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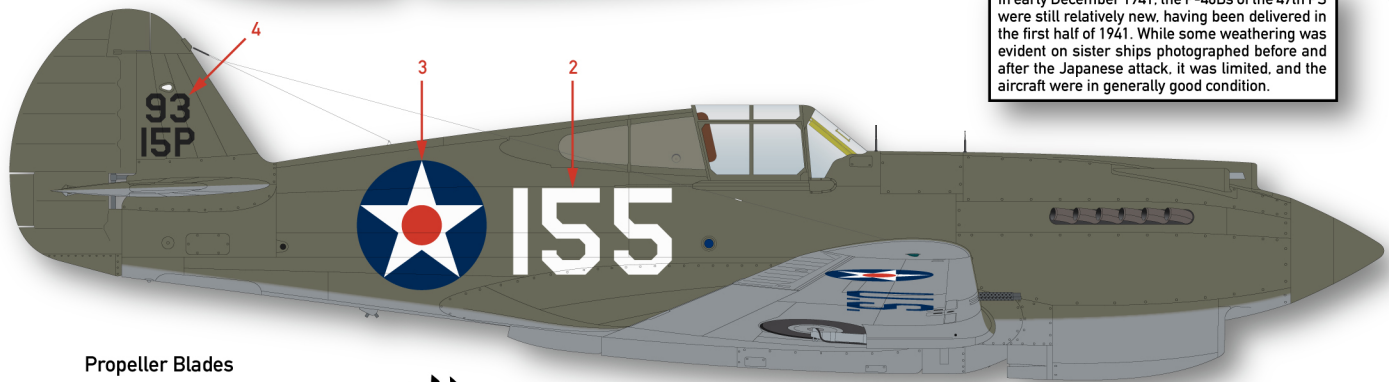
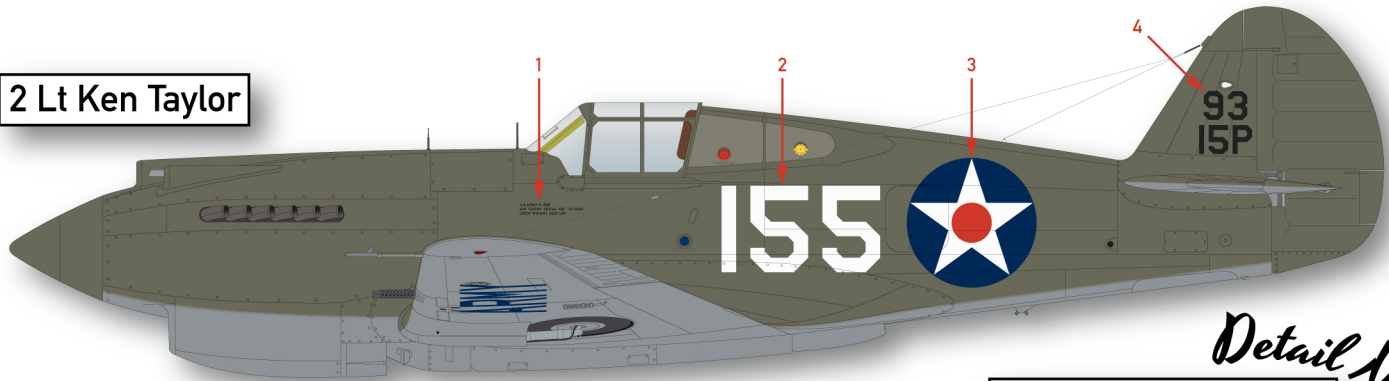
# Pearl Harbor Defenders



## Victors & Vanquished

FD32013 / FD48037

2 Lt Ken Taylor



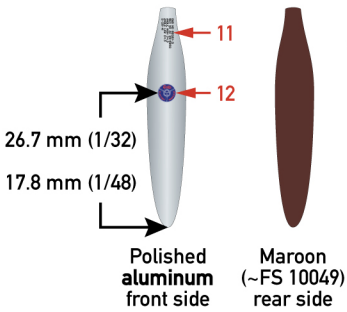
### Detail Note

In early December 1941, the P-40Bs of the 47th PS were still relatively new, having been delivered in the first half of 1941. While some weathering was evident on sister ships photographed before and after the Japanese attack, it was limited, and the aircraft were in generally good condition.

