

Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher was born in Marshalltown, Iowa on April 29th, 1885 He won the Coral Sea, Midway and Eastern Solomon Is. carrier battles between May and August 1942. He was later North Pacific Commander, one of the five capital posts in the Pacific. At the end of war, he accepted North Japan's capitulation, and led its occupation when the Soviet Union, still maintained plans to invade it on its own. Full Admiral Fletcher got his fourth star on May 1, 1947 and died in Bethesda, Maryland, on April 25, 1973 His body rests in the Arlington National Cemetery alongside that of his wife, Martha Richards Fletcher, who passed away on September 14, 1974.

**Those were the days...
when the world held its breath
the days that time believed to be the dark-
est, those ones that while finding us in fear, made
us stand up to face the victory, and that seeing us feeling
so weak, taught us to fight as the strong. Days of fury and courage
in the land of the free, but finally in the days of glory, liberty was salvaged.**

THE DAYS OF FLETCHER

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aldelcas@arnet.com.ar

www.admiralfletchervictories.com

ANDRÉS LAZARÚS DEL CASTILLO

TRANSLATED BY CARLOS VIBORG BAHNSON
GENERAL REVIEW JAMES BAUER

THE DAYS OF FLETCHER

**The man who stopped an empire in the darkest night of history, his victories
when the world was scared, and his silence when the world forgot him.**

Years ago the author bought a book, about the great naval Battle of Jutland in the First World War, in London. In its dedication, its author, Donald MacIntyre said, “*When asked by his Captain what the name of Jutland commemorated (the coast of Jutland was right there, in sight), one of the last sea-going Royal Navy’s Midshipmen admitted that he had no clue. I dedicate this book to him and others who might like to recall the greatest battleship’s sea battle in our naval history.*” Once Jim Bauer – from Marshalltown like Fletcher – told the author that his business partner had never heard of Frank Jack and added “*The city put together a list of its one hundred most notable people and he wasn’t on it. (His uncle, Admiral Fletcher of the First World War, was. Maybe they mistook both of them as one, but...)*”. The author, just like Donald MacIntyre, dedicates this story of naval history to all those who let their lives slip away without taking a single look at the truly big men, those that sometimes make us think that for some reason, that our Creator may have, HE left in some, more of himself, than in others. Those who have given us so much, especially in the cases of their struggle to defend the values and principles that today seem to be meant to disappear. This could be prevented if those enjoying those standards would take the torch from people like Admiral Fletcher, the one of the Second World War, the “Victor of Midway”. They could be inspired by them to continue that fight and thereby give an incomparable course of honor and dignity to their existence. Because life, in all its aspects, shows the struggle of the urgent vs. the important, what shines at the moment vs. what stays deep inside for a long time, what shows off vs. what is worth it. A time when everything seems to teach the new generations that you can only grow by “selling” well what you do, rather than “knowing how to do it”. And this is fine if you first do it right and then show what you did, but not when you do something that shines a lot and is worth very little, “smoke and mirrors” or “jack-o’-lantern” because then you end up falling back, a lot and fast. But it’s not too late for the world to show the young the way to conscientious behavior and profound thought, Jack’s reason in life. This always prevailed in him, even when no one understood him.

The author also wants to dedicate this book to all those who refuse to give credit to the man in command, for the victory at Midway. But the author also wants to remind those who suggest that it was not Fletcher who won Midway, while he was the commander, so then it wasn’t won by his second in command, Spruance, and not even by the squadron commanders, but only by pilots that effectively hit with their bombs. Not to mention now the heroic decisions of the squadron leaders like McClusky and Waldron, who – after a serious mistake that inexperience forced on Spruance’s Task Force 16 – guided those pilots toward the target. And not to mention now, the remarkable decisions that Fletcher made so many times, and especially that day. Many claim a belated honor of a fifth star for Ray Spruance or for George Patton. We could well say to whoever may have to do it someday: do the same with Fletcher. But don’t do it for him and don’t do it for us: **do it for our children**, and for all humankind. British poet John Donne said: “*the death of any man diminishes me, because I am a part of mankind*”. Perhaps, we should say: “The greatness of any man makes me grow, because it makes humankind grow”. This was Frank Jack Fletcher’s case. And as the renowned Canadian tenor John Vickers said, “if only two or three of the one thousand spectators understood my message, the effort will have been worth it.” Only for them, more than sixty years since the biggest naval victories in the US history and more than thirty since the death of the man who won it, has the author wanted to remember:

“The days of Fletcher”

To Grace
To Great Jim
To an old captain
To a small boatswain
To a very wise old lady
To the U. S. Marine Corps
To all the children of the world
To all hands in the American Navy
To the Daughters of American Revolution
To all the people that fight for truth and justice
To all who let their lives slip away, without taking a single look at the truly big men

And if you believe that the Battle of Midway was an “easy job for Fletcher” because:

- 1) Americans had all the information about enemy’s intentions
 - 2) The information provided by intelligence was true
 - 3) American Forces ambushed the Japanese
 - 4) Enemy was caught completely by surprise
 - 5) Enemy made big strategic mistakes
 - 6) Enemy made many tactical mistakes
 - 7) Fletcher’s second was Ray Spruance
- Then, we dedicate this book to you.**

THE DAYS OF FLETCHER

The author says he doesn’t know why he wrote this book. But we do know why we published it.
(Admiral Carlos Frasch. President of the Naval Publications Institute of the Argentine Naval Center)

LET WE WHO NOW PRESUME TO JUDGE ADMIRAL FLETCHER HOPE THAT WE CAN PERFORM AS WELL SHOULD WE BE SO TESTED - AT THE ONSET OF A WAR FOR NATIONAL SURVIVAL
(Marvin Butcher 'Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher. Pioneer Warrior or Gross Sinner?' Naval War College R)

When Fuchida didn't see fighters in the sky of Pearl Harbor, When he was sure that nothing would stop his victory because he sensed that the attack was a complete surprise. He knew Japan had won the battle, but he couldn't understand that he had just lost the whole war. He could happily send the now so famous triple Tora without imagining how soon revenge would come nor that right there Japan's tragedy started. When all was shining under the bright rising sun. When a hurt, defeated and humiliated Mac Arthur, taken away under protest from his beloved Philippine land, tried to organize the very non defensive Australia. When everything was dark for the enemies of the Axis, there was better news among all the misfortunes. In the hurtful hours of the fall of Corregidor, an allied force of aircraft carriers had prevented, in the Battle of the Coral Sea, the Japanese Empire's boot, from landing in Port Moresby, right in front of the chosen victim for the next conquering step
The commander of that force, was a certain Admiral Fletcher.

Thirty days hadn't gone by since then and six months hadn't passed since Pearl Harbor, when an American navy force took revenge on that attack, in Midway, sinking four big carriers, forever closing the way to the final victory, of this Empire and starting what Churchill called in his book, "The Hinge of Fate"
The commander of that force, was a certain Admiral Fletcher.

The decision to send the fleet to Midway will always be owed to Nimitz, to McCluskey for his heroic decision of chasing the enemy at open seas, and to Rochefort, the professional skill to get the information. But even in view of the courage, sacrifice and effort of thousands of workers, seamen and airmen, if we were asked the reason for the amazing setback of Japan's weapons, one word would suffice to clear up each and every doubt, each and every question: **Fletcher**

Because the handling by this admiral of the American fleet at Midway was a masterpiece of management and strategy, replicable in all ways of human activity. He never got the fifth star and he didn't need it. **Midway was his fifth star.**

And when seeing the Marines, give their foes a whipping, in the sad adventure of Guadalcanal, Japan sent their fleet for reinforcement, an American carrier force repelled it reaffirming the freedom of Australia, and indirectly protecting the "Marine Corps", in the so called "Battle of the Eastern Solomon Islands"
The commander of that force, was again Admiral Fletcher.

There was a great difference between Fletcher and the later American Fleet Commanders, to whom the infinite resources available would have made it almost impossible to lose a battle. But to him, in the poverty of his means, destiny always showed him the face of a skull. In the three battles he fought and won, there would be no revenge, nor return, nor forgiveness. Only hope was left. But it was then and there that America and the World saw the smile of destiny. But it was then and it was there that America and the World could see that whereas Frank Jack Fletcher fought, liberty always won



"Frank Jack Fletcher, being the admiral that had to face the most unfavorable war conditions, was nevertheless, the most successful commander in combat since Trafalgar, winning in all three aircraft carrier battles where he fought -- there were only five such battles in all history. Admiral Fletcher was outnumbered at all times and when his opponents were at their height in the early years of the Pacific War. He stopped them from taking over Australia, Midway, and Guadalcanal. He put down six of the ten Japanese carriers with four of their six great carriers, which had attacked Pearl Harbor. His acts were completely his own, since there was no past experience in carrier fighting before him to teach how to fight ships from the air. He kept the Pacific safe, enabling much support to go to Europe and started the Allied victory in the Second World War' (Photo US Navy)



“Fletcher was a full admiral who had served his country heroically in World War II. But he showed not the least element of false pride, arrogance, presumption, or braggadocio. He was as modest, humble, sympathetic, warm, and understanding as some of the old friends of my father that I might meet on the streets of my hometown in Pomeroy, Iowa” (Gordon Prange). “Admiral Fletcher deserves great credit for initiating efforts to rescue aviators downed in combat.. Air-sea rescue added immeasurably to the morale of American aviators and saved hundreds of trained pilots for further combat”. (Samuel Elliot Morison quoted by Stephen D. Regan in “In Bitter Tempest”).

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Frank Jack Fletcher was the most successful combat commander of the American Navy in all its history, and the most successful one in the whole world's naval history, since Trafalgar.

FOREWORDS

Man's imagination is magnetically attracted to discuss history, maybe because the idea of the perpetual instant in which all events coexist remains deep down, and from which, prisoners of that need to live them one after another, that need called time, they are excluded.

FOREWORD

At the end of the year 2003 a fellow officer introduced me to Doctor Andrés Lazarús del Castillo as an expert in Second World War's naval history in the Pacific. This is a subject we are interested in because of the studies that we carry out in the Center for Strategic Studies of the Navy.

Dr. Lazarús turned out to be a professional of pleasant conversation that attracted an exchange of opinions on different subjects, mainly ones related to the mentioned world war in an operations area that was essentially a naval one.

To my surprise, I learned that he was working on (and nearly finished) a book about a United States Navy Admiral, Frank Jack Fletcher, the victor of the naval battles of Midway, Coral Sea and Eastern Solomon Is. Those battles were, no doubt, the most significant and decisive in the Pacific War and the foundation that enabled General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz to develop, step by step, the famous amphibious assaults that brought Japan to its knees after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

On the other hand, both battles are famous for the massive use of aircraft carriers and their carrier based aircraft, bringing up these units to be capital ones in a Fleet, replacing the battleship with its imposing artillery.

What's most interesting about this study is not the chronological description of historical events, but the author's very personal perspective to deeply analyze the American commands's personalities that were involved, from the top navy authority in Washington to the Fleet and Task Force commanders operating in the Pacific.

He brings forward Admiral Fletcher's figure, his inborn ability to lead, both at strategic and tactical level, and highlights his special perception to empower his subordinates with operation's management where they excelled, even sacrificing his personal glory in the final tactical action.

