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The Secret War Report of the OSS

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textbook and has an eye for interesting cases. He also knows what technical materials are needed by those working in the military justice system. In his next effort he would be better served eliminating altogether the idea of a handbook-deskbook, and splitting up his project into two separate books: one, a readable, fascinating and sometimes humorous book on military trials—with the appropriate graphics—and the other, a college textbook with reduced appendixes and perhaps a sketch of the *Somers*.

JUDGE TIM MURPHY
Superior Court, Washington, D.C.

Cave Brown, Anthony, ed. *The Secret War Report of the OSS*. New York: Berkley Medallion Books, 1976. 586pp.

"If foreign policy is the shield of the republic, as Walter Lippmann has called it," proposed Sherman Kent of Yale, "then strategic intelligence is the thing that gets the shield to the right place at the right time; it is also the thing that stands ready to guide the sword." *The Secret War Report of the OSS*—a condensation of the larger, recently declassified "Official War Report of the Office of Strategic Services," written in 1947—is the definitive account of United States participation in clandestine intelligence operations against the Axis powers in Europe, and of the OSS attempt to guide Kent's metaphorical sword.

While it lacks the literary style which characterizes the official history of one of its British counterparts, M.R.D. Foot's *Special Operations Executive in France*, the *Report's* description of OSS is candid and extensive. Part I recounts the origin and structure of the OSS, from the inception of the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI), the forerunner of OSS, through the interminable political conflict that shaped both the centralized concept and

structure of the Office. Part II chronicles the nature and extent of OSS activity in the European and related theaters of operation. Cave Brown has arbitrarily excluded OSS involvement in the Far Eastern theater, but only, it would appear, to emphasize strategic operations in Europe, where OSS made its principal contributions in support of the French and Italian resistance and in the clandestine preparations for Operations TORCH, ANVIL, and OVERLORD.

The appearance of the *Secret War Report*, with only slight censoring and some 30 years after it was written, will inevitably revive a number of controversial issues. Preeminent among them will undoubtedly be the question: What does the book reveal concerning the significance and effectiveness of the OSS contribution to the clandestine war in Europe?

Perhaps what is most compelling about the *Report* is its remarkable objectivity. It does not contend that OSS won the secret war with Germany. Nor does it contend that it won the secret war in collaboration with the British. Rather, it awards full credit to the British intelligence services—the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and the Special Operations Executive (SOE)—and acknowledges the inestimable British contribution both to the establishment of OSS and to the success of Allied intelligence collection and special operations. The *Report* does show, however, that the United States, with the proper assistance and its own intellectual resources, created within 30 months an intelligence service that had taken other countries over 30 years to establish, and then, confronting those services, proved their equal. Moreover, it shows that in the closing months of the war in Europe the OSS began to surpass the British services in the agent penetration of Germany.

Concerning the founder and Director of OSS, Maj. Gen. William J. "Wild Bill"

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Donovan, the Report discloses little about the flamboyant bravado and reckless personal abandon that earned him his sobriquet. But it does reveal some of doctrinaire conservatism and political naiveté that caused great uncertainty within the OSS on policy in Italy and France, and increasingly aroused the suspicions of the British about his competence. And yet it also confirms that whatever success OSS achieved in clandestiness—indeed whatever credibility was won for the principle of a permanent central intelligence agency—was largely the attainment of Donovan and of the excellent men that he personally recruited.

If this volume indicates anything about the efficacy of OSS as an intelligence service, nowhere is it more apparent than in its discussion of the funding of secret operations. Here, for the first time in print and relatively uncensored, is the story of unvouchered funds and clandestine banking operations as it was then and, presumably, at least to some extent, remains today. It is unfortunate that, despite a cogent analysis of secret funding and the surreptitious acquisition of foreign currencies in his Introduction, the editor does not include all material on financial operations from the verbatim OSS Report. Not only would it have delighted scholars, but it would have further substantiated perhaps the book's most astounding claim of OSS effectiveness: that "as of August 1945, no case had been found of an OSS agent who was captured due to the fact that he had been supplied with insecure funds." Although such comparisons are misleading, this is one claim that neither SIS nor SOE could reasonably make.

Not everyone, of course, will be impressed with the preceding indications of OSS effectiveness. After all, the measure of a clandestine service in wartime is its proficiency in secret intelligence (espionage) and special operations.

