

## Air and Space this Week

### Item of the Week

## MIDWAY REVISIED

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**KEY WORDS:** Midway Yamamoto *Kido Butai* Misperceptions

*The Battle of Midway was 81 years ago this week. Many of you know quite a bit about this pivotal battle, but perhaps there are a few new angles/resources that you might find interesting. I normally avoid the really big topics in aviation and Space exploration because there is so much other information available out there, but I'm making an exception because newer information has become available that sheds new light, or at least nuance, on this very important battle.*

*Early June's anniversaries make Item topic selection difficult, what with Midway and D-Day (and more) being on almost exactly the same dates. Next year will be the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day; I'll cover its aviation components then.*

### REVISIT ONE: JAPAN'S OBJECTIVE AND STRATEGY

The primary desired outcome of the Pacific War from the Japanese perspective was to capture the natural resources their island nation needed to become a modern industrial state. They wanted to strike quickly, occupy key areas, and build up their defenses quickly and heavily enough so that the U.S. would recognize and accept Japanese hegemony.

The time needed for capture and buildup was critical. The Japanese were confident they could quickly overcome the Allied forces in the areas to be captured, but they were concerned that a sortie by the U.S. Navy could give them a problem in holding and exploiting their gains.

The solution Yamamoto rammed through his bosses was to attack the American base at Pearl Harbor, and especially target aircraft carriers and battleships. If they could be put out of action for an extended period, then the desired captures could well be *fait accompli*, especially if the Americans were distracted by the War in Europe. The attack damaged the American battleship fleet, but the carriers then in the Pacific were not in port.

Yamamoto was still concerned about capturing and protecting areas in the Southwest Pacific, a fear that became particularly acute with the carrier raids on the [Marshall Islands](#), Wake Island, and the [aborted attack](#) on Rabaul (February); and the carrier raids on [Marcus Island](#), at [Lae and Salamaua](#), and the [Battle of the Coral Sea](#) (March). The U.S. carrier fleet just had to be put out of action in order to buy time for consolidating gains further west.

Therefore, Yamamoto came up with a plan to use an attack on the American base at Midway to cause the Americans to counter-attack with their depleted carrier forces, putting them in a position for the Japanese to annihilate them. It didn't work out that way. The Americans were there all right, but were there sooner and in a different position than the Japanese expected. Four front-line Japanese carriers were sunk, for the loss of one by the Americans. The Japanese Navy never fully recovered.

## CODEBREAKING

The Americans could read the codes the Japanese Navy was using, at least to a degree. It was enough to reveal Yamamoto's intent to attack Midway. Nimitz, to his great credit, trusted his codebreakers and set an ambush for the Japanese. It is said that success has many fathers, but failure is an orphan, and that was true for the distribution of credit for the victory to come. The guys that actually delivered the most important intelligence in WWII did not get much credit. One could expect, perhaps, that public awareness was low because the codebreaking ability of the U.S. was still a secret, but the groundwork was laid to deprive those responsible of the military credit they richly deserve. For example, the leader of the Hypo codebreaking team at Pearl, Lt. Joseph Rochefort, was shunted aside, given command of a floating drydock, instead of the career advancement he deserved. The books by Holmes and by Layton in the Reference List give copious details.

## NOT ON THE SAME PAGE: YAMAMOTO AND NAGUMO

***Admiral Yamamoto was the overall commander of the Japanese forces attacking Midway; Admiral Nagumo was in charge of the Kido Butai, a group of four front-line aircraft carriers and their supporting ships, at the front of that attacking flotilla.***

***Bottom Line Up Front #1:*** The Pearl Harbor attack was poorly planned and poorly executed.

***Bottom Line Up Front #2:*** The Midway attack plan was even worse, as was its execution.

***Here's why I think that on #1.*** The desired outcome of the first part of the War was to acquire resources. The strategy chosen was to delay any response by the U.S. Navy to give time to make and consolidate gains. The tactic selected to support the strategy was to take out major American ships at Pearl Harbor, while also suppressing any response by Hawaii-based aircraft.

