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George Jr. Larsen

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MAUI POLICE AND THE WAR

George Larsen, Jr.†

Within a few hours after the bombs began to fall on Pearl Harbor, there were fully mobilized and equipped for active service with the Police Department, the civilian defense organizations, and as auxiliaries to the armed forces, over 1,000 Provisional Police officers in Maui County. The majority of these men had received substantial previous training in emergency duties and marksmanship.

This preparedness was something more than a happy accident. As early as October, 1940, the Police Department had undertaken to plan the organization and training of a body of police reserves. Plans were made to protect all vital installations, such as harbors, airports, power sources, communications, fuel and water supplies, major arterials, and so forth, against possible violent acts of overzealous enemy patriots or organized fifth columnists.

Formal instruction of these men in 1941 first came with classes conducted by Lt. Eugene Kennedy of the Honolulu Police Department, who was graciously loaned to this Department by Chief W. A. Gabrielson. From January 6th to 10th, inclusive, some 125 men from Wailuku and environs attended daily intensive lectures in riot duties, handling of arms, laws of arrest, investigation and procedure in sabotage cases, and other pertinent matters. During the following four months, Assistant Chief Lane repeated and expanded these classes throughout the County, with total attendance of some 250 additional men. These men had been selected by their employers as being qualified to receive this instruction, and as men whose loyalty could not be questioned. Their employers further agreed to keep them on the company payrolls if their services were needed in an emergency.

In July, 1941, through the efforts of Chairman Wm. Balthis and members of the Police Commission, a group of sugar planters, pineapple producers, and other large corporations of Maui agreed to sponsor a more intensified Provisional Police training program through the employment of a full-time Co-ordinator, and payment for equipment and supplies necessary for training. Mr. Louis Herschler was selected as Co-ordinator, and his energy and ability soon stimulated the community into noticeable response. Throughout the months of September, October, and November, provisional police training classes were held in all areas of Maui. Twenty-five separate groups of men, totalling some 815 in all, attended thirteen classes of two hours each in intensive and varied instruction.

Police officers in the different Districts acted as instructors for these men, and established working contacts which enabled the Department to better evaluate the men for their individual traits and

† Chief of Police of the County of Maui, T. H.

abilities. Early in December plans were being perfected by Mr. Herschler to make each of nine separate areas of Maui more nearly self-sufficient in the matter of protection, by designating various men as Area Co-ordinators to complete the organization and planning necessary for each area.

Plans and training would be useless without equipment for these men. Such essential items as field helmets, badges, riot-sticks, police whistles, and raincoats, were purchased during the latter part of 1941. High-powered air pistols were bought for basic firearms training, with a number of Police Special .38 Colt Revolvers also purchased for training. Many firearms for training were secured on loan from interested citizens, and sufficient ammunition and targets purchased to complete a well-rounded course in marksmanship. For use if an actual emergency arose, patriotic individuals subscribed for the loan of their pistols, rifles, and shotguns to the provisional police, some 500 firearms being thus registered, inspected, certified, and made readily available.

Other pre-war activities of the police during 1941 included the investigation of scores of potential enemy aliens at the request of the F. B. I., and furnishing reports on the background, circumstances, and possible subversive activities of these persons. While not carried on through a designated espionage bureau, these investigations were principally made by a small group of officers well suited for this work.

Meanwhile other preparations were going forward. The Board of Supervisors, recognizing the trend of world events, appropriated funds for the formation of a Major Disaster Council to plan for such emergency functions as Medical, Welfare, Engineering and Public Works, Resources, Power, Communications, Transportation, and Public Safety. In addition, special ambulances and fire-fighting apparatus were ordered for immediate delivery. Trial blackouts, in which the Police Department participated extensively, were first held in the Territory of Hawaii as far back as 1939. They were repeated throughout all the islands with increasing success in May 1940 and May 1941, thus making the Territory the first major area under the American Flag to have completed this phase of preparedness. Public utilities, such as telephone and power companies, were encouraged to build safeguards against sabotage, and to floodlight their plants. While not police functions, these activities are mentioned to show that civilian agencies throughout the islands were becoming prepared for the war.

When war struck, Maui was fortunately not in the immediate attack zone. Yet being only eighty miles by water from Pearl Harbor, and offering innumerable possibilities to an invading force, Maui went instantly on a complete war footing. It cannot now aid the enemy to reveal that the total armed strength then on Maui was insignificant in size and but nominally equipped. The area to be de-

fended was hopelessly large for such a force, as there was only one fighting man for each two square miles of area in Maui County, and scarcely one man for each mile of coastline. To be of any value at all, this small band had to be kept as nearly intact and as mobile as possible. The part performed by the Police Department and the Provisional Police therefore became of greater significance.

