

# **The Question of Hajime**

*By*

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*20 000 Word Fourth Year History Thesis  
4 November 1995*

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***“Is this it, then, the truth of the case, that ultimate nugget of certainty that historians once imagined they would find if only they looked hard and long enough in the archives?”***

**Simon Schama, Dead Certainties.**

***“History must strive to be an art before it can pretend to be a science.”***

**J.H. Plumb, The Death of the Past.**

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#### ***Acknowledgments***

Firstly I would like to thank Associate Professor Beverley Kingston, whose support of and belief in academic freedom made this thesis possible. Dr. David Potts, who directed me in the use of the evocative style of writing. Dr. Dilip Basu of The University of California, Santa Cruz, who taught me that the small person in history can reveal something much bigger. Michael O'Sullivan of the Australian War Memorial, who helped me with the task of using the Memorial's vast collection (especially in relation to the capture of *Hajime Toyashima*). Llewellyn Hughes of Melbourne University whose knowledge of Japanese was helpful in searching for Japanese language articles (and by phoning The Centre for Military History in Japan). David Wilson of The RAAF Historical Section who helped with the details relating to the bombing of Darwin and by directing me to secondary articles written about *Hajime*. John Haslett of The Northern Territory Aviation Historical Society who first gave me the outline of the story of *Hajime*. And Les Powell whose stories and eyewitness accounts were invaluable. I would also like to thank Simon Lancaster of The Law Book Company who

helped in proof-reading this thesis, and Sam Crupi who kindly lent me his computer.

### ***Synopsis***

What follows is a story told using the oldest form of history writing. It is a story of *Hajime Toyashima*, Australia's first prisoner of war. *Hajime* was involved in the bombing of Darwin and is said to have played a major role in the Cowra breakout. Both these events are important incidents in twentieth century Australian history. The telling of this story conduces a certain importance upon those who tell it and it is this that I bring into question. The purposes of this story beyond its substantial entertainment value, how I researched it, and how it has been constructed by others are, on one level, the questions that I address.

From an historiographical perspective, narrative history is not held in very high esteem in the academy. I attempt to explain how this has come about and why this mode is as legitimate or even more legitimate than scientific empiricism. I not only put this mode in its historical perspective in the prologue, but also address some of the debate surrounding it in the epilogue. On this level the epistemological advantages should become self-evident after the reading of the story. The historiographical questions, the practical questions of *Hajime Toyashima*, and the questioning of historical truths are the parameters of this study. Thus the title, *The Question of Hajime*.

### **Prologue: The Use Of Evocative Narrative.**

There are many advantages in the self-conscious use of "evocative narrative" to convey historical meaning. There are the advantages of entertainment and broad accessibility over narrow specialisation

and analytical rigidity. There are the advantages of visualisation and dramatic re-enactment over the often reductive and prosaic nature of analysis. By gaining a sense of sharing in the events that the narrator is trying to describe, the reader can bring to those events much more individual interpretation, analysis is more conclusive and controls and directs the reader to absolutes that often deny the tangential and somewhat chaotic nature of the fabric of human history.

I have chosen to use a form of story telling to tell the story of *Hajime Toyashima* because, quite simply, it is a wonderful story. To reduce it to lofty academic prose would be to take something away. It would be like building an intellectual parking lot over a site of historic significance. It would deny the voice of the characters that made that history and impose upon them the sterility that is often associated with the modern academy. This may strike the reader as story rather than history, but it *is* history: well researched, synthesised and conveyed. This story represents a deliberate turning away from analytical history and is an unabashed revival of 'old-fashioned' nineteenth century narrative. It uses many fictional devices, but it is not fiction. It is a story that is constricted by documentary evidence.

There was once a time when storytellers were accepted within the academy. In the third quarter of the nineteenth century however, the free companionship between literature and history was deemed, by newly founded university departments, to be fundamentally un-serious. The storytellers were shoved aside by scientists intent on reconstructing from fragments and clues what they insisted would be an empirical, verifiable, objectively grounded version of an event; its causes and consequences precisely

delineated. Storytellers not only lost ground, they became aggressively despised.<sup>1</sup>

The simplest forms of historical narrative appeared in and around Europe in cultures that had a simplistic, linear view of time. A developed theory of historiography did not exist so the chronicle and annuals became the means of recording what were deemed important historical characters and events.<sup>2</sup> Books such as *The Old Testament of The Bible* and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* are examples.<sup>3</sup>

More sophisticated forms of narrative history appeared over time, such as the plot in the ancient epics. The ancient epic recorded through a simple linear story the life of a hero or significant historical figure. *Beowulf*, written in 500AD, had a simple, linear plot: the sequential chronicle of the deeds of a hero. The simple linear plot of the ancient epic was supplanted by the multifoliate plot of the romance; such as in the Arthurian Romance *Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight*.

Plot is the dynamic and sequential element in narrative history. The importance of plot in narrative history is that it forms part of the story. In so far as character or any other element of the narrative becomes dynamic, it is part of the plot. Story, language, plot, and character are the elements that give narrative history its evocative power.<sup>4</sup>

When history became highly professional and highly scholarly, the audience changed from a popular, to a narrowly specialised one. In

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<sup>1</sup> Simon Schama, "No Future for History Without its Stories" in The Sydney Morning Herald, 18th November, 1991, p13.

<sup>2</sup> G.R. Elton, The Practice of History, Sydney, Sydney University Press, 1967, p127

<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey of Monmouth, History of the Kings of Britain, (Translated by Sebastian Evans, Dent 1963)

<sup>4</sup> Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979, p208

the ancient world, a general audience was the only one available, so all historical narratives had to be artful.<sup>5</sup> The Historian who hopes to reach an audience beyond his or her fellow professional is to, some extent, artistically minded.<sup>6</sup>

Narrative history is artful because it can evoke emotional responses and is thus more in touch with everyday life. Through language, plot, and character, an event can be critically enacted in a far more skilful fashion than with the singular use of analysis.<sup>7</sup> The attempt to analyse and form models immediately removes many of the ambiguities that constitute what it is to be human. Narrative allows controlling perceptions, but without the artificial exactness of science. It is fundamentally less conclusive and does not as readily control the reader's understanding of the past. The reader can get a sense of being there as a reader of history but not as a controlling actor. The events do not have to be excessively analysed. The connections are left open; how the narrative historian loosely connects and directs the descriptions of events is a creative process, not a scientific one.

Analytic history appears as a presentation of neat and self-contained little blocks. No one could possibly assemble analysis into one continuous and useful narrative. History is a multi-layered fabric of cause and effect, or, to use a metaphor like a tree with many branches leading off, stopping, dividing and twisting, growing and constantly changing. The narrative historian has greater choice through artistic liberty to resonate life and the amalgam of events, time, place and character from which the narrative emerges.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p217

<sup>7</sup> David Potts, "Two Modes of Writing History: The Poverty of Ethnography and the Potential of Narrative" in Australian Historical Association Bulletin, March-June 1991, p.19

<sup>8</sup> A.R.Louch. "History as Narrative" in History and Theory, Vol 8., 1969,pp.61.

What I am offering here is simply something more aesthetically pleasing and imaginatively exciting than the prescribed rules of history writing currently allow. As with Simon Schama, John Womack, Garrett Mattingly, T.B.Macaulay, Sir Walter Scott, and Kenneth Roberts, by using my creative skill, I hope to make history interesting so as to stir ordinary people into feeling passionately about the past. I realise that the conventions of history writing, like any conventions, are fragile and are vulnerable to challenge. These conventions were painstakingly developed over the past century and I feel there is no reason why documentary proof should not guide and control the writing of history.

But it is “positivism” or the belief that there is an ultimately observable, empirically verifiable truth that in our Postmodern times is dead. It is not historians like Schama who are murdering the discipline as Keith Windshuttle asserts instead it is history written in impenetrable prose, entombed in erudite discourse, excluding the imagination and enforcing academic predictability, that is a slow form of professional suicide.<sup>9</sup> As we approach the next millennium, Clio’s accountability to the Supreme Historical Court appointed by the ideologically correct, seems to present a less pressing task than restoring history to the forms by which it can catch the public imagination.

### **The Journey.**

He stood on the deck of the *Hiryu* clad in his full flight gear. Wearing knee-high boots, zip-up over-alls, and a fur lined cap, Hajime *Toyashima* was eager to get away. It was the height of the southern summer and with later temperatures promising to climb to

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<sup>9</sup> Keith Windshuttle, [The Killing of History: How a Discipline is Being Murdered by Social Therists and Literary Critics](#),



43 degrees, the morning freshness was a welcome reprieve.<sup>10</sup> His spirits were high and his confidence as expansive as Japan's empire, now extending throughout East Asia and the Pacific.<sup>11</sup> It had only been three months since it had entered the war, but in this time, Japan had managed to reverse 400 years of European colonialism.

This Knowledge was comforting to the air leader, Commander *Mitsuo Fuchida*. Beneath his feet was the steel flight deck of the 36 000 ton aircraft carrier *Akagi*: the flagship of the task force commander, Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, the distinguished leader of the Pearl Harbour attack force. Directly behind *Akagi* at a distance of about five hundred meters was her sister ship *Kaga*. The carrier *Soryu* was about 700 metres from *Akagi*'s port flank and directly behind *Soryu* was the carrier *Hiryu*.<sup>12</sup>

An operation order had been received calling for a strike by 188 carrier borne aeroplanes.<sup>13</sup> Fuchida was pleased to be going into action, but less pleased with the task he had been given. He did not think that Darwin was worthy of a Japanese attack, but his superiors were concerned about the possible use of Darwin to impede Japanese ambitions in the Netherlands' East Indies.<sup>14</sup>

Commander Fuchida walked over to the wing of his Mitsubishi-built Kate bomber. He was finishing a cup of bean soup and now ate sparingly from a bowl of rice and pickled plums. He accepted philosophically the news that there was no coffee because the

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<sup>10</sup> Robert Piper, "War Comes to Australia" An article written to accompany Petty Officer Hajime Toyashima's flying clothing. On Display at The RAAF Point Cook Museum, Victoria.

<sup>11</sup> Douglas Lockwood, *Australia's Pearl Harbour*, Adelaide, Rigby, 1975,p2

<sup>12</sup> *Australian Archives (Vic): MP157/1; 174Q*

<sup>13</sup> Lockwood *Op.Cit.*, p4

Douglas Lockwood went to Japan after the war to interview Commander Fuchida for his book. Fuchida's dialogue and thoughts here are based on this.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

cooks had already left the galley for action stations. Fuchida put his bowl aside and gave full attention to the task ahead.<sup>15</sup>

The sun was rising as Fuchida turned to his pilot and radio operator. Fuchida shaded his eyes from the sun and scanned the horizon.

“It is seven thirty, Sir. We are ready when you are”, reported a lieutenant.<sup>16</sup>

The mechanical crews had been running-up engines and making last minute adjustments since 5.00 a.m. They idolised their leader, the Navy’s unchallenged top air commander.<sup>17</sup> An 800kg bomb with the fuse attached had been placed in the rack of Fuchida’s plane. He made a quick but expert inspection, grunted, then walked away to greet other crews preparing.<sup>18</sup>

Fuchida, with his brown eyes, prominent chin, and rather big ears looked almost aristocratic sitting in his bomber.<sup>19</sup> He signalled that he was ready for the launching to begin and within seconds, the orders came over the loud speakers.

“All hands to launching stations”.

Fuchida gave the thumbs up as he heard the broadcast order.

“Start engines”<sup>20</sup>

Blue smoke and sheets of flame flashed from exhaust pipes.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p7

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p8

<sup>17</sup> Ikuhiko Hato and Yasuhi Izawa, Japanese Naval Aces and Fighter Units in World War II, Annapolis, Navy Institute Press, 1975, p64

<sup>18</sup> Lockwood, Op.Cit.,p8

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p9

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p10

Hajime marched over to his plane, pausing briefly to pay homage to a small *Shinto* shrine erected on the deck. There were rigorous standards of behaviour expected of young pilots and higher powers that demanded his subservience.<sup>21</sup> He climbed into his *Zero* fighter and adjusted himself snugly in the cockpit. The blocks were taken from under the wheels of his plane and he taxied into position. Pulling the cover of the canopy over his head and strapping on his goggles, Hajime watched the flagpole on top of the bridge for the signal. The flag was hoisted and in meticulous sequence, the planes thundered down the runway.<sup>22</sup>

Hajime made the ascent into the cloudless sky where he met, in formation, the others from his squadron. Hajime's *Zero* was one of the forty-five planes on the *Hiryu*. He would join the divisions from the other three carriers. The attack would be followed by 54 land-based bombers from *Ambon*, off *Ceram* and *Kendari* in the *Celebes*.<sup>23</sup> Amassed around him was the might of the Japanese Navy, whose historic mission was to destroy America and her allies.

Fuchida directed the formation of the planes. Fighters, dive-bombers, and level bombers climbed to cruising altitude. The fighters were ahead of the other planes to provide and maintain a protective screen in the case of attack.<sup>24</sup>

Fuchida glanced at his watch. It was 8.45 a.m and he brought the attacking force on to a compass bearing of 148 degrees. This

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<sup>21</sup> Charlotte Carr-Gregg, Japanese Prisoners of War in Revolt: The Outbreaks at Featherston and Cowra During World War II, St.Lucia Queensland, University of Queensland Press, 1978, p89

<sup>22</sup> Captain R.N. Donald, Wings of Neptune: The Story of Naval Aviation, Surry England, Peter Davies Ltd, 1963, p104

<sup>23</sup> Lockwood, Op.Cit, p4

<sup>24</sup> *Australian War Memorial (ACT): AWM54;86/5/1*

course, with the prevailing northwest winds, would bring them to Darwin in little more than an hour.<sup>25</sup>

Hajime was a somewhat handsome and intelligent young pilot of twenty-two. He was very excited, as this was his first mission.<sup>26</sup> In his pocket he had a small photo of a Shinto shrine and a rice-paper prayer.<sup>27</sup> He thought of his family back home and he swelled with pride. He imagined returning home to his village, victorious and self-satisfied and sharing his glory. He owed so much to his father in becoming an elite member of the Japanese air force.

His parents were solid, respectable citizens in a small village in *Kagawa* prefecture.<sup>28</sup> They grew cotton and rice and cultivated silk worms in the roof of their house.<sup>29</sup> Through hard work and toil his family had prospered and had become one of the leading cotton growers in *Kagawa*. He reminisced about carefree days of playing with other members of the community. He missed his friends, especially the boys. If only they could see him now.

