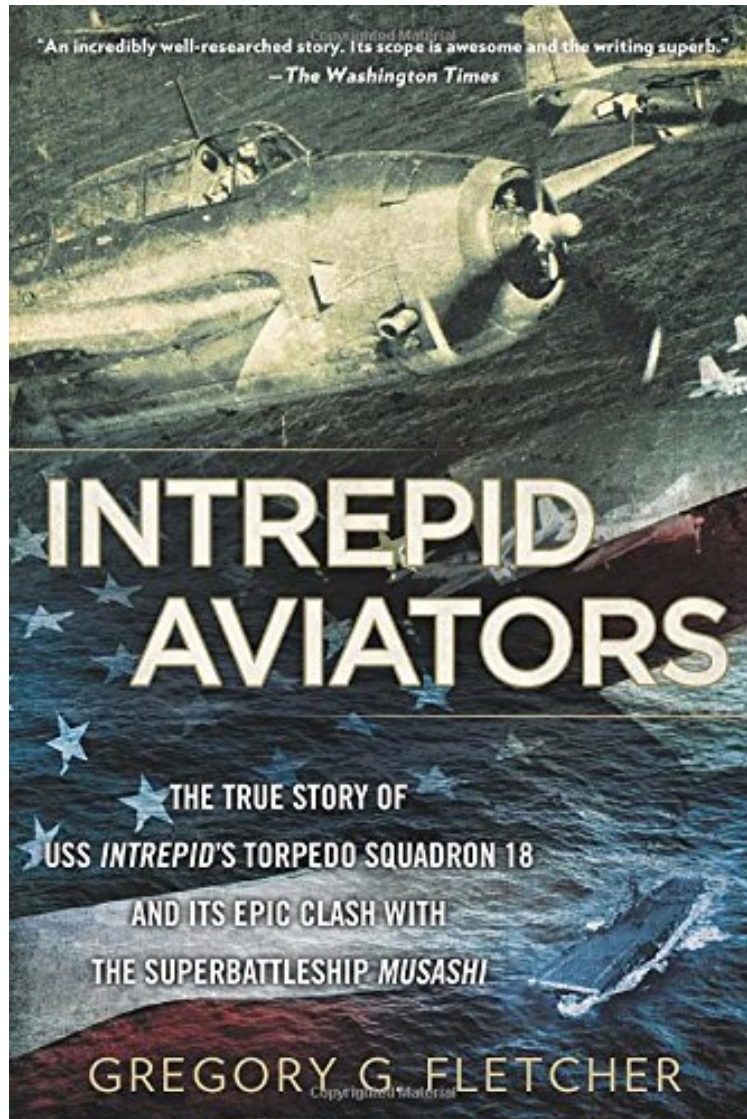


# Intrepid Aviators: The American Flyers Who Sank Japan's Greatest Battleship

Gregory G. Fletcher

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**Gregory G. Fletcher : Intrepid Aviators: The American Flyers Who Sank Japan's Greatest Battleship** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Intrepid Aviators: The American Flyers Who Sank Japan's Greatest Battleship:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Mosquitos -vs- the BehemothBy CustomerAny part of this WW II travelogue would rate 3 1/2 stars... it includes history leading to the WW II battles, technology used by each side, the

