

Review Article

**On the Treadmill to Pearl Harbor:
The Memoirs of Admiral
James O. Richardson (USN Retired),
As Told to Vice Admiral
George C. Dyer (USN Retired).**
Washington DC: Naval Historical Division,
Department of the Navy, 1973, 471 pages.

Martin Merson

On the Treadmill to Pearl Harbor: The Memoirs of Admiral James O. Richardson (USN Retired), As Told to Vice Admiral George C. Dyer (USN Retired), with an introduction by Vice Admiral Edwin B. Hooper, (USN Retired), Director of Naval History, is a fundamental book for anyone interested in ascertaining the truth concerning the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, including the role of Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) and the Navy's state of readiness. A review of the Richardson book appeared in *Officer Review* (The Military Order of the World Wars), Vol. 27, No. 6, January 1988, page 5.¹ Although this book was completed in 1958, the publication date appearing in the book is 1973. To this reviewer's knowledge there is no satisfactory explanation for the fifteen-year delay in making the book available to the public. We have unofficial information that the delay may have been due to the fact that Harold Stark, Chief of Naval operations during the crucial early war years, did not die until 1972; the book is indeed highly critical of Admiral Stark. This writer has also been told that Admiral Arthur

¹Martin Merson, "On the Treadmill to Pearl Harbor" *Officer Review* (The Military Order of the World Wars, 6 January 1988).

Radford, then serving as Chief of Naval Operations, insisted that Chapter XXII, entitled “Retrospect,” be included as a condition for publication.

The reader must bear in mind that Joe Richardson, to an extent unmatched in this century, had been personally groomed by FDR for the top operating job in the Fleet. The salient facts, as developed in the book, are summarized as follows (Admiral Richardson is the narrator):

1. “I held in my hand a piece of paper [just after leaving the White House on 9 March 1939]. It had just been handed to me by President Franklin D. Roosevelt”:

Office Relief
CNO Leahy retires 1 month Stark
after Congress adjourns

2. “I knew Rear Admiral Harold R. (Betty) Stark [at that time Commander of Cruisers, Battle Force, U.S. Fleet] very well. He was very capable, hard-working and one of the best-intentioned officers in the navy, as well as one of the most likeable. I believed then, and believe now, that his capacities, although marked, were not equal to those required by the Chief of Naval Operations billet, under conditions then existing.

“I believed also that few, if any, other senior officers in the Navy could have served the President so long and so satisfactorily as did Admiral Stark.”

Two and a half years later, Executive Order 8984, which prescribed the duties of the Commander-in-Chief of the United States Fleet and the Cooperative Duties of the Chief of Naval Operations, made Ernest J. King COMINCH. Stark, although remaining as CNO, had his wings significantly clipped. To all intents and purposes, King became the top uniformed officer of the Navy. King assumed his new post on 30 December 1941. This marked the beginning of the end for Harold Stark. Ultimately, he was “kicked upstairs,” to a post in London. Thus Joe Richardson’s appraisal of Stark proved prophetic.

3. On page 251, Adm. Richardson begins a discussion of War Plans, expressing this thought “...It has seemed to me that the very real

part of our pre-Pearl Harbor War Plans played in the Pacific War has never been sufficiently pinpointed.” Richardson devotes many pages to a discussion of the evolution of War Plans - a field in which he enjoyed a recognized expertise.

On 26 January 1940, within three weeks of taking command of the U.S. Fleet, Richardson wrote to Stark and expressed the view that the Orange War Plans were unrealistic. He pointed out to Stark: “. . . You are the principal and only Naval Adviser to the boss and he should know that our Fleet cannot just sail away, lick Orange, and be back at home in a year or so. Also the probable cost (human and physical resources) of any war should be compared [with] the probable value of winning the war.”

The Orange War Plans had been in effect since 1927 and little had been done to provide the Navy with the special resources needed to project major Fleet Operations any significant distance west of Hawaii. The fact is that FDR and the bureaucrats in Washington were concerned more with events in Europe and the Atlantic Ocean than they were with the Pacific Ocean area.

