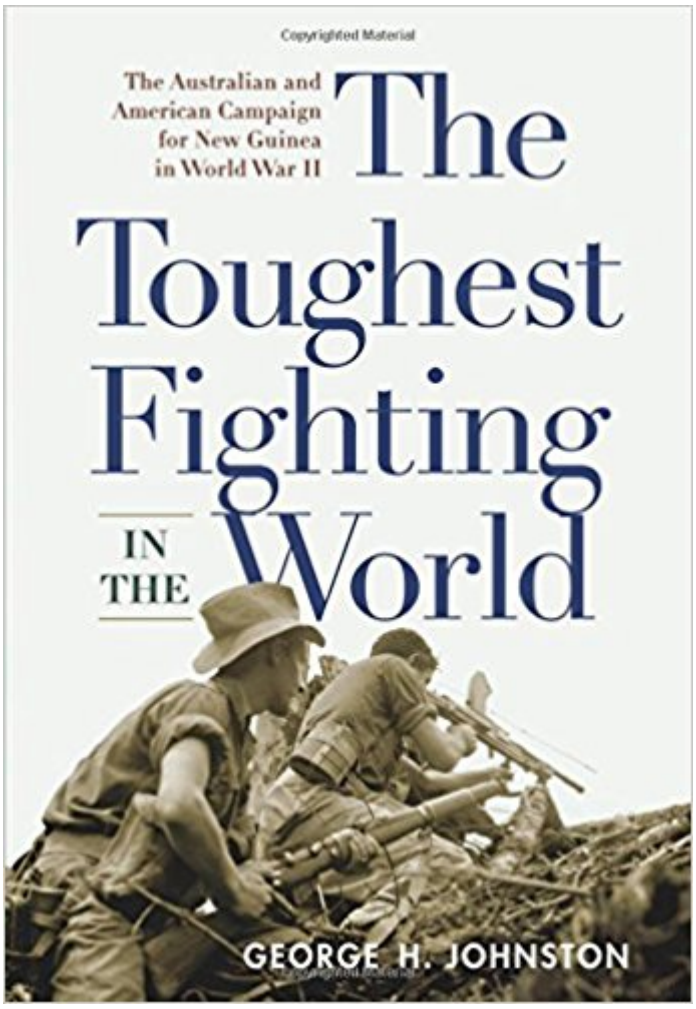
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The Toughest Fighting In The World: The Australian And American Campaign For New Guinea In World War II



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Synopsis

Ã¢â ¬Å“No other writer has turned out a book on the fighting in New Guinea that can match Mr. JohnstonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s. Superior literary quality projects this work far in advance of those earlier and more hasty accounts. Mr. Johnston is a young Australian war correspondent who lived through most of the action he describes. The reader will know that from the first page and is apt to find himself tensely hunched up as he is carried into the jungles by this writer's extraordinary reporting and artistry. As Mr. Johnston himself admits, the title sounds bombastic and the sensitive book purchaser might well shy from it. This would be a mistake, since the title is thoroughly honest.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •New York TimesÃ¢â ¬Å“It is a book of episodes which are fitted together into a pattern that tells his story in compelling fashion. Mr. Johnston is a brilliant descriptive writer and the full flavor of this extraordinary battle is in his book.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Saturday Review of LiteratureFollowing their attacks on Pearl Harbor, the Dutch East Indies, and the Philippines, the Japanese invaded New Guinea in early 1942 as part of their attempt to create a Pacific empire. Control of New Guinea would enable Japan to establish large army, air force, and naval bases in close proximity to Australia. The Australians, with American cooperation, began a counterattack in earnest. The mountainous terrain covered with nearly impenetrable tropical forest and full of natural hazards resulted in an exceedingly grueling battleground. The struggle for New Guinea, one of the major campaigns of World War II, lasted the entire war, with the crucial fighting occurring in the first year. In The Toughest Fighting in the World, first published in 1943, Australian war correspondent George H. Johnston recorded the efforts of both the Australian and American troops, aided by the New Guinea native people, throughout 1942 as they fought a series of vicious and bitter battles against a determined foe. In one of the classic accounts of combat in World War II, the author makes a compelling case that the hardships endured by the soldiers in New Guinea from both nature and the enemy were among the most severe in the war.

