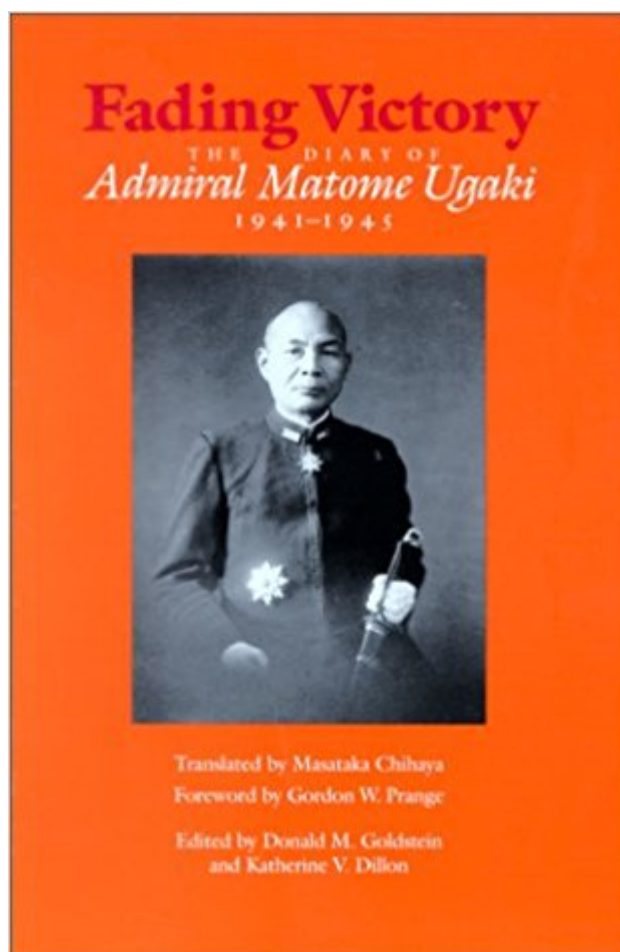


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Fading Victory: The Diary Of Admiral Matome Ugaki, 1941-45



Synopsis

Never before available in English, the diary of Admiral Ugaki is the only candid and personal account of World War II by a major Japanese military leader. Revealing of the Japanese mind and analytical about Japan's conduct of the war, Ugaki's diary begins in October 1941 and includes detailed entries covering virtually every day of the war in the Pacific. A career naval officer, Ugaki was appointed chief of staff of the Combined Fleet on 10 August 1941. He served Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto until Yamamoto was killed and Ugaki was seriously wounded when both were shot down by an American fighter pilot over Bourgainville Island on 18 April 1943. On 19 February 1945, Ugaki was entrusted with command of the Fifth Air Fleet on Kyushu. The diary gives the reader intimate glimpses of the Imperial Navy at war and into the mind of a ranking Japanese admiral. We follow Ugaki to a staff conference of the Combined Fleet and stand beside him aboard the flagship "Yamato" when he describes the sinking of her sister ship "Musashi" in the battle of Leyte Gulf. We overhear him plan the last-ditch kamikaze attacks against US forces on Ikinawa from a bunker on Kyushu. Not only is the diary full of strategy, tactics, combat operations and domestic politics, it also contains critical and historically valuable postmortems of Japan's conduct of the war and is suggestive about the role of Emperor Hirohito. Its appraisals of the Americans - their methods, decisions, weaknesses and strengths - are revealing and intelligent. From February 1945, as commander, Fifth Air Fleet, Ugaki lived through the terrible days of the B-29 raids, Iwo Jima, Ikinawa, and the atom bomb. The loss of the war was the end of his world. On 15 August 1945, he decided on a suicide mission against US forces on Ikinawa. Taking with him only his binoculars and the small sword Yamamoto had given him, Ugaki boarded the dive bomber "Comet" for his final flight.

