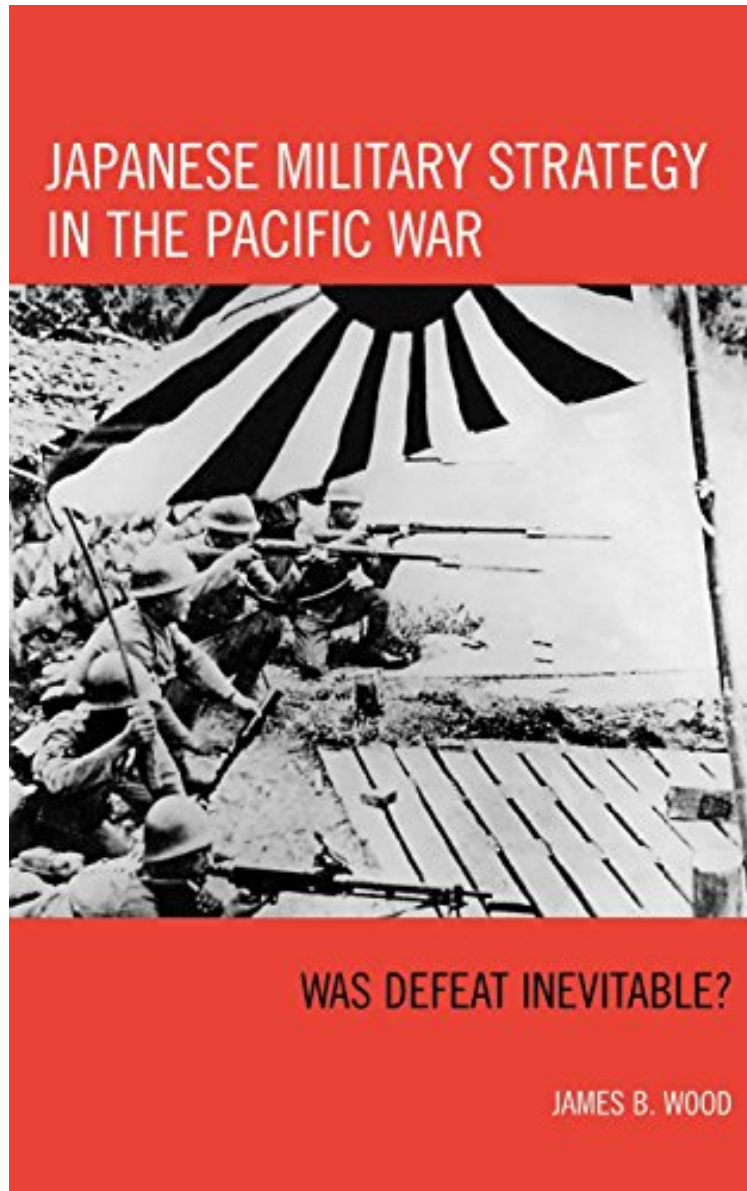


(Get free) Japanese Military Strategy in the Pacific War: Was Defeat Inevitable?

Japanese Military Strategy in the Pacific War: Was Defeat Inevitable?

