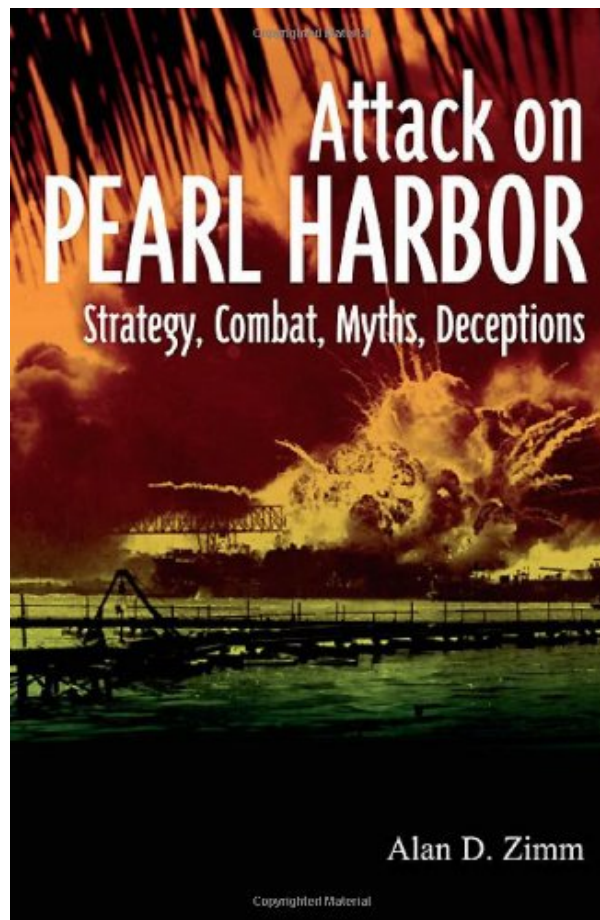
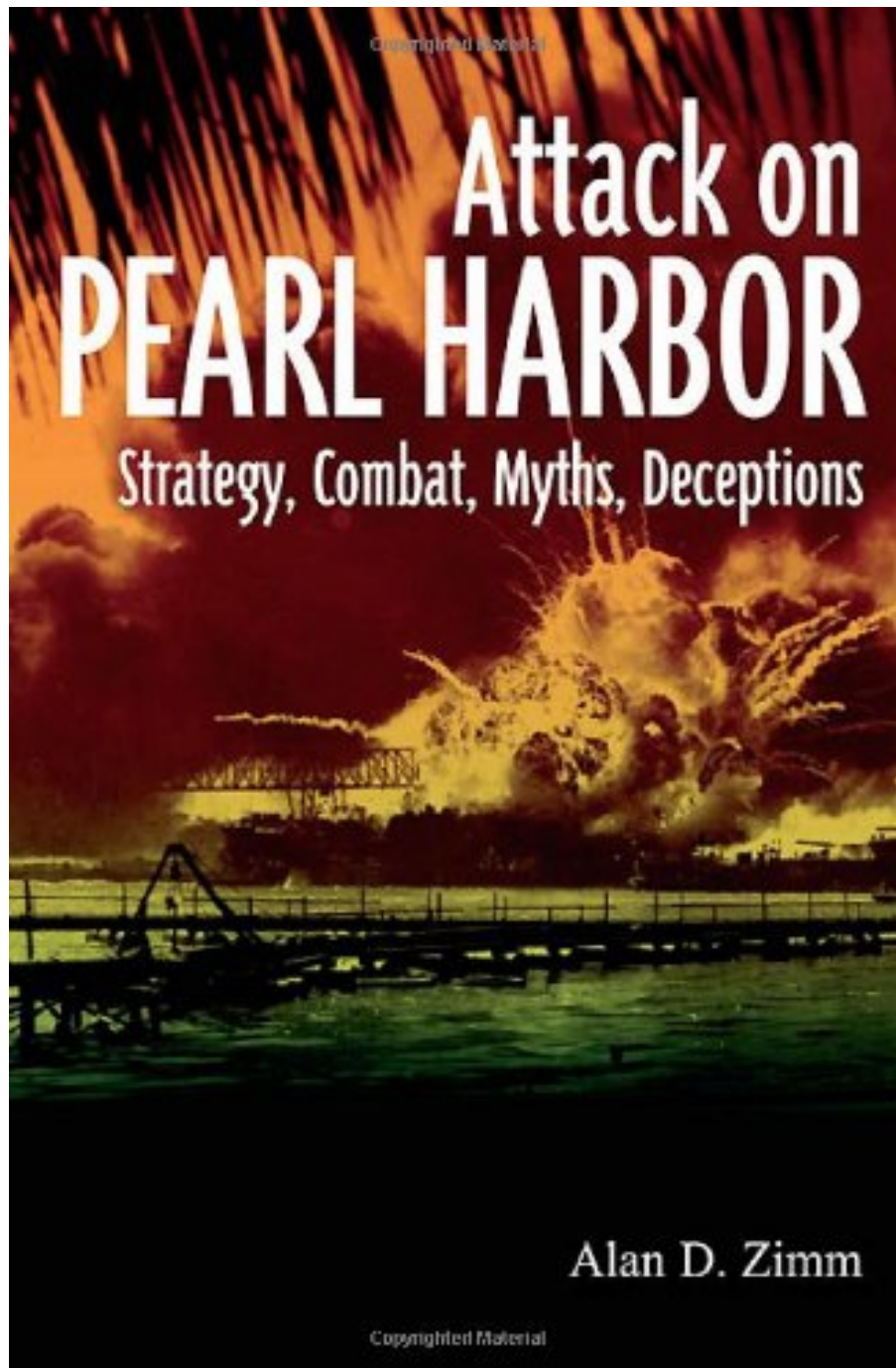


