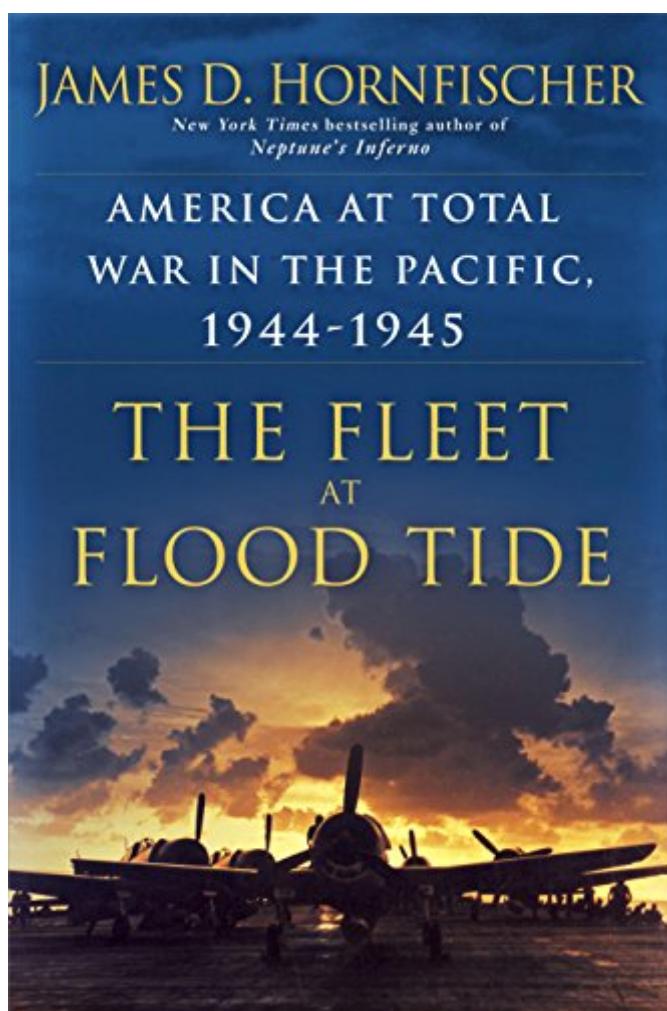


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The Fleet At Flood Tide: America At Total War In The Pacific, 1944-1945



Synopsis

An unprecedented account of the monumental Pacific War campaign that brought the U.S. Navy to the apex of its strength and supremacy and established the foundation for America to become a dominant global superpower. Here is the extraordinary story of the most consequential campaign of the Pacific War: the U.S. Fifth Fleet's seizure of the Marianas, a relentless deployment of overwhelming force on air, land, and sea that opened the path to total victory over Japan and established a new state of the art in warfare: the first use of the forerunners of today's SEALs; the emergence of massive cross-hemispheric expeditionary operations; the flowering of American naval aviation and carrier power; and the secret training of Marianas-based air crews who would first unleash nuclear fire. From the epic seaborne invasion of Saipan, to the stunning aerial battles of the Marianas Turkey Shoot, to the grinding combat ashore and the largest suicide attack of the war to the devastating bombing campaign that culminated with Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Marianas were the fulcrum of the Pacific. Filled with memorable action set pieces and closely observed portraits of the naval, air, and ground-force warriors and commanders who revolutionized warfare, The Fleet at Flood Tide is the broadly encompassing story of the full materialization of America as a world-class military power.

Book Information

File Size: 156604 KB

Print Length: 640 pages

Publisher: Bantam; 1 edition (October 25, 2016)

Publication Date: October 25, 2016

Sold by: Random House LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B01BJSJMHI

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #20,312 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #14 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Military > Naval #15 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks >

Customer Reviews

When this book first arrived last week, I was somewhat dismayed to learn that, while telling the tale of the final days of the Pacific Theatre in World War II, the three leaders it chose to focus on more deeply in this work were different from the ones I expected. He chose on Raymond Spruance, commander of the Fifth Fleet, Kelly Turner, commander of the transports that landed the amphibious forces (Marines and Army), and Paul Tibbets, who flew the history-changing first atomic bombing mission. While these seemed disjointed choices at first, they proved to be quite smart. These are major players in the campaigns to capture Saipan and the Marianas, and with his intense examination of the Japanese will to resist, one is left with the obvious conclusion that an invasion of Japan proper would have been bloody beyond measure. Hornfischer does not proselytize, but lays out the facts of this critical period concisely and clearly. He does so with his usual engaging and readable narrative. Like his previous works, Hornfischer does not disappoint in this production that deals with the final throes of the Japanese attempt to rule the Pacific. Once again, I am reminded how grateful we all must be to the warriors of World War II.