Timely comments, keen observations and valuable teachings make this an enjoyable book to read. But Del Castillo goes one step further by showing us how Admiral Fletcher's role in commanding his Task Force applies to any high-level decision making, regardless of the field.

In a nutshell, this is the passionate book of an Argentine who values, in all its dimension, one of the greatest officers in the US Navy's life, perhaps unappreciated by his own people. A man whose teachings prove that anyone who is highly trained, has a defined personality and clear thoughts on strategy, is capable of leading to success or victory undertakings not easy to measure or execute.

Vice Admiral Carlos Luis Alfonso

FOREWORD

I've been honored by Andrés Lazarús del Castillo with the writing of a foreword to his book. I'm a witness to the passion, knowledge and wisdom he has put into this writing. We have spent many hours together, discussing paragraphs and historic events related to the episodes that Frank Jack Fletcher had to go through, to unravel the meaning that each decision might have had and the actions that followed as a consequence of those decisions.

The first comment that comes to my mind is to warn the reader, that this is not a simple navy history book, as it might seem at first glance. It goes much deeper, into the research of the profound causes of successes and failures experienced by Japanese and American, in the analyzed location. He explores the leadership talents of the players involved, with their personal traits, their virtues, limitations, ambitions, that finally make up the difference between victory and defeat.

He advances in the analysis of responsibilities inherent to different decision making levels, from the highest in strategy down to the "lowest" in tactics. This helps to understand, that the difference between one level and the other is not a matter of magnitude, but of the problem's nature that each level faces and must solve. One is not more important than the other, they complement each other. All this is clearly reflected in the book. **That is why this is not merely a history book. It is addressed to political, military and business leaders who, in times of peace or crisis, are fortunate enough to hold the highest responsibility in providing guidance.**

Raymond Aron states that "History is the laboratory for the Theory". The knowledge of history is essential for those "making strategy", while it contributes practical expertise that could be the result of previous failure. This does not mean falling into the intellectual easiness of copying the past, since no two circumstances are alike. Nevertheless, they're useful, as Peter Paret proposes, for inspiration and influence.

Throughout history we've learnt how famous statesmen handled conflicts: by defining the goals to be reached and the suitable use of resources that led them to the objective their countries or organizations wanted to achieve.

Knowledge and the right technical use of means is still the important fact in the tactical handling of a conflict, and these are tools operated by specialists. But at the higher level of administration, what is important are the ends that politicians pursue, achieved through intelligent management of the former. The means end up producing actions that then generate results or events that enable us to reach the desired effects.

This way, the military man, the politician and the businessman, at high levels of management, need not be a specialist in all technical aspects of his profession. Neither does he have to be an expert statesman, nor a historian, but he has to be familiar with subjects that are considered at highest levels of the State or the company and with the interests that constantly arise, the matters that are considered and with the people or groups they interact with. He won't need to be a psychologist nor a sociologist, but he must be qualified to understand the political state of affairs he is in, observe and guide the will, the intellect and the reasoning of his superiors, peers, subordinates, partners and competitors.

Clausewitz said "what the genius made, should be the most beautiful of the rules and studies could not do better than describe the how and the why this could happen." This book happens to achieve this. It describes by way of a fluent, precise, and subtle pen, sometimes using a levelheaded irony, balancing with anecdotes and details, **the difficulties, doubts and the good decisions that men with high and serious responsibilities had to make, describing the circumstances that they had to face.** His writing style makes the reading very pleasant and it fulfils, basically, an educational purpose because of the excellent teachings that it puts forward to the reader.

Rear Admiral (Ret) Guillermo Delamer

“As God is my witness, they're not going to lick me!”
(Scarlett O'Hara in Margaret Mitchell's 'Gone With the Wind').

BOOK ONE

AS GOD IS MY WITNESS !!

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing” (Edmund Burke)

“In the nightmare of the dark, all the dogs of Europe bark, and the living nations wait, each sequestered in its hate” (Wystam H. Auden)

“I solemnly predict that this damned man will push our Reich to the abyss. He will drag the nation to unprecedented sufferings and the curse of human beings will follow you to the grave for what you have done” (From a letter that General Ludendorff sent Marshall Hindenburg when Hitler was appointed chancellor on January 30, 1933).

“History is an endless discussion”. (Peter Greyl. Historian)

Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death! (Patrick Henry. Speech, 23 of March of 1775. www.law.ov.edu/ushistory/henry.shtml)

FIRST PART

**GIVE ME LIBERTY
OR
GIVE ME DEATH !!**

“This is a fight between a free world and a slave world”. (Speech by Vice-President Henry Wallace at New York. May 8th 1942. The date Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher won the Battle of the Coral Sea)

1 - HISTORY AND POWER

Man's imagination is magnetically attracted to discuss history, maybe because the idea of the perpetual instant in which all events coexist remains deep down, and from which, prisoners of that need to live them one after another, that need called time, they are excluded. History is the mirror humanity looks into to learn. We could say that the history of humanity is the account of the struggle for power. Nothing seduces man more than power. Power allows man to feel like a god. Imposing his will on others is a treasured goal that can move the lowest passions. Traditionally, power was always in the hands of the strongest or the most intelligent. Force, as a tactical expression of human will, and intelligence as a strategic expression, always shared power. The chief of the tribe was the strongest warrior, but then the most intelligent resorted to strategy and made an alliance with someone stronger than the chief: God. There was another side of power that could coexist with brute force: mystery. The tribe's witch doctor started to manage, with religion, a very particular aspect of power, clearly respected by the chief. The plan of the chief coexisting with religion led to the normal and natural way, in fact the only one, of exercising power. And that continued to happen until money appeared in the scene. Then, the accumulation of money put another actor on stage. Political power, religious power and economic power all came to share man's imagination. The three always competed. Sometimes they shared power and sometimes, they took turns. They evolved individually and collectively, but they always backed each other. Each one played with its resources and one of the most widely used resources was war. All shared that use and so coexisted until the great changes of the nineteenth and twentieth century. These led to another way of exercising power and evolved until it had its own identity on stage: communication. Communication's means became more important, while monarchies were being replaced by democracies either in its traditional form, or in others like a syndicalistic one. People's will can be influenced by communication as well as by politics, religion or economy. And within the possibilities of communication is, of course, the transcription of History. If History is the most important source of human learning, whoever writes history is influencing the will of men, according to what they decide to write, since what is written is not necessarily the truth. Historians can be biased, they can twist the facts or simply, not know any better. This book tries to be a contender of other books, and of other authors, in the thorny area of analysis

2 - HISTORY AND ORGANIZATIONS

We could also say that humanity's history is organization's history. There are either organizations or individuals. There isn't much history – nowadays – in the short life of a human being. Organizations are now, the princes of man and to them he devotes his efforts, talent and love. In war, the traditional breeding ground for progress, the enemies are led to the worst situations from which they usually come out with astonishing solutions. As the saying goes, necessity is the mother of invention. That is how war has improved technique and organizations. Organizations are nothing but a set of resources servicing an objective. They use the administration which, with its functional authority, supplies and controls the resources, policies, structures and proceedings and use the tactical, strategic and operational level of the hierarchical authority. These determine organizational objectives and ensure that they are carried out. Leadership strengthens and coordinates both authorities, practicing efficient ways to do it in war. When the hierarchical levels assign resources, the administration provides them. The decision processes and the structures ensure that the strategic objectives are carried out, deserve to and have been studied through situations that take you to the limit, like those created during a war. The operational and tactical orders by them originated, that assign objectives, goals and tasks, also have been studied by this way. That's why, more than tell the "what", we'll see the "why" and we'll say that the conclusions can be applied to any activity, given the universality of administration, management and organization. This is a book of history, though it is also about the study of structures, decisions, tactics and strategy. We'll see these matters in part nine. This book is about the history of the Pacific War, though it is also an invitation to compare battles of other wars. There is something about the universality of battles: there are similar moments, diversions, hesitations, uncertainty, deception and "frictions" – such is the name given by Clausewitz, the genius of strategy, to little events that disturb the application of the great ideas. There is also cause and effect. We'll

see comparisons all along the book, but now we'll talk about battles, their categories and decisive battles in history. We'll compare moments of the key battles of the Pacific with battles of other wars. We understand that a battle is crucial when it determines the outcome of a campaign. It could be ending it like Waterloo or simply making the initiative dramatically change hands, as Kursk or Stalingrad. There are battles, like that of Jutland, which might have been decisive, but wasn't because of its result. In the Pacific War there were four decisive battles, but it could be said that the last two of those four were the complement of the first two. By chronological order the four crucial naval battles in this war were: Coral Sea, Midway and Eastern Solomon Sea, won by Fletcher, and Guadalcanal, the only of the four without carriers.

3 – THE WAR AND GREAT BATTLES

“War is the continuation of politics by other means” (Clausewitz).

“War is the art of killing them faster than they can kill you” (James Lee ‘Jim’ Bauer).

“*The war, the most evil lash and the greatest sin of humanity*”(General Douglas MacArthur).

War: the stupidest activity invented by man since the beginning of creation.

The story goes that when Eisenhower - future supreme commander of the allied armies in Europe – presented to Marshall the reasons for which he deemed necessary to give priority to plans to the fight against the Germany of Hitler, Marshall put him to the test by asking: “if I tell you that your whole plan is foolish?” to which the great “Ike” replied: “General Marshall, war is foolish.”

For all those who are not familiar with history's great battles, here is a summary of some of them, to which we will refer later on in the book.

El Alamein: October 23rd, 1942

After more than a year of a see-saw war in the North African desert, the British finally retreated towards Cairo, chased by Marshal Erwin Rommel's Italian-German armored army. If Rommel beat General Claude Auchinlek's 8th British Army, night could fall on the free world. The way to India, through the near East, would be open and the joining of Germans and Japanese there. This would have left the Allies without ports on the Indian Ocean and the Soviet Union exposed to a flank attack, on the edge of defeat. In July 1942, and under the desperate gaze of the free world, Auchinlek stopped Rommel. In a narrow stretch of the desert with the Mediterranean on his right flank and the swampy lands in the depression of Quatara on his left flank, the British General managed to make a stronghold. At this spot there was an old train station called “El Alamein”. This name had been known only by Bedouins. But it would remain, like Midway, Guadalcanal, Stalingrad and Kursk, as a milestone of the Allied victory in the Second World War. During the following months, the Eighth Army would be reinforced with equipment from the United States. After Midway, it felt it was safe enough to pay attention to the European theater. Churchill relieved Auchinlek and some day someone will make a serious analysis as to why, but the British Empire's old Prime Minister had his reasons. After all, this book attempts to explain why Fletcher was relieved after his victories calmed MacArthur's Southwest Pacific and all the Allied block. Now, thanks to Fletcher's victories, Australians and New Zealanders were allowed to give the old Winston their experienced 9th(A) and 2nd(NZ) Infantry Divisions, the best units of the 8th Army. They would now belong to General Bernard L. Montgomery. Finally, when everything was according to the great “Monty's” desire, the British attacked. Two divisions of the South Pacific, attacked and deeply penetrated the Italian-German left flank. When Axis's reserves recklessly moved in that direction – Rommel was in Germany – British Armored divisions, cleverly hidden in the Allied left flank, attacked and broke the Axis' front. Rommel returned and slowed British advance in a battle that lasted ten days and in which six hundred tanks took part, sent by Roosevelt after Midway. The Italian-German had to fall back toward Tunisia, but the landing of Eisenhower's Anglo-Americans at their backs left them between two fires. The threat of the Axis through Egypt was over and in a few months they were completely out of all of Africa.