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Customer Reviews

Matome Ugaki was chief of staff of the Combined Fleet under admiral Isoroku Yamamoto until both were shot down over Bougainville on April 18, 1943, resulting in Yamamoto's death. Following his recovery from injuries sustained in the incident, Ugaki commanded a battleship division and later directed the kamikaze attacks against U.S. forces off Okinawa. His diary, augmented by clarifying editorial commentary, is historically invaluable because it provides intimate day-to-day glimpses of the Imperial Navy at war, along with then-admiral Ugaki's running appraisal of the fighting. The journal ends abruptly on August 15, 1945, when Ugaki, staggered by news of Japan's surrender, departed on an airborne suicide attack against the Americans and was lost at sea. Goldstein and Dillon coauthored with Gordon Prange *At Dawn We Slept*. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Ugaki served as Admiral Yamamoto's chief of staff (he was wounded in the air attack that killed Yamamoto), and commanded major naval and air units. His diary provides useful insight into Japanese strategy and tactics, and into the mind of a military leader who always maintained his belief in his emperor and in victory--he died leading a kamikaze attack the day Japan surrendered. The introduction by the late Gordon W. Prange and the editors' comments provide important contextual information, correct damage reports, and identify Allied forces; the editors and Prange wrote *At Dawn We Slept* (LJ 11/1/81), *Miracle at Midway* (LJ 11/1/82), and *December 7, 1941* (LJ 10/15/87). Highly recommended.- Kenneth W. Berger, Duke Univ. Lib., Durham, N.C. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Admiral Ugaki's diary - and this book - are treasures. His faithfully kept record of his experiences and thoughts during the war years are well characterized by each of 's reviewers (all accurate and very helpful). Despite the occasional errors others have described, the editors here have produced a monumental work adding greatly to an understanding of the Admiral, his diary, and the conduct of the Pacific war. One particularly valuable insight from the diary is the Admiral's recognition over time of the fundamental defect in the Japanese naval strategy which until the very end sought that one decisive battle with which to win or end the war. Admiral Ugaki cites the failure of the Japanese

leadership to perceive that while Japan was waiting for an opportunity to force that decisive battle, American forces were defeating the Imperial Navy in detail and thus through attrition winning one smaller decisive battle after another. Left without alternatives, only the Kamikaze campaign offered any hope at all for victory. Early in 1945, Ugaki was appointed to command of the Navy's Fifth Air Fleet. The hopelessness of the situation ultimately led to the massive Kamikaze strikes which he commanded off Okinawa, and even to the Admiral's sacrifice of his own life after receiving word of the surrender. I wish I had read this book years ago.

"Fading Victory" The Diary of Admiral Matome Ugaki (1941-1945) is a massive volume of daily diary entries by Admiral Ugaki during the Pacific War from 1941 through 1945. I have not yet actually finished this huge volume, but it is a masterpiece of historical information as seen "from the other side." There are naturally, some inaccuracies but, we must remember, Admiral Ugaki was writing from the information available at the time, and intertwined with his own perspectives and ideals as well. In addition, the authors have graciously added updated information where available. The two personal events that were the most interesting to me were: (1). The Admiral's recollection of April 18, 1943 when his plane, along with Admiral Yamamoto's was shot down by American P-38 fighters. (2). Admiral Ugaki's reaction to Japan's surrender and the actions he took shortly thereafter. He basically flew off into oblivion and "honorable death" ...the only end befitting to a true Samurai such as himself. In addition to the very fine writings and ideals put forth on paper during these years of turbulence, the book also has some superb photographs worthy of scrutiny. The cover photo of the book is a magnificent photo of the Admiral depicting not only his right hand injury after his recovery, but it exudes the pride, arrogance, wisdom, intelligence, and determination that this man carried with him. Like so many of these Japanese Admirals, Ugaki epitomizes the times, culture, and ultra nationalistic fervor that enveloped Japan and the Asian campaign. As they say: "Pride goeth before the fall." The reader will see this plainly as he/she reads the progressive entries. In the end, Admiral Ugaki stripped off his uniform rank, discarded his identity, and embraced his fate. His war ended, his purpose evaporated in the smoldering ruins of the empire, and like the great Imperial Japanese Navy, he became history. This work not only covers battles lost and won, it is the actual collection of a man's thoughts, ideals, and spiritual essence that lived at a time many of us... can only pretend to understand.

This senior admiral's diary provided a rare inside look into the psyche and culture of one of America's WW II adversaries. Ugaki was a major player from the pre war planning of Pearl Harbor,

to the day of surrender, when he took off on a final Kamakaze flight. Through the many daily postings, readers gain a feel for the personal side of the man -- who was sometimes moved to write a few gentle lines of poetry to describe such natural beauties as a song bird's soft twitters. At the same time, the sincere expressions in the writing starkly expose the growing lunacy of continuing the dying Empire's struggle against the clearly overwhelming strength of the U.S. The writings of this intelligent, highly placed officer -- who, to the very end, extolled fighting on virtually forever to gain "revenge" against the Americans -- clearly reflect the irrational mindset of the Japanese. The author's attitudes affirm, sadly, that the use of the atomic bomb probably spared more lives than it cost.

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