

Coastwatcher

By David Hill

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Blurb:

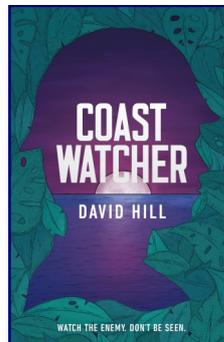
A tense, exciting war adventure inspired by the coastwatchers of Operation Pacific, from award-winning author David Hill.

'It's not going to be a cushy job, young Benson. You're on your own. Japs will be looking for you. Far as they're concerned, you're spies. And when a spy gets captured, remember . . .'

It's 1943, and 19-year-old radio operator Frank Benson is shipped out to an enemy-occupied island in the Solomons with two other soldiers. Their mission is to spy on the Japanese.

In dense jungle they meet a Solomon Islander who says he has information that will shatter Japanese defences. But he could be working for the enemy. What if it's a trap to get them killed?

No training could have prepared Frank for this decision. Their lives - and Operation Pacific - depend on his next move.



Lamont Review:

New Zealand author David Hill has written a terrific novel inspired by the coast watchers of Operation Pacific, that looks at the allies trying to overcome the Japanese on the Solomon Islands in 1943 during WWII.

Frank, who has recovered from Tuberculosis, has faked a clean bill of health to enlist in New Zealand army as a wireless operator.

He is sent on a mission with his mate Wally and experienced Aussie soldier Les, to become a coast watcher. This essentially means to bunker down in potentially enemy territory and observe the coming and going of battle enemy ships and planes.

They were discovered by A'ata, a local, who wants them to visit his village and meet his elders. Once there, they discover a recently parachute dropped enemy radio and secret code books. Frank can't believe their luck, as this could change the war in their favour.

But with the Japanese desperately searching for it, what can they do to get it back to their commanders?

With some fighting, the story tackles the reality of war as well as camaraderie, mateship, and empathy - even with the enemy - this is a terrific novel that is suitable for all 11 - 14 year olds.

Reviewed by Rob