**THE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR:
STRATEGY, COMBAT, MYTHS,
DECEPTIONS BY ALAN D. ZIMM**



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About the Author

Dr. Alan D. Zimm is a member of the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, where he heads a section in the Aviation Systems and Advanced Concepts Group. He is a former officer in the US Navy, completing his service as a Commander, and holds degrees in Physics, Operations Research, and Public Administration with a concentration on Policy Analysis and Strategic Planning.

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THE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR: STRATEGY, COMBAT, MYTHS, DECEPTIONS BY ALAN D. ZIMM PDF

The December 7th, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor has been portrayed by historians as a dazzling success, “brilliantly conceived and meticulously planned.” With most American historians concentrating on command errors and the story of participants’ experiences, the Japanese attack operation has never been subjected to a comprehensive critical analysis of the military side of the operation.

This book presents a detailed evaluation of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on the operational and tactical level. It examines such questions as: Was the strategy underlying the attack sound? Were there flaws in planning or execution? How did Japanese military culture influence the planning? How risky was the attack? What did the Japanese expect to achieve, balanced against what they did achieve? Were there Japanese blunders? What were their consequences? What might have been the results if the attack had not benefited from the mistakes of the American commanders?

The book also addresses the body of folklore about the attack, supporting or challenging many contentious issues such as the skill level of the Japanese aircrew, whether midget submarines torpedoed Oklahoma and Arizona, as has been recently claimed, whether the Japanese ever really considered launching a third wave attack, and the consequences of a “3rd wave” attack against the Naval Shipyard and the fuel storage tanks if it had been executed.

In addition, the analysis has detected for the first time a body of deceptions that a prominent Japanese participant in the attack placed into the historical record, most likely to conceal his blunders and enhance his reputation.

The centerpiece of the book is an analysis using modern Operations Research methods and computer simulations, as well as combat models developed between 1922 and 1946 at the U.S. Naval War College. The analysis puts a new light on the strategy and tactics employed by Yamamoto to open the Pacific War, and a dramatically different appraisal of the effectiveness of the Attack on Pearl Harbor.

