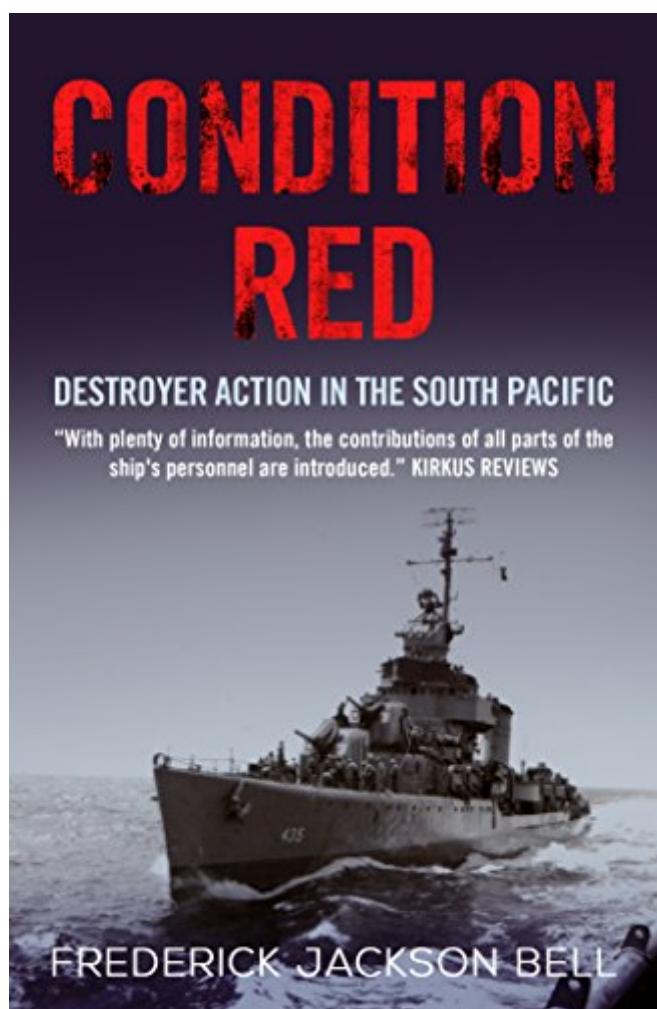


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# Condition Red: Destroyer Action In The South Pacific



## Synopsis

As we passed Hutchinson Reef the loud-speaker in the pilot house blared forth with "Condition Red" over Guadalcanal. Condition Red. Many planes. • What was it like to be trapped upon a ship and constantly under threat of attack from Japanese forces? Frederick J. Bell, commander of the USS Grayson during World War Two, dramatically exposes the mental and physical strain that his crew and ship underwent through the course of the first few years of conflict. No stone is left unturned in Bell's account, as he explains how he and his crew survived strafing by Japanese planes, navigated the treacherous waters of the South Pacific, assisted fellow ships in peril and overcame the tedious moments of boredom. Admiral Bell takes the reader to the heart of the action which he witnessed first-hand and explains the vital role that destroyers played in the Pacific War. They fulfilled a variety of roles, from escorting convoys and guarding Task Forces, to bombing enemy shorelines and providing much needed supplies to the army and marines fighting on the islands. There are few accounts that better document naval warfare during the Second World War. "Tales of himself and the men, of the function of destroyers, alone and in group action, of early difficulties of poor charting, of successive South Pacific engagements, of periods without sleep, of shore landings, of "coconut shoots" and many a ding dong with the enemy." • Kirkus Reviews

The valor that Bell demonstrated during the battle of Ontong Java in August 1942 earned him the Medal of Honor, and later during USS Grayson's operations at Guadalcanal in February 1943 he received a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. His citation reads: "When his ship was subjected to repeated bombing and strafing attacks by enemy dive bombers at very close range, Commander Bell ... directed the fire of his battery with outstanding efficiency, destroying at least two Japanese dive bombers and damaging others. Immediately following the engagement and during the night, he conducted a search for lost planes, taking his ship into enemy waters and away from the protection of friendly forces. ... He established the identity of lost aircraft and, by flashing messages, directed our planes safely to the carriers." After the war Bell became a business executive and later at the age of 68 he became an Episcopal priest. His books *Room to Swing a Cat*, a history of the early American navy, and *Condition Red* were published in 1938 and 1943 respectively. He died at the age of 91 in Miami in 1994.

## Book Information

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## **Customer Reviews**

It is one of those books that you wish were at least twice as long. I have long respected the memory of the Marines on Guadalcanal. Now, I have an equal admiration for the men of the U.S. Navy - especially the destroyer crews - who lived and died alongside the equally gallant men who lived and died on that deadly jungle island as well as on its surrounding seas. Great read.

A nice quick reading naval WWII war stories with plenty of personal details and stories to flesh out the characters in the short story. Not too short of a story, as many war novels can be. At times, hard to find a stopping point to put it down a bit to sleep!

The author writes like he is talking to you over a relaxing drink at the restaurant. He is telling his story about war and the experiences that many people today will never know or understand.

Very good book that was written in the day, Though 60 or so years later it was still a fresh outlook. I had no idea of the hardships endured,

Really felt like I understood life on a destroyer. Glad I missed the real deal - I am not as brave as the guys who manned that ship. Wow!

Realistic writing. Meant a lot to me since my dad was aboard the Uss Holland. He talked a lot about the great time he had in z Australia

Author was very up beat and gave vivid descriptions of the wartime actions of the USS Grayson. Hr had nothing but praise for his crew. A good description of everyday life aboard a destroyer.

Good description at times about sea warfare aboard a navy destroyer. Unfortunately, nobody assisted this navy officer in organizing his accounts into a well-flowing story. Not a bad account, but could have been far better with a strong editor with story development skills.

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