Although it effected such strategic intelligence coups as the secret negotiations for the surrender of all German forces in northern Italy, the OSS Secret Intelligence Branch (OSS/SI) seemed inhibited by two factors which prevented it from realizing its full potential—the British and the ULTRA Secret. At the operational level, animosity developed between OSS/SI and SIS as OSS officers increasingly perceived that SIS was more committed to the preservation of the British empire than it was to the effective prosecution of the war. At staff levels this animosity was exacerbated when the British proposed the complete SIS control of espionage in Europe, a proposal that Donovan unceremoniously rejected. A second hindrance was the ULTRA Secret. With this British penetration of the German Enigma machine-cipher in virtually all of its modes, conventional espionage was compelled to take a backseat in the acquisition of intelligence. ULTRA's speed, accuracy, and profound reliability exceeded even the most sophisticated spy network.

In special operations—the physical subversion of the enemy—the OSS ostensibly had parity of control. In reality, however, the field of special operations was very much a British play, performed on a European stage. The salient OSS contribution to the Normandy invasion came in the critical area of supply, and only as more men and materiel from America arrived in England did OSS exert a decisive influence on special operations policy in France.

One may criticize Cave Brown's editorial selectivity, such as his failure to include the full extent of the official text on secret financing, but not his ability to provide illuminating commentary. For it is only through the commentary that we learn of the identities of the actual participants, of the intricate exploitation of sources by Allen Dulles as "OSS/Bern," or of the extraordinary courage of such junior

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OSS officers as B.M.W. Knox and William Colby behind enemy lines. He succeeds in capturing the spirit and behind-the-scenes sensation of perilous operations in perilous times, and reminds us that events were nowhere as prosaic as the *Report* describes them. At times, his editorial comments display a discernible British bias. It is true, for instance, that many young OSS operatives were inexperienced, naive, liberal, and idealistic, and "evinced quite definite fits of Anglophobia." But to brand them as "unstable" and a "very strong left-wing strain in young OSS politics," simply because they recognized the imperialist motives of the British services for what they were, is an overstatement.

The lifespan of the OSS was actually less than 3 years. For what its *Secret War Report* can tell us about the nature and effectiveness of that brief existence makes the book an invaluable source. And, as the first publication of an official classified intelligence history, it is a unique historical document, as well. If the past is prologue, however, this volume may be most useful not for what it can tell us about OSS, but for what it can tell us about the foundations of its successor and the beleaguered concept of a central intelligence agency for the United States.

RONALD D. VANDEN DORPEL

Jentschura, Hansgeorg, et al. *Warships of the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1869-1945*. Translated by Antony Preston and J.D. Brown. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1977. 284pp.

The genesis of this book was in 1942 when, at the request of Hitler, the German Naval Attaché in Tokyo, Admiral Wencker, was granted permission to inspect a *Yamato*-class "super battleship." Wencker then sent a detailed description to Hitler's HQ. Upon

the fall of the Third Reich, Erich Gröner, historian of the German Navy, retrieved this material to be used as the frontpiece of his projected book on Japanese warships. For this project, Gröner exchanged information with Shizuo Fukui, a Japanese naval constructor, who was writing a similar book. Fukui furnished a great number of photographs, line drawings, and technical material for Gröner's use.

When Gröner died, the project was continued by the above authors. This volume was first published as *Die Japanischen Kriegsschiffe 1869-1945* by J.F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1970. The English edition was translated by Antony Preston and J.P. Brown with the help of seven technical assistants. The English edition, however, was more than a literal translation. Considerable new material was added and amendments made. This edition was printed in England in 1977 by Lionel Leventhal Ltd.

The book is a monumental encyclopedia of all Imperial Japanese Navy warships, including even the *Daihatsu* barge-like landing craft. It will probably never be equaled in quality and the profuse photographs, line drawings and technical detail. Esthetically, it is a beautiful book.

Its encyclopedic nature presents to the reviewer a serious problem. How does one review an encyclopedia with no comparable work to check the technical details? Watts and Gordon, *The Imperial Japanese Navy*, is not this comprehensive and in places must be used with caution. *Jane's Fighting Ships* is inadequate because the Japanese Navy Ministry was reluctant to furnish ships' details, particularly after 1931.

The one area open to checking is where the authors present the "Career" of each ship. Definitive sources for such checking include the microfilm reels prepared by the U.S. Naval Archives (Washington, D.C. Navy Yard) from among the half million pages of seized