

2 PP CIRC NO. 1/42 AIRCRAFT WARNING 26/4
R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS SECOND INTERCEPTOR COMMAND

County-City Building
Seattle

CIRCULAR NO. 1

To Observation Posts, Aircraft Warning Service, 2IC.

It is impossible to over-emphasize the vital importance of the job being done by the volunteer personnel, manning the OP's upon which this Command depends for its information. It is a hard task, staying on watch through long hours and days of waiting. But it is well to remember that IF THE OBSERVERS SHOULD FAIL, all the rest of the Civilian Defense effort would be jeopardized, because without the observers there might be no warning to send out to the wardens and firemen and police and all the others -- at least, not any warning that would reach them in time.

It is the purpose of this circular to do three things: (1) Impress all AWS personnel with the vital importance of remaining on duty when called; (2) Carry the thanks of General Wash and this Command for the fine work done so far; and (3) Remind observers that there are others also enduring the hardships of 24-hour service -- The women volunteers in the filter and control centers, the soldiers of the Interceptor Command (including anti-aircraft personnel), and the officers, right up to and including the General himself. In a war with a crafty, conniving enemy there can be no "business as usual".

Now, what are some of the points to drive home in this first Circular? Here are a few:

1. Distinction between "Aircraft Warning Service" and "Civilian Air Raid Warning Network". Naturally in the rush since the war started, many new appointments have been made by various local defense agencies. Some of these are air raid wardens, and we have had some reports of confusion between their duties and those of our observers. Please help these people to understand that these jobs are at opposite ends of the process: First, the AWS gathers the information and sends it to the Control Center, and then the warnings go back out to the wardens, policemen, fire watchers, ambulance corps, and all the other civilian defense organizations, as well as to vital industries, military headquarters and other important centers, not only in your locality but throughout the entire northwest.

In other words, we "push the buttons", and the other agencies leap into action. PLEASE, Chief Observers, avoid if possible having your people loaded down with other defense jobs in the community. Your observers are the most important of all, right where they are. They must have rest, so they can always be fresh and alert while on duty.

2. For the present you MUST keep your posts manned, to give the Navy a chance to search out the offshore areas, and to give the Army a chance to establish military OP's at strategic points. Then, if the situation is normal, we will be able to temporarily suspend the alert, and stand ready to call you back to your posts when emergencies develop. This will be done at the earliest possible date. Until then, we are counting on your posts observing any aircraft that may try to slip through, night or day. The safety of thousands rests with the "thin red lines" of our AWS observation posts.

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As soon as a system is perfected whereby General Wash can "turn on" the observer network at a moment's notice, and be sure of it, then the constant alert can be relaxed except in emergencies. BUT -- until then, the first line of defense against a treacherous and clever enemy, is the band of loyal watchers in the Aircraft Warning Service.

REMEMBER -- The observers and plotters in Britain waited a whole year for the first attack, but they were ready when it finally came, and they didn't miss!

3. The sudden war upset all our plans to send officers to your OP's to consult with you on your individual problems. We are getting hundreds of letters here about these problems now. It is physically impossible for us to reply to all this mail at once. In the meantime, we are sending officers out to you as rapidly as possible.

4. What to do about one observer in a valley, who sees an airplane "high", while the next OP, being on a mountain, thinks the same airplane is "low"? Report it as you see it. The altitude of your post is taken into consideration in the filter center.

5. Here are some hints from the control room: Get flight directions accurately; train observers in the proper sequence of reports on the flash message form; speak clearly, speak slowly and speak up, and don't crowd the plotter.

6. We had one bomber reported as 5 single-motor airplanes. Try to note the difference in the sound of the motors, and observe the distinctive features of various types.

7. Do what you can to shut off careless talk about anything that might be of aid or comfort to the enemy. It is hard for ordinary folks to get used to the fact that one careless slip may cost American lives. THE LITTLE BROWN BROTHER HAS BIG EARS!

10. We will try to send you aircraft silhouettes and other useful training material as soon as possible.

RANDOM COMMENTS.

A. Maybe we should have said "rumor" dept. If you only could have been here last week to see us jump out of our skins at each new report, only to have it turn out to be a truck convoy coming over a hill, or a motor boat, or a runaway weather balloon, or a railroad train, or even (yes, it's true) -- even a star, flitting through the clouds. (But the way some people we know drive automobiles, it's pretty hard to tell whether they're running high or flying low.) So we'd rather get the calls if you're the least bit doubtful. Just try to train your observers to be calm and clear-headed. They have a serious trust.

B. Bellingham filter area has been handed the roses as being the most efficient, judging from reports received on flights scheduled over that area. Are the rest of you going to let that border crowd get away with that?

SPECIAL NOTICE:

Station KIRO has scheduled a weekly Interceptor Command program from 6:30 to 6:45 p.m. each Saturday evening. This will be YOUR program. Listen to KIRO this Saturday for the first "Remember Pearl Harbor" broadcast.