IMO, Yamamoto was overly focused on the warships rather than how his forces might fulfill the pre-War strategy. The appreciation of military logistics seemed somewhat lost on the Japanese all through the Pacific War. Pearl Harbor is on an island, distant from the U.S. West Coast. Military operations based there, especially large-scale ones, are somewhat dependent on material replenishment from the mainland. Pearl was well-equipped with a fuel tank farm, workshops and other military support facilities, and locally-based aircraft. But there was no source of fuel there; storage, but not production.

What if Japan had attacked Pearl, but focused on destroying the tank farm and base facilities rather than sinking semi-obsolete battleships in salvageable waters, and then set up a rotating

blockade with submarines equipped with very-effective Long Lance torpedoes to stop any re-supply? How could have the U.S. Navy responded quickly if the on-hand fuel and supporting infrastructure at Pearl was destroyed, especially if replacement shipments of fuel and other supplies were interdicted?

Yamamoto can be criticized justly on the failure to attack the infrastructure that made Pearl Harbor such an important and effective base of U.S. naval operations, and Admiral Nagumo, commanding the attacking force, should have sent in a third attack wave to hammer shore facilities when it became clear that, after two attack waves, a number of ships were hit heavily, the infrastructure of the base was not.

**Here's why I think that on #2.** The objective was to lure the American carriers in the Pacific to a place where they could be attacked successfully. The strategy was to select a target important enough to ensure that the Americans would use their carrier forces to defend it – Midway. The tactic was to send in an invasion force as “bait.”

IMO, Yamamoto's disposition of forces and his planning with Nagumo were poorly thought out. Yamamoto placed Nagumo's striking force carriers in the van, with an invasion force nearby, followed by Yamamoto on battleship *Yamato* and other large-gun ships at a distance too great for direct support of the carriers or of the invasion. He assumed that no U.S. carriers would be present when the Japanese arrived at Midway, so while he did arrange for submarine reconnaissance east of Midway, it was too late to find the U.S. carriers assembling in an ambush position. Further, he and Nagumo do not seem to be on the same page with regard to implementing the strategy. Yamamoto did not particularly care about invading and seizing Midway, since it would be difficult to support, he simply wanted to get U.S. carriers within range. Nagumo seems to have taken the invasion part of the plan more seriously than the destruction of U.S. carriers.

The problem was one of aerial search. Prudence should have suggested that Nagumo fly extensive search missions on the way toward Midway to ensure the fleet would not get attacked by surprise. Much has been made in some accounts of the battle about the delay of one particular search plane and the effect it had on the battle. Look, if your primary mission is **find-and-destroy**, and the success of the “find” part of the mission depends critically on a single aircraft, **then your plan stinks**. Nagumo should have **more than doubled** his search, and Yamamoto should have made sure Nagumo understood the priorities before sailing.

**Other Problems Affecting the Outcome of the Battle** were Japanese inflexibility to change plans when the situation required it, how their carrier forces were structured, and their capacity to effect repairs of battle damage. Each carrier had a group assigned to it, fighters, bombers, and torpedo planes. The air group was more than just administratively assigned to a carrier, it was an integral part of that particular carrier's crew. This approach hurt them at Midway. Two Japanese carriers, the *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku*, fought in the Battle of the Coral Sea two months before Midway. The *Shokaku* was hit by several bombs that wrecked its capacity to support air operations, but did not hurt its engines or other aspects of its physical plant. The *Zuikaku* was undamaged, but its air group suffered grievous losses that made it temporarily

ineffective until replacements could be made and integrated into the crew. The Japanese were unable (or unwilling) to move the *Shokaku* planes to the *Zuikaku*, a simple thing that would have made *Zuikaku* capable of joining the *Kido Butai*. One additional large carrier could have made the outcome of Midway much different!

CODA: The damage to *Shokaku* would likely have kept it out of the Midway battle even if the Japanese had had a repair yard nearby. However, it was out of action much longer than an American carrier would. The *Yorktown* was badly damaged at the Battle of the Coral Sea the month previous, but yeoman work by the Pearl Harbor repair crews managed to patch it up enough to participate in the Midway fight. The Japanese lacked such a robust repair capability.

