

Air Wars Between Ecuador and Peru: Volume 1: The July 1941 War and Volume 2: Falso Paquisha! Aerial Operations over the Condor Mountain Range, 1981. By Amaru Tincopa. Warwick UK: Helion & Company, 2019 and 2020. Maps. Tables. Illustrations. Photographs. Notes. Glossary. Bibliography. Pp. 64 each. \$29.95 each, paperback. ISBN: 978-1-911628-67-5 and 978-1-913118-70-9

A Peruvian by birth, Tincopa is a lawyer who has been fascinated with history since childhood and has written a great deal about Peruvian and Latin American military history.

These two monographs present wars fought four decades apart but whose origins go back to the early nineteenth century. Tincopa does an excellent job of summarizing more than a century of political and military clashes over one section of the Peru-Ecuador border. Unstable political conditions in many of the South American countries led to almost constant problems between Peru, Columbia, Chile, and other nations.

The story of these wars has been buried under the far-larger clashes of the great powers. The July 1941 War began after several months of Ecuadoran infiltration into Peruvian territory. The first shots were fired on 5 July. Peru's overwhelming strength drove the Ecuadorans back across the border and continued into Ecuadoran territory. A cease-fire went into effect on 31 July, and the dispute ended in early 1942 with the original border intact. What ought to be most fascinating to anyone interested in military aviation, however, is the aircraft used. Most readers will be unfamiliar with many of the types. As with Dan Hagedorn's great books on Latin American airpower, readers will find aircraft produced during the dark economic days of the 1930s where a large production run was a couple dozen aircraft. Douglas 8A-3P, Caproni Ca.114, Curtiss-Wright CW-16E, Waco YKS, and many other more-or-less obscure models were flown by both sides in the border dispute and are well shown in both photos and illustrations. The Peruvian Air Force conducted armed reconnaissance, air patrols, and air-to-ground attack missions that supported the ground troops. They even had a paratroop operation. Because of this war, airpower became an integral part of military planning and operations in this part of the world.

Step ahead 40 years into Volume 2, and we have another war—no, just another episode in the long-drawn-out border dispute. This time, the aircraft were far more modern: Russian, American, French, and British. There must have been a tremendous logistics problem on both sides. One of the many excellent pictures shows the ramp at a Peruvian AF base. On it are 23 Sukhoi Su-22s, 12 Dassault Mirage 5s, 10 Cessna A-37s, 4 Mil Mi-6s, and 3 Mi-8s! Canberras, Grumman S-2s, Antonov An-26s, C-130s, DHC-5 Buffalos, and several different types of SAM systems also participated. In addition to air-to-ground attacks and reconnaissance, this war also had a little air-to-air action. What began on 27 January was over by 22 February. While occasional border violence continued through 1998, the dispute was “finally” settled diplomatically.

As it generally seems to do, Helion has again published two excellent monographs. These are full of tables that list orders of battle, participants, and the like; excellent photos on glossy paper; beautifully done illustrations of many of the participating aircraft; and a glossary to follow the alphabet soup. While the language of most of the authors of these monographs are not native English speakers, Helion must have an excellent editorial staff, because they are well written and generally free of errors. For those interested in airpower other than Messerschmitts, F-4s, Zeros, F-86s, and B-17s, these are two very excellent monographs worth reading.

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