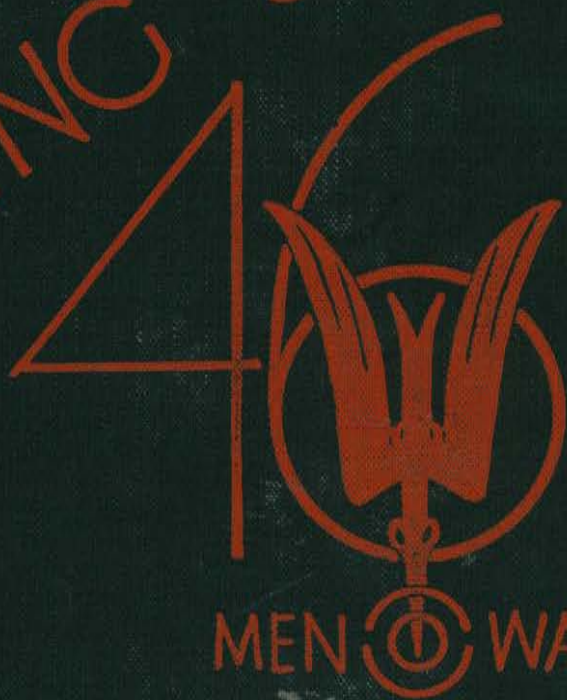
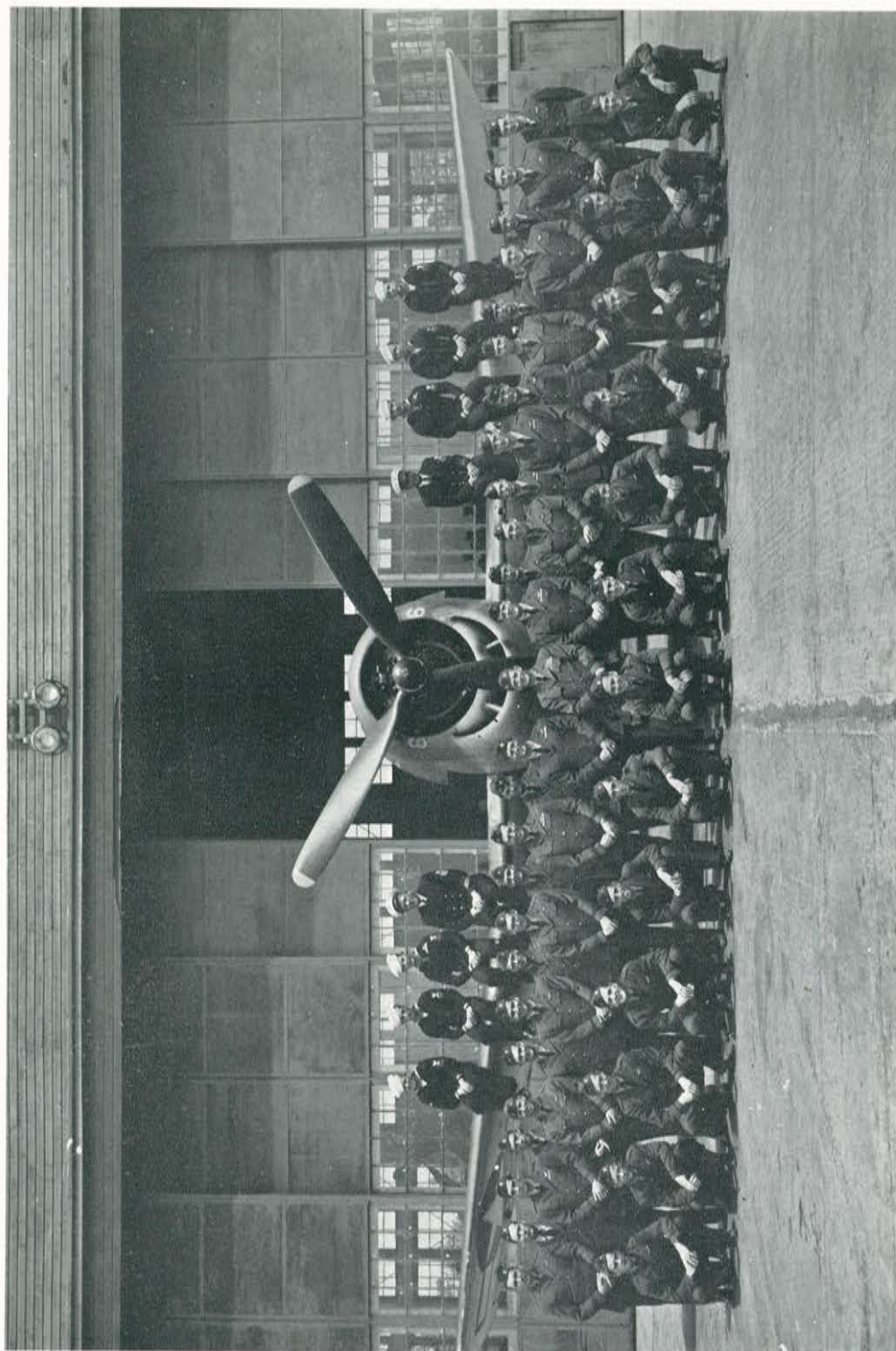


FIGHTING SQUADRON



MEN © WAR

HISTORY OF
FIGHTING SQUADRON FORTY-SIX



Training period at Groton, Conn. June 1944

HISTORY OF FIGHTING SQUADRON FORTY-SIX

A LOG IN NARRATIVE FORM
OF ITS PARTICIPATION IN
WORLD WAR II

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1946

*PUBLISHED FOR THE MEMBERS OF SQUADRON FORTY-SIX
BY THE PLANTIN PRESS, NEW YORK, N. Y.*

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(This book has been reviewed for security
and cleared for publication by the Office
of Public Information, Navy Department.)

IN MEMORIAM

*"Give me high noon—and then let it be night.
Thus would I go."*

LIEUT. (JG) B. R. APGAR, USNR

LIEUT. (JG) D. K. BRIGHT, USNR

ENSIGN O. H. CLARK, USNR

ENSIGN R. T. DYER, JR., USNR

LIEUT. ARNOLD C. HARWOOD, USNR

LIEUT. (JG) F. E. LIEBER, USNR

LIEUT. (JG) R. J. REEDER, USNR

ENSIGN T. E. SULLIVAN, USNR

PREFACE

THIS history is dedicated to the Fighter Pilots of VF 46 with my admiration, respect and affection.

It is a narrative of the Squadron from its inception to the end of its first and last carrier combat tour of duty. Opportunities of splashing large numbers of enemy planes in "Turkey Shoots", enjoyed by some of our contemporary Air Groups, simply did not present themselves to 46. Any AGC will concede there is a great deal of luck in being assigned to Strikes or CAP where the hunting was good. We were not lucky in our assignments. Every opportunity to inflict damage on the enemy, however, was capitalized, thus contributing to their ultimate defeat in some of the most important actions of the war.

To one who has participated enthusiastically in all forms of athletics for many years without ever having approached perfection in any, the expert is profoundly impressive. I can't resist this opportunity, therefore, to express my feeling which borders on awe for the perfectionist in the most difficult of all physical achievements. I refer to Carrier Landings. They require more precise timing, hair-trigger thinking and faultless judgment than any form of physical accomplishment. Each move is under pressure and unless perfectly executed may result in serious injury or death.

Timing, the sine qua non of success in all forms of athletics, is concededly most allusive in the Royal and Ancient game of golf. Here the problem of timing is between a moving object, the golf club, and a stationary one, the ball. Not so difficult a problem of timing presents itself in all kinds of racquet games where both the racquet and the ball are in motion. In both of the above type of games the motion of the club can be controlled at all times to meet the object whose course is predictable, and therefore can be anticipated. Yet with these advantages how many participants can be classified as experts? There are few Bobby Joneses, Byron Nelsons, Bill Tildens or Donald Budes.

On the other hand, all Carrier pilots are experts in Carrier landings. Many perfect carrier landings are made with plane controls damaged by enemy flak on an itinerant base, 588 feet long by 71 feet wide, one-third of which may be covered by planes parked forward, heaving and bobbing in a rough sea. The club, in this case a six-ton Grumman Hellcat landing at a speed of 65 knots with damaged controls, must meet in perfect timing, an object, the deck, whose motion is unpredictable. All participants have to be experts. Necessity is the mother of perfection.

The pilots in Fighting 46 were always willing to do their job from dawn to dusk, were modest in their claims, bending backward to give their fellow-pilot the credit in case a doubt existed, showed no evidence of false heroics and were gentlemen. Anything one can say falls short of the truth.

In the words of Commander Kenneth McCracken, Navigation Officer of the *U.S.S. Independence*, I regret that my medium is paper instead of bronze.

HIBBEN ZIESING, LT. COMDR., U.S.N.R.
A.C.I.O., and Historical Officer



P.E. Lutz, Lt. A-10(N)



J. Jones



Lt Jack Rivers



*C. H. Ramsey
Capt., U.S.N.*



Ensign John Gentry



*37 304
Capt. K. K. K.*



"Doc" Weathering Lt., USN



Lt. H.J. Badyen USN.



CHRONOLOGY

1. Advent of VF-46.
 - (a) Commissioned 15 April 1944.
 - (b) Atlantic City, N. J.
2. Transfer from Atlantic City to Groton, Connecticut, 18 May 1944.
 - (a) Training syllabus completed at Groton 11 September 1944.
3. Transfer from Groton, Connecticut to San Diego, California.
 - (a) AG 46 detached from U.S. Atlantic Fleet and ordered to report to ComFair West Coast 19 September 1944.
4. Transfer from San Diego, California to Pearl Harbor, T. H., 25 September 1944.
 - (a) AG 46 ordered to board *U.S.S. Makassar Strait* (CVE-91).
 - (b) Departed San Diego 25 September, arrived Pearl Harbor 1 October.
5. Home port changed 23 September 1944.
 - (a) CVLG 46 home port changed from Quonset Point to San Diego.
6. Transfer from Pearl Harbor to Hilo, Hawaii, 3 October 1944.
 - (a) Authority: ComAirPac verbal orders.
7. Transfer from Hilo, Hawaii, to Pearl Harbor, 20 November 1944.
8. Transfer from Pearl Harbor to Manus, Admiralties, 2 December 1944.
 - (a) AG 46 ordered to board *U.S.S. Breton*, 2 December 1944.
 - (b) Arrived Seeadler Harbor, Manus, 13 December 1944.
9. Transfer from Manus to Ponam Island, 13 December 1944.
 - (a) Left Seeadler Harbor opposite Pityilu Island at 1445 in LCI arriving Ponam Island 1730.
 - (b) Authority: Verbal instructions from 7th Fleet Logistics.
10. Transfer from Ponam Island to *U.S.S. Cowpens* (CVL-25).
 - (a) Ordered to board *U.S.S. Allamaha* (CVE-18) on 2 February 1945.
 - (b) Arrived Ulithi 5 February 1945.
 - (c) Boarded *U.S.S. Cowpens* 6 February 1945.
11. Detached from *U.S.S. Cowpens* (CVL-25)
 - (a) *U.S.S. Cowpens* arrives Ulithi 4 March 1945.
 - (b) Transferred to Falalop 6 March 1945 by LST.
12. Transferred to *U.S.S. Independence* (CVL-22).
 - (a) Available planes flown aboard *U.S.S. Independence* (CVL-22).
 - (b) Rest of personnel CVLG 46 board *U.S.S. Independence* by 1600 in afternoon.

13. Detached from *U.S.S. Independence* (CVL-22).
 - (a) *U.S.S. Independence* arrives Leyte, 13 June 1945.
 - (b) Authority: Visual dispatch from CTF 38 to *Independence* 14 June 1945. Info CTG 38.4 DTG 140551 Orders CVLG 46 to disembark 15 June for housing aboard APL 13.
14. Transferred to APL 13.
 - (a) Transferred to APL 13 by LCT, 15 June 1945.
 - (b) Authority: Included in #13.
15. Transferred to *U.S.S. Makassar Strait* (CVE-91).
 - (a) Transferred to *U.S.S. Makassar Strait* by LCM, 17 June 1945.
 - (b) Authority: Verbal instructions by Com Nabs Samar Rep.
16. Transferred to F.P.R.C. (Flying Personnel Rehabilitation Camp), Guam.
 - (a) Arrived Guam 23 June 1945.
 - (b) LCT 1292 effects transfer to fleet landing and buses to F.P.R.C. 17 miles from Orote.
 - (c) Authority: Verbal instructions by ComAirPacSubComFwd.
17. Embarked *U.S.S. Bougainville* (CVE-100) for Pearl and San Diego.
 - (a) Boarded 1115, 1 July 1945; underway 1830.

