

Introduction

This volume is the third in the *Pacific Profiles* series, and the first to illustrate Allied aircraft as opposed to Japanese ones. *Volume Three* portrays, as accurately as possible, the colours and unit markings of Douglas A-20 bombers as they operated throughout Australia and New Guinea during 1942-1944.

This is an ambitious objective, as adequate reference material has impeded past efforts. Previous authors have concluded colours from monochrome images, with varying degrees of accuracy and success. The original motivation for this volume can be traced back to 1976 when I was led to an intact A-20G in the jungle near Amaimon village behind Madang. I returned to the site in 1984 to assist with the salvage of the aircraft (now currently displayed at the Aviation Heritage Centre, RAAF Amberley, Queensland). Curiosity about the aircraft's history led me to meeting its pilot, Charles Davidson, in the US in 1985 and collecting photos from its parent unit the 312th Bombardment Group (Light).

In the many years since, my collection has expanded to include many A-20 photos from other USAAF Fifth Air Force units. Choosing which particular bombers to profile for this volume was challenging, and examples were chosen to give a representative sample of markings across the spectrum. The profiles focus on USAAF A-20A and -G models which served in the South West Pacific, plus also the single RAAF unit which operated the type, No. 22 Squadron.

The opportunity to accurately recreate the curious pageantry of the A-20 era was facilitated via digital technology. Techniques include the extraction of calligraphy from photos which can be superimposed on 3D models and recreated with photorealistic lighting systems. The result is the most accurate profiles published to date of these aircraft. Artwork has been referenced from extensive photography including from post-war wreck sites. Other sources include diary entries, colour movies, official histories and correspondence from pilots and crew chiefs.

A frustration is that most of the relevant A-20 units failed to record their markings, and none of their nose art. This detail is deficient to the extent that it is rare to find even assigned tail letters recorded against serial numbers, save in the occasional maintenance log. A rare gift is the records of the 675th BS which via a meticulous operations clerk recorded this detail assiduously for every mission.

In total A-20s served with twelve USAAF squadrons in New Guinea, plus one RAAF unit, No. 22 Squadron. Others later served with the Combat Replacement Training Center, while a few older airframes were stripped of armament and used as transports.

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