



Victory Fever on Guadalcanal: Japan's First Land Defeat of World War II (Williams-Ford Texas A&M University Military History Series)

William H. Bartsch

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Following their rampage through Southeast Asia and the Pacific in the five months after Pearl Harbor, Japanese forces moved into the Solomon Islands, intending to cut off the critical American supply line to Australia. But when they began to construct an airfield on Guadalcanal in July 1942, the Americans captured the almost completed airfield for their own strategic use.

The Japanese Army countered by sending to Guadalcanal a reinforced battalion under the command of Col. Kiyonao Ichiki. The attack that followed would prove to be the first of four attempts by the Japanese over six months to retake the airfield, resulting in some of the most vicious fighting of the Pacific War.

During the initial battle on the night of August 20–21, 1942, Marines wiped out Ichiki's men, who—imbued with “victory fever”—had expected a quick and easy victory.

William H. Bartsch draws on correspondence, interviews, diaries, memoirs, and official war records, including those translated from Japanese sources, to offer an intensely human narrative of the failed attempt to recapture Guadalcanal's vital airfield.

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