Vicissitudes of VF-46

	<i>Date</i>
1. Atlantic City to Groton, Conn.	5/18/44
2. Groton, Conn., to San Diego, Calif.	9/15/44
3. San Diego to <i>U.S.S. Makassar Strait</i> (CVE-91) to Pearl Harbor	9/25/44
4. Pearl Harbor to Hilo, Hawaii	10/3/44
5. Hilo to Ford Island, P. H.	11/20/44
6. Pearl Harbor to <i>U.S.S. Breton</i> (CVE-23) to Manus, Admiralty Islands	12/2/44
7. Manus to Ponam Island, Admiralties	12/13/44
8. Ponam to Manus	2/2/45
9. Manus to <i>U.S.S. Altamaha</i> (CVE-18) to Ulithi	2/2/45
10. Ulithi to <i>U.S.S. Cowpens</i>	2/6/45
11. <i>U.S.S. Cowpens</i> to Falalop, Ulithi	3/6/45
12. Falalop to <i>U.S.S. Independence</i>	3/13/45
13. <i>U.S.S. Independence</i> to APL 13, Leyte	6/15/45
14. APL 13 to <i>U.S.S. Makassar Strait</i> (CVE-91) to Guam	6/17/45
15. <i>U.S.S. Makassar Strait</i> to F.P.R.C., Guam	6/23/45
16. F.P.R.C. to <i>U.S.S. Bougainville</i> (CVE-100) to Pearl Harbor	7/1/45
17. <i>U.S.S. Bougainville</i> (CVE-100) to San Diego	7/18/45

HISTORY OF

FIGHTING SQUADRON FORTY-SIX

"ADVENT OF VF-46"

FIGHTING Squadron 46 was a gleam in the Commander-in-Chief's eye on the memorable evening of 7 December 1941, the day that Pearl Harbor was attacked. Due to unforeseen logistic difficulties it was not conceived until 18 March 1944. Born on 15 April 1944 by Cominch out of Cinclant it had a short though adequate embryonic period. A normal squadron was christened on the day of its birth at Atlantic City, N. J., in the absence of Admiral C. T. Durgin, by Commander Geo. L. Heap, CAG 82. Temporary custody was assumed by Lt. Comdr. Robert A. ("Doc") Weatherup, USN (then a Lieut.), the Executive Officer. Soon thereafter the tender hands of Commander Carl W. Rooney, USN (then Lt. Comdr.) took over the reigns of leadership. Born on 27 March 1911 in Anaconda, Montana, Commander Rooney enlisted in the Navy in 1928 and in June 1930 entered Annapolis to graduate an Ensign in 1934. Six years with the fleet and four years in Naval aviation, in which he served as a fighter pilot in CVG Seven in the *U.S.S. Wasp* ending up as C. O. of a land based detachment of VF 71 on Guadalcanal followed by a tour of duty in the *U.S.S. Cabot* as F.D.O. qualified him with a background to direct the critical formative period of VF 46. Early tutelage was assumed by Commander Fleet Air, Quonset Point, R. I., who assigned CASU 23, NAS, Atlantic City, as mid-wife. The squadron was subsequently weaned effectively and ably by CASU 22, N.A.A.F., Groton, Conn., CASU 31, NAS, Hilo, Hawaii, and CASU (F)-13, Ponam Island Airfield, Manus, Admiralty Islands. (See chronology for dates.)

"SWADDLING CLOTHES AT N.A.S., ATLANTIC CITY, N. J."

Born with 33 pilots, 2 ground officers, 15 enlisted men and 24 Grumman Hellcats, VF 46 soon grew to include 36 pilots and 6 ground officers, maintaining its normal complement of enlisted men and aircraft. Though still in swaddling clothes the squadron demonstrated its precocity both in the air and on Atlantic City's famous "Brawd Walk." All phases of ground and flight training were initiated and taken in our stride as was the nocturnal research made available at divers emporiums in the center of town. Approximately a month after christening we were ordered to N.A.A.F., Groton, Conn., to complete our training. Some of the more socially in-

clined members were loathe to leave this gay Bohemian atmosphere for the alleged conservatism of New England, while others welcomed a change from the overrated Jersey shore. Our orders read to fly our own planes but at the last minute a departing Air Group decided to leave their planes for us at Groton so that those without automobiles were faced with a sudden minor crisis in the field of transportation. Lieut. Robert E. Lee, USNR (from Chicago, Illinois), preceded us as Material Officer in order to make the necessary housing and office arrangements. The squadron arrived at its new base on 18 May 1944 without incident.

“WE CUT OUR EYE TEETH AND BECOME ‘MEN-O-WAR’ AT
N.A.A.F., GROTON, CONN.”

Quarters for officers and men on the station were found to cover the bare necessities only. The field was originally a farm on the Plant Estate so that most facilities were obtained from renovated farm buildings. The junior officers and men lived in Army barracks built when the Army operated the field in 1943. The senior officers lived in a rehabilitated dairy which was a combination hospital, “O” club and dormitory. The operations tower was originally a silo. The station was taken over by the Navy in March 1944 so that we were the third Air Group to be stationed there. Designed to take care of ComFair Quonset’s overflow, it was placed under the management of two AV-S officers recently graduated from N.I.T.S., Quonset Point, Lieut. Chas. Platt, Jr., and Lieut. Kim Whitehead, Commanding Officer and Executive Officer, respectively. Chow, shipped by truck from general mess, Quonset, was, like the living quarters, designed for Spartan living. All married officers and men brought their wives and lived off the station, commuting to the station by individual and communal means each day from such outlying historical towns as Westerly, R. I., Stonington, Lord’s Point, Mason’s Island, Mystic and New London, Connecticut.

Coordination and timing, both essential characteristics of a fighter pilot, are also requisites for proficiency at the “National Pastime”—baseball. It is not surprising, therefore, that we developed an excellent softball team headed up by Lieut. Bill Schroeder in the box, Lieut. John I. Jones receiving, Ensign J. R. Butler at 3rd, Ensign Marlar (throttle king) Stewart, shortstop, Ensign Joe Crampton 2nd, and Ensign Bob Flodquist at the initial sack. Ensign Sam Sparks, Lieut. (jg) Hank Lieber, Lieut. Heber Badger, Lieut. Frank Fogde, Lieut. Dick McNees, Ensign Tom Delehaunty, Ensign West Shaw and Ensign Carleton Jones alternated at the four outfield positions. We more than held our own in the Atlantic Coast League and later in the South Pacific League. At this writing (17 January 1945) we took the lead in the Ponam Island, Admiralties League by defeating VF-9 4-0 in a well-played game, in which Lieut. Bill Schroeder pitched a two hit game and Ensign Bob Flodquist put the game on ice in the fifth inning with a mighty four bagger into deep center field.

Latent basketball talent was discovered in Ensigns Bill Apgar (our youngest and smallest member), Bill Schleis, Rusty Reeder and Omer Clark.

Lieuts. Don Barley and Hib Ziesing upheld the “old men” in athletics by remaining throughout the season the undefeated tennis doubles team. Groton tennis circles were somewhat

of a come-down for Lieut. Barley as he used to hold his own on the west coast with such celebrities as Ellsworth Vines and Johnny Doeg.

Genial Lieut.-Comdr. Van Atta, Bon Vivant, represented the older generation socially. He upheld his reputation as "ComWolfPac" with ruthless determination until forced to retirement in the South Pacific where the Melanesian Chiefs became too wary for him.

Gourmets favored the culinary artistry of Deane's Tavern and Skipper's Dock in New London, while the social lights tripped the light fantastic at the famous Griswold Hotel and the Officers' Club at the Submarine Base nearby on the Thames River. New England's hospitality was exceeded only by its historic charm.

Ensigns C. T. Jones and R. D. Flodquist were responsible for adding two benedicts to our "pipe and fireside" list.

During a pre-dawn simulated strike on Long Island, Ensign L. N. Jones made history when he developed vertigo, spun in and extricated himself and raft from the cockpit when the plane was below the surface of the water and on its way to the bottom. Four hours later as he was attempting, without too much success, to combat a five-knot current on Long Island Sound in his life raft, a submarine patrol from New London sighted him by periscope. Surfacing next to him the Captain called out "Hey, what you doing bud, fishing?" The welcome news of his recovery came over CWS while the rest of the squadron was flying air support to 600 paratroopers as they landed on MacArthur Field.

Our association with the submarine branch of the Navy was augmented when Commander and Mrs. Rooney entertained Air Group 46, including wives and friends, at the Officers' Club, Submarine Base, New London. The Club, situated on the banks of the Thames River near the finish of the classic pre-war Yale-Harvard boat races, was an ideal setting for our first social get-together, with its spacious living room, outside porches overlooking the river and golf course, and a bar equipped with plenty of glassware.

During our training at Groton we lost three fine pilots due to operational accidents. Lieut. Arnold C. Harwood of Cooperstown, New York, a graduate of Union College, '40, was a favorite with all hands due to his personal charm, sincerity and enthusiasm. He was killed when a part of his wing was torn off as a result of a collision in mid-air causing his plane to go into an unrecoverable spin. Ensign T. E. Sullivan of Upper Darby, Pa., a very personable younger pilot of great promise, failed to recover from a strafing dive and was instantly killed. Our deepest sympathy has been extended to Mrs. Arnold Connell Harwood, mother of Lieut. Harwood, and to Mr. and Mrs. Timothy E. Sullivan, parents of Ensign Sullivan. Lieut. (jg) Robert F. Shimer of Allentown, Pa., was incapacitated for nine months when his plane crashed due to engine failure. It is gratifying to record here that the squadron recently was assured of his complete recovery.

There have been seven F6F's stricken from the Navy list by this squadron during its training, as a result of engine failure and pilot error.

It was decided to adopt the Frigate "Man-O-War" bird as the symbolic background of our insignia. Sketches by Joe Karinsky, an artist of the Curtis Publishing Co., by Raymond Barger,

sculptor of New York City, and by Lieut. Bill Stames were submitted for our consideration. Mr. Barger's impression of the bird in a diving attitude was adopted and sent to the Chief of Naval Operations where it was approved on 9 August 1944. A colored drawing of the insignia 11" x 14" was forwarded to the Chief of Naval Operations for framing. Prophetic characteristics possessed in common by the Frigate "Man-O-War" bird and the F6F "Hellcat" are as follows:

- (1) In command of wing they are unsurpassed.
- (2) They are more nearly independent of land than any other birds.
- (3) They are often seen hundreds of miles at sea.
- (4) They delight to soar at astonishing elevations.
- (5) Food is procured by dashing down on wing with unerring aim and by harassing weaker birds until they are forced to disgorge or drop their prey.
- (6) They do not leave the nest until they are able to follow their parents on wing.

Let the myopic, buck-teethed, bandy-legged Japs read and beware! We have adopted "Men-O-War" as the nickname of our squadron.

From 15 April to 11 September 1944 when training was completed at Groton, the squadron had flown 8,954 hours. Individual pilot time in the F6F during this period varied from 143 to 313 hours. There were 396,094 rounds of 50 caliber fired, 1,605 rockets fired and 150 live bombs dropped in training up to 1 January 1945. Lieut.-Comdr. R. A. Weatherup and Lieut. Frank Fogde are fighting it out to a photo finish for top gunnery averages. They are closely followed by Ensign Bruce Garlock, Lieut. Heber Badger, Ensign Marlar Stewart, Ensign Buck Rogg, Lieut. Bill Schroeder, Ensign Carleton Jones, Ensign A. W. C. Thomas, and Ensign C. K. Purcell.

Carrier landings qualifying all pilots have been made on the *Mission Bay* (CVE-59) while based at Groton, Conn., the *Saratoga* (CV-3) and the *Bataan* (CVL-29) while based at N.A.S., Hilo, Hawaii, T. H. All pilots were checked out with catapult take-offs at Groton.

Ground training instituted at Atlantic City and continued at Groton included daily recognition classes, navigation and communications, (i.e., code, blinker, signal flags, semaphore), link training covering ZB hops, radio range, fighter direction and cross country, synthetics including various gunnery devices, pistol and skeet practice, movies on carrier operations, A. C. I. lectures, and daily athletics. The AV-S officers, Lieut. Don Barley, Ensigns Moran and McMullin and Lieut. Hibben Ziesing were responsible (?) for the daily full attendance at ground school. Lieut.-Comdr. Rex Van Atta, USNR, was in charge of all administrative matters and Lieut. Gip Hudson (MC) USN, skillfully cured us of all of our self-inflicted and unavoidable ailments as well as making us immune in our future travels from typhus, cholera, yellow fever and smallpox. Lieut.-Comdr. Van Atta boasts he was immunized twice at considerable added discomfort but no extra expense to himself.

"GO WEST, YOUNG MAN, GO WEST"

Having completed our training syllabus on 11 September, technicalities permitted us to either stay in Groton on duty until the 15th and proceed to San Diego at our own expense or to take

leave on the 11th and return on the 15th to travel to San Diego by troop train. Time did not permit ship travel but all other means of transportation were used. N.A.T.S. from Floyd Bennett Field and commercial airlines from La Guardia Airport, the Union Pacific and Santa Fe Railroads out of Chicago and privately owned cars removed our allegiance 3000 miles from U. S. Atlantic Fleet, transferring it to ComFair West Coast where all hands reported at N.A.S., San Diego, California, on 19 September 1944.

Five days later final farewells were made by a few in person and the rest by long distance telephone and letter as we boarded the *U.S.S. Makassar Strait* (CVE-91) for Pearl Harbor, T. H. Three days after our arrival there the first echelon flew to N.A.S., Hilo, Hawaii, on 3 October, where we were stationed until 20 November for more training.

