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Ultra in the Pacific: How Breaking Japanese Codes and Ciphers Affected Naval Operations against Japan, 1941-1945

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Stewart T. Faulkner when the Japanese bombed Guam 7 December 1941, but Faulkner is not listed among those whom the author interviewed. However, these minor flaws should not detract from one's appreciation of this excellent work.

This study is of considerable importance for the national security community, as a skillful integration of intelligence and military history—something of a rarity until the recent appearance of Gerhard L. Weinberg's *A World At Arms* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994). John Prados also reminds us that force without the imaginative use of intelligence is "sterile"—a truth ignored for the most part and to its detriment by the German army when it invaded the Soviet Union in 1941 with minimal knowledge of that country. Finally, the author points out that intelligence interpretations at headquarters are often less acute than those of officers in the field. For instance, after the Doolittle raid on Tokyo the leadership of Op-20-G (Communications Security Section, U.S. Navy, Washington, D.C.) expected a retaliatory Japanese raid on the U.S. West Coast—a notion that, fortunately, Commander Joseph Rochefort in Hawaii ridiculed on the basis of the lack of Japanese support forces for such an escapade. An analogy for the Eastern front is that Soviet deceptions were taken seriously by German Army Headquarters but were quickly seen through in the field.

I strongly recommend this book to those interested in either naval intelligence or naval history. For those who

insist that these two fields are inseparable, this book is a gem.

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Winton, John. *Ultra in the Pacific: How Breaking Japanese Codes and Ciphers Affected Naval Operations against Japan, 1941–1945*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1994. 247pp. \$22.95

Declassification of voluminous U.S. government records related to cryptologic operations in World War II has led to significant revisions in our understanding of that conflict. British author John Winton has made an important contribution to the growing body of books on the subject. With excellent credentials as a historian and writer strengthened by fourteen years of service in the Royal Navy, Winton has skillfully used both American and British sources to craft a readable and persuasive case for the invaluable role of U.S. and Allied codebreakers in the sprawling naval war against Japan.

ULTRA was the cover name for the intelligence product derived from exploiting military communications through breaking codes and ciphers, in conjunction with traffic analysis, high frequency direction-finding (HFDF), and radio "fingerprinting." U.S. naval cryptologic operations were conducted by the Communications Security Group, Op-20-G—the lineage of which can be traced to the Code and Signal Section of the Office of Naval Communications, established in 1924. Winton provides excellent coverage of

the three most prominent examples of the successful use of radio intelligence, namely, the battles of the Coral Sea and Midway, and the shootdown of Admiral Yamamoto, commander in chief of the Combined Fleet. However, of perhaps greater merit is the author's detailed treatment of the grueling and strategically important Solomons campaign and the attrition of the Japanese merchant fleet. Time and again, U.S. naval forces gained from ULTRA foreknowledge of Japanese operations in the Solomons, only to see opportunities lost, primarily due to poor U.S. tactics and superior Japanese night fighting capabilities. Winton then clearly documents why the "Maru war" was one of the main reasons for the defeat of Japan: the nation was deprived of raw materials, combat troops, and supplies destined to reinforce the Solomons, New Guinea, and other island bastions. Late in the war U.S. submarines seemed so ubiquitous that the Japanese said that "one could walk from Singapore to Tokyo on U.S. periscopes." In fact, at the start of the war, the U.S. submarine force in the Pacific numbered about fifty-five boats, growing to seventy-five by 1944, a small number when considering the size of the theater. Thus Winton admirably demonstrates how ULTRA became what today is called a "force multiplier," enabling operational planners to make the best use of scarce resources to achieve impressive tactical and strategic results.

As noted, Winton's book is both readable and useful. It complements and bears favorable comparison with Dr. Edward Drea's work, *MacArthur's Ultra: Codebreaking and the War against Japan*

1942-1945 (Univ. of Kansas Press, 1992). Focusing more on land and air operations, Drea offers a more detailed look at the Allied organizations and people who produced and disseminated ULTRA intelligence. Drea provides one of the clearest explanations available on the construction of Japanese codes and ciphers. (Another strength in Drea's work not found in Winton is inclusion of numerous order-of-battle tables comparing ULTRA estimates of Japanese troop strength to the actual numbers derived from official Japanese sources. These clearly demonstrate the ability of radio intelligence to deliver an often amazingly accurate picture of what awaited U.S. forces.)

Winton's book could have been improved by more maps of the Pacific theater, detailing specific operational areas and showing the locations of the U.S. and Allied radio intelligence sites. One could get the impression that the Allies had such sites everywhere, when in fact in 1941 they had only a handful and quickly lost two (Guam and then Corregidor). A visual depiction of the "net geometry"—the transmitters (Japanese fleet units and headquarters) and the U.S. intercept sites—would add much to the reader's understanding of the subject.

In summary, this work provides an illuminating view of a fascinating topic. It is an excellent source for the general reader and provides points of departure for the more serious student of the Pacific War. In concert with Drea's book, it points toward a much needed comprehensive study of U.S. cryptologic operations, on the scale of F.H. Hinsley's magisterial five-volume work, *History of*

the Second World War, vol. III, *British Intelligence The Second World War* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979–1990).

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Costello, John. *Days of Infamy*. New York: Pocket Books, 1994. 448pp. \$24

The flood of books and articles about the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, i.e., the traumatic entry of the United States into the Pacific War, shows no sign of abating. Whetted by documents—particularly those on intelligence—still being grudgingly declassified in Washington and London, historians are laboring to discover what the principal players actually knew and when they knew it. Opinion is bitterly divided over whether the commanders at Pearl Harbor, Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and General Walter C. Short (both of whom received harsh official censure), or President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his closest Washington advisers, General George C. Marshall and Admiral Harold R. Stark, caused one of America's worst defeats.

One of the latest efforts to assess where the blame for Pearl Harbor lies is John Costello's *Days of Infamy*. In two of his previous works, *The Pacific War, 1941–1945* (1981) and (as coauthor) the prize-winning memoir of Rear Admiral Edwin T. Layton, "*And I Was There*": *Pearl Harbor and Midway—Breaking the Secrets* (1985), Costello landed squarely in the Kimmel-Short camp. Now he has broadened the scope of his inquiry to

include the overall Allied strategy in the Far East, especially the destruction on 8 December at Clark Field on Luzon of nearly half the Far East Air Force, which so contributed to the fall of the Philippines. For that reason Costello makes plural the now-familiar reference to the Pearl Harbor attack—"days of infamy." To the leaders in Washington and London Costello adds the arrogant but indecisive commander in the Philippines, General Douglas MacArthur, as one of those most accountable for the December debacle.

Costello contends that in the summer of 1941 American strategists, enthralled by exaggerated claims for the efficacy of land-based air power, reversed their traditional strategy by shifting the entire center of gravity of Pacific defense five thousand miles westward from Hawaii. This projection of American power to the far more vulnerable Philippines led to an agreement with Britain for mutual defense in the Far East should Japan attack either power's territories. Despite the fact that American forces would not complete the necessary buildup until the spring of 1942, Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill pursued a hard line against Japan that ill served their defense strategy when war broke out early.

Thus in Costello's view the American senior commanders relied unrealistically upon the modest number of Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress heavy bombers in the Philippines—not the Pacific Fleet's battleships and carriers based at Pearl Harbor—as their principal offensive weapon against the Japanese. For Costello this interpretation serves two purposes. First, it