The time was now 9.10 a.m: in 50 minutes they would be in Darwin. Between the drone of the engine and the endless sky, he was at peace with himself, alone in his Zero. A wind that was surely a sign from the gods sent ripples over the ocean below.

When Hajime was only seven his father had held him in his arms as their home had fallen around them. Their crops were destroyed

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<sup>25</sup> Lockwood, *Op Cit*, p10

<sup>26</sup> Harry Gordon, *Voyage From Shame. The Cowra Breakout and Afterwards*, St.Lucia Queensland, University of Queensland Press, 1994, p1

<sup>27</sup> *The Australian War Memorial (ACT): AWM54;779/375*

<sup>28</sup> Gordon, *Op.Cit.*, p1

<sup>29</sup> C.J Dunn, *Everyday Life in Imperial Japan*, New York, Dorset Press, 1969, p37

and their house crumbled before their eyes. The earthquake reaped havoc throughout Japan and as many as 100 000 people were killed.<sup>30</sup> The catastrophe affected him deeply as he came to realise the fragility of his beautiful homeland. All efforts to build a society can be destroyed instantly.

This setback did not deter his father in the slightest. He worked all the harder from first light until late in the day. His mother worked at the loom unceasingly, morning to evening. Hajime and his brothers manured the fields, removed weeds, and let in water so the ears of the rice ripened full and plump and the flowers on the cotton plant grew fluffy and fat. They rebuilt the house with its tall-pointed roof, overhanging eaves to allow the heavy rain to run off, and an extra story for the silk worms.<sup>31</sup> If their prosperity had been restored it was because they had worked so hard, enough to wear out his father's spade and hoe.

The bright red flag was in stark contrast to the metallic grey of the planes, which in turn, contrasted with the pale blue of the southern sky.<sup>32</sup> The glass enclosure of Hajime's plane glistened in the sunlight. He could see the bombs of his comrades. Soon these bombs would be whistling downward; downwards to destroy the barbarians below.

Just 45 minutes to go!

Hajime thought that Japan's enemy was weak. Japan had only been in the war since the attack on Pearl Harbour and even

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<sup>30</sup> Gordon.W.Prange, God's Samurai, Washington, Brassey's, 1990, p77

<sup>31</sup> Dunn, Op.Cit., p71

America, the world's most industrialised nation, had seemed no match for Japan. British air power in Hong Kong had been shattered on December 8 and both the British and Canadian forces there had surrendered by Christmas day. Japan occupied Bangkok on December 9 and Victoria Point in Burma on December 16. By the end of January 1942, just two Japanese divisions of the 25th Army had occupied all Malaya with surprising ease.<sup>33</sup>

In Burma, Japan had taken Moulmein and was now advancing rapidly towards Rangoon. The "East-Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere" now included parts of New Guinea. On February the 15th, the 100 000 strong British, Australian and Indian garrison in Singapore, along with thousands of tons of war material and supplies, surrendered to just 30 000 Japanese Imperial Guards. These guards were themselves short of ammunition and food. Almost the entire Indonesian archipelago was now under Japanese control. It appeared that nothing could stem the astonishing flood of Japanese conquests, now approaching Australia itself.<sup>34</sup>

The time was now 9.25 a.m.

Hajime had not long been out of school. He attended *Osaka* secondary school and was educated to secondary standard. *Osaka* was the booming industrial centre of Japan and it contrasted greatly with the crystalline purity of his village life. The sludge-filled rivers, the grind of machinery, the streets filled with carts of all kinds drawn by man and animal. The notices posted on telegraph poles calling for women to work in suburban textile

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<sup>32</sup> Office of The War Historian, W.R.Clarke, January, 1953, p62 "Raid 1 Formations" (RAAF Historical Section)

<sup>33</sup> Frank Alcorta, Australia's Frontline: The Northern Territory's War, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1991, p8

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p8

mills, the electric trolley's zigzagging over-head wires: these were all signs of the times and *Osaka* was a product of Japan's burgeoning industrialist-capitalist economy.<sup>35</sup>

At Hajime's school, the boys were made to stand to attention. The austere headmaster stood at the front and imperiously gazed out over his new recruits. Behind him hung the portrait of the emperor, clad in military attire.<sup>36</sup>

The headmaster un-apologetically outlined the schools elitist nature. The gentleman reaches upward, the inferior man reaches downward, the gentleman understands what is right, and the inferior man understands what is profitable. The world of nature and man are unequal and thus in accordance with the doctrine of the righteousness of status, the educated elite are inherently obliged to give moral guidance to the illiterate barbarians.<sup>37</sup>

After the speech the boys were made to shout and gesticulate manly feats whilst the headmaster bellowed out instructions:

You beg me to call you boys...If you want your upperclassmen to treat you as men, how do you intend to prove yourself? Never stoop to acting like girls! Be like Alexander the Great! Demonstrate your manliness!<sup>38</sup>

Hajime's independent urge towards self-improvement soon diminished. Having little or no choice, he had to seek an identity in the bonds of his peer group. Facilitated by his lessons, his loyalties soon switched from a dependence on his family to a dependence on his school.

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<sup>35</sup> Donald Roden, *Schooldays in Imperial Japan*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980, p95

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p100

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p105

<sup>38</sup> Dunn, *Op.Cit*, p98

History was based on the indoctrination of facts, mostly obscure and untrue. It promoted a cult of war through veneration of war heroes and historical imperial loyalists.<sup>39</sup> It enshrined the people who had loyally served the emperor in the nationalist wars of the time. It produced a rigidity and conformity that suited the military-industrial machine.

It was now 9.31a.m. They were just 29 minutes away from target. Their flight path took them directly over Bathurst Island, about 80 km northwest of Darwin. The heavy wooded island below was home to many Aboriginal tribes and a Catholic mission. As the planes passed by, Fuchida could see the corrugated iron roof of the mission church, but he could also see an aeroplane. This aeroplane could cause problems. It would have to be destroyed.

Six Zero fighters were sent to investigate, whilst three bombers circled overhead.<sup>40</sup>

The missionaries of the Sacred Heart Mission had started their day as usual with the morning angelus being rung at six o'clock. They had breakfast and then allocated jobs for the three hundred Aborigines who lived on the mission.<sup>41</sup>

Brother Francis Quinn turned over in his bed. He was not feeling well and had decided to stay where he was until his conscience or one of the other brothers forced him to rise. Suddenly there was a loud commotion outside among the tribesmen and women. Then

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<sup>39</sup> J.F. Wilson (ed) *Shinto and State*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1989, p90

<sup>40</sup> John Pye, "The Tiwi Islands", p46 (*Manuscript in the personal possession of Mr. Michael O'Sullivan, Curatorial Assistant, Private Records, Australian War Memorial (ACT)*)

<sup>41</sup> Timothy Hall, *Darwin 1942, Australia's Darkest Hour*, Methuen, Sydney, 1980, p20



the mission priest, Father John McGrath, rushed past his door shouting something about the wireless station.<sup>42</sup>

Almost instantly brother Quinn was out of bed and in the naked yard. He looked up and saw more aircraft than he had ever seen at one time in his life. Although they had silhouette charts, the aircraft were too far away to identify. But there was no doubt that the course on which they were set would bring them over Darwin in less than half an hour.<sup>43</sup>

Father McGrath switched on the Radio to send his message of warning:

“Eight SE to VID”, he called. “I have an urgent message stop An unusually large air formation bearing on us from the north west stop Identity suspect stop Visibility not clear stop over”.<sup>44</sup>

He transmitted verbally, and at Darwin Radio, Lou Curnock received the message and immediately confirmed it. He followed the set procedure and telephoned RAAF Operations in Darwin to pass on the message to the duty officer. It was 9.37a.m. and the officer acknowledged receipt of the message. Curnock entered it in his log and returned to his radio.<sup>45</sup>

He told Father McGrath to stand by while he passed on the warning, but the priest was doing no such thing. He had scarcely finished his transmission when out of the sky the six Zero fighters swooped down and machine-gunned the transport plane that was sitting on the ground nearby.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid

<sup>43</sup> Ibid

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p21

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p22

<sup>46</sup> Pye, Op.Cit, p47

Father McGrath scurried to take cover having already started a stampede by telling the Aborigines to get out of the mission. With the rat-tat-tat of their machine guns, the Japanese fighters blasted a hole in the church roof. The small radio room hidden in the citrus orchard remained untouched.<sup>47</sup>

Helped by the pilots from the now destroyed transport plane, the missionaries worked feverishly to dismantle the wireless and carry it deep into the bush. They feared that the Japanese would be landing any moment.<sup>48</sup>

The Zeros flew off as quickly as they had come, leaving behind their gesture of bad will.<sup>49</sup>

Hajime watched the planes return to their grouping. He contemplated these Zeros and how they were the greatest flying machines ever built. They were far superior to the enemy's planes, which were slower and not as manoeuvrable. The planes in Darwin would be no match for his Zero. What would the barbarians know about planes? After all, the aeroplane was a Japanese invention.<sup>50</sup>

Father McGrath's message to Lou Curnock, warning of the approach of unidentified aircraft over Bathurst Island, was telephoned immediately to RAAF Operations at 9.37a.m. The operations room had eight telephones and at the best of times, was in fairly hectic confusion. The message was taken by Pilot Officer Richard Saxton, one of the officers on duty.<sup>51</sup> It was then given to the senior officer at Area Command Headquarters,

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Hall, Op.Cit., p22

<sup>49</sup> Pye, Op.Cit., p46

<sup>50</sup> Wilson, Op.Cit., p30

<sup>51</sup> Hall, Op.Cit., p54.

Lieutenant-Commander Stirling Cobbold of the Royal Australian Navy. He in turn communicated with Lieutenant Francis Glynn, the Staff Officer, Operations, at Naval Headquarters. Glynn then gave the message:

“Don’t do anything, we think they are our own”.<sup>52</sup>

It was now 9.45 a.m.

Japan’s early success in *Manchuria* changed the national mood. There was resentment against the rest of the world, that had vehemently criticized Japan’s occupation in China. The ultra-nationalist elements began to gain the upper hand and more and more began to shape domestic as well as foreign policy. With the growing nationalism and militarism, the notion of *kokutai* reached its apogee.<sup>53</sup>

*Kokutai* is an amalgam of beliefs, synthesizing elements of *Shinto* mythology, Confucian ethics, and the martial ethics propagated by *Bushido*.<sup>54</sup> By 1937 it became the vehicle of indoctrinating the entire population of Japan. It imbued beliefs such as the divine origin of Japan and its imperial dynasty, Japan’s uniqueness, its moral superiority and its mission to establish a world empire.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *Australian Archives (ACT): A816/1;31/301/293*

There are many conflicting stories here. When the Royal Commissioner examined the log book (Operations Room) between the 16 of February and the 20th, there was not a single entry. The raid might never have happened.

<sup>53</sup> Carr-Gregg, *Op.Cit.*,p84

<sup>54</sup> R.K Hall “Kokutai no Hongi”: *Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*, Cambridge Mass, Harvard University, p114

Adherence to the precepts of *kokutai*, as outlined in the Japanese book Kokutai no Hongi, was rigorously enforced in the late 1930’s. Hall notes that in 1937 approximately 300 000 copies of this small book were distributed to the teaching staff of both public and private schools from the university level to elementary schools

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p115

The time was now 9.55 a.m.

In 1929 the U.S. stock market crashed, and to protect their domestic markets, economic barriers were raised in countries around the world. Japan was particularly vulnerable due to a lack of raw materials and a lack of market control. Rural families were particularly hard hit, as cotton made up the bulk of the Japanese export industry.<sup>56</sup> As the economic depression deepened, anti-foreign sentiment grew and *Fascism* began to replace democracy.

Once again Hajime witnessed his family's fortune, for which they had worked so hard, diminish rapidly. Along with many other Japanese people, his family put their faith in the militarist idea of imperial acquisition.

Democracy died in Japan when the political parties voted themselves out of existence and joined the Imperial Assistance Association. In the same year, Japan joined the triple alliance pact of Japan, Germany, and Italy. Gradually the military gained control of the media and began a vicious cycle of indoctrination that generated acceptance of its actions.<sup>57</sup>

## **PWJ11001**

From Darwin, on the 25th of February, Tadeo *Minimi*, Australia's first Prisoner Of War, was sent to Melbourne in an RAAF transport plane. He was held in an RAAF detention centre under the direct custody of Flight Sergeant Sam Shallard, of the RAAF's service police-special investigation unit.

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<sup>56</sup> Dunn, *Op.Cit.*, p101

<sup>57</sup> Roden, *Op.Cit.*, p100

Shallard spent days with Tadeo reciting and recording Japanese and English words and phrases. He supervised his exercise routine and played badminton with him.<sup>58</sup> They spent hours together teaching each other the rudiments of their respective languages. Shallard and *Tadeo* began a curious friendship.

Tadeo spoke to Shallard often about the impossibility of returning to Japan. Whatever the outcome of the war, he would be judged to have disgraced his country, emperor, and family by being captured. Tadeo said there would be no place for him in the future of his family or his country.<sup>59</sup>

Back in Darwin, the Royal Commission into the bombing was well underway. Justice Lowe had interviewed many people to try to ascertain the failures of the civilian and military response: especially why the warning had been ignored and how Darwin could be better prepared in the future.<sup>60</sup>

On the fifth Day (March the 9th) Justice Lowe, whilst questioning a Flight Lieutenant C. Bell on why the RAAF had responded so poorly, discovered that a Japanese pilot had been captured.

“So you are blaming inexperience Lieutenant Bell?”

Yes. “No one had been in a job long enough to get used to it... All appointments are elected from Melbourne...”

The Commissioner: “As a matter of interest I have just located a Zero fighter on Melville Island...”

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<sup>58</sup> Gordon, *Op.Cit.*,p23

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*,p24. This letter, along with a photo of Hajime, was sent to Gordon by Shallard on the 20th of August, 1980. Shallard is now deceased.

Lieutenant Bell apparently knew something about this and proceeded to tell Justice Lowe...

Bell:..“One airman was interrogated by the naval authorities through an interpreter and he said he was a writer. He was an air-gunner on a bomber which we believe was shot down. He absolutely was telling him a story. We are quite convinced he was a pilot of a Zero.”

The Commissioner: “Is it a matter of wrong interpretation?”

Bell: “No I don’t think so. He told a story and he said he fell into the sea, but his uniform had no proof.”

The Commissioner: “What was his uniform?”

Bell: “A ground over-all with no patches or rank at all.”

The Commissioner: “What would he be bearing on the over-all?”

Bell: “Nothing at all. He had the name of an aircraft carrier on it.”

The Commissioner: “What age would he be?”

Bell: “About twenty”.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Newman Rosenthal, “Sir Charles Lowe” The Age, 11th May 1968, p17.

