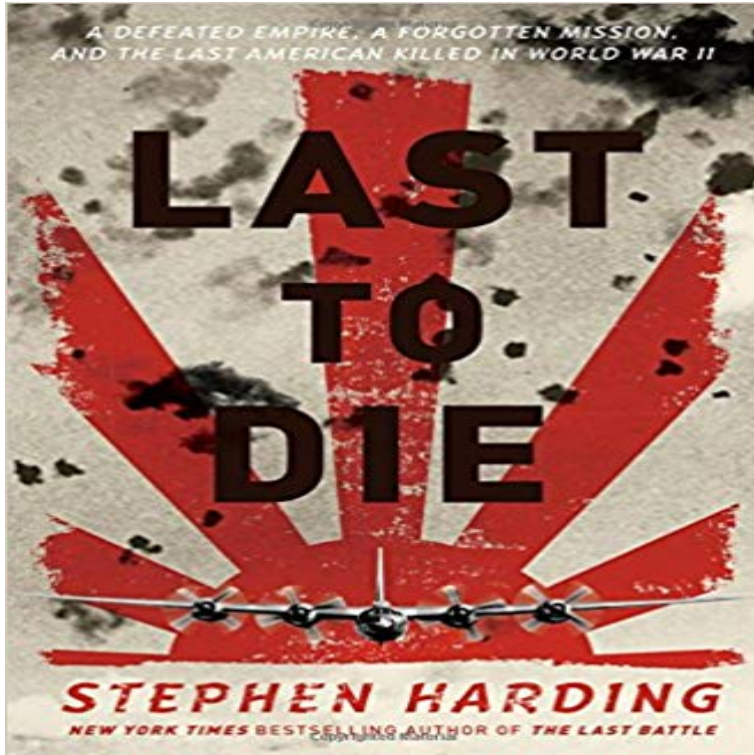


Last to Die: A Defeated Empire, a Forgotten Mission, and the Last American Killed in World War II



On August 18, 1945 three days after Japan announced it would cease hostilities and surrender U.S. Army Air Forces Sergeant Anthony J. Marchione bled to death in the clear, bright sky above Tokyo. Just six days after his twentieth birthday, Tony Marchione died like so many before him in World War II quietly, cradled in the arms of a buddy who was powerless to prevent his death. Though heartbreaking for his family, Marchione's death would have been no more notable than any other had he not had the dubious distinction of being the last American killed in World War II combat. An aerial gunner who had already survived several combat missions, Marchione's death was the tragic culmination of an intertwined series of events. The plane that carried him that day was a trouble-plagued American heavy bomber known as the B-32 Dominator, which would prove a failed competitor to the famed B-29 Superfortress. And on the ground below, a palace revolt was brewing and a small number of die-hard Japanese fighter pilots decided to fight on, refusing to accept defeat. Based on official American and Japanese histories, personal memoirs, and the author's exclusive interviews with many of the story's key participants, *Last to Die* is a rousing tale of air combat, bravery, cowardice, hubris, and determination, all set during the turbulent and confusing final days of World War II.

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