

**Daniel Allen Butler. *Pearl: December 7, 1941*. Oxford, UK: Casemate Publishers, [www.casematepublishers.com](http://www.casematepublishers.com), 2021. vi+354 pp., illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. US \$34.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-61200-938-4. (E-book available.)**

Pearl Harbor holds a unique place in both American and military history. A perfect example of the concept of strategic surprise, it represents a pivotal moment in the history of the Second World War and, of course, a dramatic and shocking moment for the United States. For the survivors, it is a tragedy that shaped not only their lives but the lives of many. Pearl Harbor also represents thousands of moments of drama and terror, of courage and sacrifice. As such, it has really captivated the minds of many, including historians. One of the latest additions to our understanding of Pearl Harbor is Daniel Butler's *Pearl: December 7, 1941*.

Butler's book provides a chronology of the events of Pearl Harbor on that fateful day in twelve chapters supported by a prologue, epilogue, and appendices that provide the order of battle of both the Japanese and American forces at that time at Pearl Harbor. Tracing the attack from the planning through execution, the text provides an excellent chronology of events providing an incredibly readable account for the next generation fascinated with that day. Several chapters stand out in the material provided. Chapter four "MAGIC and the Color Purple" for example examines the issue of code breaking and the road to Pearl Harbor. It discusses the origin of codebreaking in the United States and the unique problems of codes and ciphers. It traces the development of the organizations within the US from the Black Chamber through OP-20-G and the importance of the United States Navy's taking on the task of breaking Japanese codes. The key of course was the work of William Friedman and his breaking of the PURPLE diplomatic code in the years leading up to the Second World War. PURPLE and the material it produced, given the code name MAGIC, were political codes, but in the years leading to Pearl, they provided America with invaluable information.

Similarly chapters five and six, "Climb Mount Niitaka" and "To-ra! To-ra! To-ra!" respectively, discuss the Japanese advance on Pearl and the attack itself. The author provides an excellent understanding of the Japanese side of the attack. Planning, strategic thinking, and the debates between the various Japanese decision makers provide an essential backdrop for understanding why the attack had to happen. The planning of Commander Minoru Genda and the challenges of getting the Imperial Japanese Navy leadership to agree to the plan, as well as the difficulties in overcoming the problems associated with operations at such a distance from home waters provide a fascinating read. It also provides important context for the reader to understand just how

remarkable the attack was and the massive difficulties that the Japanese had to overcome to not just try, but to succeed so dramatically. When matched with the political/foreign policy decisions that set the context for the war, it presents the reader with a good understanding of the road to war.

Unfortunately, there are some problems with the text. Discussion of the preparation for the attack on 7 December is remarkable. Butler provides incredible detail regarding the routine of many of the key players from prayers at the Shinto shrines on board the ships to what they ate for breakfast and the spotting of planes on the carrier decks. But such detail is not common knowledge and should be backed up with some form of attribution. Citation is an important aspect of every historical work, yet its spottiness imposes a limitation on the text. Sadly, it also means that the text needs to be used very carefully.

The account that Butler lays out is very clear and easy to follow. It provides a series of dramatic moments and hits all the key elements of the story of Pearl Harbor that have appeared in the existing literature. As such it is a useful text for anyone interested in the subject, especially if they are only starting to come to the subject. Unfortunately, the text does not provide a great deal of new information for readers already familiar with the history of Pearl Harbor. For example, Gordon Prange's more detailed 1981 study *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* is recommended. Clear and concise, Butler's text is a valuable account and as such is highly recommended. The citations and bibliography provide an excellent start for research purposes and would definitely be an asset to any student of Pearl Harbor. I would recommend it for not only the fan of American and military history, but for anyone working in the area. A valuable research tool to be sure.

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**Aidan Dodson and Dirk Nottelmann. *The Kaiser's Cruisers, 1871–1918*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Seaforth Publishing, [www.seaforthpublishing.com](http://www.seaforthpublishing.com), 2021. 320 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, glossary, appendices, bibliography, index. UK £35.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-5267-6576-5.**

This work is a chronological history and technical data compendium for the Imperial German Navy's "small cruisers" and their predecessors dating from the empire's founding in 1871, through its dissolution in 1918, to the scrapping of the last vessel in 1954. Intended to tell the story of the Imperial German Navy "through the lens of a particular group of warships," authors Aidan Dodson and Dirk Nottelmann both draw and expand on their earlier