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In My View

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IN MY VIEW . . .

Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones

Sir:

In his very interesting survey on nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Autumn 1996 issue of the *Naval War College Review*, pp. 44–61, Mark E. Rosen correctly pointed out that many of the USA's general policies on arms control include a number of elements that are part of existing nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, and thus support the zone measures, but on a global scale. This is a very important fact that should not be overshadowed by the fact that some fine-print elements of existing treaties have attracted criticism. He refers to the U.S. support of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, its verification régime, and the security guarantees granted to its non-nuclear-weapon parties, the zero-yield comprehensive test ban, the London Dumping Convention, etc.

In my view, however, he failed to mention the most important of them all: the unilateral but coordinated declarations by the presidents of the USA and USSR in the fall of 1991 implying that all sub-strategic nuclear weapons would be withdrawn from theatres of deployment and from general-purpose naval ships, to be dismantled or kept in centrally located storage. George Bush made his declaration on September 27th, and Mikhail Gorbachev a week later, on October 5th. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russian president Boris Yeltsin confirmed Mr. Gorbachev's commitment, on January 29, 1992.

These measures are now implemented. As it is the sub-strategic nuclear weapons that primarily concern the many states interested in forming nuclear-weapon-free zones, these declarations remove the main problem for them, including the transit

and port-call problems that used to be sensitive in the past. It could be commented, though, that the non-legal form of these declarations makes them vulnerable to any sudden change of mind, and that therefore they should be codified into permanent and legally binding instruments, now, when there is time for negotiating a regular treaty.

It could be added that these declarations removed sub-strategic nuclear weapons also from the seas and the oceans, a fact that should satisfy the security considerations of those states who proposed denuclearization of the Indian Ocean and the South Atlantic. The only remaining nuclear weapons at sea are the submarine-based strategic missiles, assigned to a central deterrence function and thus not constituting a threat to most non-nuclear-weapon states.

In conclusion, the success of the nuclear non-proliferation idea, together with the removal of sub-strategic nuclear weapons declared in 1991, have for the time being made the world—including the world's sea areas—a zone free from the majority of precisely those nuclear weapons that are relevant for most non-nuclear-weapon states. At present, therefore, the nuclear-weapon-free zone concept represents more a measure that *confirms* a factual situation than a measure that *enforces* the absence of nuclear weapons from specific regions. By continuing its current policies, the United States could take the lead in making this world order permanent, by initiating talks among the nuclear-weapon states to turn the 1991 declarations into a legally binding treaty for regulation of sub-strategic nuclear weapons.

Jan Prawitz
National Defence Research Establishment
Stockholm

"A Wild Rush of Power"

Sir:

Barrett Tillman has asserted in his review of my book, *The Ship That Held The Line: The U.S.S.* ***Hornet*** *and the First Year of the Pacific War* (in the *Naval War College Review*, Autumn 1996) that "the author simply does not know his subject" (at least with respect to naval aviation) and that more than two dozen technical and factual errors ruin this "obituary" of CV-8.

Mistakes were made for which I alone am responsible and which will be corrected; however, the reviewer is not without error. Although he has claimed that the *Hornet*'s commissioning date is not given until near the end of the book, I provided it in the appropriate place, mentioning on page 10 the torpedoing of the destroyer *Kearny* on 17 October 1941 and stating that CV-8 was commissioned three days later. Surely readers can figure out the date.

Tillman has also slighted the importance of the *Hornet*'s activities in the few weeks when she was the only U.S. fleet carrier in the south Pacific. Although weather in the Solomons in mid-October 1942 was poor and air activity minimal, the *Hornet*'s presence and actions indicated to all that the United States was committed to aggressive pursuit of the enemy. It is now well known that despite the arrival of army reinforcements on 13 October, the prospect of Guadalcanal becoming "another Bataan" had not disappeared from American command thinking; certainly the enemy believed this would happen. The *Hornet*'s raid on Japanese installations in the upper Solomons and the later sweeps of her air group around the Guadalcanal area signaled a continuing resolve to remain at the enemy's throat. These activities had their desired effect. Even after Santa Cruz—a Japanese victory by nearly any standard—Yamamoto's chief of staff, Admiral Ugaki, was depressed, believing that the Americans had at least four and possibly more carriers in the Solomons region with more on the way momentarily. *Hornet*'s actions off Guadalcanal, along with the Tokyo raid, is her real legacy.

