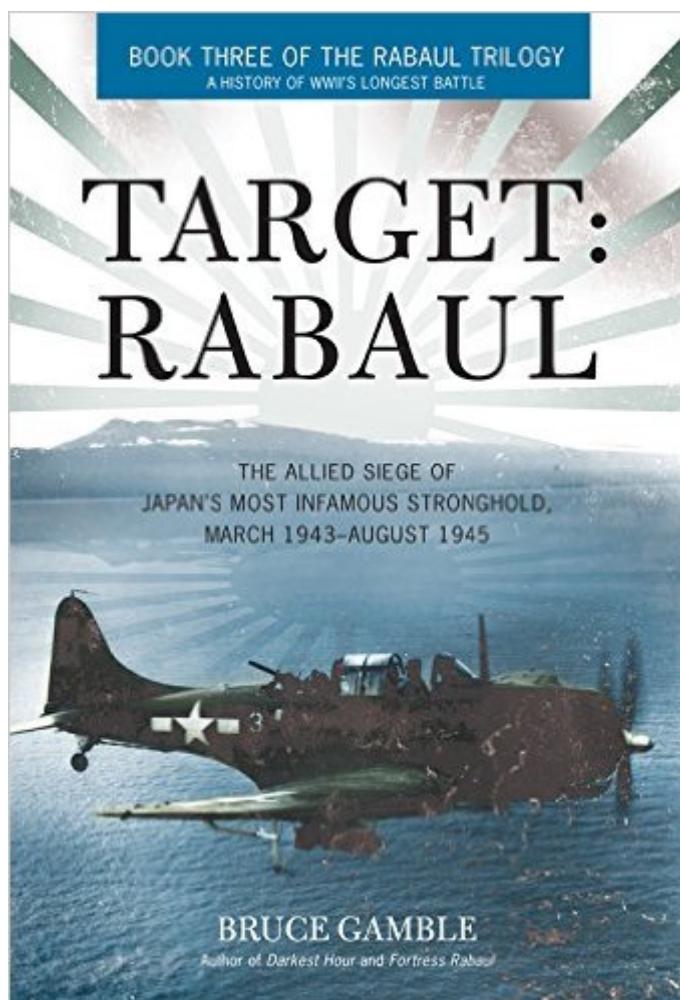


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# Target: Rabaul: The Allied Siege Of Japan's Most Infamous Stronghold, March 1943 - August 1945



## Synopsis

As the final book in Bruce Gamble's esteemed trilogy on the War in the Pacific, *Target: Rabaul* picks up where *Fortress Rabaul*, the second installment, leaves off--and sets the stage for the major Allied aerial engagements of 1943-1945, which would result in the defeat of Japan. March 1943, Washington, D.C.: Major General George Kenney, commander of the 5th Air Force, begins to formulate plans for Cartwheel--a 2-year campaign to neutralize Rabaul, Japan's most notorious stronghold, with the use of unescorted daylight bombing raids against the base and the heavily-defended satellite installations nearby. The undertaking would prove to be anything but straightforward, and the story of Rabaul's destruction remains one of the most gripping of World War II's Pacific Theater. In *Target: Rabaul*, award-winning military historian Bruce Gamble expertly narrates the Allied air raids against the stronghold: the premature celebrations by George Kenney and Gen. Douglas MacArthur; the bequeathing of authority to Adm. William F. "Bull" Halsey; the unprecedented number of near-constant air battles that immediately followed; the Japanese retreat to Truk Lagoon in 1944; and their ultimate surrender to Allied forces in August 1945. This amazing story, one that profiles the bravery and resolve of the Allies in the horrific Pacific battleground, is the turbulent conclusion to an acclaimed trilogy from one of today's most talented nonfiction military authors.

## Book Information

Series: Rabaul (Book 3)

Hardcover: 400 pages

Publisher: Zenith Press; First Edition, First edition (November 15, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0760344078

ISBN-13: 978-0760344071

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 1.2 x 9.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ (97 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #80,744 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #74 inÂ Books > History > Asia > Japan #112 inÂ Books > History > Military > Aviation #620 inÂ Books > History > Military > World War II

## Customer Reviews

Picking up where he left off in Volume Two of his Rabaul Trilogy, Bruce Gamble completes the tale

of World War II's longest battle. Rabaul was the prime focus of Allied attention in the South Pacific and as such it was subjected to a constant stream of attacks from the U.S. Army Air Force, Navy, and Marines, as well as Commonwealth forces from Australia and New Zealand. The American efforts make up the majority of the book, with the attacks by the 5th Air Force being the primary focus. Once the 5th AF moved on to other areas of fighting, the 13th Air Force, the Navy and the Marines took up the challenge of reducing Rabaul to rubble, along with help from the Aussies and Kiwis. When you have a campaign of this length, you have a high amount of losses by the forces involved. While many Allied pilots and crew were fortunate to survive being shot down, they were not so fortunate to end up as prisoners of the Japanese. With the Allied bombing campaign continuing day after day and around the clock, life in Rabaul for the Japanese military was rough, but significantly rougher for prisoners of war. Bruce Gamble has done a masterful job of researching this campaign. The detail is astounding as he has used American, Commonwealth and Japanese sources to provide a complete picture of the campaign. Stories from the Allied pilots and crew are a prime part of the book, along with those of the unfortunate ones who ended up as prisoners of war. However, some of the best parts are the recollections of the Japanese soldiers, sailors and airmen who participated in the battle. Japanese memoirs of World War II are fairly scarce so it's really a treat to have them in this book (as well as the other books in the Trilogy).

Although the events of this book are long ago and happened far away it should be read by anyone with a serious interest in the "Greatest Generation"/ Most have now passed away, a good number in action. the rest from age. But the author in this book and his prior book about the Rabaul campaign has done a great service detailing a part of WWII that has escaped much publicity. He tells in detail how these young men with limited or no prior combat experience flew mission after mission against Rabaul starting with unescorted flying boats against proficient Japanese fighters and anti aircraft fire. The aircraft type and numbers improved over the three year campaign that ended only with the end of the war. Rabaul was the most important and heavily defended Japanese base in the Southwest Pacific. While we have read and heard about the European bombing campaign. the author vividly describes the vast distances over water. extreme weather that had to be conquered before they reached Rabaul, and then they had to get back, many crashed due to combat, weather and being lost. Many went into the ocean or wilds of New Guinea and were never found. One can only imagine the courage it took for these very young men to go on these missions that lasted up to 12 hours, day after day. The famous Greg (Pappy) Boyington and his Black Sheep Squadron missions are fully covered. The author painfully describes the Japanese atrocities against its

prisoners---Australian, New Zealand and American. For little or no reason the Japanese would select groups of prisoners for execution, usually by beheading. The Australians lost the most to prisoner execution but the Americans had a great number also.

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