In any event, by July 1941, after strenuous urging by Adm. Richardson, the Orange War Plans were shelved in favor of the Rainbow War Plans. In mid-October 1940 Richardson wrote an official letter to Stark, pointing out that it was Richardson’s firm conviction that neither the Navy nor the country was prepared for war with Japan. Two months passed before Stark replied to this letter. Richardson comments:

My own belief is that Stark was not pleased by my official letter of 22 October 1940 . . . I believe my official letter of October 22, 1940, in regard to the dismal state of the Navy’s War Plans, was probably one factor which made Stark accept with equanimity the President’s urge to have me relieved.

4. The basing of the Fleet at Pearl Harbor followed Fleet Problem XXI, which began on 2 April 1940, and was to have been completed on 9 May 1940, with the Fleet projected to return to the West Coast about 17 May 1940. In fact these plans were changed in Washington and

Richardson was instructed to remain in Hawaiian waters. Richardson concludes Chapter XV with this statement "...Basing the Fleet at Pearl Harbor in May of 1940 was undertaken under a completely false premise, in my opinion. The false premise was that the Fleet so positioned would exercise a restraining influence on the actions of Japan."

The reviewer believes that Richardson – more than anyone in Washington – knew the state of readiness of the Fleet, and thus why it was essential that it return to the West Coast. In this regard, please note Richardson's wisdom in pointing out:

... In 1940, the policy-making branch of the Government in foreign affairs – the President and the Secretary of State – thought that stationing the Fleet in Hawaii would restrain the Japanese. They did not ask their senior military advisors whether it would accomplish such an end. They imposed their decision upon them.

It should be noted that Richardson has not in any way suggested that FDR deliberately stationed the Fleet at Pearl in order to "bait" the Japanese to attack. Such an implication might be derived from a similar set of facts, but Richardson, to his dying day, remained a dedicated naval officer, not a politician, thereby embodying the highest traditions of the Navy. One might wish that the Washington bureaucracy had among its number more men of the caliber of Joe Richardson.

5. Richardson risked his career by making two trips to Washington in order to confront the President personally on key issues of basing the Fleet at Pearl Harbor. Richardson expressed the danger of keeping a Fleet at Pearl, in view of his serious skepticism concerning its readiness. During his second visit Richardson told Roosevelt:

Mr. President, I feel that I must tell you that the senior officers of the Navy do not have the trust and confidence in the civilian leadership of this country that is essential for the successful prosecution of a war in the Pacific.

In view of what took place on 7 December 1941, who will judge whether or not the terrible loss of life and material damage suffered could have been avoided had the President and Stark paid greater heed to Richardson? At least we know that the brave men and women who make up Pearl Harbor Survivors Association have satisfied themselves that Kimmel and Short are not to blame [see p. 250 of this journal - Ed.].

6. The CINCUS post had customarily been held by its incumbent for a period of 18-24 months. Richardson was detached after barely 12 months, on 31 January 1941. His relief was Admiral Husband E. Kimmel.
7. One of the alleged failures of Kimmel was in not conducting long-range aerial reconnaissance. Regarding this we are told by Richardson that it was Stark's adverse reaction to Richardson's practice of long-range reconnaissance that prompted calling off this practice. In fact, Richardson received a letter from Stark on 23 December 1940 in which Stark said: "... While the extent of security measures required is increasing, it has not yet reached the demand of full wartime security." Under the circumstances, it was logical for Richardson to conclude:

So, I believed that some of the responsibility for the failure to have daily long-range air reconnaissance as part of the daily routine in 1941 at Pearl Harbor lies directly on the doorstep of the CNO. Having been told by the Commander-in-Chief that daily long-range reconnaissance would be carried out, he said it "was not necessary."

