



## Touched with Fire: The Land War in the South Pacific

*Eric M. Bergerud*

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# **Touched with Fire: The Land War in the South Pacific**

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**Touched with Fire: The Land War in the South Pacific** Eric M. Bergerud

A brilliant history of the land battles in the Pacific theater of World War II, with stirring personal accounts of the horrifying struggle between the Japanese and Allied forces.

The horrors of WWII in the South Pacific extended far beyond the detonation of atomic bombs. In this revelatory portrayal of the lives of the regular infantrymen who struggled to contain the Japanese advance, Eric Bergerud has given us a compelling and chilling record of the incredible hardships endured by these soldiers, and the heroic efforts that resulted in the reversal of the course of the war. Bergerud spent hundreds of hours interviewing the last surviving veterans of this remarkable campaign, and he has placed their personal experiences at the center of his analysis of military strategy.

"Aspires to do for the ground war in the South Pacific what Keegan achieved in *Six Armies in Normandy*."--*Los Angeles Times*

## **Touched with Fire: The Land War in the South Pacific Details**

Date : Published July 1st 1997 by Penguin Books (first published 1996)

ISBN : 9780140246964

Author : Eric M. Bergerud

Format : Paperback 566 pages

Genre : History, Nonfiction, War, World War II, Military, Military History, Military Fiction



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# From Reader Review Touched with Fire: The Land War in the South Pacific for online ebook

## Mark Merry says

Outstanding account of the Australian / US war effort in the South Pacific. A surprisingly astute reading of the Australian military by a foreign author. The analysis resonates with the accounts I heard from family members who served in the AIF / RAAF during WWII

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## Jonathan says

Not a chronology but rather a portrait of how the Americans and Australians (don't forget the Aussies!) fought in the war's worst theater.

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## Stephen says

### Overall Assessment: Keeper

#### Commentary:

Almost 70 years after the end of WWII, today's focus on the Pacific side of WWII is on the decision to drop the atom bomb. Lost amidst the discussions of war weariness, the desire to play with a new toy, racism, strategic concerns regarding Russia, etc. is an understanding of the experience of 3 years of ground combat in the Pacific.

As author Eric Bergerund vividly describes in his book Touched with Fire The Land War in the South Pacific, that experience was horrific. Not only was the terrain malignant, but worse the Japanese ethos of death over surrender and continued fighting at all costs and for no recognizable gain, inevitably informed Allied decisions on the cost of a invasion of Japan itself.

While not directly addressing the dropping of the atom bomb, in detailing combat conditions and experiences Mr. Bergerund adds important context to the atom bomb decision. Quite simply, any judgement on the dropping of the atom bomb is, in my opinion simplistic, if the combat experience that Mr. Bergerund details is not factored in.

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## Dan says

a highly readable book that I put down. why?

was I weary of war?

was I weary of the writers style?

I am determined to renew the attack--but it will have to wait... when I weary of the Civil War (American)

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## **Bill V says**

The is a great book. It can be a bit dry at times and it is long but the material it covers is quite unique. It doesn't just cover the ground campaigns fought on New Guinea, New Britain, Guadalcanal and the rest of the Solomon Islands. It has entire sections covering morale, disease, training, medical facilities, terrain, weapons, tactics and logistics.

Amongst these categories it often differentiates between differences between the participants; the American Army, the Marines, Australian militia and regular army, the crack Japanese troops that began the campaign and their lesser replacements. In that regard this book is specialized and probably would not appeal to casual readers of the Pacific War, but to someone who already has a good knowledge of the campaign and is interested in reading a unique perspective on the issues that contributed to the campaign as a whole, the book is invaluable. There are a few minor spelling errors and an insignificant factual error but they do not detract from the superb quality of this book. I did find the epilogue at the end a bit odd and unnecessary.

Nonetheless, this is a wonderful niche book and belongs in the library of every avid historian of this part of the conflict.

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