Jutland: May 31st, 1916. The background.

Jutland was the great naval battle of the First World War and it was also the great naval battle of armor and big guns. In this battle, capital ships were the big players, that is, battleships and battle cruisers with guns that were between eleven and fifteen inches in diameter. Complementing them were the armored cruisers, cruisers and destroyers. There were other ships like the hydroplane mother-ship, which at some point navigated with the Grand British Fleet. There were also dirigibles with the Kaiserliche Marine High Seas Fleet. The British Commander was Full Admiral Sir John Jellicoe and the German one was Admiral Reinhardt Scheer. Vice Admiral sir David Beatty commanded Great Britain's battle cruisers and his peer, Ferdinand Hipper, Germany's. The British incessantly searched for this battle. But the immense responsibility on Jellicoe's shoulders led Churchill to say about him: "He was the only man, on any of the two sides, including heads of state, that could lose the war in only one afternoon". That responsibility had made Jellicoe say, in a letter to the British Admiralty: "The battle shall be fought my way or there will be no battle at all." That long sought battle recognized some background, among which we'll mention further ahead, the fleeing in the fog of the German battle cruisers that had bombarded Hartlepool and Scarborough. Another fact was the Battle of the Dogger Bank between British and German battle cruisers. The fleet's method was to send battle cruisers well ahead of the main force's battleships. The battleship squadrons and battle cruiser divisions were complemented by flotillas of cruisers and destroyers. Destroyers are relatively small ships that had been born as a defense against a sort of primitive torpedo boats, with high speed, small size, and great destructive power from their torpedoes. Battleships, battle cruisers and armored-cruisers were provided with secondary artillery of a smaller caliber for use against those torpedo boats. After some time these ships: "destroyers of torpedoes" or "destroyers" became more of a defense against submarines with torpedoes while small boats with torpedoes started to disappear. They would later be replaced by Motor Torpedo Boats (E-boats). The armored-cruisers would also disappear. In the future cruisers would have two versions: light with six-inch guns and heavy with eight-inch guns. The king of the sea was born in the period between wars: the aircraft carrier. In the times of Jutland, cruisers and destroyers screened the fleets as an early warning for spotting enemy fleets and against the attack of torpedo boats and submarines. Capital ships fought in a battle line, one behind the other and shooting toward the sides. Although it doesn't seem logical and given that the shooting was to lob shots, it was easier to hit a ship that was pointing, because the vertical angle of the gun is much more difficult to determine than the horizontal. When a ship is pointing the gun, she offers all her length for the fall of the shot. Is notable to see, that subordinate commands didn't have any self-determination neither initiatives while all operational strategic decisions were assumed by the higher level present afloat,.

The capture of the German codes by the British in the sinking of the cruiser *Magdeburg* at the beginning of the war, allowed them to forecast the sailing of the German ships. On May 30th, 1916 it was known that German battle-cruisers would set sail but nothing was known about the main force, that is, the battleships. All the Grand Fleet was ordered to set sail from their bases. A force with six battle cruisers and four of the newest and fastest battleships - the *Queen Elizabeth* class, the first ones in the world with fuel oil - was to sail separately on a parallel route, all under Vice- Admiral Beatty, but further South than the main force of his boss Jellicoe with 24 battleships, three battle cruisers, and screening ships-. It was almost two o'clock in the afternoon when the battle cruisers and the *Queen Elizabeth* turned north to meet Jellicoe with his battleships. They didn't know that five German battle cruisers sailed parallel to them also heading north. Both parallel lines were far enough not to be able to see each other, but between them sailed a small Danish freighter visible to both forces: the *N.J. Fjord*. Hipper sent cruiser *Elbling* with two destroyer to inspect her, and she wasn't moving with her safety valve letting off steam. The steam caught the attention of British cruiser *Galatea*, that headed there at full speed while signaling to her: "Stop engines immediately and identify yourself". Inquired by Beatty from the battle cruiser, and within sight of the German flag, *Galatea* reported: "enemy in sight", hoisted her battle flag and opened fire. *Galatea's* message, and the noise of her guns were enough for Beatty.

Jutland: May 31st, 1916. The battle

The *Lion* immediately changed course to starboard toward the Horn Reef channel to cut the enemy off from its base. After her, the other battle cruisers changed course and also did – even though with certain delay – the four fast battleships under the orders of Rear Admiral Evan Thomas. Of course, their escorts sailed around these ships and were immediately ordered to take a position on the opposite side of the line of fire so as not to interfere the gunner's sights. Meanwhile, dark clouds of smoke announced the presence of the German battle cruisers below the horizon. Upon seeing Beatty's ships, the Germans changed course and headed south, while the British took a parallel course. This was called the "race to the South". While Beatty was thinking that with his ten ships – even though Evan-Thomas was very far away – he could destroy Hipper, the latter meanwhile knew that he was leading Beatty toward Scheer's twenty-one battleships. At this point, two of Beatty's battle cruisers were blown up. Beatty's famous answer when he heard of the loss was: "There's something wrong with our bloody ships today". Beatty sailed preceded by a screen of cruisers under the orders of Commodore Goodenough. As he was much further ahead, he saw Scheer's battleships and reported it to Beatty. Beatty again changed course and fled North, with Hipper and Scheer after him. Now Beatty knew that he was leading them towards Jellicoe's battleships. Evan-Thomas was again delayed in changing course, and in the "race to the North", had to receive all the artillery fire from the German's vanguard on his ships. Jellicoe knew, through the radio, who was getting close. Still, as he didn't know their exact position, it was hard to decide which wing he would deploy his fleet on. His questions to Beatty and Evan-Thomas "Where is the High Seas Fleet?" became a part of history. Tardy answers from both of them allowed for the correct positioning of the German Fleet's vanguard. Their presence beyond the horizon was given away by their gun flashes. Jellicoe looked at the chart for the last time and called his Signal Officer to his side for the historic order. At 6.16 (7.16) p.m, he ordered the fleet, to form in a battle line, on course SE1/4E, at 14 knots, over the port side column. The port division's first battleship, took this course immediately, while those behind it, continued their way toward the turning point. Ships heading each of the other divisions turned 90 degrees to port, to adopt columns by divisions in the general line. Velocity was diminished so Beatty could place his ships ahead of the formation. Evan Thomas did it at the rear, while everywhere, cruisers and flotillas rushed to take their places at the sides of the fleet which was being deployed, in a battle line. In a perfect maneuver Jellicoe managed to place the Grand Fleet between Scheer and his bases, with the sunset sun striking the eyes of German gunners. The British Admiral also managed to take the lead on his surprised enemy and thereby ended up in the classic victory position of "cutting the T". He then believed that he had won the battle with the tremendous shelling of his now thirty-four capital ships on the vanguard German battleships, the feisty *Koenig* class. But Scheer had prepared his fleet for a situation like this and ordered them to turn "ship by ship", starting with the one furthest astern and managed to slip away. The situation was repeated due to Scheer's mistake, but also the escape was repeated. This time it was with the loss of *Lutzow*, his best battle cruiser. Finally, both fleets separated while night was falling. Jellicoe had lost – to the fire of the German vanguard during the Grand Fleet's deployment – one of three battle cruisers assigned directly to him. Scheer then had to resolve a serious problem because Jellicoe was blocking his way to his base and he ran the risk of dawning the following day at sea while facing a much more powerful enemy. Nevertheless, he managed to cross the stern of the British formation and take refuge in his base. At a cost of three battle cruisers against one and an old German battleship, Jellicoe succeeded in that his rival didn't risk sailing out (except a very short sortie) for the rest of the war. Anyway, failing to destroy a much weaker force was very painful for the British. This would have allowed them to operate in the Baltic Sea with no fear of a disaster in the North Sea. The hypothetical presence of the British Fleet in the Baltic Sea could well have thwarted the Bolshevik movement in Saint Petersburg and the arrival of communism to power. There wasn't – for the rest of the great war – any surface engagement between British and Germans. The next ones took place more than twenty years later, in the frame of the Second World War. The splendid High Seas Fleet, remained without being used, and had to go, with its guns disabled, and escorted by British ships, to be surrendered at the Scapa Flow base. This sad situation was solved by the German commander, Admiral von Reuter, with the honorable decision of scuttling the ships, and sinking them in front of the powerless view of the British. This was the end of what Winston Churchill called at a certain moment: 'Luxus-flotte'.

The Marne: September 6th, 1914

One single wise decision on the night between the fifth and sixth of September of 1914 forever ensured General, and later Marshall of France, Joseph Jacques Césaire Joffre a glorious place in history. The French Army's lack of modernization before the beginning of the First World War forced a retreat on all fronts. Nine French Armies retreated together with the British Army. The Germans chased them but at dusk both fronts camped for the night. The Germans did not attack at night because their superiority could vanish in the night's chaos. At three o'clock in the morning both fronts packed their tents and continued, the French retreating and the Germans advancing. The giant maneuver continued from the French-German front toward Paris and then veered to leave Paris aside. They arrived to the Marne river and camped. Paris was to the left of the French line and to the right of Germany's. At eleven o'clock that night, of that September fifth, the telephone rang and the voice of General Gallieni from Paris ordered to put the call through to Generalissimo Joffre. Joffre had a conference for an hour with Gallieni, his former superior. The latter was Paris's military governor. He had a complete army under the direction of General Maunoury under his command. Although now retired and called to serve his country -he was nominally under Joffre's orders- his former subordinate listened to him with total respect. Gallieni suggested that instead of retreating he should confront the Germans at Marne's banks. He didn't see any future in the continuation of the retreat. If Joffre accepted his idea, he could send Maunoury's troops, who were there to defend Paris, to the German's right flank. It seemed to be the only feasible plan. Still, it wasn't so easy to turn ten armies formed for a retreat and put them into battle in three hours in the middle of the night. But that's what great decisions and great commanders are for. At twelve midnight the decision was made. Orders were prepared and ciphered and they were sent in cars with staff officers to each army commander. There in Paris, Gallieni requisitioned all taxis to take Maunoury's vanguard to the German flank. And thus, motorized infantry was born that night. The famous Order of the Day with the phrase "now nobody has the right to look back" was transmitted and at three o'clock in the morning of September sixth, 1914, a million bayonets and roughly one thousand cannons suddenly turned to confront the invader. Soon, the German command received – at the same time - two pieces of worrisome news. Marne's front had become stronger and the enemy, far from retreating, was confronting it and the First Army's commander to the right reported that he was being attacked on his right flank by troops that came from Paris. Two of his corps had turned ninety degrees to face the new threat, immediately followed by the third. The Second Army's command reported that there was a breach to its right in the joint with the First Army and it also started to rotate. The breach was transferred to the joint of Armies Two and Three and the British cavalry filtered through it. At that point, the German High Command ordered to retreat in all the front. France had been saved and its armies chased the enemy in retreat.

