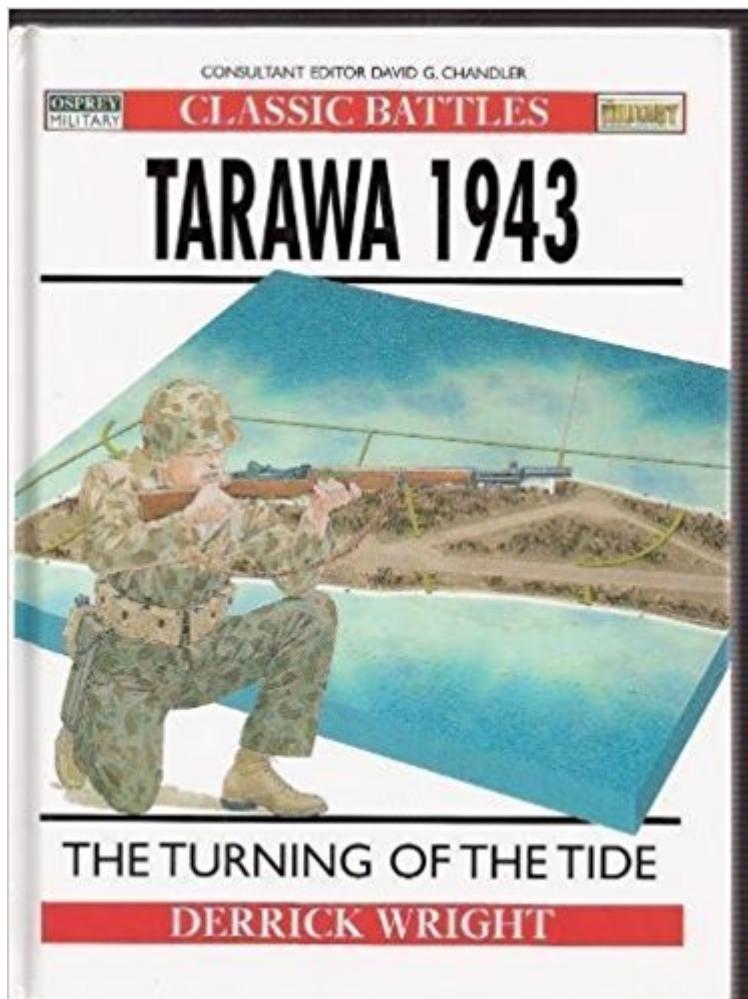


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Tarawa 1943 : Turning Of The Tide



Synopsis

Book by Wright, Derrick

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Customer Reviews

Book by Wright, Derrick

Let me suggest another meaning for the subtitle. The author is not referring to the turning of the tide of war. I believe he was being literal; he was referring to the trouble our marines experienced in negotiating the reefs until the tide came in to its fullest extent. Though mentioned, this trouble if developed more fully would give the reader a better understanding of the difficulties in the landing. The author begins by describing the near term history of Japan as it arose from its feudal shell around 1850s and began an increasing trend toward imperialism. The victories in Korea and China and the naval defeat of the Russian navy are discussed. The author then briefly discusses the start of the war and the events that lead into 1943 and the invasion of the Gilberts. The Japanese had anticipated an eventual attack in the region and tried to prepare for it. They made tactical and strategic plans to destroy the US invasion force which was clearly described by the author. It also is clearly shown how the US foiled those plans by raining destruction on the two key facilities of Truk and Rabaul before Tarawa was invaded. The summary of the battle was good, even though I would have preferred greater tactical detail and more first hand accounts but in an Osprey book that's not always possible. The three day battle is presented on a daily basis and by landing zone. The author clearly shows the trouble the Marines had in reaching and holding the beach and the costly advance in securing the island. The author uses seven 2-D maps and three 3-D maps and five hand drawings to support his narrative. Mr Wright had duplicated two 3-D maps of the exact

configuration as in the 2-D maps. The third 3-D map seemed unnecessary. I also would have brought the focus in on the maps. The photos of the island were great and added much value and understanding of the ordeal of the Marines to take the island. The author did a good job of describing the mistakes that were made before and during the landing. If the island had been bombed more extensively, fewer men would have died. If the timing of the landing was better, that too would have saved lives. Once it was discovered during the first landings, that the reef was a problem and that the Japanese was putting up intense fire, why didn't we back off and continue shelling the island. Why was the communications so poor? The big question: Was it necessary to capture the island? I know it had an airfield but was it worth it. Listing the Medal of Honor Winners was a nice touch. Its a good read and would recommend it. I would also recommend the 5 star books: "Utmost Savagery" by Joseph Alexander which had more details as well as Mr Wright's own full length book "A Hell of a Way to Die".

As I say in my 's Profile: "I am a science fiction fan and a history buff (especially WW II, Napoleon, Civil War, Ancient Rome), I read omnivorously on these subjects." Osprey's different collections are a great resource for History "aficionados". In a very compact book series with excellent presentation, first quality paper and nice reproductions gives the reader a succinct and complete view of the subject. Mr. Derrick Wright starts with a synopsis of the events preceding war's break out and then he follows with opposing Commanders, Armies and Plans in roughly 20 pages. Next a compact but detailed day-by-day chronicle ensues. Here the author sagely intercalates personal recounts with cold description of the battle in progress. The photographic material is outstanding; each photo shows the shocking reality of the battlefield. The color plates are realistic and painted with vivid tonalities. There are two and three dimension maps, showing very clearly how the combat evolved. Finally a brief section is dedicated to the four Medal of Honor winners. The appendix showing the casualties suffered by both sides is appalling and the 97% of dead Japanese military will prove the rule and not the exception all along the Pacific Campaign. The only weak point of the book is the almost nonexistent description of the Makin landings. This book may suites as an introduction for neophytes or as a graphic resume for students and researchers. Reviewed by Max Yofre.

British amateur historian Derrick Wright has written a thorough summary of the US Marine Corps landing on Tarawa Atoll in November 1943. The subtitle, "the turning of the tide" is not appropriate however, since the tide of victory had already turned against the Japanese a year earlier at Midway

and Guadalcanal. The author covers the battle in succinct but thorough day-by-day detail, from the marine landing to the conquest of the island three days later. There are three appendices covering US and Japanese orders of battle and USMC casualties. The three-D maps are good, but probably should have been zoomed in a bit more, since the area of fighting was quite small. There are no major flaws in the book, which does cover well-travelled ground after all, but there are several areas that could have been given better elaboration. First, since this was the first major opposed landing for the US Marine Corps in the Second World War, a bit more space should have been given to amphibious doctrine. Was the landing conducted in accord with existing doctrine and how was doctrine modified? Second, the US Army landings on Makin should have been given a map and a little more detail. Otherwise, this is another useful, if not ground-breaking, Osprey Campaign summary. The photographs are quite good also.

Previously read another book on Tarawa (Tarawa: One Square Mile of Hell) which was more informative.

This is a good book. The author seems to have taken all that has been written by others and simply compiled a more complete narrative of the battle for Tarawa. That's okay. I'm one who has read everything there is to read on the battle. I think if you were to find yourself wanting to know about the battle...just from one book, this would be THE book to read.

Excellent from beginning to end!

Great book, It covered this battle well. Good info and good pictures!!!

Fantastic book!!

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