This command feels very strongly that replacement groups should be employed as promptly as possible after completing the training syllabus. Prolonged training militates against pilot and group morale. We have already seen evidence of this in our group at N.A.S., Ponam Island. Where circumstances, however, do not permit final training in the States, no one could ask for better facilities than offered by N.A.S., Hilo, Hawaii. All pilots made refresher day landings aboard the *U.S.S. Saratoga* (CV-3), Ensign Tom Delehaunty having the distinction of making the 78,000th landing on its flight deck. A majority also made night landings on the *U.S.S. Saratoga* (CV-3) and *U.S.S. Bataan* (CVL-29). During our stay at Hilo, Ensign L. N. Jones, USNR, was detached and ordered to report to CASU 32 at Maui, T. H., for duty involving flying, and Frigate 8, composed of leader Lieut. Bill Stames and Ensigns John Bender, Steve Butler and Walter Schoenberger were detached and ordered to report to Commander Naval Air Bases, Guam, for further assignment as a carrier replacement team. We have heard since that they have remained intact as a team, are with VF-20 in the *U.S.S. Enterprise* and have been pronounced the best replacement division that has gone aboard the big "E". Score one for VF-46!

At N.A.S., Hilo, Hawaii, the squadron also adopted a live mascot of K-9 variety. The dog, christened "Frigate", has unusual personality and intelligence, so often the case with the offspring of carefree parents. He was brought into the world in this theatre of war at Saipan at the time of the invasion 17 May 1944, transported to Hawaii by troop transport by the 5th M.A.C. He has the distinction of being one of the few members of the Caterpillar Club in the squadron, having made two parachute jumps from the tower at Ford Island at a height of 225 feet. He proved to be a good sailor on the trip from Pearl Harbor to Manus and at this writing is enjoying enviable good health on Ponam Island, Admiralties. The method of his acquisition from the Marines by our men is unknown to this Command.

Assigned to replace Air Group 27 in the *U.S.S. Princeton* we were tentatively scheduled to go aboard her about 15 November at Ulithi. A lucky hit by a Jap suicide dive bomber prolonged our stay at Hilo. It is an understatement to say that duty there was pleasant. Comfortable quarters, a fine Officers' Club with weekly dances, good food and a beautiful countryside with the famous Volcano Inn on "off days" left an indelible impression with everyone. Mesdames Libby Young Starr and Sally Clark McClanahan of Honolulu, formerly of Balti-

more and Boston respectively, attended one of the dances as our guests. Needless to say they were the cynosure of all hands. Mrs. Rockefeller's Hilo debutantes provided inadequate competition to the mainland's best. Bob Crosby's band inspired the light fantastic. A group picnic on the shore of Hawaii revealed in Lieuts. Jack Rivers, Heber Badger, Dick McNess and Ensigns John Gentry, Marlar Stewart and Pete Kooyenga gridiron talents that would be welcomed by any college coach on the mainland.

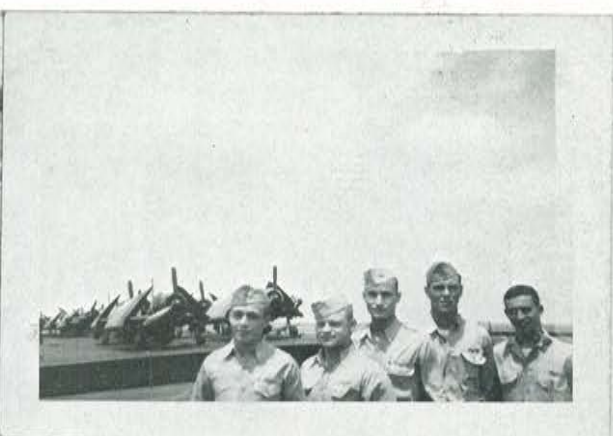
THE BAND PLAYS US ALOHA AT FORD ISLAND

Finally reassigned to ComAirPac to replace Air Group 28 in the *U.S.S. Monterey* (CVL-26) we hopefully boarded the *U.S.S. Breton* (CVE-23) 2 December 1944 at Ford Island for transportation to Manus, Admiralty Islands. Arriving Seeadler Harbor 13 December with a full complement of Shellbacks, we were immediately assigned to Ponam Island Airfield 40 miles distant. Evidence that all hands were irrevocably initiated into the solemn mysteries of the Ancient Order of the Deep was noticeable in the showers for several weeks. The "Crossing the Line" ceremony was conducted with appropriate pomp and dignity. The most colorful member of Neptunus Rex' entourage was the Royal Baby. Weighing at least three hundred pounds net with most of his avoirdupois centered amidships, his beam was as wide as his overall length. He roared with sadistic delight as he pressed each lowly Pollywog's head into the folds of his belly in order that he might be privileged to kiss his honorable navel.

We discovered that the waters between Hawaii and the Admiralties were shark infested in more ways than one. Ship's Company and passengers matched their wits every night at draw and five and seven card stud poker games that eliminated the grocery clerks at the opening round of bets. Enigmatic faces seen nightly around the big gaming table were Ensigns Rogg, Stewart, C. T. Jones and Lieut. (jg) Hank Lieber. Ensign Rusty Reeder kibitzed. The rest of us played bridge, cribbage, gin rummy, read and wrote letters until the wee small hours in order to cut down on sack time. There were 987 personnel aboard, a 40% increase over the ship's complement, which made three sittings at each meal necessary. The staterooms were overcrowded and it grew hotter each day as we approached the equator. Ship's Company did all they could to make a difficult situation pleasant.

Ponam Island Airfield, located 40 miles from the center of supplies and communications at Momote and Lorengau, was found to be inadequate in many respects for Air Group training. The sentiments of this command have already been expressed on this subject in another vehicle, the War Diary, but we repeat them here for the sake of conviction. Poor facilities for servicing Fighter A/C, the lack of gunnery and bombing equipment, field carrier landing facilities, and typewriters for squadron administrative use, the dearth of fresh food, good water, salt tablets and vitamin pills and the enervating climate do not add up to the improvement of morale and battle readiness of spare groups standing by to go aboard their carriers. On the contrary, noticeable impairment of battle readiness is evident in VF-46 since our 5 weeks here. From 13 December 1944 through 18 January 1945 we have flown approximately 700 hours, which is





140 per week or 4.5 hours per pilot per week. This compares with 15 hours per pilot per week during August 1944. As previously stated in the War Diary (December 1944) the above deficiencies are inherent in the logistics of this area and consequently beyond the scope of correction by either ACORN 27 or CASU (F)-13.

BLESS ALL THE ADMIRALS IN COMAIRSOPAC,
THEY DONT GIVE A DAMN IF WE ROT ON PONAM

Poor flying conditions made it possible for our aesthetic members to exploit their talents. Lieut. Jack Rivers carved several beautiful models, Ensign Bill Pruett photographed Melanesian torsos with artistic subtlety, Ensign Sam Sparks collected Cat's Eyes, Tiger Eyes and indigenous fruits, like the experienced naturalist that he is, Lieut. Frank Fogde built, with an engineer's precision, miniature airplanes with every detail in true proportion, Ensign Jack Fielding demonstrated financial genius by selling war bonds to both the solvent and insolvent, Ensign John Gentry accompanied himself on the Victrola and learned to dress himself from memory while in the sack with his eyes closed, and Ensign Pete Kooyenga, Chicago's 185 pound light-heavyweight representative in the 1939 Golden Gloves Tournament, spoiling for a fight but unable to find one (discretion and the Shore Patrol being the better part of valor) entertained us with his inimitable patter. Contract bridge became the favorite indoor sport, replacing "Acey-Ducey", the Navy's adaptation of ancient Chinese Backgammon (A.D. 500 Ch'i dynasty). Ponam produced at least 26 converts, 25 of whom adopted the Eli Culbertson system and one rugged individualist who advocated and employed the John I. Jones method. Ensign Robinett finally admitted the superiority of Naval Aviation over the Army, his first love.

The infallibility of Lieut-Comdr. "Doc" Weatherup was again confirmed when he led a flight composed of Ensigns Shaw, Stewart and Reeder 600 miles over water to Biak, New Guinea and return, hitting his ETA within a few minutes at each end.

POSTERITY DATA TO DATE

Babies have been born to Mrs. R. J. Byron (girl), Mrs. Ray Rigmaiden (boy), Mrs. R. B. McNees (boy), Mrs. J. I. Jones (boy) and Mrs. J. R. Butler (boy) in the order named. Of these, Ensign Brow Byron is the only sire who has had the good fortune to see his offspring. May this situation be corrected within a few months. We claim the distinction of having more pulchritude, with no reservations, and more fecundity, over an equal period of time, than any other CVL Group, the VT Squadron having produced 2 boys and 1 girl since our departure from Uncle Sugar and there being three expectant fathers waiting for future arrivals.

Through a series of fortuitous circumstances this group has the distinction of having been assigned to four light aircraft carriers: the *U.S.S. Bataan* (CVL-29), converted to VFN squadron; the *U.S.S. Princeton* (CVL-23) sunk; the *U.S.S. Monterey* (CVL-26), damaged; and at present the *U.S.S. Cowpens* (CVL-25) (this on 18 January 1945).

WITH A MINIMUM OF NOSTALGIA WE LEAVE THE BEAUTIFUL ISLAND OF PONAM, 2 FEBRUARY 1945

Revived by the excellent food on the taut ship *U.S.S. Altamaha* (CVE-18), commanded by Captain A. C. Olney, Jr., USN, we arrived at Ulithi harbor 6 February to board the *U.S.S. Cowpens* (CVL-25), Captain G. H. DeBaun, commanding, as her third air group. As it later developed, we were optimistic in our belief that here at last was our final carrier assignment for this tour of duty.

EVIDENCE OF A DEMOCRACY AROUSED

We witnessed for the first time what it means to arouse the wrath of an hitherto lethargic democracy. Through a miscalculation of the willingness and ability of our amateur civilians to make war, Japan was now faced, after four years, with opposing the greatest naval power the world had ever seen. Of our total 1,108 warships, as of the end of the fiscal year June 1944, 400 of them were in Ulithi harbor on 6 February 1945. There were in addition, 400 oilers, tankers and merchant ships. We were to take part in one of the world's historic events; an act which four years ago would have been considered fantastic by even the most imaginative—the carrying of an offensive triphibious war into the Japanese backfield 5500 miles from our mainland and 3400 miles behind the initial line of scrimmage, Pearl Harbor.

A series of meetings was promptly held on the *U.S.S. Bunker Hill* (CV-17) at which the amphibious landing of the 3rd, 4th and 5th Marine Divisions on Iwo Jima on 19 February was outlined. Commander C. W. Rooney and Lieut. Hibben Ziesing were present to learn how carrier based aircraft were to function as air support. We were informed that our first combat experience was to be a strike at 0645 16 February, D-3 day, on Tokyo itself! We were to take part in the first raid by carrier based Navy planes on the Japanese homeland! An Homeric task for a curtain raiser to say the least. Incredulous raised eyebrows should be lowered on reading this when we hasten to explain that the famous Doolittle raid by B-25's launched from the *U.S.S. Hornet* (CV-8) in April 1942 were Army planes which landed on the China coast after their strike on Tokyo.

The division we lost in Hilo to Air Group 20 was replaced at Ulithi by Lieut. Angus T. Morrison and his proteges Ensigns Dean Albertson, Bruce Agesen, Albert Adair, and Damon Bright. With the exception of Lieut. Morrison who has a total of 2200 hours flight time to his credit (160 hours in the F6F) the others with an individual average 450 hours (50 hours in the F6F) had considerably less experience than any other pilot in the squadron and were as a consequence handicapped for combat carrier duty. A breakdown of their 50 hours' training time at Oxnard, California, where they reported 11/15/44 as a replacement team indicates a total of 10 hours fixed gunnery. This, according to ComFair Quonset's standards for completion of the training syllabus, is considered inadequate. Other pilots averaged 50 hours of gunnery practice at Groton.

THE "MIGHTY MOO" BRINGS OUT THE FATTED CALF

With her fine heritage of 18 months of successful combat duty we were proud to be the third air group on the *U.S.S. Cowpens*, known affectionately by its ship's company as the "Mighty Moo." Assayed by the critical and experienced eyes of Captain DeBaun, Commander Nieman, Executive Officer, Lieut. Haithcock, Air Officer, and Lieut. Lumpkin, L.S.O., we were soon pronounced an outstanding group and made to feel at home. The *Cowpens'* culinary department was all that it was reputed to be. In answer to the daily a. m. request, "How will you have your eggs this morning, sir?" we ran the gamut with the exception of 'Eggs Benedict' which we expected to order after the Tokyo raid. Two-day laundry service with shirts wrapped and marked 'Your shirt, sir', plenty of good cold drinking water, hot showers and good mattresses all seemed very plush in contrast with the Spartan living of the past two months on Ponam.

The valuable services of Ensign Garlock were lost to us on 8 February when his plane struck a gun sponson after a wave-off, severing his right arm above the elbow. He displayed remarkable fortitude, quick thinking and skill in extricating himself from his plane and assisting the destroyer in taking him aboard. Despite burns and the loss of his arm he walked unassisted to wardrooms country and appeared in the wardroom for breakfast the next morning. He sent word to the squadron that Grampaw Pettibone's advice on wearing gloves should be strictly observed by all in the squadron. The sincere best wishes of the squadron for his future goes to Ensign Bruce Garlock. Ensigns Apgar and Kooyenga joined the Dunkee Club by making perfect ditchings on 11 February and were returned intact on 13 February by the *U.S.S. Porterfield*, DD 682. A cake with all the appropriate markings was presented to Ensign Adair on 20 February in recognition of the 9000th landing made aboard the *U.S.S. Cowpens*.

