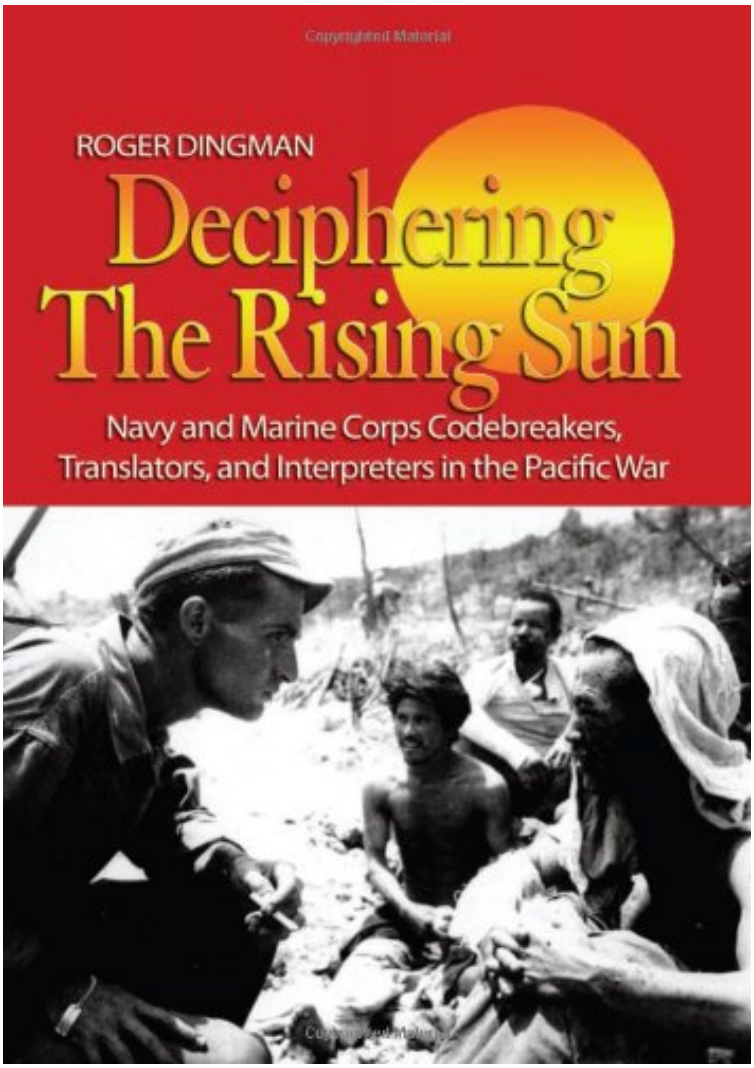
Deciphering the Rising Sun: Navy and Marine Corps Codebreakers, Translators, and Interpreters in the Pacific War

Roger Dingman
*ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF*



#825213 in Books 2009-07Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x 1.20 x 6.20l, 1.45 #File Name: 1591142113384 pages | File size: 44.Mb

Roger Dingman : Deciphering the Rising Sun: Navy and Marine Corps Codebreakers, Translators, and Interpreters in the Pacific War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Deciphering the Rising Sun: Navy and Marine Corps Codebreakers, Translators, and Interpreters in the Pacific War:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Very scholarly, and very cultural in its emphasisBy David W. NicholasThis book is a history of U.S. Navy and Marine Japanese language translators and interpreters during World

