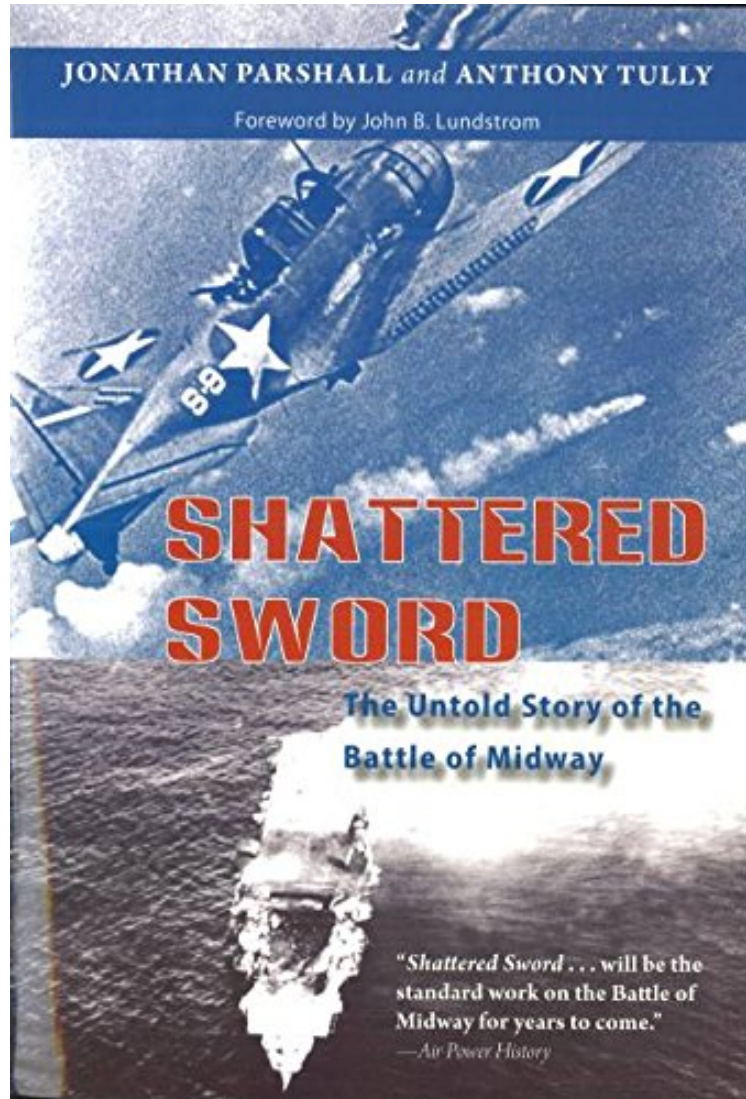


(Free pdf) Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway

Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway

Jonathan Parshall, Anthony Tully

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Jonathan Parshall, Anthony Tully : Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Superb In Depth Analysis By F. William Hessmer This account is a comprehensive examination of the Japanese doctrine, ships, and their battle at Midway. The analysis is superb, in depth, and comprehensive. Relying on not only US, but a multitude of uncovered Japanese sources, this book also brings you right there to the Japanese carriers, crew and commanders through first hand survivor accounts. The book

also demolishes certain myths associated with the Battle of Midway including the strike still on the deck myth. A superb and unbelievably well researched account that includes tactics, doctrine, ship design, battle plans, Yamamoto's "high jacking" of the planning process, and Japanese personal accounts of the battle, this volume provides a terrific narrative of how the Japanese approached and lost the battle. Most importantly, this book demonstrates how the Japanese were victims of their own doctrine, internal naval politics, and ship design, as much as the bravery and boldness of our leaders and brave naval forces. A well balanced comprehensive account of the battle, this is a must read for any person with a real interest in the Battle of Midway. Note: I have read several reviews here that complain about the lesser focus on American forces as well as the book diminishing the heroism of our forces. This couldn't be further from the truth. The objective of the book from the outset is an examination with a focus on the Japanese side of the battle. If you are looking for a rah, rah, we won type of account that doesn't question any of the myriad unsubstantiated "myths" surrounding the battle, this book is not for you. If you want an in depth account of the Japanese players, ships, doctrine, first hand accounts, and how that fits into the true nature of the battle and a deeper understanding of the great victory achieved by our carriers, pilots, as well as their desperate and heroic sacrifices, then this is the book for you. It is also a must read for any real student of the battle as well as the war in the Pacific.

86 of 88 people found the following review helpful. A great book with deeply insightful analysis of the Battle of Midway and the Pacific conflict.

