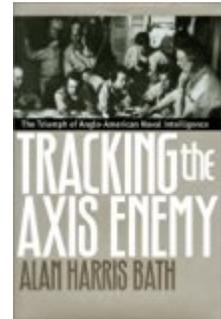


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Alan Harris Bath. *Tracking the Axis Enemy: The Triumph of Anglo-American Naval Intelligence.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998. xii + 308 pp. \$34.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7006-0917-8.

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Alan Harris Bath, a former naval intelligence officer who served in the United States Navy from 1951 through 1983, has the appropriate background to assess and interpret the primary documents and published sources that he uses in preparing this new synthesis on Allied naval intelligence during World War II. He was a commanding officer, Fleet Intelligence Center, Europe and Atlantic; served as deputy director for intelligence, U.S. European Command; and was commanding officer, U.S. Naval Investigative Service, Pacific Area. Bath's thesis is that the "Battle of the Atlantic," the 1942-1943 naval campaign against German U-boats, was a major victory not only for Allied warships but also for naval intelligence. Significantly, the author moves beyond the Atlantic-European-Mediterranean Theater of operation and also evaluates Anglo-American naval intelligence in the Pacific Theater of Operations (PTO). In this assessment, he uses archival materials from repositories in the United States, the United Kingdom, and British Commonwealth-Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. Previously classified documents, many newly released by the British Public Records Office Documents (PRO), and those deposited in the archives of the three Commonwealth nations, Bath observes correctly, are rarely utilized by American and British historians. He ultimately concludes that Anglo-American political and cultural bonds influenced intelligence operations during World War II. Nonetheless, at the same time he documents the cautions and mistrust among the English-speaking Allies—the United States, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada

This volume represents the latest contribution to "Modern War Studies," a series published by the University Press of Kansas under the general editorship of

Theodore A. Wilson. The book is divided into four parts: "Part I: The Road to Cooperation" (Chapters One through Four), "Part II: Culmination and Turning Point" (two chapters), "Part III: The Pacific" (Chapters Seven through Ten), and Part IV: Denouement of Wartime Alliances" (two chapters). In the initial chapter, "Uneasy Beginnings," Bath documents Anglo-American naval intelligence cooperation during the years between the two World Wars and traces the establishment of the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) in 1882 and its subsequent history. The founding of ONI preceded the Admiralty's development of a parallel organization, Naval Intelligence Division (NID), in 1887. The essay concludes with references to the Churchill-Roosevelt correspondence and the growing concern about the Sino-Japanese conflict. The second chapter, "Changing Attitudes," covers the beginning of the European war in 1939 and provides some background on Anglo-American technical and intelligence cooperation. The creation of the Standardization of Arms Committee and British and American military, naval, and air intelligence exchanges are also discussed. In "Forging Ahead," the author begins with the Nazi Blitz against England and covers the period until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii—e.g., August 1940 to December 1941.

Bath recounts the effort of the Bailey Committee to improve intelligence exchanges, mutual concerns about the Japanese fleet in the Pacific, and the loss of Continental British SIS (Secret Intelligence Service) stations as the Germans occupied central and western Europe. He reviews America's problem of having divided foreign intelligence responsibilities between army and navy intelligence and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and he characterizes the shift from "mutual suspicion" to a

“new spirit of cooperation” among the Allies as a result of ABC-1 conferences (American-British-Canadian). The exchange of military missions among these three allies began only in August 1940, and strategies were initiated to protect North Atlantic convoys sailing from America to England. The important roles of the British Director of Naval Intelligence, John Godfrey (and his assistant, Ian Fleming, later of “James Bond” fame), American Admiral Robert L. Ghormley, and William J. Donovan of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) are assessed. Likewise, the code breaking activities at Bletchley Park, the Enigma and Purple cypher machines, Magic (the U.S. decoding of Japanese crypto-systems), and ULTRA (decoding of German cryptography) are summarized briefly.

Chapter Four, “Growth of Wartime Cooperation,” is where the author characterizes the period between the Pearl Harbor attack and the Arcadia Conference through Operation Torch, the invasion of North Africa, in November 1942. The development of the joint/combined staff system among the allies; submarine tracking centers in London, Ottawa, and Washington; the convoy system and the German U-boat Wolfpack’s “Operation Paukenschlag” [Drumbeat] as a counter response, are reported. Michael Gannon (1990) provides more detail on this period. Bath emphasizes the important distinction between strategic and operational intelligence, the different philosophies and capabilities in military and topographic intelligence. Among the major American leaders mentioned are Admirals Stark, King, and Turner. Notably, the close cooperation that existed between the Admiralty and the U.S. Navy in London was lacking in Washington, in part due to Admiral King’s “strong antipathy to mixed [Anglo-American] forces and to liaison officers” (p. 90)—the opposite of General Eisenhower’s approach to the Allied war effort.