War 2. The author is mainly interested in describing how the schools they attended worked, were staffed and organized, and so forth. The principle school involved was at the University of California Berkeley before the war, but much of the staff was of Japanese ancestry and couldn't remain in California after Roosevelt evacuated all Japanese-ancestry individuals from the West Coast, so the whole operation was moved to the University of Colorado, Boulder. There, small classes at first and later larger ones learned to speak, read, and write Japanese. Even conversational Japanese wasn't sufficient for what they wanted to do; the Japenese military used a plethora of terminology that was unintelligible without the proper knowledge. Once they graduated the courses (typically sometime in 1943) the translators were sent to the Pacific theater to work in intelligence centers, on headquarters staffs, and even on occasion at intercept centers.The author is mainly focused on the role these people played culturally during the war, and especially after it. He's semi-interested in the war itself, but only in terms of how it influenced the later lives of these translators, and the Japanese-American cultural exchange. The discovery of documents on the Japanese cruiser Nachi, for instance, is only briefly mentioned; there were thousands of these documents, some of them very interesting to Allied forces, and they all had to be translated. The author only recounts this incident, really, in terms of how impressed the translators were with what had been captured. The last 2 chapters (of 8) deal exclusively with the influence of these translators after the war.This is an interesting book for what it is, but not much beyond that. The author is interested in this translator's school, and how many graduates it had, but the overall influence they had on the war is only briefly touched on, and there's no real context to fit these translators into the larger picture. Interesting, but a very esoteric topic.14 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Great case study in learning how to bridge a cultural divideBy Joel R.The inside cover of "Deciphering the Rising Sun", by Roger Dingman, succinctly summarizes the book by stating "This book is the first to document the vital role played by Americans not of Japanese ancestry who served as Japanese language officers in World War II." It continues "This book reveals an exciting and previously unknown aspect of the Pacific War and demonstrates the enduring importance of linguistic and cross-cultural knowledge within America's armed forces in war and peace." The book was fully successful in living up to these goals.I am always fascinated with the foresight America had in preparing for World War II months or years prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor. Dingman opens the book by examining the efforts "to try and remedy an importance deficiency in the Navy and Marines Corps' readiness for war" by increasing the number of officers who were truly fluent in Japanese. So, in October 1940, the United States began the effort to train hundreds of officers in Japanese almost a full year before the Day that lives in infamy. What follows is the fascinating saga of how the United States ended up with language schools on both coasts, and finally at the University of Colorado in Boulder.Dingman next captures the memoirs of the students as they went through the demanding curriculum of the language school. These stories not only cover the technical aspects of learning the seemingly indecipherable Japanese characters; but also cover many of the personal stories that took place during the rare off-hours not spent studying.The balance of the book is a continuation of the memoirs of the men's and women's combat assignments. Two chapters are logically grouped by service assignments - Marine Corps or Navy. The Marines were quickly thrown into the stresses of combat as combat interpreters, whereas the Navy interpreters served equally important but less dangerous assignments in Hawaii, Australia, or aboard ships. For these officers who trained together at Boulder, fate would take them down two very distinct paths. For some, their paths converged again on an island named Okinawa. These paths would remain intertwined through the surrender and the occupation of Japan.Dingman does an excellent job of capturing the memories of these men and women who served in very unique assignments during the war. As an example of the writing style, Dingman writes "[Lt Hart Spiegel] had worried that he would be unable to understand the locals, who purportedly spoke an impenetrable dialect... sure enough, when he tried to question an approaching group of ragtag men, Spiegel could not understand a word they said. His sense of humiliation and incompetence vanished only when he learned they had wandered out of a home for the mentally incompetent." In this story, Spiegel was serving ashore with the invasion forces, and is serves to highlight the humor that Dingman laces throughout the book.The front cover recommends this book for "those interested in America's intelligence establishment and in Japan's relations with the United States." A much broader audience can get value from this book. This book is an excellent case study for in bridging cultural divides. The United States identified a strategic cultural gap; mobilized academia to train a cadre of officers; and successfully integrated those personnel into military operations. This is certainly a lesson that America could dust off and apply again today.5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. DECIPHERING THE RISING SUN: NAVY AND MARINE CORPS CODEBREAKERS, TRANSLATORS, AND INTERPRETERS IN THE PACIFIC WARBy Robert A. LynnDECIPHERING THE RISING SUN: NAVY AND MARINE CORPS CODEBREAKERS, TRANSLATORS, AND INTERPRETERS IN THE PACIFIC WARPROFESSOR ROGER DINGHAMNAVAL INSTITUTE PRESS, 2009HARDCOVER, $29.95, 272 PAGES, NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEXIn 1942, the U.S. Government recognized the need to set up a school where its servicemen could be instructed in the Japanese language. After brief sojourns at Harvard and Berkeley, it was decided to locate it at the University of Colorado in Boulder. On 23 June 1942, barely two weeks after the Battle of Midway, the school opened with 152 officer candidates, recruited mainly by Albert Hindmarsh, who had as a young academic visited Japan in 1937 to study the language intensively. The students were trained by both American and Japanese instructors, using the Naganuma