## BOMBING VERSUS TORPEDOES AND OTHER STORIES

The traditional view of the Battle of Midway was ingrained by reports, books, TV shows, and a major movie – all based almost exclusively on American accounts. The only significant Japanese view was that of Fuchida Mitsuo, and we have come to learn that his account, which was incorporated into the “traditional view,” contained inaccuracies and what Parshall/Tully call “outright lies” (page 437). More recently, analysis of the surviving Japanese records, and the declassification of naval intelligence capabilities in the 1940s, gives a more complete picture of the events.

The best source I know to correct some of the imperfections in the Midway story is the Parshall/Tully book, *Shattered Sword*, published in 2007. They specifically outline and discuss the following eight Midway misperceptions (stated on page xxii and supported by much of the rest of the book, especially Chapter 24, pages 431-443).

**Misperception #1:** The American forces were outnumbered, and the victory was somehow a “miracle” or “incredible.” When all of the aircraft on both sides are counted up, the balance is: the *Kido Butai* had an aggregate total 248 operational planes, and the planes on the three American carriers, plus the planes stationed on Midway, totaled on the order of 353 operational aircraft of all types. Further, American carrier operations were significantly more efficient, in spite of the prior damage to *Yorktown*. The codebreaker’s information was spot on (the prediction was off by 5 miles, 5° of azimuth, and 5 minutes of time!), which gave the Americans an enormous advantage.

**Misperception #2:** The Aleutian Island attack portion of the Japanese battle plan for Midway was conceived by Yamamoto as an integral part of the overall plan, causing a diversion of American attention and disposal of forces.

Nope. Japanese planners, lacking the experience to evaluate the logistical conditions of conducting flight in the Aleutians, looked to the globe to see those islands as a path allowing the Americans to attack the Home Islands from the northeast. As a result, they had been planning a blocking attack on the westernmost islands for some time; the acceleration of the Midway attack schedule caused the two attacks to occur simultaneously. The diversion of forces from the Aleutian attack to Midway wouldn’t likely have helped much, but, who knows?

**Misperception #3:** During the approach to Midway, Yamamoto withheld intelligence from Nagumo as to the potential threats the Midway attack would face. That's just not accurate. Yamamoto and the entire task force was maintaining radio silence on the approach to Midway, hoping to conceal the attack as long as possible. But if he had a solid sighting of American carriers close to Midway, totally unexpected, he certainly would have let Nagumo know. Besides, Nagumo's communications people could easily have picked up any information coming to them from the naval command in Tokyo directly; they did not need Yamamoto to relay it.

**Misperception #4:** A two-phase reconnaissance search [rather than the meager effort that actually occurred] at the onset of the battle, they would have found the American carriers in time to avoid disaster. A two-phase search (where two planes would fly the same search sector, with the second leaving the *Kido Butai* at the time the first was at the end of its outbound leg), would have been better, but would still be insufficient considering the importance of finding the Americans. More on this point later.

The air search for the American carriers was not the only deficiency here. A submarine cordon was planned to detect any American forces coming from the direction of Hawaii (or other directions) toward Midway, but since the Japanese thought the enemy carriers were in Hawaii and nowhere near Midway, they did not position the picket subs in a timely fashion, and the subs arrived on station after the Americans passed through. The disposition of the subs would have increased the odds of sighting the Americans, but would allow only one at most to do more than report to Nagumo. Reason: Subs are slow, especially submerged. A moving target would pass through the picket line before any of the other subs could intervene. Too little, too late.

The Americans submarine effort at Midway was equally poor. A number of subs were placed around Midway in a single circle. They had the same problem as the Japanese picket subs would have had, a sighting from one would not allow the others to attack. More than one sub skipper complained; a better disposition would have had two concentric lines, the outermost to first report so that the subs in the innermost ring would have time to back up the outer line and attack. None of the subs saw the invasion force before our airplanes had detected it. As it was, only one American sub played any substantive role in the battle, the [USS Nautilus](#) (SS-168), an antiquated sub that was better suited for the supply and special forces runs it would make later in the war. *Nautilus* copied a sighting report from one of our planes, giving a location of ships very near *Nautilus'* position. The captain of the *Nautilus* stayed submerged and moved slowly to the reported location, where he saw several large ships. A Japanese plane saw his periscope, strafed it, and called one of the destroyers, the *IJN Arashi*, over to pin *Nautilus* down while the others escaped to be closer to the *Kido Butai*. The *Arashi* held *Nautilus* down for a while, then high-tailed it back to the main force.