geography over which they operated, and people who fought. Yes, each section includes trivia of ship construction, or aircraft features, or the size of anti-aircraft guns, but they set the stage for future events. Flying in combat, young pilots depend upon their commanders, skill, their aircraft, and luck. That is where the individual story begins. Will Fletcher joined the Navy and after training, found himself in Torpedo Squadron 18, assigned to the carrier *Intrepid* (of 36,000 tons displacement). In a campaign to reduce aerial opposition to upcoming invasions, His ship is part of the force that bombs Japanese airfields in the Palaus, then Philippines, and Formosa, surprising enemy planes waiting to strike. Later, before MacArthur's return to the Philippines, they stand guard against the Imperial Japanese Navy's response. Three groups of powerful Japanese ships head for the beachhead to slaughter US troops and sailors. Air Group 18, with Fletcher, attack the center force. In it is *Musashi*, a Battleship of 72,000 tons and armed with 18 in guns. Face-to-face, the *Intrepid* would not survive long, but they never saw each other. In multiple strikes against *Musashi*, different planes drop many bombs, and 10 confirmed torpedoes besides 9 'possibles'. Fletch carried one of the torpedoes. *Musashi* sank that night. However, Fletch had been damaged by *Musashi* and crashed in the water. There follows a chronicle of his survival and joining the guerrillas. We follow him as he shares starvation rations with the natives, dodges Japanese patrols, endures leeches and heat. You will learn a lot about the trials of civilians preyed upon by the greedy Japanese. There is one perspective here- a young patriot who persevered despite frightening odds. If you have already read of these battles in (*Dauntless Helldivers*, *The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors: The Extraordinary World War II Story of the U.S. Navy's Finest Hour*, *Intrepid: The Epic Story of America's Most Legendary Warship*), then skip ahead to read of the experiences of ordinary Filipinos under the occupation. \*4 Stars\* Scholars will like the bibliography, source notes, individuals interviewed, chapter end notes and extensive index. There are good maps and a selection of clear BW photos. \*+1 Star\* This explains the spirit of young men who were not afraid of Nipponese power. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Gripping By Jack Sparacino *Intrepid Aviators* takes the reader deep inside the *Intrepid's* air combat missions with a highly detailed focus on the brave torpedo bombers. Mr. Fletcher practically gives the reader flying lessons with his macro and (more frequently) microscopic descriptions of how the Avenger flew and fought. One quickly comes to identify with and root for the pilots and their crews, whose assignments ranged from challenging to close to impossible. It is easy to feel each casualty personally and to wish it were possible to rewrite history and allow more of these incredible men to return to their families after the war. My one lingering question mark surrounded how the author was able to accumulate the massive amount of mission details and the minute by minute circumstances of his father's crash, rescue, and service with the Filipinos. I saw no mention of a diary or the multiple recountings of his experiences that would seem necessary to capture his experiences so vividly. In any case, the book reads very well and lays out a fascinating piece of U.S. naval history. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Wasn't exactly what i was expecting, left wanting more on the sinking of the battleship! By Jonathan Mattson I hope I'm not perceived as a harsh grader, but I didn't hate the book but at the same time I didn't love the book either. I think he does a good job of being able to tell the story with the people involved. He makes you feel connected to them which is always a good thing. I understood this wasn't going to a dry operational history of a carrier's air group, but at the same time I guess I was hoping for a little more coverage of the actual attacks and sinking of the battleship. It seemed to me he did a wonderful job of setting the stage for the actual attacks on the battleship, but once it got time for the actual attacks and sinking of the battleship it seems that things got glossed over quickly in my opinion. If you want details regarding carriers operations during the battle of Leyte Gulf, this is a fine book. If you are reading more to see how they sank the *Musashi* during the battle of Leyte Gulf, you will be like me and left wanting more.

The true story of the World War II Pacific naval battle that pitted the USS *Intrepid's* naval aviators against Japan's superbattleship *Musashi* during the Battle of Leyte Gulf. October 24, 1944: As World War II raged, six young American bombers from Torpedo Squadron 18 were sent on a search-and-destroy mission in the Sibuyan Sea. Their target: the superbattleship *Musashi*, the pride of the Imperial Japanese Navy. The pilots were tasked with preventing the immense enemy warship from inflicting damage on American supply ships. Little did these men know that they had embarked on the opening round of history's greatest—and last—epic naval battle. Two bomber crews launched in the first wave of attackers were shot out of the sky. Only pilot Will Fletcher survived the crash landing. Adrift at sea, Will made his way to land and escaped into the jungles of the Philippines, where he eluded capture by the Japanese with the help of Filipino guerrillas, whose ranks he joined to fight against their common enemy. *Intrepid Aviators* is the thrilling true story of these brave bomber pilots, their daring duel with the *Musashi*, and Will Fletcher's struggle to survive as a guerrilla soldier. The sinking of *Musashi* inflicted a crucial blow in the Battle of Leyte Gulf and marked the first time in history that aviators sank a Japanese battleship on the high seas.

“An incredibly well-researched story. Its scope is awesome and the writing superb.”—The Washington Times “*Intrepid Aviators* stands out from more standard historical treatments of World War II...this book is an impressive production.”—Knoxville News Sentinel “The author is to be congratulated for his effective introduction to naval warfare and the men who were doing the fighting. For anyone who wonders why Navy pilots were so good in the last

half of the war, this book provides a detailed answer...a must read.”—St. Joseph News-Press “A thrilling, deeply moving literary memorial to the American flyboys whose immense sacrifice and courage really did change the world.”—Alex Kershaw, New York Times bestselling author of *The Longest Winter* “A rare look at a successful but little appreciated unit in the Pacific War...Fletcher portrays the men of Torpedo 18 as recognizable individuals whom the reader comes to know, to admire—and, too often, to mourn.”—Barrett Tillman, author of *Clash of the Carriers*  
**About the Author** Gregory G. Fletcher served as a naval aviator from 1969 to 1974, and is now a practicing attorney. He is the son of USS *Intrepid* pilot Will Fletcher, who was awarded a Navy Cross of heroism for his actions in World War II.