texts. In their teaching, they maintained a balance between the spoken and written aspects of "this most difficult language." When the first class graduated in July, 1943, they were commissioned second lieutenants in the U.S. Marine Corps. In the first stage, some were introduced in Washington to work as code-breakers and specialized in radio interception and cryptographic work for the Navy. But code-breaking and translation were demoralizing; and it wasn't until 1944 that they became involved in combat. As the war progressed, they played their part as Marine combat interpreters in the island-hopping campaign. Meanwhile, their naval colleagues were trained to function as Japanese-speaking intelligence officers. In the last months of the war, they were generally attached to combat units and saw grisly service in Okinawa. Two items of relevance to Britain and the Commonwealth should be made at this point. Britain couldn't rely on Niseis (a native of the U.S. or Canada born of immigrant Japanese parents and educated in America or Canada), except for those who were seconded from Canada. Nor had missionary families in Japan been as numerous as were the Americans before the war. So the British services had no pool of recruits on which they could draw in order to build up their linguistic resources. Apart from those trained at SOAS, Bill Beasley was sent by the Royal Navy to Boulder for training with the Americans. Some Commonwealth linguists also joined the Allied Translator and Interpreter Service (ATIS), primarily an Army facility, attached to General MacArthur's HQ in Brisbane, which made a large contribution to Japanese language studies during the war. After the official Japanese surrender in September, 1945, many language officers played a critical role in facilitating the local surrender of garrisons in islands like Wake and Truk which made up what Dingman calls Japan's maritime empire. Later they became involved in war crimes investigations and the prosecutions in outlying stations like Manila. The same job had to be done for parts of Japan's continental empire in China and Korea. Their linguistic knowledge was invaluable in achieving the successful dismantling of the Japanese Empire. From the evidence Dingman has amassed, it seems that interpreters were able to empathize with the commanders whose surrender they took and smoothed the transition to peace. When they landed in Japan herself, language officers had to act as agents of occupation, enforcing the instruments of surrender, Dingman claims that "language officers stood at the forefront of those who helped bring about that change (in unfriendly U.S. attitudes to Japan)." Given the American perception that the Japanese had been transformed, what was the role of these wartime combatants in the post-war occupation of Japan's home islands? They performed not only as investigators and reporters but also as bridge-builders promoting American-Japanese understanding. Dingman concludes by looking at the later careers of the Boulder graduates. This book reveals not only an exciting and previously unknown aspect of the Pacific War but is an extraordinary achievement that ventures beyond the nominal Second World War book fare.Lt. Colonel Robert A. Lynn, Florida GuardOrlando, Florida

This book is about Americans not of Japanese ancestry, who served as Japanese language officers in World War II. Covering the period 1940-1945, it describes their selection, training, and service in the Navy and Marine Corps during the war and their contributions to maintenance of good relations between America and Japan thereafter. It argues that their service as “code breakers” and combat interpreters hastened victory and that their cross-cultural experience and linguistic knowledge facilitated the successful dismantling of the Japanese Empire and the peaceful occupation of Japan. The book shows how the war changed relations between the Navy and academia, transformed the lives of these 1200 men and women, and set onetime enemies on course to enduring friendship. Its purpose is twofold: to reveal an exciting and hitherto unknown aspect of the Pacific War and to demonstrate the enduring importance of linguistic and cross-cultural knowledge within America’s armed forces in war and peace alike.The book is meant for the general reader interested in World War II, as well as academic specialists and other persons particularly interested in that conflict. It will also appeal to readers with an interest in America’s intelligence establishment and to those interested in Japan and its relations with the United States. This history tells and exciting and previously unknown story of men and women whose brains and devotion to duty enabled them to learn an extraordinarily difficult language and use it in combat and ashore to hasten Japan’s defeat and transformation from enemy to friend of America.

About the AuthorRoger Dingman was educated at Stanford and Harvard and was professor of history at the University of Southern California for thirty-six years. He and his wife divide their time between Harbor City, CA, and Glade Park, CO.