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MacArthur's ULTRA: Codebreaking and the War against Japan, 1942-1945

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wryly describes. More importantly, the humor and wisdom of this chapter has lured them deeper into the book, and I have had some difficulty retrieving it from them. That Schreadley can command the attention of students who balk at attempts to read Lynn White or even Garrett Mattingly underscores the readability of *From the Rivers to the Sea.*

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Melvin, Michael J. *Minesweeper: The Role of the Motor Minesweeper in World War II.* Worcester, England: Square One, 1992. 174pp. $20

Mine warfare had a significant if unheralded impact on naval operations in World War II. Germany's minelaying efforts were especially effective, given that the Allies in general, and the Royal Navy in particular, were not prepared to conduct a major mine countermeasures campaign. That the Royal Navy defeated the Axis mine threat is a testament to the courage and determination of its minesweeping crews, who were predominantly civilian trawlermen mobilized along with their trawlers to fight the war in the United Kingdom's territorial waters. The shift from a defensive war at home to power projection operations throughout the world forced the Royal Navy to expand this force dramatically. *Minesweeper* is the story of the Motor Minesweeper Units, or the coastal waters mine countermeasures force, which grew from less than eighteen part-time reserve units in 1939 to over nine hundred boats, built in yards located all over the world, by 1945.

Written by a veteran of the motor minesweepers, Michael Melvin, the book traces the history of the force from its start in the pre-war period, to the design debates in the war's early days over the new motor minesweepers, the construction and employment of the force as it grew, the Allies' dependence upon the mine countermeasures effort, and finally its dissolution in 1946.

This work is an interesting record of the achievements, sacrifice, and courage of a little-known group of men, whose fight began the first day of the war and did not end until the last known minefield was swept—over one year after the official end of World War II.

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Drea, Edward J. *MacArthur's ULTRA: Codebreaking and the War against Japan, 1942–1945.* Lawrence: Univ. of Kansas Press, 1992. 296pp. (No price given)

Much has been published regarding the exploits of Allied codebreakers in the European and Pacific theaters of World War II, and also about the operational uses of cryptologically derived information, which became known as "ULTRA" in both theaters of war—at sea in the Battle of the Atlantic and in the Central Pacific, as well as in the ground wars in Africa and also western and southern Europe. However, little has appeared on the handling and use of ULTRA in the Pacific ground war, especially in the forgotten campaign

waged by General Douglas MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) command. Edward Drea has filled this void admirably. Of particular interest to intelligence professionals is Drea's narrative of how special intelligence was analyzed, handled, and incorporated into operational planning.

The success of naval cryptologists in the Pacific theater is well known; the U.S. victories in the Coral Sea and at Midway were to a great degree victories of intelligence. In the SWPA, despite an uneven beginning, analysts had by 1943 broken several Japanese codes, which contributed to the turning of the tide in New Guinea. The ULTRA contribution to strangling Japanese reinforcement of New Guinea was best demonstrated in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea, during which a large Japanese convoy bound for Lae, New Guinea, was shattered and the Japanese lost the initiative in New Guinea forever. By 1944 ULTRA was reliable enough to be fully integrated into operational planning. MacArthur's masterpiece—his move in April 1944 to Hollandia, New Guinea, which bypassed prepared Japanese defenses and saved thousands of American casualties and many months of fighting—was ULTRA's greatest contribution in the Southwest Pacific.

Even with a veritable flood of ULTRA, there were still intelligence failures in which operational disasters were avoided only by MacArthur's remarkably consistent luck. From the high point of the Hollandia operation, there were several occasions when intelligence failed to predict Japanese attacks or was inaccurate in ascertaining the size of Japanese garrisons. But here the fault lay with the interpretation of intelligence, not with its availability. Ultimately, as MacArthur reached his personal objective, the reconquest of the Philippines, ULTRA again demonstrated its value. The relatively quick capture of Leyte, MacArthur's first landing in the Philippines, was due in large part to ULTRA's ability to guide U.S. aircraft and submarines in cutting the flow of Japanese reinforcements.

After an uneven performance on Luzon (the largest U.S.-Japanese ground battle of the war), during which MacArthur ignored intelligence that conflicted with his operational plan, ULTRA again demonstrated its unique capability to supply insight into Japanese operational planning by providing an exceptionally clear (and almost sole-source) picture of Japanese defensive preparations on the home island of Kyushu. But again, for reasons of personal vanity, MacArthur ignored it. Fortunately his largest and final battle was destined never to be fought. ULTRA made available to national decision makers the bulk of the evidence indicating that the Japanese had made extensive preparations to defend their homeland and that they could be overcome only at the price of thousands of Americans lives. It can thus be said that ULTRA was central to the decision to employ atomic weapons.

In addition to being a fine history of the efforts of SWPA codebreakers, this

work provides insight that remains relevant today in the interrelationship of intelligence and operational planning. Even after January 1944, when SWPA codebreakers were producing a flood of timely ULTRA information, rarely were the enemy's intentions evident from ULTRA alone. Analysis and evaluation were central to exploiting it to full advantage. Although MacArthur's boldness after January 1944 can be partly attributed to the success of SWPA intelligence analysts, the availability of intelligence, however good, was not the deciding factor in any operational plan, but MacArthur's views and desires. He consistently dismissed ULTRA evidence when it failed to accord with his preconceived strategic vision.

Even the intelligence professionals were unable to translate the bounty of ULTRA-derived information into consistently accurate intelligence estimates. In part this effort was affected by bureaucratic infighting and the egos of the individuals involved, which was to some extent reflected in the periodic gaps in ULTRA information. Inaccuracy also reflected to some degree the penchant of analysts to attribute to or superimpose on the Japanese their own concept of tactics and strategy (a problem not unknown to intelligence analysts of any era).

Drea's work is in the first rank of ULTRA-related books and clearly demonstrates the impact it had on the war in the Southwest Pacific. While ULTRA's performance was uneven regarding the ground war, there can be no doubt that the early breaking of Japanese army shipping codes provided great payoffs to U.S. air and naval forces, by giving the precise location of Japanese convoys. Also, the victory at Hollandia itself had a major impact on the Southwest Pacific drive: it shortened the war and probably affected the outcome of the Pacific campaign.

In addition to being a more than adequate history of the campaign in New Guinea (a topic little covered), this book is now the definitive work on the subject of intelligence and its influence on the Southwest Pacific campaign.

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Boyd, Carl. *Hitler's Japanese Confidant: General Oshima Hiroshi and Magic Intelligence, 1941–1945*. Lawrence: Univ. of Kansas Press, 1993. 270pp. $25

The key to this fascinating book can be found in the word *confidant* in the title. General Oshima served in Berlin from 1934 to 1938, first as the Japanese military attaché and then as ambassador. Recalled to Japan in 1939, he was soon reappointed as ambassador, apparently because he was indeed a confidant of Hitler. Oshima not only spoke fluent German but was ideologically attuned to the Nazi regime. An ardent imperialist, his pro-Axis speeches repeatedly stressed Japan's desire to share in the "redistribution of European colonies." As a consequence, Hitler trusted him, gave him ready access, and discussed German long-range plans and policies with remarkable candor. The ambassador's stature in Nazi eyes is