8. One might profitably read, in parallel, Admiral Kimmel's story.² This serves to confirm how the defenses of the Pacific Fleet were short-changed significantly in favor of both the Atlantic Fleet and the Philippines, to the detriment of the Pacific Fleet.
9. It will be recalled that Admiral Arthur Radford, while serving as CNO, was adamant that the Richardson book include a final chapter (XXII), "Retrospect". Readers of the Richardson book are urged to pay special heed to this final chapter. Among others points made are the following:

²Husband E. Kimmel, *Adm. Kimmel's Story* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1955).

- (a) “I consider that, after Pearl Harbor, Admiral Kimmel received the rawest of raw deals from Franklin D. Roosevelt and, insofar as they acquiesced in this treatment, from Frank Knox and ‘Betty’ Stark.”
- (b) “I consider ‘Betty’ Stark, in failing to ensure that Kimmel was furnished with all the information from the breaking of Japanese dispatches, to have been, to a marked degree, professionally negligent in carrying out his duties as Chief of Naval Operations. This offense was compounded, since in writing he had assured the (commander-in-Chief of the United States Fleet twice (both myself and Kimmel) that the Commander-in-Chief was ‘being kept advised on all matters within his own (Stark’s) knowledge’ and ‘You may rest assured that just as soon as I get anything of definite interest, I shall fire it along.’ ”
- (c) Since the Navy had expected and planned for a Japanese surprise attack for many years, it must be kept in mind that subordinates in a military organization cannot stand with their arms raised in protective alertness forever. It is the superior who must ring the bell to move subordinates into the ring. Kimmel’s superiors in Washington never rang that bell. Stark could have picked up the phone and given Kimmel a last minute alert on the morning of 7 December 1941. By failing to do so, Stark committed a major professional lapse. In Richardson’s opinion, Stark utterly failed to display loyalty downward. This could only be explained if Stark acted under the mistaken impression he owed no loyalty downward and this may have been due to either to influence or direct orders from above.

Richardson concludes this section with an all-important statement:

I am impelled to believe that sometime prior to December 7, the President had directed that only Marshall could send any warning message to the Hawaiian area. I do not know this to be a fact and I cannot prove it. I believe this because of my knowledge of Stark and the fact that his means of communication with Kimmel were equal to, if not superior to those available to Marshall for communication with Short. He made

no effort to warn Kimmel on the morning of December 7, but referred the matter to Marshall. [Emphasis added].

- (d) Placing the onus for the catastrophe at Pearl Harbor on Kimmel and Short, in effect, placed it on the Army and the Navy. For this reason it is pertinent to emphasize the extent to which, as Richardson observes: “. . . the seasoned officers of the navy over a twenty-year period had correctly diagnosed the aspirations and intentions and war habits of the Japanese.”

As far back as 1 February 1934, when Richardson was a student at the War College, he submitted a thesis entitled: *The Relationship between Japanese Policy and Strategy in the Chinese and Russian Wars, and Its Lessons to Us*. In his thesis Richardson pointed out that in these wars the complete harmony and effective strategy of the Japanese are not to be found in the wars themselves, but in the preparations for these wars. It was in Japan’s participation in conferences, peace and otherwise, that we find the harmony. Richardson predicted the same would be true with respect to naval conferences which Japan would hold with us. It would be the United States that through concessions would sink her modern fleet and bind herself not to fortify any possessions west of Hawaii. In return the U.S. would get no permanent compensating advantage. This is precisely what happened as a result of naval conferences.

To carry out the Orange War Plans, the U.S. would need a strong “train,” i.e., the various auxiliaries, including repair ships, ammunition ships, refrigerator ships and above all oilers. Interestingly, during the peacetime years between World War I and World War II, the strong “peace” groups in Congress believed that the best way to keep the U.S. in its own backyard was to prevent the navy from building up an appropriate train. It is for this reason that Richardson, early on in his letters to Stark, pointed out how unrealistic were the Orange War Plans.