<sup>61</sup> *Australian Archives (ACT): A816/1;31/301/293.*

Tadeo spent four weeks in Melbourne. He was then sent to Hay detention centre in New South Wales.

Before being put on the train under guard, Tadeo wrote a letter to Shallard on pages of Shallard's diary. This was the same diary in which Tadeo had copied hundreds of phonetic Japanese translations of English words and phrases. It read:<sup>62</sup>

Dear Mr. Shallard

I would like to thank you very much for your hospitality and particularly the story of Japan, which you have told me from time to time. I hope you will do your best for your country in the future. I want to thank you very much for the kindness you have shown me. I have spent healthy and peaceful days with you until now, but now I am quite prepared to die anytime. I think this is the time to say good-bye to you. I can really hear that my mother in my home town is saying, "You die for the mother country". Then I want to say "sayonara". To have a life for 25 years, or for 50 years, or 100 years, it doesn't make much difference for me unless I can do what I can to satisfy myself. I have no regrets to die since I shot down two fighter planes anyway.<sup>63</sup>

Hay was mostly a civilian detention centre that held Japanese pearl divers and fishermen from Broome, bankers, and office managers based in Australia, and visiting Japanese businessmen stranded by the outbreak of war. The existence in Hay was certainly not harsh.

Tadeo kept taking notes to add to his vocabulary. He worked hard on his English, practising when he could with guards and farmers

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<sup>62</sup> Gordon, Op.Cit.p24

and businessmen who knew something of the language. He applied himself enthusiastically and before long, his newly acquired language abilities, as well as his status as a sergeant and naval airman, caused the camp authorities to call on him often for low-level translation tasks. He became an unofficial leader and spokesman.<sup>64</sup>

In December of 1942, he was sent by rail to another camp at Cowra.<sup>65</sup> Tadeo had the first POW number *PWJ11001*.<sup>66</sup> This camp was dedicated solely to the incarceration of prisoners of war. Tadeo found himself with a number of Italians, but he mostly remained in a large, separate, and comparatively empty compound. First impressions of Cowra were that the security was much tighter and there was much more barbed wire around the fences.<sup>67</sup> It was barren and bleak to say the least, devoid of trees and deathly dull. Michel Foucault would not even have even visited here.

The prison camp consisted of dozens of timber huts set in a barbed wire compound in a vast, flat plain. The strategically placed guard towers and sporadic spread of trees were all that stood between him and the horizon. Nearby, the pleasant middle-sized town of Cowra minded its own business.

Tadeo settled into life within the compound and witnessed the arrival of more and more Japanese prisoners. When the new Japanese arrived, they were told they would be living in B compound that was solely for them. An interpreter would introduce them to Tadeo and the compound and tell them about the rules.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p25

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p33

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p34

<sup>66</sup> *The Australian War Memorial (ACT): AWM54 780/1/7*

<sup>67</sup> Teruhiko Asada, The Night of a Thousand Suicides: The Japanese Outbreak at Cowra, Angus and Robinson, Sydney, 1967, p92

<sup>68</sup> Gordon, Op.Cit.,p54



“Today each of you will be issued with a uniform, a greycoat, five woollen blankets, a mattress and cooking utensils.” The interpreter then beckoned to a compact, rather handsome Japanese man with a scar over his left eye. This man had an air of capability and it seemed somehow appropriate that his uniform fitted snugly.

“This is Sergeant Pilot Tadeo Minami, he is your camp leader he will direct you to your huts and explain the routine of the camp”.<sup>69</sup>

“What are the Italians like, do you mix with them much?” asked a new prisoner.

“They’re different,” said Tadeo.

“So different from us, but they’re pleasant enough. We’re not supposed to mix with them, but some of our people do. You know they even like it here. They go out to work on the farms, and if they come back and find the gate closed they become upset. They don’t want to be locked out.”<sup>70</sup>

When later prisoners arrived, they invariably gravitated to the small gang led by Tadeo. He enjoyed a certain status, not only because he was the longest serving prisoner, but also because he got food for his comrades. He would tell the authorities that he wanted fish and the next day it would arrive. The Australians had tried to make them settle for potatoes and bread with their meat, but Tadeo said that they could not exist without good polished rice. Rice then became plentiful and they got bread and biscuits too.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, p54.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, p55

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p77-78

Tadeo's group's hegemony went unchallenged. They had money and coupons that allowed them to buy small amenities. They bought their own cigarettes, shared quarters that seemed marginally more comfortable, owned a few changes of clothes, and managed to extract extra food rations. There was an aura of exclusivity about them. They stayed separate, aloof, and occasionally indulged in a kind of patronage of others.

Tadeo was generally respected by the whole compound, but some of his fellow airmen seemed to consider themselves of a higher caste than the soldiers. It was an unhealthy situation. The soldiers soon came to have numerical superiority, but authority remained with the small group of airmen.

Arguments broke out between the two groups, and finally a deputation was sent to Tadeo. They told him that the internal control of the compound could no longer remain with an airman, simply because he had been in captivity longer than the others. Tadeo, sensing that violence would almost certainly occur if he refused, agreed that an election should be held.<sup>72</sup>

The result was a compromise. *Kanazawa*, who had never sought the appointment but possessed toughness, became the camp leader. Tadeo retained high status because he was the former leader, and because he was the only senior prisoner who spoke English. Real power remained with those people who could control communication with the enemy.<sup>73</sup>

Kanazawa's job was not an easy one. There were now 1100 Japanese prisoners and all had a burning sense of shame. Any form of surrender to an enemy was abhorrent under the intricate code that governed their behaviour. To be captured by an enemy

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p83-84

was to bring to themselves, and to their families, a dimension of shame that was so huge as to be unendurable. The code was called *bushido* and had evolved over centuries of military careers. Likewise, a form of ritual suicide whose purpose was to avoid capture had the name *setsujoko*. It had existed since the twelfth century.<sup>74</sup>

### **August 1944.**

Tadeo had now been at Cowra for two and a half years and the Australians had decided to split up the Japanese prisoners. Some armed guards visited the mess hut in which Kanazawa was eating.

“Be ready to come to the major’s office at two o’clock “, they told the Japanese leader. “And bring with you Mister *Kojima* and Mister Tadeo Minami”.

Promptly at 2.00 p.m., Kanazawa, Kojima and Tadeo were marched under escort out of the compound gates and into the office of Major Ramsay. Then Ramsay told the three men:

“We are sending seven hundred of the men from your compound to another camp. We want them ready to move after breakfast on Monday”.

For a moment none of the Japanese spoke. Then Tadeo began. “Why...what’s it all about?”

“We are not going to have any discussion about the thing”, said Ramsay brusquely.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p84

<sup>74</sup> Richard O’Neill, Suicide Squads, Landsdown, Sydney, 1981, p12

<sup>75</sup> Gordon, Op.Cit., p115

Tadeo looked through the list of who was to go:

“Very bad business...why can't we all go?”<sup>76</sup>

After the meeting the prisoners returned to the exercise yard. The list that Tadeo read said that all prisoners below the rank of lance-corporal were to be sent. News of this sent shock-waves through the Japanese compound. Immediately after the 4.30 p.m. parade, Kanazawa gestured to a senior prisoner *Oleg Negervich* who then joined him.<sup>77</sup>

“It's true, is it?” Kanazawa asked. “He really intends to separate us according to rank?”

“It's true,” replied Oleg.

“Can you ask the major to reconsider the decision to have the NCO's transferred to the other camp with the privates?”

Oleg replied: “I've already asked him once- after the conference today. Major Ramsay tells me it's not in his power. The instructions have come from somewhere else. It's his job to carry them out”.

“Are you absolutely sure?” asked Kanazawa.

“It's not possible. It's an order and that's final” he replied.

Kanazawa looked grim. “We've had a conference already about this. We don't like it. We'll have to make more talks. We'll have to do something”.

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<sup>76</sup> *Australian Archives (ACT): AAI977:461*

“There’s nothing you can do,” said Oleg, “except start preparing for the change. There’s the theatrical gear all sorts of things that will have to be moved”.<sup>78</sup>

Within minutes of the conversation with Oleg, Kanazawa, Tadeo, Kojima, and a trusted friend, Eiichi *Yamakawa*, found a quiet spot in Kanazawa’s hut.

“Would you mind watching the door and seeing we’re not disturbed?” Kanazawa asked.

Eiichi nodded and went outside.

They then talked about the realisation that had suddenly been thrust upon them. If the plan they had so tirelessly prepared was going to eventuate, it would have to be now. Since almost the very first day of Kanazawa’s arrival, there had been talk of a mass escape. He had heard the escape plan discussed almost every night.<sup>79</sup>

“Now,” he said, “it looks as if we have to do the thing quickly”.

The others nodded. There wasn’t any debate. Yamakawa was excited about the idea of an imminent battle. The others were more subdued. They did not regard this as a discussion about whether they would die. They were dead men in theory to their families anyway.

Tadeo’s family had been advised that he had been killed in battle. A funeral was held in his town and a plaque erected in his memory.

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<sup>77</sup> Gordon, *Op.Cit.*, p120

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, p116. The dialogue here is based on Gordon’s personal interviews with Kanazawa in Japan in April 1977.

The tomb in the family graveyard read "Died in Darwin, 19th February, 1942".<sup>80</sup>

Kanazawa gave the directions mechanically.

"We'll have to act fast," he said. "Let's get all the hut leaders together. We'll need to establish how they feel, and then they'll have to put it to the men in their huts."

Indicating to Tadeo, he said "You better get a message to the officers. Tell them we'll probably move tonight."

"Yes," said Tadeo. "We need directions. It would be wrong to act without approval."

Kanazawa interrupted. "Nonsense. No orders are necessary. This has to be on a personal level. They wouldn't want us to wait for orders from them. If we're going to go, we know what we have to do. We've talked about it often enough. This is simply a courtesy."

Kojima spoke for the first time. "I don't think it will work. I think it will be futile."

Kanazawa swung towards him. "What's that you're saying? Don't you think that we should do it, and quickly?"

Kojima nodded. "Yes I know we have to do it. It is inevitable. But I know that it will simply give us a manner of dying."

"True", said Tadeo. "It is a chance to die, and that's probably all it is. But we can still make some sort of fight of it. We can still take some of them with us, and maybe we'll do a lot better than that."<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p126

Kanazawa replied. "You'll have the honour of signalling the attack with the bugle.

Just one strong blast. Major Ramsay will be sorry he ever issued the thing. Now, do they all know what the targets are?"<sup>82</sup>

"I think so," said Tadeo. We're attacking the most vital points, we're trying to get to our officers, and we have people who'll get clear of the camp. If everything goes perfectly, we have a chance of overthrowing this entire camp, and then taking over the other military camp across the way. If it doesn't we'll still give a good account."<sup>83</sup>

## **The End of the World<sup>84</sup>**

The Northern Territory: an almost uninhabitable expanse of millions of square kilometres of desert, craggy red escarpments, weathered hillocks, monsoon forests, and immense eucalypt savannah.<sup>85</sup> Battered by periodic cyclones, an oppressive climate and poor soils, Darwin had none of the prosperity of the gentler southeast of Australia. It grew almost by accident as a government administration post.<sup>86</sup> It is an ugly settlement of corrugated iron shacks and dusty muddy streets.

A dog strutted up the street, stopped, sniffed a lamp post, pissed on it, and then continued on his journey.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid, p19

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p120-121.

<sup>82</sup> John Hopley, "'Cowra Bugle Presented to The Australian War Memorial" Deapatch: Monthly Journal of The New South Wales Military Historical Society, vol. 15 no.7. Jan 1980, pp144-145.

<sup>83</sup> Gordon, Op.Cit.,p140

<sup>84</sup> J Binning, Dear Mum, Melbourne, Greyflower Publications, 1964, p.20

<sup>85</sup> Alcorta, Op.Cit., p6

<sup>86</sup> Ibid

Darwin is a wild sort of a place. There was a bad riot just recently. There was a riot nearly all the time at the Don Hotel. Bob Heppell is just eighteen years old and had arrived in Darwin in October to join an Anti-Aircraft Battery. He soon learnt that it was a lot safer to drink at *The Vic*. The Vic was more genteel, although not much more.

He patronised the gambling games at Cavenagh street. "These would be rooms filled with men and smoke, people were shoulder to shoulder, and the place stunk of sweat, grog and stale smoke. There was heaps of money here. In fact, the place was awash with money, mostly from contractors who were building the defence installations...if you won money the bouncers would escort you back to camp- -there was a fair chance you would get rolled otherwise."<sup>87</sup>

It was five minutes to ten and Walker was still in bed. Walker was a gruff but amiable communist who was as militant in fighting for the rights of workers as anyone had a right to be.<sup>88</sup> As a wharf labourer, he had worked the day shift the previous day. It was his duty, before knock-off time, to find out how many gangs were wanted for the same shift on the following day. He asked the wharf supervisor, Reginald Erickson, and he was told that five would be enough.<sup>89</sup>

He was delighted as it meant that he would not have to start work again until late tomorrow. He had "always had a constitutional reluctance to get out of bed in the morning."<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p18

<sup>88</sup> Lockwood, Op.Cit., p69 The dialogue here is based on Douglas Lockwood's personal interviews for his book.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.



Commander Fuchida led the squadron to the east, crossed the coast, and then flew inland before turning so that he could approach Darwin from the southeast. It had been planned this way so the bombers would already be heading back to the carriers when the bombs fell.<sup>91</sup>

Jimmy Yuen was one of the six Chinese wharfies. Yuen was twenty-four years old and was the son of a storekeeper father who had migrated to The Northern Territory last century. He had worked in Fong Yuen Kee's store in Darwin's Chinatown, but the recent evacuation of women and children from the town had created unemployment for shop assistants. He then transferred to the wharf.<sup>92</sup>

Jimmy lived with five of the six Chinese men who worked on the wharf. He had cooked a breakfast of chicken soup for himself and his house mates. Jimmy rode his bicycle to work and by eight o'clock, he was helping unload the timber from *The Barossa*.<sup>93</sup>

The postmaster, Hurtle Clifford Bald, sat in an office so badly lit that he kept a window and door open. Hurtle had come north from South Australia where he had served as a postmaster at Kadina, Port Lincoln and Glenelg. His good work had brought him under official notice and he was promoted to the Darwin office. His wife, Alice, and daughter Iris, aged nineteen, went with him. He took a keen interest in the town's social and sporting life.<sup>94</sup>

It was now 9.57 and Hajime could see the hull of *The Neptuna* lying deep in the water, moored to the delicate arm of the wharf.