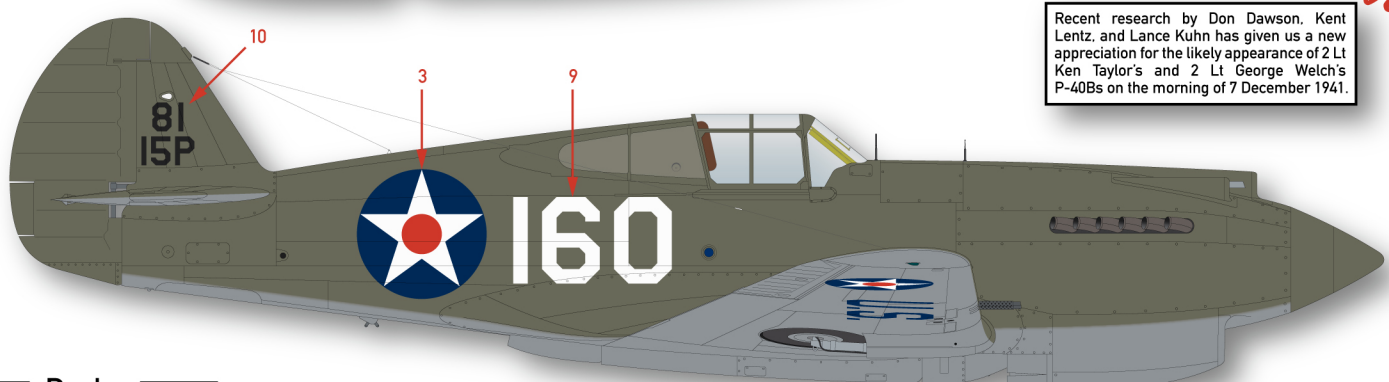
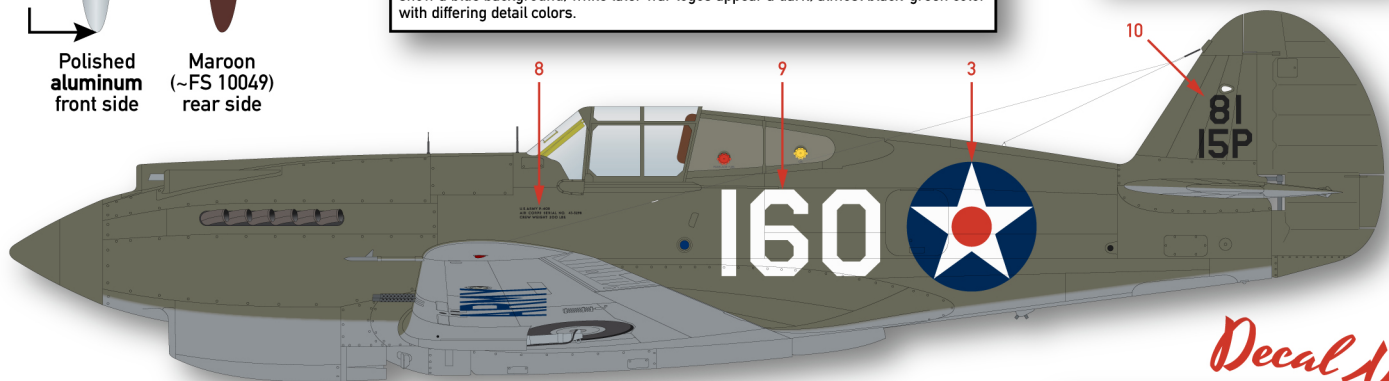
### Detail Note

Note that due to a shortage of standard P-40 steel-bladed Curtiss Electric propellers, P-40Bs were built with identically shaped props made of aluminum. The forward side was generally highly polished, with the back side finished in USAAC maroon (approximately FS 10049). We believe photos of wrecked P-40s with yellow-tipped black prop blades are likely some of the brand new P-40Cs delivered shortly before the attack. There appears to have been a change in the color of the Curtiss Electric prop logo at some point during WWII. Period color photos of multiple different early P-40s clearly show a blue background, while later war logos appear a dark, almost black-green color with differing detail colors.

