercept incoming hostile planes if they appeared."

Enlisted men, like Pvt. Joe Lockard and Pvt. George Elliott, provided the Pursuit Officer with data from a new system called radar. Working the radar station at Opana Point with Lockard on the morning of December 7th, Elliott was getting some more experience. Most days, they turned the radar off by 7 a.m. Waiting for their ride back to base, the men decided to keep the radar on.

Suddenly Lockard saw something he had never seen before.

It was the largest group I had ever seen on the oscilloscope. It looked, as I said, like a main pulse and that is why I was confused, at first, as to whether it was a flight or not. I had never seen one...it produced the largest echo on the scope that I had ever seen.

Unable to tell whether the incoming planes were friendly or enemy, Elliott plotted the data. The two men determined the "blip" was about 132 miles off Kauku Point, traveling at about 3 miles a minute.

Using the phone which linked the radar site with the Information Center, they reported their findings. All of the plotters had left for breakfast.

Lt. Tyler, an inexperienced Pursuit Officer, was the only officer on duty. He thought the "blip" was from the expected B-17s. It was about 7:20 a.m.

Lt. Tyler did not know the radar "blip" represented more than 50 incoming planes. Had he known, he would have responded differently. Had he known a Japanese submarine was spotted that morning near the mouth of the harbor - and fired at - he would have immediately notified his supervisor about the unusual radar readings. Instead, he thanked the radar operators for the information and told them:

Don't worry about it.

Within 30 minutes after that fateful encounter, everybody on Pearl Harbor was worrying about it. The incoming planes were from the north, not the east. They were Japanese, not American.

Kermit Tyler (depicted at age 86) was forever haunted by what happened that morning. What if he had called his supervisor, Major Berquist? Would it have made a difference?

In the days before instant communication, would the senior command have been able to scramble U.S. planes in time to resist an impending attack? Based on the evidence, most historians say no - it would have made "no practical difference."

It was already too late for Pearl Harbor.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/RADAR-STATION-at-OPANA-POINT-Pearl-Harbor>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/RADAR-STATION-at-OPANA-POINT-Pearl-Harbor>

Media Stream



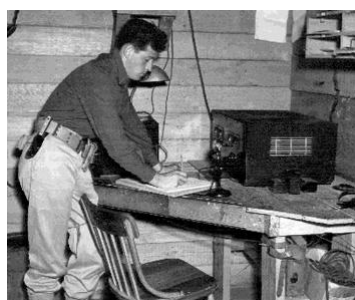
[Kermit Tyler - Pilot with 78th Pursuit Squadron](#)

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Park Service.

PD

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Kermit-Tyler-Pilot-with-78th-Pursuit-Squadron>



[Joe Lockard - Opana Point Radar Operator](#)

Photo, Courtesy *Army Communicator*, United States Army Signal Center, Fort Gordon, Georgia.

PD

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Joe-Lockard-Opana-Point-Radar-Operator>



[George Elliott - Opana Point Radar Operator](#)

Image of Pvt. George Elliott, online courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/George-Elliott-Opana-Point-Radar-Operator>



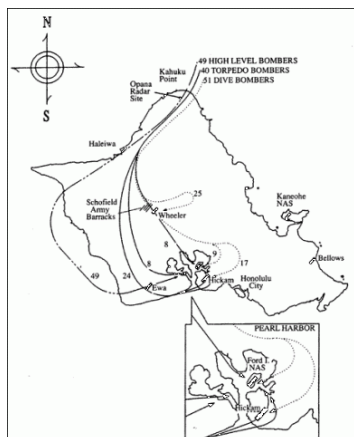
Portable Radar Station - Opana Point

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Park Service.

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Opana Point - Scene of Portable Radar

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Park Service.

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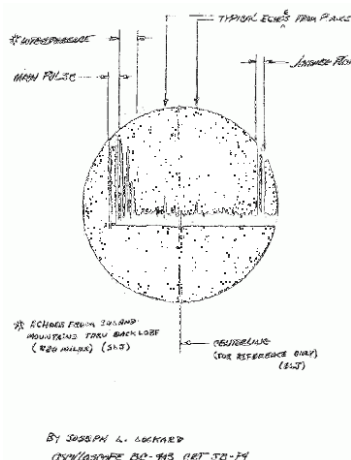
Opana Point Radar Station - National Park Service

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Park Service.

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Radar Echo - Opana Point Radar Reading

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Park Service.

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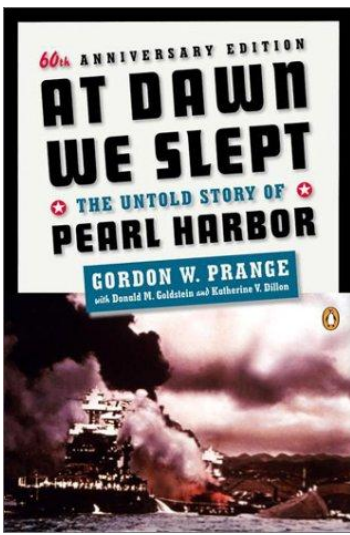
Oahu Air Attack - Two Waves of Incoming Planes

Courtesy, U.S. Naval Historical Center.

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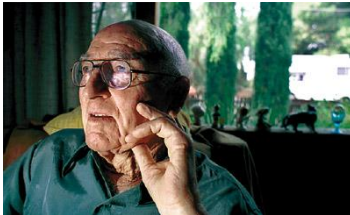


At Dawn We Slept - by Gordon Prange

Book cover, courtesy Amazon.com.

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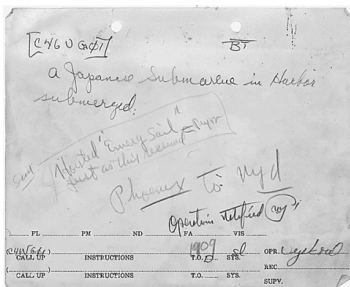
Kermit Tyler - Retired Pursuit Officer, Age 86

Image of an older Kermit Tyler, online courtesy U.S. National Park Service.

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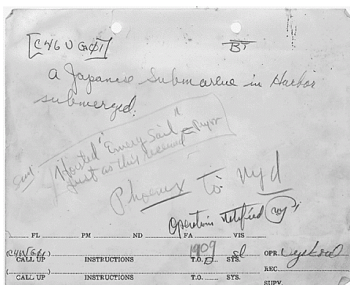
Pearl Harbor - Report of Japanese Sub in the Harbor

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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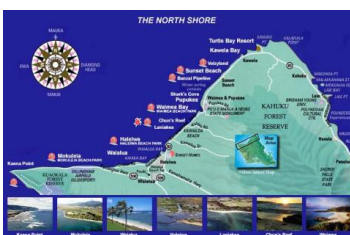
Pearl Harbor - Officer Reports Sighting Japanese Sub

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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RADAR STATION at OPANA POINT

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Attack on Pearl Harbor

Clip from Universal Newsreel, online courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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