



*The loss of A16-172. Flt Lt Simon "Sim" Fraser delivered A16-172 from Richmond to Daly Waters on 1st April 1942 and flew it on to Darwin the next day. He is seen here at the controls in a photo dated 18th August 1942. Four weeks later A16-172 was lost to enemy action in a shipping attack at Saumlaki, the chief town in the Tanimbar Islands, about 300 miles north of Darwin. Seen to crash into the sea in flames, post-war enquiries ascertained that a light anti-aircraft gun situated on the long jetty (seen in the second photo, taken during 1943) was most likely responsible. (A16-172 courtesy AWM, ID number 13076 and Saumlaki RAAF Official photo, author's collection)*

warning came from the turret gunner. The Hudson turned from five o'clock to [the] 11 o'clock position. [The] turret gunner held off the attack, whilst [the] side gunner warned of an approaching attack from [the] eight o'clock position. The Hudson then reached cloud cover, dived out of [the] cloud cover on [the] same course (north) – both Zekes still in same position. Evasive tactics [were used] until [the] next cloud [was] reached, stall turned out of [the] cloud in [a] southerly direction, then turned sharp east and made for cloud cover over Wetar Island. Approached this cover with [the] two Zekes in pursuit but they had fallen behind.

Entered cloud cover, stall turn to north and then encountered a third Zeke attacking forward above. Dived back into cloud, came out [the] other side going south and observed a fourth Zeke on starboard beam. Tunnel and side gunners called position of main attacks, using intercommunication, for the next 20 minutes.

Tactics used to evade attacks were to swing aircraft away from [the] position where attack was pending so that [the] turret gunner was given full opportunity to bring guns to bear, forcing the enemy to attack from the blind spot dead astern. Port turret gun went u/s [unserviceable] after first 15 rounds – breech lock broken. Evasive tactics continued, consisted of diving out of cloud, pulling up into nearest cloud cover, entering it at speed [of] 90 knots, pulling power completely off and stall turning to either reciprocal course.

Stall turning seemed to confuse Zekes as they split up, one on each side and one above on entering cloud. By varying these turns we would



captained by PO Ralph James, saw two Zeros, by then given the code name 'Zeke', taking off from the Dilli aerodrome. An official report, later given prominence for its explanation of enemy tactics and the Hudson crew's excellent response, explained:

*These two Zekes attacked from below, starboard and port, astern. [The] first attack was from one at [the] five o'clock position below – the*