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Battleship Commander: The Life of Vice Admiral Willis A. Lee Jr.

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1990 that numbers over eight hundred thousand online sources (p. 155).

Third, Miller champions a revisionist just war paradigm by synthesizing the three stages of just war discourse into what he calls an Augustinian liberalism. Miller incorporates the Augustinian premises of tranquility and sovereignty as a responsibility to pursue a just peace. In conjunction with that Augustinian foundation, Miller adds the liberal emphasis on human rights and humanitarian intervention. The former security director assimilates the Westphalian stress on the balance of international power and national autonomy (as safeguarded by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648). Miller concedes that the Augustinian heritage of salient religious values cannot parley easily with the pluralistic environment of the international forum. Thus, he weds the Augustinian virtues of justice and *tranquilitas ordinis* (order of tranquility) with the cultural prevalence of human rights as codified and promulgated by the United Nations in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In terms of constructive input, Miller fuses together Augustinian and liberal presuppositions and describes the strong family resemblance and conceptual alliance between the two schools of thought even without any historical linkage. Yet earlier Miller castigates those just war theory proponents who integrate theories together without the rich continuity of historical insights embedded in the just war discourse (p. 156). Does Miller perhaps open himself up to the same ahistorical criticism he levels at just war theorists? While he does not provide a historical narrative on the causal connections between the two philosophical backgrounds, Miller suspects that he

could mount a plausible defense of such a connection, but such an effort regrettably lies beyond the scope of his book (pp. 167–68). Admittedly, Miller does furnish an ample supply of historical narratives throughout his work, but he does not offer the history of the causal relationship between his two leading philosophies of Augustinianism and liberalism—and he qualifies that this is not his expressed purpose.

That said, the reader already discovers implicitly the precedent of historical ties between Augustinianism and liberalism in the approach of Ramsey and the Challenge of Peace as a basis for Miller's revisionist just war paradigm (p. 150).

All in all, *Just War and Ordered Liberty* represents the highest standards of scholarly research and strategic responsibility, demonstrating a passionate vision and reappropriation of just war ideals repurposed and effectively reclaimed for great-power competition and asymmetric conflict.

EDWARD ERWIN



Battleship Commander: The Life of Vice Admiral Willis A. Lee Jr., by Paul Stillwell. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2021. 368 pages. \$39.95.

It is hard to come away from Paul Stillwell's treatment of the life of Willis "Ching" Lee without wishing you had known the man. Vice Admiral Lee is a fairly obscure figure in the mythos of World War II in the Pacific, in part because he died in 1945, and in part because he was embroiled in controversies that stir debate to this day. That is a shame. Stillwell renders us a service by rescuing Lee's memory and dwelling on

the personal, professional, and operational dimensions of his life and career.

On the personal front, Lee was at once a prodigy and an American everyman. Defying his poor eyesight, he competed with the U.S. rifle team at the 1920 Antwerp Olympics, winning seven medals in team events. Fittingly for a future battleship commander, marksmanship became a running theme in his professional life. He served as master of ordnance in the Midwest and on Long Island, earned a reputation as an innovator in gunfire control, and excelled as a gunnery specialist in the realm of anti-air warfare in particular. Technical pursuits, then, comprised his natural areas of endeavor. Stillwell depicts him as a “human computer” able, for instance, to calculate relative motion in his head rather than relying on instruments and maneuvering boards (pp. 77–78).

And yet this competitive streak coexisted with nonchalance toward matters that held little interest for him. Writes Stillwell, “There was a dual nature to Willis Lee’s personality. In things he cared about, he was extremely competitive. But in other areas he was less competitive and often unconcerned” (p. 81). Paperwork and spit-and-polish habits tended to languish in his commands. As a commander, observes Stillwell, Lee was “democratic” in outlook, nonplussed in demeanor, and given to leading and managing by walking around and talking to subordinates (pp. 84, 90). These are considerable virtues in any sailor.

