

HEWITT INQUIRY EXHIBIT No. 51

PATROL WING TWO,  
U. S. NAVAL AIR STATION,  
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, U. S. A., 27 Oct. 1941.

*Secret*

PW2/A16-30027

From: The Commander Patrol Wing TWO.

To: The Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Types of Combatant Aircraft for a Pacific Campaign.

Reference: (a) Compatwing TWO SECRET 1tr. A16-3 serial 0026 of Oct. 22, 1941, with Comairscofor SECRET 1st end. A16-3 of Oct. 23, 1941.

Enclosure: (A) Copy of reference (a).

1. In view of the urgent nature of the subject matter of reference (a), and, in view of the fact that the Commander Scouting Force is now at sea, a copy of reference (a), is being forwarded herewith direct.

P. N. L. BELLINGER,  
P. N. L. BELLINGER.

Copy to: Comscofor.

A16-3

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET  
AIRCRAFT SCOUTING FORCE

FLEET AIR DETACHMENT,  
U. S. NAVAL AIR STATION,  
Pearl Harbor, T. H., October 23, 1941.

*Secret*

First endorsement to Compatwing TWO SECRET

Letter PW2/A16-3/0026 dated October 22, 1941.

From: The Commander Aircraft, Scouting Force.

To: The Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet.

Via: The Commander Scouting Force.

Subject: Types of Combatant Aircraft for a Pacific Campaign.

1. Forwarded, concurring in the recommendations of the Commander Patrol Wing TWO. This concurrence is emphatic with respect to the employment of carriers of present design.

2. The recommendation for change in Naval Policy to permit inclusion within the Naval Aeronautical Organization of Air Striking Groups of high performance landplane-bombers and landplane interceptor fighters, for the protection of advanced Fleet Air Bases, meets with the hearty endorsement of the Commander Aircraft, Scouting Force. Landplane bombers and fighters with the characteristics as described are definitely tools that Naval Aviation requires today in its varied missions. Upon enlargement of the scope of Navy Policy, the corresponding procurement and training programs should be prosecuted.

3. The inherent delays in accomplishing the change of policy with its attendant modifications in training and procurement plans, seriously influence the factor of time, which is now not one of our superiorities to be exploited. Accordingly as a stop-gap measure, if not already provided for, the Commander Aircraft, Scouting Force, considers that the westward movement of the Pacific Fleet must be accorded the full support of an Army Air Striking Force in joint effort under the unified command of the Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet.

J. S. McCain.

Copy to: Compatwing TWO.

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PATROL WING TWO,  
U. S. NAVAL AIR STATION,  
Pearl Harbor, T. H., October 22, 1941.

PW2/A16-3/0026

Secret

From: The Commander Patrol Wing TWO.

To: The Commander-in-Chief, UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET.

Via: (1) The Commander Aircraft, SCOUTING FORCE.

(2) The Commander Scouting Force.

Subject: Types of Combatant Aircraft for a Pacific Campaign.

1. In examining the types of aircraft that are listed in the scheme of procurement of the 15,000 plane program, it is noted that, except for those planes based on carriers, there are no types that are considered really valuable as combatant units capable of carrying out offensive action against enemy units afloat, or ashore in the face of efficient enemy opposition. The strategical background of the Pacific indicates that in a war in the Pacific there will be many occasions where Fleet aircraft will have to take offensive action against objectives at islands which are strongly defended by anti-aircraft batteries and by shore-based aircraft. The utilization of carrier aircraft for this purpose involves placing the carriers within range of hostile shore-based aircraft. Carriers of present design are very vulnerable to bomb hits and the value and chances of success of their employment against bases defended by shore-based aircraft must be weighed against the chances and consequences of failure. Patrol Planes, which have the requisite range, are relatively slow and vulnerable to fighter and anti-aircraft opposition. It is respectfully submitted that the Fleet is not adequately prepared for a campaign in the Pacific until, in addition to present types of aircraft, it is provided with an air striking force of high-speed long-range landplane bombers, at least equal in performance to the B-17-E. It is my opinion that such bombers should be available in sufficient numbers to permit continuous effective bombing attacks to be made against shore objectives from Wake, and from such other suitable island bases as are available. In addition, for the protection of bases from which this air striking force would operate, there are needed high performance interceptor fighters in adequate numbers to provide for interception, under RADAR direction, of approaching hostile air attacks.

