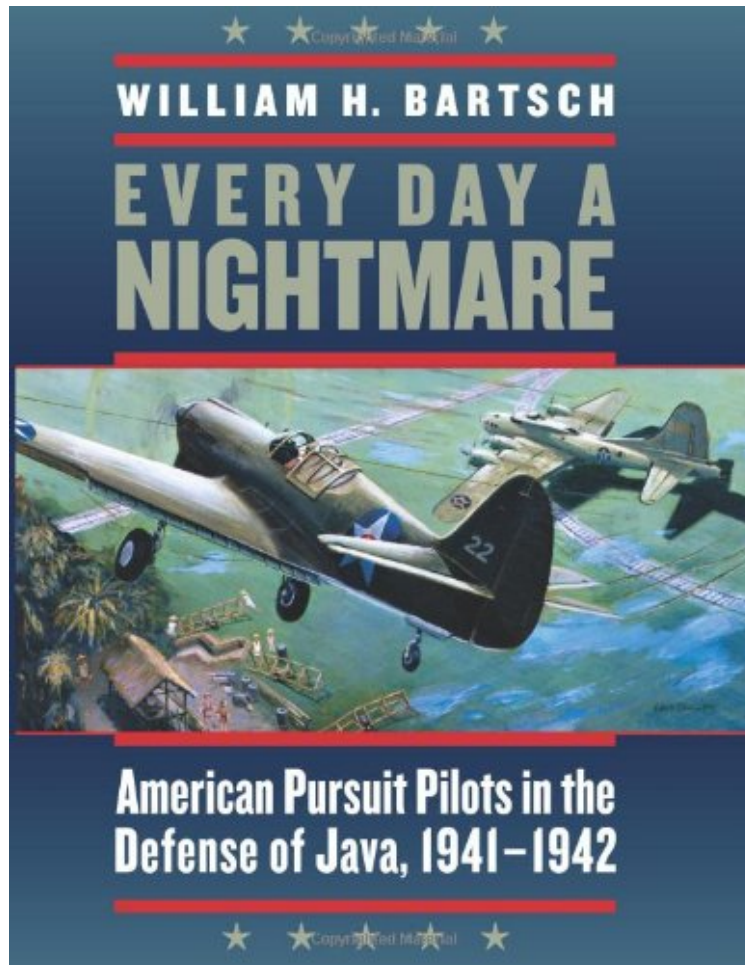


[Download pdf] Every Day a Nightmare: American Pursuit Pilots in the Defense of Java, 1941-1942
(Williams-Ford Texas AM University Military History Series)

Every Day a Nightmare: American Pursuit Pilots in the Defense of Java, 1941-1942 (Williams-Ford Texas AM University Military History Series)

William H. Bartsch

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William H. Bartsch : Every Day a Nightmare: American Pursuit Pilots in the Defense of Java, 1941-1942 (Williams-Ford Texas AM University Military History Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Every Day a Nightmare: American Pursuit Pilots in the Defense of Java, 1941-1942 (Williams-Ford Texas AM University Military History Series):

38 of 38 people found the following review helpful. marvelous unit historyBy David LatanéIt's hard to imagine a better small-unit history from WWII than _Every Day a Nightmare._ Bartsch begins with a story which had never been accurately related: that of the inexperienced American pilots of the 17th-Pursuit squadron who attempted to stem

the Japanese attack on the Dutch East Indies, flying out of a hidden airfield at Ngora on Java, prepared by the Dutch. In a short personal postscript, Bartsch tells of visiting the remains of the airfield in 1983. "The author," he writes, "now had physical proof that it was true that a small group of valiant American pursuit pilots had operated from a secret airfield cut out of a cane field in the jungle of Eastern Java for a fleeting month early in World War II. With that realization, the author vowed to tell their story as completely as possible from whatever information he could obtain from surviving participants and the families of the deceased" (345). Bartsch's subsequent research was meticulous, and his method scholarly. He rightly distrusted the printed and press reports from those dark early days, and sought instead to turn up every possible scrap of first hand and contemporary evidence--his own interviews, plus hundreds of other unpublished sources diaries, letters, logbooks, US records, Japanese records--to reconstruct the story of these airmen, without the varnish. He has told their story plainly and well--and truthfully. After Pearl Harbor, air reinforcements were put on ship to the Philippines, but most were diverted to Australia, with the hope that they could be ferried Manila another way. From the start, it all went wrong. The crated P-40s were assembled in a rush, sometimes by the pilots themselves, and many of the pilots had practically no experience, having just graduated from flight school. Accidents happened--again and again. Their original destination was changed--to defend the oilfields in the Dutch East Indies, and Northern Australia. Bartsch skillfully interweaves the story of the men from their arrival in Brisbane just before Christmas until the Japanese attack on the evacuees from Java at Broome, Australia on 3 March. In between these dates 110 of the 129 pursuit ships assigned to the squadrons were put out of action, one way or another, and 45 of the 124 pilots were killed. The appendices give the complete listings, including enlisted men, with their flight classes and fates, and the endnotes are fascinating too, supply much additional information. I am looking forward now to reading his earlier book on the pursuit pilots defending the Philippines, and recommend this one most highly not only to anyone with a special interest in this Pacific air war, but to those interested in military history in general. It's done right.

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Another Harrowing Tale From This Expert Author
By Tommy Dee
First there was *Doomed At The Start*, then there was *December 8, 1941*, now we have *Every Day A Nightmare*. Bartsch's third history is about a group of P-40 pilots and their planes that made it to Australia too late to participate in the defense of the Philippines. They crashed their planes across Australia and ended up crashing more planes in Java. They destroyed about 150 P-40s and gained 4 victories for their trouble. This book, among others, clearly illustrates that almost total lack of training, not inferior equipment, was the main reason the U.S. fared so poorly in the early part of the war. When a flight of twelve planes ends up crash landing twelve for twelve, you know something was missing in the training department! I can't think of any category in which these U.S. personnel were ready to face the Japanese. You can hardly read this book, because you are shaking your head too much! These three books are must-reads. First read *Doomed...*, then *December...*, then *Every Day*. But buy a neck brace first!

10 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Essential reading for all who study WWII in the Pacific
By Peter motyka
Although the Southwest Pacific campaign ended in military disaster for the allies, the accomplishments of these brave men cannot be overlooked. All of the men who fought for ABDA have one thing in common: they resisted the Oriental Blitzkrieg as best they could, fighting with what they had for as long as they could until they could fight no more. During these difficult months, the allies learned the hard way that shoestring operations and "on the job training" of pilots and ground crews was not the way to fight a winning campaign. In the last chapter Mr. Bartsch begs the question as to why the USAAF decided to send green pilots and crews to SWPAC when more experienced men were available stateside. The conclusion that I draw from this is that the brass in Washington considered this campaign to be a lost long before 12/7/41. I thoroughly enjoyed this well researched and well written book.

In December 1941, the War Department sent two transports and a freighter carrying 103 P-40 fighters and their pilots to the Philippines to bolster Gen. Douglas MacArthur's Far East Air Force. They were then diverted to Australia, with new orders to ferry the P-40s to the Philippines from Australia through the Dutch East Indies. But on the same day as the second transport reached its destination on January 12, 1942, the first of the key refueling stops in the East Indies fell to rapidly advancing Japanese forces, resulting in a break in their ferry route and another change in their orders.

"One reviewer called Mr. Bartsch's earlier book 'an impressive labor of love.' That phrase applies equally well to the present *Every Day A Nightmare*, a work that will probably stand as the definitive account of a significant but forgotten episode of the Pacific War." - Ronald H. Spector, George Washington University, *The Journal of Military History*