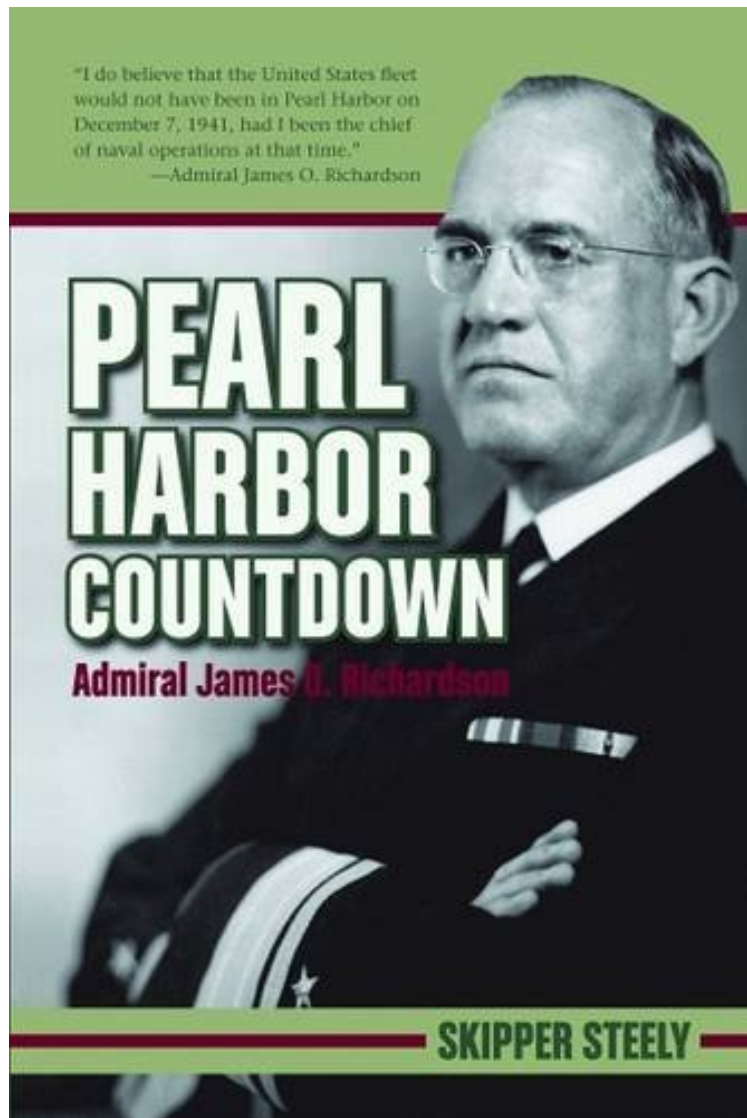


(Library ebook) Pearl Harbor Countdown: Admiral James O. Richardson

Pearl Harbor Countdown: Admiral James O. Richardson

Skipper Steely

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Skipper Steely : Pearl Harbor Countdown: Admiral James O. Richardson before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pearl Harbor Countdown: Admiral James O. Richardson:

40 of 41 people found the following review helpful. Required Book for Everyone Interested in Pearl Harbor StoryBy David M. DoughertyAlthough this book is not a great book in that it does not include all aspects of the Pearl Harbor story, it does cover new and overlooked ground that adds another dimension to the American command and political scene at the time. The book centers on the life of Admiral James Otto Richardson, a potential candidate for the office given to Admiral King before Pearl Harbor and the commander of the Pacific Fleet immediately before Admiral