Regarding two of my own errors, I was misled by a primary source. Stanley Johnston, one of the most distinguished war correspondents in the Pacific in 1942 and author of the classic *Queen of the Flat-Tops*, wrote of the SBD that "its armament consists of only two fixed .50-caliber machine guns in the wing" (*The Grim Reapers*, 1943, p. 36). He also wrote about the formation of "Air Group 10" (ibid., p. 47) in the late spring of 1942, which I misinterpreted as a designation used in the prewar era, incorrectly naming the *Hornet*'s air group "Air Group 8." Although it is true that both SBDs and the Japanese "Vals" mounted their two machine guns in the nose rather than in the wings, the men on the *Hornet* who were strafed by Vals at Santa Cruz did not particularly care whether the weapons firing at them were five or six feet this way or that on the enemy fuselages. Tillman's criticism of my use of "hook" instead of "wire" seems rather gratuitous, for in my first extended discussion of air operations on CV-8 (pp. 45–47) I indicated clearly that tailhooks on aircraft were designed to catch arresting wires on the flight deck.

Tillman should realize that production costs and the loss of the *Hornet*'s photograph files when she sank determined the use of maps and pictures. Because I did not receive any photos from private sources during my various interviews with *Hornet* survivors, I had to rely on generic pictures to illustrate the crowded conditions that existed aboard CV-8, as on all other U.S. carriers during World War II. Maps were not included because they would have further increased the cost of an already expensive book, and many readers undoubtedly have available other maps of the Pacific war in their personal libraries. Cost considerations also limited the number of pictures I could use, so I decided to portray Mitscher and Mason in words.

Unfortunately, irritating mistakes appear in many if not most reputable books about naval combat in World War II, including Samuel Eliot Morison's multivolume history, which in its last volume has over thirty pages listing two dozen or more mistakes in each earlier volume. The war was a long, highly complex, and ever-shifting event. One can write about it generally or with great specificity. Having chosen the latter course I necessarily crammed my book with names, dates, places, figures, events, incidents, and designations. Regrettably technical and factual errors, which Tillman has aptly characterized as "glitches," crept in.

In reviewing any book it may be fun and it is surely not too taxing to concentrate on such glitches. It is more difficult to reach a higher level and wrestle with basic issues and insights. Assuming that Tillman is an expert on naval aviation in the Pacific war, I would think that he would have discussed my finding that the flawed launch sequences on both the *Hornet* and *Enterprise* were responsible for the breakup of the American attack formations at Midway into scattered, uncoordinated groups that doomed both Torpedo 8 and the *Enterprise*'s Torpedo 6. Sending off the high-performance, fuel-guzzling fighters first, the scout-bombers second, and the slow torpedo planes last assured the massacre. Torpedo 3 from the *Yorktown* did receive close-in fighter support from Jimmy Thach and his fliers, and although it was also badly mauled without obtaining results, more planes got through to drop their torpedoes from the *Yorktown* than from the *Enterprise* and *Hornet*. As I wrote, "despite the obvious lessons of the Coral Sea, no effort was made at Midway to coordinate air group flights or assaults or to incorporate the much slower and more vulnerable torpedo squadrons into any coherent plan of attack" (p. 150). If such an effort had been made, *Hiryu* might have died alongside her sisters on the morning of June 4, thus saving the *Yorktown* for the subsequent south Pacific campaign.

As I suggested, the Midway failures reflected a deeper flaw in the American conduct of war. Since at least 1861 we have relied on men of action to fight our increasingly complex battles—individuals easily bored with detailed planning and enamored of the impulsive, sledgehammer approach. There are exceptions to this trend, of course, but the naval air war in the Pacific was not one of them. From the beginning our carrier admirals were determined to hit the enemy with everything they had, in a wild rush of power, despite the consequences. As a result Fletcher threw an entire strike against the light carrier *Shoho* in the Coral Sea without waiting to determine whether she was the main enemy force; Spruance uselessly sacrificed Torpedo 6 and 8 at Midway; Mitscher sent a dubious "mission beyond darkness" to find the Japanese fleet in the Philippine Sea, although its air groups had already been decimated and its two finest flattops had been dispatched by American submarines; and Halsey rushed after the last few (and almost empty) Japanese carriers off Luzon, completely exposing the landing beaches at Leyte Gulf and Sprague's supporting escort carriers.