- (e) The Roberts Commission. According to Richardson it was Felix Frankfurter, then on the U.S. Supreme Court, who suggested to FDR the creation, under a carefully drawn precept, of a mixed commission composed of officers of the armed forces, with a civil-

ian counsel and headed by a member of the Supreme Court, to investigate the attack on Pearl Harbor. Such a commission would not be led by rules of evidence governing a civilian court or a military court of inquiry. In the opinion of Richardson, the report of the Roberts Commission was: “. . . the most unfair, unjust, and deceptively dishonest document ever printed by the Government Printing Office.”

Richardson finds that the military members of the Roberts Commission were: “. . . later rewarded for their services by favorable assignment and promotion, for employment after retirement.” Richardson tells us that the decision to relieve Kimmel and Short was made prior to the initial meeting of the Roberts Commission. In effect, the Roberts Commission could not have been intended to determine culpability or blamelessness, since that had been decided beforehand.

According to Richardson:

A more disgraceful spectacle has never been presented to this country during my lifetime than the failure of the civilian officials of the Government to show any willingness to take their share of responsibility for the Japanese success at Pearl Harbor.

When reference is made in books and articles by academic historians – and even by high government officials, including the military, of dereliction of duty by men such as Kimmel and Short – without their having been given a trial, permitted to introduce evidence or being represented by counsel, we are in effect departing from those rules of jurisprudence which our constitution guarantees even the meanest criminal in our midst.

Finally, Richardson points out that he had known Admiral William H. Standley for a long time. He knew Standley as an honest, fair-minded, sincere man and valued his friendship. This is precisely why Standley was chosen to be a member of the Roberts Commission, in order to induce the United States Navy to have confidence in the justness of the Roberts Commission findings. Below

we shall discuss the Naval Court of Inquiry on Pearl Harbor and an incident involving Adm. Richardson.

- (f) Richardson observes that while Japan commenced its war with Russia in 1904 after breaking off diplomatic relations, but before a formal declaration of war, at Pearl Harbor, Japan did not bother to break off diplomatic relations beforehand. To Richardson, FDR "...consistently overestimated his ability to control the actions of other nations whose interests opposed our own." Richardson believes the President's responsibility was direct, real and personal insofar as Pearl Harbor is concerned.

(When we consider the moral values of Franklin D. Roosevelt, we should not overlook his plan for judicial reorganization presented to the Congress on 5 February 1937. It was no more and no less than a plan to bring the third branch of government under popular control. Regardless of the willfulness of the justices in opposing New Deal legislation, is the step pursued by FDR one of which we can approve? The fact is that FDR was, to say the least, a willful man, who did not readily brook opposition. This quality of Roosevelt may help us understand his behavior in the Pearl Harbor controversy.)

- (g) In his final chapter, Richardson pays a special tribute to Congressman Carl Vinson. Richardson has this to say:

I have known the Honorable Carl Vinson since 1914 and I cannot forego the opportunity to pay my respects to him, because I firmly believe that his service to the Navy and the nation renders him one of the great living Americans.

Carl Vinson of Georgia, (1883-1981) served in Congress from 1919 to 1964, a period of 45 years. During this period two very important pieces of legislation are ascribed to Vinson. The first is the Naval Parity Act of 27 March 1934 authorizing the building of a full treaty- strength Navy within the limits set by the Washington Naval Limitations Treaty of 1922 and the London Naval Limitation Treaty of 1930. A hundred warships and more than a thousand planes were provided for. However, Congress did not appropriate adequate funds, and until 1938 construction was carried out only on a replacement basis.

On 17 May 1938 the Vinson Naval Expansion Act was passed, authorizing a “two-ocean” Navy to be constructed over the next ten years. Thus, much of what was accomplished in strengthening the Navy can be attributed to the efforts of Carl Vinson, a man known to Naval officials as “Daddy” Vinson – in many ways the father of the Navy of his day.