Overhead, the attacking force flying from the *Enterprise* were in the general area of the *Kido Butai*, looking for trouble. When its leader saw the *Arashi* below, by itself and moving at high speed, he correctly assumed it was heading to join the main force and followed. *Arashi* led them to the *Kido Butai*, where *Enterprise's* planes played an important role in the sinking of three of the carriers.

The *Nautilus* followed *Arashi*, too, but slowly. The soundman reported a lot of commotion ahead, and the periscope revealed a damaged carrier, on fire. The officers of the *Nautilus* believed it to be the *Soyru*, but it was the much bigger *Kaga*, instead. In any case, the fired a spread of torpedoes, then went deep. Many explosions were heard, and all aboard *Nautilus* were sure they had sunk a damaged carrier. American torpedoes rarely worked well the first two years of the War, and these were no exception. Only one torpedo actually hit *Kaga*, but it was a dud. Its warhead broke off and sank, and its buoyant afterbody floated impotently alongside. It actually served as a life raft for a few of the *Kaga* sailors abandoning ship!

*Nautilus* did not damage the Japanese directly, but their actions did give the *Enterprise* attacking force an assist. Still, this was a poor return relative to the submarine effort expended. The Japanese subs might have well stayed in port.

**Misperception #5:** The late launch of *Tone's* #4 scout plane doomed the *Kido Butai*. To repeat: If your plan for a large-scale battle hinges on the success or failure of a single plane, your plan is fatally flawed. There was a problem with the pre-fight Japanese search – it was grotesquely inadequate. It is inconceivable to me that a task force would have as their strategic objective to find and destroy the defending fleet wouldn't bother to make much of an effort to search for that fleet prior to battle.

Parshall and Tully make the case that the tardiness of the launch of the *Tone* #4 scout was actually a plus for Nagumo! The Japanese search pattern (see page 160) had seven aircraft radiating from the *Kido Butai*, one due south and each of the others spaced counter-clockwise about every 15° in azimuth, ending with #7 going NNW. The four search planes from south to ESE were to fly out 300 miles, then turn left for about fifty miles, then left again to head back to the *Kido Butai*. Had plane #4 left on time and flown its planned course, it would have flown right over the American carriers, **but later than it actually did so!** What really happened is that plane #4 did not fly the planned 300 miles, but turn left about 235 miles. They sighted the Americans at the end of their cross-leg.

**Misperception #7:** The loss of *Hornet's* torpedo squadron (and many of the planes attacking from Midway) was not in vain, because it lured defending Zero fighters to low level, thus incapable of countering the dive-bombing attack that soon followed. It is comforting to think that the loss of these gallant airmen led to victory in the pivotal battle of the War, but the problems with Japanese combat air patrolling were far deeper. Japanese forces did not have radar, and many of the fighters protecting the fleet did not have radios.

**Misperception #8:** All the very best pilots of the Japanese navy were lost at Midway. Japan Naval Air did take a big blow, but many of their elite pilots were elsewhere and were not lost at Midway, and only about a quarter of the Japanese aviators embarked in the *Kido Butai* were KIA. Witness the caliber of Tainan Corps and other IJN pilots the Marines faced on Guadalcanal two months later for additional proof that Japan still had elite pilots after Midway.

Japan did have two huge problems with military aviation, however: The rate at which they could produce pilots and the design of their aircraft. The loss rate of pilots was grossly underestimated, and the planes were designed for dogfighting, not winning in the bigger

picture. Surviving fighter ace Saburo Sakai recounts the rigors of flight training he encountered; the emphasis was producing a handful of the best pilots in the world rather than on producing a LOT of pilots good enough to accomplish their strategic mission. Once the elite pilots were gone, they could not be replaced, except with amateurs that were easy pickings for American planes.

IMO, I attribute the problems Japan faced to cultural differences of the time. Japan revered sports with highly-skilled individual opponents (*e.g.* sumo, kendo), and similarly in fighting, with samurai. They had no experience with team sports growing up. They fought as individuals, the Americans fought in teams; and both sides had their own mindset for combat accordingly. For example, the U.S. Army's internal magazine, [\*Impact\*](#), used analogies to football in their description of the elements of aerial combat.

