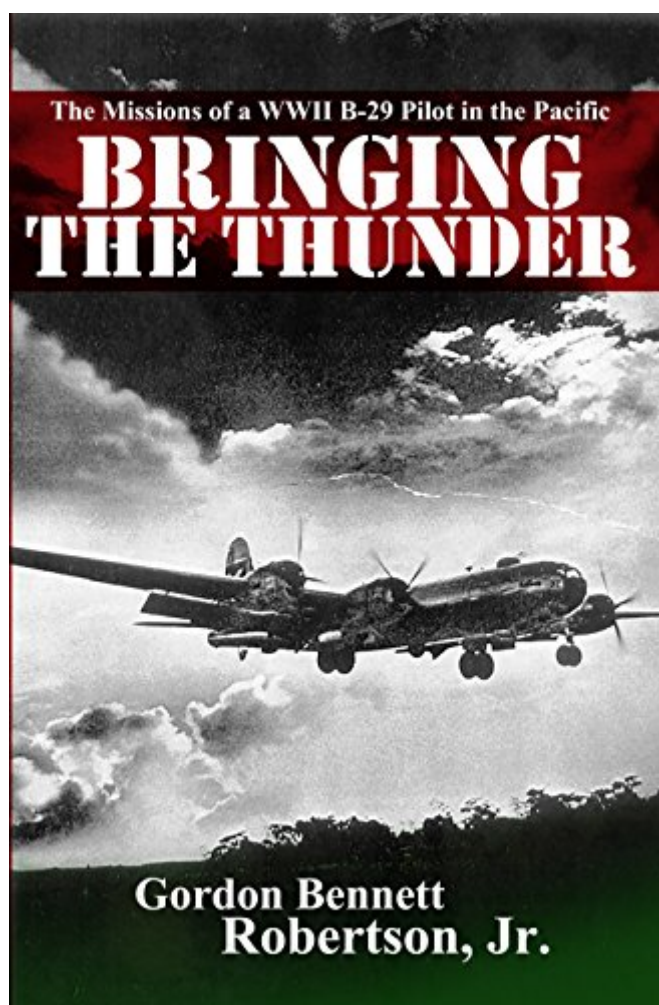


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Bringing The Thunder: The Missions Of A World War II B-29 Pilot In The Pacific



Synopsis

By March 1945, when Ben Robertson took to the skies above Japan in his B-29 Superfortress, the end of World War II in the Pacific seemed imminent. But although American forces were closing in on its home islands, Japan refused to surrender, and American B-29s were tasked with hammering Japan to its knees with devastating bomb runs. That meant flying low-altitude, night-time incendiary raids under threat of flak, enemy fighters, mechanical malfunction, and fatigue. It may have been the beginning of the end, but just how soon the end would come — and whether Robertson and his crew would make it home — was far from certain.

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Customer Reviews

I read this book a little bit ago. I liked it. While you can find many many books and narratives about the bombers over Germany, finding a good book about the bombers over Japan is a little harder to find. What I liked about this narrative was he gave a much more in-depth explanation of what was occurring. Some narratives end up being a very dry account of an individual going about his job that

just happens to be soldier, pilot, or a sailor. Here he does take the time to explain about the bomber, his mission, and how operations were done. While it may bore some people, I enjoy that stuff. It helps fill in my knowledge about the war and how the bombing campaign was conducted. As for why I gave it a four star over a five star, maybe I'm a little tough of a grader, but to me a five star book is one that I would want to reread at least a few more times. While his narrative was good and a great story, I'm not sure if this would fall into the category of I love it and want to reread it over and over again. To give him a five star would detract from the books that I really love, that I'm so glad to have read and will want to reread over and over again. Also, I love the stackpole military history series and buy almost every volume of it. Sometimes they are not books on a subject I would normally read about, but I've never been disappointed. They select great personal stories and excellent histories. I hope they keep up the great work!!

Bringing the Thunder is an interesting book written by a man who was a pilot late in the war. He flew 34 missions against Japan in a B-29 bomber and was part of some of the more impressive and destructive raids in the history of the war. The book is easy to read and quite interesting. The author spends a great deal of time detailing his training in various types of aircraft and his desire to be a fighter pilot. Instead, he becomes the pilot of one of the most impressive bombers of all time. One of the most interesting topics covered in the book was the firebombing of Japan. The author was part of the famous raid that burned dozens of square miles of Tokyo to the ground in one night. He even writes about the infamous thermals having pulled a few of our own aircraft into the fires. He also writes extensively about the dangers of losing an aircraft over Japan and many of the war crimes perpetrated upon the bomber crews. It was truly a war to the end. The only concern I have with this book is it needed an editor. There are many typos though the book. But nothing that takes away from a great war-time memoir. I just wish it had an editor who could have made those changes for the sake of a wonderful read. If you enjoyed this book then I would strong recommend reading the fantastic book, "The Wrong Stuff," by Truman Smith. I would also recommend, "Two Gold Coins and a Prayer," by James H Keetfe, III., and "Shot at and Missed" by Jack Myers. All three recommendations are very strong books.

I picked up this book after I became involved in restoring the B-29 s/n 45-21748 at the Museum of Nuclear Science and History in Albuquerque, NM. As I learned about the history of the aircraft, I found that there is so much written on the B-29 about how it was such and innovative aircraft, its early troubles, and how important it was in finally defeating the Japanese. One reads about its

range, speed and payload; and eventually about the low-level bombing raids and the fire-bombing. But it wasn't until I read this book that it finally all came together. The 15 hour missions over water, the continuous concern about the engines, the skill of the flight crews, what it was actually like to fly the aircraft, the living conditions, the unbelievable cost in lives and treasure, and yes, how it felt to drop incendiary bombs on Japanese cities mission after mission. The book is well written and a quick read because it is such a page turner. I would recommend it to anyone who truly wants to understand the B-29 as a warbird and what it was like to be a B-29 pilot, literally on the front lines of the first test of the theory of overwhelming strategic air power courtesy of Curtis LeMay.

I've read hundreds of books and articles on World War II, but *Bringing the Thunder* added a lot to my knowledge of the B-29 strategic bombing campaign against the Japanese mainland throughout 1945. Author Gordon Robertson gave a superb first-person account of his 35 missions as the aircraft commander of a B-29 flying long-range bombing missions from Guam. The first chapter described his first mission, a low-altitude night run dropping incendiary bombs on Tokyo. The next chapters recounted Robertson's early years growing up in Nebraska. Even before Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps and began his training, leading eventually to learning to fly the new B-29 Superfortress. Robertson did a great job of describing what it was like to be in the cockpit of the giant bomber. The 14-hour missions were grueling enough as it was, but with bad weather often the norm, many missions were flown under instrument flight conditions. With the low-altitude flying, Japanese anti-aircraft fire and interceptor planes brought down many of the bombers, but many bombers were lost from mid-air collisions and mechanical problems, notably from the unproven Wright R-3350 engines. I've read a number of books that covered the B-29 strategic bombing campaign against Japan, but with the author's vivid descriptions of each mission, and the anecdotes about life on the base, the book stands out from many of the detailed but dry histories as one of the best wartime chronicles that I've read.

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