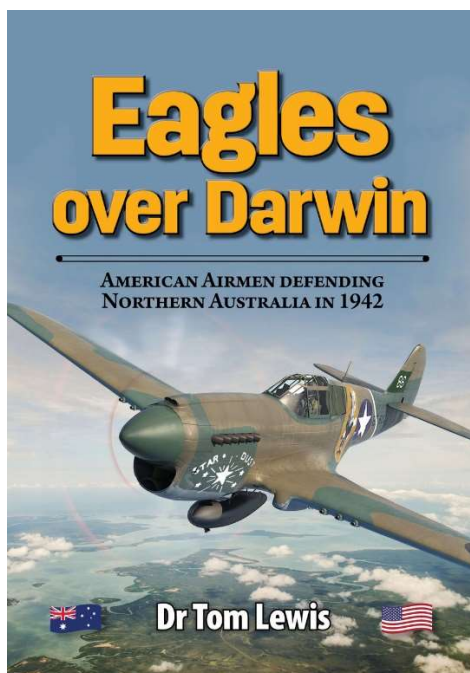


NEW RELEASE - FEBRUARY 2021



Eagles over Darwin

American Airmen defending Northern Australia in 1942

Avonmore Books

Dr Tom Lewis; softcover; 250 x 176mm; 108 pages; full colour throughout, fully illustrated; 2021. ISBN: 978-0-6486659-8-4 RRP \$34.95

In 1942 the air defence of the northern Australian frontier town of Darwin was operated by airmen from the United States.

That year was very nearly the end of Australia as a country. To those men the present nation owes a debt.

A massive Japanese attack on Darwin on 19 February had left the town and its air base in ruins. An understrength squadron of American P-40s had fought a gallant defence but was all but wiped out.

Northern Australia was now at the mercy of Imperial Japanese Navy Betty bombers and Zero fighters whose crews were both skilled and experienced. However, help was on the way. The 49th Fighter Group was the first such group to be sent from the US after the start of the Pacific War. Its destination was Darwin.

From modest beginnings on make-shift airstrips, the 49th FG entered combat with its feared Japanese adversaries. Its P-40s were poor interceptors but were rugged, reliable and well-armed.

Over several months the 49th FG pilots fought a brave and innovative campaign against a stronger enemy that did much to safeguard Australia in its darkest hour. Today lonely and long forgotten airfields still bear the name of American pilots who made the ultimate sacrifice.

This is their story.

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