

1967

Hell in a Very Small Place

G.H. Kaffer Jr.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Kaffer, G.H. Jr. (1967) "Hell in a Very Small Place," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 20 : No. 8 , Article 11.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol20/iss8/11>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

sense the trial succeeded in doing what judicial proceedings are supposed to do: it convinced even the guilty that the verdict against them was just." This book is recommended for those who are interested in obtaining some insight into the character of the Nuremberg defendants. It is not recommended for those interested in a critical, analytical book on the legal basis for the Nuremberg trials and the precedents they established.

J. M. BATTAGLINO

Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy

Fall, Bernard B. *Hell in a Very Small Place*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1967. 515 p.

The courage, frustration, agony, hope, and sacrifice of the French military forces during the 1955 siege of Dien Bien Phu are the concern of this volume. The late Bernard B. Fall has written a superb day-to-day description of the events leading to, during, and after this tragic battle.

Hell in a Very Small Place represents Dr. Fall's extensive research of all available official and nonofficial documents pertaining to this historic battle and his interrogations of many of the participants of both sides of the conflict. The book opens with an account of the initial 1954 French airborne landing at Dien Bien Phu during the French Indochina War. It then describes the daily buildup of, and fighting between, the French and Viet-Minh forces. The reports of the French attempts to resupply the fortress are excellent as is Dr. Fall's description of the individuals participating in the battle. The book concludes with a spellbinding recountal of the last agonizing hours of the gallant French defenders and their demolished fortress. In addition, the reactions of French, American, and British officials after the fall of Dien Bien Phu are reviewed. This book is highly

recommended for the student of military history and should be a part of every military library.

G. H. KAFFER, JR.

Commander, U.S. Navy

Farago, Ladislav. *The Broken Seal*. New York: Random House, 1967. 439 p.

The Broken Seal is the story of military and diplomatic cryptology and its place in the events that ended in World War II. The breaking of the Japanese codes prior to World War II is household knowledge and has led to considerable allegation and much hindsight prophecy. Mr. Farago has treated this subject completely, starting with the first breaking, in 1915, of an American code by an ambitious American code clerk. From this point he follows the fortunes, in terms of success, failure, and indifference periods, of U.S. military and diplomatic cryptology involving the Japanese. Mr. Farago has a background of World War II ONI service and was an intimate of many of the primaries in this story. His research into the Japanese side of the story was immense and complete. The footnotes, reference notes, and bibliographic material provide a complete and interesting supplement and will fan the reader's further interest in this intriguing subject. It is this material, in part, that makes the *Reader's Digest* condensation of this book pale compared to the full work.

The event-by-event, personality-by-personality, national-reaction and international-counteraction coverage of the United States-Japanese relations from 1918 through 1941 weaves an incredible story. It is a story replete with daring plans, the dull cryptanalysis spade-work, the good and the bad luck, and the humorous and the saddening stories. Cryptology came of age in 1921 during the Washington