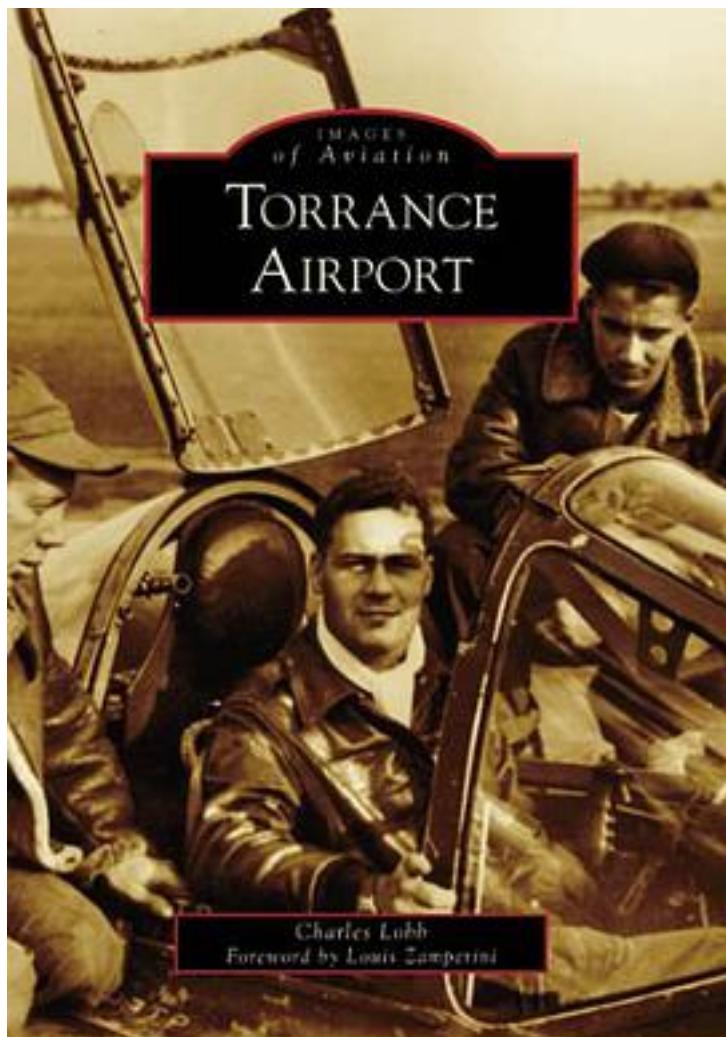


Torrance Airport



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著者:Lobb, Charles

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Californians were panicked by the Pearl Harbor attack of December 7, 1941, and

civilian flights within 200 miles of the coast were immediately terminated. Airfields were commandeered and new ones hastily built. One of these was the Lomita Flight Strip, known today as Zamperini Field, the Torrance Municipal Airport, or TOA. This 490-acre parcel sent four squadrons of P-38 fighter pilots off to war with one commanded by the judge of the Charles Manson trial, an ex-Flying Tiger. Six other pilots became generals, two became commandants of cadets at the Air Force Academy, and one became the only fighter pilot with combat victories in both World War II and the Vietnam War. Japanese Americans returning from World War II internment camps found temporary housing at the field, and the world's largest manufacturer of civilian helicopters settled there in 1973. The first runway takeoff of a Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) aircraft was pioneered at TOA, and aerobatic champ Bob Herendeen trained at the site.

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