If Joe Richardson believed that Harold Stark was failing to present to FDR the Naval view of its own readiness for war, there is relevance in the fact that Carl Vinson, in July 1940, expressed to Richardson a grave concern as to whether or not Stark was, in fact, standing up to the president.

Revisionist Versus Anti-Revisionist

So far as the Pearl Harbor disaster is concerned, the writing in the field, especially by academicians, serves the very useful purpose of accentuating the need for a consideration of truth in history.

In Volume Four, Number Four/Winter 1983/44 issue of *The Journal of Historical Review*, the Editor’s Note entitled: “Pearl Harbor The Latest Wave,” is an excellent summation of the writing in the field. There is no need for this writer to duplicate this information in the note.

As the note points out, John Toland’s *Infamy: Pearl Harbor and its Aftermath*,³ is remarkable for the fact that the author: “. . . had for many years been recognized as a certifiably Establishment, ‘safe’ historian not known to hold any brief for the Revisionists in pinning blame on FDR and his Administration.”

Soon after the appearance of Toland’s *Infamy*, one Roger Pineau was quoted in the *Foreign Intelligence Literary Scene* in calling Toland’s book: “. . . a specious representation” of the case against President Roosevelt’s handling of events leading to the Japanese attack of December 1941. It so happens that Pineau is a naval historian, a former intelligence officer, a Japanese linguist, and a former aide to Samuel Eliot Morison in the writing of the naval history of World War II.

³John Toland, *Infamy: Pearl Harbor and Its Aftermath* (New York, Doubleday & Company, 1982).

Pineau had met Edwin T. Layton, also a Japanese language officer and the Pacific fleet intelligence officer under a succession of three Pacific Fleet Commanders: Joe Richardson, Husband Kimmel, and Chester Nimitz. Following the end of the war, Edwin Layton began to put his notes in order for a possible memoir. In 1980, it so happened that a massive amount of previously classified naval records, concerning communications intelligence, was made available at the National Archives.

Pineau and John Costello, the British author of *The Pacific War*,⁴ began to assist Layton, then in his early 80's. In April 1984, Layton suffered a fatal stroke and his widow turned to Pineau and Costello to complete the task. The book was completed and published posthumously in 1985.⁵ What is so very remarkable about this whole episode is the fact that two such arch anti-Revisionists were so readily transformed into champions of one of the most important accounts of Revisionist literature dealing with Pearl Harbor. In fact, it can be said that anyone seeking an understanding of what happened at Pearl Harbor can readily master the subject by reading the four books published by Joe Richardson, Ed Layton, Husband Kimmel, and finally, Kemp Tolley's *Cruise of the Lanikai*.⁶

It should be noted as well that the Layton memoirs also make mention of how the significant victory at Midway was achieved, owing to the cooperation between the brilliant Joseph Rochefort, the radio intelligence officer at Pearl and his counterpart, Ed Layton, the fleet intelligence officer.

Ironically, it is the former anti-Revisionists, Pineau and Costello, who disclose in their authors' notes just how flimsy is the foundation of Gordon W. Prange's book, *At Dawn We Slept*.⁷

The publication of the Layton memoirs has furthermore the very definite tendency to undermine the importance of Roberta Wohlstetter's *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*,⁸ which had, since its publication, been hailed as

⁴*Foreign Intelligence Literary Scene: A bi-Monthly Newsletter/Book Review*, Volume 1, No. 4, August 1982.

⁵Rear Admiral Edwin T. Layton, USN (Ret), with Captain Roger Pineau, USNR (Ret), and John Costello, "*And I Was There*": *Pearl Harbor and Midway - Breaking the Secrets* (New York, William Morrow and Company, 1985).

⁶Kemp Tolley, *Cruise of the Lanikai* (Annapolis, Maryland Naval Institute Press, 1973).

⁷Gordon W. Prange in collaboration with Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon, *At Dawn We Slept* (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1981).

⁸Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor Warning and Decision* (Stanford, California: Stan-

“the definitive book” on Pearl Harbor.