Propeller Blades



2 Lt George Welch



### Decal Note

Recent research by Don Dawson, Kent Lentz, and Lance Kuhn has given us a new appreciation for the likely appearance of 2 Lt Ken Taylor's and 2 Lt George Welch's P-40Bs on the morning of 7 December 1941.

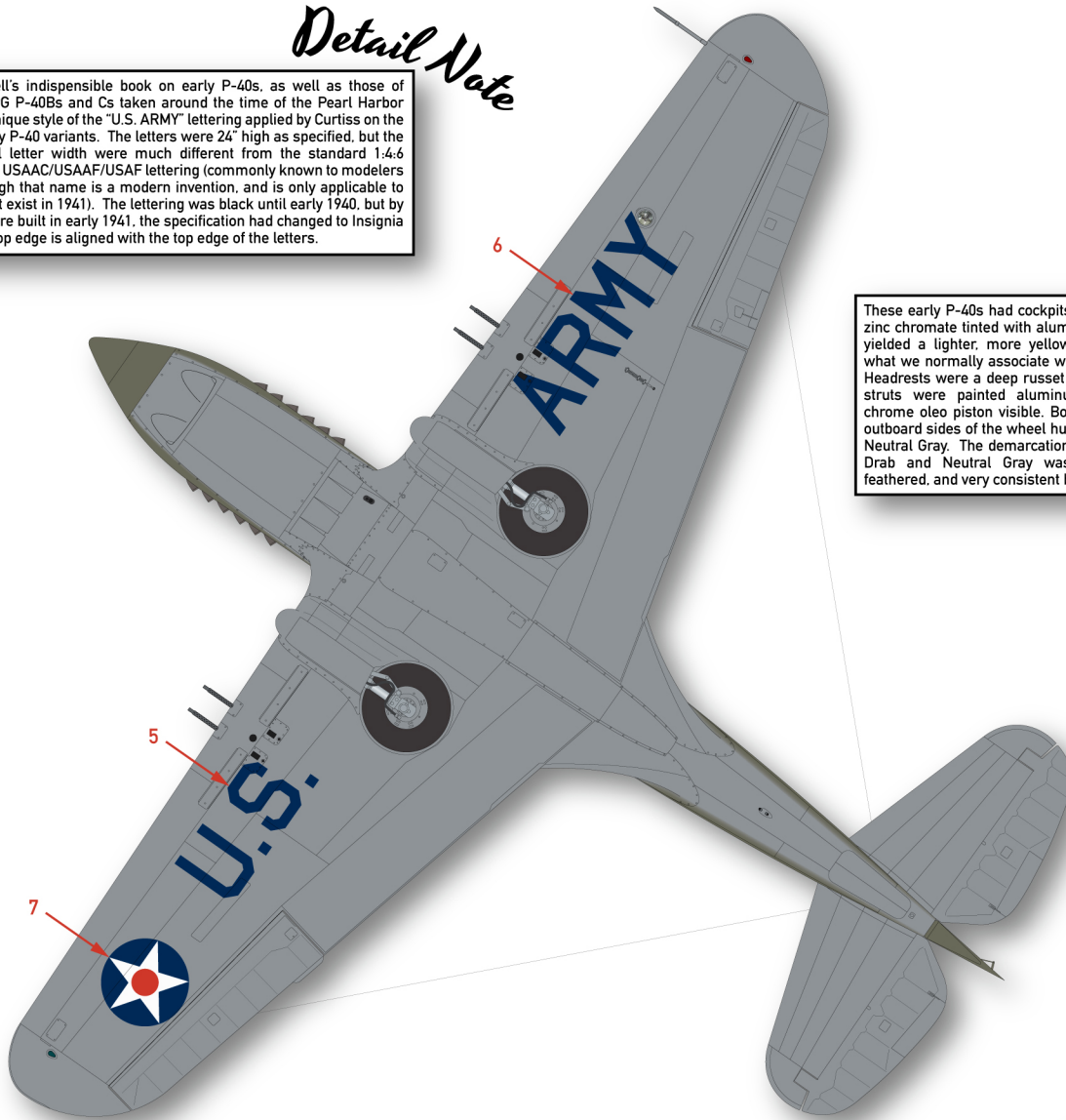


### Detail Note

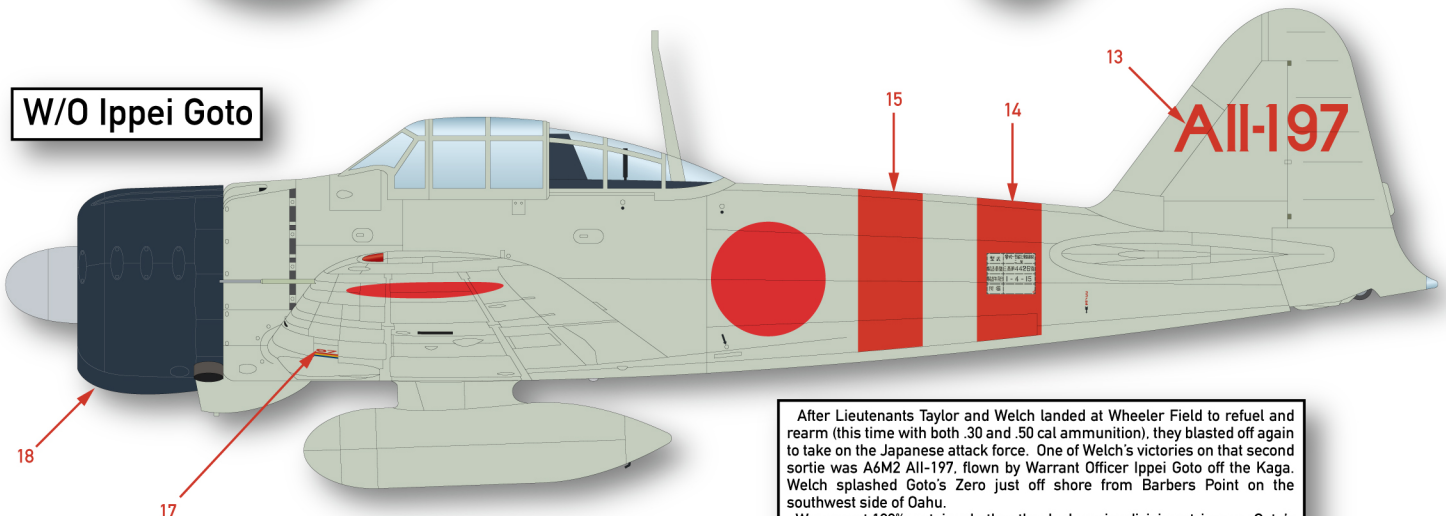
Photographs in Dana Bell's indispensable book on early P-40s, as well as those of wrecked 15th and 18th PG P-40Bs and Cs taken around the time of the Pearl Harbor attack clearly show the unique style of the "U.S. ARMY" lettering applied by Curtiss on the lower wings of these early P-40 variants. The letters were 24" high as specified, but the stroke width and overall letter width were much different from the standard 1:4:6 proportions seen on most USAAC/USAAF/USAF lettering (commonly known to modelers as "Amarillo USAF", though that name is a modern invention, and is only applicable to computer fonts - it did not exist in 1941). The lettering was black until early 1940, but by the time these aircraft were built in early 1941, the specification had changed to Insignia Blue. The 30" insignia's top edge is aligned with the top edge of the letters.