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<sup>91</sup> Hall, *Op.Cit.*, p23

<sup>92</sup> Lockwood, *Op.Cit.*, p74

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, p75

There were more than 10,000 people in and around Darwin and most did not want to be there.<sup>95</sup> “It seemed a very isolated and unreal sort of a place. It was just so different from the rest of Australia. Many men couldn’t believe they were still in the same country.”<sup>96</sup> Daily life for thousands of servicemen in the Northern Territory was a dull routine unbroken by the spice usually associated with service overseas.<sup>97</sup>

The anxiety in Darwin was high as there was great uncertainty as to who was winning the war. There was only one brigade in Darwin as the 6th, 7th, and 9th Divisions were fighting in distant North Africa, and the 8th Division had been captured in Singapore.<sup>98</sup>

In just three months the Japanese had brushed aside with astonishing ease the French, British and Dutch empires in South East Asia. They had also ejected the Americans from the Philippines. Hundreds of years of colonialism had been ended in less than 80 days by an Asian power.<sup>99</sup>

There had been months of propaganda and continual bad news from the war front. Media reports told about Japanese atrocities; about the looting, raping, and killing of unarmed people in the countries they had occupied. Most believed it was only a matter of hours before they landed on Darwin’s virgin shores.

Australia was vulnerable and the Prime Minister, John Curtin, had recently said in the press that:

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<sup>94</sup> Hall, Op.Cit.,p94

<sup>95</sup> Alcotta, Op.Cit., p17.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, p67

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p1

<sup>99</sup> Ibid

Without inhibitions of any kind I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free from any pangs to our traditional links with the United Kingdom. We know the problems the United Kingdom faces. We know the constant threat of invasion. We know the dangers of dispersal of strength. But we know that Australia can fall and that Britain can hang on. We are therefore determined that Australia shall not fall.<sup>100</sup>

From the south, in perfect formation, the planes came. The town heard the awful roar of almost two hundred planes bearing down on them.

The nation was in panic. There was a strong demand for the establishment of a people's army. Public opinion moved far ahead of the government and in a score of cities and towns across Australia, people organised armed groups of civil guards, trained by World War I veterans. Booklets on guerrilla warfare became immensely popular, while newspapers in the major cities advocated full resistance to the invader. They encouraged men and women to join their local militias.<sup>101</sup>

Dudly Rose fired the first shots; "My men were at their posts and in action before the air raid sirens sounded. We had 3.7 inch anti-aircraft guns, and Lewis machine guns for low flying aircraft...We fired, but were well below the target most of the time. Our equipment really wasn't up to it. We weren't ready for the fact that the Japs were flying very high."<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> John Curtin, The Age, 27th December, 1941, p.1

<sup>101</sup> Alcotta, Op.Cit., p11

<sup>102</sup> *Australian Archives (ACT): A816/1; 31/301/293*

The RAAF officers were still discussing the possibility that they were not Japanese aircraft at all.<sup>103</sup> The station Commander, Wing Commander Griffith, heard the machine gun fire and looked out of the Operations Room window almost straight down the sights of a Zero. He ordered the alarm to be sounded.<sup>104</sup>

At the post office, several people stood in the doorway watching the sun glint on the silver aircraft that were approaching the town. Not yet hearing the alarm someone said, "Thank God the Yanks have got here at last." They were still staring at them when the first bombs dropped: "like one big raindrop as the sun caught them- -a flash and then nothing more". Seconds later there was an explosion from the direction of the wharf and simultaneously the sirens began to wail over the town.<sup>105</sup>

Instead of being at the wharf, Walker, true to his promise, was still in bed in a bungalow behind the Victoria hotel. The town's main air-raid siren cried out from the water tower nearby. "Although in bed I was not asleep, the siren would up to a peak of noise. People in the town could hear it but they couldn't have done so on the wharf. They must have had bombs before they heard the alarm."<sup>106</sup>

"I get out of bed and walked out to the edge of the veranda. I could not see planes but I could hear bombs falling and anti-aircraft fire...In that time some of them fell fairly close and some of the debris fell on the roof of the place I was in and one piece knocked a whole about two feet big in the roof. I could hear them screaming down towards the harbour. I could not go outside because the shots from the anti-aircraft guns were falling around".<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Hall, *Op.Cit.*, p23

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p63

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p24

<sup>106</sup> Lockwood, *Op.Cit.*, p69.

<sup>107</sup> *Australian Archives (ACT): A816/1; 31/301/293*

The first bomb hit the metal bridge connecting the wharf to the shore and tore an oil pipe, allowing its contents to gush into the harbour. The ship's surgeon, John Hyde, was in the surgery when a second bomb hit *The Neptuna's* forecastle and another landed just forward of the smoking room. "Machine gun fire thudded into port and starboard sides". The surgeon turned to see the collapsing deck pin a cadet down. He rushed to his aid. He asked how he was but the cadet only groaned and made no reply".<sup>108</sup>

The wharf labourers had knocked off for the ten o'clock smoke'o and were bunched on the jetty. A bomb hit, hurled a locomotive into the sea, and took away an entire span. It took the workers with it.<sup>109</sup>

In the darkness inside *The Neptuna*, some Chinese crewmen rushed by John Hyde, stepping over the cadet. "When they reached the deck one of the crewmen dropped a rope from the side, which the others proceeded to climb into the sea. A cry of "the wharf", "the wharf", was heard from the Chinese as they scrambled over the ships rails in desperation to reach the wharf".<sup>110</sup>

"Flames, which had started forward, now spread aft, and in view of the cargo of depth charges in No.4, further delay was dangerous. The strong swimmers amongst the engineers gave up their life-belts to the non-swimmers and dived into the sea. Most fortunately the tide was ebbing and carried them all the way from the burning wharf and from *The Barossa* which was burning at inner berth." Pushing the cadet along in the sea, John Hyde suddenly encountered the oil. "This made vision difficult, but a launch in which were the Chief Engineer and the 3rd Officer picked us up.

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<sup>108</sup> *Australian Archives (Vic): MP1587/1; 156B*

<sup>109</sup> Lockwood, *Op.Cit.*, p65

<sup>110</sup> *Australian Archives (Vic): MP1587/1; 156B*

Whilst proceeding to *The Platapus*, a tremendous explosion occurred and *The Neptuna* blew up”.<sup>111</sup>

Lumps of red-hot metal showered down on the other ships and entire masts were tossed like match-sticks for hundreds of metres<sup>112</sup>.

Cadet John Rothery was chipping paint below decks when the first bomb hit *The Neptuna* with a violent explosion. He had heard no alarm or aircraft and he hurried up on deck to see what had happened. He “stared in disbelief at a sky now filled with aircraft marked with the red rising sun of Japan. In the saloon, I found many of the 125 crew gathered together for protection and they shouted to me to get down on the floor. But either premonition or claustrophobia drove me outside again after only a few minutes and this split second decision saved my life. As I came out on deck I saw a dive-bomber appear from behind a cloud and scream across the water toward *The Neptuna*. I watched mesmerised as its bomb came away and crashed through the bridge and into the saloon that I had just left. Every man in there, more than thirty of them were killed”.<sup>113</sup>

George Tye “came up on deck.[and]..jumped over the side of the wharf into the water with a lot of others, wharfies and ship’s crew...Then the dive bombers came at us, Thank God they were straight...they hit what they wanted. I was swimming under the wharf as bombs were hitting it and the ships alongside. I made my way towards the elbow of the wharf. That had already been hit, and the shed where man had gathered for smoke’o, and it was all gone...just disappeared”<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Hall,Op.Cit., p47

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

Gus Brown was blown into the water by the blast that wrecked the recreation shed. Tye saw him swimming back towards the wharf, apparently uninjured. Then another bomb hit the decking, tearing out several huge planks as though they were splinters. One fell on Browns head, killing him instantly.<sup>115</sup>

Yuen had knocked-off for morning smoke-oh with the other wharfies, but he did not go to the shed directly. Instead he crossed the wharf and began to talk to *Foo Hee*, the Chinese chief cook from *The Neptuna*. He did not know that Darwin was about to be attacked until a bomb burst in the water nearby. He: “looked up, saw the planes, and realised that his mates were already running, then a bomb hit the right-angle of the wharf. A locomotive, six railway trucks and several man were hurled into the sea”.<sup>116</sup>

“I ran off with the purser, Joe Floyd. We went to the seaward end of the wharf because the landward end was cut. Some badly wounded men were struggling around in the water. Floyd and I rolled a dozen empty petrol drums over the side to help those who seemed to be in trouble.”<sup>117</sup>

They then dived together, ten feet from the top of the wharf to the water. The tide was running outwards. Yuen and Floyd swam together for a while but then parted company. Yuen struck out for open water and the boom wharf two hundred yards away; trying to get around patches of blazing oil.<sup>118</sup>

Yuen, shocked and covered in oil, made it to the sand at the edge of the water. “Although I was a few hundred yards away the explosion lifted me two feet off the ground, like I was a feather, and

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<sup>114</sup> Lockwood, *Op.Cit.*,p70

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p71

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p75

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p74

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*

dropped me back with a splash in the water. I thought my ribs had been cracked. Parts of *The Neptuna* were coming to earth for several minutes. It was terrible...terrible...these huge planks and masts thrown hundreds of feet like match-sticks...they landed on the foreshore and on the town and on the ships...hundreds of yards away.”<sup>119</sup>

The next wave of bombers concentrated on the post office complex and nearby administrative offices, which included the Administrator’s residence and police station.

Hurtle Clifford Bald, his wife and daughter and several other people, hurried out to the postmaster’s garden. A hole in the ground covered with two halves of a corrugated iron water tank, is how Hurtle had built his shelter. The nine people huddled underneath.<sup>120</sup>

Constable Darken heard the bombing and rushed out of the station: “The ear-splitting noise and the air seemed to crowd in and make it hard to breath. (The bomb)..had collected Baldy’s shelter and we came across a gruesome sight. They were all beyond assistance and the girls were all in a heap. Harry identified them. The girls. Baldy, Bill, no it’s old Bro’, Oh God, the Girls!”<sup>121</sup>

“I noticed Mr. Bald- -I have always known him as that--was more or less in a sitting position on top, partly covered by dirt. He was in a terribly battered condition, most of his bones, his arms and legs--seemed to be broken”.

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<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p75

<sup>120</sup> Hall, *Op.Cit.*, p24

<sup>121</sup> *Australian Archives (ACT): A816/1; 31/301/293*



“I also recognised his daughter, she had part of her head blown away. I also recognised Mrs. Young. The top of Mrs. Young’s head was blown off”.

“Someone was thrown into a tree”.<sup>122</sup>

Pilots laughed while spreading death, gesturing crudely from the security of their cockpits and cabins, searching for opposition that might allow them, as they craved, to prove their superior skills.<sup>123</sup>

Darwin’s Administrator, C.L.A. Abbott, was in his office, “where I had arranged to see the accountant, Mr. Fyson, to make arrangements to get him away with his staff that day, if possible. We talked about the arrangements till nearly ten o’clock, when suddenly the alarm sirens sounded. I told him to go back to his office in case it was a genuine raid, and see that his stuff was all right. He set off, but was caught in the blast of a bomb and flung to the ground”.

“...my wife and her servants had come across from the house with their small bags of necessities to take shelter under the office. My wife and the staff settled themselves in the shelter. Elsie, one of the half-caste maids, was a tall, strapping girl, and the other, Daisy, was very thin. Then came the Russian cook, with her husband, who was my driver and messenger. Finally there was the old half-caste gardener, Billy, and Leo, the native boy who swept the verandas. I directed them to go as far under the building as possible, and then I joined them”.

Then...“I heard the unmistakable sound of a bomb bursting, and the whole structure seemed to rise into the air. I could see the concrete floor above us lift as the reinforced pillars snapped like

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid

dry sticks, then it settled down, and there was a crash and rumble of falling masonry and grey dust everywhere. The building had received a direct hit. It completely obliterated one-half of the office, making a crater twenty feet deep and thirty feet wide. The office walls and floor were blown in and a huge block of concrete fell on the half-caste girl, Daisy, burying her from the head to the waist and killing her instantly. The black boy was pinned by one leg and was calling out in fright. We would have all been killed by the collapsing concrete floor but for the steel door of the strong-room, which had swung open in the blast and jammed under the corner of the floor, holding it up.<sup>124</sup>

The Administrator's wife, Mrs. Hilda Abbott, "had just got into place when there came the most terrific, incalculable noise. Mortar, concrete, grit, fell, bruising and blinding us. The whole structure cracked and moved down over us and the most terrible screams filled the air. I rushed towards the opening where the pillars had been the highest., in that instant knowing we would all be crushed under the breaking and moving concrete roof above us...It's Coming down! I screamed. The noise was so terrific that nothing was distinguishable- -our guns, their guns, bombs- -it was all just enormous and terrible".<sup>125</sup>

Darwin and the harbour were an inferno. The anti-aircraft guns were firing, but had little or no effect. The smoke of burning oil billowed high into the sky, tinged with the orange flashes as the bombs found their targets. The oil tanker, *The British Motorist*, was heeling over, ready to capsize. Near to this, *The Zealander* was going down by the stern. There was an incessant scream of

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<sup>123</sup> Lockwood, *Op.Cit.*, p2

<sup>124</sup> C.L.A.Abbott, *Australia's Frontline Province*. Sydney, Angus and Robinson (Date not specified), p81

<sup>125</sup> *The Australian National Library (ACT): MS4744*

Japanese dive-bombers as they zoomed along the foreshores, machine-gunning the wharf and the men struggling in the water.<sup>126</sup>

Hajime flew away believing that the enemy's fighting spirit was feeble.

### **The Island**

Hajime could not believe that the enemy had not launched one plane in its defence. Japan seemed unstoppable. Nothing could stand in the way of its divine destiny. The rightful success of his first mission had made Hajime somewhat reflective. Just imagine returning to *Kagawa* prefecture with the honour he had bestowed upon his family? Just imagine the virility of Japan, its wealth and the pride of slaughtering the barbarians who dared to question "the way of the gods"?<sup>127</sup> He was pure and Japan was pure. Japan had worked so hard to clean the world of its filth.

From somewhere below a fluke shot fired from a 303" rifle pierced his oil tank.<sup>128</sup>

Oil spurted out...but Darwin was then long gone...Now all that remained was the journey home.

Melville Island was beneath him. This was the last piece of land that he would see before *The Hiryu*...But suddenly the plane jolted, the propeller sheared off and the drone was no longer. The motor had ceased.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Abbott, Op.Cit., p81

<sup>127</sup> Shinto or *shin tao* in Chinese is translated as "the way of the gods".

