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A Different kind of Victory

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and *Tirpitz* in tying down the Royal Navy as justification for Force Z. Did Churchill also have in mind the possibility of getting more American support at Singapore by offering an earnest of his own? Marder does not pursue the line of some critics that the disaster could have been avoided had British planes bound for Singapore not been diverted to the USSR. That Singapore was at jeopardy at all was a reflection of a strategic choice dictated by reality.

One comment (from both British and Japanese sources) that might bother sensitive American readers is that Force Z at least died in a try at the enemy, not running away from him as did the U.S. Asiatic Fleet. Had Professor Marder lived to do the second volume, he surely would have reported that the Asiatic Fleet's lamentable performance was due not only to inferior numbers, poor torpedoes, and the loss of air support at Clark Field, but also because of British insistence that the U.S. cruisers and destroyers be used for escorting convoys to Singapore rather than in offensive action.

One closes this volume with the melancholy reflection of Gibbon (which Marder himself had once quoted) on finishing *Decline and Fall*: ". . . I had taken my everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion"

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Leutze, James. *A Different Kind of Victory*. Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1981. 362pp. \$21.95

Although he was on active duty during World War II as a full admiral, today only a few naval officers could identify Admiral Thomas C. Hart without first reading this particularly good biography. Hart is of interest to us today primarily because he was commander of the United States Asiatic Fleet from 1940 until early 1942.

When Hart relieved Admiral Harry E. Yarnell in 1940 the Asiatic Fleet was

not an impressive naval force. It consisted of only 2 cruisers, 13 destroyers, 12 submarines, a few auxiliaries, and the 4th Marine Regiment. It possessed no tactical aircraft. The United States wanted a four-star officer to command it so that this country's representative in the many discussions that animated the international community in China would be equal, if not senior, to the officers of the other navies on the scene.

At that time the Japanese were attempting to consolidate their position in China by eliminating the British, French, and American presences there. The Europeans were preoccupied and weakened by their reverses in Europe and the United States had only begun to rearm. The United States and Japan were on a collision course that ended at Pearl Harbor.

Under these circumstances Hart's principal task as a naval diplomat was to conduct a presence mission in the classic sense: show the flag and exert what influence he could. Using firmness, patience and tact coupled with "common" sense, that rarest of all commodities, Hart wrung as much advantages for his country as was humanly possible from very difficult circumstances. Those who today so glibly talk of presence missions would do well to consult this biography.

In addition to a crumbling and increasingly dangerous situation in China, Hart had to deal with the British and the Dutch to coordinate some form of common action against the Japanese threat to Southeast Asia. Since Washington was neither willing nor able to make the necessary political commitment, Hart found himself in an almost impossible position.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Hart was as surprised as anyone else that they attacked where they did. But he and the Asiatic Fleet were ready for war. Hart's preparations stand in stark contrast to those of General Douglas MacArthur who allowed the

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U.S. Army Air Forces to be caught on the ground and destroyed. Thanks to this avoidable blunder the Japanese gained air superiority over the Philippines in one stroke. Then it was only a matter of time before they triumphed.

The absence of air defense anywhere, even over their base, meant that the surface ships could not attack the Japanese successfully. The only remaining naval weapon was the submarine. Soon Hart and his 29 submarine commanders (the number of submarines had risen during his tenure) learned to their dismay, that they were armed with torpedoes so defective as to be useless. Thus the Asiatic Fleet was robbed of all its weapons.

There was little that Hart could do. His common sense and his professional judgment dictated a withdrawal of his forces from the Philippines, rather than wasting them in action doomed to failure against the Japanese. Reluctantly, he ordered his forces to retire to the south. He and his small staff left in a submarine and under the keels of the conquering Japanese fleet proceeded to Java. MacArthur complained to Washington that the navy had deserted him.

When he arrived in Java Hart found to his surprise that he had been appointed the naval commander of a new allied command for Southeast Asia. His tenure in that position was brief, marked as it was by continuing reverses at the hands of superior Japanese forces, by Dutch intrigue to have their own admiral appointed to his position, and by MacArthur's malicious complaints to Washington. Finally, after much complicated maneuvering in Java, London, and Washington, Hart was asked to request his relief.

Leutze properly devotes the major portion of his fascinating and well-written biography to this short but extremely important period in Hart's life. He sets the stage for these complicated events and he tells of the great difficulties Hart had in receiving

adequate support and direction from Washington. There is a fascinating account of his relations with General MacArthur, then his military junior. The relations were not good. MacArthur's petulance, his arrogance, and his blindness to military and naval realities are revealed for all to see. How Hart dealt with MacArthur is a lesson in wisdom and forbearance.

When Hart returned home he did not retire. He served on the General Board and he conducted an extensive inquiry into the disaster at Pearl Harbor. Finally, when he retired from active duty he served for two years as United States Senator from Connecticut. He was blessed with a happy old age and died in 1971 at the age of 94.

The task of a biographer is not only to tell the story of his subject's life against the background of his time, but also to explain and to describe the man. In this respect Leutze has done an admirable job. Hart kept a personal diary in which he recorded the events of his life and his innermost thoughts. Leutze's keen insights tell us the kind of man Hart was and his historian's discipline prevents him from descending the slippery slope of psycho-history. The result is a vivid and compelling picture of a man and his times. It is also a model of what biography can and should be.

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Ball, Desmond. *Politics and Force Levels: The Strategic Missile Program of the Kennedy Administration*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980. 322pp. \$27.50

Desmond Ball has produced a carefully documented and well-written study of the strategic missile program of the Kennedy administration. He demonstrates that this buildup was not, as is commonly assumed, a response to the "missile gap" because Kennedy and his advisors no longer believed in the existence of such a gap at the time they