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## The Pacific War Revisited

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Dingman, Roger. *Ghost of War: The Sinking of the *Awa maru* and Japanese-American Relations, 1945–1995*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1997. 373pp. \$35

In the *Ghost of War*, Roger Dingman recreates both the intense national emotions of World War II and the high drama of U.S. submarine warfare in the Pacific theater. Interweaving the strategy of nations with the operational imperatives of submarine warfare, Dingman recounts the tragic sinking of the Japanese merchant ship *Awa maru* by the American submarine *Queenfish*. Traveling under a safe-passage agreement with the United States, *Awa maru* was torpedoed while transiting the Taiwan Strait, with the loss of all hands, save one.

Was the sinking of the *Awa maru* intentional, or was its loss simply another tragic act within an unscripted theater of global conflict? Did the U.S. submarine commander intentionally disobey orders that granted the ship safe passage? Did he, in concert with the U.S. theater commander, knowingly send it to the bottom? Did the fact that the Japanese had openly violated *Awa maru's* terms of safe passage by loading it with contraband mitigate the political consequences of its sinking? Would Japan's brutal treatment of allied prisoners of war, which had prompted the shipment of Red Cross relief supplies to them onboard *Awa maru*, be intensified? Should the commander of *Queenfish* have been court-martialed? Should the United States have apologized to an enemy who had little respect for international convention? Should it have made reparations for the sinking of *Awa*

*maru*, to an enemy that tortured and murdered its prisoners of war? And, of lasting consequence, how did the sinking of the *Awa maru* affect postwar political relationships between the Supreme Commander Allied Powers and an emerging postwar Japanese government?

Brilliantly written and exceptionally documented, *Ghost of War* transits the uncertain chasm between the exquisite development of a national policy and the visceral employment of weapons of war. Exploring the nuances of the war and its political aftermath, this book notably accomplishes all of its stated purposes, most notably offering "substantial food for thought about how individuals, governments, and peoples deal with issues that war raises for all of us."

SAVERIO DE RUGGIERO  
Newport, Rhode Island

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Bischof, Günter, and Robert L. Dupont, eds. *The Pacific War Revisited*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1997. 220pp. \$25

This book is a collection of works on some of the more obscure aspects of the World War II Pacific theater, offered at an Eisenhower Center conference that coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of Pearl Harbor. Noted scholars contributed monographs that explored the roles played by culture, racism, and logistics in determining American action against Japan, including unrestricted submarine war against Japanese shipping and the decision to drop the atomic bomb.

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D. Clayton James's introduction validates the approach and the topics considered. Michael Schaller investigates the political considerations and compromises made to placate General Douglas MacArthur and to assuage his potential political ambitions. Though Schaller provides a wealth of relevant documentary information, he only amplifies the ambiguities of the relationship between MacArthur and Roosevelt and of its implications for U.S. Pacific strategy rather than resolving them. The reader is left to sort out truth from the posturing of the times. Ronald Spector considers what Sir Michael Howard referred to in a 1979 article as a "Forgotten Dimension of Strategy"—the social dimension. He makes a compelling case that racism and ingrained feelings of social superiority had more than a casual influence on U.S. aggressiveness and ferocity in the execution of strategic decisions aimed at Japanese destruction. Spector maintains that it is culture that structures strategic debate and frames the reference for acceptable standards of conduct in war. Daniel Blewett details the severe constraints on strategic options and operations imposed by logistics limitations, particularly on petroleum products in the war's early stages. He highlights the severe resource limitations, compounded by distance, at points in the war where the strategic balance was still in question.

Kenneth Hagan describes what might be called the "third prong" of the two-prong strategy in the Pacific. While MacArthur and Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz contested for strategic priority in their western and central-Pacific advances toward Japan, Hagan

makes a compelling case that the most significant challenge to Japan after 1942 was posed by the devastating submarine campaign against the movement of petroleum and mineral resources on sea lines of communications. This largely unheralded campaign left Japan near exhaustion of its domestic oil and, in his view, made the necessity for a U.S. invasion of the home islands or the use of atomic weapons questionable. Hagan advocates resource denial as a necessary and sometimes sufficient strategic option in creating strategic leverage for war termination. Gregory Urwin details the captivity of the Wake Island defenders and maintains that their survival rate and their health upon repatriation was the result, in large part, of their cohesiveness and the sense of ultimate military superiority they attained during the spirited, if short, defense of Wake against a determined and vastly more numerous foe. Valuable lessons on the importance of self-discipline and sense of individual sacrifice for the greater good of the unit emerge. Kathleen Warnes addresses another group of little-known heroes of the Pacific War—nurses. Significant numbers of nurses faced unbelievable torture and dehumanization at the hands of their Japanese captors. Warnes personalizes their character, courage, and steadfastness during captivity.

The essays by Herman Wolk, Stephen Ambrose, and Brian Villa reexamine the decision to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Wolk maintains that racism played a significant role in that decision and downplays the lesser viability of other strategic options for securing Japanese capitulation. Though his arguments are

powerful, he fails to consider the possibility that Emperor Hirohito might have flown to Manchuria to continue the Japanese war effort even if the home islands had been overrun. Nor does Wolk deal with the outrage against the Japanese that festered after Pearl Harbor, irrespective of racial bias. U.S. servicemen were stationed as observers only ten thousand yards from ground zero during testing (nuclear fallout being a theory rather than a proven reality at the time); the bomb seemed merely a more efficient means of mass destruction. Racism may be overemphasized by Wolk as the primary motivation for its use. Ambrose and Villa provide what may be the most compelling essay of the lot. They comprehensively discuss alternative rationales for the use and nonuse of nuclear weapons, coming to the conclusion that the decision made excellent sense in structuring the postwar U.S.-Japanese relationship. President Harry Truman receives credit for adroit politicization of the nuclear military option, in using it to drive a wedge between the militarists and the emperor—without which the former would not have been discredited, and Japanese society would not have been restructured on favorable lines.

*The Pacific War Revisited* will be of particular interest to those who are conversant with major World War II events and are interested in broadening their understanding. While some essays widen the debate over particular events rather than provide definitive answers, all are meticulously researched. Perhaps the book's strongest aspect is its usefulness as a "mine" of resource materials. Considering the relative brevity

of some of the compositions, the wealth of source documentation throughout is indeed impressive.

DOUGLAS V. SMITH

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Evans, David C., and Mark R. Peattie.

*Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics, and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887–1941*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1997. 696pp. \$49.95

Like a flare ascending from the dark sea, the Imperial Japanese Navy rose swiftly, burst brilliantly, and then winked out. Like a flare, after it was gone it left almost no evidence that it had ever existed.

The authors of this long-awaited book, David Evans and Mark Peattie, make plain their purpose in their introduction: it is "to explain as far as possible the sources of both the navy's triumphs and its defeat. The perspectives we have chosen are those of strategy, tactics, and technology, or, more precisely, the evolving interrelationship of the three. . . . We have sought to understand the overriding strategic issues confronting the navy, the synthesis of foreign and indigenous influences in the shaping of its tactics, and how the navy acquired its technology and material assets. We have, at various points, discussed aspects of the navy—intelligence, manning, logistics, naval fuels, to name the most prominent—that relate directly or indirectly to our three main concerns. Finally, as much as anything else, we have attempted to explain how the Japanese navy thought