Alan Bullock et.al. (eds) The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought, London, Fontana, .p777

<sup>128</sup> Piper "War Comes to Australia" Op.Cit.

The plane started to plummet...Gravity tore at his body..

He looked to the island,....but there was nowhere to land....

The trees were so dense,....but then the valley!<sup>130</sup>

The plane was rapidly descending and the trees loomed up ahead.

He nosed his fighter into a shallow glide and kept his wheels retracted to prevent them striking an obstruction.<sup>131</sup>

Several small trees and rocks smash at the wings. The plane skidded and slid to a halt. Hajime was flung forward. The gun-sight inflicted a deep cut above his left eye.<sup>132</sup>

He was dazed, but he was still alive! His face hurt like hell, but he was *still alive!* He had struck his face on the gun sight; the blood blurred his vision in his right eye. He climbed out of the shattered cockpit and down over the crippled wings of his plane. High above the members of his flight watched, whilst Hajime wandered into the bush.<sup>133</sup>

Hajime trudged aimlessly through the deathly isolated, dry, and inhospitable wilderness. Day turned into night and night into day. In his pocket he still had the photo of the shrine; he still had a prayer.<sup>134</sup> He would be protected by the gods.

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<sup>129</sup> Bob Alford, Darwin's Air War, 1942-1945 An Illustrated History, Darwin, The Aviation Historical Society of The Northern Territory, 1991, p21

<sup>130</sup> Much of the story on how and where the plane crashed is based on my own personal phone interviews with John Haslett, 4th and 5th September, 1995.

<sup>131</sup> Robert Kendall Piper, "Epitaph for a Darwin Raider" Canberra Times, Canberra, 12th February, 1983, p13

<sup>132</sup> Ibid

<sup>133</sup> Alford, Op.Cit., p21

<sup>134</sup> Australian War Memorial (ACT):AWM54;779/375

He wandered on a journey that would not end. Is this where his life had led him? Is this where his life would end? He had to avoid the shame of capture. He would not let the barbarians take him alive.

The island was home to many different tribes of Aborigines. They were known collectively as the *Tiwi* Tribe.<sup>135</sup> In the 1920s and 30s, there had been numerous reports that Aborigines had had violent clashes with Japanese pearlers. The Japanese were considered the best divers and several hundred of them were employed by the local industry. The Japanese pearlers were not allowed to go ashore on the coast of Arnhem Land or the islands. But they often did. There were several slaughters.<sup>136</sup>

Hajime made a frightful discovery.

He had stumbled upon a camp of young aboriginal women and children. They ran and scattered as the Japanese man stood in bewilderment.

I was the first one to see the Japanee man. My friends were out looking for honey nest. I was minding all the babies. The babies were all playing and when one boy see the Japanee he yelled. Then that Japanee came to me and he salute me. I got properly big fright, all right. I ran away from the Japanee man. He picked up a baby and went into the bush with him. I found my friends and went looking for that Japanee man and we found him with that baby in his arms. One of my friends went to him and took her baby away from him. He asked if the

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<sup>135</sup> John Haslett Interview.

<sup>136</sup> Douglas Lockwood, The Front Door: Darwin 1869-1969, Rigby, Adelaide, 1969, p128.

For a full account see. Michelle Dewar, The "Black War" in Arnhem Land: Missionaries and the Yolngu 1908-1940, The Australian University Research Unit, Darwin, 1992

baby belonged to her, and he put his hand in his pocket and took out a watch and gave it to the boy. We asked him where are all his friends, but he didn't answer. That night we hide in the bush and that Japanee man he sleepest alone. Next day our men came back and Matthias and Louis find that man and take him to the mission station.<sup>137</sup>

Hajime returned to the bush...and waited. At dusk, *Matthius* and his party saw Hajime sitting by a fire preparing a meal. The Aborigines surrounded him and Matthias and Barney seized and disarmed him.<sup>138</sup>

I was returning to the camp but found the women had left the place. That's funny, I think. Then suddenly I hear a noise and I saw this strange man. He had a big overall on and inside these I could see a big lump that told me it was a revolver. "Japanee", I said to my friends, so we moved out into the thick bush around the camp and waited for him to come up. I crept up behind a tree and when he passed I put the handle of a tomahawk in his back and I say "hands up!" That Japanee man was amazed when he saw so many native people. He put his hands up. We took off his clothing, everything except his underpants, and I've got his revolver, also a map.<sup>139</sup>

I made him sit down in camp. I made a big fire. He said "Merica" and shook his head and held up his hands. Might be, I think, he does not like America.

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<sup>137</sup> Lockwood, *Op.Cit.*, p183. These descriptive letters were written by Aborigines for their friends who missed the fun. The letters later came into the possession of Douglas Lockwood.. They were apparently in Douglas Lockwood's possession when he first published his book. Members of The Australian War Memorial had not heard of them nor could I locate them.

<sup>138</sup> James O'Connor, "Blacks Took First Jap Prisoner in Australia" from *The Argus*, (Date and page unknown), *Department of Defence, RAAF Historical Section (ACT): Main File, Bombing of Darwin*.

Alright we start sleep, me on one side, Jap other. He woke up middle night. He point me to lie down go to sleep. I keep out from fire, stay out cold place; might be, I think, if he go to sleep, he run away. I think too he got properly ugly face. I cannot understand him what he say. Morning time I give him boots. I told other men. We start to take him to the mission. I make him walk behind Three Feller and Young Tiger with stick. Big Barney walk behind him with big stick. I walk side with revolver and knife. I took bullets out and make Jap show me how to work gun. Then I fire near his feet; he jump. We cross creek; we all drink, Jap he drink too. We walk and come out end of Melville Island--at Paru opposite Bathurst Island Mission. We see big American plane broken on aerodrome. Jap he try to get away. He draw star on ground. He made sign that he did not want to go across water. Three Feller mind him. I go down alonga beach. I sing out four times "Canoe". Nobody answer me. I shot one bullet in salt water. Everyone know now. Paul Kerinaiaua, he bring that canoe alright. Canoe middle water, I go back. I told him: "we go". He did not move. I point gun; he came now. I go behind alright. We put him in canoe. Paul paddled. I held gun. I saw Australian Sergeant run to a tree and make ready 303 rifle. I sing out to Frank: "you tell Sarge no more come out yet"<sup>140</sup>.

Whilst being taken across Apsley Straight to Bathurst Island, the Aborigines feared that Hajime would commit suicide by throwing himself to the crocodiles. Matthias told him that there were no white people left on the island, however he sent a runner ahead to

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<sup>139</sup> Lockwood, Op.Cit. p183.

<sup>140</sup> Pye, Op.Cit. p49

tell RAAF guards on the opposite bank. He told them to keep out of sight until Hajime was safely on the shore.<sup>141</sup>

We get longa shore. He (Sergeant Les Powell) said to Jap: "put your hands up". Jap see no Sarge. He no understand what he say. Now Jap turn. "Hey", Sergeant say, "put up your hands". Jap look frighten, he salute, bend low four times. Sarge he know me from helping put mines in Aerodrome. "Oh", he says, "you Matthias". He give me rifle, I give revolver. I watch Jap; Sarge fire revolver near Jap.

We came to RAAF place. Might be five or six Australians there. Wireless him there. Jap put inside on chair, he get tucker, big mob number one. Soldiers talk about Zero plane. I put camera, map cloth on table then go and sit outside. I could not understand. I thought they would shoot him for Jap humbugging Darwin and mission. Father. McGrath rides up on horse; he said in my language "Yirringkiryiri". That is, "he got properly ugly face". I have a good laugh.

Sergeant Les Powell, an Army engineer sent to Bathurst Island earlier that month to service equipment, saw Hajime being brought across Apsley Straight by canoe. After being put ashore he disarmed him of a .32" automatic which had several bullets in the magazine.<sup>142</sup> Powell and some others then took Hajime to their quarters. They fixed his wounds, fed him and removed his boots and coveralls.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> O'Connor, Op.Cit, *Department of Defence, RAAF Historical Section (ACT): Main File, Bombing of Darwin*

<sup>142</sup> From a recent letter sent to *The Department of Veteran Affairs* from Les Powell. This letter is now in the possession of Michael O'Sullivan, Curatorial Assistant, Private Records, *The Australian War Memorial (ACT)*: The letter has not as yet been cleared for public viewing.

<sup>143</sup> Hajime's clothing is now part of *The RAAF Museum's* clothing collection in Point Cook, Victoria.



A message was sent to Darwin informing them of Hajime's capture and requesting an aircraft. The aircraft did not come until two days later.

At night time they sat around the table interrogating him in Pidgin English. Powell liked Hajime and thought he was "quite a nice fellow."<sup>144</sup> They ate with him, slept in the same room and even made Hajime do the washing up.<sup>145</sup>

Five days after the Darwin bombing, a plane was sent to Bathurst Island to pick up Hajime and Brother Quinn.<sup>146</sup> Brother Quinn from the Catholic mission had been summoned to appear before a Royal Commission. The Commission was being held to investigate the effect on Darwin of the raid, with the view of implementing preventative measures.<sup>147</sup> Justice Lowe was to be sent from Melbourne. The hearing was due to start within two weeks.

Hajime was flown to the RAAF headquarters in Darwin to be officially interrogated with an interpreter present. His fate was to become Australia's first Prisoner Of War.<sup>148</sup>

The interrogation commenced with the soldiers asking Hajime about who he was and from where he had come.<sup>149</sup>

"What is Your Name?" they asked.

"Tadeo Minami" said Hajime.

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<sup>144</sup> Alford, Op.Cit., p21

<sup>145</sup> Les Powell from my personal interview.

<sup>146</sup> Hall, Op.Cit.p22

<sup>147</sup> Newman Rosenthal, "Sir Charles Lowe", The Age, Melbourne, May 11th, 1968.pp17-18

<sup>148</sup> Alford, Op.Cit., p21

<sup>149</sup> *The Australian War Memorial (ACT): AWM54;779/375*

“What is your rank?”

“Sergeant, Air Gunner”.<sup>150</sup>

“What is your unit?”

“Murrakami Air unit”.

“What is your age?”

“I am 22, born on the 11th of December.”

“Could you tell us how you arrived on Melville Island?”

“I had been in Ambon air base in The Dutch East Indies as the member of the crew of a high level bomber. We received orders on the 19th of February to proceed to Darwin. On the way to Darwin, our plane caught fire before we had reached our destination. I bailed out, swum a mile to the shores of Bathurst Island. I wandered around for two or three days until I was taken by an Aboriginal to the aerodrome and made prisoner”.<sup>151</sup>

“Hajime” talked easily, was unselfconscious and gave the impression of speaking the truth as far as he knew it. His knowledge of his job, according to the soldiers, was adequate; but his knowledge of and apparent interest in extraneous matters practically nil. His interrogators, as far as their experience allowed

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

This is the information “verbatim” as contained in an intelligence report on *Tadao Minimi*. (The first prisoner of war.) However, for narrative flow, I have put the reports narrative conclusions in first person question/answer format. This may or may not be how the interrogation actually proceeded, but the findings are unaltered. (*Army Interrogation Reports no.1 Tadeo Minami, no.2 Sakaki Minorn. 1st March, 1942.*)

<sup>151</sup> *The Australian War Memorial (ACT): AWM54;779/375*

them to tell, considered this to be consistent with his type- -a peasant farmer.<sup>152</sup>

“Where did you receive your education and military training?” the soldiers asked.

“I was educated at *Osaki Technical School* to middle standard. I only finished one year ago. Since then I have had one year of flying training including four months of infantry training. I am a conscript and was called up when I was 20. I was put in air service because of my physique.”<sup>153</sup> Hajime replied.

“Did you have machine gun practice?”

“Yes. We had a fixed gun with ring and bead sight”.

“Where did you go to high school?”

“I went to *Kangawa High School* and graduated nine years ago”.

“What about your family?”

“I came from a peasant family and I did not like leaving what I considered to be my job in life. However, it is something to be proud of to be in the army and I have no dislikes about it.

“I am looking forward to getting back to farming, that is why I did not pay much attention to anything else beyond what I had to learn”.

“Do you want to go back to Japan?”

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

“No, I do not wish to be sent back to Japan. My friends will not want to have anything to do with me. I have been taken prisoner and I will not be regarded as a good character and I would not be able to get back into the army.”

“I want to stay in Australia!”

“What happened to your crew?”

“All the other crew members were killed. I descended by parachute”.

“Do you like War?”

“No. Are you going to kill me?” ...

After the interrogation the soldiers signed off the report with, “Statements appear to be fairly reliable”.<sup>154</sup>

### **August, 1944.**

With one long blast of the bugle, Tadeo signalled the break-out. It was 1.55 a.m. The prisoners whose job it was to attack the gates spilled out of their huts. Seconds later, waves of Japanese shouting “*banzai, banzai*” were charging across B compound in their prearranged directions.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Charlotte Carr-Gregg, Japanese Prisoners of War in Revolt, p69

The tailor's shop erupted in flame, then a sleeping hut. Soon the whole core of the compound was an inferno, with the wooden walls blazing and the fibro roofs exploding in the heat like grenades. Nearly all the huts were now on fire with the prisoners who had elected to die still inside.<sup>156</sup>

I felt I could hear (Tadeo) Minami's bugle again, telling me the enemy would all be killed. There were so many people running in front of me. At the beginning of the charge there was plenty of glare from the floodlights, then darkness, then the lights from a signal, red and yellow stripes across the sky, illuminating everything. The bullets from the tower were slanting down strongly, like heavy rain. In the middle many people fell down under the hail of bullets.....It was hard for me to go forward because there were so many bodies. Sometimes I walked across dead bodies, sometimes I pushed them aside. At last I reached the officer's gate, but here again there were many bodies. I huddled down.<sup>157</sup>

Tadeo went down in a hail of fire from the rifles. With bullets in the chest he regained his feet, but went down again. Finally he managed to crawl into a drain. He was losing a lot of blood and his strength was draining. He propped himself up, took a cigarette from his pocket and lit it. He had a puff, but he was weakening fast and was in danger of lapsing into unconsciousness.

Tadeo was found the following morning with a cigarette and knife beside him his throat had been cut.<sup>158</sup>

## **The End**

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<sup>156</sup> Teruhiko Asada, The Night of a Thousand Suicides, (Ray Cohan Translation) , Arkon, Sydney, 1973, p71.

<sup>157</sup> Marekuni Takahara, Cowra Monogatari, Kobe: Toyo Keizal Shinpo, 1987.p132

## **Appendix A. The use of Oral History.**

Oral history is used in numerous places throughout this thesis. The procedure used in procuring the information from the two people I interviewed is listed below. The other oral histories, predominately in the Cowra scene, I have taken from secondary sources and the author's own personal interviews. I cannot thus ascertain the interview techniques used nor vouch for their accuracy beyond my own comparative historical contextualisation.

