



MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1941

# Radio First to Nation With News Of Jap Attack; Censorship Set Up

At 2:26 yesterday afternoon a WOR announcer interrupted a broadcast of the Giant-Dodger football game at the Polo Grounds with a special bulletin from the United Press (*photo at left*). From then on, without cease, the unparalleled U. S. radio system has been flashing to the American people the fast-breaking developments of the biggest news event in U. S. radio history—the news that the nation is at war.

All radio networks immediately went on 24-hour schedules and, in addition to the job of bringing the nation news and comment of the war, transmitted important orders and announcements of the Government. Industry was warned to be on watch against sabotage; there were orders revoking leaves and ordering men of the service to report at designated points; civilian-defense officials throughout the country mobilized air-raid wardens and police and fire departments; gas stations in the East were asked to remain open all night to supply defense and armed service men speeding to their posts. And the Navy took to the radio to announce that all Navy recruiting stations would open at 8 o'clock this morning.

Meanwhile, in connection with the U. S. Navy censorship announced last night on "all outgoing cablegrams and radio messages from the U. S. A. and its outlying possession," Navy men moved into the offices of all point-to-point communications systems. The censorship procedure has not yet been announced, and its main effect thus far has been to subject all private press and radio communications to Navy authority.

The news of the war broke out at a time Sunday afternoon when comparatively few newspapers in the U. S. A. were being published. The result was that the nation learned of the war and its immediate developments almost entirely by radio. The National Broadcasting system held the bulletin for a few minutes, and at 2:30 gave the news simultaneously to its Red and Blue networks, and subsequently to the whole world over its international short-wave system.

Columbia Broadcasting System was just about to go on the air with its 2:30 p.m. *World News* half-hour when the war bulletin ticked in. Canceling broadcasts set up from Cairo and Geneva, CBS (WABC) in the waning minutes before broadcast time got calls out for its men in Washington, Manila and London, and got Elmer Davis, CBS chief commentator, and Maj. George Fielding Eliot, its war expert.

The result was just about the fastest war edition ever put out. Announcer John Charles Daly read the press bulletins of the attack on Hawaii, Bob Trout came in from London, Albert Warner from Washington, Eliot from New York, and then, scarcely 15 minutes after the first news of the war reached the ears of the nation, Ford Wilkins was on the air from Manila, 9000 miles away.

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Hawaii was not on the air until 4:10 p.m., when NBC established contact with KGU, Honolulu. During the KGU broadcast a telephone-girl voice interrupted the announcer with:

"I've been trying to get you on an emergency call."

"I'm talking to New York, now," the announcer replied, matter-of-factly, but shortly thereafter he was cut off. Some listeners thought they heard gunfire in the background, but the announcer failed to mention it. Eyewitness details provided by broadcasters for NBC-CBS and MBS from Manila and Hawaii will be found on other pages throughout PM.

Here are the comments of some of the radio news analysts on the crisis:

**Quincy Howe (WQXR):** "Perhaps the most interesting feature of the situation is Russia. The attack coincides with Litvinov's arrival. Remember, Litvinov is the most important Soviet statesman and is identified with the democratic front against aggression. . . . Russia is important now because of her bases near Japan, especially Vladivostok, and her possible plane concentrations. Remember, the Soviet-Japanese non-aggression pact is still technically in effect."

**Maj. George Fielding Eliot (CBS):** The Japanese attack on Hawaii from aircraft carriers constitutes "a risk which would only be assumed as a very desperate measure, one which may well result in the loss of the carriers when making the attack." The attack seems to be "purely a delaying action. . . . They are expecting to take heavy losses and these losses may be expected. The question is how much delay they have purchased for the carriers they have risked. . . ."

**Paul Schubert (WOR):** "If in a sudden surprise move a part of our naval strength could be cut down and a part of our aerial strength and long-range bombers could be cut down, the Japanese might well argue that it would make the entire conduct of the war easier for them. . . . Well, they tried it. As might have been expected, the amount of damage they have done to our sea power is insignificant. . . ."

**Johannes Steel (WMCA):** "Even the most dense isolationists will begin to realize that the Allied Democracies are faced by a world conspiracy and that both Hitlerism and its handmaiden, Japanese Imperialism, must be utterly destroyed before there can be peace anywhere in the world. Since Japan acted in part at least on behalf of Germany, America should immediately declare war on Germany."

**Dr. Charles Nelson Spinks (WBYN):** "The significant point is that it was the Imperial Army Headquarters in Tokyo which announced that a state of war now exists with the U. S. A. This announcement did not come from the War Ministry or the Prime Minister and this demonstrates that the surprise attack was a result of concerted action and agreement among the various factions of the Japanese Government. . . ."

On Nov. 17, **Burnet Hershey** said in a broadcast: "I am betting 8 to 1 that Kurusu starts back to Tokyo with a flat refusal and that war will start within three weeks." Yesterday was three weeks to a day.

PM