

The text has some incredible human interest and that is a definite advantage. Kleiss as a pilot had a different perspective of the events and of course he isn't well talked about in other literature. Thus, a small window was opened into the lives of the people involved. However, the text suffers from several key failings that can't be overlooked. The battle of Midway is one that has been written about prolifically to say the least. Gordon W. Prange's work, Jonathon Parshall and Anthony Tully's monumental book *Shattered Sword*, and David Evans and Mark Peattie's *Kaigun* all stand out as exceptional and important works. In the light of such incredible resources, the constant use of Fuchida's writings, which have been discredited in Japan since the late 1950s, is perplexing. Fuchida's work was self-serving and fundamentally flawed, yet the authors here perpetuate the flaws. Simms and McGregor discuss codebreaking, but fail to reference probably the pivotal book on the subject, John Prados' *Combined Fleet Decoded*. The authors even equate Star Wars and the battle of Midway at one point. And the total absence of a bibliography hurts the value of the text as well.

The result of these and other issues is a text that suffers from serious credibility issues. What starts as a book with great promise becomes a simple rehash of a tale well told by others. If you are interested in Midway and don't know where to start, I would be hard pressed to recommend this text for you. It carries a lot of baggage that will muddy the water and thus be counterproductive. On the whole, I don't recommend this text for anyone.

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**David A Smith. *A New Force at Sea: George Dewey and the Rise of the American Navy*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, [www.usni.org](http://www.usni.org), 2023. 384 pp., illustrations, notes, biography, index. US \$44.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-68247-570-6.**

An average American today might be hard pressed to identify George Dewey. Admiral Dewey was an outstanding naval commander. During the Civil War he took part in many major naval battles. He later commanded American forces at Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War. This victory was won with only the loss of a single crewman and no major vessels, while destroying nearly the entire Spanish Pacific fleet in the Philippines. Nationally acclaimed, he was promoted to become Admiral of the Navy, the highest-ranking naval officer in American history. The admiral's celebrity led to a very short-lived candidacy for President. More positively, he was a leader influencing the

building of a world-class, modernized, steel-hulled Navy prior to World War I. The negative effect, however, led to America becoming a colonial power and a maritime custodian of both the mammoth “moats” of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

The early chapters of Smith’s book focus on George Dewey’s background as the relatively well-off son of a physician growing up in the modest capital of Montpelier, Vermont. In his youth, Dewey became “soldierly,” graduating from Norwich Military Academy. Subsequently he became a midshipman at the US Naval Academy at Annapolis, graduating third of nineteen in his 1858 class. This was just three years prior to the Civil War. As a lieutenant in the Union Navy, he served in the Gulf of Mexico and then inland, engaging in riverine battles. During this period, he was highly influenced by Admiral David G. Farragut and took part in the battles of Mobile Bay, Forts Jackson and Saint Philip, and finally was a member of the occupying forces at New Orleans. Later he served as the executive officer onboard the Union vessel *Mississippi* that took part in the Battle of Port Hudson, a clash that was instrumental in assisting Ulysses Grant’s siege of Vicksburg. Among his most famous Civil War victories was near Fort Fisher on Cape Fear, which was called by some the “Southern Gibraltar.” Its fall was arguably the most decisive battle of the Civil War fought in North Carolina and is considered by some the maritime equivalent of Appomattox. This successful land/sea assault on Fort Fisher was considered the first true coordinated fleet action of the US Navy in history, a complex operation that greatly affected Dewey’s postwar strategic thoughts in the intervening years.

After the sinking of the battleship *Maine* in Havana harbor, the United States declared war on Spain and ordered the then-Commodore Dewey to take his recently constructed armored fleet to attack the Spanish armada based in the Philippines. This was brilliantly accomplished from his flagship *Olympia* but presented unexpected consequences. His steam-powered vessels required coal, replenishment of ammunition, and had other vital logistical needs, but these were not available from neutral powers to either of the warring nations. Now an emerging power in the gigantic Pacific, its vastness became a problem for the Americans. Compounding his troubles, Dewey had earlier encouraged local native insurgent Emilio Aquinaldo, who later led a rebellion against US occupation.

The Battle of Manila Bay turned George Dewey into a national hero. He made many appearances around the country before huge crowds, participating in grand victory parades and even having a temporary triumphal arch constructed in his honor on New York’s Fifth Avenue. Dewey made the cover of popular magazines, and his likeness appeared on the wrappers of consumer products. For a brief time, he declared his willingness to “stand for” (rather

than campaign for) being a candidate for president, but soon showed lack of interest, asserting that the office is not difficult because it consisted mostly of executing the law.

Dewey went on to assert great influence in modernizing the Navy during the Theodore Roosevelt administration. Long before his death in 1917, he also predicted that an upcoming war would likely entangle the United States against Germany. His influential friend was Alfred Thayer Mahan, who regarded battleships as the preeminent weapon for any future war. Dewey, however, thought that leadership and an operational sense of how to combine daring with prudence was the key to success in battle. History has proven that Dewey, the distinguished senior admiral who was often depicted in his white naval uniform, was correct.

David Smith's *A New Force at Sea* is a carefully constructed scholarly work as well as a pleasurable read. It is a fast-moving, well-documented biography of a hero who has faded from consciousness somewhat because of the era in which he lived. The author successfully humanizes Dewey's sometimes complex character by relating his fondness for his dog "Bob," how he overcame hero worship that might have challenged an ordinary man, and his personal relationships, the loss of his first wife Susan Goodwin and a later marriage to Mildred "Millie" McLean Hazen that precipitated ugly religious prejudices. Smith clearly succeeds in telling the story of "The Rise of the American Navy," the book's subtitle. I highly recommend this fascinating work, which sheds fresh light upon a true naval hero from the late nineteenth century who made the United States into a two-ocean naval power.

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**Mark Stille. *Japan's Indian Ocean Raid 1942: The Allies' Lowest Ebb*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Books, [www.ospreypublishing.com](http://www.ospreypublishing.com), 2023. 96 pp., illustrations, maps, tables, bibliography, index. UK £16.99, Cdn \$33.00, US \$25.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-47285-418-6.**

The sub-title of Mark Stille's latest book prepared for Osprey is indeed well chosen. The start of the Pacific War was a catalogue of disasters for the Americans, the British and the Dutch. Whatever might have gone wrong did go wrong and, combined with setbacks in the European Theatre in the same timeframe (through the late summer of 1942), it was an unmitigated series of setbacks, to put it mildly. The "incredible victory" at Midway stemmed the tide in June 1942, but the struggle remained on a knife's edge into early 1943. The episode Stille covers here is the raid in April 1942 by the Imperial