In reality, not much remains of the anti-Revisionist attempt to enshrine Franklin D. Roosevelt in Valhalla. But the task ahead is to clear the names of Husband E. Kimmel and Walter C. Short, the Pearl Harbor commanders scapegoated to deflect criticism from FDR and his lieutenants.

Unfinished Business

The Navy Court of Inquiry, consisting of Orin G. Murfin, Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.), President; Edward C. Kalbfus, Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret), Member; Adolphus Andrews, Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.), Member; Harold Biese-meier, Captain, U.S. Navy, Judge Advocate, met between 20 July 1944 and 20 October 1944. The net result of the Courts inquiry is the complete ex-oneration of Admiral Husband E. Kimmel while serving as Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet on 7 December 1941. We single out for special mention this portion of the Opinion.

Based on Findings XVIII and XIX, the Court is of the opinion that Admiral Harold R. Stark, U.S.N., Chief of Naval Operations and responsible for the operations of the Fleet, failed to display the sound judgment expected of him in that he did not transmit to Admiral Kimmel, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, during the very critical period 26 November to 7 December, important information which he had regarding the Japanese situation and, especially, in that, on the morning of 7 December, he did not transmit immediately information which appeared to indicate that a break in diplomatic relations was imminent, and that an attack in the Hawaiian area might be expected soon.⁹

Appended to the Navy Court of Inquiry’s Opinion and Recommendation were various endorsements, including one from Secretary of the Navy Forrestal. With specific respect to Forrestal’s endorsement, we turn once again to Adm. Richardson’s chapter, entitled “Retrospect,” in which he states:

ford University Press, 1962).

⁹Opinion, Navy Court of Inquiry.

The Secretary of the Navy sent for me and told me that he was not satisfied with the report of the Naval Court of Inquiry on Pearl Harbor or with any preceding Inquiry, and that he had so stated to the press, adding that he would have another investigation made.

He then stated that he would like to have me undertake this investigation for him. I said, "Mr. Secretary, I am sorry but I am not available for such assignment, because I am prejudiced and I believe that no prejudiced officer should undertake the inquiry."

The Secretary asked what I meant by the statement that I was prejudiced, and I replied, "I am prejudiced because I believe that any fair and complete investigation will result in placing a part of the blame for the success of the attack upon the President." Mr. Forrestal replied substantially as follows: "In this case the President was to blame only to the extent of being a poor judge of men." The Secretary amplified his remarks by naming one or more officers whose retention in high office for some time indicated bad judgment on the part of the President, but he did not mention Kimmel.

I was not ordered to conduct the investigation.

It is my firm belief that, when the President realized the extent of the damage done by the attack on Pearl Harbor, he lost his nerve and lost his head, and ordered the convening of the Roberts Commission, believing that he would best protect his own position by focusing public attention on Pearl Harbor.

At that time, and increasingly so since, I thought that the wisest course of action for the President, from all points of view, would have been to send a dispatch to those in command at Pearl Harbor, along the following lines:

"Despite the result of the dastardly unprovoked attack of the Japanese on Pearl Harbor, the American people and I have confidence in our Army and Navy. We shall be avenged."

In Richardson's remarks which followed his colloquy with Forrestal, what, in effect, he is suggesting is that a less devious President would have faced

up to a disaster which his own bull-headedness had caused by overruling Richardson, a man he had personally groomed to be Pacific Fleet Commander. Well-informed persons, including many uniformed men, knew that the Roberts Commission was a perfidious piece of chicanery, designed to put the onus for Pearl Harbor on those in command at Pearl. It is to FDR's everlasting shame that he behaved in such a dishonorable fashion. It is this deviousness which has brought on nearly a half-century of dedicated effort to bring before the American people the real truth concerning Pearl Harbor. Moreover, a careful reading of biographical material on FDR reveals that his deviousness goes back to earliest childhood, when he resorted to such behavior to wheedle things he sought from a doting mother.

