Lapham's Raiders: Guerrillas in the Philippines, 1942-1945

Robert Lapham, Bernard Norling

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" On December 8, 1941, the day after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese invaded the Philippine Islands, catching American forces unprepared and forcing their eventual surrender. Among the American soldiers who managed to avoid capture was twenty-five-year-old Lieutenant Robert Lapham, who was to play a major role in the resistance to the brutal Japanese occupation. Lapham's Raiders is the memoir of one man's guerrilla experiences. A collaboration between Lapham and historian Bernard Norling, the book also offers a detailed assessment of the most extensive land campaign in the Pacific war and a vivid portrayal of Allied guerrilla activity. Through letters, records and the recollections of Lapham and others, the drama of the "mean, dirty, brutal struggle to the death" of guerrilla warfare in the Pacific theater is reconstructed and waged again within these pages. After emerging from the jungles of Bataan and in the face of daunting odds, Lapham built from scratch and commanded a devastating guerrilla force behind enemy lines. His Luzon Guerrilla Armed Forces (LGAF) evolved into an army of thirteen thousand men that eventually controlled the entire northern half of Luzon's great Central Plain, an area of several thousand square miles. Lapham and Norling shed light on the clandestine activities of the LGAF and other guerrilla operations, assess the damages of war to the Filipino people, and discuss the United States' postwar treatment of the newly independent Philippine nation. They also offer a fuller understanding of Japan's wartime failures in the Philippines, the Pacific, and elsewhere in Asia, and of America's postwar failure to fully realize opportunities there.

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