Mobilization of police officers on December 7th began voluntarily, when the first brief radio announcements came out of Honolulu. By the time the dispatches had taken on an official tone most off-duty officers had already reported for duty, and the remaining few rushed in immediately on being contacted. Immediate orders included the cancellation of all leaves and days-off, and re-assignment of duties and posts on an overtime basis. All beats were given increased coverage, and all officers were instructed to be sharply on the lookout for signs of alien concentrations, racial disturbances, or other dangerous trends.

At the same time the Provisional Police were called into service by Mr. Herschler, and police officers were dispatched to speed their mobilization. Police officers also rounded up the firearms which had been pledged by citizens for provisional police use.

Throughout the day the police worked in aiding the placement of provisional police on their emergency posts. While mobilization was being completed, other officers were placed at strategic points in outlying areas and at major intersections to act as observation posts. These posts, which were maintained on a 24-hour-per-day basis for the first two weeks, until gradually relieved by provisional police observers, were for the purpose of spotting airplane and ship movements, and to observe and report on all conditions. The success of this plan is best shown by the record; when the port of Kahului was shelled at sundown on December 15th, police officers were the first at the scene of damage, and the first to report an accurate estimate of the whole situation. It was by police radio network, originating from a mobile transmitter and relayed through Police Radio KQXY and the Honolulu Police, that the army and navy headquarters in Honolulu was first informed of the attack. On December 21st, when the survivors of the S. S. "Lahaina" came ashore on Maui, it was a police officer on coastal observation duty who first discovered their approach late the night before, and the first man to reach their lifeboat as it beached at Spreckelsville was also a police officer.

By noon of December 7th, all commercial radio stations in the Territory were off the air, and most home radios were tuned to the police frequency. This had certain undesirable results, but it also had a certain morale effect on the public. Newspaper extras were reaching some areas, but it was via police radio that most persons in the County were able to get a trickle of news, and to be informed about the orders from the Office of Civilian Defense and the Maui Military Command, which were coming out thick and fast.

Martial Law was declared late in the afternoon of the 7th, and that evening orders came through from military intelligence in Honolulu to arrest and detain numbers of enemy aliens. This became a police task, and the speed and thoroughness displayed in completing this assignment spoke well for the officers assigned. Internment of these men was made in the new Maui County Jail, and it is extremely fortunate that the new jail is sufficiently large and modern in design to accommodate a substantial over-load. Custody of these men was assigned to the regular jail staff, with a special army detail for added security.

Throughout the night of December 7th and the morning of December 8th, strain and tension among the civilian population reached a high peak. No accurate news had come out of Honolulu. No one knew what to expect, yet everyone felt that an invasion was imminent. Total blackout requirements, and complete vehicular and pedestrian curfew at sundown, added to the strain. Police patrols which were not on observation posts were kept busy investigating flashing lights, rumors of alien concentrations, reports of alleged landing parties, of parachute troops "in blue uniforms," of fifth columnists signalling out to sea, and countless other reports which proved to be mainly the product of overstrained imaginations. The fact that instructions were given to police officers via radio tended to add to the strain; while they heard reports of "parachute troops," etc., the public did not know of the police officers' reports back to headquarters discounting their validity. As far as the public was concerned, the parachutists actually landed that night!

For individual morale and performance of duty by officers and volunteers those first few nights there can be nothing but the highest praise. Without knowing what he might be running into when sent on one of these assignments, no officer or volunteer hesitated to rush to his destination with little or no immediate assistance.

For the sake of the record, it should be mentioned here that not one act of sabotage, attempted sabotage, or active collaboration with the enemy has thus far been uncovered within this jurisdiction, though reports have come in by the score. Whether this was forestalled by the precautions taken, or by the fear of severe action, or whether the loyalty of potential enemy aliens to their adopted country was grossly misjudged, will perhaps never be fully known. A combination of all three reasons might furnish an approximate answer.