### Detail Note

These early P-40s had cockpits finished in yellow zinc chromate tinted with aluminum powder. This yielded a lighter, more yellow-green color than what we normally associate with "interior green". Headrests were a deep russet brown color. Gear struts were painted aluminum with a bright chrome oleo piston visible. Both the inboard and outboard sides of the wheel hubs were finished in Neutral Gray. The demarcation between the Olive Drab and Neutral Gray was relatively tightly feathered, and very consistent between aircraft.



### W/O Ippei Goto



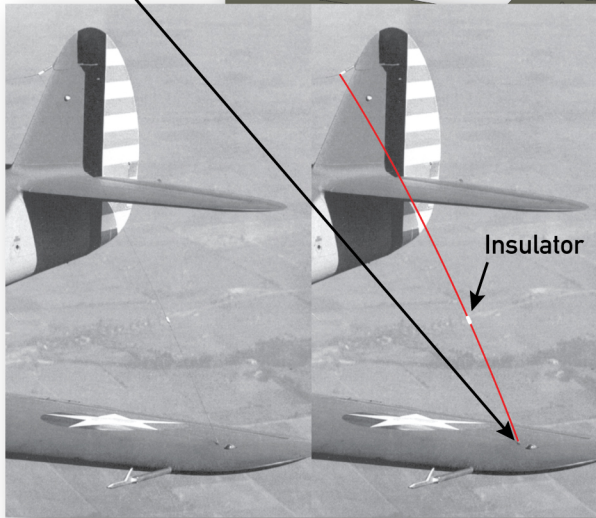
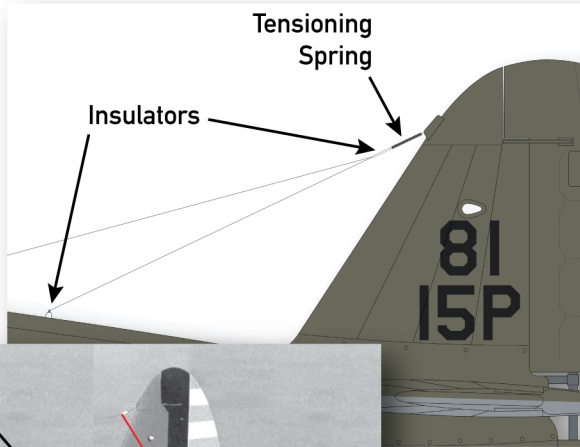
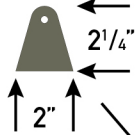
After Lieutenants Taylor and Welch landed at Wheeler Field to refuel and rearm (this time with both .30 and .50 cal ammunition), they blasted off again to take on the Japanese attack force. One of Welch's victories on that second sortie was A6M2 All-197, flown by Warrant Officer Ippei Goto off the Kaga. Welch splashed Goto's Zero just off shore from Barbers Point on the southwest side of Oahu.

We are not 100% certain whether the dual carrier division stripes on Goto's aircraft ended at the lower panel line as shown, or if they completely encircled the fuselage. The stripes provided are long enough to go completely around, so trim as shown if you choose to portray the aircraft this way.

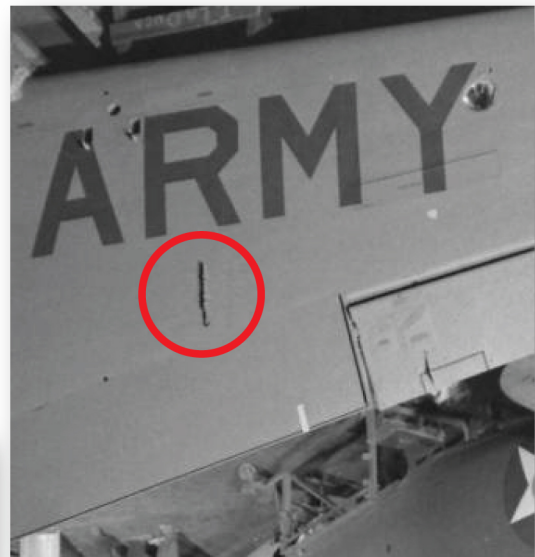
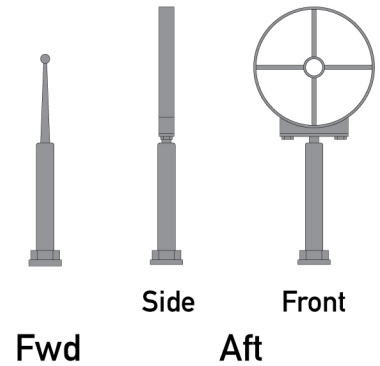
# P-40B Details