Tsushima: May 27th, 1905

The Japanese had made an unprovoked, sneak attack on the Russian Asiatic Fleet and captured the Russian port city and naval base of Port Arthur on the Chinese coast at Dalian. The Russians had to send a heterogeneous fleet from Europe under the orders of Admiral Rozdestvenskii. That fleet came sailing from the Baltic on a very long and exhausting voyage. Its ships and weapons were very old and they had to fight Admiral Togo's much more modern fleet, after such a long trip. As can be expected, Togo destroyed his rivals and the war ended. It would be the last Japanese victory against Russia. Later both countries participated on the Allies side in the First World War. In the period between two world wars, there was a serious incident on land with the victory of the Soviets under the orders of the extraordinary General Georgi Zhukov. He would later be a brilliant commander in the Second World War. In this war, Russians and Japanese, though they belonged to conflicting blocks, had a peace treaty between them and didn't fight each other until the war's last week. Then after the first atomic bomb, a great Soviet army conquered much territory from the discouraged Japanese army in Manchuria. The Battle of Tsushima, set the beginning of rebellions, such as Potemkin, which started to undermine the authority of Czar Nicolas II. The Czar managed to stay in power until the revolution of Kerensky's Mensheviks in 1917 and was assassinated by Lenin's Bolsheviks in 1918. In the technical aspect, this battle showed to the navies, the superiority of the ships with all the guns in main artillery, with the same size. 'All big guns' or 'dreadnoughts' were then born.

Balaklava and the Charge Of The Light Brigade: October 25, 1854.

Battle fought during the Crimean War. The war was fought between Russia on one side, and Turkey, later joined by France and Britain, on the other. *“The battle of Balaklava actually took place a couple of miles north of the town, in a wide valley in front of Sevastopol's Sapoun Hill (Sapun-gora). Soon after the battle the valley became known as the ‘Valley of Death’, as a result of the Light Brigade's ill-fated charge. The day began with a number of attempts by the Russian army to put themselves in a good position to attack the base at Balaklava, but these ended in a stalemate. The Russians' artillery fire had inflicted heavy losses on Turkish positions, but a cavalry charge against the Highlanders had been driven off, and the British Heavy Brigade had then forced the Russians to retire to higher ground. In an attempt to drive the Russians off one of the surrounding ridges and force them to abandon the guns they had captured from the Turks, Lord Raglan sent a message to Lord Lucan, in command of the Light Brigade, which was delivered in what some have suggested was a deliberately vague and imprecise way by the messenger, Captain Nolan. The result was that the instruction was misunderstood as an order for the Light Brigade to charge directly at the Russian guns, a mile and a half up the valley, with Russian artillery and riflemen firing at them from both sides as they did. Within 20 minutes several hundred men and horses had died as they obeyed the order and bullets rained down from either side. Having cut through the Russian guns, they found themselves at the head of the valley, and had no option but to return the way they had come, sustaining even heavier losses. 700 horsemen charged up the valley, but only 195 came back. For the Russian onlookers, the charge appeared to be an act of incomprehensible lunacy, although there was also a measure of respect for the bravery of the soldiers involved. The French general Bosquet, who watched the charge, famously remarked “c'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre!” (it's magnificent, but it's not warfare), and the controversy which followed on the British side led to Lord Lucan's enforced resignation from his command”.* (www.blacksea-crimea.com) The charge of Light Brigade, even being a demonstration of heroism without possible comparison all along history, was nevertheless an absurd sacrifice, originated in a wrong communication, which didn't correctly explain its objective. For History, British cavalry men, were heroes.

Waterloo: June 18th, 1815

Napoleon Bonaparte, French General born on the island of Corsica and self-proclaimed Emperor in 1805, had defeated the major countries in Europe. It was in the Russian Campaign of 1812 that he lost the vast empire he had created. After defeating the Czar's troops in Borodino, he entered Moscow but the Russians set it on fire. The city, with houses made of wood, was razed, and only palaces and churches made of stone remained. Unable to spend the winter there with his army, Napoleon began a long and bloody retreat, pursued by winter and chased by Russians, thereby losing nearly all of his army. Defeated by an allied coalition at Leipzig, he withdrew to Paris. He had to abdicate and was succeeded in the throne by Louis XVIII from the House of Borbon. Napoleon was confined to the island of Elba as its governor, with an escort of one thousand men under his orders. It was the year 1814 and in mid-1815 he crossed to France with his escort and advanced to Paris. His forces swelled with troops that were sent by King Louis to stop him. After the king's deposition, and knowing that several European armies were heading to France to attack him, he immediately decided to confront them, one at a time, without giving them time to join. The British were a lightly dispersed in front of Brussels under the orders of Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington. The Germans, under the orders of Gerhard von Blücher, were on their way to join them. Napoleon's strategy was to block them and attack each one separately. An advance between both armies on Charleroi, would surely make each one retreat on his own supply line, one towards Brussels-Antwerp on the north, and the other towards Namur on the east. So Napoleon's enemies would be separated. On the night of June 14th, 1815 he invaded Belgium and came between the British and the Germans. Wellington, his generals and his officers, had to abandon a party the Duke had ordered to calm the people's anxiety. But the quick departure from the party, had the opposite effect. Wellington ordered a concentration of his forces, first near Mons, but seeing he would be too far from the Germans, ordered it next to Nivelles. Napoleon left his center in Charleroi and turned to his right to beat Blücher at Ligny. He let Blücher retreat, because he believed the Germans were going towards Namur, far from Wellington, but Blücher was going towards Wavre on the north. This would be very important, because the Germans would be relatively near Wellington. Napoleon who believed his enemies were splitting their armies, wrongly sent his right wing – a third of his men – under the orders of Marshall Grouchy, to chase

them in their retreat. Grouchy was ordered not to let them regroup, and specially not to let them join Wellington. While Blücher withdrew north in the direction of Wavre, Wellington had been stopped at Quatre Bras by Napoleon's left wing under the orders of Marshall Ney. Wellington then started to retreat towards the northwest, to Waterloo hills, followed by Napoleon who believed Blücher was already very far to the east. At Waterloo, the Duke turned for the last battle. His army of eighty thousand men – deployed with their backs to Brussels and the sea – protected his retreat line toward the port of Antwerp, while leaning the left wing on the “Forest of Paris”. With Blücher towards Wavre, Grouchy was in a bad position, and Blücher managed to place himself between Waterloo and Grouchy, thus reaching Waterloo just by crossing the forest and putting Napoleon at a disadvantage. A few forces left in Wavre by Blücher would delay Grouchy and keep him from joining his commander in time. At Waterloo, the rain stalled Napoleon's attack till noon, and this was vital for the allies. Wellington firmly endured all of Napoleon's charges, targeted on the British right flank and threatening to cut the road to Brussels and Antwerp. What the Emperor actually wanted was to weaken the center to reinforce the flank. Wellington didn't do so and then Marshall Ney led a poorly armed but effective attack that nearly broke the center of the British. Only the “coup de grace” was missing, the arrival of the reserves – the “Imperial Guard” – Napoleon's crack troops. Ney asked for the reserve before dusk but Napoleon, seeing Marshall in bad shape, rejected it. And so he let victory slip through his fingers, because when he finally sent the also called “Old Guard”, Wellington had recovered. Confronted with his unexpected resistance, the Guard hesitated and later broke up. Few minutes had passed since Wellington, desperate, uttered the famous prayer: “give me Blücher or give me the night”. And also very few minutes had passed since his impeccable decision of resigning his positions on his left and right wings to reinforce his center and so resist Napoleon and finally beat him. To wrap up the French misfortune, Blücher arrived and that was the end. Napoleon was confined as a prisoner in the island of Santa Elena, where he died in 1821.

Trafalgar: October 21, 1805.

Napoleon's obsession to dominate the British and to conquer their territory made him strengthen his fleet, since it was necessary to neutralize the British one while crossing the Channel. The French and Spanish fleets, under Admiral Pierre Charles Silvestre de Villeneuve orders, left its base at the port of Cadiz, and on October 21st, saw the British one under Admiral Horace Nelson's command, to the west. Nelson moved his ships in two columns, sailing towards the center of his enemy's single line. His idea was to open fire on some part of the Spanish-French formation between his two lines,. A wrong decision by Napoleon's commander made his fleet change course 180 degrees, which caused the line of ships to be disorganized, making Nelson's plan easier. The British momentarily took the risk on their bows before the armed side of Napoleonic ships, when they were getting closer to them to break the line. Then they could take, with their own sides, the bows and sterns of their opponents. The bullets fired on the weakest parts of the ship, in those times, went through the long decks, causing destruction and death everywhere. This made the following step of boarding and capturing the ships easier and afterwards there were terrible individual fights with swords and personal guns. Villeneuve lost many ships this way and had to retreat towards Cadiz. Trafalgar's victory – in which Admiral Nelson died – showed, as important as Nelson's genius, the very high spirit of British sailors, increased by their Admiral's famous message: “England expects every man to do his duty”, sent by signals flags before the battle. Nelson's double legacy to his homeland was: 1st) Napoleon's definitive abandonment of the idea to invade it, and 2nd) The domain of the seas for more than a hundred years, which allowed the British to consolidate their Empire.

War forever. We can go back along History, and we'll always find war and conquerors. When human beings were created in God's image it was decided not to discriminate the devil and give him some credit in creation, they invented war. All the creativity and wit of the 'most intelligent' beings on the planet were put to the service of the progress's mission of learning mass production of death, taking the artisan invention of the great 'Cain' to a hyper-industrial scale. Throughout history, the willing successors of Cain were always the conquerors. Just for the intellectual pleasure of saying to themselves "I'm a genius", and, of course, to hear it from their flatterers, they did not hesitate in subduing their fellowmen to the cruelest hardships. This was far beyond death, wounds, pests, hunger and crying. Because that was the price that the power demanded from heroism. And heroism was the only contribution given by millions of human beings, which without their fault, were included in the tragedy of war.

4 - OTHER POINTS IN HISTORY

I - The Tanaka Memoranda: July 25th, 1927

Individuals unconditionally “possessed” by messianic beliefs, whatever their fanatic nature is, are “gifted” with two great “advantages”. The messianic is the unquestionable possessor of the truth. And why are his beliefs the truth? Surely because some visionary established it. Then, and because that so called visionary needs to have some hierarchy that justifies the explosive submission of a loyal mass of followers, he will rapidly walk the path of the genius, be it ideological or religious. Still, they lack the sense of fairness to respect the freedom of others for their own beliefs and truths.

The messianic substance – ideological or religious – instills in the “possessed” an immunity of guilt dangerously close to psychopathic. All is done in the name of God or the people, and should he die, he will be awarded a place of honor in the kingdom of the just. Armed with this valuable shield, our messianic can: drive airplanes into towers, organize wars and crusades, define other human beings as abject and sub-human, and lock them up in concentration camps and shower with gas those that are not “fortunate” enough to die of hunger before; scorn and lock up the Darwins and the Galileos or put the biggest nation in the world or the smallest island under a heavenly order, without letting anyone get out.

