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MacArthur's New Guinea Campaign (Great Campaigns)



Synopsis

The only fully up-to-date examination of this neglected but intriguing campaign of ambushes, flank attacks, and combined operations.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Very Good WW2 history book. The writer did not seem to like Mac Arthur but is still good to read. The campaigns are cover very well. The Author seem to forget that MacArthur like F. D. Roosevelt gave us hope when there was none with the Japanese kicking our butt then.

Nathan Prefer's book on General Douglas MacArthur's "hopping" campaigns in Western New Guinea in 1944 is a well-crafted and detailed account of the twin difficulties encountered by U.S. Army combat units in carrying out MacArthur's strategic directives: The appalling New Guinea jungle terrain and the highly audacious tactics and tenacity of the Imperial Japanese Army. I found Prefer's portraits of MacArthur and one of his subordinates, Lieutenant General Robert Eichelberger, very revealing. Prefer details MacArthur's penchant for regularly issuing communiques announcing the successful completion of battles while they were still being hotly contested. MacArthur is also portrayed as being largely indifferent to the physical hardships endured by U.S. Army infantrymen in New Guinea (MacArthur never visited the front lines in order to gain a feel for the combat conditions and only visited secured battlefields and islands once the fighting was "officially" over). MacArthur's subordinate, Eichelberger, is portrayed by Prefer as the consummate general - a tough, no-nonsense officer who regularly visited the front lines and also kept his soldiers' ("my lads," as

Eichelberger called them) best interests at heart. Nathan Prefer also reveals that MacArthur's treatment of the Australian Army soldiers under his command was no better, despite the fact that at the outset of the New Guinea campaign in 1942 it was Australian Army militia and regular Australian Army soldiers who fought the Imperial Japanese Army on New Guinea's Kokoda Trail and eventually pushed them back over the Owen Stanley mountain range, thereby saving New Guinea and allowing MacArthur to begin his "hopping" campaigns in Western New Guinea. MacArthur's New Guinea campaign was as bloody as any campaign in the Pacific - despite MacArthur's claim that he was economical with his soldiers' lives. Prefer's excellent work pays a long-overdue tribute to the valor, courage and tenacity of the U.S. Army officers and men under MacArthur's command who fought in, and won, the New Guinea campaign.

This is a three star book if you are looking for exciting action in heraldic William Manchester prose; it is at the same time a five star military account of the New Guinea campaign as directed by General MacArthur from behind the scenes. - The author provides a good account of the military action that occurred in New Guinea. He provides a division-by-division, battalion-by-battalion, company-by-company account of the American forces as well as the same sort of detailed account of the Japanese forces (the Japanese in italics, which is very helpful). This is a well written military account and sticks to the subject. The author tends to stay away from individual G.I. stories, and creates instead within the reader the feelings of the entire battalion, company, or other combat group, American or Japanese. When the author decides to stray from his account, he tends to put little "boxes" off to the side with such peripheral information. Photos are good. Maps are adequate. As for being biased against MacArthur, the author criticizes MacArthur, but does not really criticize any more so than other contemporary military history authors. Prefer answers the questions you may have had of the New Guinea campaign. To be absolutely thorough, Prefer also provides an Orders of Battle section in great depth. A good readable book and good reference material.

This book isn't about MacArthur. It is about the men and the battles for dominance of the Papua New Guinean northern coastline. The author's anti-MacArthur's bias really shows through in this book and he takes pains to show that MacArthur did not contribute significantly to winning this campaign. The Marines did. The MacArthurian legend has been clearly dented here as well as in other books. I found such a stance unwarranted as clearly, another title for the book could have well been chosen.

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