Even after fifty years, important issues regarding the Pacific war remain largely unexplored. Since I identified and discussed several of them, I hoped that a critical reviewer would subject them to a searching professional examination. That Tillman chose not to do so is disappointing.

Lisle A. Rose
Everett, Wash.

Barrett Tillman replies:
Sir:

Lisle Rose condemns himself by his own words: he was "misled," and he "misinterpreted." I submit that an author does not commit such errors when he knows his subject. Rose also states that facts don't matter: "the men on the *Hornet* who were strafed . . . did not particularly care whether the weapons firing at them were five or six feet this way or that. . . ."

Extending that reasoning to its logical absurdity, the men of CV-8 did not particularly care whether they were sunk by 550-kg bombs dropped from Vals or by Exocet missiles fired from Mirages!

The point is that *avoidable* factual errors were made throughout the book, but Mr. Rose is content with 50 percent accuracy, saying he got it right the first time he described a carrier landing but got it backwards the second time. But why, having been correct the first time, was he so far wrong the second? And why was my catching the error "gratuitous"?

It is also disturbing that the author accepts Stanley Johnston, a newspaper reporter, as a source of aviation expertise. (In DESERT STORM reporters didn't know the difference between an F-14 and an F-15, a battalion and a brigade.) Johnston, after all, was the "distinguished" journalist who leaked the fact that the U.S. Navy was reading Japanese codes in 1942!

Serious historians also will wonder at Rose's reasoning in his rebuttal's penultimate paragraph: Rear Admiral Spruance "uselessly sacrificed Torpedo 6 and 8 at Midway; Mitscher sent a dubious 'mission beyond darkness' to find the Japanese fleet in the Philippine Sea, although its air groups had already been decimated and its two finest flattops had been dispatched by American submarines."

In truth, both TorpRons were part of a "strike package" (to employ an anachronism) intending to make a coordinated attack with dive bombers. That VT-6 lost its fighter cover en route and that VT-8 steered a straighter course than the rest of the Hornet Air Group were factors beyond any admiral's control. Similarly, Mr. Rose cites lessons overlooked from Coral Sea, but remember: in that battle the torpedo squadrons helped sink a CV and got away clean while the scout bombers took the losses.

As for the Marianas operation two years later, Rose overlooks the fundamental background. Far from the "dubious" nature of the 20 June 1944 strike, for the first time in twenty months enemy carriers were brought to battle, and with the Saipan landings safe from a naval threat, Mitscher (and Spruance, as ComFifth-Fleet) were acting upon orders from Admiral Nimitz. If anything, Spruance was unjustifiably criticized for not pursuing the enemy fleet more aggressively *before* the landings were secure (his primary mission). Similarly, Rose assumes a detailed knowledge of damage to the enemy that was unavailable to the U.S. Navy until well after the event.

I am more than willing to give Lisle Rose credit for good intentions. It should be remembered, after all, that each of his errors survived not only the manuscript editor, but scrutiny by at least two Naval Institute reviewers. Because eight of my twenty volumes were published by the Naval Institute, I know the process—and I know also that several *Hornet* survivors have registered their disappointment to the publisher of *The Ship That Held the Line.*

Barrett Tillman
Mesa, Arizona

Command Networks

Sir:

I enjoyed greatly "The Emergence of a Command Network," by Captain John W. Bodnar, USNR (Ret.), and 2nd Lieutenant Rebecca Dengler, USMC. I was struck by the resemblance between their communications models and models of organizational cohesion.

Ben Shalit presents two models of unit cohesion in *Psychology of Combat and Conflict* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1988). Model A is a traditional, hierarchical structure resembling a string of beads. Model B is a model of integrated, rather than hierarchical, cohesion. Model B resembles the network described in Figure 1 of the Bodnar-Dengler paper. One implication of this resemblance is that networks and command networks can enhance organizational cohesion due to their basic design. Another implication is that Model B, networks, and command networks can continue to operate even with the loss of some nodes.

It would be interesting to see more published on how communication structures reinforce (or hamper) cohesion and survivability of military organizations.

Donald A. Petkus
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