A very particular and interesting case is that of the Japanese, whose great prophet was always their emperor, considered a descendant of God. This is studied and supposedly proven at some time by all Japanese. Just as religions struggle to take their prophet to a heavenly throne or ideologies do it to lead world destinies, the Japanese felt, at some moment of their history, that they had to place their emperor on a world throne that would be raised for benefit of the world. This was a tribute to that person who, to their knowledge, was so close to God.

Lord Hotta, Prime Minister of Japan, gives us a collection piece: "Among the rulers of the world at present, there is none so noble and illustrious as to command universal vassalage, or who can make his virtuous influence felt throughout the length and breadth of the whole world. To have such a ruler over the whole world is doubtless in conformity with the will of Heaven...." "join hands with nations whose principles are identical to those of our country". An alliance thus formed should also aim at protecting harmless but powerless nations. Such a policy could be nothing else but the enforcement of power and authority delegated (to us) by the Spirit of Heaven. Our national prestige and position thus insured, the nations of the world will look up to our Emperor as the Great Ruler of all nations, and they will follow our policy and submit themselves to our judgment."⁽¹⁾.

But Japan has not been the only country with unspeakable appetite for their neighbors. This has constantly existed in humanity in its struggle for power. Conquering and enslaving anyone who gets in their way has been one of man’s primary activities.

Yet, it’s interesting to find the masterpiece that, although denied by the Japanese, shows us, as in the former quotes, the absolute conviction with which a nation believes it has the right to take over the neighbor’s property. As we said, this looks very much like psychopathic.

In a filmed work presented by the United States Government, and produced by its Army Special Services Division, we had the first reference of a not much known today document, called “Tanaka Memoranda”. The work, composed by seven films, is called ”Why we fight”. The following is not from these films, but from Internet. It is, in essence, the same:

Memoranda Presented to Emperor of Japan on July 25, 1927 by Premier Baron Gi-ichi Tanaka.

“... upon my appointment as premier, I was instructed to guard our interests in this region and watch for opportunities for further expansion”.

“in order that we may lay plans for the colonization of the Far East and the development of our new continental empire, a special conference was held from June 27th to July 7th”

“These we respectfully submit to Your Majesty for consideration”.

“It seems that it was by divine will that I should assist Your Majesty to open a new era in the Far East and to develop the new continental empire”.

“Japan cannot remove the difficulties in Eastern Asia unless she adopts a policy of Blood and Iron”.

“In the future, if we want to control China, we must first crush the United States just as in the past we had to fight in the Russo-Japanese War.”

“But in order to conquer China we must first conquer Manchuria and Mongolia. In order to conquer the world, we must first conquer China. If we succeed in conquering China the rest of the Asiatic countries and the South Sea countries will fear us and surrender to us. Then the world will realize that Eastern Asia is ours and will not dare violate our rights. This is the plan left to us by Emperor Meiji, the success of which is essential to our national Existence”.

“Having China's entire resources at our disposal we shall proceed to conquer India, the Archipelago, Asia Minor, Central Asia, and even Europe”. But to get control of Manchuria and Mongolia is the first step if the Yamato race wishes to distinguish itself in Continental Asia”.

“But the credibility of the report need not rest on any of these circumstances, nor be weakened by Japanese official denials. It does not contain a word which does not fit in with the well-known ideas and policies of Baron Tanaka and group of militarists of whom he was the leader. Furthermore, there has not been an official action of Japan in China for the past ten years which has not followed the lines laid out in the memoranda. If the memoranda was never written and never presented to the Emperor, then it is a very curious and unaccountable circumstance that it should form the basis for Japanese policy”⁽²⁾.

(1). Peter Myers. August 27, 2001. <http://users.cyberone.com.au/myers/tanaka.html>.

(2). Memoranda Tanaka. George Allen & Unwin. London. 1942. Introduction by Carl Crow.

II - Malvinas (Falklands) coincidences: 1914, 1939 y 1982.

1914: Battle of the Falklands Island (Islas Malvinas).

At the early beginning of the First World War, a German fleet under **Admiral Graf von Spee** command, destroyed a British one at the Battle of Coronel Is, near the Chilean coast. After it, von Spee went on South, and going through the Magellan Strait, directed himself towards Falkland Is. He ignored that the British Admiralty had reinforced Falkland's Squadron with two battle cruisers, the **Inflexible** and the **Invincible**, with which, after a brief chase, Admiral Sturdee destroyed the German fleet, in a fight in which Admiral von Spee was killed. **Two years later, the battle cruiser Invincible, was blown up at the first moments of the Battle of Jutland**, by the vanguard ships of the German Fleet, under **admiral Scheer's** command. On board, Admiral **Hood** was killed.

1939: Battle of the River Plate.

In the Second World War, the Falkland Squadron was directed by its commander, commodore Harwood, to the River Plate's mouth. There he thought pocket battleship **Admiral Graf Spee**, sister ship of **Admiral Scheer**, was looking for convoys carrying food from Argentina to Great Britain. Cruisers **Exeter**, **Ajax** y **Achilles**, found the German ship, fought against it, and obliged it to flee to Montevideo. Before this, pocket battleship damaged the **Exeter** which had to abandon the battle and sail back to England. The German ship, **was sunk** by his commander captain Langsdorff in the River Plate. **Exeter was sunk two years later**, by the Japanese. Also **two years later, the battle cruiser Hood, was blown up at the first moments of the battle** against the German battleship **Bismarck**.

1982: War of the South Atlantic.

In the War of the South Atlantic, even the British denied it, the carrier **Invincible**, was apparently damaged by an Exocet missile launched from an Argentine Super Etendard plane. The destroyer **Exeter** was damaged, with conventional bombs, by Argentine planes.

5 - WARS AND DICTATORSHIPS OF THE XX CENTURY

There have always been wars but the first half of the twentieth century experienced the paroxysm of war. When humanity ripened, it decided to pressure empires and kingdoms to replace them for democracies. The American and French Revolution led the way and they were soon followed by all North and South American countries. At the beginning of the century only a few empires remained in the world. The defeat in the First World War put an end to the German, the Austro-Hungarian and the Turkish, and as an indirect consequence of that war through communism, the Russian Empire. But the people's maturity wasn't complete and human beings were still afraid of leading their own fates. Then, some of those empires were replaced by dictatorships like that of Adolph Hitler's nazism in Germany and Joseph Stalin's in Russia. Mussolini's Fascism, in Italy and militarists in Japan completed the picture. If the first war led to dictatorships, dictatorships led to the second one. The period that started in 1941 and ended in 1945 gave the twentieth century several not so honorable records of dead human beings⁽¹⁾.

As for the League of Nations, also created with the best of intentions, proved to all the scum of society exerting power in certain countries, that the world was helpless and that they could get hold of whatever their glorious nations deserved for the mere reason of existing.

The evident uselessness of the "League of Nations", mediocre forbearer of the United Nations, was the helpless scenario of all this and some previous attempts, like the "magnificent" Japanese taking Manchuria away from the Chinese, and the heroic attacks of a military genius like Mussolini on "powerful" African countries like Libya and Ethiopia. The League of Nations was a failure borne of the First World War, and just like the Treaty of Versailles, one was as criminal as the other.

One of the big mistakes in human history was the Treaty of Versailles, official closure to the First World War. But all that the victors got out of it was to start the gestation of a second war. The ancient idea that the defeated enemy had to be murdered, had throughout the centuries given way to war debts. This was in fact true looting used to punish losers, mistaking defeat for guilt. Because it was the defeated who took the blame, instead of those responsible for the tragedies.

But nobody could really blame Germany for starting the First World War. Was not the list of disgraceful alliances, carelessly done without trying to achieve global consensus in an era when fulfilling treaties was a question of honor, more responsible than anybody? But those that won, won, and the losers were ferociously punished with a succession of payments that ensured that Germany would never recover from the disaster. The human being will never be an expert in his own nature. The German people had never become aware of their own defeat. Noble expressions like that of French Marshall Foch when he said: "They have fought well, let them return with their weapons" were interpreted – in absolute good faith – as if the November 1918 armistice set an end to a very even fight. Especially when, in March of that same year, the German army, led by the great tactician Hindenburg and his brilliant strategist Ludendorff had run over the Allies. They had been very close to Paris before this last great effort definitively unbalanced the economy of the German Empire, thereby bringing them to their knees. There was no popular awareness of that reality and people felt let down and betrayed. The popular sense of uneasiness is a very dangerous seeding ground and the fall of the Emperor left a great emptiness in it. Poverty and hunger led the scarce small remaining energies to political chaos – in favor of a very weak democratic government like that of the Weimar Republic – and to street riots between the left and many army members, now unemployed. The void deepened and someone got ready to fill it, and did it quite well, indeed: Adolph Hitler. Having to listen to him for twelve years was the price paid for not listening to German Minister Matthias Erzberger, armistice signer, when he warned them that their conditions would lead them to misery: "Seventy million people can suffer, but they cannot die". Hindenburg, as president, seemed a solution, but without Ludendorff at his side, committed history's greatest error, by appointing Hitler as chancellor. Ludendorff told him in a letter: *"I solemnly predict that this damned man will push our Reich to the abyss. He will drag the nation to unprecedented sufferings and the curse of human beings will follow you to the grave for what you have done"*. But the treaty and the Society were not the only descendants that the Great War, fortunately ended in 1918, gave the world. Ten million deaths, ten million handicapped, the atrocious influenza epidemic that killed no less than forty to sixty million disposable human beings, were born from its prolific womb. The exact amount is not accurately known; nobody thought of wasting time counting when there were more important things to do. There was, for

example, this other monster born from the First World War called Communism that had to be spread to achieve the complete enslavement of the world. Having slaughtered enough people, it had to try to enslave those that remained. These couldn't get away with it so easily. The Russian Civil War appeared, between "red" Communists and "white" Czarists. The free world backed the latter, but fate decided that the others would win, and the Czarist's cruelty perfectly matched the cruelty of Communism that followed. In those times, a character sinister enough to compete with Adolph Hitler, Josiff Vissarionovic Dzougashvili or simply "Stalin", managed to take over the leadership of the brand new Soviet Union. He was the other beloved son of the Great War. The world never got to understand all his values and was entertained in minutiae such as, for example, that he, all by himself, ordered the killing within his boundaries of forty million countrymen. More than the First World War and two thirds of the unparalleled record of the Second. But Stalin's notable achievement was of a political nature: he managed to have a fascist government in a Communist nation. He was a genius. He had taken over Lenin's and Trotsky's communist revolution and, tragically for Russia and for all of Europe, signed a no-aggression pact with Hitler, in spite of enormous ideological differences. This allowed the eminent Austrian corporal to take over nearly all of Europe before turning – obviously – against good old Stalin. He attacked "Uncle Joe" without giving notice, of course; that's what made it so thrilling for the Fuehrer. **There can't be tactical agreements about strategic disagreements.** This treaty between these two men cost the Soviet Union more than twenty million deaths. Nothing serious if you consider that they were used to digging grave holes in the snow. War caused other forty million deaths to the rest of the world.