Dr. Alan D. Zimm is a member of the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, where he heads a section in the Aviation Systems and Advanced Concepts Group. He is a former officer in the US Navy, completing his service as a Commander, and holds degrees in Physics, Operations Research, and Public Administration with a concentration on Policy Analysis and Strategic Planning.

REVIEWS

“...proves an engrossing study, particularly for those considering themselves well-read on the topic.... it is even more interesting for those with ample knowledge of events in World War II's Pacific Theater of Operations leading up to, on, and following December 7, 1941. For a variety of reasons, including the provocative nature of many

of Zimm's fact-built arguments, this reviewer does not hesitate to recommend ...”

Globe at War, 7/10/2011

“...very thorough ...as an analysis of the raid from the Japanese point of reference it is very intriguing and goes far to display the old axiom “every plan changes (or falls apart) once the enemy is encountered”.

IPMS, July 31, 2011

“Zimm's conclusions will remain definitive for the foreseeable future... So, by all means, reread Gordon Prange's *At Dawn We Slept*, but definitely read Alan Zimm's *Attack on Pearl Harbor* for a fuller and more up-to-date understanding of an event that changed history and continues to fascinate.”

Michigan War Studies Review, 09/2011

“It is not often that one can say that an outstanding book transforms our knowledge of a well-known event but this can be said of Alan Zimm’s *Attack on Pearl Harbor*....groundbreaking...sets straight the record of a key historical event...essential reading...”

Dr. Eric Grove, Navy News

“...uses modern methods of operational analysis to determine exactly how the Japanese planned and executed the great raid...a worthy, useful analysis...”

Naval History Magazine

“Dr. Zimm provides a solid analysis, and at the same time knows how to maintain a healthy critical distance vis-à-vis the literature (historical records, autobiographical accounts, official reports) which he puts to good use.”

?Politique Etrangere (France)

“An interesting analysis of the strategy and tactics involved. Instead of “the most daring and brilliant naval operations of all time”, Zimm demonstrates that the Japanese carrier strike force did not plan the attack very well, nor did they train effectively for it... an interesting new “look” at this opening gambit in the Pacific Theater of World War II.

The Past in Review

“For seven decades, conventional wisdom has extolled the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor as brilliant in its planning and execution... masterful analysis topples that pillar of Pacific War history... with its amazing depth of meticulous research and analysis, this forceful book is essential reading for anyone with a serious interest in Pearl Harbor.”

World War II Magazine

“...nothing previously published has offered such a close examination of Japanese strategy...an in depth study of the Japanese planning, preparation and execution of the attack with particular focus on factors not thoroughly considered by other historians, if at all...full of revelations that counter common perceptions...detailed analyses that lead to a much better understanding of what the Japanese did, why they did it and especially how the attack was very nearly an abject failure instead of a stunning success.”

Proceedings, 07/2011

... essential reading for anyone interested in the operation or the opening phases of the Pacific War...

Strategy Page

‘Anyone with a serious interest in understanding the Pearl Harbor attack in its many aspects, both for what actually happened and for what might have happened under alternative circumstances, should read this new book for the invaluable analytical rigor and intellectual exploration that it brings to the subject. ‘

Warship International, Vol 49, No 1

“...the first militarily professional description of the Pearl Harbor attack, and for those who are serious about military history and operations, it is a joy to read... a superb military analysis of the attack...not only rendered all other histories of Pearl Harbor obsolete, it has set the bar high got other histories of the Pacific War.”

War In History

“Alan D. Zimm applies his considerable professional experience in operations research and combat simulations design to a novel assessment of the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor. It is an ambitious undertaking to fins something new to say about one of the most analyzed military engagements in history, but Zimm has managed to do so...must reading for any serious student of the Pacific War.”

International Journal of Maritime History

“...takes a very interesting approach...an arguably better and clearer analysis of what the Japanese did, could have done, and should have done. An amazing amount of detailed research on the part of a very fastidious individual has gone into this very valuable work.”

Work Boat World

“...takes a very interesting approach...analyses the known facts and data using modern research techniques. The result is an arguably better and clearer analysis of what the Japanese did, could have done, and should have done. An amazing amount of detailed research on the part of a very fastidious individual has gone into this very valuable work.”

