



# Kimberley Society

## Book Note

*The Koolama Incident in the Timor Sea, 1942* by Bill Loane. [Rosenberg Publishing](#), [Kenthurst, NSW], 2004. Soft cover, 215 pages, illustrated, maps, ISBN 1 877058 19 X, RRP \$29.95.

A decade ago, Bill Loane published *The Koolama Incident* to reveal, for the first time, the events that surrounded the Japanese bombing of the *Koolama* off a remote part of the Kimberley coast. The book created such interest that he continued to collect information about those events. Some of that information went into a documentary titled “Malice or Mutiny: The Koolama Incident”, which screened late last year on the George Negus show. Another one-hour film commissioned by the ABC at that time has yet to go to air. It will be well worth watching and, in the meantime, Rosenberg has launched Bill’s revamped and partly rewritten book.

The new edition is stylishly presented and includes rare 1942 photographs. Drawing on Bill’s extensive research, it tells the story of the only ship bombed, and subsequently sunk, in Western Australian waters during World War II. It is a complex story and, in dealing with the conflict that complicated the escape of the 180 survivors, Bill takes great care to avoid discrediting any of those who participated in what, to some, appears to have been a mutiny. His weaving together of scraps from diaries, interviews and reports allows him to document events that, at the time of their occurrence, were shrouded in secrecy. The book is thus a welcome addition to both the military history and the social history of Australia’s north.

*Cathie Clement*

Note: Booksellers who have copies of this book in stock sometimes list those copies on websites such as [AbeBooks.com](#) or [AddALL](#) (in the Used and Out of Print section of the latter site).