ABUNDANT POSTERITY DATA

Assigned to Task Group 58.3 with the *U.S.S. Essex* (F) CV-9 and *U.S.S. Bunker Hill* (FF) CV-17 the *U.S.S. Cowpens* CVL-25 travelled in high society. Rear Admiral Frederick C. Sherman, Commander Task Group 58.3 and Commander Carrier Division One flew his flag in the *U.S.S. Essex*, Vice Admiral M. A. Mitscher, Commander Task Force 58 and Commander First Carrier Task Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet, graced the *U.S.S. Bunker Hill* and Admiral R. A. Spruance, Commander Fifth Fleet, was aboard the *U.S.S. Indianapolis* (FFF) which also was part of Task Group 58.3. The *U.S.S. New Jersey*, the *U.S.S. South Dakota*, three light cruisers and thirteen destroyers provided protection to the three carriers.

On 9 February, Task Force 58, composed of Task Groups 58.1, 58.2, 58.3, 58.4 and 58.5 calmly departed from Ulithi Atoll. With the exception of the enemy picket boat encountered and liquidated enroute, the Task Force making 23 knots arrived without incident at a point 80 miles from the eastern coast of Honshu and 155 miles from Tokyo at 0800 16 February. Cruising north and east during the day the Task Force reached a point 165 miles south and east of Inubo Saki Light at 0000 17 February and at 0800 returned to approximately the same position maintained on the 16th for the second day of strikes and sweeps on the Tokyo area.

"LAY OFF THE EMPEROR'S PALACE!"

Brief all Pilots—"You are instructed to confine your attacks to military targets and for your own protection to so state if captured. The Palace and Shrines are not military targets."

The above unequivocal dispatch from the "Powers that Be" received on 13 February was religiously though reluctantly adhered to. All pilots were anxious to drop a 500-pound message on the Mikado's palace, a landmark in the central part of Tokyo. Former Ambassador Joseph C. Grew pointed out how peace loving Hirohito would be an important asset to the Allies after Japan's defeat and his opinions seem to have gained support by the Navy. That the symbol of the Japanese Shinto religion, a racket which has made Japanese militarism possible, should do a right-about-face after the war and become a force for the rights of the common man, is a highly controversial subject. We would have welcomed the opportunity to contribute toward the destruction of their Emperor-God. But—ours but to do as we are told. The official headquarters of the Supreme Commander of Japan's Army and Navy was not bombed.

"THE DAWN COMES UP LIKE THUNDER!"

Nothing but the products of Grumman, Vought-Sikorsky and Curtis were in the air on 16 February. It was black as the inside of a cow at dawn with forty knots of wind and sleet blowing across the deck of the *U.S.S. Cowpens* and continuing all day. The elements presented what appeared to a non-flyer as insurmountable hazards to finding the assigned target in a strange, heavily fortified territory, attacking it and returning to land on an itinerant base 544 feet by 73 feet that was pitching and heaving in a rough sea. A Chief with twenty years of sea duty was heard to remark as he watched the pilots "rev up" the engines on the flight deck prior to take off, "This is the toughest flying weather I've ever seen. I wish to God I was back on the farm in Missouri!" The weather over Japan was even worse, ceilings lowering over the Tokyo Bay area to 1000 feet. Some holes in the broken clouds were found, however, and our fighters were successful in inflicting considerable damage on enemy aircraft on the ground (the Japs refused to fight in the air), installations and shipping. All pilots returned safely thanks to thorough combat instrument instruction. Fighting 46 was assigned four sweeps over the Japanese homeland and one CAP. The following pilots participated: Commander Rooney, Lieut.-Comdr. Weatherup; Lieuts. Badger, Schroeder, Rivers, Fogde, McNees, J. I. Jones; Lieuts. (jg) Lieber, Sparks, Apgar, Thomas, Reeder, C. T. Jones; Ensigns Crampton, Gentry, Butler, Byron, Flodquist, Kooyenga, Fielding, Delehaunty, Stewart, Schleis, Clark, Robinett, Agesen, Shaw, Rogg, Purcell, and Pruett. Lieut. Badger on Sweep #4 shot down our first Jap plane—an Oscar, one of four tallyhoed eight miles south of Kodama Airfield, Tokyo area, was splashed from 10,000 feet.

ENSIGN O. H. CLARK IS KILLED IN ACTION

Two divisions led by Commander Rooney inflicted serious damage to enemy shipping southwest of Honshu (139°E x 34°30'N). After damaging a destroyer, a destroyer escort and two

Fox Bakers, four Sugar Dogs were sunk by this flight. Following Lieut. McNees in a deck level strafing attack on one of the Sugar Dogs, Ensign Clark's plane was hit by an explosion of the enemy ship and he was instantly killed. He was a fine pilot and officer whose loss was sharply felt.

At 0645, the time the first sweep took off, we launched a 3 plane CAP that joined 4 F4U's from the *U.S.S. Bunker Hill*. All seven fighters shared the distinction of splashing a Betty.

The total bag for all Task Groups was 245 A/C shot down in the air and 45 A/C destroyed on the ground. 32 of our own planes were lost.

WE LOSE LIEUT. (JG) D. K. BRIGHT ON 17 FEBRUARY 1945

One sweep, one strike and one CAP were VF-46's assignments on the second day of carrier-based raids on the Japanese homeland. On the sweep launched at 0715 under similar adverse weather conditions as existed on the 16th, Lieut. Fogde and Lieut. (jg) Thomas each accounted for one Zeke on the air. Lieut. McNees on CAP splashed a Jake. As Lieut. Fogde's flight approached Konoike Airfield Lieut. (jg) Bright was seen to go into what appeared to be a controlled spin, but at this writing he has not been heard from and is reported missing in action. We are not optimistic in the hope that he is a prisoner of war. Other participants in the sweep were Lieuts. Fogde and Morrison, Lieut. (jg) Thomas, Ensigns Adair, Albertson, Crampton and Kooyenga.

Eight fighters and nine torpedo planes were launched at 0835 and joined up with 28 planes from the *Essex* and 46 from the *Bunker Hill* in a strike on the Nakajima Tama and Musashino Aircraft Engine Plants, located 12 miles west of the Emperor's Palace, Tokyo. Lieut. Badger's division, composed of himself, Ensign Fielding, Lieut. (jg) C. T. Jones and Ensign Delehaunty, with Lieut. J. I. Jones' division, made up of himself and Ensigns Pruett, Shaw and Rogg, contributed to the partial destruction of these important targets with 13 judiciously placed 500-pound C. P. bombs.

The Task Force shot down 74 A/C in the air and destroyed 32 A/C on the ground on the second day over Tokyo in which eleven planes were lost. Enemy airborne opposition was conspicuous by its absence. The Japanese Kokukantai (air fleets) and the Heidau (GHQ Air Force) evidently decided the foul weather over their homeland was ample protection from our attacks and avoided air battle. At the end of the first inning the conceded superiority of land based aircraft over carrier-based had been disproved. Lack of experienced pilots, a dearth of high octane gasoline, or both, may have contributed to their unwillingness to oppose us in the air. We didn't know.

WE MOVE SOUTH TO SUPPORT THE INVASION OF IWO JIMA

Returning to Nanpo Shoto on 19 February, air support for the amphibious landing on Iwo Jima was provided on D-Day, D plus 1 and D plus 2. Task Group 58.3 with instructions to extend the full treatment to the eastern side of Mt. Suribachi, launched 8 fighters and 9

torpedo planes from the *U.S.S. Cowpens* at 0645 to join up with 54 planes from the *U.S.S. Bunker Hill*. Equipped with 6 rockets and 1—500-lb. G.P. bomb our F6F-5's, led by Commander Rooney, bombed, fired rockets and strafed the target from H-55 (0805) to H-45 (0815) during which period Naval gun bombardment was discontinued. The northernmost of the three airfields was strafed on a second run. Nothing was observed on the island. There were no signs of life, no visible gun emplacements, no vehicles or buildings. The area was so pock-marked from Naval shells and aerial bombs that it resembled a lunar landscape from the air. As a result it was extremely difficult to locate pinpoint targets in the ash heap and also difficult to evaluate additional damage by individual coordinated strikes. Little did we suspect the tremendous striking power that the Japs possessed in caves reinforced with concrete that were concentrated around our bailiwick, Mt. Suribachi. Their underground fortifications proved to be impervious to aerial bombardment and strafing. In the afternoon Commander Rooney led the entire flight composed of 8 VF from the *U.S.S. Cowpens* and 49 planes from the *U.S.S. Bunker Hill* on a bombing and rocket attack against bivouac areas, supply dumps and gun emplacements behind the enemy lines. Our initial employment of fire bombs revealed mechanical difficulties that were corrected in the subsequent use of this weapon. Three of our fighters suffered considerable damage from flak but landed safely aboard. Eight F6F-5's and nine TBM's joined with planes from the *U.S.S. Bunker Hill* in the morning and afternoon of 21 February, D plus 2 in making coordinated fire bombing and rocket attacks against pin-point targets in the northern part of Iwo Jima. Seven fire bombs of the eight carried were released at 200 feet. The fighters followed with low strafing runs directed against caves along the west coast of the island.

WE PAY OUR DISRESPECTS FOR THE SECOND TIME TO TOKYO

Point option was established 140 miles from the eastern coast of Honshu at 1200 25 February for another full day's treatment of the Tokyo area.

"PARADOX REGAINED"

Enroute north on 23 February in the midst of intensive A. C. I. briefing sessions preparatory to the Tokyo strike 36 hours hence, Commander Rooney was presented with a sheaf of formidable letters originating:

	From:	Senior Patrol Officer
	To:	C. O. Naval Air Station, Navy 128
and then	From:	Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet
	To:	Commander CAG 46
and finally	From:	The C. O. <i>U.S.S. Cowpens</i> (CVL 25)
	To:	C. O. CAG 46
	Subject:	Lieut.-Comdr. J. P. Barron, U.S.N.
		Lieut.-Comdr. Rex W. Van Atta, U.S.N.R.—
		Report of Traffic Violations

Without going into boring details of the myriad enclosures and endorsements, the net of the matter was that the Senior Patrol Officer in Honolulu, T.H., was asking to be informed of the disciplinary action taken by the C. O. of Air Group 46 against Lieut.-Comdrs. Barron and Van Atta, Torpedo Squadron C. O. and Administrative Officer of VF-46, respectively, for parking their cars overtime in front of the Moana Hotel on Waikiki Beach on the night of 1 December 1944! With the lifting of martial law in Hawaii, cases normally settled in Provost Court were diverted to the C. O. of the defendants for disciplinary action. Naval jurisprudence was relentless and Naval justice sure though not swift. We never heard whether the Senior Patrol Officer at Honolulu got his pound of flesh on the way to Tokyo.

THE SECOND TOKYO RAID

At dawn 25 February after a final briefing in the Ready Room there followed the customary silence to permit absorption of last minute vital details. During this brief period the silence was broken by Lieut. (jg) Bill Schleis, the Skipper's wing-man, when he asked guilelessly, "Captain, have you any last words to say?" The question went unanswered as at this point the order "Pilots, man your planes" was announced, followed by a rush of pilots to the flight deck.

At 0800 the *U.S.S. Cowpens*, *U.S.S. Bunker Hill* and *U.S.S. Essex* launched a total of 118 VF, VFB, VB and VT planes for a coordinated attack on Nakajima Musashino Engine Plant, 122 miles west of Tokyo. The strike leader, during rendezvous decided from information received from incoming strikes on bad weather conditions over the assigned target, to strike the Koizumi Aircraft Plant, 40 miles NW of Tokyo, instead. The *U.S.S. Cowpens* and the *U.S.S. Bunker Hill* groups attacked the Koizumi Aircraft Plant while the *U.S.S. Essex* group simultaneously hit the Ota Nakajima Plant 2 miles north and west of Koizumi. The whole area was covered with snow, the first indication that this actually was the winter season. As the planes came within range Jap 75 mm AA guns opened fire. Photographs indicated both plants were 90% destroyed. In addition to the destruction of factory buildings VF-46 destroyed 7 SE planes on Koizumi Airfield and in retiring to a rendezvous point off the coast, paid a call on Tatebayashi Airfield where 5 SE planes were destroyed and 6 damaged. After a rendezvous with the other air groups had been effected and the flight had started back to base, our fighters, in order to really earn their flight pay, attacked 16 Diesel-powered fishing boats near Inubo Saki. The weather had become progressively worse along the coast, the ceiling having lowered to 500 feet. YE was used for navigational aid on return of a 600 mile round-trip flight. Commander Rooney led the following VF-46 pilots on this well-executed strike: Lieuts. Badger, McNees and J. I. Jones; Lieuts. (jg) Lieber, C. T. Jones, Reeder, and Ensigns Stewart, Schleis, Robinett, Albertson, Fielding, Delehaunty, Adair, Shaw and Rogg.

The front that formed 175 miles south of Tokyo on the 25th along with a 35-40 knot wind, a rough sea which interfered with landings and take-offs, icing at 3-7 thousand feet, a ceiling of two to four thousand feet over Tokyo and heavy snow showers in the afternoon continued to handicap us and on the 26th and 27th prevented our consummation of the strike

assignments on the inflammable Sumida River section in the center of Tokyo, the Yokosuka Naval Base and the Mitsubishi Aircraft Factory at Nagoya. Disappointed but confident that this was not the last opportunity to flatten the homeland, the Task Force cruised south where Point Option was established 60 miles SE of Okinawa in Nansei Shoto at 0800 1 March.