By DarthRadI first read about the Battle of Midway a long time ago and decided to revisit this history. "Shattered Sword" has to rank as one of the best ever books that I have read about this conflict. The book, through careful research of Japanese and American naval records ends up shattering a number of long standing myths (both American and Japanese) about this battle. (Another book "The Unknown Battle of Midway: The Destruction of the American Torpedo Squadrons" should be read as a companion piece to "Shattered Sword" - it gives an in-depth account of the failings of American naval aviation at the Battle of Midway). There is a reason that it has taken over sixty years for such a book to be written about this battle. It has taken that long to finally get a dispassionate look at the events as they really happened. Almost all the major participants who contributed to the original story of the battle are now dead. American pride about her victories in WWII and the need for myth-making about the heroics of the Greatest Generation have faded. The result is a greater emphasis on examination of the written record of naval operations to recreate what happened, rather than relying on the spin put out by the original participants of the time. Japan has also gone through some major societal changes, and is now finally beginning to re-examine her conduct during WWII. Much of what is new in this book comes from the Japanese record, and the authors were assisted along the way by a number of Japanese historians. While eyewitness accounts are normally critical for historians, "Shattered Sword" makes clear that, for this battle, certain participants had motives for not telling the truth. One of the major fabricators of history singled out by this book is Mitsuo Fuchida, the Japanese pilot-author who single-handedly created the myth (with his book "Midway: The Battle that Doomed Japan") that the Japanese carriers were only five minutes away from launching their attack on the American carriers, and that the Enterprise dive bombers came down on carriers fully laden with planes ready to launch (not true - the Japanese carriers were caught totally unprepared with empty decks). Another contributor to fabricated history was Air Commander Stanhope Ring, whose gross incompetence made the Hornet almost useless in this battle, and contributed to the destruction of Hornet's VT-8 torpedo squadron. The subsequent US Navy cover-up of Ring's failures (he was even awarded a Navy Cross) started the myth that the sacrifice of VT-8 was not in vain, that the result of having the entire torpedo squadron shot down was that the covering Zeros were pulled down to sea level, away from the oncoming Enterprise dive bombers. The authors show how this could not have been the real reason - after the destruction of VT-8, there was plenty of time for the Japanese fighters to regain altitude and their original covering positions before the Enterprise dive bombers arrived, but this simply did not happen, and poor Japanese fighter coordination was to blame. The best parts of the book are the conclusions at the end. What caused the battle of Midway to play out as it did? What would have happened had the American naval force lost? Parshall and Tully come up with some fascinating insights, which I will summarize and make additional comments upon as follows:

1. Japanese Naval thinking and the entire Japanese war strategy against the US was dominated by the success of their last war against a major power - the Russo-Japan conflict of 1904-1905 (following the axiom that generals always fight their last war again). The Battle of Tsushima was the model for the Decisive Fleet Battle that the Japanese sought (and never could quite win) throughout WWII against the US. (I did some additional reading on this war, and discovered other striking parallels. It was almost frightening how the Japanese Navy, especially Yamamoto, tried to duplicate the success of Admiral Togo from that war - Togo had even started the war with a sneak attack, before war was formally declared, on the Russian Pacific Fleet berthed at Port Arthur in Manchuria. Thus, the strategy behind the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor becomes crystal clear - previously, Japan had been able to get its way and win favorable terms in a limited war against a much larger power by destroying almost the entire fleet of its opponent, starting with a sneak attack. Japan obviously made a huge miscalculation. Russia was a seriously dysfunctional nation at the time of the Russo-Japan war. America was far from that, and instead, like Rome at Cannae, would be energized by her military disaster to become the world's dominant superpower. Thus the attack on Pearl Harbor expanded into a total war of annihilation). Much of the persistent tendency throughout WWII of Japanese naval commanders to disengage and turn away from their original