Another factor impacting aerial combat in the Pacific was the state of aeronautical technology in Japan versus the U.S., especially engines. The American engines were much more powerful, pound for pound, than their Japanese counterparts. The Japanese design planes to be super maneuverable, in order to outfly and get behind opposing fighters. American fighters were much less maneuverable, but they had heavier weapons, pilot armor, and self-sealing fuel tanks. A few hits from a .50 machine gun would shred a Zero, while a Zero could hit an American fighter with many of its smaller bullets and not knock down a Wildcat or other fighter of the day. The Allies quickly learned that pilots who opted to dogfight with a Zero would lose, but a flight of American fighters could use hit-and-run and diving tactics to good effect.

### **Were the Japanese carriers suffering from a “locked deck?”**

Short answer: No, and ***this is the most serious misperception of the bunch.***

Fuchida's story was that all four *Kido Butai* carriers had fully armed and fueled airplanes lined up wingtip-to-wingtip, only five minutes from launching. However, the flight logs from the *Akagi*, Nagumo's ship, show they were conducting combat air patrols (CAP) during the time *Akagi's* deck would have been full of planes and incapable of any flight operations, if Fuchida was correct. Further, carrier *Hiryu*, somewhat north of the other three, would have been launching planes as the attack began on the other carriers, and that was not the case, either. The semi-official version of the Japanese report, *Senshi Sosho*, states that all of the *Kido Butai* carriers had few if any planes on deck; all planes not on search or CAP duty were in the hangar deck. At the time the *Kido Butai* was attacked, at least 30 minutes would have been needed to get planets on deck and launched, maybe more.

Parshall and Tully go to considerable length to further expound on issue of last-second armament changes and locked decks. Result: The Japanese could and should have been more prepared their carriers more as a group, to be able to provide for a strike against ships and to defend against aerial attack on short notice, than they were.

## **NOT ON THE SAME PAGE: HORNET'S ATTACK**

The Americans are not free of criticism at Midway, either. The attacks conducted by Midway-based planes, carrier aircraft from *Enterprise* and *Yorktown*, and *Hornet's* torpedo squadron, were both heroic and successful. But the rest of the *Hornet's* attack group was not, and there wasn't much said about it in real time. The person responsible was Admiral Mitscher. He'd fight well later in the War, but at Midway, he was a clinker, and perhaps a dishonest one.

Nimitz took his opinion of his admirals to his grave; he would never express publicly his assessment of the effectiveness of any of his subordinates. Good for leadership, but bad for history. You can rest assured, however, that his opinion of Mitscher at Midway (and the performance of Halsey at Leyte Gulf) was rather low, and his acknowledgement of that fact would have been to him an intolerable black eye for the Navy.

Most accounts of the Midway battle extol the luck of the Americans, the success of the attacking aircraft, and the sacrifice of the *Hornet's* torpedo squadron (both from the ship and those temporarily based on Midway). But they don't say much if anything about the rest of the *Hornet's* attacking force.

The problem is that the *Hornet's* attack group was sent out in the wrong direction, to the west, not the southwest, where intelligence placed them. The responsibility for the attack is Mitscher's, but it is not clear from the record just who told the planes to fly about 40° from the heading that would have put them in close contact with the attack groups from *Enterprise* and *Yorktown*. One possible explanation is that Mitscher thought there might be more carriers coming in that originally detected, and a more-westerly heading for his attack force might catch them before they could launch a supporting attack. But there is no surviving record of that decision. Worse, *much worse*, the After Action Report from *Hornet* was improperly incomplete, and contained information that clearly was (deliberately) inaccurate to make it look like the *Hornet's* attack group flew southwest, not west. The action report, as per customary routine, was circulated to senior officers involved for comment. The endorsement from task force commander Admiral Spruance contained the statement that, **"As a matter of historical record, the *Hornet* report contains a number of inaccuracies. The *Enterprise* report is considered accurate, and should be relied on for reference"** [Quoted in *A Day Like Thunder*, p. 181; emphasis added]. WOW! I say again, WOW! In writing on the official report no less!