Ausmarine

“ What Alan Zimm has done is to use Japanese information and not the uncorroborated thoughts of Mitsuo Fuchida, , who is now well known for being “careless with the truth”. With this information, Zimm has carried out a bottom up analysis of the attack in the first eight chapters covering the strategic and operational setting , the targets (and it is clear that these were the Pacific Fleet’s battleships and not the aircraft carriers), the weapons and weapon- target pairings, the war games, planning, training, rehearsals, briefings etc followed by the execution of the attack. He goes on to assess the attack, the attle damage and the folklore.....clearly this is not a primer for someone wishing to learn about the Pearl Harbor Attack . Rather, it is a thorough analysis of many aspects of the attack, completely overturning conventional wisdom.

The Northern Mariner

"Readers will be left with a great deal to think about and consider new aspects of the attack that are illuminated in Zimm’s book. This excellent analysis is a definitive critique of the Japanese planning and execution of the attack. For any serious student of the Pacific War, the volume makes for fascinating, “must” reading and should be included among the very best books on the Pearl Harbor attack. "

Naval Historical Foundation

This is a very impressive contribution to the literature on Pearl Harbor. Zimm makes a very convincing argument for his view that the Japanese plan was flawed in many ways, but was saved by a combination of luck and the skill of the crews of the few torpedo bombers that actually hit important targets.

Attack on Pearl Harbor

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About the Author

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Most helpful customer reviews

64 of 66 people found the following review helpful.

Clarifies what happened at Pearl Harbor as no one ever has

By W. D ONEIL

I've never met Dr. Alan Zimm in person and have no personal relationship with him, but I know him by reputation as a very highly qualified operations analyst who has spent decades analyzing current-day U.S. Navy operations using the latest knowledge and techniques. Now he has directed his analytical talents and tools to one of the most discussed but little-analyzed major naval operations of history, the Pearl Harbor raid that came to its shocking climax on 7 December 1941. He has done so while being careful to explain his work in terms it will not take a background in naval analysis to understand or enjoy.

The chapters are: 1. Strategic and Operational Setting; 2. Targets, Weapons, and Weapon-Target Pairings; 3. Wargames (i.e., those the Japanese conducted prior to the attack); 4. Planning the Attack; 5. Pre-Attack: Training, Rehearsals, Briefings and Contingency Planning; 6. Execution of the Attack; 7. Assessment of the Attack; 8. Battle Damage Assessment; 9. What Might Have Been: Alerted Pearl Harbor Defenses; 10. Assessing the Folklore; 11. The Fifth Midget Submarine: A Cautionary Tale; 12. Reassessing the Participants; 13. Summary and Conclusions. Appendices provide a tabulation of the second-wave dive bomber attacks; abbreviations, acronyms, and Japanese terms; and ships in Pearl Harbor and Vicinity, as well as a counterfactual scenario for a "perfect attack."

As he emphasizes, Zimm is not an historian, but he provides necessary historical background and he handles it deftly and crisply. He is meticulous about providing source citations for those who want to follow up on any of his historical points. While Zimm's focus is on the Pearl Harbor raid, he goes far beyond that in assessing Japanese forces and thinking, providing a very factual and well-documented analysis of the navy's

capabilities and limitations.

Zimm's thorough knowledge not only of naval operations today but historically shows very clearly in his explanation of points such as how and why the Japanese would have conducted their wargaming as they did, the structure and limitations of the planning on both sides, and the effects of material, personnel and environmental factors. As an operations analyst he has a great deal of experience in reconstructing a coherent and consistent picture of a complicated operation on the basis of individual fragmentary reports, and he applies that skill well here. Thus Zimm is able to clarify many things that historians without such a background have missed or misinterpreted, bringing the whole complex operation into clear focus in a way that no one ever has before. Following this, he moves on to analyses of a variety of theories that have been advanced, and of a broad range of "what ifs," efficiently disposing of many myths and outlining the range of possible outcomes of the operation.

