

Now for the story of the Diamonds. In the last days of Java a KLM, DC3, under command of a Captain Smirnoff was evacuating military personnel from Java to Australia. He was on his last trip as the Japanese closed

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in on the Java airport. As he was about to take off a young woman with baby pleaded to be taken aboard and was allowed aboard and at the same time a Dutch official rushed up with a packet and said that it had to be delivered in person to the Dutch Consul in Melbourne. On approaching the Australian coastline the plane was attacked by three Japanese Zero's returning from the raid on Darwin. Smirnoff and some of the crew and passengers were wounded in the first attack and Smirnoff decided to put the plane down on the beach. After landing the Zero's continued to attack the plane killing one of the passengers and wounding more of the others including the woman and her child. (Interlude. This aircraft is becoming bumpy and my writing is more unrecitable than ever)

(I resume the story a week later in Perth) After a few days on the beach when the woman and her child and some of the crew were buried one of the survivors when searching for water was found by one of the local natives who took the rest of the survivors to a Dutch mission station about fifty miles from the beach the plane had landed on. The message got through to Batavia 300 miles South and that's where I entered the story with a trap in a utility to pick them up. When I arrived at the Brugh Bay Mission the four survivors were in a pretty bad way and the Captain Smirnoff appeared to me to be delirious and kept repeating that he had to get back to the aircraft to pick up the diamonds. For a brief period we considered going back to the aircraft with some native guides but it was decided that we had to get the survivors

to hospital in Broome as soon as possible and so began the worst 300 mile trip of my life with my passengers cursing every bump. I never really believed the existence of the diamonds until some time later it was reported in the paper that a beachcomber had come across the plane and found some diamonds and was handing them out to the natives as favours and later in Broome was truly displaying them. It turned out that there was a fortune in ~~the~~ Dutch diamonds being evacuated from Java to the bank in Melbourne. That was court cases following the discovery of the diamonds but the bulk of the shipment has never been discovered and the belief is that they are still buried somewhere in N.W. Australia.

I was staying in Perth a couple of years ago when an advertisement appeared on the T.V. for a special programme to be shown in a weeks time called "The Flight of the Diamonds" based on a book of that name written by a Perth author. I was able to dig up a copy of the book and as I returned to Melbourne before the T.V. programme I had my family tape the programme and send it over. So these records filled in the gaps that had been hanging about in my mind for all these years. Also recently on T.V. there was a documentary called the war in the North which covered pretty comprehensively the details of the Darwin and Broome raids. STOP

## TRANSCRIPT OF THE EXCERPT:

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