2. If we are provided with a suitable Air Striking Force of long-range shore-based landplane bombers, it is possible that carriers need not approach within range of hostile shore-based aircraft until hostile air bases have been destroyed or, by sustained attacks, have been made untenable. By such means, and it is believed, only by such means, can a rapid successful Pacific campaign be accomplished without *disproportionate losses to our own forces*. It is undoubtedly the intention of ORANGE initially to fight a war of attrition, utilizing shore-based aircraft, shore batteries, mines, and submarines to inflict maximum damage to our surface forces, while his own fleet is maintained intact in the hope of attaining equality or superiority to our fleet. It is my considered opinion that *our present plan of action gives him a fair chance of succeeding in the attainment of this objective*. He will undoubtedly throw his most modern aircraft into the campaign, sending them to the theatre of operations from the homeland via the chain of island airports in existence, in a steady flow of fresh replacements. It is therefore essential that the fields in the immediate theatre of operations be made untenable at the outbreak of war, and also, successively, his most advanced airports as the campaign progresses.

3. The following courses of action are strongly recommended for accomplishment under unexcelled priority as of the most vital importance to national security:

(a) Obtain the immediate initial assignment of an Army Air Corps Air Striking Force to the Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet. It is believed that the composition of this force should be approximately as follows:

(1) Three groups, each of sixty (60) long-range high-speed landplane bombers equal or superior to the B-17-E.

(2) Three groups, each of sixty (60) interceptor fighters of the best performance available.

(b) Develop Wake and Midway air fields under highest priority so that each may accommodate not less than one-third of the bombers and fighters simultaneously.

(c) Expedite and expand the RADAR installations at Midway and Wake.

(d) Expedite and expand anti-aircraft defenses at Wake.

(e) As soon as possible, station one group of interceptor fighters at Wake, and one group at Midway. Provide Johnston and Palmyra with smaller detachments of interceptor fighters. Station one group of bombers at Midway. Station two bomber groups and remainder of interceptor fighters in reserve in the Hawaiian Area. This disposition will provide for defense of Wake and Midway, while the bombers at Midway are beyond range of attack from hostile shore-based aircraft, but are in position to proceed immediately to Wake to start offensive operations.

(f) Initiate action to modify Naval Policy to augment the mission of the Navy Aeronautical Organization to provide Air Striking Forces of long-range high-speed landplane bombers to the Fleets, and landplane interceptor fighters for protection of advanced air bases used by Fleet Aircraft.

(g) Initiate action to include in the Navy aircraft procurement program the requisite quantities of long-range high-speed landplane bombers and interceptor fighters.

4. It is hereby certified that the originator considers it to be impracticable to phrase this document in such a manner as will permit a classification *other than SECRET*.

P. N. L. BELLINGER.

Hewitt Inquiry Exhibit No. 52

(1)  
FW2/A16-3/(62)

Je.  
PATROL WING TWO,  
January 16, 1941.

*Confidential*

From: The Commander Patrol Wing TWO.

To: The Chief of Naval Operations.

Via: (1) The Commander Scouting Force. (2) The Commander in Chief, U. S. FLEET.

Subject: Patrol Wing TWO—Readiness of.

References: (a) OpNav Conf. serial 006323 to the Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet—"Protection of Fleet Aircraft".

1. I arrived here on October 30, 1940, with the point of view that the International situation was critical, especially in the Pacific, and I was impressed with the need of being ready today rather than tomorrow for any eventuality that might arise. After taking over command of Patrol Wing TWO and looking over the situation, I was surprised to find that here in the Hawaiian Islands, an important naval advanced outpost, we were operating on a shoestring and the more I looked the thinner the shoestring appeared to be.

2. (a) War readiness of Patrol Plane Squadrons is dependent not only on the planes and equipment that comprise these squadrons, but also on many operating needs and requirements at Air Stations and outlying bases over which the Patrol Wing Commander has no direct control. Needs and requirements for War Readiness include: spare planes, spare engines, hangar and bench equipment, squadron equipment, spare parts, stores, material, bombs, ammunition, base operating facilities, overhaul and repair facilities, qualified personnel to man all base facilities and shops, all in sufficient adequacy to insure continuous operating readiness. These cannot be provided overnight. The isolation of this locality from the source of supply, the distance, and time involved, make careful and comprehensive long distance planning mandatory. I am informed that in the past, the average interval between the normal request and receipt of material has been nine months.

(b) Reference (a) reads, in part, as follows: "In about one year practically all fleet aircraft except Patrol Wing TWO will have armor and fuel protection". As there are no plans to modernize the present patrol planes comprising Patrol Wing TWO, this evidently means that there is no intention to replace the present obsolescent type of patrol planes in Patrol Wing TWO prior to one year and that Patrol Wing TWO will practically be the last Wing to be furnished new planes. This, together with the many existing deficiencies, indicates to me that the Navy Department as a whole does not view the situation in the Pacific with alarm or else is not taking steps in keeping with their view.

3. (a) Presumably, the office and bureaus concerned are familiar with the situation in the Hawaiian Area over which they have particular cognizance; certainly enough correspondence has already been written concerning patrol plane needs to enable bureaus and offices to take the necessary steps to provide and to anticipate such needs.