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Admiral William Shepherd Benson: First Chief of Naval Operations

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for success. Those seeking solutions to U.S. problems in formulating courses of action in the Middle East and in Central America today could well ponder the blueprints for building constituencies demonstrated by Marshall in 1948. In the events described by Pogue in this volume, confrontational rhetoric was a companion of failure for both sides.

In formulating American policies for China, Korea, and Palestine, Marshall kept clearly in sight the predominance of the U.S. national interests. Once again Marshall sought to minimize U.S. entanglement in regions from which withdrawal might be difficult, embarrassing, or impossible. Pogue sketches the impact on U.S. foreign policy of ethnically motivated election year politics in 1948. Again the parallels to the present situation are striking.

The fifties brought the cancer of McCarthyism. Violent attacks were made upon Marshall by Senator McCarthy, Senator Jenner, and, regrettably, by some former comrades-in-arms. Some individuals felt the need to seek personal vindication for courses of action earlier rejected. Even General Eisenhower was caught up in the furor of the rhetoric and seemed to turn against Marshall. During this most difficult passage, the inner grace of Marshall shone like a beacon—a reminder of the necessity to maintain civility of discourse if our democratic processes are to survive. It was in this environment that Marshall, as Secretary of Defense, was a major figure in the drama surrounding the relief of

Douglas MacArthur. Nothing that has happened in the seventies or eighties matches the passion of that event; however, one can trace the origins of many of the attitudes held by current military and civilian leaders to the events of 1951.

The past is indeed prologue and throughout this volume Pogue elegantly portrays Marshall the soldier, Marshall the statesman, and Marshall the man.

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Klachko, Mary and Trask, David F.
Admiral William Shepherd Benson: First Chief of Naval Operations.
Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1987. 268pp. \$24.95

This is the first biography of the first Chief of Naval Operations—who headed the U.S. Navy in World War I. Benson, a mediocre student at the Naval Academy, attained the rank of captain in 1909 after 32 years of service. After commanding the new battleship *Utah* (commissioned in 1911) he was placed in command of the Philadelphia Navy Yard. It was during this period that he cultivated the favor of Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels. Daniels had alienated many of the senior officers in the Navy, including its leading reformer, Rear Admiral Bradley A. Fiske. As Benson's biographers point out, while "Fiske and other activists lost favor" Benson's relationship with the Secretary improved. The culmi-

102 Naval War College Review

nation of this was that Daniels passed over twenty-six rear admirals and five captains to appoint Benson the first Chief of Naval Operations, a position largely created by the reformers.

To be effective in this new office, Benson expanded the Department, and created good relations with the Secretary, and the Bureau Chiefs; perhaps even more importantly, he persuaded Daniels to give the CNO the power to issue orders directly to the fleet. This set an important precedent as hitherto, the Secretary of the Navy had determined policy concerning naval operations. Daniel's decision, in effect, made Benson (and his successors) the Chief of Naval Operations in fact as well as in name. Such changes initiated by Benson, as the authors note, depended on Daniel's liking and respect for Benson.

Much of this book concerns Benson's role in preparing the Navy for its entry into World War I. While Benson got on well with Daniels, he was less effective in dealing with his principal commander in the war zone, Admiral William S. Sims. Benson opposed Sims' pro-British policy with vigor, not because he was an Anglophobe as has been claimed, but because he believed that American and British policies were not the same. The authors write, "Benson, a convinced nationalist, did not trust any other state. He rejected the opinion held by others, notably Admiral Sims, that American and British interests were identical or complementary."

The war ended but the differences between the two admirals did not, and the two came into full public view as a result of a series of highly publicized Congressional hearings in the postwar years. The authors' arguments, suggesting that Benson's policies in conducting the naval war were more effective than Sims', are not convincing.

In September 1919 Benson retired from the Navy. He then served three Presidents as a member of the United States Shipping Board before stepping down in 1928 at the age of seventy-three. He died in 1932. A carefully researched and readable biography, this work is an important addition to naval literature.

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Hammel, Eric. *Guadalcanal: The Carrier Battles*. New York: Crown, 1987. 494pp. \$24.95

This book makes exciting reading for participants in the carrier battles and, indeed, for anyone who lived in that era. Moreover, it should excite younger generations of Americans, many of whom have not heard of Guadalcanal, but who enjoy one-on-one encounters under literary combat circumstances.

The book consists of scores and scores of personal accounts of our pilots versus the Zeros and attack aircraft of the Japanese. Indeed the account of Gus Widhelm's *Hornet* attack group fighting through swarms of alerted Zeros to the Japanese