The reader is likely aware of the serious deficiency of the Axis by failing to act in a coordinated way. This is shown in that Japan in April 1941 signed a friendship agreement with the Soviet Union for no less than five years. At the time, Hitler had already decided to attack Stalin. Maybe Hitler should have done something else to keep Japan from turning against the United States, which could be expected from the signature of that agreement. The reason for the German dictator not "going that extra mile" could be found in the idea, not far from reality, that the endurance of the USSR was limited. And the theory was very close to be proven right. But "greed ruins the pocket". The eagerness not to share the booty with their Japanese allies took them down when the strategic mistake of delaying the assault on Moscow allowed the Soviets to retain their capital city and to start to develop a monstrous military power behind the Caucasus. This was based on infinite human resources, an industry at war and aided by the shipments from Great Britain and United States, which were very strong after Midway. This provided more than ten million soldiers with excellent war equipment. So much has been written on how the victors won the Second World War, that it might be more interesting to explain how the losers lost it.

Few times in history has human cruelty reached such an enviable level of efficiency. To the deaths mentioned before, we could add a similar number of wounded. Nearly all Europe was destroyed down to its foundations and a good part of Japan, too. Hunger and lack of shelter, were the main staples for most of the population. Families were destroyed, heroes were dead and criminals hiding. If you, dear reader, want to calculate the cost of the war, don't forget adding to the things destroyed, the hours of work lost in making armament already destroyed or ready to be; hours of work employed in the caring of ill, wounded or mad people because of the war, and hours of work of the dead or wounded youth; hours spent in fighting, and finally all materials employed in war things, instead of much more useful ones. Japanese militarism and European Nazi-Fascism became history and were replaced by a cold war between victorious Allies, with the threat of a nuclear and biological war that by divine grace and, for the time being, seem to be forgotten. ⁽¹⁾.

GLOBAL DEATH FIGURES 1914-1945 (ballpark figures)	
World War One	8,700,000
World War Two	56,783,400
Good old Stalin	40,000,000
Modest Hitler (concentration camps and SS executions)	5,754,000
Spanish Civil War 1936-1939	1,350,000
Avian Flu Epidemics 1918 (consequence of World War One)	50,000,000
Total	162,537,400

6 - THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The Second World War began in Europe when the Japanese were already in their miserable war to conquer China. Mussolini had accomplished his “glorious” annexations of Libya and Ethiopia, and Franco’s nationalists had vanquished the Republican left in Spain. As they had, seventeen years before, with German Minister Matthias Erzberger, the world didn’t listen to Emperor Haile Selassie’s words at the League of Nations: ‘Now it is us, tomorrow it will be you’, and it was only 1935. Germany invaded Poland on September 1st, 1939. The British and their French partners had no other choice but to execute the assurance given to Poland in a desperate attempt to stop Hitler. Both war declarations were given to Hitler on September 3rd and tragedy fell on the world. Fighting in Poland lasted a few days, and this poor nation capitulated. The German military control continued in the western area, and the Soviet Union occupied the eastern area, according to secret terms of the non-aggression treaty signed with Hitler. Throughout the following year, the German armies turned on nations around Germany counter clockwise. One by one they went down: Norway, Denmark, Holland, Luxemburg, Belgium and, believe it or not, France. It supposedly had the best army in the world, and the famous ‘Maginot Line’ of modern fortifications. Great Britain would be the next victim, but Goering’s Luftwaffe was not able to destroy the Royal Air Force and it was impossible for German armies to cross the Channel. It was the first victory of the Allies; what Churchill called ‘Battle of Britain’. The other battle that saved Great Britain was the Atlantic Battle, a cruel campaign against German submarines that were trying to keep resources from arriving to Britain. Mussolini’s clumsy attempt against Greece forced Hitler to invade this country and Yugoslavia, and this delayed his traitorous attack against the USSR, as had always been his plan. This eventually ruined the German Armies because they arrived to Moscow too late and were rejected there for two hundred miles by the Siberian troops under the best General of the 20th Century, Gheorghii Konstantinovich Zhukov, later Russian Marshall. It was December 6th, 1941, and on following day on the other side of the world, six Japanese aircraft carriers destroyed the largest battle fleet in the Pacific at Pearl Harbor. By now it was a world war, and the final destiny of the Hitler-Mussolini-Hirohito ‘Axis’ would be sealed if America could intervene in Europe. Fletcher’s victories at Coral Sea and Midway, and the Guadalcanal Campaign allowed that to happen. The first victim of American participation in the European war, was the Italian-German Armored Army – that included the famed Afrikakorps – under ‘Desert Fox’ Marshal Erwin Johannes Eugen Rommel’s orders in Northern Africa. Between October 1942 and March 1943, Africa, Stalingrad, and Guadalcanal were liberated. The victory of the Soviet Army in Stalingrad, in part with American supplies, forced the way out of the Axis, with no turning back. The constant bombing of the American Eighth Air Force from Great Britain during the day and the British Bomber Command at night was destroying the Germans’s industrial machinery. The last great battle that closed the set of glorious victories began at Coral Sea and Midway; was that of Kursk, in Russia, in mid 1943. The invasion of Italy in 1943 and that of Normandy in 1944, began great campaigns at the end of the war, that set three million soldiers on European land. The German Army was being destroyed little by little, when taken between two fires by these forces and the Soviet ones. Yet, Hitler succeeded in mounting a counterattack against the American front – the famous Ardennes – but was controlled in few days and won in few weeks – with multiple heroic acts by American troops. Germany surrendered on May 7th, 1945. At that time, in the Pacific, Americans and Japanese were fighting the great battle of Okinawa, which was preceded by Iwo-Jima which gave aerial bases to the US. They were needed to begin an overwhelming bombardment that ended with the explosion of two Atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This and the Soviet attack against the Japanese Imperial Army of Manchuria, closed military operations. Japan surrendered on August 15th 1945, and the final ceremony, on board the battleship *Missouri*, was on September 2nd of the same year. It was six years and one day after the German attack on Poland. The ill-matched brothers, capitalism and communism, became the owners of humanity and German and Japanese superior races were on their knees. If they are great countries today, its surely because of its working and organizing capacities, and the financial help received from USA. We chose for this book, the Pacific War, and of its nearly four years ⁽¹⁾, the months immediately after Pearl Harbor: **“The Days of Fletcher”**.

⁽¹⁾. ”The burning of Tokyo took more lives. However, it took this dramatic and visible improvement in munitions to force the leadership to give in. (James L. Bauer. Webmaster ww2pacific.com).

7 - WHY THAT WAR AND THOSE MONTHS?

- Because it was a simpler diagram: two countries, two cultures, two civilizations. Europe's main players were infected with temporary ideologies. The essence of the Russian people wasn't Marxism, just as that of the German people wasn't Nazism or the essence of the Italian people wasn't Fascism.
- Because they contained two of the most stupid acts in Japanese history and even in all of war's history: Pearl Harbor and Midway.
- Because they marked the mental progress of one of the sides in an extraordinary way.
- Because they showed how one of the sides had the right men at the right time and this does not happen by chance. When a country can draw such an advantage to its favor, it's because behind such ease there are many years of hard work in the training and education of the leaders. This applies not only to the armed forces but to each and every aspect of team work. As one follows the development of its industry to full production in those months, it gives evidence that if they could do it, it was because of the level of their leaders. While studying the American behavior in that period, we'll be amazed by an event which isn't given the due attention: **success is based on training and education**. These are demanded, in the first place by those that hold or want to hold the highest level. *"The serious and responsible leaders of a great country can only emerge from those that are intellectually better endowed and prepared not from the mediocre that only seek incidental successes, easy to obtain without an effort or purely personal, without a superior purpose that encourages them."*⁽¹⁾ .
- Because they show how victory makes you arrogant in such a way, that its beloved offspring is usually defeat and inversely, how starting from defeat you can reach victory.
- Because they contrast the emotional with the intellectual. Myth and dogma against information and analysis.
- Because they turned out to be the most glorious hours for the Japanese Empire and the hardest and most difficult for the United States of America, although it had the deepest change and preparation in the psychological, warfare and industrial aspect. Methodic and diligent changes and preparation that deserve to be remembered. They can also be taken as an example because starting from them, and from the unforgettable day of June 4th, 1942, the nation went from the darkest night to the brightest day.
- Because in those six months, a cruiser officer, a "black shoes", was placed in command of aircraft carrier task forces. Setting aside the anger and rivalry of the naval aviators and the arrogance, resentment and arbitrariness of a very high ranking naval authority, he learned and taught the operation of those ships and he led them to victory. He was called Franck Jack Fletcher. **A certain Admiral Fletcher**.

⁽¹⁾ Rear Admiral Guillermo Delamer.

A man that knew how to give the world the significance of his command and the dignity of his silence in an age in which everything seems to teach that in the way to advancement, even better than to know how to do it right is to know how to sell greatly what one does **or if not done why not?**

PART TWO

A CERTAIN ADMIRAL FLETCHER

NON SIBI, SED PATROAE

“The US Asiatic Fleet, the British Far East Fleet and the Dutch East Indian were destroyed by the Imperial Japanese Navy, without losses to themselves, until they encountered Fletcher”. (James Bauer. Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher. ww2pacific.com)

‘Washington believed the US Navy could accomplish anything with the nothing they had provided. Japan made paper toys for children; the US was an industrial power. But the ship counts provided a reality quite different from the mindset in Washington’ ‘Fletcher’s situation is that his force was small, born out of years of depression and isolationism; the major resource on the American side was his talent, he had to stop the enemy without losing the few ships he had available’ (James L. Bauer. From e-mail to the author)

Jack had his enemies, but “who doesn’t have enemies, doesn’t have talent that can shadow, personality that imposes, fearsome courage, coveted honor or house that is envied” (Gracian)

“Fletcher’s sinking of six enemy carriers, made him the most successful admiral of the war”. (Wikipedia Encyclopedia).

8 - WHY FLETCHER?

- 1) Because he was the commander of a victorious fleet in naval battles that stopped Japan's advance. Especially one victory - Midway - which was the most significant of the American military in the Second World War.
- 2) Because it was he who had to confront – with scarcely any resources – a very powerful enemy and having promptly met all great objectives that were set out for him, today he's remembered by nobody.
- 3) Because there are few cases in history in which a decisive battle, and of such deep consequences as was the battle of Midway, the victorious commander's decisions have been – one after another – so incomparable perfect.
- 4) Because his spotless professional skill and his concerns about organization gave him the rare privilege of being the forerunner of a complete section of the human activity formerly reserved for the highest level, as a part of the general strategy. Today all levels, except the tactical, are strategic-operational ⁽¹⁾, assigning, planning and supervising objectives of the following levels. This led to the "Administration by Objectives", and later, to the "Balanced Scorecard".
- 5) Because it seldom happens that a public man reflects in such a utterly complete way the most noble virtues of a nation like Frank Jack Fletcher reflects the true and deep values of the people of the United States.
- 6) Because he felt great respect for human life. His initiative of using destroyers to rescue fallen pilots, and his firm conviction of not risking lives, unless absolutely necessary in the frame of strategy, proved it. He sustained MacArthur's "No substitute for victory". He would never have attacked for the King's pleasure of "punishing the enemy", or to win a decoration as certain First World War Generals.
- 7) Because when after eight months at sea "without so much as a shore leave or long rest" winning three battles, was moved – already as a Vice Admiral – to a desk, he offered to retreat from this rank, if necessary, to return to the combat risks.
- 8) Because those of us who hesitate to make commonplace decisions need to revive the moments that life set in the way of certain men so as to understand their dimensions. A small girl said to the old Marshall Joffre in a school ceremony "it's an honor to see you again, Marshall – and the Marshall asked, "young girl, where have you seen me before"? She answered, "in history, Marshall".
- 9) Because a lot has been written, and many times badly, about these subjects. Also, many writers didn't go deeper at all and limited themselves to copy from others, who in turn hadn't done so either. So they adopted absolutely elemental positions without investigating anything, nor extracting from historical experiences, lessons that help man elevate himself as such.

