

The untold story of the attacks on northwest Australia in 1942

Few Australians would be aware that the second deadliest air attack on Australia occurred in the northwest at Broome on 3 March 1942. That day a squadron of Zeros flew a daring and ultra-long range mission from Timor – the longest fighter mission ever flown. The timing was perfect – several flying boats packed full of evacuees had just landed. Over 80 people were killed, many of them Dutch women and children, and 22 large aircraft were destroyed.

Against the background of the desperate eleventh hour aerial evacuation of Java, *Zero Hour in Broome* gives a full account of this deadly attack. Many of these events have not been analysed since the Australian Official History of World War II. Following intensive research, the book debunks myths and inaccuracies propagated by the Official History:

- Why does the Official History massively over-state the amount of evacuees moving through Broome?
- The disaster at Broome occurred largely because of lack of control over military flying boats. Did the attitude of Qantas contribute to this outcome?
- The United States Navy set up a flying boat base at Exmouth Gulf and its ex-Java flying boats arrived safely. Why were the other flying boats not directed there?
- Why was nobody in command of the local defence forces at Broome during the attack?
- Despite prompting, the General of Western Command failed to exercise initiative at this critical time. Why is this part of his record missing from his Official History biography?
- On 1 March the USAAF pleaded with the RAAF for extra aircraft to assist with the airlift, but none were available. Why were 100 aircraft at Geraldton ignored?
- What was the successful Japanese strategy that denied the use of the northwest airbases? For the first time since the Official History, all of the raids against WA in 1942 are explained.

Zero Hour in Broome contains a fully illustrated aviation history section, explaining the diverse types' histories and movements and involvement in the airlift operations. Presented in a unique and highly readable format, *Zero Hour in Broome* is supported by detailed appendices.

Dr Tom Lewis OAM is the award-winning author of several works detailing the military history of northern Australia. Through careers as a naval officer, teacher, editor and divemaster, he has combined scholarly research and practical exploration to uncover new facets of the country's turbulent past. In 2009 Dr Lewis was appointed as Director of the Darwin Military Museum.

Peter Ingman, the grandson of an original Gallipoli Anzac, lives in Adelaide, South Australia. With a background as a business executive, Peter has had a life long interest in military history and historical aviation in particular. Research and compiling aircraft history sections for *Zero Hour in Broome* has taken him to previously undiscovered sources across Australia.

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