



Pain and Purpose in the Pacific: True Reports of War

Richard Carl Bright

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What follows here, just a brief insight into Pain and Purpose in the Pacific. This book did not begin with the idea of a chronology of the battles of the Pacific War, although an overview is included. But instead it was intended to be a brief account of the battles on Saipan, Tinian, and Okinawa as I retrace the travels of one Marine from the farmland of Minnesota to Japan and back. Carl J. Johnson spent 30 months in the Pacific. Four of those months were in bitter combat on the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Okinawa. He is my uncle. I have been blessed to travel, & to spend time at many of the places he traveled during World War II. My travels didn't stop there.

As a Continental Airlines pilot based in Guam, now retired and having lived on Saipan, I have had the opportunity over a seven year period to visit other islands that were the scene of horrific battles of World War II. In addition to Saipan, Tinian, and Okinawa, I will mention a few of them. Included are Guam where I was based during the closing years of my airline career; also Belau, which is Palau, and includes Peleliu. Included too in this book are Iwo Jima, Corregidor and the Philippines. In my travels beyond Hawaii and Pearl Harbor, which was my introduction into the Pacific, were Yap, and Truk, which is Chuuk, and Pohnpei in the Carolines. And I've spent time in Japan.

During my time in the Pacific, I have been presented with the opportunity to speak with several of the veterans of the Pacific War. Doing so has in some cases allowed me in some small way to understand a sense of the hell they had to suffer through. Included in this report are a few of their stories, as well as stories from some of the people of the islands who in one way or another were involved in the conflict.

It is with a depth of gratitude that I acknowledge the Military Historical Tours of Alexandria, Virginia for allowing me to be a part of their tours to the islands of Iwo Jima, and Okinawa, as well as Guam, Tinian and Saipan. I appreciate this organization, dedicated to preserving the memories of the war, and to the honoring of the military personnel who were there at the time. While living on either Guam or Saipan I also was able to visit on my own most of the islands mentioned on this page. But it was the Military Historical Tours, and it's President USMC Colonel Warren Wiedhahn (mht@miltours.com) that made it possible for me to visit Iwo Jima. They allowed me to join them once a year for 4 consecutive years. I have since returned a 5th time in March of 2010. It was through this great organization that over a 7 year period (while living on both Guam and Saipan in the Marianas Islands), I was able to meet most of the WWII veterans mentioned here; and these aging veterans of the War in the Pacific whom I have met, have touched my heart. In addition to my uncle, this book is for them too.

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