Photographic missions were conducted over Ie Shima where Ernie Pyle was later killed and three of the airfields on Okinawa; Yontan, Katana and Naha. Two deck load strikes were sent to Minami Daito Shima as our exclusive and virgin target. The reception was warm, anti-aircraft fire being heavy. With the exception of the *U.S.S. Saratoga* (CV-3) which was hit by three Kamikazes on the night of 25 February, CTF 58 returned to Ulithi on 4 March, status quo ante bellum, for a breather before the next operation.

THE SLINGS AND ARROWS OF OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE OR "BEACHED AGAIN"

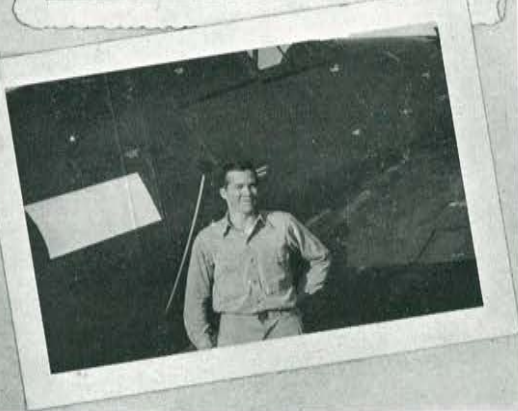
On 3 March a secret dispatch from CincPac Adv. Hdqs. informed us that the *U.S.S. Cowpens* on arrival Ulithi would report to the Port Director for onward routing to Pearl Harbor and that prior to departure CVLG-46 would be based ashore at Ulithi and embark in the *U.S.S. Bataan* (CVL 29) on the arrival of that vessel about 13 March. On 6 March, having made our adieus to our good friends and wished them Godspeed on their well-earned journey back to Uncle Sugar, we forlornly and unceremoniously went over the side on a rope ladder into an LST which deposited us on Falalop Island at 1600. There, CASU 51 assigned us quarters.

This punctuation in our sea duty which lasted until 13 March will long be remembered by the brackish water in the showers which left a permanent film on the body resembling a synthetic resin, the hot steam under the "Heads" generated by slaked lime which reduced traditional reading time in that institution to a minimum, and the fire at 0300 which burned the transient officers' chow hall to the ground and came dangerously close to doing the same for our living quarters. On the night of 11 March several members of the squadron left the movies at the Marine Base to witness one of three Kamikaze planes from Truk incapacitate the *U.S.S. Franklin* (CV) then at anchor, by placing a 20-foot hole in the deck just over the fan tail. The other two made abortive attacks, one hitting the mess hall on Sorlen, the other the lagoon.

On 13 March all hands, including Frigate, our K-9 mascot, embarked on the *U.S.S. Independence* (CVL 22), Captain N. M. Kindell, USN, commanding. The *U.S.S. Bataan*, our first and fifth carrier assignment arrived Ulithi the same day from P. H., but living up to its inconstancy, had already taken CVLG-47 aboard at Pearl.

WE BECOME THE 5TH FIGHTING SQUADRON ON THE FIRST CVL COMMISSIONED

The *U.S.S. Independence* (CVL 22) was the first of nine Cleveland class cruisers to be converted into light aircraft carriers. Commissioned 14 January 1943 she made her shakedown cruise in the spring of 1943 and saw action for the first time at Marcus Island of the Caroline Islands on 1 September 1943. Wake Island followed 5 October, then Rabaul 11 November,





and finally the Gilbert Islands, 18 November to 20 November. At Tarawa she took a fish and subsequently limped back to the States for repairs. In June 1944 she departed from San Francisco for Pearl Harbor and in August took on VF(n) 79, which later became VF(n) 41. Together they proved for the first time that the special night carrier can do the job for which it was conceived, and is an integral, vital air weapon. From 6 September to 16 December 1944 an enviable record of night fighter actions was participated in at Palau, Caroline Islands; Mindanao, P.I.; Visayaus, P.I.; Luzon, P.I.; Coron Bay, P.I.; Nansei Shoto; Formosa; the second battle of the Philippine Sea and several important strikes in the South China Sea.

Those most intimately and responsibly associated with our future destinies were the Commanding Officer, Captain Nolan Martin Kindell, USN; the Executive Officer, Commander Edwin James Stephen Young, USN; the Navigator (and incidentally the author of the well-received story of carrier life, "Baby Flat Tops"), Commander Kenneth David McCracken, USNR; the Air Officer, Lieut.-Comdr. Joe Henry Arnold, USN, and Landing Signal Officer, Lieut. (jg) Daniel Herbert Hanscom, USNR.

Com First Car Task for Pac presented forthcoming operations in three phases—Happy, Lucky and Love. Task Force Air Plans which governed our day-to-day schedules accompanied by Air-Sea rescue arrangements, photo requirements and maps, intelligence summaries and target maps for each particular phase were received sealed and were not to be opened until the date of that particular phase of the operation was announced by Commander, Task Force Fifty-eight. The purpose of this new system was to prevent the possible compromise of information regarding future operations, the one \$64 question always asked of POW's by enemy (interrogators) intelligence.

THE LUCKY PHASE

Instructed to open this phase we found that we were part of Task Force 58.

Our debut on Lucky Day, 18 March was a fighter sweep over northern Kyushu in which with VF planes from the *Yorktown*, *Intrepid* and *Langley* we contributed toward rendering USA Airfield inoperational. The production of Japanese (gismos) "made in USA" was also materially reduced by our sweep.

On 19 March, flying CAP, Lieut. (jg) Rogg shot down a Jill and ten of our planes paid a destruction call on Oita and Saeki Airfields in Kyushu. Flying SNASP on 20 March, Lieut. McNees and Ensign Robinett tallyhoed a Fox Tare Dog and along with eight fighters from the *Langley*, by means of their .50 caliber guns left it dead in the water, in flames and abandoned. A destroyer later sank it and picked up survivors clinging to debris.

"AND THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE"

Love phase was inaugurated on Love minus 9, 23 March by a strike on Naha Airfield, heavily fortified offensive and defensive center of Okinawa Shima in the Nansei Shoto, strategically important islands located between Formosa and Japan. Chinese invasions of these islands began

in 600 A.D., but they were conquered by the Japanese in the Seventeenth Century. For the next 250 years the Ryukyu Kingdom paid a monetary tribute to both China and Japan. This continued until 1894-95 when Japan defeated China, took over Formosa, and incorporated Okinawa Gunto in the Empire as Okinawa Prefecture. The Chinese protested but were told "So Sorry" by the Mikado's representatives. The effect of generations of Chinese culture still remains, however, and the Japanese regard Okinawans as innately Chinese. It remains to be seen whether the atavistic tendencies of the natives will react to our favor once the occupation is complete. The 1940 census estimated the population of the Nansei Shoto at 818,624 persons; of this total, 435,681 lived on Okinawa Shima. Naha, the largest city in Nansei Shoto had a population of 65,765.

Love minus 8, 24 March, opened with a strike on Senaga Shima off the SE coast of Okinawa and was followed by a strike against AA positions adjacent to Naha Airfield. A MINCAP which took off at 1130 resulted in a tragic loss to the squadron.

LIEUT. (JG) FREDERICK E. LIEBER IS KILLED IN DECK CRASH

After completing a CAP for the benefit of DDs and DEs which mine swept the area SE of Okinawa south to Kerama Retto, Commander Rooney led his flight in strafing attacks on Southern Okinawa. Four planes fired a total of 6200 rounds of .50 caliber as follows: Commander Rooney 1400, Lieut. (jg) Lieber 2000, Lieut. (jg) Purcell 1300 and Lieut. (jg) Schleis 1500. On returning, five of the six planes had made landings when the last plane, in what appeared to be a normal landing, failed to catch any of the nine arresting wires, crashed through both barriers into the 11 planes parked forward of the elevator. Lieut. (jg) Lieber was instantly killed by the propeller in this catastrophe. Four planes, all of which were on this CAP, were stricken from the Navy list as a result of this operational accident.

Lieut. (jg) "Hank" Lieber was an excellent pilot and a fine officer. He was buried at sea at a service attended by all hands at 1600 on 25 March. His loss was a sad one to the squadron, his relatives, and many friends.

Love minus 6, 26 March, resulted in one support mission for VF-46 and VT-46 who joined fighters and torpedo planes from the *Langley*, *Intrepid* and *Yorktown*, 87 in all, in a strike against Okinawa. This was to divert attention from Kerama Retto where the first landing was made in order to set up a seaplane base in support of the main landing on Okinawa. One support mission over Okinawa on Love minus 5 was assigned to us and on the following day we sent an eight-plane sweep against Minami Daito Shima, the 4 mile x 5 mile fortress that had been assigned exclusively to us several times before. It was felt that enemy raids based in Kyushu were using this airfield for emergency landings and refueling. Lieut.-Comdr. Weatherup led the fighters in making six runs on the target in which 11,800 rounds of .50 caliber were expended and five of our planes damaged by flak. Ensign Gentry returned with holes in the fuselage, Lieut. (jg) Sparks with holes in the elevator, Lieut. Schroeder had his belly-tank shot off, Lieut. (jg) Byron had holes in his port wing and Lieut. Rivers' head rest and cockpit

canopy were blasted away, breaking the rear view mirror and several instruments. Another shell destroyed his hydraulic system leaving several holes in his starboard wing. He landed aboard without benefit of flaps with his face covered with blood from cuts on his face.

That night at dinner Ensign Byron cut a delicious cake baked in the honor of the 5000th landing aboard the *U.S.S. Independence*.

WE TRY TO FLUSH THE JAP FLEET

At 0550 on Love minus 3, 29 March, eight F6F-5's of VF-46 were launched as escort and bombers to accompany eight TBM-3's of VT-46 on a strike against elements of the Japanese fleet located somewhere in the southern Kyushu area. The flight, comprising deck load launches from all carriers in the Task Group, numbered some 132 planes. The search for the elusive remnants of the Jap fleet proved fruitless but results were gratifying. Commander Rooney and his division, Lieuts. (jg) Stewart, Reeder and Schleis, in reconnoitering Kagoshima Bay were jumped by five bandits. Lieut. (jg) "Hawk-eye" Bill Schleis tallyhoed them at four o'clock above. When the enemy fighters started a high astern the division started a climbing turn into them. Commander Rooney got a full deflection burst at an Oscar from 1000 feet which put it in a shallow glide toward the beach. He is credited with a probable. Lieut. (jg) Stewart shot down one Oscar which was seen to burn and crash. As the enemy fighters zoomed up into the sun retaining altitude advantage, the division took evasive action by flying under clouds at about 3000 feet and joined up two miles north of Kagoshima City. Twelve Franks then dove into an attack from six o'clock. In the melee which ensued, Lieut. (jg) Reeder, Lieut. (jg) Schleis and Commander Rooney each splashed one Frank.

LIEUT. (JG) RALPH JUNIOR REEDER IS MISSING IN ACTION

It was during this dog fight that Lieut. (jg) "Rusty" Reeder was either shot down and killed by the enemy, or made a forced landing in enemy territory and is now a prisoner of war. We sincerely hope the latter is true. He and Lieut. (jg) Sam Sparks had been inseparable through cadet and operational training and combat duty.

Lieut Badger and his division escorted 20 torpedo planes from the *Intrepid* and *Independence*. After bombing and strafing attacks at Hongo on Goshoura Island, Minimata on Yatsushiro Bay and the mainland west of Warabi Island they retired north of Noma Misaki Point. Here a Tojo was tallyhoed and shot down by Lieut. (jg) C. T. Jones.

Commander Rooney in returning to base strafed a speed boat, leaving it dead in the water, four Diesel fishing boats and a barracks. He landed with four holes in his fuselage, control cables and torque tube 6/7ths severed and a hole in his starboard wing.

A dispatch received at 1130 the same day ordered a sweep over Kanoya East Airfield in southern Kyushu, approximately 164 miles from launching position. Four of our fighters took off at 1215 led by Lieut. J. I. Jones and attacked Kanoya Airfield and installations on Tanega Shima.

In addition to the strikes and sweeps briefly outlined, the squadron flew daily CAPs of all kinds, at altitudes ranging from 1000 to 30000 feet.

PROP WASH

A recent addition to the fleet in one of the other groups upon receiving instructions from a destroyer to fly patrol at 30,000 feet, repeated incredulously, "Did you say fly at Angels 30?" "Affirmative" was the succinct reply. "Roger, but I'm not dressed for it", was the last transmission. It's really cold up there even in the planes from which Mr. Grumman's heater has not been omitted.

On a sweep over Kyushu the leader of one of our flights couldn't receive over the assigned VHF channel. He indicated by hand signal for his wing man, a native of Mississippi, to assume command. Immediately, "Give it hyah! I'll take it!" was heard over the air. Later in the Ready Room the same southern voice excitedly described how he triumphantly led the flight back to base and as he was looking for a well-deserved invitation to land aboard, he was instructed to rejoin his mission. "I thought I was with my mission. I didn't know where to go so I went up in the clouds and doped off for an hour."

Frigate hasn't met the Captain's Tom Cat as yet and probably won't as he lives on the wrong side of the tracks. The Tom Cat resides regally in the Captain's cabin and Frigate lives in the electrical shop with Bradley, AEM1c. It's just as well for the health of both. Frigate has learned to sit up and to shake hands. He takes his daily constitutional on the flight deck with Kloeppel, AMM2c, in the rear expectantly and hopefully following with a rag to remove the evidence.