James D. Hornfischer is one of the finest authors writing on the subject of WW II in the Pacific, and a new title from him is always welcome. This detailed and meticulously researched volume on the latter stages of the United States' drive to close out the conflict against the Japanese Empire in the Pacific Theater provides a tremendous amount of insight into not only the what, but the why and how of the operations of the American naval, air, and ground forces. Readers of this book will become acquainted with many of the men, in both major and minor roles, who shaped the U.S. effort. Hornfischer covers the entire campaign, from the initial push to pick off island groups in the "stepping-stone" campaign to obtain forward basing positions from which to strike the Japanese home islands, to the bitter and contracted struggles for the Marianas and Okinawa, with a parallel narrative on the development and deployment of the nuclear weapons which forced Japanese capitulation. One factor which, to my mind, sets this book apart from others covering the same general material, comes in the handling of the subject of the use of the two nuclear weapons against Japan. While many sources cite the reduction in American casualties which were calculated to result from the obviation of the need to invade the Japanese home islands, Hornfischer describes the potential savings in Japanese lives – especially Japanese civilian lives – that

resulted from the elimination of the necessity of invasion. The fanatical militarism of the Japanese forces would brook no surrender (in most cases) and such was their fervency that they coerced civilians into taking their own lives rather than submit to American occupation. Worse even than that, there were numerous cases of Japanese military personnel killing civilians who sought sanctuary with American troops — shooting the civilians from cover as they came out of their hiding places. The excesses which were witnessed in the Marianas would certainly have been compounded many times over in an invasion of the home islands, with hundreds of thousands of lives needlessly lost in an orgy of fanatical suicide attacks by the military and coerced or forced suicides within the civilian population. This book, along with the author's previous efforts, *Neptune's Inferno* and *The Last of the Tin-Can Sailors*, belong on the shelf of anyone with an interest in the war in the Pacific.

On the change of writing perspective; For those who cut their Hornfischer teeth on his books on the USS Houston and Taffy3 you maybe somewhat disappointed. If you read *Neptune's Inferno* you will recognize this as a natural progression of his writing perspective. For the readers who are unhappy with his change of perspective, please consider that interviews with 1st hand participants is now becoming a bit more difficult. I for one welcome the change if that means he will keep producing these great volumes. About the book: A superlative telling of the issues facing, and the personalities of the architects and their subordinate commanders of the Pacific War in carrying out the strategic direction provided by MacArthur and Nimitz. Unless you've been part of a COMPTUEX with a bit of a Marine Amphibious component and a USAF ATO thrown in for good measure it is almost impossible to fathom the scope of the operations that were conceived, planned, and executed by the protagonists and their subordinates in this book. Mr. Hornfischer does a good job of bringing an understanding of these operations to the reader. Although not specifically within the "scope" of the book there is significant effort to describe the Japanese perspective from the tactical, strategic and civilian point of view. This is a great volume and to my knowledge one of the few that fully describes the actions of the USN, USMC, the USAAF, and the USA in terms of how they were interrelated and interlinked (The true beginning of joint operations) into one volume. The fact that it is done coherently in a readable fashion in 500 pages is a notable achievement,

This is a superb book on our Navy in the Pacific beginning about 1944. Pearl Harbor and Midway are two years past, and the Navy is starting its slog up the islands toward Japan. It treats the multiple commands clearly and moves back and forth from Nimitz down to the seaman apprentices

without losing the reader. The Marine Corps garners much attention, which it deserves, but the Amphibs, Army, and Air Force receive equal and detailed attention. His buildup to the bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki is very well done, and he spends considerable time on Paul Tibbetts ; if you think only of Tibbets for flying the Enola Gay, you're going to learn much more about this important man. Overall I have given "The Fleet at Flood Tide" five stars and have no reason to criticize any part of it.

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