



An Officer in MacArthur's Court. a Memoir of the First Headquarters Commandant for General Douglas MacArthur in Australia.

John F. Day III

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A 39-month Wartime Odyssey through the Southwest Pacific Area. Based on the true diary and oral history of Col. John F. Day Jr.

First Lieutenant John F. Day Jr. was a 30-year-old Reserve Army Officer when he was called to active duty in November 1940. On December 7, 1941, Day found himself aboard a troop ship in the mid-Pacific in route to the Philippine Islands. The USS Republic, a ship in the Pensacola Convoy, was eight-days out of Pearl Harbor sailing to re-enforce Gen. Douglas MacArthur. The Japanese attack altered the voyage and changed Day's life.

This is the story of Day's three-year odyssey to reach Manila. After dodging Japanese bombs and strafing attacks in Java, Day escapes to Melbourne where he arrives two days in advance of Gen. Douglas MacArthur's arrival from Corregidor. As one of few U.S. Army officers in Australia, Day is appointed the first Headquarters Commandant for Gen. MacArthur to support the Allied counter offensive. As a keen observer of people, Day follows the antics of the generals and the personalities of GHQ, while his heart remains firmly with the foot soldiers in the jungle. Day's journey takes him across Australia, New Guinea, and the Philippines. Only the atomic bomb spares him from joining the invasion force for Japan.

The story is told through Day's original diary, letters, and oral history. His narrative is supported by historical research of the wartime events that swirled about him.

There are few 20th century Americans more controversial than General Douglas MacArthur and yet his leadership in the neglected Southwest Pacific theatre of the Second World War remains one of the least studied aspects of the conflict. The publication of Major John F Day Jr.'s fascinating diary and letters is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the inner workings of MacArthur's GHQ, from the unique perspective of a junior officer not enthralled by the "Bataan gang" and with great empathy for the combat troops he'd once been part of before he was elevated to the role of Headquarters Commandant.

The author has added significant contextual information which makes clear what was unfolding in the Southwest Pacific frontlines from Java to the Philippines, at times far from the intense office politics of GHQ in Brisbane. — *Karen Nunan, Curator, MacArthur Museum Brisbane, Brisbane, Australia*

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