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The Last Kamikaze: The Story of Admiral Matome Ugaki

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and a corruption scandal within the navy. On board one destroyer escorting the Japanese attack force to Hawaii, the executive officer kept a diary that reflected his efforts to raise crew morale through daily scheduled singing of war songs, gymnastics, and wearing bellybands to prevent catching cold. There is also a copy of the color map that was used to brief Emperor Hirohito after the attack.

In addition are war diaries of a carrier division, a battleship division, and a destroyer squadron. There is also an interesting section on submarine operations in support of the attack. Actually, the best parts of this book are the last two chapters, "Japanese Study of the Pearl Harbor Operations" and "An Intimate Look at the Japanese Navy." Both chapters are worth the price of the book and the reader's time to study them.

In their after-action study of the Pearl Harbor attack, the Japanese concluded that their success was due to a combination of tangible factors, and the intangibles of "providential help" and "supremacy of mental power." Before Pearl Harbor, both the Japanese and the Americans believed in the supremacy of the battleship. Only carriers, however, could carry off an attack on Pearl Harbor and, if unwittingly, by destroying the battleships there force the U.S. Navy to change its own emphasis to aircraft carriers. The result we know very well—the U.S. Navy and its carrier force crushed the Imperial Japanese Navy. In the end, writes a Japanese, the U.S. "finally sent us an atomic bomb instead

of a referee with a whistle, just to close the lid."

W.D. BUSHNELL
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps

Hoyt, Edwin P. *The Last Kamikaze: The Story of Admiral Matome Ugaki*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1993. 256pp. \$22.95

This book is essentially a short narrative history of the Second World War in the Pacific, with the wartime career of Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki superficially embossed on it. The work's primary value is that it provides another vehicle for increasing Admiral Ugaki's recognition among Western readers.

Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki aptly represents the best and the worst of the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) and the character of the Japanese of his generation. He entered the naval academy at Etajima in 1909, and his career spanned from the glory days of the IJN until its ultimate destruction.

Following graduation from Etajima in 1913, his career progressed normally. Ugaki studied in Germany during the 1930s, commanded the battleship *Hyuga*, and was promoted to rear admiral in 1938. In August 1941, Admiral Ugaki was appointed chief of staff of the Combined Fleet and served in that capacity until 18 April 1943, when his aircraft was shot down into the sea during the famous air ambush of Admiral Yamamoto. One of only two survivors (he was not in Yamamoto's aircraft), Ugaki was seriously wounded.

As Yamamoto's chief of staff, Ugaki had participated in the planning of

the Pearl Harbor attack and all other major Japanese fleet actions from the invasion of Malaya to the Solomons battles. Following his recuperation from his injuries, Admiral Ugaki commanded Battleship Division One, which included super-battleships *Yamato* and *Musashi*. After the battle of Leyte Gulf, he remained unassigned until February 1945, when he assumed command of the Fifth Air Fleet in Kyushu.

Ugaki was witness to the most disastrous Japanese naval defeats. He was at Midway in *Yamato*, the Marianas Turkey Shoot in *Musashi*, and at Leyte Gulf he was transferred from the sinking *Musashi* to *Yamato*. He was next entrusted with the air defense of Okinawa and the southern Japanese home islands. The ten famous "Kikusen" kamikaze raids against the Allied naval forces off Okinawa were planned and executed under his direction.

During the war years, Ugaki kept a detailed diary that encompassed fifteen volumes in its original form. He was the only senior member of the IJN to leave any significant record of his and his service's wartime endeavors. The diary was published in Japan in 1953 under the title *Senso roku: Ugaki Matome nikki* (Seaweeds of War: The Diary of Matome Ugaki). In 1987 it was published in this country as *Fading Victory*, translated under the aegis of the late Gordon Prange and his colleagues.