The oral descriptions used in the Darwin bombing scene are my most reliable. They are sworn statements taken before the Lowe Royal Commission into the Bombing of Darwin. The parameters of the inquiry were broad enough to allow the seventy eyewitnesses to speak freely about what they had seen. And they most certainly did.

***W.K. Baum "Tips for Interviewers." Oral History for the Local Historical Society, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1971.pp.32-35***

1: An interview is not a dialogue. The whole point of the interview is to get the narrator to tell *his* story. Limit your own remarks to a few pleasantries to break the ice, then brief questions to guide him along. It is not necessary to give him the details of your great-grandmother's trip in a covered wagon in order to get him to tell you about his grandfather's trip to California. Just say, "I understand your grandfather came around the Horn to California. What did he tell you about the trip?"

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<sup>158</sup> Piper, "Epitaph for a Darwin Raider" Op.Cit., p13.

2: Ask questions that require more of an answer than “yes” or “no”. Start with “Why, How, Where, What kind of...” Instead of “Was Henry Miller a good boss?” ask “What did the cowhands think of Henry Miller as a boss?”

3: Ask one question at a time. Sometimes interviewers ask a series of questions all at once. Probably the narrator will answer only the first or last one. You will catch this kind of questioning when you listen through the tape after the session and you can avoid it the next time.

4: Ask brief questions. We all know the irrepressible speech-maker who, when questions are called for at the end of a lecture, gets up and asks a five minute question. It is unlikely that the narrator is so dull that it takes more than a sentence or two for him to understand the question.

5: Start with non-controversial questions; save the delicate questions, if there are any, until you have become better acquainted. A good place to begin is with the narrator’s youth and background.

6: Don’t let periods of silence fluster you. Give your narrator a chance to think of what he wants to add before you hustle him along with the next question. Relax, write a few words on your note pad. The sure sign of a beginning interviewer is a tape where every brief pause signals the next question.

7: Don’t worry if your questions are not as beautifully phrased as you would like them to be for posterity. A few fumbled questions will help put your narrator at ease as he realises that you are not perfect and he need not worry if he isn’t

either. It is unnecessary to practise fumbling a few questions: most of us are nervous enough to do that naturally.

8: Don't interrupt a good story because you have thought of a question, or because your narrator is straying from the planned outline. If the information is pertinent, let him go on, but jot down your question on your notepad as you will remember to ask it later.

9: If your narrator does stray into non-pertinent subjects (the most common problems are to follow some family member's children or to get into a series of family medical problems), try to pull him back as quickly as possible. "Before we move on. I'd like to find out how the closing of the mine in 1898 affected your family's finances. Do you remember that?"

10: It is often hard for a narrator to describe persons. An easy way to begin is to ask him to describe the person's appearance. From there, the narrator is more likely to move into character description.

11: Interviewing is one time where a negative approach is more effective than a positive one. Ask about the negative aspects of a situation. For example, in asking about a person, do not begin with a glowing description of him. "I know the mayor was a very generous and wise person. Did you find him so?" Few narrators will quarrel with a statement like that even though they may have found the mayor a disagreeable person. You will get a more lively answer if you start out in the negative. "Despite the mayor's reputation for good works, I hear he was a very difficult man for his immediate employees to get along with." If your narrator admired the mayor greatly, he will spring to his defence with an apt illustration of why



your statement is wrong. If he did find him hard to get along with, your remark has given him a chance to illustrate some of the mayor's more unpleasant characteristics.

12: Try to establish at every important point in the story where the narrator was or what his role was in this event, in order to indicate how much is eye-witness information and how much is based on reports of others. "Where were you at the time of the mine disaster?" "Did you talk to any of the survivors later?" "Did their accounts differ in any way from the newspaper accounts of what happened?" Work around these questions carefully or you can appear to be doubting the accuracy of the narrator's account.

13: Do not challenge accounts you think may be inaccurate, try to develop as much information as possible that can be used by later researchers in establishing what probably happened. Your narrator may be telling you quite accurately what he saw. As Walter Lord explained when describing his interviews of the *Titanic*, "Every lady I interviewed had left the sinking ship in the last lifeboat. As I later found out from studying the placement of the lifeboats, no group of lifeboats was in view of another and each lady probably was in the last lifeboat she could see leaving the ship"

14: Do tactfully point out to your narrator that there is a different account of what he is describing, if there is. Start out "I have heard...." or "I have read...." This is not a challenge to his account, but rather an opportunity for him to bring up further evidence to refute the opposing view, or to explain how that view was established, or to temper what he has already said. If done skilfully, some of your best information can come from this juxtaposition of different accounts.

15: Try to avoid “off the record” information- -the times when your narrator asks you to turn off the recorder while he tells you a good story. Ask him to let you record the whole thing and promise that you will erase that portion if he asks you after further consideration. You may have to erase it later, or he may not tell you the story at all, but once you allow “off the record” stories, he may continue with more and more and you will end up with no recorded interview at all. “Off the record” information is only useful if you yourself are researching a subject and this is the only way you can get the information. It has no value if your purpose is to collect information for later use by other researchers.

16: Don't switch the recorder off and on. It is much better to waste a little tape on irrelevant material than to call attention to the tape recorder by a constant on-off operation. For this reason, I do not recommend the stop-start switches available on some mikes. If your mike has such a switch, tape it to “on” to avoid missing material--then forget it. Of course you can turn off the recorder if the telephone rings or someone interrupts your session.

17: Interviews usually work out better if there is no one present except the narrator and the interviewer. Sometimes two or more narrators can be successfully recorded, but usually each one of them would have been better alone.

18: Do end the interview at a reasonable time. An hour and half is probably maximum. First, you must protect your narrator against over-fatigue; second, you may become tired even if he does not. Some narrators tell you very frankly if they are tired, or their wives [or husbands] will. Otherwise,

you must plead fatigue, another appointment, or no more tape.

19: Do not use the interview to show off your own knowledge, vocabulary, charm, or other abilities. Good interviewers do not shine; only their interviews do.

### **Appendix B: Was Hajime Well Connected?**

One of the most important contacts for research was Mr. John Haslett, an “independent amateur Historian” in Darwin. He told me the outline of the story and directed me to the sources that he knew existed. John Haslett is the curator of *The Aviation Historical Society of The Northern Territory’s* Darwin museum. He retrieved “Hajime’s” plane from Melville Island in 1970 and had it taken to the Darwin museum for restoration and display.

In the following letter note that he claims that he was told in 1973 by a Japanese student/journalist that:

“Hajime Toyashima” gave a false name and claimed to be a seaplane crew member when he was taken into custody.”

I am not sure how the student/journalist could have known this because in 1973, the intelligence report I used in Canberra entitled “Tadeo Minimi” had not yet been made available to the public. (There was a thirty year access restriction.)

Hajime Toyashima may have been the pilot of the Zero that crashed on Melville Island, and this could be proven by Japanese archival research. But how would this researcher have known what name a pilot would have given to Australian authorities if the documents were not yet available? And even if they were, how do you make the links? This “student/journalist” may be the original

person who linked the “identity” of Hajime Toyashima to Tadeo Minimi. (Student *and* journalist, now there is a reliable primary source.)

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Dear Craig,

Thanks for your letter, of 18 September, which, I apologise sat in the pile since it arrived here on 21 Sept.

Despite an intensive search, I have not managed to find the record of my interview, with a Japanese student/journalist in 1973, when he visited Darwin. --It was he, who told me that Hajime Toyashima gave a false name and claimed to be a seaplane crew member, when he was taken into custody.

It is quite feasible that, having contributed to the conflagration at Darwin, a couple of days previously, the prisoner would seek to disassociate himself from that event, when he was captured.

Having spoke to an elderly relative of the late Matthias Ngapiatulwai, at Melville Island, there is no doubt in my mind that the prisoner was taken by canoe, to the Catholic mission station at Bathurst Island, by Matthias. A missionary told me of seeing the prisoner, being escorted onto a military transport aircraft, at the Bathurst Island airstrip, by an Australian Sgt.

I was also told that, to discourage any escape attempt, the prisoner's flying overalls and boots were taken from him.-- This was confirmed to some degree, when during 1992,

overalls and boots, alleged to have been worn by Toyashima, were loaned by the RAAF Museum, Point Cook, for the "Battle of Australia Anniversary" exhibition at Darwin.

Although certainly, Sgt. Les Powell was photographed, standing next to Toyashima (Toyashima stripped to underwear and bandages), old blackfellas don't tell lies, so I would suggest the Sgt. Powell "captured" Toyashima, AFTER he was paddled across Apsley Strait, from Melville to Bathurst Island, in Matthias' custody.

THURSDAY 05 OCTOBER! --More humble apologies, but unavoidable circumstances caused me to be absent from Darwin.

In view of the short time before your thesis is due;

Brother John Pye was, I believe at Bathurst Island Mission, when Toyashima was apprehended. --He published a book some years ago, which may contain details relative to your research.--I inquired after Br. Pye and it seems that he may now be living in retirement, at the Catholic retreat, at Kingswood, NSW. If so, a phone call to that establishment in your locale, may give you direct access to an eyewitness.

As previously mentioned, Robert K. Piper and his wife Misako (who is of Japanese Origin), meticulously researched documents relating to Japanese prisoner units and personnel. I have lost contact with Bob Piper, since he ceased employment at RAAF Historical Section, Canberra. --If he is still resident in Aust, he may be listed in the Canberra phone directory or alternately, a call to RAAF Historical (062-655223), may give some clue to his present whereabouts.

Obviously you have read Douglas Lockwood's *Australia's Pearl Harbour* pages 182-183 and accessed the records of Prisoner of War No. PWJ11001, who allegedly died by his own hand, during the breakout from Cowra detention camp, NSW, in August 1944.

At your local reference library, *Darwin's Air War, Darwin 1942* by Timothy Hall and *The Shadows Edge* by Prof. Alan Powell, would be worth a glance, if you have not already done so.

Do not fall into the trap of listing Toyashima's aircraft No. 5349, as "The first Japanese aircraft shot down over Australia." --The remains of this aircraft are currently exhibited at Darwin Aviation Museum.

As a result of my personal discussions with Robert. F. MacMahon, one of the American pilots engaged in combat on 19/02/42 and anti-aircraft gunner W.T. "Darky" Hudson, there is some question of timing when the first Japanese aircraft was shot down, but, certainly, an aircraft shot down by an American fighter pilot and the "Zero", shot down by "Darky", were destroyed BEFORE Toyashima's aircraft could have possibly travelled the 30 odd nautical miles (50 KM), to its forced landing site on Melville Island.

Although rather belated, I hope that the above details will help you to authenticate your writings about Australian history.

Yours sincerely

John. M.Haslett

Collection Custodian, Darwin 5th October, 1995.

**Appendix C: Hajime is a figure whose ‘capture’ amounts to heroism.**

This is a copy of a letter that I obtained from Les Powell (the Sergeant who caught “Hajime Toyashima” on Melville Island). It was written to Brother John Pye of the Bathurst Island mission for his (unpublished) book, *The Tiwi Islands*. I am not sure of the date, but Mr. Powell said it was about five years ago. I was lucky to stumble upon this letter as it turned up on the desk of a curatorial assistant at The Australian War Memorial during one of my research trips to Canberra. The War Memorial would not allow me to read it as it had not yet been released for public research. At a later interview with Mr. Powell himself, he was kind enough to give me a copy.

Mr. Powell is in his mid seventies and his handwriting is not the best, so I have “translated” the letter as best I could. His story is similar to the other accounts that I have used, except for small details where he and the Aborigines differ.

It is interesting that Mr. Powell mentions that there were five other Japanese prisoners captured within days of “Hajime Toyashima”. Five survived and the Japanese prisoners claimed themselves that one of them was killed (they also said that they were from a merchant ship that was sunk). These Japanese really came from (as Mr. Powell says he was informed later by a Japanese television documentary crew) a bomber downed during either the first or second raid on Darwin. He notes this almost in passing in his letter. He also told me at our later interview that no one seems to care about these prisoners. I suppose that “number one” has more historical appeal.

Hajime Toyashima apparently told Sergeant Powell, after he was captured by him, that he was from a Zero. Why then would "Hajime" lie at the subsequent official interrogation and say that he was from a bomber that crashed? Is it quite possible that "Hajime Toyashima" used a different name to "Tadeo Minimi" and that "Tadeo Minimi" was the crew member from the bomber that the others claimed was killed?

I asked Mr. Powell if he was he certain that Hajime Toyashima was Tadeo Minimi, one of the leaders of the Cowra Breakout. He told me that he was "absolutely certain", although I am not quite sure how he knew. I suppose that this is one of the so-called "objective" advantages of the historian. The participants do not always have a privileged access to the knowledge of the events in which they are involved. Often it is the historian, removed from the events, who is in a better position to put together into a plausible whole the confused, disparate, and sometimes contradictory accounts.

When I visited Mr. Powell, he emerged with a huge suitcase full of articles, books, letters, photos and even a personal interview from a documentary about the Cowra breakout (this was by the Japanese television crew that had visited him). All this material still did not convince me that the connection between Tadeo Minimi and Hajime Toyashima could be proven. Most of the articles and the documentary were fairly tabloid and gave few indications of how they reached their conclusions.

It dawned on me whilst at Mr.Powell's house that capturing Hajime Toyashima, Australia's first Prisoner Of War, was probably this man's greatest life achievement (after all he is still being hassled by adventurous university students). The more important the connections of "Hajime Toyashima" seem to later events, the more important the story is for those who appropriate it (I was almost



tempted myself to try to prove that Hajime Toyashima was really John Curtin)! This story makes good press because it stirs the popular imagination, but no one has ever dared to question its truthfulness. Big fish for big boys or little fish for little girls. This is *Australian* history after all.

Another important observation I made is that individual identity did not seem to be all that crucial to Mr. Powell. He said “what does it matter” after he told me that he was “absolutely certain” that Hajime Toyashima was a leader in the Cowra Breakout. This appeared to me to be a somewhat indicative war-time view of the Japanese people. The “yellow peril” and the “hordes” of “Asians” were usual constructions of individual Asians and Asian cultures within the Australian media. The Australian media, especially the commercial media, still makes vague essentialisations about the two-thirds of the planet’s population that is “Asia”.

