

## British Naval Intelligence through the Twentieth Century

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who were targets of the kamikazes as well. The final chapter, “The Moon Rose Radiant,” presents the immediate postconflict stand-down and the responses of surviving kamikaze pilots. The kamikaze attacks were operational and strategic failures, but their tactical effects, at least psychologically, were enormous. These warriors left a legacy to be studied and compared with those of other wars and other suicide warriors.

Readers interested in the personal side and stories of the pilots will want to supplement this volume by reading *Kamikaze Diaries: Reflections of Japanese Student Soldiers* by Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney (University of Chicago Press, 2006) and *Blossoms in the Wind: Human Legacies of the Kamikaze* by M. G. Sheftall (NAL Caliber / Penguin, 2005). Also not to be overlooked is the classic 1958 account by Rikihei Inoguchi and Tadashi Nakajima, with Roger Pineau, *The Divine Wind: Japan's Kamikaze Force in World War II* (Naval Institute Press, repr. 2013). Yet for a first book to read on the subject, Stewart's *Kamikaze* is very good and insightful. The separate index of Australian, British, Japanese, and U.S. ships is very helpful, as is his discussion of the oft-overlooked attacks against Australian and British ships. It is well worth reading.

TIMOTHY J. DEMY



*British Naval Intelligence through the Twentieth Century*, by Andrew Boyd. Barnsley, U.K.: Seaforth, 2020. 800 pages. \$52.95.

In a most-welcome study of British intelligence bureaucracies in the modern age, Andrew Boyd has provided a major contribution to the historiography of

maritime strategy. His single-volume history provides a comprehensive, chronological analysis of the relevant administrative trends and key personalities and reveals many fresh insights into the contemporary question of British intelligence. Responding to the standard historiographical narratives, Boyd challenges many myths and provides corrective observations for his readers to consider. He examines the secret history of the British Empire while simultaneously considering the role of the Dominions and Commonwealth. From the late nineteenth century to the present, British naval strategy has evolved under the influence of intelligence. The bureaucracies involved largely have remained behind closed doors, yet intelligence organizations have helped to define the world into the twenty-first century.

Boyd draws from original documentary sources—archival holdings, contemporaneous firsthand accounts, and memoirs—to address critical problems in the official histories and other historiography of British intelligence, including addressing the major myths. Historiographical trends in recent scholarship have muddied the waters, and thankfully Boyd has addressed them. By taking the chronological approach, he has provided a better interpretation of the bigger questions, explaining *why* people in the past acted as they did *at the time*.

Among many other examples, Boyd demonstrates the influence of the First World War on efforts to renew the transatlantic relationship between the British Empire and the United States. Boyd then uses this history to correct many popular myths surrounding the heroic story of British code breakers

and the role of Bletchley Park in shaping Allied strategy in the Second World War. He then applies this history further to offer additional corrective historical observations about the character and organization of British intelligence in the twenty-first century.

The fictions Boyd corrects frequently highlighted chosen facts in the historiography of British intelligence. The foreword remarks, provided by historian Andrew Lambert, serve as a foundation for Boyd to address those myths by providing a detailed examination of the applicable documentary sources. Placing the myths in question into the broader context, Boyd also introduces his readers to the historical personalities most responsible for influencing popular portrayals of his subject.

For example, Boyd examines former intelligence operative turned popular fiction writer Hector C. Bywater and his “strange intelligence” of the First World War era. Building from this analysis, Boyd then tackles the actual history of Commander Ian Fleming, RNVR, to offer a fresh glimpse behind the curtains of British intelligence into the Second World War and through the Cold War era. Portrayals of British intelligence as found in the popular fictions of such authors as Bywater and Fleming have provided many bread crumbs for historians to penetrate classified archival sources. Conversely, Bywater and Fleming also are responsible for overstating the capabilities of British intelligence through such characters as “Mr. X” and the more familiar Agent 007—Commander James Bond, RNVR. By focusing on the original sources and unclassified documentary evidence, Boyd reassesses the genre of British

intelligence to retrace the interrelationships between history and fiction.

On the other hand, Fleming’s character, Bond, also worked very frequently with an American counterpart, Felix Leiter. Although Boyd avoids the temptation of getting too bogged down in such fictions, he restricts his analysis to the British perspective. As a result, his analysis sometimes is open to additional debate concerning the role of equivalent American intelligence bureaucracies and the emergence of the transatlantic “very special relationship” in the world wars of the twentieth century. This is understandable, as British archives generally are better kept and more accessible than American collections. Boyd also has pressed the limits with his more than 680 pages, which include condensed endnotes that are not very user-friendly.

On the other hand, Boyd very likely left much on the cutting-room floor to conform to the more-recent trends in the scholarly and commercial publishing industry of the twenty-first century. Thankfully, this book is not written to be read best on an electronic device; it also is not written for delivery in a podcast format.

Given some looming questions concerning the history of British intelligence, Boyd has provided many very substantial conclusions that historians, policy makers, and naval-service practitioners must consider. This book should be required reading for all contemporary students of history. Although the future is yet to be written, Boyd has provided a very important contribution to the historiography of British intelligence, maritime strategy, and naval operations.

DAVID A. KOHNEN