Unfortunately, Mr. Hoyt's effort seldom brings forth the richness of the sentiment and commentary of the diary itself. *The Last Kamikaze* treats Ugaki, his diary, and his wartime career superficially. Matome Ugaki was a proud,

intelligent, articulate man. He saw his beloved navy wither from a powerful, unbeatable juggernaut to a floating junkyard and deathtrap. A devoted family man and patriot, he mourned the disasters befalling his country and the fruitless sacrifices of his young sailors and airmen, whose deaths he rationalized by his personal determination to share that sacrifice. On 15 August 1945, in violation of the emperor's expressed wishes, he removed his rank insignia and, surrounded by a cadre of dedicated young volunteer airmen, launched a last, meaningless, and unsuccessful kamikaze raid against the U.S. fleet.

Mr. Hoyt has written much and often on the war in the Pacific (indeed, half of the book's bibliographic entries are his own works); however, this work is not up to the standards of his earlier efforts. There are numerous textual and editing errors throughout the book. The USS *Hornet* (CV 8) is sunk twice, in August and in October 1942. Allied cruiser losses at the battle of Tassafaronga are confused with those of the earlier battle of Savo Island. The dates and data of Japanese destroyer and U.S. PT boat losses are frequently in error. Lingga Roads anchorage near Singapore is confused with Lunga Point on Guadalcanal. Kamimbo Bay is also spelled "Camimbo." The author implies that battleship *Hyuga* was a hermaphrodite battleship carrier in 1937 when Ugaki was in command (it was converted in mid-1943). Hoyt also perpetuates the myth that Rear Admiral Masafumi Arima, commander of the 26th Air Flotilla in the Philippines, was the first successful kamikaze; he credits Arima with crashing into USS *Franklin*

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(CV 13) on 13 October 1944. In fact, that glancing flight-deck strike was by a damaged Betty medium bomber; Arima flew his intended suicide mission, in a dive bomber, on 15 October.

Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki is a fascinating character who left in his diary a historical gem. Sadly, this book does neither the man nor his legacy justice.

JOHN J. DOYLE
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Tarrant, V.E. *King George V Class Battleships*. London: Arms and Armour Press, 1991. 288 pp. \$39.95

King George V Class Battleships is an attempt to marry a popularly written operational history with comprehensive photographic coverage and with a design and development analysis based on archival research. The result is essentially successful. Victor Tarrant has produced a book that will be of general interest to historians and enthusiasts of the Second World War at sea and, perhaps just as important, to those who study the impact of strategic and financial policy upon warship design. Tarrant's analysis of the *King George V* class (known as the *KGVs*) in action leads logically to a discussion of the design deficiencies that were revealed in each unit. Particular emphasis is given to the less-than-successful quadruple fourteen-inch turrets, an attempt to beat the 35,000-ton treaty limit by mounting as many weapons as possible—an attempt that was defeated by the over-complicated machinery the installations required. Tarrant also says much, although his analysis is less

sophisticated in this area, about engineering, endurance, and habitability limitations. The *Prince of Wales* proved grievously unprepared for tropical service during her ill fated 1941 deployment to the Far East, particularly by comparison with contemporary American designs.

Tarrant's work suggests questions about the quality of ship and engineering design in the Royal Navy between 1919 and 1939, questions which are now also being raised elsewhere. It is likely that historians will come to agree that the Royal Navy was rather better prepared in its intended tactics for a war with Japan than it was in other areas. Tarrant makes it quite apparent that despite the years of preparation for the "Main Fleet to Singapore" strategy, the design implications were in no way addressed in the *KGVs*. The irony—perhaps a result of the widely differing approaches to officer training and careers—is that there is equal evidence, some of which is apparent in this book, that the United States Navy's performance was quite the reverse. Even in Arctic operations, the much greater endurance of USS *Washington*, a design developed under similar (though perhaps less strictly observed) constraints, came as an unpleasant surprise to the commander in chief of the Home Fleet. The Royal Navy would learn a lot more about U.S. naval engineering in the Pacific in 1944 and 1945.

The illustrations in the book are generally well chosen, although there are a few errors in the captions. It would have been useful had a few more postwar photographs been included, together with more