Adam Giles  
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory

Radar Gunner wins NT History Book Award

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A biography about a Royal Australian Air Force member’s time flying over enemy Japanese territory during World War II has been selected as the winning title for the Chief Minister’s Northern Territory History Book Award 2015.

“I’m pleased to congratulate the late Dick Dakeyne whose book Radar Gunner has been selected as this year’s winner of the Chief Minister’s Northern Territory History Book Award,” Chief Minister Adam Giles said.

“Dick Dakeyne was a member of the Royal Australian Air Force and spent most of his service living and flying with US Army Air Force bomb squadrons based at Fenton airstrip 140 kilometres south of Darwin.


“Craig Bellamy joined forces with another editor, David Welch and in collaboration with Dick Dakeyne, created Radar Gunner.”

Born and raised in Sydney, Mr Dakeyne survived 48 missions and 500 hours flying over Japanese enemy territory during World War II, both as a gunner and radar countermeasures operator.

Radar Gunner accounts Mr Dakeyne’s time living with the Americans and flying in B-24 Liberator long-range heavy bombers, on record-breaking missions lasting up to 16 hours.

For his military service and bravery, Mr Dakeyne was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) from Australia.

At a ceremony today at the NT Library, Mr Giles presented Mr Dakeyne’s son Stephen Dakeyne, daughter Sue Rollin and Craig Bellamy with the award.

The two other shortlisted candidates were Sophie Cunningham’s Warning – The Story of Cyclone Tracy and Steven Farram’s A History Written in Metal.

“I commend Dick Dakeyne as well as the other shortlisted writers. I am sure all these books will add to the Northern Territory Library’s aims to grow, collect and energize the knowledge of the NT,” Mr Giles said.
The Chief Minister’s Northern Territory History Book Award recognises the most significant historical book about the Northern Territory published throughout 2014.