⁽¹⁾. "Research into the original documents and a careful examination of the written histories provide a different insight into the roots of the decision, particularly when evaluating the decision with some principles of operational thinking as opposed to the sometimes disjointed tactical and strategic thought of 1942". (Hughes, W. Naval War College Newport RI 'Vice Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher: Scapegoat or Operational Artist?' Final Rept 19 Dec 92-22 Feb 93ADA263953

9 - FRANK JACK FLETCHER

Frank Jack Fletcher graduated from the Naval Academy at Annapolis with the class of 1906. He was born in Marshalltown, Iowa in a well-off high middle class family and married a wealthy heiress, Martha Richards, who came from a traditional Kansas family. They didn't have children and after living some time in Kansas moved to a historic mansion near La Plata, Maryland, south of Washington D.C. The great house called "Arabie" had a ninety-two acres park and was bought by Martha and Jack in 1935. His grandfather on his mother's side was a banker; his father a businessman, and his father's brother was Admiral Frank Friday Fletcher. Uncle Friday was Commander in Chief of the Atlantic Fleet from 1914 to 1916. Jack Fletcher participated under his orders at Veracruz actions being awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. In WWI, he was awarded the "Navy Cross" for antisubmarine action as commanding officer of destroyer *USS Benham* (DD49). In WWII he learned how to command combat task forces that were led by carriers when nobody knew how. He did it for nine months after the attack on Pearl Harbor. During these long months, Fletcher established himself as a "self made man" in the use of carriers, to later become the most talented carrier commander of the U S Navy. It was when Japan fought with a winning spirit and an unbreakable will and when there was no proven doctrine for the use of carriers in aerial

warfare. Everything was new in those days: the men, the task forces, the concepts and the proceedings. It was also new for Fletcher, who was not an aviator, to be on a carrier. He was a cruiser and battleship officer, a “Cruiser Skipper” or a “Black Shoes”, which is how they called the officers that weren’t flyers in the Navy. This was because not being flyers they couldn’t wear the brown shoes of the pilots. Nevertheless, in the following months – being Fletcher the first and only carrier commander in battle – he established guidelines and proceedings that would improve the usage of this new weapon that reigned the seas. He, therefore, had to address an area never covered before, in the midst of a real war. He learned on the tough field of trial and improvement. He proved he was up to the job, and capable of overcoming all obstacles. Through his struggle and step by step learning he helped create a doctrine of use of carriers while he managed to cage the lion that roared in the immensity of the Pacific ⁽¹⁾. This let much of the support go to Europe and started the Allied victory in WWII. And being the admiral that had to face the most unfavorable conditions of that war, was nevertheless, the most successful commander in combat of the United States Navy in the XXth Century. He was “Senior Officer Present Afloat” in the Coral Sea carrier battle and “Senior Officer Present Afloat” and Officer in Tactical Command (OTC) in those of Midway and the Eastern Solomon Sea, also of carriers. These were the three he was involved in. These fully represented sixty percent of all carrier battles in all history. In them, six Japanese carriers were destroyed in exchange for two from the United States. This made up sixty percent of Japan’s carriers and sixty-six percent of fleet carriers. In these three cases, he thwarted very dangerous landings and Japan lost its best flyers. Even confronting his enemies with a minority of carriers, and also in minority of other ships, he won all those battles, being awarded for the first time with the Distinguished Services Medal.

Japan had taken two islands in Alaska. With the Pacific threat reduced, he was needed back home to calm – with his great prestige – the American people’s fear of a possible Japanese invasion through Alaska and the Kuril Islands. He fulfilled it, taking command of a disorganized, competitive and not always having congenial relationship among the different naval and army commands, civil servants and contractors, as well as the same groups from Canada. His early accomplishments were to cooperate in the organization, planning and goals for the defense. He was one of the highest regarded persons at that time and if he called a meeting, people would listen and do what he decided.

Later he was North Pacific Commander, one of the five most important posts in that great part of the world. Defying distance, Fletcher helped Nimitz with the strategic planning. He dealt with the practical relationship with the Soviet allies in regard to resources and training personnel in their use.. He was also responsible for planning the occupation of northern Japan - this territory was in his zone – and received their surrender at the end of the war. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal – for the second time - by the War Department for “. . . his professional ability and able leadership in the vast wartime expansion and organization of naval installations in the North Pacific Area . . . between October 1943 and August 1945”. Nevertheless, despite this overwhelming file of service records, it must surprise everybody that he was forgotten. But if his name isn’t further recognized, it’s because he saw a higher calling than personal gain in fighting a war. He put his whole effort into victory taking no concern for personal glory – and he paid the price of virtual anonymity in the press then and in history books since – because his sense of duty allowed him to take no part of himself away from the cause to give a record of personal achievements ⁽²⁾. Neither did he want, after the war, to take part, as did some of his colleagues, in a petty, miserable fight for a piece of glory, which was won at the stake of his young warriors. Moreover, he was a “born strategist”, with a complete knowledge of time and space perspectives, crowned with a noteworthy intuition. This took him away from the comprehension by common people – and from many writers – even while being the clear victor in the really decisive battles in the Pacific War.

⁽¹⁾ *‘Fletcher’s step by step learning – not through making errors, but observing results – from his cruiser flagship, at Wake Island. He got used to the routines of a carrier in Yorktown escorting marines to Samoa, experienced multiple carrier operations with Lexington (Brown) in the aborted raid on Rabaul, and in the raid on New Guinea landing. Experienced total aloneness of command patrolling the Coral Sea while Philippines and East Indies fell to Japan and Dolittle’s Raid took place in the north. Fletcher aggressively attacked the Jap invasion force at Tulagi. He fought the experienced Japanese carriers at Coral Sea on equal terms and they withdrew. A perfect, step by step training’ (Bauer).*

⁽²⁾ See reference 3 page 274.

10 - FLETCHER AND EXCELENCE

For Fletcher it was always the best and the superior. It was never the subordinate ⁽¹⁾. Frank Jack Fletcher wasn't a genius – or was he? - but was an example of the application of the “way to excellence”. Nobody like him knew how to correct procedures in such a short time, and under such difficult circumstances. Nobody like him knew how to respect the knowledge and the merits of others and put the achievement of great objectives above personal desires. Nobody like him had understood that, in the new war between carriers, excellence could be the difference between living and giving out. That's the reason for the uncompromising demand and that's the reason for his obsession in “the search for excellence”. It was born in **the days of Fletcher**.

- (1) *“Recalling the rape of Nanking, the treachery of Pearl Harbor, the Death March of Bataan, and the murder, torture and starvation of our comrade in arms ours will not be an occupation in the Japanese manner. We have shown the Japanese and the world the superiority of our arms. Now we must demonstrate to the world and the Japanese people the superiority of these standards of justice and decency which we fought for.” (Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher when he received the surrender of the North of Japan. September 8, 1945).*

11 - THE AVENGER OF PEARL HARBOR

Nobody but Nimitz, this notable, pragmatic man and expert in men who was his boss, knew how to appreciate the calm, moderate, observant and firm character of the strategist Fletcher. He could compensate for the bold tactical spirit of other flag officers like Halsey. And also, why not, balance that of the Commander of the Pacific himself. And Frank could complement Nimitz's nature, of an administrator which strongly received the tactical influence of his boss, admiral King. Nimitz saw in Fletcher the mind needed to learn from his experiences and continually improve his own and others' procedures, in a time of fear, scarcity and upheaval. He needed a strategist for the non-structured new war – between carriers – and he kept hold of Fletcher despite the stigma of his having been “Kimmel's man”. Kimmel was the Commander of the Pacific Fleet when it was attacked at Pearl Harbor. It was an era of hardships and ungratefulness and Fletcher was the perfect example of one who “walks the talk” (and does it well), who was destroyed by those who just “talk the talk”. Nimitz forgave him for not knowing how to fly, giving him a message with deeds in the style of Calomarde: ⁽¹⁾ “Sir, black shoes don't offend” and Fletcher also knew, with deeds, to say: “favor with favor is paid”, when he stopped the invader. He had gone from least to most, with important observations in the carrier's operation like the need – when doing the job in pairs - of distributing obligations between both or the very valuable observation of maintaining these ships separated from each other so as not to be spotted simultaneously. He noticed this at Coral Sea, where he stopped the enemy's advance and used it successfully in Midway, where he stroke the final blow. Fletcher's contribution to the improvement of the wartime doctrine for the use of the carriers, which had, of course, been developed in time of peace, was very important. The outdated doctrine had disregarded the presence of *Queen Elizabeth* battleships in the battle of Jutland. It was also due to the excessive centralization at that time, almost without delegation, not even tactic, that Fletcher always fought against. Ray Spruance, who said he admired Fletcher for what he did at Midway, blessed what was practiced by his master in that and other battles. Fletcher was the true creator in them, maybe developing Husband Kimmel's idea, of the figure of “Fleet Commander”. Spruance made it official with the authority of Chief of the Staff of the Pacific Fleet two years later under Nimitz's command. When everyone made mistakes, when everyone was frightened, Fletcher constantly sailed and patrolled. He watched over the dream of a nation and of the free world, too. He established the basis of the “know how” for great fleets, those that he never got to command. Because he ran the first ones, the small ones, the only they had, the ones you had to take special care of, because they were so few, but made them win. And he took good care of them and made them win. Always at a disadvantage, with fewer ships than his opponent, he found a way to make them triumphant. He carried out attacks against enemy ports, the ports of a powerful enemy and made the foe retreat, in the first battle in history between carriers, saving Australia from an invasion. And on a day just like any other, in the periphery of Midway, he saved our liberty. He was Mr. Nobody; he was just the Cruiser, Pacific Fleet, Commander, he had come from the obscurity of his post to the center of the scene in the most difficult moment, the decisive one, and “the supreme hour of the Japanese Empire”. It was also “the supreme hour of his nation” and then he disappeared from the scene just as he had come. But by then the war had already been won. It was won in a very few months after Pearl Harbor; it was won in **the days of Fletcher**. ⁽¹⁾ See part 11 chapter: ‘138 – They are deceiving you!’