"Doc" Hudson, whose day usually starts at 0500 with the first hop, is still on his feet every evening taking on all comers at the erudite game of chess. Contract Bridge and Gin Rummy seem to have the edge on Poker and Acey-Ducey, and Lieuts. McNess, Fogde and Jones and Ensigns Byron and Butler proudly display pictures of the prodigies which they have not yet seen in the flesh.

Ensign Bob Flodquist's name continued to be on the standby list of almost every flight scheduled. This was at his request. He really loves to fly.

1 APRIL 1945—WE LAY OUR EASTER EGGS ON OKINAWA

The use of eggs to celebrate Easter is borrowed from the pagan, the egg being an ancient symbol of resurrection. We celebrated strictly according to pagan precepts. We were assigned to air support of the Task Force who transported the XXIV Army Corps. The last-named landed on the southern half of the six and one-half mile beach head on the west coast of Okinawa at H-hour, 0830. By noon 2 April, Love plus 1 Day, it was expected there would be 175,000 troops of the Tenth Army on Okinawa. This operation was larger than the Normandy invasion. We were assigned to one strike in which four fighters contributed a total of four 500-lb. bombs, 24 rockets and 3350 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition on AA positions east of Naha Airfield.

A FINE REPLACEMENT TEAM BECOMES "MEN-O-WAR"

On 6 April five USNR pilots joined us at sea, increasing our complement to 36. Our bachelor ranks were concurrently increased by five. Lieut. Carl Owen Jones, division leader from Wichita, Kansas, and Ensigns John Vernon Ballard, Falls Church, Virginia; Leland Victor Adgate, Lyons, Michigan; Robert Theodore Dyer, Jr., Belchertown, Mass.; Zigmund Plecha, Niles, Ohio, were fine pilots. Their gunnery time at Oxnard, California was only 16 hours, the same as that of the able team led by Lieut. Morrison. This has already been compared unfavorably with ComFair Quonset's standards. It shouldn't take them long, however, to compete with our mighty nimrods if their skill at carrier landings is any criterion.

The following day we were transferred to another Task Group. Routine support missions were conducted daily over Okinawa and surrounding islands, in order to neutralize and "maintain" the Jap airfields in an inoperational status. On one strike there were 28 individual fires visible from the air in Southern Okinawa. All towns and villages had been riddled; there wasn't a house on the island left standing. Crowds of civilians were seen walking up country roads so tired of being bombed since 1 March that they appeared totally unconcerned when planes flew overhead.

Constantly reminded by the Skipper of the fact that every gun position eliminated saves the lives of 100 Marines or Soldiers, our fighters continually sought targets of opportunity after their assigned support strikes were completed.

Nearly every Okinawa family has a funeral vault, a symbol of Chinese ancestor worship which still has a strong influence. These large limestone structures were conspicuous throughout the countryside and appeared from the air to be logical hiding places for guns, mortars and tanks emplaced as pill boxes. Hundred of them were strafed at the termination of each assigned support mission.

ENSIGN T. M. DELEHAUNTY QUALIFIES FOR OUR FIRST D.F.C. AWARD— 12 APRIL

Ensign "Red" Tom Delehaunty has been shying successfully at the publicity due every pilot who participated in the first carrier raid on Tokyo but there isn't a bushel large enough to hide the light of fame accruing to the fighter pilot who shoots down two Jap planes (Zekes to be exact) in one action. He has been recommended for the D.F.C. Lieut. (jg) C. T. Jones bagged his second single on the same CAP.

LIEUT.-COMDR. R. A. WEATHERUP COMES INTO HIS OWN—15 APRIL

One of those frequent last minute dispatches appointed Lieut.-Comdr. "Doc" Weatherup flight leader of a 28-plane sweep against Kushira Airfield in Kyushu. Kanoya Airfield was named as the secondary target in case nothing of interest was found at Kushira. Some of the other air groups were assigned to hit airfields in the same 3-mile area simultaneously.

The source of recent raids on the Fleet was sought. Approaching Kushira Airfield up Kagoshima Bay many A/C parked on Kanoya Airfield were noticed and also several taxiing preparing to take off. Lieut.-Comdr. Weatherup decided to nip a possible raid in the bud and immediately swooped down on the field followed by seven of his chickens. He splashed one SE on a stern run at 400 feet, did a high wing over and got the second at 800 feet as he was climbing. Ensign Kooyenga shot down a SE 75 feet from the deck and Lieut. (jg) Thomas got his second single when he liquidated a TE. In addition, on the ground Lieut.-Comdr. Weatherup destroyed one TE, Lieut. (jg) Gentry two SEs, Lieut. (jg) Sparks two SEs and one TE, Lieut. Schroeder one TE destroyed and two SE damaged and Lieut. Rivers one TE destroyed and two SE damaged. Ensign Pete Kooyenga was hit by flak which eliminated his starboard aileron control and shredded a hole 3 feet by 4 feet in that area. Sans aileron Engine Kooyenga returned 260 miles to make a perfect landing. That "Golden Gloves" right arm came in handy for holding up the starboard wing.

"SHERRY FOR BOYS, PORT FOR MEN, BUT BRANDY FOR HEROES"

15 April 1945 marked our first anniversary. A year ago the squadron was commissioned at Atlantic City, N. J. The ship presented a cake at dinner in our honor and afterwards in the Ready Room "Doc" Hudson dispensed a drop of Nelson's Blood to all hands.

LIEUT. FRANK FOGDE FOLLOWS WITH A D.F.C. AND LIEUT. ANGUS MORRISON BRINGS BACK A JUDY'S SCALP

Once again under Admiral Radford's direction 17 April a CAP at 0815 produced three kills. Directed ably by Lieut. T. F. Jardine, FDO on the *U.S.S. Independence*, Lieut. Fogde at Angels 12 tallyhoed three bogies approaching from the north on an opposite course at Angels 10. They were later identified as Judys with radial engines. #1 and #2 were 500 yards ahead and to the left of #3 Judy. An ideal set-up for an experienced pilot with Lieut. Fogde's deadly accuracy. He made a high side run, rehearsed many times at Groton and Hilo, firing several bursts at #3 Judy which he passed over and followed with a sharp turn to the left in order to get on the tail of #1 and #2. Effortlessly he shot them both down. As he followed them down he got so close that Japanese oil was deposited on his windshield.

As Lieut. Fogde made a pass at #3, Lieut. Morrison skillfully made a round-house run bracketing him and from 5 o'clock opened fire at 1000 feet. A very strange and exasperating thing happened which was not in the book! Instead of burning as Lieut. Morrison's bullets hit the engine and wing roots as she was supposed to, Judy #3 continued merrily on shaking the .50 caliber bullets off like flies. His Scotch temperament thoroughly annoyed at this point and intent on the kill which he was determined to make, Lieut. Morrison bore in closer and closer until in pulling out above he clipped the vertical stabilizer off the Judy and took a twelve-pound portion of it with him embedded in the leading edge of his starboard wing. The tail of

the Skipper's pants as evidence! Judy finally succumbed to these unexpected offensive tactics, spiralled in at 1000 feet and exploded as she hit the water.

ENSIGN JAMES WILLIAM PRUETT, USNA, OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI, DOES HIS STUFF, SHO 'NUFF, 22 APRIL

After bombing Tokuna Shima Airfield and then photographing the damage inflicted for assessment purposes continuously for one-half hour, Ensign "Bill" Pruett resignedly joined his division for two hours of prosaic routine patrol around Amami-O-Shima and Kikai Shima before returning to base. On the second tour around, however, things picked up. Ensign Pruett tallyhoed a bogie on the horizon that wasn't even a visible speck to anyone else. Jettisoning his belly tank and applying water injection he took off to investigate what turned out to be a Tojo on his way home to evening chow. "An honorable death" was the least of this Jap's ambitions and furthest from his thoughts when he noticed an approaching plane with a white star instead of a red meat ball on its wing. He put on the coal in order to pancake at Kikai Airfield, but he wasn't fast enough. Ensign Pruett's graphic description in the Ready Room tells the story:

"He dropped right out of the clouds boy, right out of the clouds. I turned inside of him and joined up on him just like I would on anyone else. I fired once and my tracers were low and ahead. I picked up that old pippet boy, kicked that old right rudder and let him have it. I riddled the hell out of him. I filled that cockpit up with bullets boy. After I'd filled up that cockpit for the second time, I flew right over him staying on the outside of his turn and then I saw that old left wing drop and he rolled over and exploded when he hit that old ground. He wasn't no Oscar 'cause I had an Oscar on my tail at Tokyo and I know. He was a Tojo boy."

"LOYALTY, AN UTTER DISREGARD FOR LIFE AND AN HONORABLE DEATH"

The Zen (a Buddhist sect) monks teach that life is something indifferent and death desirable. They have sold the Japanese irrevocably on this. It was not difficult, therefore, to enlist volunteers for their Kamekaze Chutai (suicide squadrons) for they presented an opportunity to vindicate their sins of this world by a glorious death.

Thanks to intelligent interpretation by expert operators of a new type of radar gear recently installed in all ships of the Fifth Fleet, the situation never got out of hand. The Kamekazes took their toll, however. These attacks resulted in heavy personnel casualties and the temporary loss to the fleet of several carriers (the *Bunker Hill* was hit 10 May). The suicide pilots played no favorites. Each of the Task Groups suffered losses. We were constantly within range of planes with a one-way ticket from Formosa, the China Coast, Kyushu and Tokyo and hence constantly on the alert.

General Quarters sounded often during the day and night and we witnessed during one day six enemy planes that somehow or other got through the screen unscathed. All were shot down by ships' AA within two miles of our ship, one being splashed as it crashed into the sea a few

yards from the *U.S.S. Intrepid*, in position, 2000 yards on our starboard beam. One Stygian night was lighted up like Commonwealth Edison by 16 flares dropped about five miles from our ship. You could have read a newspaper on deck as everyone crouched down under their tin hats in anticipation of a suicide attack. Suddenly a small red light moving rapidly across the sky was seen in the reflection of the flares. All hell broke loose as the Task Force opened up with short stabs of yellow flame from their guns and another heathen joined his ancestors as a flaming comet-like Jap plane hit the sea about three miles off our starboard quarter. A large red ball of flame remained on the horizon as we retired to the wardroom for a cup of coffee. The screen was clear of bogies and G. Q. secured.

WE CONTINUE TO ASSIST IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF OKINAWA

While providing air support to the III Amphibious Corps and the XXIV Army Corps in their occupation of Okinawa Shima and the establishment there of five new airfields, it became our job to "maintain" the airfields in Sakishimo Gunto, Amami Gunto and Minami Daito Shima in an inoperational status. Jap combatant aircraft on these islands couldn't molest our invasion forces without a nest to return to. This strategy had the added purpose of eliminating these airfields as refueling bases for enemy planes based on Formosa, the China coast and Japan. Our area covered 390 miles from Iriomote, the southernmost island in Sakishimo Gunto to Kikai, northern island in Amami Gunto. There were 6 airfields in Sakishimo Gunto, two in Amami Gunto and one on Minami Daito Shima. A group of fast British carriers commanded by Rear Admiral Sir Philip Vian aboard the *H.M.S. Illustrious* flew sorties against airfields in Sakishimo Gunto, 180 miles from Formosa, during April and May. The flag flew in *H.M.S. King George V* which helped sink the *Bismarck*. They operated under the tactical command of Admiral Raymond A. Spruance. The unmistakable accent of the British pilots was heard occasionally over the air.

The Air Plan arrived by dispatch from the *U.S.S. Yorktown* in the evening (usually late) and assigned us to targets in one of the above groups of islands the next day. An occasional diversionary attack on Japan was directed which we welcomed. Lieut. Heber J. Badger, Flight Officer, scheduled as many as 50 sorties in one day, over 200% of our complement of planes.

7 MAY 1945. LIEUT. ANGUS T. MORRISON'S DIVISION SCORES OUR LARGEST BAG SO FAR

Defying the Kokukantai (air fleets) and Hiko Shidan (Army flying division), daily patrols were directed over Kikai Shima, 165 miles from Kyushu. Lieut. Morrison, Ensign Agesen, Lieut. (jg) Crampton and Ensign Albertson took off at 0630 and flew 103 miles to Wan Airfield, Kikai, where they deposited four 500-pound bombs in the middle of the runway. Lieut. Morrison was in the lead of a second bombing dive when to his amazement and Scottish satisfaction, he noticed a Judy demonstrating complete contempt for the ACA-1 report that Kikai was inoperational. Lieut. Morrison reciprocated his contempt for the Judy by shooting it down. The



other three Men-O-War witnessing this, pulled out of their dives and climbed to an area where many bogies were being tallyhoed. Soon thereafter all four fighters, now separated, joined in a merry free-for-all between planes from the *U.S.S. Randolph* and *U.S.S. Yorktown* and 12-15 Jap planes of different species. In a squirrel cage melee at 4000 feet, Ensign Agesen got himself a Tony and a Zeke assist. Lieut. (jg) Crampton shot down a Zeke and proceeded to chase a Jill over Kikai where he splashed him. Ensign Albertson on the tail of a Jill, chased him to the northern tip of Amami-O-Shima and pulverized him. Lieut. Morrison made the total six and a new high for the squadron when he got a Zeke in his sights at 800 feet 6 o'clock. One-half hour after the start of their second bombing run, the division joined up and returned to base.

