



History of United States Naval Operations in World War II. Vol. 4: Coral Sea, Midway and Submarine Actions, May 1942-August 1942

Samuel Eliot Morison

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Volume 4 of Samuel Eliot Morison's panoramic naval history - the second volume on the war in the Pacific - details the American victory in the Coral Sea and the U.S. Navy's stunning defeat of a far superior Japanese force at Midway, as well as the events leading up to the six months' struggle at Guadalcanal. Coral Sea and Midway were the first two naval battles in which aircraft inflicted all losses, with some assistance from submarines but none from ships' gunfire. Morison reports of the Battle of the Coral Sea that "So many mistakes were made on both sides in this new mode of fighting that it might be called the Battle of Naval Errors; but more were made by the enemy." At Midway - "the first really smashing defeat inflicted on the Japanese Navy in modern times" - Admiral Yamamoto was forced to abandon his mission without firing a shot and despite superior gun power because one well-directed carrier thrust by the Americans effectively destroyed the Japanese air component. This volume also provides a richly detailed look at the first year's exploits of the "Silent Service": the fledgling American submarine corps in the Pacific. In 1942 the U.S. Navy was hampered by a chronic shortage of torpedoes, by defective torpedoes, and by faulty strategic notions and excessive caution. Meanwhile, Japanese submarine efforts were compromised by wasteful diversion to special missions and a penchant for seeking out warships instead of raiding merchant shipping to break supply lines. Morison's incorporation of critical information from the Japanese side gives his account balance and completeness, while his first-hand experience of American operations infuses his history with immediacy and vigor.

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