12 - WHAT IS VALUABLE AND WHAT SHINES

Those who lead make, with serene thinking and right decisions, men's victories. Many journalists and writers find that myths and theatrical poses sell better than wise analysis and deep knowledge. The British Field Marshall Montgomery was better known for his beret than for his tactics. People liked Halsey's outspoken optimism more than the enemies' carriers that were sunk. *"Even though it isn't the hand of the captain that fires the machinegun, it's the hand of the captain that points out, to the one who does it, where to place himself"*. (Herbert P. Simon. *The Administrative Behavior*). The common man knows little about the art of leadership, he just recognizes it when he sees it. The public understands very well the importance of the hand that fires the machine gun (**tactics**) and, to a lesser degree, understands the importance of the captain's hand (**strategy**). Therefore they're guided by gestures and theatrical poses. That's why people always gave more value to a Halsey, admirer of dramatic effects, than a Jack Fletcher who quietly went about the business of sinking enemy carriers. That's why "Bill" Halsey made it to the five stars (like King) and two giant warriors like Fletcher and Spruance couldn't. The first one wasn't even allowed to remain in combat, while having been the cause that Japan was left without its aviation. King never understood why Fletcher didn't want to gain prestige with the blood of his pilots, nor with the useless risk of his ships. He always said, like Jellicoe, "The battle will be my way, or there won't be any battle at all.(1) *"... no bastard ever won a war by dying for his country. He won it by making the other poor dumb bastard die for his country"*. (Attributed to General George S. Patton in film 'Patton'). However, it's fair to recognize that Doolittle's attack on Tokyo was one of those "dramatic effects" that paved Yamamoto's way for his suicidal adventure at Midway.

13 - HISTORY AND CLOSENESS

It is not easy to analyze history when it's so close in time and space. Passions take over, emotions interfere our capacity to think logically and, on top of that, we add information's manipulation, then the saying "in a war the **first victim is truth**", perfectly fits here.

The consequences of the recent past are that, while many of the actors in this history are still alive, they could influence, with their presence, friendship or prestige, those writing that history. And it gets even worse if, to the closeness, we add the proximity of space. That pressure is then magnified by the well deserved tributes of admiration that provoke strong reactions when faced with certain realities. Therefore, it isn't difficult to find the truth that others missed, especially if the writer is not involved. With evidences in front of us, the unbelievable number of inaccuracies is such that we could easily set ourselves up into thinking that we are the ones who are wrong. The more material we search through, the more truths we find and the more our personal findings are further confirmed. Many times the ones caught twisting the facts are people with many years of experience in the field. And it isn't a matter of incompetence. Simply put, they are committed to their own feelings. Every minute of every event being analyzed has implications that don't reach us, but interfere with the evaluation criteria of otherwise very valuable people.

14 - PRIVILEGED AUTHORS

We have read and quoted many authors, but some of them are especially interesting: Edwin Layton and Mitsuo Fuchida. Layton was the Pacific Fleet's Chief of Intelligence in times that go from before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor until the end of World War II. In other words, he had a front seat at the show and could stretch his hand and touch the leading actors of the American cast in the Pacific War. Such a location, better still than Mitsuo Fuchida's – leader of the attack on Pearl Harbor - on the Japanese scenery, spares us from any other comment on the reason for this interest. Layton reported directly to Nimitz and he was in permanent contact with Joseph Rochefort, chief of the intelligence unit Hypo on Pearl Harbor Base. Rochefort, who reported directly to the District Commander, Rear Admiral Claude C. Bloch, was in charge, as we'll see, of the deciphering team at Pearl Harbor. Finally, Mitsuo Fuchida, just mentioned as military boss, wrote a splendid book about the Battle of Midway, and his partner in the book was his comrade Masatake Okumiya.

15 - SOLDIERS WIN MEDALS . . .

The importance of the team isn't understood nor is the "hero" of the event looked for, when many times, not to say all, a good or even brilliant individual performance is due to the sound support work of other members of the team. This is originated in an excellent distribution of the job or its objectives by the head of the group. Music lovers know this very well, but some reporters and writers, in fact many, ignore it and show some attractive figure to the public, or they invent, as long as it allows them to sell more. The Japanese, who know a lot about teamwork, say that a man from China is superior to one from Japan. In ten against ten it balances and one hundred Japanese are superior to one hundred Chinese. Many people are not aware that **one of the major advances in human history is to pass from individual action to team action. The essence of the team operation is delegation.** Execution is delegated with the necessary authority and not the responsibility. Responsibility is in the hands of whoever manages the team, except that of the delegated – whose tasks can be rewarded or penalized by his superior. In the unforgettable battles of Coral Sea and Midway, there were two clear examples of delegation and no writer, at least not to our knowledge, has written a single line about Admiral Fletcher's underlying responsibility. At Midway, after the goal of destroying the enemy carriers had been achieved, he executed a 'devolution' of Task Force 16's Tactical Command to Spruance, On the other hand, at Coral Sea he delegated TC (tactical command) of the Carrier Group to his subordinate, Rear Admiral Fitch. So Fletcher put him in charge of the aerial action of the battle while he himself was still entirely responsible for the outcome. This was while his TF 17 executed the tactical orders of the new Officer in Tactical Command (OTC) Fitch. The Commander or "Senior Officer Present Afloat" always holds the strategic command. In Guadalcanal, the delegation of aerial handling in Noyes, allowed Fletcher – already without tactical concerns – to dedicate his time to evaluate the operational and general strategic situation. So, he could correctly decide the withdrawal of his carriers. Many people – far from strategic thinking – didn't understand it. Bear in mind that a layman perceives the tactical handling much more strongly than the strategic, so it is not surprising that – without anybody being able to explain why – Spruance's actions at Midway were better appreciated than Fletcher's real masterpiece. That is why we must not forget that: **soldiers win medals, generals win battles.**

16 - . . . GENERALS WIN BATTLES

The notable General Walter Bedell Smith, Eisenhower's impeccable Chief of Staff in Europe, once said how impressed he was by the immense solitude of his boss when he made the decisions that led to accomplishing the mission assigned to the Allied Expeditionary Forces in that region. The decision, understanding it as the administrative act that leads to the accomplishment of the objective, is the act of the superior executing his authority and the ultimate expression of his will. It is command in its most direct form and nature and is transmitted to the subordinate by way of an order. In his thoughts, Bedell Smith goes right to the core of the decision making process. **The absolutely defining feature of decision is solitude.** If the decision is the complete materialization of authority, it is also the mother of all responsibilities and thereby the loneliness of the decider. Decision making entails search and skill at inventing options, the evaluation of those options and the expert opinion of the staff as well as of subordinate commands. However, the supreme act, the choice of the one and only way among all possible ways is exclusive of the commanding officer. That is why he is left alone, that is why he is responsible. Hence, the corollary to all we have said: **"battles are won or lost by the commander"**, and if this were a presumption "*juris tantum*", that is to say "unless proven otherwise", it would be for those who don't see it that way to seek proof. But the author wants to be categorical and go much further: the presumption is "*juris et jure*"; that is, it does not admit proof to the contrary, therefore **"the battles are always won or lost by the commander"**. This is so because the risk of defeat is always his and to see it another way would be to admit a one-sided society. In the 20s, the elderly French Marshall Caesar J. J. Joffre, winner of the Battle of Marne (he avoided, in only one dawn, the defeat of the allied armies in the first month of the First World War), was interviewed by a reporter from "Life" magazine. At that moment he had made a big decision, drawn from General Gallieni's idea, and, inevitably, the interviewer asked the obvious question: Is it true Marshall, that the Battle of Marne was really won by General Gallieni? To which

the old warrior replied with a phrase that went from his mouth straight to the annals of French history and deserves a space in all the books about administration, structure and command, **“I don’t know who won it, Madame; what I do know very well is who would have lost it.”** Wouldn’t the responsibility of a catastrophe at Midway have fallen on Fletcher? Of course **and it would have been fair.** Historians considered Frank responsible for the loss of the *Lexington* at Coral Sea, **and they were right** because he was the “senior”. It didn’t matter and it didn’t have to, that the ship belonged to Fitch’s TF 11 or that he was the OTC (officer in tactical command) that day. The outcome of the battle is owed to the team and the team follows the commander’s plan. In chess, victory or defeat isn’t by the Queen or the Knight, but by the player. Thus, Fletcher was also responsible for the loss of *Yorktown*. But then, credit for the six enemy carriers sunk in three battles fought and landings frustrated also have to be his. Defeat has only one father and it’s fair for the victory to be so too. We’ll support the truth of this concept, in each and every single word and paragraph of **“The days of Fletcher”**

FRANK JACK FLETCHER

Marshalltown, Iowa

“Fletch” “Flap-Jack”



“You sunburned sicklemen, of August weary,
Come hither from the furrow, and be merry.”
--Shakespeare

Two stripes (1) Santee (2)

A strenuous son of the Middle West. Proud of Iowa’s corn and hogs. Savez, but has taken easy his four years of life with “Wid.” Talks forcibly with both hands. Made a heavy bid for adjutant, but Cap. Kidd’s shaped-to-order leggings finally distanced him. Though not a Y.M.C.A. man is a model youth. Has a sunny disposition and a hearty laugh, which once got him a thirty-day sentence. Had the pleasure of reading the order disrating himself. First cousin of the breech mechanism but doesn’t savez it. “Well, now, I’ll tell yeh.”

Yearbook of the United States Naval Academy, The Lucky Bag of 1906, p. 82

You've started to know Fletcher, Midway's Fletcher, the one who beat all that got in his way. Frank Jack Fletcher: tttt he one who shared the management of the US Navy's aircraft carriers with William Halsey in the first actions against Japan after Pearl Harbor. But Halsey's nerves made him sick even before going into battle. And Fletcher was left alone at the head of the only ships of that class available, alone to learn how to use them, alone at the head of his fellow countrymen's fear, alone to face a very powerfull, well armed, highly trained enemy which also had the necessary experience to perform.

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You've started to learn the author, who will be the pilot that will take you on this "Trip from History to Strategy" which he promises from the cover of his book "The Days of Fletcher". You've seen that he leads you to key points of his account with lots of information. He isn't the author of a tactical nature that'll show you thousands of stories of Fletcher's planes. Tactical authors believe that by knowing thousands of stories and thousands of details you can get to know the battle's essence. And they're wrong. As he isn't a tactical author, he'll take you to crucial moments. To the uncomparable moments in which an also uncomparable commander made decisions that, without our knowledge, involved us because they involved the future of all men.

What did the man know what decisión to make? What alternatives did he have? What feelings drove him? How did he face his decisions? Which were the tactical and strategical considerations he considered to make them? What would have happened if he had made others instead? This is what is important and what'll let you share Fletcher's strategic thoughts and learn from him how to apply them.

If depth is what you're looking for, subscribe to our bulletin. Apart from getting the third and fourth part of this book for free, weekly you'll also receive our proposals, comments and information, as well as the description of 150 mistakes about Fletcher that we've found in history, together with the opportunity to see your ideas and opinions published. You'll also be getting chapters of our article "Proceed Southwesterly", where we compare Fletcher's and Spruance's performances in the Battle of Midway. Finally, you'll have the possibility to buy the rest of the book "[The Days of Fletcher](#)", at only 60% of the price for the whole book. The subscription doesn't imply any expense at all. We look forward to hearing from you.



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29 July 2008

Dear Mr. del Castillo,

Thank you very much for a copy of your superb book on Admiral Frank Fletcher. It is a fascinating account of a very critical time in U.S. history. We appreciate your continued support.

Sincerely,

TIMOTHY J. KEATING
Admiral, U.S. Navy