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Miricale at Midway

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only resourcefulness and a makeshift depth charge rack.

The Fleet the Gods Forgot weaves these many stories into an enlightening account of the operations and accomplishments of the units of the Asiatic Fleet, a fleet which, though it vanished in the opening moments of combat in the Southwest Pacific has been succeeded by today's Seventh Fleet.

JOHN N. PETRIE

Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy

Prange, Gordon W. *Miracle at Midway*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982. 469pp. \$19.95

There is a necessary "history" to this history. The late Gordon Prange (1910-1980), professor of history at the University of Maryland, reportedly devoted some thirty years of research to the subject of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and its related subjects. In 1969 part of his researches were published as "Tora! Tora! Tora!," a series in the *Reader's Digest*; in somewhat revised form this was published as a book in Japan but not in the United States; and in 1970 it formed the basis of a movie of the same title.

After Prange's death his former students Goldstein and Dillon, acting as his "literary executors," published *At Dawn We Slept; The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor*. This book would have been a sensation in 1951 but by 1981 there was little in it which remained "untold."

The current *Miracle At Midway* is a nominal sequel to the basic *At Dawn We Slept*, and reportedly the first of a series of sequels to be mined from Prange's research files and a collection of uncompleted typescripts. Toward this end, Prange Enterprises, Inc., had been created to exploit these materials.

Those who have read *At Dawn We Slept* and expect a product of similar quality in *Miracle At Midway* will be progressively disappointed, perplexed, angered, and ultimately disgusted by this miserable potboiler. It is impossible to believe that the two books were written by the same person. Whereas the former is a carefully structured and soberly written history of the Pearl Harbor drama, the latter is in a word: dreadful.

It should be enough to point out that at its outset this book fails to establish with any clarity the US Navy's perception of the Japanese threat to Midway as it was gradually pieced together by radio intercepts and cryptanalysis. This is related in marvelous detail in W.J. Holmes' *Double Edged Secrets: US Naval Intelligence Operations In The Pacific During World War II* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1979), and this is a title which does not appear among the Prange book's references.

With this vital point badly bungled, the text blunders forth to the battle, dragging the reader through a maze of minor errors, major omissions, outrageous demonstrations of ignorance about the characteristics of ships, airplanes and the maritime environment as a whole, all of which is planted in a quagmire of mangled rhetoric.

In sum: this is a badly cobbled attempt to make sense out of a very complex naval operation. The text is badly organized, jerky, disjointed, and otherwise badly written. It is filled with clumsy solecisms and ridiculous figures of speech which quickly become irksome; the authors do not know how to permit facts to speak for themselves and hyperbolic rhetoric is repeatedly used to create drum rolls followed by a clash of cymbals; and the text is badly flawed by frequent use of "cute" slangy expressions which are reminiscent of an

amateur stand-up night club comedian with a very small repertoire. Indeed, too many pages of the book are like an unfinished television script: the text clearly pauses at points where it would seem that canned laughter or applause should be inserted.

Aside from its vexing literary qualities, the book's six wretched maps and the total absence of intelligible diagrams are an insult to any reader's intelligence. One example may suffice: Japan's Midway operation included a number of diversionary sorties, one being a relatively complex operation in Alaskan waters which resulted in the seizure of the islands of Attu and Kiska. There is no map of Alaska or the Aleutian islands. Badly written, the book is also mindlessly edited. Indeed, the "miracle" of this book is that it got published in its present form.

The person interested in the Battle of Midway will do well to obtain a copy of Mitsuo Fuchida and Masatake Okumiya's (translated and edited by Clarke H. Kawakami and Roger Pineau) *Midway: The Battle That Doomed Japan* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1955). Although published more than a quarter of a century ago it has been updated and is still available at a current price of \$14.95. It will stand forever as a primary source and a "classic" account of the subject, and it is infinitely superior to this hodge-podge of confused verbiage which has been slapped together under the name of Gordon Prange.

RICHARD K. SMITH
Washington, D.C.

Mosley, Leonard. *Marshall: Hero for Our Times*. New York: Hearst Books, 1982. 570pp. \$18.50

It is an unfortunate fact that American military figures of the Second World

War, on the whole, have not had much said about them that has been both well written and widely read. As so many were reticent professionals who avoided publicity, most Americans are uninformed about our great captains and about their achievements. The public knows far more about American civilian celebrities whose life stories sell books and movies but whose lives have contributed little to our nation's destiny.

There are three exceptions to this thesis: Eisenhower, MacArthur, and Patton. Ike had a wonderfully photogenic face, war correspondents liked him, and he commanded the allied forces that smashed Hitler. He was in every way a hero to Americans, and his popularity carried him to the presidency. MacArthur shamelessly exploited his command position and his flair for drama to manipulate public opinion in his behalf. Patton was simply irrepressible—profane, boisterous, bold, and a winner who made exciting newspaper copy. Halsey was his naval equivalent.

Presiding over these generals and their colleagues (and the entire US Army) was George C. Marshall. Not only did he reign as Chief of Staff during the war, but he also served as Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense in the postwar Truman administrations. Given such positions of influence and responsibility, Marshall deserves not one biography but many. Forrest C. Pogue undertook the only major work years ago and so far has published three volumes, the last in 1973 which took Marshall through victory in Europe. We still await Pogue's sequel covering Marshall's subsequent service.

Meanwhile, a self-proclaimed "anecdotal biography" written by Leonard Mosley has appeared that spans Marshall's life in one volume containing 524 pages of text. The author is a journalist