Like most naval officers of his generation, Admiral Lee made his name during World War II. On the evening of 14 November 1942, he led Task Force (TF) 64—a hastily thrown-together six-ship flotilla made up of the battleships

Washington and *South Dakota*, along with four destroyers—into Ironbottom Sound near the Solomon Islands. These waters were so dubbed because they had become a killing ground for surface warships during the early struggles for Guadalcanal. The date in question was no exception. Lee’s mission was to intercept an Imperial Japanese Navy convoy attempting to run supplies and reinforcements to an expeditionary ground force vying for control of the island and its all-important airfield.

A host of problems plagued TF 64: inexperience in working together; a dearth of doctrine for fighting in confined waters; the lack of anything more than a rudimentary combat information center; and the ill-judged positioning of the SG radar aboard *Washington*, which blacked out coverage aft of the battlewagon. And yet the task force prevailed, despite suffering a brutal beating at Japanese hands. Lee maintained his legendary calm amid the clangor of combat—the skipper of *Washington* recalled that Lee was “no more excited than at a peacetime target practice”—while radar supplied a crucial edge in fire control (p. 156). The Japanese convoy and its protectors turned back, and the Japanese ground force went without replenishment that night. In fact, Stillwell concludes that the night action was “the straw that broke the camel’s back,” convincing the Japanese high command that Guadalcanal was a lost cause (p. 172).

Yet Willis Lee’s career was not without controversy. He passed up a surface action off Saipan in mid-1944, reasoning that his force commanded, in Stillwell’s words, no “clear tactical advantage” over its foe (p. 215). His caution incensed Mahanians obsessed with major fleet

battles. That October he was attached to Admiral William F. “Bull” Halsey’s Third Fleet during the Battle of Leyte Gulf. On 24 October, Halsey sent out a radio message announcing that he intended to establish TF 34 under Lee’s command. Centered on four battleships, the surface force would guard the San Bernardino Strait to forestall a Japanese assault on General Douglas MacArthur’s landing force on the island of Leyte, as well as its offshore naval guardians.

But the new force never took station as Halsey envisioned. Admiral Lee urged Halsey’s staff, embarked aboard the battleship *New Jersey*, to form TF 34 but to dispatch it for picket duty, while leaving Halsey’s main fleet to pursue a Japanese carrier group steaming to the north of the Philippine Islands. He expressed himself clearly and forcefully via flashing light and radio, but stopped short of seeming to pick a public quarrel with Halsey. As one of his staffers put it afterward, Lee “wasn’t a heckler, as such” (p. 226).

The result was that the strait remained unguarded, and on 25 October the Japanese task force pummeled the remaining U.S. naval force off Samar. Only heroics on the part of destroyer sailors and carrier aviators, and an apparent loss of heart by the Japanese commander, Admiral Takeo Kurita, warded off an outright debacle. Halsey rightly bore most of the criticism for the command breakdown, but you have to think that some of it splattered onto Lee’s legacy by association. Such “what-ifs” are the stuff of historical debate.

In the end, then, Willis Lee comes off as a commander any sailor would relish serving with, possessed of the right stuff as measured in character and technical acumen. His life is also

a reminder that ill circumstances can ensnare even the doughtiest warrior.

JAMES R. HOLMES



Dark Skies: Space Expansionism, Planetary Geopolitics, and the Ends of Humanity, by Daniel Deudney. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2020. 464 pages. \$30.

This extraordinary and important book challenges many contemporary orthodoxies. Above all, it challenges the way we commonly think about space and the future of humanity. But it does so in the context of a broader argument—developed in the author’s earlier work *Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village* (2007)—that upends the accepted framework of international relations theory. It does so through a rediscovery of American federalism—a device that Deudney argues provides a novel and powerful solution to the problem of the historical fragility of republican government.

The core contention of *Dark Skies* is that what the author calls “space expansionism” is an ideological project derived from simplistic assumptions about science and technology, as well as from a completely inadequate understanding of the geopolitical and security implications of humanity venturing into space. In the first place, Deudney argues that, in spite of astounding advances in science and technology over the last century and more, the Baconian promise that modern empirical science would bring about the “conquest of nature” for the benefit of humanity remains fundamentally a fantasy—particularly