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President's Notes

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President's Notes

He was a submarine operator in the 1920s, a contributor to submarine design in the 1930s, and then an engineer in a heavy cruiser. At the time of Pearl Harbor he was commanding officer of one of the famous old four-pipe destroyers in the Asiatic Fleet. In ships designed for other times and other conditions, he and the other officers and men in that fleet had to fight enemy submarines with hardly a sonar amongst them, and enemy bombers with few antiaircraft guns and no fighters. In the Java Sea campaign he made one of the first night torpedo attacks in our Navy's history, and one of the last daylight torpedo attacks in any navy's history. He, and those with him, had to fight with antiaircraft shells—such as they had—that failed to burst even when aimed true; with submarine torpedoes which, despite true aim, failed to hit or, if they hit failed to explode; and with destroyer torpedoes which, despite true aim, were too short-ranged, too slow, and with too weak an explosive charge to do much harm to any foe.

That is part of the professional and combat background of a naval officer, Rear Admiral Henry Eccles, who is best known to us as a strategist, a logistician, a philosopher, and a moralist of war.

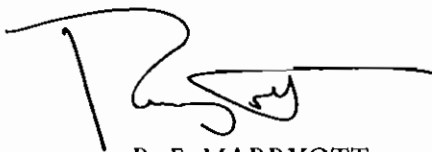
Admiral Eccles came to the Naval War College in 1947, twenty-five years after having been commissioned. Here he served his country for another thirty-eight years until, this past May, he died at his retirement home in

Needham, Massachusetts. His wife and best friend, Isobel, was with him to the last.

I do not wish to list all the books, all the articles Admiral Eccles wrote. Most of them can be found in the bibliography we published in the Summer 1977 issue of this journal, an issue whose content consisted mainly of a tribute to this naval officer's work. The cover illustration of that issue was a portrait of him by Tony Sarro. That portrait now hangs in the lobby of our library so appropriately named in his honor on the very day he moved from Newport.

Admiral Eccles knew the importance, when one wants to communicate thoughts, orders, information, or ideas, to be clear, accurate, brief, and relevant to the issue at hand. He worked hard to meet those requirements he had laid upon himself. Those who have read the eleven main articles he contributed to this journal, beginning in 1949, are aware of the results of that endeavor. Those who read this issue can gain a glimpse through his review of two books dealing with the Java Sea campaign through which Admiral Eccles brought his ship and men, unscathed, to safety and by which he earned the Navy Cross.

Newport, the Naval War College and the Navy as a whole are the poorer for Henry Eccles' passing, but we are all the richer for his having been among us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. F. MARRYOTT'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping 'R' and a long horizontal line extending to the right.

R. F. MARRYOTT
Rear Admiral, U. S. Navy
President, Naval War College