

DECEMBER 21, 1941

King Heads U. S. Fleet



Adm. Ernest J. King

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20.—Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox announced today that Adm. Ernest J. King had been designated commander-in-chief of the U. S. Fleet.

The move separated the command of the whole fleet from that of the Navy's Pacific forces, both posts having been held formerly by Adm. Husband E. Kimmel, who was relieved after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.

Adm. Chester W. Nimitz was appointed last week to succeed Kimmel as commander of the Pacific Fleet.

Rear Adm. Royal E. Ingersoll was assigned to command the U. S. Atlantic Fleet, succeeding King, who had held that command since Feb. 1. Ingersoll had been assistant chief of naval operations.

The high command of the U. S. Naval forces at sea now rests in a quartet including King, Nimitz, Ingersoll and Adm. Thomas Hart, commander-in-chief of the Asiatic Fleet.

The order designating King commander-in-chief of the entire fleet does not relieve him from sea duty. His principal office will be in the Navy Department here but he will be free to exercise such personal command at sea "as in his judgment circumstances make advisable," the Navy said.

Knox said King's appointment was made in accordance with an executive order signed by FDR Dec. 18, defining the functions of the commander-in-chief of the U. S. Fleet and setting forth the duties and responsibilities of that office.

King an Aircraft Man

King, 63, was born in Lorain, O., and was appointed to the Naval Academy in 1897. He saw service in the Spanish-American war aboard the cruiser *San Francisco* and during the World War was assistant chief of staff. King received the Navy cross for his World War service.

In 1927 King qualified as a naval aviator at Pensacola, Fla., and the following year was appointed commander of the scouting fleet's aircraft squadrons. After a tour as assistant chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics he was placed in command of the aircraft carrier *Lexington* for two years. He was appointed chief of the Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics in May, 1933.

He was commander of aircraft, base force, from June 5, 1936, until Oct. 1, when he assumed command of aircraft of the scouting force. He was commander of aircraft of the battle force with the rank of vice admiral from Jan. 29, 1938, to June 24, 1939.

On Feb. 1 of this year he was elevated to full command of the Atlantic Fleet with the rank of admiral.