



# Rising Sun, Falling Skies: The Disastrous Java Sea Campaign of World War II (General Military)

*Jeffrey Cox*

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## **Rising Sun, Falling Skies: The Disastrous Java Sea Campaign of World War II (General Military)**

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A fresh look at the disastrous Java Sea Campaign of 1941–42 which heralded a wave of Japanese naval victories in the Pacific but which eventually sowed the seeds of their eventual change in fortunes.

In the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbor, the Japanese juggernaut quickly racked up victory after victory. Desperate to secure resource-rich regions in the Pacific and ensure their continued dominance of South East Asia, Japanese forces were determined in their efforts to conquer Malaya, Singapore and the oil-rich islands around Java Sea - Borneo, Sumatra and Java itself. In the face of this seemingly unstoppable tide stood a small Allied force - American, Australian, British and Dutch. Thrown together by circumstance; cut off from reinforcements or in many cases retreat; operating with old, obsolete equipment and dwindling supplies, there was little hope of victory. Indeed, the month-long Java Sea Campaign, as it subsequently became known, quickly evolved from a traditional test of arms into a test of character. In the face of a relentless enemy and outnumbered, outgunned and alone, they defiantly held on, attempting to buy weeks, days, even hours until a better line of defense - and offense - could be established. These were the men of the US Asiatic Fleet, the British Far Eastern Fleet, the Royal Netherlands Navy's East Indies Squadron and the Royal Australian Navy. And their supporting units like Patrol Wing Ten, the Royal Netherlands Naval Air Service, the US Army Air Force's 17th Pursuit Squadron and submarines of all these fine nations. A campaign that has been too often either ignored by historians or criticised for poor command decisions, this is the story of the sailors and the airmen at the sharp end, and how they fought and endured the first months of the War in the Pacific.

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