James B. Wood

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James B. Wood : Japanese Military Strategy in the Pacific War: Was Defeat Inevitable? before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Japanese Military Strategy in the Pacific War: Was Defeat Inevitable?:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This is an excellent book with thorough research into the Japanese war from ...By Arthur H Bishop This is an excellent book with thorough research into the Japanese war from the Japanese perspective. Western historians conclude that it was inevitable for the Japanese to lose to the US. But Wood writes from his own research that had the Japanese leaders kept to their original plans to not extend their reach beyond what they could reasonably defend and group their military assets so that they could meet the American offense with their full power they could have extended the war and perhaps worn down the US. They had no business attacking Midway nor the Alaskan islands nor the Solomons nor New Guinea. They extended their assets way beyond their ability to manage and suffered at the hands of the American superior forces. Good reading. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. great book By Lee Hunt Great book, really well explained and interesting. Fascinating because its clear the Japanese could have done "better"- very fun read because too many history books are just accounts of what happened- not the thinking or strategy behind what choices were and could have been made. 37 of 39 people found the following review helpful. Good Place to Start a Conversation By Richard Worth This intellectual tidbit offers no ground-breaking scholarship, with its bibliography full of secondary sources, all of them English-language. This is no crippling flaw though, given the author's purpose simply to challenge the conventional view of Japan's inevitable defeat by the Allied industrial powerhouses. The text highlights some Japanese mistakes familiar anyone who has read about the Pacific War: failure on the offensive and defensive sides of the submarine duel, piecemeal commitments to dubious campaigns, etc. Perhaps Wood's most novel point concerns suicide attacks, which he regards as effective and commonsensical and worthy of refinement. His critique of Japan's war effort fails to distinguish between strategic mistakes and defeat in battle. When the Japanese lose while pressing their initiative, they are guilty of systematic over-extension; when they lose on the defensive, they are guilty of conceding the fight to the enemy's terms. They are criticized simultaneously for failing to stick to their game plan and for failing to adapt to new situations. Apparently the Japanese can neither have their cake nor eat it. Likewise, readers must go without a precise definition of the defeat in war that Japan is trying to avoid. Is any negotiated settlement that prevents occupation of the home islands better than a "defeat"? Wood seems content to see Japan lose all its conquests and all its continental holdings, avoid invasion, and call it a draw. At its essence, Wood's alternative scenario is a fundamental switch from Japan's short-war strategy. He examines the salient features of a long-war strategy, and while the book gives only a superficial look at the global ramifications of this switch, it does usefully summarize the immediate consequences. There is little examination of Allied counter-moves. The text provides a few geek-ticklers, and the always popular super-battleship "Yamamoto" makes an appearance. Other matters are more disturbing. The author has swallowed whole the regurgitated American-centric nuggets concerning Adm Kurita's actions at Samar, and then poured further indignity on the admiral by mis-naming him. (Ozawa!) Some passages stopped my reading dead in its tracks. Page 9 gives an overview of the years running up to the outbreak of hostilities: "American hostility to Japan's position in Asia was manifest and in retrospect, the conclusion that the United States was bent on war was in no way a misreading of American intensions." (None of Asada's works appear in Wood's bibliography.) But even this gaff lies tangential to the main thrust of the book. The serious flaw in the author's argument is his treatment of two issues that largely trump the long-war advantages. The atom bomb and the Soviet threat appear in the main text only long enough to be sidestepped, then reappear in the conclusion for a more formal but equally shallow dismissal. The Soviets apparently could be bribed into staying out of the war by ceding Manchuria to them, an idea that might have made Molotov smile; it presumes that the Japanese pre-empt Allied deals with Stalin and that the Russians accept as payoff something that was already theirs for the taking. As for the A-bomb, Wood's long-war scenario implies a delayed capture of the Marianas so that an atomic bombing would not take place in the context of routine mass-bombings, thus diminishing the emotional impact of a 1-Bomb/1-City event. To me, this seems counter-intuitive and even silly. It also ignores that B-29's first struck Japan from bases in China, not in the Pacific. In general, Wood turns a blind eye to warfare on the continent, justifying this because the Pacific was historically the decisive sector--ignoring that his central thesis is a change in the way the war was fought. Wood's book suffices as a conversation-starter more than as a comprehensive argument. However, many readers will find it a useful introduction into the significance of major mistakes made by the Japanese in World War II.

In this provocative history, James B. Wood challenges the received wisdom that Japan's defeat in the Pacific was historically inevitable. He argues instead that it was only when the Japanese military prematurely abandoned its original sound strategic plan—to secure the resources Japan needed and establish a viable defensible perimeter for the Empire—that the Allies were able to regain the initiative and lock Japanese forces into a war of attrition they were not prepared to fight. The book persuasively shows how the Japanese army and navy had both the opportunity and the capability to have fought a different and more successful war in the Pacific that could have influenced the course and outcome of World War II. It is therefore a study both of Japanese defeat and of what was needed to achieve a potential Japanese victory, or at the very least, to avoid total ruin. Wood's argument does not depend on signal individual historical events or dramatic accidents. Instead it examines how familiar events could have become more complicated or problematic under different, but nevertheless historically possible, conditions due to changes in the complex

interaction of strategic and operational factors over time. Wood concludes that fighting a different war was well within the capacities of imperial Japan. He underscores the fact that the enormous task of achieving total military victory over Japan would have been even more difficult, perhaps too difficult, if the Japanese had waged a different war and the Allies had not fought as skillfully as they did. If Japan had traveled that alternate military road, the outcome of the Pacific War could have differed significantly from that we know so well—and, perhaps a little too complacently, accept.

[Wood's] carefully constructed arguments stem from a wide reading and understanding of the war's historic literature, and his suggested alternative courses of Japanese actions are entirely credible . . . [his] careful examination of alternative possibilities in the Pacific War is an impressive example of good counterfactual history. (Col. Stanley L. Falk *The Journal of the Australian Society of Archivists*) Wood has raised many provocative points worthy of debate. Recommended. (CHOICE) This impressive counterfactual analysis demonstrates that the course of the Pacific War was not set in stone. Wood demonstrates, through careful analysis of alternatives actually discussed by Japan's leaders, that the decision to go to war was not an exercise in national suicide. Instead, specific choices closed a window of opportunity for Japan to have bought more time and might well have altered fundamentally the war's conclusion. (Dennis E. Showalter, *Colorado College*; author of *Patton and Rommel: Men of War in the Twentieth Century*) About the Author James B. Wood is Charles Keller Professor of History at Williams College.