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FDR: Into the Storm, 1937-1940: A History

Jan van Tol

Kenneth C. Davis

desire for increased federal funding while retaining control of the Guard created several problems during mobilization in 1940–1941. It would be 1990 before the Supreme Court would resolve this dilemma.

The one major flaw in this work occurs in the last pages. After carefully documenting the salient factors affecting the Guard's mobilization during a two-year period, Sligh attempts to explain the remaining history of the Guard in only six pages. There are only one or two paragraphs covering the Cold War, Korea, Vietnam, and their intervening periods; they do not add to this study but only confuse the reader as to what the author's main thesis actually is.

With this one exception, however, this work will be of use to force planners and the national security community. It is a highly specialized work and fills a void in the history of the National Guard.

GARY A. TROGDON
Major, U.S. Air Force

Davis, Kenneth C. *FDR: Into the Storm, 1937–1940: A History*. New York: Random House, 1993. 691pp. (No price given)

We tend to think of Franklin Delano Roosevelt as the great president who almost singlehandedly brought America back from the depths of despair during the Depression, or as the triumphant commander in chief who successfully led the country through World War II. What we forget is that Franklin Roosevelt was also an often ineffective politician who was unable to get his policy objectives implemented, particularly during his second term.

Although part of a larger work (this book is the fourth in a projected five-volume biography of FDR), it stands alone. It covers those years when, for various reasons, FDR was less than effective in a variety of areas.

Davis starts by posing the question of how the seemingly invincible winner of the 1936 landslide could, by the end of 1937, be considered by many to have lost his political potency. He argues that hubris regarding the Supreme Court "packing" plan (which was unexpectedly and strongly opposed by many who were otherwise political allies) caused FDR to persist for an unreasonably long time in the unsuccessful attempt to force it through an unwilling Congress. The passions within his own party created by that fight cost him the leverage needed to get other cherished initiatives enacted. (There is an interesting parallel here with current politics regarding the cascading effect of a major policy error early in a term.) FDR further exacerbated his problems by campaigning vigorously in the 1938 primaries against those Democrats who had opposed him on the Court plan. When he almost wholly failed in his purge attempts, his relations with Congress were further strained. Economically, Roosevelt made a number of policy decisions which significantly aggravated the 1937–1938 recession, driving unemployment up and further reducing his effectiveness.

Davis argues that these considerations affected more than just domestic policy but were a marked factor in FDR's less than stirring performance in

foreign policy during the critical years leading up to the war. Roosevelt's perception of his limited political freedom to maneuver led him to apply the neutrality law so strictly during the Spanish Civil War that in effect he sided with the Franco forces. When he made his famous "quarantine the aggressors" speech in October 1937, he almost immediately defanged it to forestall anticipated protest.

On the moral level, Davis argues that Roosevelt's performance was almost shameful at times, citing the Spanish case and also pointing out that when Neville Chamberlain stated he was going to Munich to negotiate Czechoslovakia's doom, FDR sent him a two-word telegram, "Good Man!" Davis gives FDR credit for at least attempting, as events became grimmer in 1939, to prevent the war. However, his actions were often self-limited by an excessively pessimistic perception of what the public would accept in the way of support to the Allies. This would not change even when the cataclysmic events of spring 1940 caused him to decide to run for a third term. Arguably, his caution was due in no small part to the consequences of the major errors he had made early in his second term, at a time when he seemed to be at the height of his power.

Within the framework of the larger issues, Davis adds frequent anecdotes and vignettes to show the reader the man, as well as the politician. The author's skillful interweaving of the "big picture" and "small details" make this an exceptionally intimate and thorough portrayal of Roosevelt.

On the negative side, Davis too frequently makes what have to be considered ideological assertions that, whatever their truth, he does not defend. For example, he gratuitously describes Republican conventions as those "quadrennial Republican exercises . . . having as their main purpose the packaging in attractive disguise of candidates and programs which, frankly exposed to public view, would be seen to serve very few at the expense of very many." Davis is an enthusiastic critic of the "profit system," more so than was his subject. The author is also given to stereotyping, ascribing to Wendell Wilkie's mother a "typically Germanic power lust." On specifically military matters, his account of the May 1940 German attack in the West betrays a significant lack of deep knowledge which, though not a great problem for this volume, may cause him difficulties with volume five, which must inevitably be more concerned with such matters.

Davis has had considerable experience as a biographer, having written books on Dwight D. Eisenhower, Charles Lindbergh, and Adlai Stevenson. He has had a variety of different jobs, including as a war correspondent attached to General Eisenhower's personal headquarters, journalism instructor, State Department staffer, and professor of English and history. Also, having grown up during Roosevelt's time, he has a personal sense of that era that younger historians perforce cannot.

Despite the author's clear political bias and an occasional tendency to be too close to his subject, Davis's biography is

engaging, well written, and paints a picture that is sympathetic, if critical when necessary, of one of the giant figures of this century. If this volume is the measure of the full opus, the whole set will be well worth reading.

JAN VAN TOL
Commander, U.S. Navy

Goldstein, Donald M. and Dillon, Katherine V., eds. *The Pearl Harbor Papers: Inside the Japanese Plans*. New York: Brassey's (US), 1993. 384pp. $30

Ah, yes, yet another book about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Next to the Battle of the Bulge and D-Day in Normandy, surely Pearl Harbor has attracted the most writers, scholars, books, and articles of any U.S. battle in World War II. This work adds to that growing list of histories, but there is a difference.

The editors of *The Pearl Harbor Papers* attempt to view Pearl Harbor exclusively through Japanese eyes. Using a wide variety of official and unofficial letters, interviews, diaries, ships' logs, and other "memory" documents, they have done a creditable job and provide fascinating insight into the Japanese plans for the attack that launched America into World War II.

Donald Goldstein and Katherine Dillon have coauthored numerous World War II histories, with at least four books on Pearl Harbor. They worked with the late Gordon W. Prange on the enormously successful Pearl Harbor history, *At Dawn We Slept* (1981). All of the documents contained in the work under review were actually researched and obtained by Prange, when he was MacArthur's historian in occupied Japan. Goldstein and Dillon have compiled Prange's documents into a readable and interesting sourcebook of the Japanese buildup for and planning, execution, and aftermath of the Pearl Harbor attack.

Besides portraying the Japanese side of the attack, the editors also offer evidence that neither President Roosevelt nor Winston Churchill knew in advance of the impending attack, as is frequently asserted and popularly believed. Other historians have claimed that the Americans and British had intercepted Imperial Japanese Navy radio messages prior to 7 December that indicated their intentions. Goldstein and Dillon contend that it is not true, because the Japanese naval attack force never broke radio silence. Several Japanese ships' logs cited in this book support that contention. However, this reviewer is not convinced that the editors offer conclusive proof; after all, only a few ships' logs are cited, all the others having been lost in the war. Additionally, even if the Japanese navy did not break radio silence while en route to Hawaii, there is always the possibility that Roosevelt and Churchill knew through some other intelligence source.

That aside, this book does contain some remarkable information. There are personal and professional letters written by Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, the architect of the Pearl Harbor attack, including several sensitive and poignant ones to his *geisha*. A Japanese admiral's notes include references to a spy ring