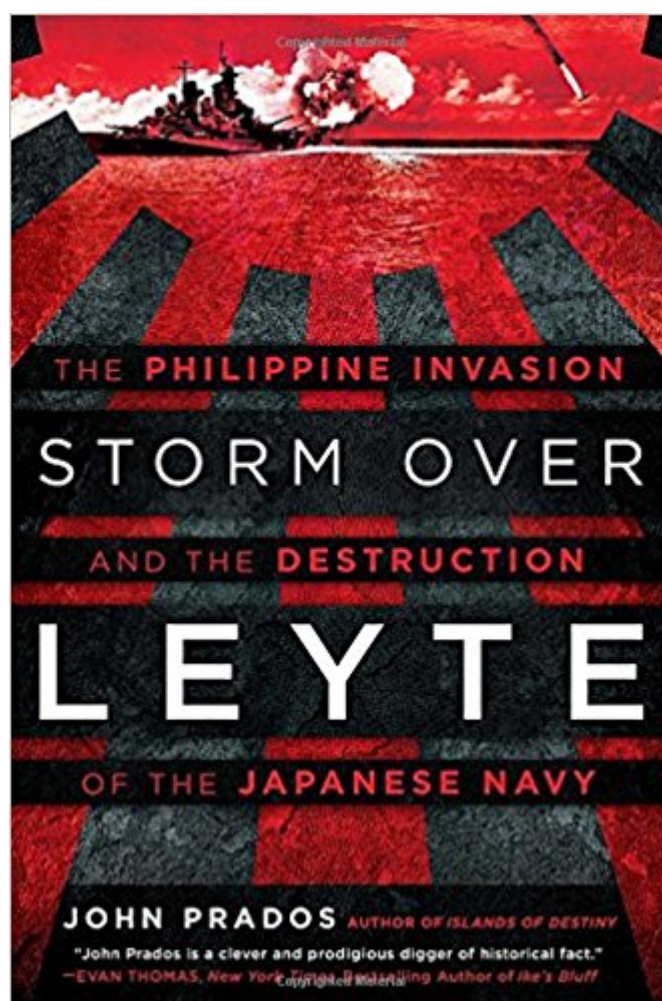


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# Storm Over Leyte: The Philippine Invasion And The Destruction Of The Japanese Navy



## Synopsis

The story of the Battle of Leyte Gulf in World War II—the greatest naval battle in history. As Allied ships prepared for the invasion of the Philippine island of Leyte, every available warship, submarine and airplane was placed on alert while Japanese admiral Kurita Takeo stalked Admiral William F. Halsey's unwitting American armada. It was the beginning of the epic Battle of Leyte Gulf—the greatest naval battle in history. In *Storm Over Leyte*, acclaimed historian John Prados gives readers an unprecedented look at both sides of this titanic naval clash, demonstrating that, despite the Americans' overwhelming superiority in firepower and supplies, the Japanese achieved their goal, inflicting grave damage on U.S. forces. And for the first time, readers will have access to the naval intelligence reports that influenced key strategic decisions on both sides. Drawing upon a wealth of untapped sources—U.S. and Japanese military records, diaries, declassified intelligence reports and postwar interrogation transcripts—Prados offers up a masterful narrative of naval conflict on an epic scale.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for *Storm Over Leyte*—“A book every serious World War II student will want.”—Kirkus—“The strongest part of the book is Prados's description of the U.S. intelligence apparatus that meticulously tracked the Japanese military's communications, leveraging a small army of brilliant linguists, radio operators, cryptologists, and analysts. The work is exceedingly balanced and provides detailed portraits of the

personalities of the Japanese commanders, their understanding of events, and their decision-making processes. — Publishers Weekly — “A narrative filled with new information, *Storm Over Leyte* clears new ground, reminding us that there were two sides in the Pacific War. John Prados shows us how U.S. and Japanese intelligence decisions influenced the Battle of Leyte Gulf, allowing the Japanese to accomplish their naval goals. Burrowing into hitherto unknown intelligence reports, Prados has provided readers with an unprecedented look at the war within the war in the Pacific Campaign. This is a must read. — Mark Perry, Author of *The Most Dangerous Man in America: The Making of Douglas MacArthur* — “Aircraft on suicide missions, ignoring intelligence, unreliable sources — 9/11? — No, the battle of Leyte, history’s greatest naval fight. — In *Storm Over Leyte*, premiere military historian John Prados, armed with reams of newly uncovered documents, provides a box-seat view of both sides of the infamous conflict. And along the way, he also shows that intelligence failures began long before 9/11. — James Bamford, Author of *The Shadow Factory: The Ultra-Secret NSA from 9/11 to the Eavesdropping on America* — “Once again, John Prados has given us an essential study of events we thought we knew well, blending dynamic narration with insight and fine analysis to create the best study of this critical battle yet. — Theodore F. Cook, PhD, Coauthor of *Japan at War: An Oral History* — “Prados constructs battle narratives that are fluid, dramatic, and engaging. — Naval History