The leader of the *Hornet* strike group was Stanhope Ring. He was not held in high regard by his pilots before the Midway attack, for a variety of valid reasons. The leader of the *Hornet* torpedo squadron, John Waldron, was particularly vocal with his criticism of Ring before the mission. Everyone knew that Ring was leading them in the wrong direction, but they dutifully followed, at least at first. Waldron became fed up with the direction Ring was going, and veered off to the southwest not too long after launch. They found the Japanese carriers, and their destiny; every plane in the formation was shot down, only pilot Tex Gay survived.

Ring's remaining planes carried on. Flying lead takes less fuel than flying in the following formation; pilots have to jockey the throttle a bit to maintain formation, the leader does not. Fuel supply was becoming critical, and hand signals to that effect were ignored by Ring. Pilots, concerned about making it back to *Hornet*, began peeling away from Ring. Many of them ran



out of fuel and ditched, with only a few being rescued. Ring returned to the *Hornet* by himself, and when asked where his group was, he replied that he didn't know, an enormously embarrassing admission. Yet, Ring received the Navy Cross for his actions at Midway, and never once related why his group flew the heading it did.

Ring carried the blame for the debacle from his comrades, and the approbation of the families of the men lost on this mission, for the rest of his life, even though he probably did not issue the heading they were to fly; Mitscher never was punished (although Nimitz did send him to a desk job for a while). Author Mrazyk darkly implies that Ring's being awarded the Navy Cross was to buy his silence in order to protect Mitscher.

## CONCLUSION

Before Midway, things were going pretty much all Japan's way. However, the idea that valuable territory and resources could be captured and consolidated, and then retained against an American counter-attack could only succeed if America's resolve to defeat Japan utterly had wavered. Pearl Harbor settled the resolve issue; America would only accept total defeat. And if it came down to a battle of attrition, the overwhelming industrial might of the U.S. would give Japan no chance of staving off disaster.

A wave of success one way, followed by a bigger wave of failure, means that there had to be a "turning point" around which the fortunes of war were reversed. It turned out to be the Battle of Midway. But even if Japan had won at Midway, the American resolve and capabilities would have found a different turning point not too long thereafter. The Japanese could, and did, lose the War at Midway, and thus the ultimate outcome was inevitable. The Americans could have lost at Midway, and while that would have set the timetable back considerably, IMO it would not have affected the ultimate outcome.

Parshall and Tully express it this way (page 402): "The final failure, of course, lies in Admiral Yamamoto's battle plan. There is no question that his operational scheme features an overly rigid timetable and a counterproductive dispersal of forces. By making the assumption that the Americans were beaten, and therefore had to be baited into fighting, Yamamoto made the crucial mistake of letting perceived intentions on the part of the Americans drive his force structure and dispositions. The plan that emerged from this flawed belief was a crazy quilt of formations and objectives, none of which were mutually supporting. When one of the legs of the table was kicked out, the entire article promptly collapsed under the weight of its own foolishness." Gee, I wonder if P&T didn't like the plan...

## FINAL WORDS

The Battle of Midway was a huge and complex operation, far beyond the scope of an Item of the Week. My purpose here is not to give a full account of everything and everyone involved, but rather to put some ideas on the table for you the reader to see, and references for you to follow up with as you see fit, all on the anniversary of the battle.

I will close with the same final paragraph in the main text of *Shattered Sword*:

“Without question, elements of this account will be modified and reinterpreted in the future, perhaps drastically. This process will doubtless accelerate as optical scanning and computer-aided translation technologies begin eradicating the language barriers that have plagued the study of the Pacific War. Such revisions are only to be expected – indeed, they are to be welcomed. It is only by constantly endeavoring to dig more deeply that a closer approximation of the truth can be achieved. The Battle of Midway, and the legacy of the brave men of both countries who fought and died there, deserve no less.”

## REFERENCES

Many books, reviews, studies, you-name-it, have been written about the Battle of Midway over the years. But I believe that no study of Midway is complete without detailed perusal of the following resources:

General: The Battle of Midway Roundtable website has an **enormous** amount of information the battle! See: <http://www.midway42.org/Default.aspx>.

