

## PACIFIC PARADOX

R. MacDougall, '46

We often heard that her navy was a fleet of tin ships, vastly inferior to its British and American counterparts. It was said that her airmen could not stand the physical rigors of high altitude flying. Her soldiers were no match for white troops. Then our illusions crashed to earth; what we witnessed made our heads swim. These little yellow inferiors had out-hitlered Hitler at his own game. They struck with inconceivable treachery their strength was awful. Their tin fleet punched its way through all opposition to control the tepid waters of the far east. Their airforce crippled as it killed, sinking the mightiest British and American men of war. Her soldiers moved stealthily, swiftly, and surely. Singapore, Bataan, Burma, the Indies fell. Yes, our underrated yellow enemies had accomplished in less than six months what we thought they would never dare dream of doing.

Hitler had been at war with England and her Empire for over two years. He had plowed over continental Europe, taken Norway and enjoyed limited success in Africa. When he had to make a choice between Britain and Russia as his next victim, he chose Russia. His great drive on Moscow petered out as an early and hard winter settled on the plains of Russia. The conquered countries to the west were causing him no slight amount of trouble. American supplies were reaching Britain and Russia in ever increasing quantities. The strengthened Empire forces in Africa were making dangerous headway towards Tripoli. His somewhat dejected subjects needed the tonic of more Hun victories. He found his medicine in the far Pacific in the form of a Rising Sun. Germany and Japan had joined hands in the past for certain economic reasons and also because of their common hatred of things Russian. Japan had long wished to see the Orient free of the white man. For Japan could use the material wealth and the manpower of the Orient to suit her own scheme of empire. Such a hatred of the white man coupled with the religious fanaticism of these people explains their willingness to fight for Germany against other nations so much larger than herself. Hitler gave the signal and Japan prepared to strike.



They struck in the early hours of Dec. 7th. The American fleet was swinging at anchor in the roadstead off Diamond Head inside famous Pearl Harbour in the Hawaiian Islands. As war had not as yet been declared the fleet was spending Sunday as usual. When the smoke of that uneven battle cleared, the U. S. was at war, with a fleet whose striking power had been cut far below the enemies' in the first hours of it. Then the whole east fell to the ever advancing yellow man. Guam, Wake, and Hong Kong fell in the surprise of the initial attacks. The Empire army in Malaya could offer no great opposition to the Jap as he filtered his way down the peninsula in record time. The city of Singapore was to be defended by sea only, as the peninsula was thought to be impregnable. With the loss of two capital ships and without air power, the fortress fell. General MacArthur withdrew with a small force of American regulars and Philippine guardsmen into Bataan Peninsula. Here he battled with the enemy and tied up Manila Harbour for over five months. With the Malaya Straits in yellow hands, the enemy over-ran the Dutch East Indies in a matter of days. It was in Java that the Allies made their first attempts to fight as one nation with a common enemy. In the Java Sea the Allied fleet made its first serious attempt to wrest control of the seas from Japan. The Allies lost everything in this battle. The only course of action left was to retreat further south to Australia. The Empire forces in Burma slowly withdrew into India. This long, dangerous trek was accomplished in masterful fashion. And so ended the first phase of our war with Japan. The Jap had won control of the land, air, and sea to take his initial objectives in the first half year of the war.

General MacArthur, having been snatched from Bataan, arrived in Australia to take command of the combined Australian and American forces there. General Wavell took command of the remaining British forces in India, while the monsoons put an end to activity on that front. Japan apparently was consolidating her new positions at this time. She could strike now in any one of three directions. An attack upon Siberia would have been delightful to Hitler but hardly worth the price to Japan. India was wide open on her Burma front, but the weather nullified any such action for the summer months. The road south to Australia looked the easiest. Accordingly the Japs moved southward, seizing the Islands north of Australia. In the



interim the U. S. fleet had patched its wounds and moved southwest from Pearl Harbour. A determined effort to hold Australia had to be made, for if Australia were to fall the war in the Pacific was lost for the present. Thus began the battle of the supply lanes. Japan knew that unless the country down under was kept well supplied with men and munitions, she would soon fall victim to the green clad army creeping down from the north.

American naval task forces ranging north of Australia had been causing trouble in the Jap-held Islands there. These forces were protecting the supply lanes to the south. These same supply lanes the Japs undertook to disrupt. The battle of the Coral sea was to the north of these waters. It was the first indication of what to expect in this type of warfare. Carrier-based planes swarmed over the opposing fleets, and the U. S. Navy won its first victory of the war without having fired a gun at an enemy ship. The Japs came to the conclusion that the fleet wasn't going to be beaten so very easily. They decided to give it a dose of what they had intended to give Australia, to destroy and capture its base of supply. Accordingly a feint was made in the direction of Alaska in the hope of diverting the U. S. naval strength. The U. S. commanders were not to be so easily fooled this time and when the enemy armada was yet far from small Midway Island it was swamped under the impact of the American aerial attack. What was left floating withdrew in disorder. The Alaskan bluff was called by Canadian and American airmen flying together for the first time in this war. The small Jap forces have been forced to withdraw as quickly as aerial pressure could be launched against them. American marines landed in the southern group of the Solomon Islands in August. We were now going on the offensive. Since the ultimate control of these and the other Pacific Islands lies with the side controlling the adjacent waters, the battle here has been of the see-saw type with both sides reluctant to expose their heavy ships to land-based air power. This offensive movement should gain in momentum as new supplies and forces reach the far Pacific. Japan's initial advantages of surprise and numerical supremacy have worn off.

Though the battle fields of Europe and Asia are not correlated as far as the actual fighting goes, the ultimate results reached on one will affect the course of the other. With Hitler and Stooze chased from the Mediterranean,



strong units of the British Navy may well be sent to the far east. Japan will rue the day that she attacked Pearl Harbour and captured Singapore. The mistakes of this last year will make possible the triumphs of the future. We shall inevitably win if we keep on the offensive. We have made a start in that direction and we will keep it up.

### THE DONOVANS

F. A. Brennan, '43

The flame of the sanctuary lamp flickered and cast its red warmth on the huge marble pillars about it. There was peace here in the Cathedral on west Avenue. The fury of war had not hit this dwelling of the Most High. Still reigning on His small yet mighty throne the Prince of Peace was at home to one such as Mary Donovan, who knelt before Him.

"Dear Lord, watch over my husband. Protect and shield him from all the dangers of war. I love him, O God; do Thou love him also—I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator . . . . ."

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Outside Dieppe two soldiers lay, trapped in a little hollow. All around them guns roared and sputtered, as livid streaks of fire shot against the sky—a savage scene, unearthly demoniacal, a scene rivalling that of hell.

"It's an awful business, Fred," said Jim Donovan, as he twisted uncomfortably on the ground. "It doesn't seem possible that little men like us can raise such an inferno, does it? I've always wanted to go out in a big way, but I never figured it would be like this. We're trapped, Fred, we're trapped—I wonder what Mary would think if she knew. —Great girl, Mary, one of the best—brave little thing, has lots of courage. Poor kid, she's going to need it."

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The shadows were lengthening now in the Cathedral on West Avenue. Dim forms moved slowly from station to station, mounting in their aging years the steep ascent of Calvary. It seemed as though the heavy cross carried for so many years had left its mark on their backs, so bowed did they appear.