



Bloody Buna

Lida Mayo

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"The battleground has been a vast, primitive, almost unknown wilderness of towering mountains and steaming coastal jungles, burned by the equatorial sun and drenched by tropical downpours. Into this fearsome terrain had been thrown raw Australian militiamen and American National Guardsmen, none of them adequately trained for combat of any kind." The grueling 7 month campaign from July 22, 1942, to January 22, 1943, for the recapture of Buna (on the north coast of New Guinea) was a turning point in World War II. Having narrowly escaped from Corregidor with his life, General Douglas MacArthur landed in Australia only to realize that he had been "rescued" to a sector nearly as menaced as the Philippines. Undermanned and ill-informed, he engaged his feeble forces in a campaign that was to decide not only the future of Australia but that of the entire Southwest Pacific as well. Bloodier than Guadalcanal, the Buna campaign is known as a "ghastly nightmare" in Australian military history. Neither MacArthur nor the Japanese High Command foresaw the impossible conditions under which the historic showdown was to take place. Never-ending rain, dense steaming jungle, soupy mud which rusted helmets red, malaria, insects--it was as much staying power as military prowess that determined the victor. Well-researched and engagingly written, BLOODY BUNA is a book for all with an interest in the fascinating history of the Allies' first major land victory in the Pacific. Lida Mayo is equally adept at dramatizing the hand-to-hand struggles of the jungle infantrymen as well as the crucial behind-the-scenes strategy decisions of the Allied and Japanese commands. Her work is an important addition to the annals of military history.

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