



Pacific Victory: Tarawa To Okinawa 1943-1945

Derrick Wright

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The American 'island-hopping' campaign in the Pacific was a crucial factor in the eventual defeat of Japan in 1945. In November 1943, Tarawa tested the doctrine of seaborne assault to the limit in a 76-hour battle. Peleliu in September 1944 was the 'unknown battle', where a combination of poor planning, dubious leadership and a major change in Japanese defensive strategy turned what was expected to be a three-day engagement into one of the most savage battles of the war. Iwo Jima in February 1945 was a titanic struggle that eclipsed all these battles, as three Marine divisions fought in appalling conditions against an enemy for whom surrender was not an option. Okinawa was a foretaste of what could be expected in the proposed assault on the Japanese mainland. These battles were all characterised by savage fighting and heavy casualties on both sides. Japanese garrisons often fought to the death and kamikaze air attacks posed grave threats to the supporting US forces. Employing archive colour and black and white photographs, maps and first-hand accounts, the author relates these pivotal battles to the wider struggle against the Japanese in the Pacific.

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