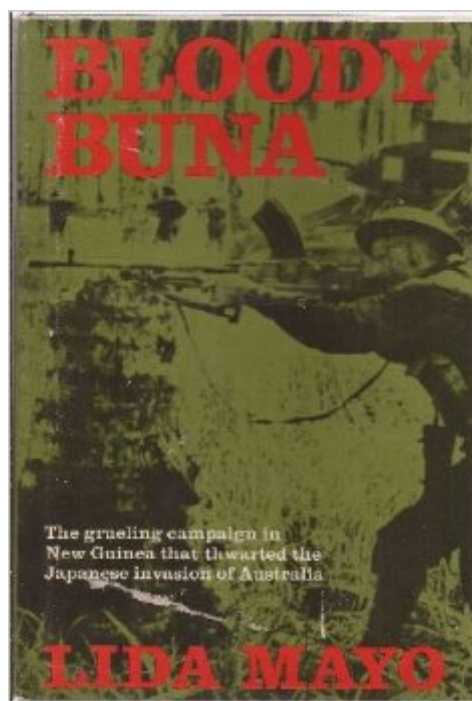


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# Bloody Buna



## Synopsis

"The battleground has been a vast, primitive, almost unknown wilderness of towering mountains and steaming coastal jungles, burned by the equatorial sun and drenched by tropical downpours. Into this fearsome terrain had been thrown raw Australian militiamen and American National Guardsmen, none of them adequately trained for combat of any kind." The grueling 7 month campaign from July 22, 1942, to January 22, 1943, for the recapture of Buna (on the north coast of New Guinea) was a turning point in World War II. Having narrowly escaped from Corregidor with his life, General Douglas MacArthur landed in Australia only to realize that he had been "rescued" to a sector nearly as menaced as the Philippines. Undermanned and ill-informed, he engaged his feeble forces in a campaign that was to decide not only the future of Australia but that of the entire Southwest Pacific as well. Bloodier than Guadalcanal, the Buna campaign is known as a "ghastly nightmare" in Australian military history. Neither MacArthur nor the Japanese High Command foresaw the impossible conditions under which the historic showdown was to take place. Never-ending rain, dense steaming jungle, soupy mud which rusted helmets red, malaria, insects--it was as much staying power as military prowess that determined the victor. Well-researched and engagingly written, BLOODY BUNA is a book for all with an interest in the fascinating history of the Allies' first major land victory in the Pacific. Lida Mayo is equally adept at dramatizing the hand-to-hand struggles of the jungle infantrymen as well as the crucial behind-the-scenes strategy decisions of the Allied and Japanese commands. Her work is an important addition to the annals of military history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As the previous reviewer said, this is history the way it should be written (and I'm constantly amazed and impressed that it includes all these old books). This one's factual, concise and tells the story. And as the old diggers who fought WW2 pass away, it's histories like this that should be remembered and retold. These were important historical events and the battle to recapture Buna from the Japanese was a turning point in the Pacific War, and one that almost nobody now remembers. For that alone, this book's worth reading. The author's not an outstanding writer but does a credible job. Don't expect a thriller that'll have you hanging off the edge of your seat. Do expect a detailed account of what happened. Buna was a campaign that lasted for six months, from July 1942 to January 1943 and it was fought in the appalling conditions that were prevalent in New Guinea (and the Solomon Islands). The Australian militia forces and the US National Guard units who fought the battle for Buna under the command of Gen. Douglas MacArthur lost as many casualties to disease as they did to the fighting. The battle itself was a turning point in the war in the south-west Pacific and the author portrays it with all the stark reality that a true war history deserves. And the men that fought and died there on our behalf and on the behalf of future generations deserve the respect and remembrance of ours and future generations. "They shall not grow old, As we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, Nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun, And in the morning, We will remember them. We will remember them." Lest We Forget - the ANZAC Prayer

While trying to find any item I have that may actually be worth money, I typed in this book just for fun, never expecting it to come up. Lo and behold... My edition dates to 1974 and so understandably, this is not a new book. Be that as it may, Buna is a frequently overlooked campaign that SHOULD NOT be overlooked. The men who fought in New Guinea experienced some of the worst conditions nature could provide and fought on all the same. This book in particular is a wonderful example of how history books used to be written. Liberal use of military documentation and personal accounts intersperse this novel but the reader never really gets to know the soldiers like they do the officers. The battle accounts as crisp, well written and a little aloof. Even so, readers will be amazed and impressed by the details included, such as a soldier, when asked by a visiting general what he wanted, flipping over to show the hole in his pants and saying only, "PANTS General. Glve us PANTS!" Now that is just good history.

To a certain extent this book is superseded by The Ghost Mountain Boys, but not completely. In this short, concise work the author manages effective and thoughtful criticism of MacArthur, and also

addresses the issues of the friction between the Australian and American forces, and the quality or lack thereof of American fighting. This battle was commenced around September of 1942, and ended in January of 1943, really it was fought at the same time as Guadalcanal. The author also does a good job pointing out the competition for resources and attention between Buna and Guadalcanal, especially from the Japanese point of view. And the fact that appropriate weapons were lacking to reduce the Japanese bunkers. Much praise is due the author.

My father fought with the 163rd infantry in this battle. He never spoke of his experiences in the war. He died in 1978 of leukemia as a result of radiation poisoning after being stationed at Hiroshima 10 days after the bomb fell. I've researched much of what he experienced and I've never found a more fascinating and graphic account of the war than this book, 'Bloody Buna' written by Lida Mayo. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in WWII primarily because it is so well-written and secondly because these battles have been so grossly overlooked. You'll find this accounting to be far more fascinating than most other WWII battles. This really was the first time that we gave the japs hell.

I bought this book,...only because my uncle was there...in the midst of the bloody combat fighting that took place in WWII Buna, New Guinea,...between the American forces and the well entrenched and supplied Japanese. The losses were terrific to the American forces because of the well equipped Japanese, and the unforgiving jungle. The "Battle for Buna", became the American ground forces turning point for war in the Pacific. War historians and the general public will find this book interesting.

I discovered this jewel of a military history book in the SMU library in Dallas Texas. It is one of the most concise and well written accounts of the Buna land campaign I have found. Other reviewers have mentioned those strong points, but the author also tells the story of the horrid made up from nothing logistics that the Aussie-American force had to use to recapture Buna. The small, expendable, coastal fleet of impressed Australian fishing smacks, schooners, harbor tugs and tramp steamers that was the SWPA Small Boat section makes several appearances in in the book in both photographic and story form. Telling the reader why two Western military's, built around large amounts of artillery, tanks and air power, fought a starving war of attrition, in a howling wilderness, under Japanese air superiority, and won. That's why the book rates five stars.

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