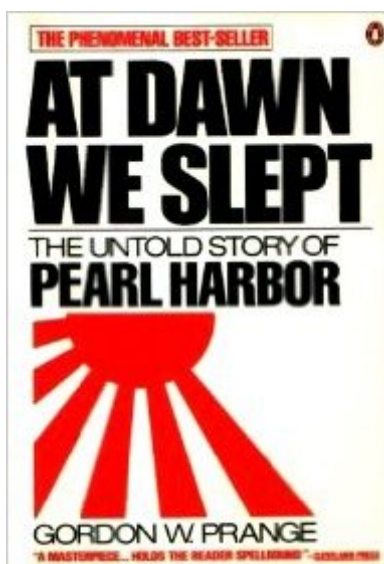


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At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story Of Pearl Harbor



Synopsis

The inside story of one of the most shocking surprises in the annals of warfare. 2 cassettes. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Paperback: 910 pages

Publisher: Penguin Books; 1st edition (December 7, 1982)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140064559

ISBN-13: 978-0140064551

Product Dimensions: 7 x 1 x 5 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.4 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (117 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,752,109 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #521 in [Books > History > Australia & Oceania > Oceania](#) #16543 in [Books > History > Military > World War II](#)

Customer Reviews

While science is my area of expertise, I have a continuing interest in history. That interest lead me to pick up Prange's book. Gordon Prange has devoted years to accumulating information about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. That information includes interviews and military and government information from the USA and Japan. That accumulated information was then boiled down into this final work -- completed after Prange's death. While there have been many books and theories proposed about why and how the debacle at Pearl Harbor took place, Prange's approach is well documented, and includes details of the pre-attack politics of the USA and of Japan. His book also includes detailed information about the attack itself, gleaned from interviews with those on both sides who actually participated in the event. But, even with that level of detail, I must admit that the most compelling part of the book for me is the section that follows the actual attack -- when the US government and the military were trying to figure out what actually happened, and who was to blame. The final series of chapters of the book provide insight into the thoughts and tactics of Adm. Kimmell (CincPAC) and Gen Short (Commanding General of army at Hawaii), the two primary "interested parties" in the event. Before reading the book, I had a tendency to believe that there may have been something of a conspiracy by the Roosevelt administration to get us into WWII, but after reading this account of Pearl Harbor, I am more likely to believe that the great success, including complete surprise by Japanese naval aviation was the result of a series of ill-advised decisions by

the commanders at Hawaii rather than by any entity in Wash DC.

You can spend too much time writing a book. Such a thing happened to Gordon W. Prange, author of the celebrated "At Dawn We Slept." After more than 30 years researching, writing, and fine-tuning his opus, Prange died more than a year before this massive yet much-edited book finally saw light in 1981 with help from two former colleagues. Buttressed by hundreds of interviews, his narrative of the planning and attack on U.S. forces at Pearl Harbor and Oahu by the Japanese Navy is compelling, yet also repetitive and unwieldy. Prange's narrative hops between the U.S. forces in Hawaii, maddeningly inert, and the Japanese attack plan, which he describes as a daring gambit brilliantly led by Admiral Yamamoto rather than a sneaky atrocity performed under cover of peace. So committed was Yamamoto to his plan that one point he dramatically threatened to resign if he was not allowed to carry out the attack. Prange seems to share the hero worship for Yamamoto of his Japanese sources. But at the same time he writes of Yamamoto having "no hope" of winning a war with the United States. There are even questions raised about the attack's necessity. The Japanese wanted the whole of the southern Pacific, then carved up by numerous western powers including the United States. So why go north and attack Hawaii? Yamamoto feared the American fleet there, Prange writes, but then reveals this as a false premise, quoting a U.S. congressional report after the war that noted the fleet "did not present a formidable deterrent to anything Japan desired to do in the Far East." The fleet's pathetically winnowed and outdated condition was in full display to Japanese spies in Oahu, and Yamamoto got regular activity reports. So why attack a paper tiger and risk the wrath of a real one?

Just as Cornelius Ryan's three major works about World War II (The Longest Day, The Last Battle, and A Bridge Too Far) focus on the last 11 months of the conflict in Europe, the late Gordon W. Prange and his collaborators Donald Goldstein and Katherine Dillon zeroed in on the Pearl Harbor saga and its aftermath. No less than five major books by Prange and Co. deal with the series of events that occurred before, during, and after. Of these, *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* is the first and most important volume. *At Dawn We Slept* covers nearly the entire 12-month period leading up to the "day of infamy" that marked America's entry into World War II. It provides amazing insights into both the Japanese and American mindsets, and, most important, explodes the revisionists' myth that Japan's attack succeeded because President Franklin D. Roosevelt withheld critical information from Army and Navy commanders in Hawaii. Prange researched the Pearl Harbor affair for 37 years until his death in 1980, and his posthumous books

paint a tragic picture of two great Pacific nations reluctantly yet inexorably moving in a collision course. Japan doesn't necessarily hate the United States, yet since the 1920s sees it as its main rival for supremacy in the Pacific. Japan's war in China causes the rift between it and America to grow, and U.S. economic sanctions intended to end Japanese aggression against its neighbors have exactly the opposite effect on the military-dominated government in Tokyo. What once was just an abstract idea in Japan's military academies -- a transoceanic war with Britain and America -- slowly but surely comes closer to reality after Tokyo joins the Axis in 1940.

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