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## Marshall: Hero for Our Times

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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

who writes books in great quantity, some 17 of them in the past 23 years. (Most are biographies of such diverse people as Lindbergh, Hirohito, Goering, and Haile Selassie.) This prodigious production rate averages one book each 16 months, hardly enough time for adequate research, much less time to have it written, edited, produced, and published.

Such biographies are usually hastily contrived, and that unfortunately is the case with *Marshall: Hero for Our Times*. The dust jacket, as a point of departure, seems to be shrilling a lurid novel: "Critics are raving about MARSHALL—a book of drama, love, tears, and action [the jacket blurbs quote authors who should have known better] . . . It tells the awful truth about his wedding night [Marshall's first wife allegedly was too frail to consummate their marriage, or so says the author with boring repetitiveness] . . . He had wit, persuasion, and charm—a great deal of charm, as a number of famous and beautiful women discovered [Marshall, like most men, enjoyed the company of attractive, intelligent women]." All of this could have been said briefly once, but the author is so intent on vulgar insinuations that the important aspects of Marshall's life are passed over.

As Marshall was deliberately reticent about his thoughts and feelings, especially towards others, the author resorts to speculation and to fabricating episodes to suit his story line. This literary device is most evident in the author's version of the Marshall-MacArthur rivalry. For example, in an early chapter dealing with the First World War, he writes, "If Marshall had any particular feelings about MacArthur when he joined the staff at Chaumont, they *could have been* only admiration for his soldiery skills and *perhaps* envy at the opportunities to lead men in battle which

MacArthur had been given and he had been denied." (Reviewer's italics.) Such attempts at mind reading are distressingly self-evident. What the author is admitting to is a lack of evidence as to how Marshall regarded MacArthur beyond his public statements that MacArthur was a good general.

Given all this, the book's greatest defect is that it says so little about what Marshall did that was important in his service to the nation. How, for example, did Marshall even become Chief of Staff? His prewar record seems undistinguishable from most other colonels toiling in the same period. In the early 1930s, he organized a regional Civilian Conservation Corps and then commanded the Illinois National Guard. His promotion to brigadier general in 1936 coincided with the departure of MacArthur as Chief of Staff, who presumably had begrudged Marshall. After two years of remote duty in Vancouver, Washington, he came to Washington, D.C. as Chief of War Plans and soon became Deputy Chief of Staff. His greatest achievement, the author suggests, was his direction of Pershing's funeral arrangements.

Upon the retirement of Malin Craig, Roosevelt elevated Brigadier General Marshall to the office of Chief of Staff on 1 September 1939. What had Marshall done to deserve such a dramatic promotion—from colonel to four-star general in three years? The author alludes to cronyism and political intrigue as the path to career advancement for Marshall and others. How unfair. Perhaps, to a degree, that was the way the Army worked in the years just before the war. But certainly Marshall must have contributed significantly as a professional soldier, and that achievement and not careerism led to his ascendancy. Marshall's talents as an organizer, teacher,

strategist, planner, thinker—in other words, the personal traits it took to be a great military leader—remain untold in this book.

Marshall's colleagues on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the men with whom he made the grand strategy that won the war, are also misrepresented and misunderstood. The JCS Chairman, William D. Leahy, is vaguely described as "the fourth member of the JCS." Ernest J. King is misidentified as the "Navy Chief of Staff" (sic) and also as "Commander in Chief of U.S. Navy Operations" (sic). The author's careless disregard as to who did what is intensely irritating to those who value accuracy. King, so says the author, commanded a flotilla of destroyers in the First World War (he commanded a division of submarines after the war); the Bureau of Aeronautics is identified as the "Air Division Command"; and the author's assertion that King had made carrier landings on the USS *Lexington* is fabrication. Such inaccuracies, while not major in themselves, are nevertheless typical of the author's sloppy research. (The author in this same passage managed to distort King's womanizing into an innuendo against naval officers and their wives that was so demeaning that this reviewer was tempted to relegate the book to the circular file then and there.)

The author begs the question of Marshall's role in history by simply quoting accolades from others as prima facie evidence that Marshall was a great man. Hence there is every reason to believe that the author is unsure of what Marshall actually did. The result is a shallow biography of superficial anecdotes devoid of either interpretation or analysis. The writing style matches the contents: the text is burdened both with slang (the Japanese are described as "bayonet-waving

bullies" with "greedy eyes") and absurd metaphors (bad news from the Middle East "came limping in," and American advisors in North Africa "were as useful in solving the problems of the French in Algiers as goldfish in a bowl of piranhas").

Enough. This is a wretched book, steeped in trivialities, its veracity discredited, hastily slapped together to exploit Marshall's name for uncritical public consumption. The pity is that gullible readers will swallow it whole. Military biography is cursed with journalists who write what they think the public will buy and who have only the dimmest awareness of the people they write about. Public understanding of the military profession has become a hopeless proposition.

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Editors Note: The George C. Marshall Research Foundation is in the process of publishing *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall*. The first volume, "*The Soldierly Spirit, December 1880-June 1939*," edited by Larry I. Bland and Sharon R. Ritenour was published by the Johns Hopkins University Press in 1981.

Coffey, Thomas M. *HAP: The Story of the U.S. Air Force and the Man Who Built it, General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold*. New York: Viking Press, 1982. 416pp. \$19.95

As the book's jacket claims that it is the definitive biography of General Henry H. Arnold (it is the only one, aside from Arnold's autobiography, *Global Mission*), the author's qualifications are therefore significant. Thomas Coffey was once himself a pilot in the force Arnold commanded. Since the war, he has made an impressive career as a journalist, a drama and movie critic, and a writer of television scripts and books. Of course, the fact that the book is well written and readable and that the author