## Antenna Wire & Insulator

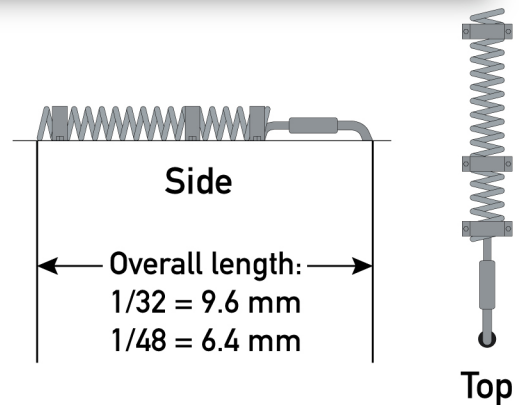
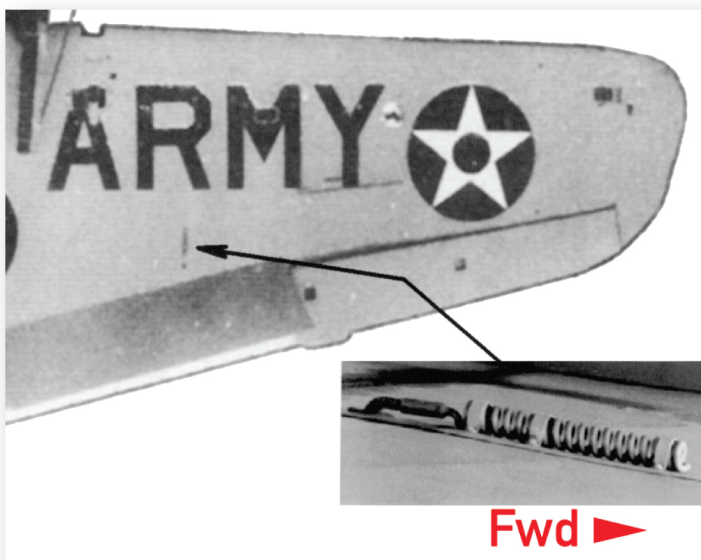
Wing tip antenna mounting lug actual dimensions



## Ring & Bead Gunsight



## Bourdon tube temperature probe



# 15th PG Markings



Photos of 15th Pursuit Group P-40Bs taken before or immediately after Pearl Harbor are rare as hens' teeth. Almost every illustration of Taylor's and Welch's aircraft has shown them with the 24" high buzz codes on the fuselage done as stencil type numbers, often with very odd features. We have found no photographic evidence to support this. Certainly the 18th PG, also in Hawai'i at the time, used stencils and left the Dark Olive Drab showing through the breaks in the white numbers. The 18th also used very non-standard styles of numbers, which does not appear to have been the case with the 15th. We have only found a couple of period photos of 15th PG airplanes, of which this is the only one really suitable for publication, showing the style of numbers used. It shows a P-40B (with a P-26 in front of it) inside the bombed-out hangar at Wheeler Field in the aftermath of the attack.

