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# Admiral Harold R. Stark: Architect of Victory, 1939-1945

William R. Braisted

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means a simple one. Halder's diary entries show that Hitler's often-cited direct interference generated less confusion on an everyday basis than did Nazi Germany's complex and haphazard institutional structure. Halder spent a disproportionate amount of effort coordinating strategic, operational, and logistical problems among the Third Reich's numerous and overlapping jurisdictions. Interservice rivalry as well reached levels of intensity unknown in Britain or the United States, with corresponding drains on mental and physical resources. No regime waging even a European war with the limited reserves of Hitler's Germany could long afford this kind of inefficiency. Bills drawn up in Poland, Norway, and France in 1940 came due with interest a year later in front of Moscow. Their payment was in good part the price of Franz Halder's limitations. Their existence highlights the distinction between subordination and submission—a distinction the Third Reich's generals proved unable to sustain.

D. E. SHOWALTER  
The Colorado College

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Simpson, B. Mitchell III. *Admiral Harold R. Stark: Architect of Victory, 1939-1945*. Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1989. 326pp. \$24.95

A half century after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, a friendly advocate has finally emerged to present the case for Admiral Harold

R. Stark, who was then serving as Chief of Naval Operations. Stark himself maintained a dignified silence regarding his role at the time, apparently unwilling to risk injury to others by publicly defending himself. Without going into Stark's earlier career, Simpson is chiefly concerned with the admiral's record as CNO during the two years before Pearl Harbor and as Commander U.S. Naval Forces Europe (ComNavEu) during World War II. Simpson clearly believes that Stark's fine record in these high commands is proof of error by the Naval Court of Inquiry, which affirmed that prior to Pearl Harbor the admiral "failed to display the sound judgment expected of him." Nor does Simpson accept the cruel admonition by Admiral King—Stark's successor as CNO—that Stark be relegated to a position in which he would not be required to exercise superior judgment. King later retreated from this harsh affront against his former chief.

The author refers to two specific achievements by Stark as CNO as evidence that the admiral was indeed an "Architect of Victory." In Simpson's view, it was Stark as much as Congressman Carl Vinson who in 1939-1940 drew up the building programs that led to the construction of a two-ocean navy. He also calls attention to Stark as having successfully won adoption of an Atlantic first strategy as outlined in his famous Plan Dog memorandum that was subsequently developed in Anglo-American naval conversations and in the Rainbow 5 War Plan.

However, he all but ignores the contributions by the Navy's General Board and Stark's own War Plans Division. Simpson, of course, cites Stark's messages before Pearl Harbor as evidence that the admiral had sent ample warnings to the Pacific commanders, avoiding any further inquiry into the charges that Stark failed to transmit vital intelligence. Simpson also relieves Stark and the Navy of any responsibility for Pearl Harbor by pointing out that the Army was responsible for the defense of naval bases under the 1935 policy known as Joint Action of the Army and Navy.

As ComNavEu from April 1942 to August 1945, Stark held the title first assigned to Admiral Sims during World War I. Whereas the post in Sims' day was clearly an operational command, Stark's responsibilities were more administrative and diplomatic. His duties involved the delicate handling of General Charles de Gaulle, serving as liaison between the Admiralty in London and the Navy Department in Washington, supervising the American naval buildup in the United Kingdom (before the Normandy landings) and recommending antisubmarine strategies. In all of these undertakings, Stark apparently demonstrated extraordinary energy, tact, and patience. Indeed, Stark ended his career far more appreciated by his British hosts than by his own countrymen. Simpson is partisan for Stark, but his partisanship is justified.

Historians will rejoice that with the completion of Stark's biography,

his personal papers are now available for research at the Naval Historical Center in Washington.

WILLIAM R. BRAISTED  
Naval Historical Center

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Schratz, Paul R. *Submarine Commander*. Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1988, 344pp. \$24 paperback \$4.95

Captain Paul Schratz has written an engrossing memoir of his submarine duty from the time of Pearl Harbor through the Korean War.

After submarine school and a tour in a training boat, the author joined the new submarine *Scorpion* in Portsmouth Naval Shipyard where, as torpedo and gunnery officer and torpedo data computer operator, he dealt with the myriad details of preparing his boat for war. The complexities of dealing with the wonderful people who built our boats are well described.

Alert to reports from the Pacific about torpedo failures, he went to the heart of the problem in the Newport, Rhode Island Torpedo Station where a long-ensconced bureaucracy refused to face its failures or to accept solutions. Paul came up with an important solution which helped his submarines achieve a much higher torpedo success rate than other boats. He also adopted and promulgated an improved use of sonar information in attacks of all kinds. The wonderfully human bond among shipmates, in the wardroom, and among the families is described