



Hell's Islands: The Untold Story of Guadalcanal

(Williams-Ford Texas A&M University Military History Series)

Stanley Coleman Jersey

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From August 1942 until February 1943, two armies faced each other amid the malarial jungles and blistering heat of Guadalcanal Island. The Imperial Japanese forces needed to protect and maintain the air base that gave them the ability to interdict enemy supply routes. The Allies were desperate to halt the advance of a foe that so far had inflicted crippling losses on the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor, then seized the Philippines, Wake Island, the Dutch East Indies, Guam, and other Allied territory. After months of relentless battle, the U.S. troops forced back the determined Japanese, providing what many historians believe was the decisive turning point in the Pacific theater of operations.

Stanley Coleman Jersey, a medical air evacuation specialist in the South Pacific during World War II, has spent countless hours combing Australian, Japanese, and U.S. documents and interviewing more than 200 veterans of the Guadalcanal campaign, both Allied and Japanese.

Beginning with the events that preceded the battle for Guadalcanal during the Australian defense of the southern Solomon Islands in late 1941, Jersey details the military preparations made in response to intelligence describing the creation of an enemy air base within striking distance of American supply lines and recounts the civilian evacuation that followed the Japanese arrival in New Guinea.

With the stage set, he turns to the campaign itself, with particular emphasis on the combat during the critical period of August to December 1942. While Guadalcanal is his primary focus, Jersey also covers the roles played by forces occupying the other Solomon Islands, including the plight of construction laborers, air crews, and ground units.

This book, chock-full of gripping battlefield accounts and harrowing first-person narratives, draws together for the first time Allied and Japanese perspectives on the bloody contest. It is certain to become an indispensable asset to historians of World War II.



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