



The Massacre of ABDACOM: The Destruction of the United States, British, Dutch and Australian Forces by the Japanese In World War II

J. Lee Ready

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Bataan! Singapore! Coral Sea! These names have become legend in the history of World War II. Yet ABDACOM is one of those military acronyms that has faded into the mist. But at the time in 1941 and 1942 this unit title meant real flesh and blood people, real soldiers, sailors and airmen fighting a seemingly hopeless battle. Named after the American, British, Dutch and Australian armed forces, the formation also included units of the armed forces of Canada, China, New Zealand, Burma, Hong Kong, Singapore, India and the Philippines, and of lands that became Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangla Desh. The battlefield covered the greatest surface of the earth of any battlefield in the history of mankind. It encompassed the largest surrender in British military history, and the longest retreat in the history of that martial nation. Also involved was the largest surrender of US controlled troops in American history. And the second largest surrender in Dutch military history. Modern warfare was introduced to the soil of Australia for the first time. More Canadian troops were lost in one week of battle, than in the previous two years of war put together. In addition, these crippling defeats were inflicted upon Caucasian white generals and admirals by members of a non-white race. This fact alone would have massive repercussions for the latter half of the twentieth century, and more than any other single factor it would be responsible for bringing the age of colonialism to an end. Over half a million desperate men and women valiantly fought to stem the tide of Japanese aggression on the ground, in the air and at sea, and they suffered more than ninety per cent casualties. This indeed was a massacre.

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