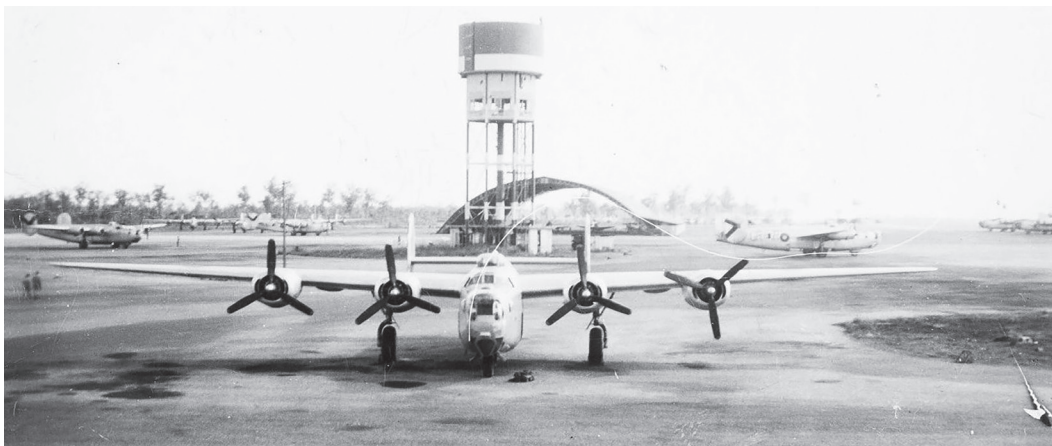


strafed and left burning fiercely. On 10 August he flew on a navigational exercise along the route Darwin-Wyndham-Truscott-Perron Island-Cape Fourcroy and back to Darwin, while on the 15 August (Victory over Japan Day) he flew on a practice bombing flight in A72-90.

While the Japanese had enjoyed victory after victory in the early stages of the war, the effectiveness of the Liberators in the NWA was one of continued harassment, strikes on installations, armed reconnaissance and shipping sweeps. This had denied the Japanese the freedom to move and build up or supply their depleted forces. In his work *Zero*, Masatake Okumiya wrote that:

With the Liberators thundering constantly over our ships, airfields and staging areas, the situation was reversed. We were in the position of the traditional enemy ... and handicapped by the same limitations we had always regarded as the opponent's weakness ... we were compelled to discard plans long prepared and resort to the application of mass strength in battle.

It was a fitting summary as the war drew to a close.



*An RAAF Liberator on the apron at RAAF Darwin, circa 1945, with many others in the background. The iconic water tower doubled as a control tower and survived the bombing of the base in 1942. Today it is preserved at the Darwin Aviation Museum. (NT Library via Bob Livingstone)*



*No. 23 Squadron Liberators overfly Darwin township, circa 1945. A line of "Black Cats" can be seen moored in the harbour, centre left. (Bob Livingstone)*