



The War with Japan: The Period of Balance, May 1942-October 1943 (Total War: New Perspectives on World War II)

H. P. Willmott

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Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 was the beginning of the United States' battle with Japan during World War II. In the months following the attack, Japan was successful in a series of victories throughout Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific. Then, from May 1942 to October 1943, the Japanese and the United States engaged in a series of fierce clashes in the Southwest Pacific. Both the U.S. and Japanese forces were evenly matched, and their troops fought one another to exhaustion.

This engrossing book looks at the war with Japan, focusing on this "period of balance" between American and Japanese forces. *The War with Japan* explains how the battles fought in the Coral Sea in May and off Midway Islands in June 1942 represented the first engagements that were not the result of decisions made by the Japanese before the outbreak of war. Both the U.S. and Japanese had to consider their next moves in a strategic situation that was much like a gun lying in the street: it was there for either side to pick up and use.

H. P. Willmott examines the conflict in this context. The campaigns that raged in the lower Solomons and along the Kakoda Trail for control of eastern New Guinea, along with the ferocious battles in the Coral Sea and off Midway Islands, were the turning point of the war in the Pacific. The fight for control of Guadalcanal saw the Imperial Navy and U.S. Navy fight one another, and themselves, until they were completely spent.

But between February and October 1943, the Americans gained a critical edge when the U.S. Navy took delivery of the first of the massive warships that were to carry the fighting to the Japanese home islands. After November 1943, this strong U.S. fleet—built during the period of hostilities—outfought the Japanese navy. *The War with Japan* explores all these aspects of Japanese defeat.

This fascinating probe into the war with Japan is ideal for all readers who are interested in military history and World War II.

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