Commencing on December 8th, other wartime duties of the police began to be evident. Under Martial Law drastic orders were being issued to control the populace. The Chief of Police was designated as Acting Provost Marshal by reason of a shortage of army officer personnel, and all officers of the Department thus became "ex-officio" military police. Military orders on blackout, curfew, food and fuel rationing, traffic, possession of firearms, poisons,

signalling devices, and other necessary military measures, were assigned to the police for enforcement and investigation. Under orders restricting their possession, some 5000 firearms, 350,000 rounds of miscellaneous ammunition, 800 alien-owned short-wave radios, 150 aliens' cameras, and hundreds of miscellaneous weapons and optical devices were received by the Police Department. This involved a staggering amount of clerical work for the small force available; all items had to be properly tagged and identified, with an adequate cross-indexed record set up; they had to be segregated by type, and then properly stored or stacked to ensure minimum damage from handling or corrosion.

It was found necessary to issue passes to persons authorized to be about at night, or to operate vehicles after dark. This job also fell to the police, with its attendant mass of clerical work. Aliens who had served under enemy flags at any time, or who wished to change their place of residence or occupation, also had to register with the police. Permits to hold meetings, to operate necessary business establishments after dark, to visit internees, to enter restricted areas, to enable aliens to travel inter-island, and similar control measures, all became regular police assignments.

Other duties which have become police responsibilities include supervision of Provisional Police posts and operation of the Observation Post network manned by the Provisional Police. The latter involves coordination of all O. P. reports, evaluating them, and relaying them to the Army or Navy, as necessary. Cooperation with the military and naval intelligence units is involving the actual lending of police personnel to assist in the investigation of subversive matters. The continued enforcement of ever-increasing military regulations, maintaining communications with outlying areas via the police radio system, and remaining on full alert for all eventualities, also appear to be on the police program for the duration.

One important change under Martial Law which is affecting the police indirectly is the operation of Provost Courts throughout the Territory, to hear criminal cases. All District and Circuit Courts were declared inoperative in criminal matters after the establishment of Provost Courts. There are three such courts in Maui County, one each on the islands of Maui, Molokai, and Lanai.

In Provost Court no one may have a jury trial, and no appeal may be taken from the decisions rendered. Furthermore, the Provost Court is but loosely bound by rules of procedure. The maximum penalty it may impose is five years imprisonment and/or \$5000 fine; it may assess this penalty for any case tried, regardless of limitations set by law. Crimes of violence, or other crimes requiring more than this penalty, are heard by a Military Commission, which sits as a hearing board rather than a jury. Provost Court cases include violations of military orders, territorial and federal laws, and county ordinances—all treated in the same swift manner.

This has greatly speeded the disposition of cases, especially of felonies, and its effect will be to greatly deter crime and lessen the work of the police. The penalties imposed are inclined to be somewhat stiffer than those in peace time, and tend to further deter would-be offenders. For example, instead of the usual \$5 fine, the ordinary drunk now pays \$50 for the first offense, \$100 for the second, and several months in jail if he chooses to make it a third time. We certainly do not advocate this form of justice as an American Institution, but under the conditions now existent in the islands, this swift and sure method, with its inclination towards severity, does much to maintain the absolute control which is so necessary.

The war has caused a number of minor changes in police equipment as well as procedure. Officers are permitted to use a modified "field uniform," less formal than that specified by the Rules and Regulations, and better adapted for emergency work. All cars are now equipped with riot guns or .30 caliber carbines, and substantial first-aid equipment. It is expected that all officers will soon have steel helmets, and gas masks will be issued to all, civilians included. Extra ammunition pouches, heavy police riot-sticks, and spare flashlights, properly blued, have also become necessary war-time equipment.

It would seem that with the additional duties imposed by the war, the police would not be able to maintain normal service in other matters without a large increase in personnel. It is hoped that some expansion will be possible to relieve the strain of long hours and no days-off, as well as to be better prepared for emergencies. However, normal police business has been cut virtually in half. This applies not only to offenses but to miscellaneous complaints, traffic violations, and the various licensing functions of the police. It appears that the severe restrictions imposed by military orders are hardly favorable for the commission of crime! If the Hawaiian front remains quiet, however, a lessening of tension may cause a partial change back toward normal offense rates. It is interesting to note that despite a minimum of night traffic, involving only official cars and pedestrians, the night accident rate has jumped up sharply. This parallels the experience of London and every possible effort will be made to reduce these accidents to the bare minimum.

During 1942 it is expected that some definite pattern will evolve, and that the war duties of the police will become more routine. All attempts to pre-dispose the police under any hypothetical situation will be resisted, however, as experience has shown that the police can be of greater value by being unhampered, and by being instantly available to assign here or there, or to act as mobile operations and communications headquarters. Whatever happens, the officers have shown their true quality, and we are confident that they will meet any emergency with calmness, courage, and intelligently ordered procedure.