

# RECKLESS AND PERSECUTION

JOINT UNITED STATES NAVY, US ARMY, AND ALLIED OPERATIONS IN SECURING NEW GUINEA  
BY ADAM BISNO



USAAF B-25 Mitchell bombers come in at very low-level to drop phosphorous bombs on enemy aircraft.



**A**irpower had become the winning factor in the deadly fighting that spread through the Pacific during World War Two. In the island-hopping war, securing airfields became paramount to victory. The US Navy played a crucial role in operations to take Japanese airfields near the north coast of New Guinea during April 1944. The main operations were *Reckless*, which aimed for the conquest of Hollandia and nearby airfields, and *Persecution*, which focused on the landing strips near Aitape. These operations succeeded in securing northern New Guinea to allow for American and Allied progress toward the Philippines and the Japanese Home Islands. Hollandia and its environs were claimed by the Dutch in 1910. Aitape and the surrounding area had been part of the German Empire until World War One; the territory then came under Australian control. Hollandia and Aitape fell to Japanese occupation in 1942.

The fight that took place during the Spring of 1944 for northern New Guinea's airfields was in part a product of the Casablanca Conference. This was the January 1943 meeting of US President

As the US Navy launches its final bombardment on the beaches at Hollandia, US Army troops look on with apprehension as their LCVP heads for the landing zone.