It is both troublesome and inexplicable that Joe Richardson's book was withheld from public view for fifteen years, during which time the academic historians rushed to judgment with a great deal of material, obscuring the truth concerning Pearl Harbor. Moreover, even in more recent years, a book such as Admiral Layton's *And I Was There* was unmercifully criticized. This notwithstanding the fact that Layton occupied one of the most critical posts in the Pacific Fleet throughout the successful prosecution of the war under both Kimmel and Nimitz. Bear in mind that it was with the help of Layton that the communications intelligence information derived by Joe Rochefort was put to use in time to set an ambush for the attacking Japanese, which made possible the brilliant victory at Midway.

Nevertheless, those who wish to discredit any writer who has a good word to say about Kimmel will permit no obstacle to hinder their undeviating point of view. For example, one Ronald Spector was appointed Director of Naval History on 20 July 1986, placing him in a position where his views on all matters affecting naval history must be as devoid of subjectivity as is humanly possible. In a *New York Times* book review, Spector joins in the usual anti-Revisionist criticism.¹⁰ It is most unfortunate that a man in the official position of Naval Historian should indulge in such groundless criticism.

This brings us to a final and most important point to be discussed in this article. Reference is made to the circumstances under which the Richardson book was published by the Naval History division, the director of which was

¹⁰Ronald H. Spector, review of *And I Was There*, by Edwin T. Layton, with Roger Pineau and John Costello in the *New York Times*, 5 January 1986. p. 9.

Vice Admiral Edwin B. Hooper, U.S.N. (Ret.). Admiral Hooper wrote the introduction. In the course of his introduction, Admiral Hooper has this to say:

Insofar as lessons for the future are concerned, no historical example is of greater importance than that of the decisions and events in the period leading up to the Pearl Harbor attack.

As had others before him, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt directed deployments of the Fleet as a part of his overall national peacetime strategy. Rather than deterring the Japanese from aggressive actions, the maintenance of a major portion of the fleet at Pearl Harbor was viewed by the then militaristic leaders of Japan as an opportunity to cripple U.S. naval power in the Pacific. As she decided to launch the devastating carrier air attack of 7 December 1941, Japan had memories of the decisive results of the battle of Tsushima in the Russo-Japanese War and of territorial acquisitions made possible by the diversion of the western navies to meet the needs of warfare in Europe and the Atlantic during World War I. In 1941, with Europe again in the throes of all-out war, only the American Navy could prevent fulfillment of ambitions of establishing a “Greater Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere.”

In this volume, completed (except for editorial work) in 1958, Admiral J.O. Richardson records his recollections and views, concentrating mainly on the years from 1939 to 1942. He devotes considerable attention to war plans, to his efforts to obtain adequate manning for the Fleet, to his concern over the effects of the prolonged Hawaiian deployment in degrading Fleet readiness for war, and to the disagreement with the President that led to his being relieved as Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet. . .

While the primary value of this book has to do with decisions and events in the months before the Japanese attack, Admiral Richardson has included material on other periods of his long and eventful naval career, thus providing valuable insights with regard to a changing navy from the turn of the twentieth century to World War II.

Mr. Edward J. Marolda of our Operational Archives, working under the direction of Dr. Dean C. Allard, located and verified sources that

were cited, undertook a number of editorial tasks in conjunction with Vice Admiral Dyer, and performed other functions associated with the publication of this book. However, the Naval History Division has made no attempt to pass judgment on the views expressed in this volume; they are solely those of Admiral Richardson. With the full realization that, for a complete picture or an overall evaluation of the decision and events of the time, it will be necessary to draw also upon additional source materials and the opinions of others involved, the work is published, in the expectation that it will provide valuable contributions to naval history.

Every reader of this paper will be asked to search his mind and conscience and respond to this question: Would it be ethical for the Naval History Division which accepted a manuscript from an outstanding Pacific Fleet commander in 1958 – thirty years in the past – to disavow in 1988 its imprimatur on the fundamental thesis of the world.