The Shadow's Edge: Australia's Northern War
This book is about a war zone and the people in it. The war was World War II; the zone Australia's Northern Territory (7th Military District) with extensions into western Queensland and the Kimberley district of Western Australia that follow the course of military control. The defensive and offensive conflicts fought by Australian and allied armed forces based on this area formed a very small part of a very large war, but they meant that for the first time in the history of European Australia some part of its people faced the full impact of modern war: destruction, dispossession and the blind sweep of Death. In that sense, it is the only war we have. The approach of conquering Japanese forces drew in black and white Australians, Americans, British, Dutch and others to defend the north and, small though it was in global terms, the organization of the northern war was far too complex for comprehensive coverage in a single book. Thus readers will not find here more than the minimum required for understanding of political, strategic and tactical decisions which can be readily found elsewhere, mainly in the admirable series of Australian official war histories and the books of David Horner. No more than a few of the multifarious armed Services units and the tens of thousands of Servicemen and civilians who lived, worked - and died - in the north could be mentioned. Perhaps this book can distil some of their common experience. [from the Preface] Alan Powell is Emeritus Professor of History at Charles Darwin University.
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