In Part II, the fifth chapter, “Culmination,” demonstrates that the tide of battle began to turn in early 1943, although Allied shipping losses to U-boats continued to mount. The Canadians were viewed by the British as second class allies and a source of men and material for the Royal Navy, and the Canadians became convinced that instead of being a co-equal in the triumvirate, the Americans and British wished to keep Canada in this subordinate position. The formation of the Tenth Fleet and the Joint Intelligence Collecting Agency (JICA) are also summarized. The defeat of the U-boats is characterized as the direct result of a combination of ULTRA, “Y” (radio intelligence) analysis, D/F (direction finding), and aerial photographic reconnaissance. In November 1942, for personality and political reasons, Captain Rushbrook replaced

Admiral Godfrey as the director of the Admiralty’s Naval Intelligence Division; Beasley’s (1980) biography provides a more detailed account. Bath claims that the American OSS cooperated with the French resistance on intelligence matters to a greater degree than the British, and that the latter also began to withhold intelligence information from the Americans. The reason suggested is that by the spring of 1943 British politico-military strategists were already looking toward postwar relationships and wanted a “one-way pipeline of information” (pp. 123-27) in their desire to maintain parity with the United States. The documentation provided by Bath appears to be compelling.

The four chapters in “Part III: The Pacific,” begin with a review entitled “Interwar Faltering Steps” in which the author comments upon British and American interests in the Far East from 1579 through 1941. The breaking of the Japanese diplomatic code, the development of the coast watching system in the southwest Pacific, and local “un-sanctioned” intelligence cooperation between the Americans and British in the Far East are assessed. Bath also documents the destruction of the records of the British Intelligence Far East Combined Bureau before the fall of Singapore in 1941 and he concludes that Australia and New Zealand were unprepared in naval intelligence at the beginning of World War II. In Chapter Eight, he provides evidence that by the fall of 1941 “when the soon-to-be Allied navies had begun to look seriously at increased intelligence cooperation, it was too late” (p. 150). Bath borrows the chapter title, “Too Little, Too Late,” from Samuel Eliot Morison (*History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, Vol. 3: Rising Sun in the Pacific*, rev. ed., 1954, p. 49). The Dutch efforts at decoding Japanese naval signals, German raider attacks in the southwest Pacific, the abortive ABDA multi-national naval cooperation (American, Australian, British, Dutch and New Zealand), and the tragic loss of Admiral Tom Phillips and HMS Prince of Wales and Repulse are evaluated.

In his ninth chapter, “Organizing for Cooperation,” the author argues correctly that the Pacific War was largely American, but concludes that Anglo-American naval intelligence was plagued more by geographic dispersal than by disunity. Nonetheless, the cooperation was, as Bath states “not inspiring” (p. 186). As the United States assumed primary responsibility for the Pacific War, Anglo-American naval intelligence cooperation deteriorated—in the author’s words, “slowly faded.” The reader is presented with insights about Admirals King, Nimitz, Ghormley, and Halsey, and General

MacArthur. The significance of the U.S. cryptographic station in the Philippines (CAST) is examined as is the struggle among the Americans as to who would control the U.S. code breakers—the Office of Naval Intelligence or the Director of Naval Communications. With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor viewed as the major American intelligence failure, the Battle of Midway is perceived as the greatest success, enabling the Allies to shift from defensive to offensive intelligence operations. The chapter entitled “‘Support’ Vice ‘Cooperation’” covers the period from late 1944 to the end of the Pacific War. A lack of local intelligence exchange, the control of information distribution (especially decrypts), and the different philosophies of MacArthur’s and Nimitz’s separate intelligence organizations are assessed. The return of the Royal Navy to the Pacific as a coequal ally (rather than as a force subordinate to Nimitz) is also evaluated, and Bath contends that Anglo-American naval intelligence returned to its prewar level of ineffectiveness. The author also notes that these Anglo-American vicissitudes of naval intelligence were replicated in the naval intelligence cooperation between Germany and Japan.

“Part IV: Denouement of Wartime Alliances” begins with a chapter entitled “Twilight of Cooperation” in which preparations for Operation Neptune/Overlord—the Normandy invasion—are outlined. The Allies won the intelligence battle in Europe because of fast and accurate decoding, and the ability to provide ULTRA information directly to field commanders. The British, Canadian, and American submarine tracking centers became “seamlessly coordinated in their sharing of information.” However, the U.S. soon began to differentiate between intelligence information needed to win the war and that relating to the postwar world, and the cooperative intelligence apparatus was disbanded. “In Retrospect,” Bath’s final chapter, naval intelligence operations in the Atlantic-European-Mediterranean Theater is compared to those in the Pacific. Dissimilar patterns of cooperation, Canada’s subordinate position in the Atlantic region, centralized British versus U.S. decentralized intelligence operations, the successful combined effort against the U-boats, and intramural feuding between Washington and Hawaii are also considered. Apparently the lesson of December 7 was not learned well.

