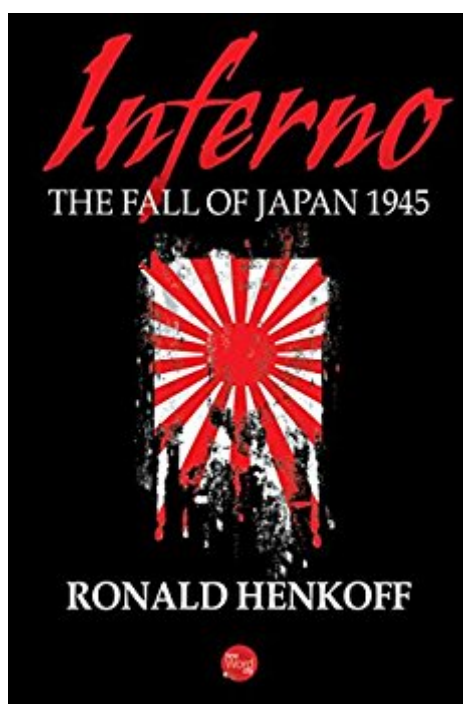


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Inferno: The Fall Of Japan 1945



Synopsis

Inferno is the compelling story of the U.S. atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the ensuing death and destruction that led to the end of World War II. The events that culminated in the fall of Japan - which forever changed the course of diplomacy, geopolitics, and warfare in the twentieth century - are vividly recreated through dramatic first-hand accounts of the major participants on both sides of the Pacific. They include: Harry Truman, the inexperienced American president who made the decision that would lead to unprecedented death and destruction; the war-mongering, but mysterious, Japanese Emperor Hirohito, who ultimately presided over his country's surrender; General Leslie Groves, the no-nonsense director of the Manhattan Project; and Paul Tibbets, the pilot of the plane, the Enola Gay, which dropped the very first nuclear bomb on Hiroshima in August 1945.

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Customer Reviews

First off, let me establish my bona fides for writing this review. I majored in Asian History at college and then spent a year as a Special Research Fellow in Japanese History at Kyoto University, so I'm quite familiar with the field. I lived in Japan for 18 years and speak the language, too. This is

a splendid book. It could hardly be more timely, following President Obama's visit to Hiroshima, which reopened the question of whether the decision to drop the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was justified. In an age when people are more and more certain of right and wrong, when grey areas and compromises are not to be countenanced, Henkoff manages to present the controversial events of this time with sympathy and understanding for all involved. He describes people's choices not as we see them now, knowing how it all came out in the end, but as the people at that time saw their choices given the information that they had available then. He makes us understand as best we can today the calculus that led the US to drop the bombs. He balances that detailed discussion of the US's actions with an equally full examination of the Japanese side, showing convincingly that the moral dilemmas and responsibility were not just on one side. At the same time, he describes in horrible detail the devastating impact of the bombs so that we can feel compassion for the thousands of people who died in dreadful conditions as a result. This important little book should settle some of the discussion concerning this controversial decision. The US authorities did discuss whether to drop the first bomb on an uninhabited place first to demonstrate its power, but rejected the idea.

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