Kimmel. It is actually very much a biography of Richardson, but the truly interesting portion, and the author's area of concentration, is Richardson's involvement with the move to Pearl Harbor by the US Pacific Fleet and his actions and knowledge of the political and command situations that cast light on the Pearl Harbor attack. Richardson was involved in the creation and updating of War Plan Orange, specifically the Rainbow series of Rainbow One, Two (never issued) and Three. At no time did Richardson feel the Rainbow plans were realistic -- a serious indictment of American civilian and military leadership and obviously something that could not be told to the American public. Nevertheless, Richardson tended to blame Congress for this situation due to the lack of funding for the Navy rather than the President. (So what else is new -- Congress has never possessed much moral courage or foresight.) Richardson vehemently opposed the move of the Pacific Fleet to Pearl Harbor in 1940 due to many well-founded factors (including its lack of training and supply facilities and unnecessary exposure), but Roosevelt wanted to move the fleet to Hawaii as an aggressive move towards the Central Pacific to place pressure on Japan. When the move became permanent Richardson opposed Roosevelt's edict in an overly frank manner. At a meeting with the President in October, 1940, Richardson told Roosevelt "that the senior officers of the Navy do not have the trust and confidence in the civilian leadership of this country that is essential for the successful prosecution of a war in the Pacific." The idea was to convince the President that more input should be received and considered from the Navy hierarchy when making decisions about fleet operations and its bases. Instead Roosevelt was angered and within twenty-four hours called Admiral Stark to have Richardson relieved. Roosevelt had two hobbies, stamp collecting and his Navy, and he was not about to be told what to do with either. Worse was to come. Although the decision had already been made to fire Richardson, he then went on the record to state that the Pacific Fleet was not combat ready. This was too much for Roosevelt who was in a campaign for his third term. From that point on, Richardson had to remain silent for political reasons. Richardson did so, remaining out of the Pearl Harbor controversy and delaying the publication of his autobiography until after the death of Admiral Stark. Richardson's book clearly placed much of the blame on Roosevelt, Stark and Marshall for their feckless inattention to the Pacific Fleet's danger when they knew the Japanese were going to attack on the morning of December 7th. Although they did not know for certain that the attack would be directed at Pearl Harbor, a large number of the senior officers in the Navy (including Stark and Richardson) knew Japanese history and expected an attack to be directed at Pearl since that was where the fleet was. The details and discussion of these events, along with Richardson's testimony at the Japanese war criminal trials take up a respectable part of this book. President Roosevelt was playing a dangerous game that, for political reasons, depended on the Japanese firing the first shot. No doubt he believed that Pearl Harbor was on high alert and could weather a Japanese attack, but he refused to make certain the Hawaiian command was prepared by being alerted that morning concerning a possible imminent attack. Richardson believed the Roberts Commission was formed to divert the focus from Washington and the discussions that took place that morning. He believed that Admiral Stark was told not to pick up the phone and call Kimmel by scrambler since the President had decided that Marshall would be official dispatcher of the warnings to Hawaii. Marshall, however, totally failed, sending a cable by Western Union rather than talking to General Short by scrambler phone -- an almost unbelievable dereliction of duty. More amazingly, history has given Marshall a pass on his incredibly deficient performance. With respect to Kimmel and Short, Richardson believed that they had to be relieved if for no other reason than as he states, "no armed force should remain under the command of a leader under whom it had suffered such a loss." He felt that military officers would understand this principle, even if the public in its hysteria wanted to affix blame by congressional and other inquiries. The rest of the details and the bureaucratic turf wars and lack of communication are also discussed at length in this book, but more as sideshows. The work is not an easy read due to the author's organization of the immediate war years by activity rather than chronologically. The reader must go back and forth in the text to understand what was happening at what time. Ordinarily I would have reduced my rating to four stars due to this difficulty, but the book's importance required me to give it five. There are also a number of typographic errors, but that is to be expected in this day and age of minimal editing skills in many publishing houses. If you are interested in the Pearl Harbor story and the US Navy from 1938 to 1942, purchase and read this book!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Admiral Richardson and his place in history

By Peter motyka J.O.R. was not a man to simply shut up and take orders. His appraisal of the readiness of the U.S. fleet in the Pacific in relation to War Plan Orange was spot on accurate and events seem to have exonerated him. Admiral Richardson was a man of integrity who refused to say "I told you so" or throw any of his detractors under the bus after events had proven him to be right. He had a large role, however, in preparing the his command for war as best he could. The fact the he was not afraid to tell F.D.R. what he needed to hear adds to his legacy although it cost him his command. Admiral Richardson did his job, and that's all that can be asked of a sailor.

For those who study the early Pacific war and 12/7/41, this is an essential read.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars

By Albert Akridge Very informative book.