Appropriate to an analysis, the book has 20 clear charts and diagrams executed by Matt Baughman. There are also many photos, most chosen to illustrate particular analytical points.

This is not the book for someone looking for the human drama of the Pearl Harbor attack, but like Brian McCue's *U Boats in the Bay of Biscay: An Essay in Operations Analysis*, it is a striking illustration of the power of operations analysis to vividly illuminate a complex historical event. It also serves as a fine introduction to how to analyze operations, whether to clarify history or to serve as material for improving current operations.

The book works very well as a Kindle e-publication.

42 of 44 people found the following review helpful.

Bad strategy, bad operation, bad tactics. And bad planning.

By Steven Zoraster

The Japanese decision attack the United States in December 1941 was insane. I'll come back to this statement later.

As mentioned in earlier reviews, this book uses modern operations research techniques to analyze the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor at the levels of strategy, operations and tactics. In the process the reader learns the difference between deterministic and stochastic models of the efficiency of hits by bombs, torpedoes and shells on warships. The reader is also presented with many useful tables showing things like torpedo hit probabilities and ship damage possibilities under different attack scenarios. These tables are based on pre and post-war US and Japanese war college studies or on results of other naval battles during World War II. There are many good maps and many good photographs.

The overall conclusion of the author is that the Pearl Harbor attack was poorly planned and executed at strategic, operational and tactical levels. At an operational level the plan worked, but only by chance. By this I mean that the Japanese carriers reached their launch point north of Oahu without being detected, and their first attack wave achieved a surprise attack. But this operational success resulted from luck and poor American reconnaissance. Toward the end of the book the author mentions that any type of reasonable precautions such as dawn fighter patrols off Oahu, or a properly manned control room able to react to the early radar contact with the incoming Japanese strike would have led to a massacre of the Japanese aircraft.

There is a new interpretation of the goals of the Imperial Japanese Navy and Admiral Yamamoto, the driving force behind the attack on Pearl Harbor. The author argues convincingly that Yamamoto's first targets were American battleships, not American aircraft carriers. Yamamoto believed that immediately sinking one or

more American battleships at the outbreak of the war would destroy American will to fight. This idea is not in line with most previous studies. Yamamoto is usually presented as a carrier oriented officer who would have wanted to strike American carriers first. The author seems to believe that battleships first was a rational goal, assuming weak US morale, since most wars end when one side decides it is no longer worth fighting, rather than by the complete destruction of one side.

Interestingly, the author also shows that the Japanese aviators deviated from Yamamoto's goals by allocating more aircraft against carriers than would have been required if battleships were the primary target. As the author states, it is not good when goals of the most senior commanders are superseded by those of lower level officers!

A tactical planning shortfall effecting Japanese success was the failure of the various types of naval aircraft to practice together before the attack. Training in Japan during October and November of 1941 was done separately for the fighters, dive bombers, torpedo bombers, and level bombers. I knew that the Japanese navy and army did not cooperate, but had no idea that combined training by the air components was also fragmented. The author points out that this lack of joint training was a prelude to the failure of the different types of Japanese aircraft to properly support each other during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Also on the tactical planning level the author is highly critical of the allocation of strike aircraft to various Oahu targets, the way the planned strike tracks for aircraft were allowed to cross on their final approach runs over the harbor, and the failure of the torpedo planes to provide mutual support during the first attack. The author also argues that the allocation of dive bombers during the second wave attack was horribly wrong. Other details concern things like a high rate of duds among the Japanese bombs, and the poor to non-existent central control over the first Japanese strike aircraft as they made their final approach to Pearl Harbor.

Now back to my opening sentence. The Japanese started a war against the United States, with more than 6 times the industrial power, based on wrong assumptions about the willingness of the American people to fight. Willingness they regarded as weak. So the Japanese military, politicians, and Admiral Yamamoto himself, bet the future of the country on a wild gamble. A strategic gamble they would surely lose in a long war. Yamamoto may have come up with the best way to take advantage of this assumption about American will to fight, but it was a wrong assumption. Japan was almost destroyed on the resulting war. I repeat, the Japanese decision to enter the war was insane. That is just my definition of "insane", but I hardly know what else to call it.

