

Doomed at the Start: American Pursuit Pilots in the Philippines, 1941-1942 (Texas a&M University Military History Series)



During the first three days of the Japanese assault on American Pacific bases in December of 1941, the 24th Pursuit Group, the only unit of interceptor aircraft in the Philippine Islands, was almost destroyed as an effective force. Yet the groups pilots, doomed from the start by their limited training, an inadequate air warning system, and lack of familiarity with the few flyable pursuit aircraft they had left, fought on against immensely superior number of Japanese army and navy fighters. . . . bold drama, with almost novel-like narration. This is good history. . . . Daniel R. Mortensen, Office of Air Force History . . . an engrossing and minutely detailed account based on a variety of US and Japanese government and military records and on personal interviews with the surviving pilots. Choice . . . an admirably detailed history . . . the work will [be of] interest to both aviation buffs and students of WWII. Publishers Weekly Ignoring the point of view of the top brass, Bartschs book becomes a triumph of human interest rather than another statistical account. . . . A winning account of a losing campaign defended by courage and honor. Journal of Military History . . . as much a compelling human drama as an objective and detailed unit history. . . . a prodigious achievement in unit history research that does overdue justice to the memory of a tragic group of airmen who did the best they could with what they had under extraordinary circumstances and against thoroughly daunting adversity. Military History

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