Adm. James Richardson strongly disagreed about permanently docking navy ships in Pearl Harbor, believing that the Japanese would feel threatened by the proximity of America's Pacific fleet and organize a preemptory attack. With their exposed and isolated location, the ships would be vulnerable to any such aggression. He also recognized that the

navy did not have the manpower to fight a war in the Pacific in 1940. He relayed these concerns to all who would listen and protested the decision to politicians in Washington. In response, Pres. Franklin Delano Roosevelt relieved Richardson of his command. This biography covers Richardson's life from moderate beginnings to the investigations by the army and navy into shortcomings at Pearl Harbor, detailing his influences on the military.

From the Publisher A biography of the first naval officer to lose his command over Pearl Harbor strategy prior to World War II. From the Inside Flap In 1940, the U.S. naval fleet was stationed at Pearl Harbor, a strategic and political move intended to discourage Japanese aggression. Admiral James O. Richardson, the commander in chief of the entire U.S. fleet, ardently opposed this decision. Richardson was truly devoted to the fleet, playing a central role in developing and implementing War Plan Orange, the military strategies, exercises, and plans launched in 1924 designed to check Japan in the Pacific. From his intense investment in these exercises, it became clear to him that the fleet should not remain at Pearl Harbor. The fleet was not prepared, the country was vulnerable, and the facilities available in Hawaii were less than sufficient to provide training for the sailors and protection for the United States. Living out his life-long commitment to the U.S. fleet, Richardson sacrificed his career to make certain that the navy provided the United States her first line of defense. Going up against the chief of naval operations, Harold Stark; the secretary of the navy, Frank Knox; and not to mention the president of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Richardson repeatedly tried to convey to them the navy's unpreparedness and vulnerability in the Pacific. Richardson's training, expertise, and experience led him to believe that a Japanese attack on the U.S. fleet was not only possible, it was inevitable. After Richardson repeatedly criticized the executive decision to station the fleet in Hawaii, he was relieved of his command. When the Japanese attacked on December 7, 1941, it became painfully obvious that Admiral Richardson's fears were not only well founded, but that he had been right all along. Author Skipper Steely masterfully crafts an insightful and convincing biography of this overlooked naval hero. Offering a fresh perspective on what led to the catastrophic and infamous 1941 Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, along with a detailed treatment of the historical investigations regarding the attack throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Pearl Harbor Countdown proves indispensable reading for anyone interested in World War II in the Pacific. [Back flap] Skipper Steely has been writing and editing books for more than twenty years. He attended East Texas State University and graduated from there in 1968. After serving in the United States Air Force as an information and recruitment officer, Steely began his career in the newspaper industry as a writer and an editor. Since 1990, Steely has worked as a full-time writer. He lives in Paris, Texas. From the Back Cover "Why was the American Pacific fleet anchored at Pearl Harbor on the date of infamy? Why did President Roosevelt fire Adm. James O. Richardson, predecessor to Admiral Kimmel? Were the Pearl Harbor commanders, Admiral Kimmel and General Short, scapegoats selected to shoulder the blame for Japan's stunning tactical victory? Why were neither Kimmel nor Short afforded either a trial or proper counsel in the series of post-Pearl Harbor investigations? "Skipper Steely has done a masterful job of sifting through the debris of the Pearl Harbor disaster and answering lingering questions that have hung like a shroud over this cataclysmic American tragedy." --Alan Armstrong, author of Preemptive Strike: The Secret Plan That Would Have Prevented the Attack on Pearl Harbor "Pearl Harbor Countdown allows the reader to better understand and appreciate one of America's most exceptional admirals, J. O. Richardson, who until now, has been largely ignored by history. After reading Pearl Harbor Countdown one is left wondering, 'What if . . .'" --Robert R. Payne, former naval OP-20-G officer and editor of Cryptolog "This book adds greatly to the knowledge of the Pearl Harbor story. It is a must for all Pearl Harbor and military historians and World War II military buffs." --Donald M. Goldstein, Ph.D., professor and military historian, co-author of At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor In this biography of Adm. James Otto Richardson, the author takes his reader on a shocking, insightful journey through the annals of United States military history, exposing the events leading up to the Pearl Harbor disaster and providing an unprecedented account of the life of the admiral who risked his military career in an effort to protect his country.