Bath concludes “it is difficult to determine why Anglo-American naval cooperation flourished in the Atlantic and floundered in the Pacific. One reason may have been that intelligence cooperation in the Atlantic was based on a series of navy-to-navy agreements between Washington and London, crafted and implemented

by skilled, high-ranking liaison officers in both capitals whose major assignment it was to smooth the cooperative path. In the Far East, the Allied fleet commanders, half a world away from Europe and North America, were powerless to conclude all but the most minor agreements without referral to their respective seats of government” (p. 167).

The most recent entry among Bath’s references, his “Selected Bibliography,” dates to 1997. There are a total of 745 endnotes (pp. 235-276) for the “Preface” and 12 chapters in *Tracking the Axis Enemy*. Bath’s references include 24 “Documentary Sources,” 27 “Official Histories and Documents,” 134 “Books and Chapters,” and 31 “Articles and Papers.” Many of the books and chapters cited refer to works published by the United States Naval Institute Press. Bath also depends heavily upon secondary sources but has chosen the “best of the best.” Surprisingly, he cites the older 1967 edition of David Kahn’s classic, *The Codebreakers*, rather than the 1996 revision. Among the published multi-volume official histories he employs are those by renowned American naval historian Samuel Eliot Morison (1947-1962) and the late British historian of military intelligence, Harry Hinsley (1979-1990). Both histories are cited frequently in the endnotes (14 and 16 times, respectively).

However, Clay Blair’s two monumental volumes on submarine warfare (1996, 1998) are not cited; the second was probably published too late to be included in Bath’s volume. Blair, himself a submariner during World War II and the author of twenty-six books, died in late December 1998, but spent ten years researching Hitler’s U-Boat War, in which he concluded that the German submarine menace had been “vastly overblown” in many historical accounts. It would have been interesting to read Bath’s assessment of this conclusion. Scholars, such as Blair, Michael Gannon (1990, 1998), Maria Paz (1997), and Friedrich Schuler (1998), have “mined” the resources at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and the Naval Historical Center Operational Archives, as well as other recently declassified collections of U.S. documents. Bath uses some of the same record groups but not to the same finite level as other authors. In addition, *Tracking the Axis Enemy* has fewer citations to relevant articles in the journals *Cryptologia* and *Intelligence and National Security* than might be anticipated. Among other sources not cited is a useful Australian Defense Force Academy evaluation of Australian-American naval relations (Frame 1992).

The most often referenced “new” (recently declassi-

fied) documents are, by far, PRO:ADM (Public Record Office, Kew, England: ADMiralty: War History Cases and Papers) (68 citations); COMNAVEU and OPNAV (ten and eight citations, respectively) are next in frequency. Given the number of “Documentary Sources” listed, the reader might expect more than the 150 or so citations to these sources. While full documentation to specific sources does appear in the endnotes, the “Selected Bibliography: Documentary Sources” (p. 277) lists, for example, without further emendation, the Library of Congress; U.S. Naval War College; British Museum, London; National Library, Ottawa; Australian Archives, Victoria, Melbourne; and National Library of New Zealand, Wellington. Scholars would appreciate more complete citations to the specific collections at these repositories. Some of the “Documentary Sources” such as those in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Nimitz Library, and MacArthur Memorial Archives, are cited infrequently. A twenty-page double-column conflated index incorporates topical and proper noun entries and is an essential asset to the book. Unfortunately, the volume has no illustrations or maps.

Nonetheless, *Tracking the Axis Enemy* provides valuable new and fresh insights about Anglo-American naval intelligence, or lack thereof, and the political and cultural differences that served to mitigate against what might have been even better cooperative efforts. The author views the “triumphs” over Nazi U-boats and the Imperial Japanese Navy as a victory predominantly by allied naval intelligence over their Axis counterparts. The outcome might have been radically different except for Anglo-American technology—radar, sonar, and cryptoanalysis. Bath’s evaluation of Anglo-American naval intelligence for both the Atlantic and the Pacific theaters of operation is significant because of his use of the recently declassified British documents. His analysis adds to the classic assessment by “Jasper” Holmes, formerly a member of the Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area, in *Doubled-Edged Secrets* (1979) and an earlier synthesis by Donald McLachen (1968), who served on the staff of the Director of Naval Intelligence from 1940-1945. Therefore, *Tracking the Axis Enemy* updates our understanding of naval intelligence cooperation among the Allies as initially referenced by Morison in *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II*, Vol. 3: *Rising Sun in the Pacific* (1954) and Vol. 10: *The Atlantic Battle Won, May 1943-May 1945* (1956). Hinsley’s compendia (1979-1990) remain as the definitive, official British published sources.

Alan Harris Bath has provided the reader with a fresh, up-to-date evaluation of a complex and controver-

sial subject, and documents significant distinctions between naval intelligence and cooperation among allies in the Atlantic and Pacific theaters of operation. His research demonstrates that, as reports and documents are declassified, we will begin to have a better grasp of the military intelligence intricacies of World War II and the postwar world.

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