ENSIGN ROBERT D. FLODQUIST SMASHES OLYMPIC AQUATIC RECORD

Assigned to patrol Tokuno-Amami area 10 May, Lieut. Schroeder's and Lieut. Morrison's divisions first dropped fifteen 500-pound messages in the middle of Tokuno Airfield. During this bombing attack Ensign Flodquist was hit by four or five 20 mm shells in his engine and outboard of his port wing which killed his engine. He was forced to ditch about 4500 feet from the enemy's shore! A strong current toward Tokuno would have carried an ordinary swimmer into the precarious custody of the Japanese army but not our "Floody". Complying with an "All rightie" to Lieut. Schroeder as he circled over him, Floody covered a half mile against the current in record time away from shore. Lieut. Morrison's division, unable to contact a Dumbo in the vicinity of Kikai, flew south, contacted another and directed him to the rescue which was effected at 1655, 2½ hours after the forced landing was made. Here was an example of excellent team work in the execution of Air-Sea Rescue doctrine. The Dumbo (PBM) returned to its mother ship, *Chandeleur* (AV-10), and from there Ensign Flodquist was taken to the *St. George* (AV-16), where he was given excellent bed and board and a wardrobe including a pair of shoes, two pairs of socks and shorts, a shirt, a pair of pants and a kit bag. An LCI transported him to Yontan, Okinawa, on 11 May and on 12 May, on orders from Delegate, he spent that night and the following one on the receiving ship *Crescent City*. A C-46 took over and flew him to Guam on the 14th and back to Falalop on the 15th where he rejoined the *Independence* which had preceded his arrival in Ulithi by 24 hours.

ENSIGN ROBINETT ALSO CALLS AT YONTAN

On a TCAP over Okinawa the same day, Ensign Robinett developed fuel pump difficulties and made a forced landing on Yontan Airfield. After a sleepless night on a stretcher in an ambulance truck during which he was disturbed four times by air raids from 0100 to 0500 and again at 0700, he directed the necessary repairs to his plane and landed aboard 1630, 11 May. In spite of being discommoded by the enemy he said the change was worth it just to get his feet on terra firma for the first time in two months.

"DAMN THE TORPECKERS, FULL SPEED AHEAD!"
(LIEUT. (JG) SAM SPARKS, USNR)

Our last mission in CTF 58 was a support strike on Okinawa at 1445, 11 May. Lieut.-Comdr. Weatherup led his division and 8 TBM-3s from the *U.S.S. Independence* together with 8 SB2Cs from the *U.S.S. Yorktown* in a bombing and rocket attack against mortar positions near the town of Shuri, the Jap fortress which proved so formidable. The Army had made little progress in the last two weeks and we heard the Marines were going to lead an offense on Naha town. It is hoped the Army will emulate them around Shuri and Yonabaru.

After taking our four F6F-5s and 8 TBMs aboard at 1830 we started for Ulithi for a two weeks' rest from the combat area. Task Group 58.3 stayed on to support the invasion.

CHERCHEZ LA FAME

As of 14 May a total of 155 individual recommendations for fighter pilot citations had been submitted to the Flag for approval. They are as follows:

I Air Medal	37
Gold Star in lieu of 2nd	36
Gold Star in lieu of 3rd	32
Gold Star in lieu of 4th	14
Gold Star in lieu of 5th	3
II Distinguished Flying Cross	29
Gold Star in lieu of 2nd	3
III Purple Heart	1

The wording of each citation was slightly different which made it necessary for Lieut. Barley to write out 155 in longhand for typing by Christal, Y1c, USNR. Five reams of bond paper and four large pads of scratch paper were consumed in 126 yeoman hours and 60 administrative hours during eight hectic days and nights. Lieut. Barley and Christal, Y1c, were fit subjects for the Purple Heart when the job was done. They are now fully recovered, however, and welcome the Air Plan that presents us opportunities for additional laurels.

ULITHI THE HAIRSHIRT

The chief difference between Ulithi and a hairshirt is that you can remove a hairshirt. At 1255, 14 May the ship was dead in the water and the First Lieutenant marked the sounding, "By the deep twenty-six". We were at anchor for ten days of alleged pleasure and rest. Ulithi had little to offer. There was no good swimming, no women (atoll) and the weather was extremely hot and enervating. After the novelty of Mog Mog's beer had worn off we were content to absorb Vitamin Dog by sun bathing on the Fo'cs'le in the afternoon, attend the movies on the hangar deck in the evening and sleep until noon. Romance in this Pacific war was conspicuous by its

absence. The ship, Chaplain Falling officiating, provided a smoker consisting of wrestling and boxing contests between the men and an excellent musical.

LIEUT.-COMDR. VAN ATTA AND ENSIGN MORAN GET NEW ASSIGNMENTS

Ensign Maurice James Moran (A), USNR, our Ordnance Officer, was detached from duty in VF-46 on 14 May. Ensign Moran's opinion, corroborated by the Skipper, that his duties as Ordnance Officer were too nominal in a stream-lined squadron such as ours, resulted in his application 15 November 1944 for submarine training; on 19 January 1945 he applied for flight training. The answer to these requests arrived 10 May from BuPers instructing him to proceed and report to Chief of Naval Air Operational Training, Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida for six weeks' temporary duty under instruction at Aviation Gunnery Training Standard Unit.

Lieut.-Comdr. Rex W. Van Atta, (S), USNR, our Administrative Officer, was detached from the squadron 15 May. He left by air transportation to ComAirPac where he was assigned to CASU (F) 12, ComAirPac Sub Forward Area. Friends can address him there for the next nine months. Lieut. D. L. Barley, Group Recognition Officer, took over Lieut.-Comdr. Van Atta's administrative work.

Captain N. M. Kindell on 20 May presented Commander Rooney with a Gold Star in lieu of his second DFC, Lieut. Rivers with a Purple Heart and Lieuts. (jg) Stewart, Schleis and C. T. Jones with Air Medals.

We moved to the south anchorage 22 May in order that the ship's gunners might sharpen up on towed sleeves. On 23 May our basketball team beat the ship's highly touted organization in a fast court game on the hangar deck. Lieut. Schroeder scored 5 baskets, Ensign Flodquist 3 plus 1 free throw, Lieut. (jg) Anderson (VT-46) 4, and Lieut. Rivers 2 plus 1 free throw. Ensign Gentry's guard work was outstanding. Final score, VF-46—26; *U.S.S. Independence*—21.

WE UNDERGO AN UNNOTICEABLE METAMORPHOSIS

0600 24 May found us underway back to Okinawa. At 2400 27 May (1500 GCT) we became part of TF-38 when Admirals Halsey and McCain took over operational control of the Third Fleet. The *U.S.S. Yorktown* with Air Group 9; *U.S.S. Shangri-La*, Air Group 85; *U.S.S. Ticonderoga*, Air Group 87; and *U.S.S. Independence*, Air Group 46, together with 3 BBs, 2 CBs, 2CLs, and 17 DDs comprised TG 38.4. We were surrounded by 27-16", 18-12", 217-5", and over 1000 each 40 mm and 20 mm guns, the greatest fire power ever assembled in one Task Group. Admiral Halsey hoisted his Flag in the *U.S.S. Missouri* whose position was directly ahead of us. It was comforting to see her guns "bristling" from port and starboard.

POINT OPTION IS ESTABLISHED ONCE MORE AT OKINAWA

The alleged vacation terminated 28 May when four CAPS were placed on the flight schedule.

With Air Group 9 we were senior in the Task Group and hoped to receive strike for strike assignments with the CVs as we had in the good old days, but such was not our lot. The pre-dawn CAP became like the proverbial bed pan—there every morning even on fueling days. The second day in June broke the monotony of CAPs, TCAPs, RAPCAPs, SUBCAPs and Barrier CAPs.

“THE BEST WAY TO SHORTEN THIS WAR IS TO INFLICT
DAMAGE ON THE ENEMY AT EVERY POSSIBLE
OPPORTUNITY.”—COMMANDER C. W. ROONEY, U.S.N.

To be bromidic, he practices what he preaches. On 2 June, Admiral McCain selected ten airfields in Southern Kyushu and divided them into four individual groups of targets for the four carriers in 38.4. Twelve fighters from the *U.S.S. Independence* joined by eight fighters from another carrier were assigned Miyazaki A/F, Iwakawa A/F, and Miyakonojo A/F as primary, secondary and tertiary targets. Miyazaki, located on the east coast of Kyushu at 31°55'N by 131°25'E was the northernmost objective of all targets assigned and hence the farthest distant from launching point. In order to cover all three airfields a minimum round trip of 750 miles had to be flown in such a manner as to allow for use of military power in the target area and return to the ship with at least 50 gallons (condition queen) of gas. In order to avoid loss of aircraft everything had to click with some luck thrown in.

Through a miscalculation of launching time of the two ships the *U.S.S. Independence* planes were forced to orbit over base for one-half hour using critical fuel before they were joined by 8 VF from the *U.S.S. Yorktown*. The twenty-plane flight led by Commander Rooney then set course for the target and ninety miles north an active front was encountered and persisted until Tanega Shima, which necessitated instrument flying for two-thirds of the way into Miyazaki. In addition to carrying out the mission which was to destroy airborne and grounded aircraft at three assigned airfields, Commander Rooney led strafing attacks on Shibushi A/F, Inuho A/F on Tanega Shima, a locomotive, two sea trucks and a factory. The total bag for the day claimed by 9 VF of the *Independence*: 13 A/C destroyed and 7 A/C damaged on the ground, one locomotive destroyed, two sea trucks destroyed, one factory damaged and one radio tower damaged. Every opportunity was taken to inflict damage on the enemy! Q.E.F.

Seven out of the eight planes making the attack on Miyazaki were hit by enemy flak on the first pass. Two were severely damaged. Ensign Adgate with the starboard tip of his stabilizer blown off and his elevator destroyed flew back to base under the able wing of Lieut. (jg) Shaw and made a perfect landing under a severe handicap. Lieut. (jg) Stewart, euphonically and affectionately known as “Stew Babe” by the Skipper, was hit in the belly of his fuselage which destroyed his radio gear and electric compass. Losing contact with the flight he set a 185° “By guess and by God” heading for home which was a near miss. With 60 gallons of gas left he determined at 1110, by the aid of his cloth survival chart, that he was over Kito Daito Shima, 200 miles east of Okinawa! A 280° course was then set and at 1230 with two gallons of gas left

in his right main tank he sighted 4 DDs in the radar picket line. Making a water landing he was picked up at 1234 by the *DD Uhlman* (687) and delivered f.o.b. *U.S.S. Independence* at 0830 the following day in exchange for 10 gallons of ice cream. He was worth the customary 25 gallons but the ship didn't have that much. He was airborne 6 hours and 40 minutes, covered approximately 1050 miles and consumed 398 gallons of gas. (Pilots' time in the air varied from six hours to six hours and forty minutes.) All pilots who had benefit of wingmen and instruments to fly with landed aboard with approximately 50 gallons of gas! Q.E.F. The following inflicted serious damage on enemy aircraft and installations: Commander Rooney, Lieut. C. O. Jones, Lieuts. (jg) Schleis, Rogg, Shaw and Pruett and Ensigns Dyer, Adgate and Ballard. The next day Commander Rooney led another 20 VF plane sweep through identical weather over the same area but the Japs anticipated the visit by moving most of their aircraft to places unknown. Commander Rooney destroyed 2 planes and Lieut. (jg) Pruett damaged one on the ground. Excellent photo coverage of six airfields in Kyushu and Tanega Shima by Lieut. (jg) Pruett earned a "Well done". While on his photo run over Miyakonojo A/F as he avidly supervised the intricate workings of the K17-12" f.l. camera inside the cockpit, he had a narrow escape. Lieut. Morrison, his cover, flying at same altitude slightly abaft his starboard beam noticed black puffs bursting at regular intervals behind Lieut. (jg) Pruett's plane. A Jap gunner with 3" AA had found the right altitude and with continuous fire was fast approaching Pruett's range. The first puff Lieut. Morrison saw was 1000 feet behind and level, the second 500, the third 250 and the fourth 100! The fifth would have rivalled William Tell's archery when he split apples at 100 yards had "Pru" been where he was supposed to be. At this point "Gus" yelled, "Hey Pru, start jinking, there're going to shoot your tail off!" Pru made a split second flipper turn to the right and levelled off. As he did so he looked over his right shoulder and observed a black burst right where his nose would have been. On being questioned in the Ready Room Lieut. (jg) Pruett said, "It didn't bother me 'cause I was gone boy. I just laughed at what those Japs thought." Later, after considerable introspection, "That sure was a close call boy. If it hadn't been for Gus I'd be fertilizin that old rice paddy." What you don't know, doesn't scare you.

WE LOSE LIEUT. (JG) BILLY ROBERT APGAR AND ENSIGN
ROBERT THEODORE DYER, JR., ON 3 JUNE. "NO BIRDS WERE
FLYING OVERHEAD. THERE WERE NO BIRDS TO FLY."

The weather became progressively worse in the afternoon and all agreed who flew on the CAP that it was the most difficult instrument flying they had experienced. At a position approximately 26°N x 129°24'E, 30 miles from the ship and 85 miles from Okinawa a weather front was encountered which may have cost the lives of two of our best pilots. They were last seen going into the front at 7500 feet and although exhaustive searches have been made by PBMs and a 6-plane flight from the ship, Lieut. (jg) Apgar and Ensign Dyer are at this writing reported missing in action.

