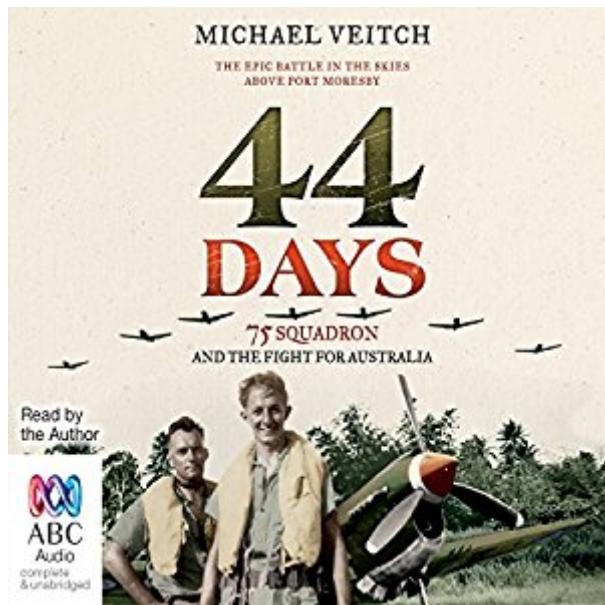


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# 44 Days: 75 Squadron And The Fight For Australia



## Synopsis

The epic World War II story of Australia's 75 Squadron - and the 44 days when these brave and barely-trained pilots fought alone against the Japanese. In March and April 1942, RAAF 75 Squadron bravely defended Port Moresby for 44 days when Australia truly stood alone against the Japanese. This group of raw young recruits scrambled ceaselessly in their Kittyhawk fighters to an extraordinary and heroic battle, the story of which has been left largely untold. The recruits had almost nothing going for them against the Japanese war machine, except for one extraordinary leader named John Jackson, a balding, tubby Queenslander - at 35 possibly the oldest fighter pilot in the world - who said little, led from the front, and who had absolutely no sense of physical fear. Time and time again this brave group were hurled into battle, against all odds and logic, and succeeded in mauling a far superior enemy - whilst also fighting against the air force hierarchy. After relentless attack, the squadron was almost wiped out by the time relief came, having succeeded in their mission - but also paying a terrible price. Michael Veitch, actor, presenter and critically acclaimed author, brings to life the incredible exploits and tragic sacrifices of this courageous squadron of Australian heroes.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Papua New Guinea's main airport, at its capital of Port Moresby, is Jackson's International Airport. Many of us know that Sydney airport is named after Charles Kingsford-Smith, an Australian aviation hero, but few would have heard of John Jackson, another equally deserving Australian

hero. Squadron Leader John Jackson was killed in action whilst leading a small group of Australian fighter pilots of No 75 Squadron defending Port Moresby against a massive Japanese air threat in a 44 day period in early 1942. This book tells the story, largely unknown or forgotten today, of this extraordinary air campaign which literally saved Australia. Michael Veitch has had a lifelong passion for aircraft and aviation and has previously published a couple of other WWII aviation related books. He displays great depth of research and obvious affection for the subject. Although the events in "44 Days" are adequately covered in official histories for those with the time and inclination to dig them out, Michael has done a great service to 75 Squadron's heritage, and general awareness, by breaking out the initial air defence of Port Moresby into a more readable format. Even though I'm a former Commanding Officer of 75 Squadron, with these events in my DNA, I was still turning pages to see what happened next. As we used to say, this book is a "cracking good read". Michael has the happy knack of re-creating the period and making the reader feel right in the thick of the appalling conditions at the Seven Mile strip outside Port Moresby. The only consolation was that the Japanese at their bases north of the Owen Stanley Range endured equally appalling conditions. The Moresby air campaign is a tribute to Australian resilience, adaptability, and just plain old fashioned getting on with the job.

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