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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

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.

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