Perhaps Hajime Toyashima never really had an individual identity, but only represented Japan and its political values. This is exactly how I constructed him in my narrative, as Hajime was supposed to represent much more than “fluffy and fat cotton”. I researched his individual identity as far as possible, but firmly contextualised him as a war-time representative. This *subaltern* approach signifies that everyday people are just as important in war-time (or anytime) as those who lay claim to an imperious perspective.

This is Les Powell’s story from the letter I discovered in the War Memorial, that I was later personally given.

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Brother Pye,

The following is a factual account of my part in the capture of the first enemy prisoner taken on Aust. soil, also [?] more Japanese airmen from a crashed bomber who came down off Melville Island.

I arrived in Darwin on the 1st January 1942 with my unit 23 Fld. Coy. RAE. [?] time later I was detached to P.2E. Hqs from there flown to Bathurst Island.

My instructions were to assist in the mining of the airstrip, most of this work was done by one of [?] officers with the help of the natives and two airforce personnel who were stationed there, a Corporal Moore and [?] Elimore.

On completion my instructions were to maintain the [?] and test for continuity twice daily and in the event of a Japanese landing was to wait until the aircraft landed then blow up the airstrip, making my way back to the mainland best way possible. (Expendable no doubt)

On the morning of the first air raid on Darwin 19-2-1942, we, that is Moore, Elimore and myself heard the sound of many aircraft, on going outside and there in the sky it seemed to us to be hundreds of planes heading in the direction of Darwin.

We then saw three Zeros break from their formation heading for us. Moore and Elimore ran and climbed down a well, I grabbed my [?] kit and headed for my firing point never got further than some cement. Laid there and watched the Zeros make three [?] firing at the radio shack [?] in the mission where Father McGrath had sent a warning to Darwin. (Also attacked a U.S. aircraft that was standing on the airstrip. It

had damaged a wing tip on landing some days before.) [The Zeros] then returned to the formation heading south.

That night we received a radio message from Darwin thanking us for the warning, later we found out they had ignored it, great shame.

The next day it was decided to shift the radio into the bush and Father McGrath was going to close the mission sending the native girls and boys to Melville Island this was carried out and that left myself and the RAAF [?] to our knowledge the only people on the island.

We carried out a routine Moore and Elimore stayed with radio during the day and I at the firing point, at night returning to our quarters.

One day about three or four days later, Moore and Elimore had left for the day. I was preparing to go when three natives came running around to where I was, singing out Japanese! Japanese! I grabbed my gear and took off [?] to the firing point, the natives after me, they finally got through to me that there was only one and he was across on Melville Island, I told them to bring him over. This they refused to do unless I came down to the beach with my rifle as the Jap had a gun. I went down and hid behind a tree or palm, they then brought him across as he got out of the canoe I stepped out and told him to put his hands up, he did after bowing I told one of the natives to take his pistol (a .32 automatic) and hand it to me he then became a POW. No shots were fired and the pistol was fully loaded.

I took him around to our quarters and dispatched one of the natives to tell Moore and Elimore to come back as I had a Jap prisoner, they arrived some twenty minutes later.

We stripped the prisoner of his flying overalls and treated his wounds leaving his underclothes on, I then took him outside and had Elimore take a photo with my camera. I have read that the natives had done the above, not so. I think they thought we had found the camera on him, so they included it in their story.

Moore sent a message asking for a plane to take back the prisoner to the mainland that came two days later.

Moore suggested on consultation with me, we decided to give the credit to the natives so we could ask Darwin for tobacco and food as we would have to rely on them in the case of a Japanese landing. (My first mistake.)

The prisoner was quite co-operative, at night we "interrogate" with the help of a pidgin Japanese book. He said that he was a fighter pilot and he showed us where on the map (our map) he took off from and where the bombers left from.

He was picked up a couple of days later not quite sure if it was two or three days, two I think.

We then resumed our routine. Moore and Elimore in the bush with the radio and I at the firing point.

One of the Americans from the plane mentioned returned to salvage some parts. He was with me one morning after Moore and Elimore had left when the natives came running

around to where we were calling out Japanese! Japanese! They told us there were five on Melville Island opposite the mission we adopted the same tactic as before. We both went down to the beach and told the natives to bring them across, as they stepped ashore we came out from where we were hiding and surprised five startled sorry looking Japs.

Told them to put their hands up, by gesture they were talking a lot so to quieten them I fired a shot at their feet and got a result.

The five were taken around to our quarters given water and something to eat, sent for Moore and Elimore, a message was coded and sent to the mainland, the five said they were off a cargo ship that had been sunk named "Makayu Marki". This was not true. I found this out later when a TV film crew visited my home for an on camera interview. They were off a Jap bomber that came down off Melville Island there were six in the crew and one did not survive.

The film crew were from Y.T.V. "Yomilili" and were down doing a documentary on the Cowra breakout.

When I returned to my unit Moore asked me to make a report to the effect there was a possibility in an electrical storm the air-strip could prematurely be blown up. I said this was unlikely. To keep faith with him and the position they were in not knowing what was happening and they wanted out I subsequently made the report to C.R.E.

Some time later I was with my CO. [?] possible sights that would have to be blown up in case of a Japanese landing. We were at a RAAF radio station when I ran into corporal

Moore he was with at least six other airman, he introduced me as the Sgt. who had taken prisoner the first Japanese prisoner on Australian soil. A fact he seems to have forgotten in later years, in fact it seems we, Elimore or myself never existed, he skips over the important parts, possibly a mental block as he was not there when the action happened both times, I wonder would he have reported it if he was in my shoes? Makes you wonder!

When I visited Bathurst Island some years later with my wife you may remember I questioned Matthias about some of the account such as the firing of the pistol and what had supposed to have happened on Melville Island he just thought the truth would have spoiled a good story.

He says when I stepped out from behind the tree he says I gave him my rifle and he gave me revolver and that I fired a shot, not so. He then says when I took him around to our quarters there were five or six stationed there, not so. I would not have gone down to the beach on my own if there had been others there.

On another occasion he was quoted saying Father McGrath came riding up on a horse. I do not know where he got that from, as he had long gone from Bathurst Island.

The main fact is there were, apart from the natives, by myself there and my account was never asked for, after all the Jap was never a prisoner until I stepped out and at gun point and disarmed him and then and only then became a POW

Sgt. 23.Fld.Coy.RAE.

Les Powell.

P.S. In this year "That Australia Remembers" It would be nice to receive some official recognition, the enclosed data is to establish my bona fide and history should be based on fact. (Enclosed photo to do as you with)

(Letter written about 1990.)

#### **Appendix D: The Death of Certainty.**

There are a few alternative endings to the story of Hajime that I hinted at in my narrative. The first is that Hajime died on Melville Island and was never captured. He may have simply died of starvation or of inflicted wounds. The pilot that Les Powell and the Aborigines caught may have been someone else. However, it would be a pretty short story then and perhaps not worthy of the dozens of published accounts.

It is possible that the Aborigines killed Hajime. There was much antagonism between Japanese pearlers and the Aborigines that had resulted in deaths. I found this published account of some other Japanese prisoners who were "captured" by the Northern Territory Aborigines.

Not all were taken alive, according to bob Baupani, who worked on the Milingimbi airstrip at the time of the Japanese raids. He recalled a Japanese airman who parachuted from a downed aircraft.

"Soon as (he) bin landing, soldier there.....They never bin take prisoner. No, just one way bullet.....finish him up."

And, he said, the whites told their Aboriginal workers:

"if you see any landing Japanese, just spearem."

There is a persistent story which indicates that, at least on one occasion, the Aboriginals did just that. As Tim Japangardi told it:

"When some Australian people shot a boat, Japanese boat and.....some of them get live and swam across sea to beach. Some Aboriginal people caught them.....and put a spear through them. all around the beach."<sup>159</sup>

Another alternative is that Hajime was simply sent to Cowra and was not very important (but who wants to hear that?) It would seem that many "historians" like Harry Gordon and Bob Piper, who have made "absolute certain" connections between Hajime Toyashima and Tadeo Minimi, have set out with a thesis or a "cause" that asserts that Hajime Toyashima is Tadeo Minimi, and they will find any minuscule fact to prove it. After all, facts are "objectively observable" and "empirically verifiable" truth(?)

One of these so-called facts is that "Hajime Toyashima", if this is the pilot in the photo with Les Powell, scarred his face when he crashed. This may be true as, in the photo, the prisoner has many bandages on his face. It is also certain that Tadeo Minimi had a scar above his right eye as the following evidence from the Cowra Inquiry states. But this hardly makes the connection absolute. Remember that this is a time of war and scars would have been common place. And even if Tadeo Minimi is the same pilot that Les Powell captured, how do we know that he is the same "number one" pilot from the Zero?

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<sup>159</sup> Powell, Op.Cit., p.253



It is easy to become confused and bogged down in detail and the choice of documented “evidence” in this study was enormous. Indeed as E.H.Carr once said, “facts are fish” meaning that it is possible to choose numerous “fish” out of the millions in the ocean and “serve them up” any way you wish.<sup>160</sup>

This is what Sergeant Jack Granger of the intelligence Corps is quoted as saying when asked about Tadeo Minimi’s identity during a court of inquiry into the Cowra breakout..

“Are you sure it was Minami?”

“Yes” he replied. “I could positively identify Minami, having spent some time in the compound with him during his term as acting camp leader and when he was camp leader in D compound.”

“Did he have any identifying marks?”

“Yes. He had a scar on the corner of his left eye.”

Negervich was asked: “Did you see Minami’s body?”

“Yes,” he responded, “in the morning. It was in the Southern part of Broadway right next to the officers’ quarters. He was dead and lying in the gutter.”<sup>161</sup>

The pilot who crashed on Melville Island may have wounded his face when he landed. Tadeo Minimi, or who ever this person was, had a scar above his left (or right) eye. Again this seems like big

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<sup>160</sup> E.H.Carr, What Is History, London, Harmondsworth, 1964, p9

<sup>161</sup> *Australian Archives (ACT): AA1977;461*

fish for big boys. Facts can be fish and served up as any dish you please on the fishmonger's tray.

### **Epilogue: How I wrote the story of Hajime..**

#### **A: Stylistic Devices.**

Although in *The Question of Hajime*, I use numerous fictional devices, as I outlined in the prologue, it is not fiction. I am heavily influenced by the Harvard academics, Simon Schama and Jonathan Spence, but their works (especially Simon Schama's Dead Certainties) venture far more into the fictional realm. Schama speculatively invents imaginary conversations or interior monologues, of which the accuracy he makes no claim.<sup>162</sup> The first person conversations that I use in my story are the actual conversations, taken from primary sources, that the real life characters were recorded as saying.

I used court room dialogue or investigative interviews to ascertain what was actually said and re-contextualised this material, in most cases, verbatim. When I could not use a source because it was in third person or past tense, I simply changed it to first person, present tense, restricted by the documentary evidence in my possession. It is not so much that I do not agree with Spence or Schama's fictional devices, it is that I had many more primary sources available to me than they perhaps did. My work is concerned with history merely fifty years past, whilst their particular studies are set in the 17th Century.

A stylistic device that I experimented with was the self-reflexivity of the sources that I used to construct my narrative. Schama does this extraordinarily well in Dead Certainties, which I feel detracts from his many critics who claim that it is "all made up". Self-

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<sup>162</sup> Theodore, Zeldin. "Playmates" in London Review of Books, 13th June 1991, p15

reflexivity is a tool long used in *avant-garde* cinema where the viewer is made aware that what he or she is watching is film. Film is constructed of celluloid, cameras, editing, directors, lighting, story, and an infinite amount of subjective choices.

By making the viewer aware of all the choices that go into making a film, the director is not imposing a false sense of “reality” upon the audience. For instance, a wobble of the camera, an editing jump-cut, and characters that seem to walk across the screen can make you aware of the camera’s limited view. Wim Wender’s Wings of Desire (1989) and Fassbinder’s The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant (1972) are brilliant examples of self-reflexivity in the cinematic arts.

The opposite to the *avant-garde* film is the Hollywood film that uses a concept known as *suture*. The Hollywood film glosses over the links and choices that go into making a film and “sutures” the viewer into the story. It portrays a false sense of “reality” as it denies the producer the ability to show the process of his or her art. In a Hollywood film, the camera is all-knowing and all-seeing and does not dare to “take a look at itself”. A Hollywood film has very few tangents and the viewer is not made aware of the alternative directions the story could have taken, or why the story is taking the direction that it is; like sheep we are passively drawn along.

This analogy to cinema is important because it is the authoritative tone in much historical analysis that is like an “all-seeing camera”. Analysis often hides the links and alternative tangents that the “story” could have taken, by imposing a false sense of scientific objectivity, or “reality”. In the Darwin bombing scene in my narrative, there are numerous cuts and jumps that make the reader aware of the evidence. If I had have made the story smoother or

attempted to hide the links, I would have been concealing the historian's craft (or craftiness).

When you read a narrative such as Schama's, a source seems to leap out of the page and make you aware that it is a primary document; this is historical self-reflexivity in action. Schama does this in the court room scene in Dead Certainties, when he refers constantly to the stenographer for no apparent reason. But later you realise (if you are a crafty historian) that this is where he must have obtained his evidence for the very dialogue that he is using.

It is quite difficult to do successfully and I only really tried it a few times (not so subtly in the Darwin Royal Commission scene and the interrogation scene). Its successful use can lessen the reliance on excessive footnoting that can often detract from the story. In my narrative nearly every paragraph required a verifiable footnoted reference as I was well aware that the authoritative and truthful voice of narrative is humbled beneath the bellowing ejaculations of her analytical master.

### **B: Sources.**

I will not offer much more critical analysis here than I have already given in previous sections, because after all, it is not necessary given my narrative and epistemological arguments. Many of the themes, the thesis, evocative ideas, juxtapositions, metaphor, and paradox are contained within the narrative; the individual reader brings his or her own subjective understanding. As discussed in the prologue, this is one of the advantages of this mode.

The sources I used in this study are extremely varied. I used numerous government documents, oral histories, private records, and secondary sources. Probably the least reliable of all these were the secondary sources. An interesting story like this inevitably

attracts the “impeccable” investigative skills of journalists. I found articles in publications as disparate as The Canberra Times, The Age, professional journals, and The Australasian Post Magazine (bored journalists tend to write books with revealing titles such as “Stick em Up” or “Die Like the Carp”).

One of my most reliable sources about Darwin was in fact written by a journalist who lived in Darwin, called Douglas Lockwood (Australia’s Pearl Harbour) (1975). Although originally written in the sixties, it is still the best researched book about the attack (even without the benefit of the minutes of evidence from the Lowe Royal Commission, which Lockwood could not gain access). His description of events and analysis is almost the same as later accounts in which more documents were available.

