

Introduction

Why another book about RAAF Bostons? Several have been written, complemented by *Wings of Destiny*, an excellent 2008 biography about No. 22 Squadron commander Charles Learmonth. However, as an aficionado of the Douglas Boston/A-20, it was necessary to correct perpetrated errors about the type's markings, details of its RAAF service and its contribution to the SWPA air war.

I thought it imperative to define the Japanese side of the equation directly from unit orders and operational logs of those affected. This gives a better understanding of the type of targets attacked by the Bostons and also which fighters defended these targets.

Past errors about RAAF Bostons extend to the markings of the DB-7A in which Victoria Cross recipient Bill Newton was shot down. Other markings are consistently misrepresented, including the type's early markings in Australia. The restored Boston A28-8 DU-J on display at RAAF Museum Point Cook has been restored in colours wide of the mark, as explained in the Technical Section. To date, Australian Illustrator Juanita Franzi is the only artist to create well-researched and accurate RAAF Boston profiles. This volume also illustrates No. 22 Squadron's later A-20As, A-20Cs and A-20Gs with explanations of their USAAF provenance and associated markings eccentricities.

My approach has been to use an aviator's focus on the Boston itself, and its service with No. 22 Squadron, the only RAAF unit to operate the type. The type's RAAF service has opaque roots in a 1930s Dutch apothegm in that penny-pinching for the defence of the Netherlands East Indies had led to a millionaire defending his property with a slingshot. The first six Bostons to arrive in the theatre were unloaded at Java with Dutch markings and stenciled "Kon. Marine" representing the Royal Dutch Navy (*Koninklijke Marine*). Following the surrender of the NEI in March 1942, the unanticipated arrival in Australia of undelivered Dutch Bostons presented the RAAF with a problem, namely what to do with them?

There is more in the fascinating history of the Battle of the Bismarck Sea than contained in disappointing English-language works to date. For a start, who would believe at one stage during the battle that No. 22 Squadron's Bostons and the IJN were both given an identical task: to sink the destroyer *Tokitsukaze*. The numerous misadventures of this destroyer led to an exemplar outburst of Japanese army/navy politics whereby the commander of the 18th Army, Lieutenant General Adachi Hatazo, argued unsuccessfully with his rescuer Lieutenant Commander Yamazaki Nitaro to take his men to Finschhafen. Given the belligerent attitude of roaming Allied aviators at the time including the RAAF Boston crews, Yamazaki's refusal might well have spared Adachi's life and that of his men. Events like this play directly into histories such as this, as you will read.

Every military unit is entitled to a few myths, as much a natural outcome of war as other predictabilities. The colloquial claim that the Japanese Salamaua garrison nicknamed pilot Bill Newton "Blue Cap" or "Blue Hat" reflects collegiate high regard for Newton. The Japanese did no such thing; the fable has as much validity to similar claims such as the Japanese naming the