objectives after the first battle was probably also related to this underlying theme of preserving the ships for the Decisive Fleet Battle.² American victory at Midway did not hinge totally on the success of naval code breaking (another myth). Because the naval air forces were so evenly balanced in this battle, success depended ultimately on which fleet could find and attack the other fleet first. At Midway, it was the superior search patterns used by the US, and some lucky guessing by individual aviators, that allowed the US fleet to find and attack the Japanese fleet first. For much of the rest of 1942, the US Navy would not be so lucky.³ Japanese failure to learn from their mistakes, or to anticipate possible failure was a cultural phenomenon that contributed greatly to their disaster at Midway. I want to add a point here that Parshall and Tully did not come out and say in their book. The name of this cultural phenomenon was bushido, the rigid samurai code of discipline and behavior that dominated Japanese military thinking at the time. Bushido was what allowed Japanese commanders to make suicidal demands of their subordinates, bushido was what prevented lower level underlings from refusing such assignments, bushido meant that the mistaken decisions of one's superiors had to be atoned for with the suicide of the person supposed to carry out the order if he failed, thus shielding that superior for an unnecessarily prolonged period of time until the mistakes and bodies piled up, and bushido was what prevented rapid implementation of ideas coming from underlings, indeed bushido probably discouraged independent, innovative thinking altogether from the lower ranks. I have always regarded the Japanese bushido coda of committing suicide to atone for failure in battle, rather than to survive, learn from the mistake, and continue to fight, as the ultimate in wasteful ceremonial stupidity, something that could only evolve on an isolated island, much like pigmy mammoths and dodo birds.⁴ Parshall and Tully conclude that, even if the American carriers had lost the naval battle, a subsequent Japanese land invasion of Midway would have been a bloodbath for the Japanese. As a comparison, they point out the ultimate slaughter of Colonel Ichiki (the man supposed to lead the invasion of Midway) and his men at Guadalcanal. It is likely that had the American carriers been defeated decisively, Midway, not Guadalcanal, would have become the next major bloody ground battle of the Pacific war. (An excellent companion reader here is "Guadalcanal: The Definitive Account of the Landmark Battle" - compared to Midway, the Japanese Navy did a much better tactical job at Guadalcanal, sinking a great many US ships, while continuing to remain befuddled strategically, and so many of Parshall and Tully's conclusions are re-emphasized by the re-analysis of Guadalcanal in this book). Thus, in conclusion, Midway was not a climactic battle, nor even the turning point of the war. It was only one lucky break for the US Navy in what was a long series of battles of attrition in the Pacific during 1942, a time that both sides would make plenty of mistakes and lose almost equal numbers of men, ships, and aircraft. As Parshall and Tully point out, the real turning points would come in 1943, when the first of the more than 100 new American carriers built during WWII became operational, and when the superior F6F became operational. Japan had nothing that could come close to matching such forces, and the original plans of her warlords to win a limited regional war by way of a sneak attack and a Decisive Fleet Battle, a la the earlier Russo-Japan war, failed completely. By 1944, the US Navy would be operating and attacking at will in the Pacific and fully engaged in finishing out a total war of annihilation.³ of 3 people found the following review helpful. Worth every penny

By Arthur Van Pelt
Having read Prange's *Miracle at Midway* many years ago, I thought I knew everything that could be of interest about that battle. I bought the Kindle version and have not completed reading the book, but I feel confident enough in what I've read so far to recommend this work to those who want to delve really deeply into all aspects of the battle. The information provided concerning Nagumo's precise situation after learning of US ships in the area, while waiting for the return of the first wave assault planes, is worth the price of the book itself - this situation was the crux of the entire battle. A great deal of background information was provided concerning the doctrine of the American Navy versus their Japanese counterpart, which is immensely valuable in gaining a clear picture of what and why each side did what it did. There still rages discussions about what Nagumo should have done, and this book covers just about every option available to him. There were errors aplenty on the Japanese side. Of particular importance was the scandalous failure of the picket submarines to arrive at their duty station on time, made worse by the fact that this was never reported to the Combined Fleet. Since the entire plan depended upon surprise, this, in my view, was probably the most important error on the Japanese side. I can take issue with several of the author's qualitative judgments (such as his strange claim that Yamamoto's methods in getting his plan accepted by higher ups was "immoral"), which clearly don't belong in a historical text. Nevertheless, if you really want to get into the nuts and bolts of Midway, this book should be on your shelf, or in your Kindle.

Many consider the Battle of Midway to have turned the tide of the Pacific War. It is without question one of the most famous battles in history. Now, for the first time since Gordon W. Prange's bestselling *Miracle at Midway*, Jonathan Parshall and Anthony Tully offer a new interpretation of this great naval engagement. Unlike previous accounts, *Shattered Sword* makes extensive use of Japanese primary sources. It also corrects the many errors of Mitsuo Fuchida's *Midway: The Battle That Doomed Japan*, an uncritical reliance upon which has tainted every previous Western account. It thus forces a major, potentially controversial reevaluation of the great battle. Parshall and Tully examine the battle in detail and effortlessly place it within the context of the Imperial Navy's doctrine and technology. With a foreword by leading World War II naval historian John Lundstrom, *Shattered Sword* is an indispensable part of

any military buff's library. *Shattered Sword* is the winner of the 2005 John Lyman Book Award for the "Best Book in U.S. Naval History" and was cited by *Proceedings* as one of its "Notable Naval Books" for 2005.

"To really know about the Battle of Midway, you must read this book."—John B. Lundstrom, author of *The First Team: Pacific Naval Air Combat from Pearl Harbor to Midway*