As mentioned by a previous reviewer the book could have been better edited. Two important facts repeated almost word by word in the book are: The pre-attack engine setting experiments that led to greatly extending the range of the Japanese Zero fighter, and the number of American fighters that managed to get in the air during the first attack and the number of kills they made. I noted a number of smaller editing errors, including an event set in 1942 that obviously occurred in 1941.

One reviewer mentioned an online article about the British carrier attack on Taranto that might have been usefully cited by the author of this book. I found the article and it argues that the British planning of their attack on Taranto suffered from some of the same tactical failings that the Japanese demonstrated at Pearl Harbor. I am sure there is some lesson here, but I am not sure what it is.

In summary, I enjoyed reading this book, as it gives a much different take on the Pearl Harbor attack and backs its interpretation with a lot of facts. I would not have been able to write such a long review if the book did not have lots of useful information. And there is a lot of information I have not covered in this review. (What about those miniature submarines, were they a good idea?) But, the book deserved better editing.

27 of 28 people found the following review helpful.

A Critical Analysis of Japanese Strategy and Tactics at Pearl Harbor

By R. W. Russell

This is not re-telling of the familiar Pearl Harbor story, which has already been done in abundance by several renowned authors. Instead, Alan Zimm has presented an in-depth analysis of Japanese planning, preparation, and execution of the attack, with particular focus on factors that most other authors have either misjudged or ignored.

The book is an operational analysis of the infamous raid, focusing entirely on what the Japanese intended to do vs. what they actually did, plus intriguing postulations about what would have transpired had they done certain things differently, like mounting a third strike against Pearl Harbor's fuel tank farm, or launching the attack a week earlier when Hawaii's defenses were locked and loaded.

There is one interesting revelation that was entirely new to me and, I suspect, most readers. The author demonstrates that despite his reputation as a champion of naval air power, Admiral Yamamoto was not bent on starting the war by destroying U.S. carriers. His total focus was on *battleships* and those were the primary target of the raid, whether any carriers were in port at the time or not. That stemmed from his perception of the American public--supposedly, the people would be horrified at the loss of their beloved battleships, which they viewed as romantic symbols of America's worldly presence. In the admiral's view, the trauma caused by sunken battleships would drive Americans to the negotiating table instead of recruiting offices.

Since Yamamoto had spent a great deal of time among Americans in the 1930s, it's hard to understand how he could come to such a cockeyed notion, but Dr. Zimm convincingly shows that the American people were Yamamoto's main target, and sinking their beloved battleships was his strategy for defeating them.

Beyond that, the book abounds in revelations of how faulty the Japanese attack plan was, in its conception, planning, rehearsing, and execution. The strike commander, the renowned Mitsuo Fuchida, is shown to have been a comic opera dunce in one instance, inconceivably botching a tactical signal that caused his dive bombers to chaotically interfere with the torpedo bombers run-in, directly leading to four of the torps being shot down.

Attack on Pearl Harbor is a fine hardbound volume with abundant charts, tables, and photos. It's almost flawless, but not quite. There are a few inconsequential composition errors, and the text is excessively laced with Latin and French terms that sent me to Google, plus acronyms and Japanese words that sent me to the book's glossary where I found it convenient to keep a permanent bookmark. But none of that detracts from its core value as a very important addition to the history of the Pearl Harbor attack. Definitely read this book after you have read any of the more familiar works by Prange, Lord, Toland, or especially Fuchida.

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About the Author

Dr. Alan D. Zimm is a member of the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, where he heads a section in the Aviation Systems and Advanced Concepts Group. He is a former officer in the US Navy, completing his service as a Commander, and holds degrees in Physics, Operations Research, and Public Administration with a concentration on Policy Analysis and Strategic Planning.

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