



Tarawa and the Marshalls: A Pictorial Tribute (U.S. Marines in World War II)

Eric Hammel

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Some of the biggest battles fought by the Marines during World War II took place on tiny islands scattered throughout the western Pacific. Among these, the battles for Tarawa and the Marshalls were some of the fiercest and most decisive of the Pacific campaign--critical engagements that this pictorial history brings vividly to life. In hundreds of rare photographs, many never-before-published, the historic drama unfolds beginning with the 2d Marine Division's landing on Betio Island in the Tarawa Atoll on November 20, 1943. Assured that the island's defenses had been "pounded into coral dust" by naval and air bombardment, the Marines in fact found themselves in the thick of the first modern amphibious assault on a well-defended beachhead. Three days of intense fighting secured the island for the Allies, at the cost of 1,000 Marines dead and more than 2,000 wounded.

The book then turns to the Marshall Islands where, early in World War II, the Japanese had built airfields on the Kwajalein and Eniwetok atolls. Dramatic photographs document the taking of Kwajalein by U.S. Marines and Army troops after the most massive bombardment of the war. We then witness the landing of the 22d Marines on the five islands of Eniwetok on February 18, followed by the intense fighting that brought the entire atoll under Allied control within four days--securing crucial landing fields and operational support for the Allies' island-hopping campaign to ultimate victory in the Pacific. A tribute to the rare courage and heroism that, for the Marines in WWII, were merely a matter of course, this illustrated history keeps their spectacular sacrifices and feats of valor forever before us.

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