The portions of published books and complete articles written about “Hajime Toyashima” are riddled with inconsistencies. For instance, Hajime’s name is published in the book Japanese Naval Aces and Fighter Units in World War II. How a 22-year-old supposedly on his first time mission could be an ace pilot is a mystery to me. About the only thing the secondary sources have in common is that, predictably, they nearly all claim that Hajime Toyashima is Tadeo Minimi.

As this thesis is presented, yet another book is hot off the press claiming that Hajime and Tadeo are the same person. It is by Bob Piper, the former boss of RAAF Historical in Canberra. Considering his previous articles in The Canberra Times and The Australasian Post Magazine, which arrogantly asserted conclusions based on flimsy evidence, I am sure this will be more of the same. I am also led to believe that some of Mr. Piper’s sources are a blatant contrivance, such as Photo B (explanation in the Bibliography). It is

perhaps also predictable that Mr. Piper has published his “findings” in just about any magazine that will take his articles.

**C: A note on epistemological angst.**

I should at this stage at least mention something about the debate in the Australian press this year over the blurring of fact and fiction that many short sighted journalists reduce to the word “faction”. I am really not sure what the definition of this term is or even if it has any relation to the work of Simon Schama, Garrett Mattingly, John Womack or others working in an evocative, narrative style. The debate split the Australian academic community in what I saw as a rather sensationalist over-reaction. Helen Demidenko wrote a novel; it is really that simple. It was a particularly good novel for a first time author and showed quite good novelistic skill.

All novels are historical to some degree, and without history, we would not be able to understand anything that is written. Even a science fiction book has to have some reference to known historical events, characters, actions, and cultural paradigms; otherwise, how would any of the ideas within it be communicable? How come Clio does not apply her same empiricist rules to Tolstoy, Kafka, Celine, Patrick White, or Banjo Patterson? They all deal with real, empirically known events to some degree and none of them, just like Helen Demidenko, ever claimed to be an historian. Literature is not history, nor (as I am sure would surprise Gerald Henderson), is it journalism. The rich world of the imagination is very different from the observable, empirical, positivist, and practical world.

The debate reveals a deep seated anxiety within the history profession and perhaps is an indication of the winds of epistemological scepticism and Nietzschean denials of the possibility of objectivity that are sweeping through every humanistic

discipline.<sup>163</sup> Rather than a matter of fiction writers attacking the discipline of history, it was a matter of historians and journalists attacking literature (for what ever reason).

Clio is morally reserved when it comes to Brett Whiteley and Henry Miller, so why did Helen Demidenko receive her wrath? Art and science are two different things requiring different skills, different outlooks, and very different motivations. I am not really sure why so many historians failed to remember this when it came to Helen Demidenko. Could it have been a literary version of *Bluepoles*? (Frederick McCubbin was much better at telling the “truth”).

I do not really wish to be associated with Helen Demidenko any more than I do with Jean Genet, but it is inevitable that I will be considering the misguided nature of the whole debate. “Evocative narrative” has roots stemming back over two thousand years and “faction” has about as much meaning for me as putting Vegemite and Peanut Butter on the same sandwich!

At the beginning of the year a number of academics suggested that I withdraw from honours rather than write what they considered was “not history”. Narrative is not only the oldest form of history, but I consider it to be a much more intellectually challenging and aesthetically pleasing mode. If I had chosen a title for my thesis such as “Labour Relations in the Dutch Margarine Industry 1870-1934” no one would have blinked an eye.<sup>164</sup>

A generation ago, almost everyone in Australia shared a much more common history and consistent set of cultural norms. There were fewer media outlets and academic curriculum was much more predictable. This universality has now been shattered, probably for

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<sup>163</sup> Gordon.S.Wood. “Novel History” in New York Review of Books, 27th June 1991, p12.

good. Information now splits along demographic, political, and cultural fault lines. We all look in our separate mirrors now, and mostly see ourselves looking back. What was universal in the post-war years has become the media of the middle-class: the political and cultural structure of the ageing and incredibly self-righteous boomers. They tend to the perfumed remains of the industrial era with barbed wire defining and guarding the perimeters. They pay homage to a Zero, crashed and battered in the Australian bush, its motor the decadent drones of a modernism that no longer bears any trace of flight.

Manning Clarke once said that “every generation writes its own history in its own image: every generation admits into the portals of the heroes men [or women Manning] fashioned in their own image”.<sup>165</sup> Someone also once said that the past is another country; that person had obviously never looked all that hard at their own.

PS. I had great difficulty in finding documentary evidence as to whether a dog actually pissed on the street a few minutes before the Darwin raid. I can only make an informed speculation as to its truthfulness.

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<sup>164</sup> As quoted by Simon Schama from (*History Workshop Journal 1990*) in “No future for History without its stories” in The Sydney Morning Herald, 18th November, 1991, p13

<sup>165</sup> Manning Clarke “Heroes” in Australia: The Daedalus Symposium, Sydney, Angus and Robinson, 1985, pp.57-84.



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## **Primary Sources. (Including Research Centres)**

### **A) Photographic Evidence:**

***Australian War Memorial (ACT), Les Powell Personal Records and Robert Piper Personal Records. (Includes captions and my own comparative analysis)***

*As with the written record, there is quite a considerable amount of visual evidence available for this study. And as also similar to the written record, many of the photos were unclear, contradictory to other photos and documents and even blatantly contrived. A small selection of the most published photos are offered in this thesis.*

**Photo A: (Page 10)**

*Published in Robert Piper “ Epitaph for a Darwin Raider” in The Canberra Times, 12th February 1983, p13.*

*This is said to be Zero pilot Hajime Toyashima, centre, with fellow trainees during a visit by members of his fighter-pilot training course to Hirose shrine in Takeda, Japan in 1941.*

**Photo B: (Page 10)**

*Les Powell Personal Collection.*

*Mr. Powell is not sure how he came to get this photo in his collection, but he believes that it may have come from Robert Piper. This photo is contrived as it has “usual signature” written in English and the supposed signature of “Tadeo Minami”. How is it possible that he could have given a false name in pilot school before he was captured by Les. Powell? I had the signature translated and it actually does say Tadeo Minimi. This was the best example of fake evidence that I found.*

**Photo C: (Page 32)**

*Australian War Memorial (ACT): Negative Number; 152204.*

*This is the damaged fuselage of the landed aircraft shot at on Bathurst Island by the Japanese on their way to Darwin for the first raid. It is an American transport plane.*

**Photo D: (Page 21)**

*Les Powell personal collection. and Australian War Memorial (ACT): Negative Number; P0022/02/01*

*This is a photo of Les Powell taken with "Hajime Toyashima" on Bathurst Island. This photo is said to have been taken on the 27th of February 1942. Note that this photo was taken eight days after the first raid on Darwin. It is quite possible that this pilot is not Hajime but another Japanese man from the downed bomber in the same period and similar location.*

**Photo E: (Page 10)**

*Published in Harry Gordon's Voyage from Shame, The Cowra Breakout and Afterwards, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1994, p.27.*

*This is a photo of "Tadeo Minimi" said to be taken by Sam Shallard whilst Tadeo was in Melbourne. It is not clear who this actually is in the photo or its relation to Photo D.*

**Photo F: (Page 22)**

*Robert Piper Personal Collection.*

*This photo is of "Hajime Toyashima" said to be taken at The RAAF Station, Port Pirie, South Australia in about March of 1942. There is a striking resemblance of this pilot to the one in Photo D. He has a similar pose, body shape, height and there are bandages on his face. This evidence contradicts the claim by Shallard that the pilot that he had in custody in Melbourne, "Tadeo Minimi", is the same pilot to this one "Hajime Toyashima".*

**Photo G:(Page 32)**

*Australian War Memorial (ACT): Negative Number; 012741.*

*Machine gun crew on anti-aircraft duty in the Darwin area, 7th January 1942. These light "ack ack" guns had little chance of effective operation against a Japanese attack.*

**Photo H: (Page 42)**

*Australian War Memorial (ACT): Negative Number; 062344.*

*A photo taken of a squad of Melville Island Aborigines taken on the 22nd of December, 1943. They were enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy for special duties such as locating stranded Japanese airmen.*

**Photo I: (Page 42)**

*Les Powell Personal Collection.*

*A photo of the Zero crash landed on Melville Island that is said to be the plane of Hajime Toyashima.*

**Photo J: (Page 51)**

*Australian War Memorial (ACT): Negative Number; 044171.*

*A photo taken at Cowra prison camp on the 5th of August, 1944. This prisoner ended his life during the breakout. A knife is still clutched in his hand. It is quite possible that this is Tadeo Minimi, although numerous prisoners ended their life in a similar way.*

**B) RAAF Historical Section, Canberra.**

*Main File into The Bombing of Darwin. (Not Referenced).*

**C) RAAF Museum, Point Cook, Victoria.**

*Piper, Robert. "War Comes To Australia" An article written to accompany Petty Officer Hajime Toyashima's flying clothing on display at the RAAF Museum, Victoria.*

**D) The Australian National Library, Canberra.**

*The Australian National Library (ACT): Abbott, Hilda, MS4744; "Diary 1942"*

**E) The Australian War Memorial, Canberra.**

*Hopley, John. "Cowra Bugle Presented to Australian War Memorial" Despatch: Monthly Journal of The New South Wales Military History Association, vol.15, no.7, Jan., 1980, pp.144-145.*

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*Australian War Memorial (ACT): Royal Australian Air Force, AWM54; 812/3/11 Raids Air--Enemy including damage: Chart of Darwin air raids--Excluding reconnaissance except where stated: Showing date time target--own and enemy losses, anti-aircraft engagements, 1942-43*

*Australian War Memorial (ACT): Australian Defense Forces, AWM218; 779/3/3 Card index to interrogation reports of Japanese captured by Australian's.*



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*Australian War Memorial (ACT): The Australian Government, AWM54; 780/10/3 Prisoner Of War Australia and Internees--Escapes. The findings of a court of inquiry on the mass of escape of Japanese Prisoner Of War Cowra NSW, 5th August 1944, including nominal roll of deceased Japanese POW's.*

*Australian War Memorial (ACT): The Australian Defense Forces, AWM54; 780/1/7 Prisoner Of War Australia and Internees General. Nominal roll of Japanese Buried Cowra Japanese Cemetery.*

*Australian War Memorial (ACT): The Australian Defense Forces, AWM226; 100 File: Outbreak of Prisoner of War Camp, Cowra, 5th August, 1944.*

*Australian War Memorial (ACT): The Australian Defense Forces, AWM226; 96 File: Prisoner of War Group, Hay, Cowra.*

*Australian War Memorial (ACT): The Australian Defense Forces, AWM127/15 Japanese Survivors of Cowra Prison Break.*

*Australian War Memorial (ACT): Royal Australian Air Force; AWM54 86/5/1 Aviation, Enemy. Names of Japanese Air Combat tactics including bombing and dive bombing visual signs used by Japanese Aircraft 1942, 1943*

*Australian War Memorial (ACT): Joint Intelligence Centre Pacific Ocean Area, AWM54; 423/4/40 Intelligence-Captured documents and translations: Interrogation of Japanese POW's.*

#### **F) Australian Archives, ACT**

*Australian Archives (ACT): AA1977;461 Department of the Army, Proceedings and Findings of Court of Inquiry into Outbreak from Cowra POW Camp, 1944, 2 vols.*

*Australian Archives (ACT): Bathurst Island Mission, A431; 1951/1294 Bathurst Island Mission Reports 1910-1952*

*Australian Archives (ACT): Administrator, Northern Territory, A431; 1946/1560 Japanese air-raids Darwin detailing movements and actions of administrator*

*Australian Archives (ACT): The Australian Government, A816/1; 31/301/293 Findings and further and final report--Commission of inquiry on the air-raid on Darwin 19th Feb. 1942. Original. Mr. Justice Lowe. (This includes the volumes of the minutes of evidence from the Lowe Royal Commission)*

*Australian Archives (ACT): The Australian Defense Forces, A5954/1; 372/12 Press reports of bombing of Darwin. Advisory war council agendum No. 2/1942.*

#### **G) Australian Archives, Victoria.**

*Australian Archives (Vic.): Administrator, Northern Territory, MP729/8; 36/431/46 Darwin-Main file on operations of Japanese during air-raids on-Reports by Administrator and Mr. Justice Lowe.*

*Australian Archives (Vic.): Burns Philp (Ship Owners), MP1587/1; 156B Loss of M.V. "Neptuna" at Darwin, 19th February, 1942. Report by John Hyde, Ship Surgeon.*

*Australian Archives (Vic.): United States Pacific Fleet, Flagship of the Commander-in-Chief, MP1587/1; 174Q "Hiryu" Japanese Aircraft Carrier (POW Interrogation report of survivors of Hiryu from Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Fleet.)*

#### **H) The Aviation Historical Society of Northern Territory Inc., Darwin.**

Alford, Bob. Darwin's Air War: 1942-1945 An Illustrated History, The Aviation Historical Society of The Northern Territory, 1991

The wreckage of Hajime Toyashima's Zero is held in the society's museum.

#### **I) Interviews.**

Mr. John Haslett. (Curator, The Aviation Historical Society of Northern Territory) Phone interview, 5 September, 1995.

Sgt. Les Powell. (Ex-Sergeant, Australian Army, Captured *Hajime Toyashima* on Melville Island) Personal Interview, 17th October, 1995.

**J) The National Institute for Defense Studies, Military History Department., Tokyo.**

This research centre was telephoned on the 19th September 1995 from The Department of Japanese, The University of Melbourne, requesting information relating to Hajime Toyashima or Tadeo Minimi. We were told that: "obtaining information of this nature would be very difficult given the fact that we were not in Tokyo". (This translates to "no" in Japanese.)

**K) Department of Japanese, The University of Melbourne (CD ROM Search)**

J.BISC. 1969-1995. (Record of all books published domestically in Japan's, National DIET Library, Tokyo.)

Zasshi Kiji Sakuin. (1990+, Record of 1300+ periodicals published in Japan.)

A search was conducted using the key words *Tadeo Minimi* and *Hajime Toyashima* to ascertain if there were any published items in Japan relating to either of these individuals.

**L) The Australian and Japanese Military Cemetery, Cowra, N.S.W.**

Tadeo Minimi's grave is located at the Japanese Military Cemetery in Cowra.

This is confirmed by documentary evidence at *The Australian War Memorial.(ACT):*

*AWM54 780/1/7 "Nominal Roll of Japanese Buried Cowra Japanese Military Cemetery.*

*Name: Sgt. Minami (Tadeo), Date of Death: 5-8-1944, Grave Sight: Sec. C. QC. 18.\_*