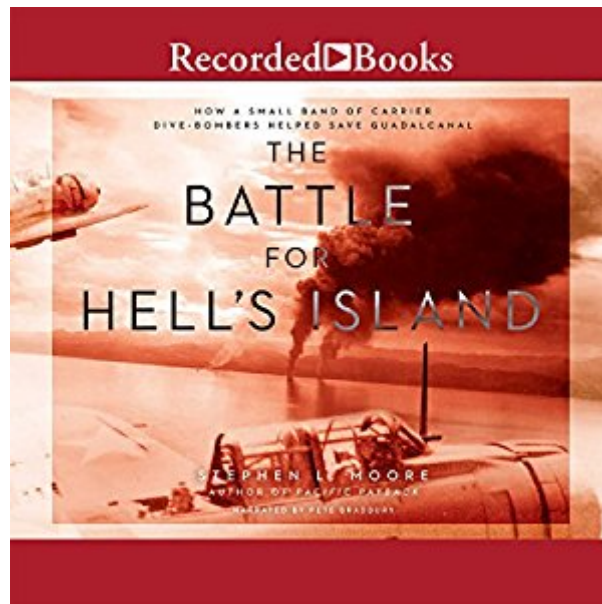


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# The Battle For Hell's Island: How A Small Band Of Carrier Dive Bombers Helped Save Guadalcanal



## Synopsis

From the author of *Pacific Payback* comes the gripping true story of the Cactus Air Force and how this rugged crew of dive bombers helped save Guadalcanal and won the war. November 1942: Japanese and American forces have been fighting for control of Guadalcanal, a small but pivotal island in Japan's expansion through the South Pacific. Both sides have endured months of grueling battle under the worst circumstances: hellish jungles, meager rations, and tropical diseases, which have taken a severe mental and physical toll on the combatants. The Japanese call Guadalcanal Jigoku no Jima - Hell's Island. Amid a seeming stalemate, a small group of US Navy dive bombers are called upon to help determine the island's fate. The men have until recently been serving in their respective squadrons aboard the USS Lexington and the USS Yorktown, fighting in the thick of the Pacific War's aerial battles. Their skills have been honed to a fine edge, even as injury and death inexorably have depleted their ranks. When their carriers are lost, many of the men end up on the USS Enterprise. Battle damage to that carrier then forces them from their home at sea to operating from Henderson Field, a small dirt-and-gravel airstrip on Guadalcanal. With some Marine and Army Air Force planes, they help form the Cactus Air Force, a motley assemblage of fliers tasked with holding the line while making dangerous flights from their jungle airfield. Pounded by daily Japanese air assaults, nightly warship bombardments, and sniper attacks from the jungle, pilots and gunners rarely last more than a few weeks before succumbing to tropical ailments, injury, exhaustion, and death. But when the Japanese launch a final offensive to take the island once and for all, these dive bomber jocks answer the call of duty - and try to perform miracles in turning back an enemy warship armada, a host of fighter planes, and a convoy of troop transports. A remarkable story of grit, guts, and heroism, *The Battle for Hell's Island* reveals how command of the South Pacific, and the outcome of the Pacific War, depended on control of a single dirt airstrip-and the small group of battle-weary aviators sent to protect it with their lives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In June, 1942, the American Navy had defeated a superior Japanese force at the Battle of Midway, sinking four of Japan's front-line aircraft carriers. Now, in August, 1942, the Japanese had begun construction of an airfield on the island of Guadalcanal in the Solomon islands. If this airfield was completed, the Japanese would be able to harass American supply lines to Australia and the surrounding areas. On August 7, 1942, American forces invaded the island in their first amphibious campaign of the war. The unfinished airfield was captured and named Henderson field in honor of a Marine pilot killed at Midway. Soon, American planes began operating from Henderson field. These fliers became known as the Cactus Air Force. Often flying against superior forces, these pilots helped their Marine brethren on the ground. Many of these pilots were displaced from American aircraft carriers. During the course of the six-month-long battle, these fearless pilots destroyed scores of Japanese planes and helped sink numerous Japanese ships. Without the heroic action of these pilots, Guadalcanal might very well have been won by the Japanese. Author Stephen L. Moore has written an excellent book about these intrepid pilots. Starting out with the early carrier raids against the Marshalls and Gilberts islands, through the Coral Sea and Midway battles and up to Guadalcanal, Moore describes the rise of American carrier tactics against the Japanese. As in his earlier book "Pacific Payback", Moore describes every aspect of the battle, including testimonies of the pilots who flew from Guadalcanal. These men provided an invaluable service by fighting with battle-damaged aircraft on a daily basis while also enduring shelling, sniper attacks, and constant bombing by Japanese forces. These men were a huge part in the capture of Guadalcanal and the turning of the tide against the Japanese. Highly recommended.

Stephen Moore has done a great job in bringing the exploits and daily struggles of the Cactus Air Force to life in this book. The reader learns about the background of these aviators, enough so that they become familiar to the reader. Vivid battle details and descriptions of life as a carrier airman and then as a displaced airman fill the pages. Guadalcanal is a name that is burned into the pages of history. Anyone who wants to learn more about the battle for this island and the men who fought

in that battle should read this book.

Far far to long and detailed. Took entirely to long to get to the battle of Guadalcanal. I know those guys were all heroes but the detail was so tedious i couldn't finish the book. Good for a naval historian. Not so much for a Marine.

I have read a lot of books on the war in the Pacific but never from this angle., most are about how wonderful the generals and admirals were and not about the guys who were doing the killing and dying!

Excellent both chronologically and from a human standpoint. Stephen Moore clearly did his homework. There are a few errors, but they don't distract from the overall content. Excellent read and highly recommended.

Stephen Moore has written another exciting read over a subject that has been covered by several historians. The exception to the others is that Moore brings up information that has been disregarded and makes it worthwhile.

Excellent detail about the sacrifices made by carrier based pilots in stopping Japanese Navy. Especially good details about those stranded. On "Hell's Island."

Great book if you are interested in the WWII Pacific Theater. Very detailed, precise work on the part of the author.

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