Pre-Midway Strategic Considerations: Lundstrom, John B., 1976, *The First South Pacific Campaign: Pacific Fleet Strategy, December, 1941 – June, 1942*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, ISBN: 978-1-59114-417-5

Codebreaking: Holmes, W.J., 1979, *Double-Edged Secrets: U.S. Naval Intelligence Operations in the Pacific during World War II*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, ISBN 0-87021-162-5. Jasper Holmes was USNA 1918, served with distinction, then retired for medical reasons and joined the faculty at the University of Hawaii, and moonlighted as a writer of submarine stories for the *Saturday Evening Post* under the pseudonym “Alec Hudson.” When the War came, he returned to service and was a key part of Combat Intelligence Unit in Honolulu, working in part on codebreaking. He revered the disrespected leader of his unit, Joseph J. Rochefort so much that he used his picture as the frontispiece for this book! Holmes was the first Dean of the Engineering School at the University of Hawaii, and the Engineering Building at there is named “Holmes Hall” in his honor. And, didja know, there is a connection between Holmes and *Star Trek*! (see the Didja Know? section after the Calendar).

Codebreaking and more: Layton, Edwin T., with Roger Pineau and John Costello, 1985, *“And I Was There” Pearl Harbor and Midway – Breaking the Secrets*, New York: William Morrow and Company, ISBN 0-688-04882-8.

The title of his book comes from an incident immediately following the Japanese surrender ceremony. Nimitz and his team were there, quartered on his flagship, the battleship *South Dakota*. Nimitz and Layton, who had been the Intelligence Officer for Nimitz and Admiral Kimmel before him, were finishing dinner when Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner walked in. Turner was notorious for his extreme ego, bad temper, and lack of anger management. He also drank heavily, and he had been drinking prior to visiting Nimitz and Layton. He had seen a copy of the Court of Inquiry report on the Pearl Harbor attack, and he was on a roll, ranting and raving about how Kimmel should be “hanged higher than a kite.” Layton knew Turner didn’t

know what he was talking about, but since Turner seriously outranked him, he (at first) bit his tongue and did not respond. After Turner repeated his accusations, and again suggested Kimmel be murdered, Layton had had enough. He got into Turner's face and said, "Admiral, I'm sorry, but Kimmel did not have the information (about the impending attack) that you say he did. You say that he did. I say he did not. And I Was There." Turner went apoplectic, and physically assaulted Layton. Captain Emmet Forrestel, skipper of the *South Dakota*, had to physically intervene.

The *Hornet's* Role: Mrazek, Robert J., 2008, *A Dawn Like Thunder: The True Story of Torpedo Squadron Eight*, New York: Little, Brown, and Company, ISBN-13: 978-0-316-02139-5

And most of all: Parshall, Jonathan and Anthony Tully, 2005, *Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway*, University of Nebraska Press, ISBN 978-1-57488-924-6

### DIDJA KNOW?

[W. Jasper Holmes](#), mentioned above, actually has a connection with *Star Trek*. Before WWII, Holmes wrote submarine adventure stories for the *Saturday Evening Post*, under the pseudonym, "Alec Hudson." Many boys who would later serve on WWII subs were inspired by these stories. Another young man so inspired was Charles Knapp, who became a fan of airplanes and submarines. Knapp lived near Hollywood, and was a friend of a *Star Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry. He played golf with Gene and Majel Barrett (the original Nurse Chapel) regularly, and they talked about many things. Knapp gave Gene a copy of one of Holmes' non-fiction books, *Up Periscope* (wrong – see below). Life on a sub and life on a starship have some aspects in common, and some of Holmes' stories in *SEP* were the basis or elements of some of the *Star Trek: The Original Series'* episodes! For more on the Jasper Holmes/Gene Roddenberry connection, see: <https://www.eng.hawaii.edu/startrek>. NOTE: There is an error in the linked material. Holmes did write a number of *SEP* sub stories before the War, and afterward wrote both *Double-Edged Secrets* and *Undersea Victory*, both excellent info resources. Between the stories and the books, there was plenty to inspire Roddenberry. *Up Periscope!* was indeed a submarine novel, written by Robb White in 1956. It was [turned into a movie](#) in 1959, starring Edmund O'Brien, James Garner, Frank Gifford (!), Kookie Byrnes (Lend Me Your Comb!), and Alan Hale Jr. – that's right, Gilligan's skipper (!!).

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