



The Last Kamikaze: The Story of Admiral Matome Ugaki

Edwin P. Hoyt

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This is the story of a man and a Navy--Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki and the Imperial Japanese Navy. By 1945 the Imperial Navy was physically destroyed and Admiral Ugaki was given the task of defending the Japanese homeland against attack, and he sent hundreds of kamikazes against the American naval forces operating around Okinawa. After Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's surrender on August 15, Ugaki stripped off his insignia of rank, climbed into a torpedo bomber, and flew to Okinawa, where he intended to crash into an American ship. But like so many of the other kamikazes, his mission was fruitless, his plane was shot down by American nightfighters. But Admiral Ugaki died, as he has promised to do, in the fashion of the thousands of young men he had sent to their deaths. Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki was the only high official of the Imperial Japanese Navy to have left a significant record, in the form of a diary started during the preparations for the China Incident, and kept throughout the war--from the planning phase of 1940, through the Pearl Harbor attack, and up until Japan's surrender. Hoyt draws on the diary and numerous other accounts by admirals and historians to create a picture of a Japanese Navy that began in a position of strength but was eventually destroyed by powerful Allied forces, shattering Japan's drive for conquest.

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