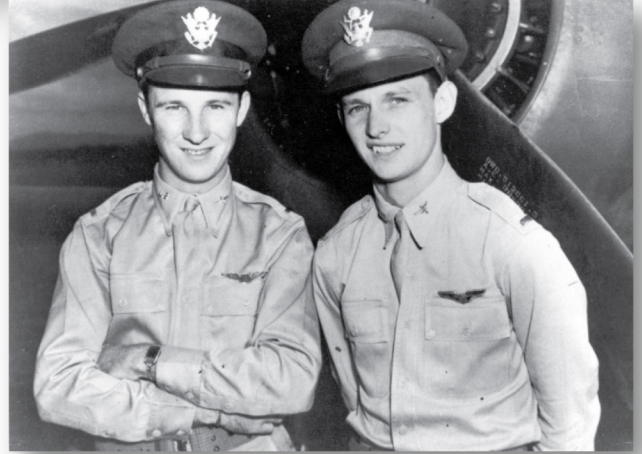
While not 100% conclusive, close examination of it and the others we found have convinced us that the 15th either painted the numbers without the aid of a stencil, or if one was used, they touched up the stencil breaks with white paint to create a complete number. The former might well be the case, since the 15th appears to have used a very standard 1:4:6 proportion (stroke width:number width:number height) style of numbers, which is easy to lay out and apply with tape. Conveniently, this photo of aircraft number 156 provides us with reference for both of our subject aircraft.

New research also points to the high likelihood that the 15th PG carried the full plane-in-group number and group ID in black on the vertical tail at the time of the attack.

# Hale'iwa Fighter Strip

In the days and weeks leading up to the 7 December 1941 Japanese attack on Hawai'i there had been fragmented warnings of possible hostilities. Despite the orders of Lt Gen Walter Short that aircraft at Wheeler and Bellows Fields be grouped together to guard against potential saboteurs, some aircraft were dispersed to the outlying fields on Oahu. Taylor's and Welch's aircraft had been flown from Wheeler to the bare-bones Hale'iwa Fighter Strip on the northwest side of Oahu. The strip was nothing but a sand runway with a small parking apron and absolutely no other amenities. Personnel had to bring their own tents, food, and anything else they needed. The strip was used sporadically for training during WWII, and in 1945 got a concrete runway and some support buildings. It was used as a civilian airport for a short time after the war, but was eventually abandoned, and remains so today.

Having attended a Christmas party turned all night poker game in Honolulu the night of 6 December, Taylor and Welch called ahead to have their aircraft armed and the engines started and warmed up once the attack began. The pair sped to Hale'iwa at breakneck speed, arriving just as the Japanese second wave appeared. In possibly the only instance of aerial combat by pilots thus attired, Taylor and Welch took off still wearing their mess dress uniform shirts and trousers! Their aircraft were armed with only .30 cal ammunition for the wing guns, since no one had thought to bring any .50 cal ammunition to Hale'iwa. After their initial success, the pair landed amidst the chaos at Wheeler Field to refuel and rearm - this time with both .30 and .50 cal ammunition, and took off once again to meet the Japanese attack force.



2 Lts Kenneth Taylor (left) and George Welch (right), taken shortly after 7 Dec 41. Taylor is credited with two kills on 7 Dec 41, and later stated, "I believed I was a better trained pilot than the enemy. I had good equipment, and I was proud of it." He died in 2006. Welch went on to a career as a test pilot with North American Aviation, becoming the first person to fly the FJ-1 Fury and the XP-86 Sabre. It is likely that Welch broke the sound barrier in the XP-86 two weeks prior to Chuck Yeager's famous flight in the X-1 in 1947. Welch became the first person in history to achieve Mach 1 in level flight in a jet (vs. rocket) powered aircraft in May of 1953. He died in the crash of an F-100A in 1954 and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



Above and right, black & white views of Hale'iwa Fighter Strip, located on the northwest shore of Oahu. These images were taken in early 1942, just after the Japanese attack, and show it as it would have appeared at the time Taylor and Welch flew their famous mission on 7 Dec 41.

Below is a current day satellite photo of the area where the strip was located. As you can see, it is mostly overgrown with vegetation, although reportedly remnants of the concrete runway laid down in 1945 and some building foundations are still present.

