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Canaris: The Life and Death of Hitler's Spymaster

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The other interesting aspect of this work deals with the difference between prewar training of our submariners and what they actually did in combat. In a section called "The Accidental Commerce Raiders," Holwitt points out that commanders had been conditioned by article 22 of the London Naval Treaty—which many thought meant that if they torpedoed merchants without warning, they would actually be held liable, "hunted down and captured or sunk as pirates." So, according to this account, commanders were taught to be cautious and were essentially trained for naval combat against high-speed, heavily armored combatants and not against commercial shipping. The result was that very few of the tactics eventually used were developed before the war.

Execute Against Japan should be required reading for naval officers (especially in submarine wardrooms), as well as for anyone interested in history, policy, or international law. Lieutenant Holwitt has already briefed some of our Naval War College students. His research shows how and why our experience in the First World War did not prepare us for the next one, and this is its essential lesson. It is a lesson worth some reflection.

REAR ADMIRAL JAMES P. WISECUP, U.S. NAVY
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Mueller, Michael. *Canaris: The Life and Death of Hitler's Spymaster*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2007. 320pp. \$34.95

Who was Wilhelm Canaris? The naval cadet from the Ruhr who rose to vice admiral and directed the Abwehr,

German military intelligence, for nine years remains one of the most intriguing figures in twentieth-century military history. German journalist and documentarian Michael Mueller unravels several of the mysteries that surround Canaris's life, though many remain.

Mueller acknowledges the shortfall. Despite solid research and fresh archival material, his account "neither answers all the questions, nor resolves all the contradictions." The paucity of primary sources and the tendency of intelligence operators habitually to brush their tracks owe much to the circumstances of Canaris's arrest and execution. Only remnants survive of Canaris's service diaries, discovered by investigators in the aftermath of the 20 July 1944 plot to assassinate Hitler.

Mueller's narrative informs, illuminates, and entertains. Canaris's early career at sea was marked by escapades of derring-do in South America and Spain. An officer of his time, Canaris absorbed the credo of the sea service, and it served him well. He had a clear talent for languages and social rapport, and his superiors noted the vitality of his wide-ranging networks. Before long, he became "too valuable to send to sea."

An astute and calculating observer, Canaris navigated multiple career-threatening crises that began as the defeated German fleet returned to Kiel in 1918. In the closing years of the Weimar Republic, Canaris again leveraged his luck, evading a series of potentially devastating political scandals. He did not emerge unscathed, however; his growing reputation made both naval officials and politicians nervous.

If rivals watched with gimlet eyes, Canaris's political patrons had reason to look the other way. He was soon enmeshed in the government's efforts to circumvent the naval-armament provisions of the Versailles treaty that had ended World War I. With his international networks delivered, Canaris won only muted applause in Berlin.

Grand Admiral Erich Raeder was leery of Canaris, who he feared was compromised politically. Mueller acknowledges the awkwardness between the two officers but emphasizes Raeder's professionalism. Raeder's own memoir supports that judgment. Setting his personal feelings aside, Raeder intervened to elevate Canaris to the head of the Abwehr.

At first Canaris walked the razor's edge between collaboration with the Nazi regime and open resistance. The spring of 1938 was the turning point. The cumulative effect of the Blomberg and Fritsch scandals, destroying the careers of the war minister and the commanding general of the Wehrmacht, respectively, was too much for an old-school naval officer. Still in uniform, Canaris became the heart of the opposition circle in Abwehr headquarters.

Canaris's career-long wrangling with his political and diplomatic counterparts will resonate with military intelligence officers today. His death in the bloodletting unleashed by Claus von Stauffenberg's failed attempt on Hitler's life is startling only for its accidental nature. The real surprise is that he was untouched until the Abwehr was dissolved in mid-1944.

Who was Wilhelm Canaris? A loyal servant of "the other Germany" or a right-wing Nazi sympathizer? What

accounts for Himmler's indulgent, even protective, attitude toward Canaris and his circle? The wily yet principled admiral is an incomplete puzzle. However, Mueller puts new pieces on the table, while nudging others into place.

Readers will appreciate Muller's abundant reference notes, exhaustive bibliography, and index. Sadly, the work is marred by the absence of rigorous copyediting and fact-checking; names in particular suffer. But these are minor quibbles. Mueller's work is an important contribution to the literature, and the Naval Institute deserves a laurel for bringing it to these shores.

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Harari, Yuval Noah. *Special Operations in the Age of Chivalry: 1100–1550*. Suffolk, U.K.: Boydell, 2007. 224pp. \$90

Yuval Noah Harari published this book in the midst of the ongoing struggles among the Hezbollah militia from Lebanon, the Palestinian Hamas militias, and the Israeli army. These contemporary events, especially the special operations undertaken by all sides, provide the backdrop to this work. With regard to medieval special operations, not much has been written, and Harari endeavors to fill this void by focusing his work on a general readership rather than a strictly scholarly audience.

The title of this book is eye-catching but immediately raises questions: What does the author mean by "special operations," and what is meant by "the Age of Chivalry"? The author's use of the phrase, which dates back to the high and late Middle Ages, is really nothing