Dr. John Prados, author of *Islands of Destiny: The Solomons Campaign and the Eclipse of the Rising Sun* and *Normandy Crucible: The Decisive Battle that Shaped World War II in Europe*, is a senior research fellow on national security affairs, including foreign affairs, intelligence, and military subjects, at the National Security Archive. He also directs the Archive’s Iraq Documentation Project, as well as its Vietnam Project. He holds a PhD in International Relations from Columbia University. His books *Vietnam: The History of an Unwinnable War, 1945–1975*; *Keepers of the Keys*; and *Combined Fleet Decoded* were each nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. He has published articles with *Vanity Fair*, *The Journal of American History*, *Scientific American*, *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History*, *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Boston Globe*.

In the entire history of naval warfare, there has never been a battle as large as the Battle of Leyte Gulf. Fought between the juggernaut U.S. Navy and the desperate Imperial Japanese Navy in October, 1944, this battle saw the last attempt by the Japanese to inflict a crushing blow upon the

Allies and swing the tides of war back into their favor. John Prados does a wonderful job of setting up the scene for this titanic clash, providing lots of information and detail on the planning which went into the battle, the forces involved, and the commanders calling the shots. He sheds light on the key role the Allied intelligence services played in deciphering Japanese plans and movements, as well as how key decisions in crucial moments came to play a major part in the outcome. Much has been written about the battle from an American standpoint, and this book helps balance things a bit by providing a good look at the Japanese viewpoint. Even though the Japanese faced long odds, they still felt a major victory could stem the Allied tide heading towards their shores. Prados examines the Japanese commanders, forces and decisions in great detail, thus helping the reader understand they hows and whys of their actions. He doesn't go into as much detail on the Allied (predominantly American) side, possibly because so much has previously been written from their viewpoint. Now, in a battle of this magnitude, decisions are made which don't always work out for the best. There's an old adage that no plan ever survives an encounter with the enemy, and this certainly applies in many aspects of the battle. While others have found fault in the decisions or indecision of both American and Japanese commanders, Prados examines things carefully and puts forth interesting and thought-provoking evidence which shows the decisions (or lack thereof) were actually not as bad as some have claimed, or else were simply the inevitable result of the mindset and training of those involved. Overall, a really excellent book which is heavier on the strategy and decisions involved than the actual combat, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't read it. Having read several books on the battle, I was pleased to learn much more about the Japanese side of things, as well as how much the role of intelligence gathering played in the planning and outcome. Pick this one up--you won't be disappointed.

John Prados is well known to careful readers of World War II history as one of the best historical researchers and writers about the Pacific War. Here he turns his attention to the largest naval battle in history, the Battle for Leyte Gulf. Starting with C Vann Woodward's account of this battle, I have on my bookshelf no fewer than 10 other accounts all or part of this battle, some of them by other eminent historians including Evan Thomas and Anthony Tully, Robert Lundgren, and James Hornfischer. plus of course there are other versions incorporated into larger surveys of the Pacific war, going back to Samuel Eliot Morison's multi-volume history of the entire American naval side of WW II. So, what can be added at this date? Prados takes advantage of additional declassified information concerning US radio intelligence. He delves into the personalities of the major actors, including those in the Imperial Japanese Navy. He skillfully gives a thorough background, a vivid

and detailed account of events, and a reasonable set of opinions about the many controversies. It is illuminating (at least to me) to read that Halsey could not have easily placed his fast battleships (the to-be-formed if needed Task Force 34) to guard the exit from the San Bernardino strait into Leyte Gulf against the advance of the Japanese surface forces under Admiral Kurita, given his geographic position when he decided to go north to chase the Japanese carrier fleet commanded by Admiral Ozawa. He offers the reasonable speculation that turn away from torpedoes that took his largest battleship, the Yamato, and the next most powerful, the Nagato out of the battle for a critical period was ordered by his subordinate Admiral Ugaki, who chafed under Kurita's command. All in all this is a well-written, thoroughly documented, and balanced view of a familiar story. It added to my knowledge and insight, and I'm glad to have read it.

Outstanding book. I have read many books on the Leyte invasion and resulting major naval battle and this is without a doubt the best I have read. The author is to be commended for using the Japanese names as they do rather than as you usually see them reversed as we do ours. The fact that he has researched this from both sides and has been, what I consider, very unbiased in presenting the material from both sides speaks very well of him and the book. He does a very good job in explaining the complexities of the Japanese Sho battle plan. After reading it I am not sure all the Japanese commanders really understood it except for the fact they wanted a major naval battle they could win. I think his coverage of the American side is great particularly the parts dealing with the major commanders from the President down. All in all I feel if you are interested in the Leyte portion of the naval war in the Pacific during World War II this is an excellent book to read.

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