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Customer Reviews

GEORGE H. JOHNSTON (1912Ã¢â ¬â œ1970) was a distinguished Australian war correspondent and author of a number of books, including My Brother Jack and Clean Straw for Nothing, both winners of AustraliaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Miles Franklin Award. He was awarded an OBE by Queen Elizabeth II in 1969.

George Johnson was an Australian journalist who covered the early WW2 campaigns in Papua, New Guinea. His "you are there" narrative is engaging and paced well. This work includes numerous anecdotes and soldier euphemisms that adds both life and humanity to the struggle he observed. Johnson also devoted print to to often-forgotten air war over New Guinea that preceded McArthur's landing of the American 32nd Division on the island. The later portion of the U.S.-Australian effort to defeat the Japsnese on New Guinea is sparsely handled, and persons interested in the nuts and bolts of the 1942-3 campaign will have to look elsewhere. However, I strongly recommend this book for the particulars of the early portion of the campaign, particularly from the Australian perspective.

The author wrote this contemporaneously with this campaign, because he was there for almost all of it as a war correspondent. The reader gets to go back in time and read what people were reading about the war in New Guinea in 1942 and 1943. The author writes moving passages about the bravery of the Australian and U.S. soldiers as they endured incredible hardships and brutal conditions. While the Japanese did suffer overwhelming losses compared to the Allies, I wonder if the enemy body counts were inflated to raise morale.NOTE - there are several passages where the Japanese race is portrayed as less than human in graphic and unapologetic terms. While typical of the times, these passages are likely to jar the modern reader.

This a classic account of the struggle to stop the Japanese advance toward Australia in 1942 through New Guinea. This is not a history per se, but a series of "episodes" in chronological order telling of the desperate fighting to stop the Japanese and then push them back and away from

Australia. The author is a Aussie reporter posted to this battlefield. He tells the stories of Aussies and Americans fighting the elements of New Guinea, which are worse than the enemy, the Japanese. For example: a 6ft plus Yank is surprised by a "little" Jap in the jungle and is almost killed in a wrestling match but prevails by strangling the Jap. This is the combat of New Guinea, up close and personal, where you are lucky to see your enemy 10 feet away in daylight. Very Good and Recommended.

My dad fought in the Pacific so I am interested in reading about the war in that theatre. This book is well written and gives one insight into the everyday happenings during the toughest fighting to happen in recent history. This does not tell much about our American boys but it is a good read and a good view from one of our best allies - the Australians.

I’m a real Australian military history aficionado (and ex-Infantry soldier) and I have been reading alot about the Papuan Campaign in preparation for a trek along the Kokoda Track this October. This book has a good review but on closer observations it is a ’classic’ written at the time (or shortly thereafter) of the Kokoda Campaign in 1942/43. It therefore suffers from a bias of war propaganda by the Author with many cliched observations about the Japanese enemy and derogatory comments about the Papuan people which is indicative of the classic "White Australia’ mentality of the time. It is a good insight into the mindset of an Australian journalist at the time with several pointed references to the failings of the Australian Government’s preparation to prepare for the "yellow menace" including the contentious sale of scrap metal to Japan by the Australian Government prior to the outbreak of war. It is more a book of anecdotal snapshot of the battles with feel good stories to prop up the flagging morale of the Australian people...read it for what it is. I would not consider it to be a historically accurate account of the battle but a good example of the public opinion and censorship limitations of the time.

The reason I only rated this book as three out of five is that both the cover and the description are misleading. I bought the book with the impression it was about infantry combat. After reading over one hundred pages, I still had not gotten to any ground fighting. If you are more interested in combat than descriptions of lack of air support, I recommend reading Kokoda instead.

Hard to put down.Enjoyable to read.I learned a lot about this often overlooked battle front in the South Pacific.The author’s style of writing puts you on the scene in the hot,stinking,miserable

conditions of New Guinea.I could almost feel the fear and paranoia of the Australian people who knew that the ferocious Japanese war machine was coming their way and the front was just a few hundred miles from their doorstep,and the desperation of the Australian troops and airmen that fought hard to keep Port Moresby and Milne Bay in Allied hands.I almost hated to finish this book having enjoyed my ringside seat safely along the sidelines of this bitterly fought theatre.

The book consists of a week-in-week-out diary of journalist covering the campaign from New Guinea itself. As such, it makes a fun, fascinating read, but like most on-the-scene journalists, many of the immediate reports and facts turn out to be less-than-accurate upon later review. Read this book to get an idea of what being there with the Aussies was like. Don’t read this book to get the facts of the campaign.

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