A TYPHOON FIRST REPORTED 250 MILES SOUTH OVERTAKES US

At 1200 4 June 1945, Lieut. Fritz, Aerologist, reported pressure 1004.2 mllbs and wind 13 knots. At 0635 5 June we were in the center of the typhoon at 23°48'N x 131°38'E with pressure of 981 mmlbs and 64 knots true wind across the deck. We outmaneuvered the elements escaping unscathed, but allied ships were not so fortunate. CVs *Bennington* and *Hornet*; CVEs *Salamana*, *Windham Bay*, *Bougainville* and *Attu*; CAs *Pittsburgh*, *Duluth* and *Detroit*; DEs *Conklin*, *Donaldson* and *Hilbert*; Oilers *Millicoma*, *Lackawanna*, *Seber* and *Calients* all suffered damage of varying degree. At 0800 the worst of the storm had dissipated with pressure back to 999.0 mllbs and wind 40 knots. By 1000 the wind had subsided to 28 knots.

LT. (JG) JOHN K. GENTRY IS TRANSFERRED TO AN ESSEX CLASS CARRIER BY DESTROYER

After an impressive performance in the basketball victory of 23 May, Lieut. (jg) John Gentry in an overheated condition became the victim of an organism which developed into atypical pneumonia. Dr. Hudson skillfully supervised his illness which reached and successfully passed the crisis 1 June. John left for a hospital ship via a destroyer and a carrier on 6 June where we trust he will stage an early and complete recovery.

OUR FLIGHT OFFICER RECEIVES THREE "WELL DONES" IN RAPID SUCCESSION

Lieut. Heber J. Badger served as air coordinator 6 and 7 June on two bombing attacks against enemy positions in southern Okinawa. His wingman on the first was Ensign Ballard and on the second Lieut. (jg) Fielding. The target assignment on 6 June was an important enemy position only 200 yards from our own front lines. The proximity of friendly troops to the target assignment required precise and accurate bombing with a low tolerance for pilot error. Lieut. Badger found the target and led his section in dummy and strafing runs to point it out to the torpedo planes overhead. He then directed their attacks. On 7 June the assigned target was a cave and a gun position containing four 120 mm gun emplacements on Sanega Shima off the west coast of Okinawa near Naha Airfield. Lieut. Badger used the same procedure as on the previous day for directing an accurate pinpoint bombing attack by VT planes. Both support missions received a "well done" from the target coordinator, and the ground observer in his daily summary.

On 8 July a dispatch was received to stand by for a possible Air-Sea Rescue mission. A few minutes later a second dispatch demanded immediate launching. The problem was strictly one of exact navigation in order to save a life. A fighter pilot from the *Shangri-La* was reported down in his life jacket and raft on an easterly bearing 165 miles from Virgin's Fall, a reference point we had used on previous Okinawa strikes. This position was about 166 miles from Point Option. With no landmarks to help, navigation had to be right on the nose with about five minutes to work out the problem on the plotting board. Lieut. Badger led Ensign Ballard and

Lieuts. (jg) Fielding and Delehaunty in escorting two Kingfishers from the *Winsconsin* to a speck in the Pacific 166 miles away which was the downed pilot! One Kingfisher landed in the rough sea and after making about eight passes got the pilot safely aboard. There followed a few tense minutes while the Kingfisher in attempting to take off was repeatedly slapped down by the relentless waves of the Pacific which kept trying to break off one of the wing tip floats. Finally after a two-mile take-off the pilot gradually lifted old faithful off the water and the flight, directed by Lieut. Badger, returned safely back to base. Score "Well Done" number three for Heber.

"PROCEED TO LEYTE!"

With the Naha Airfield secured and Japanese resistance broken, Task Force 38 received a dispatch to proceed to Leyte after fueling. Our hopes ran high that our relief was on the way. We wouldn't know for sure until we arrived in Leyte on 13 June but all steps were immediately taken to put the group in a fluid condition. It was an even bet that we would be relieved.

COMMANDER ROONEY ACTS AS AIR COORDINATOR IN 112-PLANE STRIKE ON MINAMI DAITO SHIMA

The final act in Nansei Shoto was a research strike on Minami and Kita Daito Shima to obtain data on the accuracy and effectiveness of fire bombs and air burst fuzed frag bombs. 112 planes participated and advance instructions dispatched by Commander Rooney to all CAGs were carried out without a hitch. 304 bombs were released on Minami and Kita, excellent photo coverage was obtained and the attack was a model of its kind.

MORE PROP WASH

On 19 May Commander Daniel Fletcher Smith, Jr., NA '32, replaced Commander Edwin James Stephen Young as Executive Officer of the *U.S.S. Independence*. Commander Smith has a background that is diversified and active. His last assignment was CAG 20 on the *Enterprise* and *Lexington* in which he led several successful attacks of VB, VT and VF planes against the Jap fleet in the Battle of Leyte. Specifically, he led the strike on 24 October which sank the BB *Musashi* (Yamato Class) south of Marinduque in the Visayau Sea. Friendly, efficient and ubiquitous, you were apt to meet him any time, any place around the ship and if you did, it behooved you to have an intelligent answer to one of his questions about your particular pigeon. He soon developed respect from all hands.

The arrival of Anne Kathryn Weatherup, eight pounds avoirdupois, on 21 May was announced by our Executive Officer 10 June.

The ship's Hill-Billy orchestra, made up of a base fiddle, three guitars, two mandolins and a violin, entertained us in the Ready Room enroute to Leyte. Favorite tunes repeatedly requested and rendered in their inimitable way included: Nelly (No. 1 on the Hit Parade),

Cindy, No Not a Word, No Letter Today, Rum and Coca Cola, Bill Bailey, Craw Dad Hole, Letter Edged in Black, Talkin' Blues, Back in the Saddle Again, Raggedy Ann, Red Wing, When the Work's All Done This Fall, New Moon Over My Shoulder, Golden Slippers.

At this writing, 12 June, there have been 179 written recommendations for pilot citations. This recalls Lieut.-Comdr. Ted Russell's (A.C.I.O. VT-46) remark that any pilot returning from combat in the Pacific theatre without an Air Medal will probably be classified as a "conscientious objector". H. Robinson Hyde, investment banker from Cleveland and Boston, kept us informed of stateside news with newspaper clippings sent via air mail. This service actually reached us at sea during refueling periods in five days from date of posting. The Post Office Department contributed greatly to morale by this remarkable service.

CVLG 27 BOARDS THE *INDEPENDENCE* 13 JUNE AS OUR REPLACEMENT

The 13th turned out to be a lucky day for CVLG 46. Following the *Yorktown*, *Shangri-La* and *Ticonderoga* in column, the *Independence* making continuous soundings in San Pedro Bay, Leyte, "let go" the starboard anchor in 14 fathoms at 1400. Around 1700 the news that the Air Group Commander of CVLG 27 had come aboard as our relief was announced by an unrefined shout of joy which fairly shook the bulkheads in the Ready Room. Our tenuous hopes, some more fervent than others, had been answered! Strangely enough, our replacement was the group we were scheduled to relieve on the *U.S.S. Princeton* last November. Picking up the pieces after the *Princeton* was sunk off Luzon 25 October, they returned to the States for rehabilitation and reforming at Quonset and Sanford, Me. Equipped with twenty-one combat veterans in the Fighter Squadron our shoes were well filled for the next operation which promised to be a tough one.

RECOGNITION OF SERVICES RENDERED

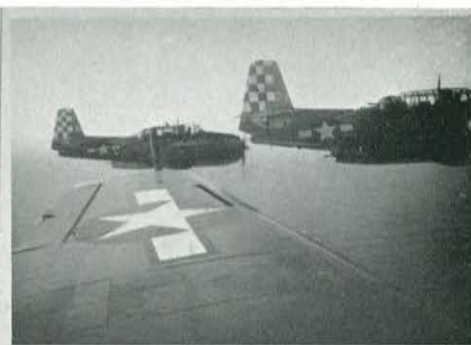
From: CTF 31 13 June 1945
To: CTF 38 101530
Info: Com 3rd Flt/CinCPac Adv. Hdqs.

On behalf of all those you leave behind here at Okinawa I wish to extend hearty thanks and appreciation for the aggressive part you have played in bringing this operation to a successful conclusion. Your protection and support have given us a very happy feeling of security and at the other end of the line you have caused a serious epidemic of nervous indigestion. Well done and come again soon.

From: CTG 38.4 Visual
Action: *INDEPENDENCE* 161035

For CVLG 46. Sincerely regret losing the support of CVLG 46 during coming operation. Extend to all hands my congratulations for a splendid performance in combat and best wishes on departure for a well-earned rest BT.





A letter from Gordon Rowe, Commodore, U.S.N., Commander Fleet Air, Quonset Point, under whom we trained in the embryonic period, to the Skipper is quoted herewith verbatim:

"An Air Intelligence memorandum passing over my desk states that Air Group Forty-six which participated in the strike on Tokyo performed in a highly creditable manner, establishing themselves as seasoned veterans, and paid high tribute to the soundness of their selection, the quality of their training and their unmistakable fighting spirit. I am pleased to express my hearty congratulations to you and the Group." Well Done All Hands!

WE COMPLETE THE GAMUT OF NAVAL HOUSING

On 15 June while still aboard the *U.S.S. Independence*, CTF 38 ordered us to disembark for housing aboard APL 13. A feverish perusal of available literature on ships of the Pacific Fleet was of no avail toward identifying our next haven. It wasn't until we had given three cheers for "Those we leave behind and the good ship, *Independence*" and were on our way in the LC1 which transported us to its mooring off the coast of Samar that our curiosity was satisfied. APL 13 was an Auxiliary Personnel Lighter. To the laity, this is a powerless house boat with a deck below the main deck for refrigeration, engine room and quarters for passenger enlisted men, a main deck with a recreation room, mess hall and crew's ship's company quarters, an upper deck which housed sick bay, the laundry and officers' country and a super deck (pent house) for recreation. One of 35 of its kind built in the Charlestown Navy Yard, Boston, APL 13 was towed by way of the Panama Canal, Pearl Harbor, Eniwetok and Ulithi to Leyte. She left Boston 22 December 1944 and arrived Leyte 1 June 1945 with a month taken out at Pearl for meditation and accumulation of poise for the trip across the Pacific at seven knots. Ship's company comprised 65 officers, chiefs and enlisted men. Ensign W. H. Glye, First Lieutenant, plus an MC, DC and SC officer made up the officer roster. She could accommodate 68 officers and 407 enlisted men. As there were no Liberty boats available to take us to Tacloban, Leyte or Guian, Samar we spent two restful days reading on the super deck, punctuated occasionally by a visit from the natives who in their canoes came to barter their wares. We were no match for their shrewdness born of necessity. A carton of cigarettes worth five dollars in the black market brought a medium-sized bolo knife or 10 Japanese pesos (worthless of course) and a mattress cover (lap-lap in Admiralty Islands parlance) was worth a large bolo knife. Scivvy shirts and soap did business but U. S. legal tender was worthless.

On 17 June we received orders to board a carrier for Guam. Our journey home had started!

"THE BIRDMAN HOMEWARD PLODS HIS WEARY WAY"

The initial phase of our journey back to Uncle Sugar was under the auspices of an old friend. The *U.S.S. Makassar Strait* (CVE 91), which deposited us in Pearl 1 October 1944, picked up CVG 12 and CVLG 46 at Leyte on 17 June 1945 and delivered us f.o.b. Guam on 23 June. Ship's company expressed the wishful thought that they might take us through to Pearl but

this hope proved abortive, as they were soon ordered to further training at Guam. This necessitated another move for us, our fifteenth to be exact!

In addition to their normal complement of 60 officers and 750 men, the *U.S.S. Makassar Strail* carried 340 passenger officers and 480 men. This meant that all senior passenger officers doubled up in rooms two decks below the Hangar Deck where the temperature in the shade of the rays of the desk lamp averaged 90°F. day and night. They ate at the second ward room sitting. Junior officers and enlisted men slept in cots on the Hangar Deck and subsisted in the general mess. With the sun setting regularly at our backs the minor discomforts of overcrowding occasioned little comment.

MAGELLAN LANDED ON GUAM IN 1521; AIR GROUP 46 LANDS 23 JUNE 1945

Complying with ComAirPacSubComFwd's invitation, we traveled by bus from Fleet Landing, Orote, seventeen miles to a camp on the southern end of the island designed to restore the frayed nerves of returning Air Groups. Completed 1 April 1945, the camp was managed by Lieut.-Comdr. T. R. Morse, C.O., a flyer in World War I and Lieut. J. A. Hager, Executive Officer, of the sixth N.I.T.S. class at Quonset. The F.P.R.C. (Flight Personnel Rehabilitation Camp) proved a welcome change.

Some of the pilots had been to Guam before on ferry hops but to most of us this initial visit was a revelation. Defying limitations of space and equipment, the Navy had, since U. S. occupation in August 1944, installed all conceivable modern conveniences. The Marine Highway, Route 1, which circumvented the perimeter of the 26 by 48 mile island was a beautiful hard-surfaced, four-lane road which rivaled in every respect its prototype, Route 1 from New York to Miami. We took Route 1 from Orote through Agana, a town occupied by 20,000 Chamorros before it was flattened by naval shells in the invasion, to Route 4 which branched off south to our destination. The countryside was brightened with hibiscus, primroses, orchids and mountain roses. The cocoanut palm, breadfruit, papaya, bay cedar and screw pine were the most prevalent trees. Guam resembled the Hawaiian Islands in vegetation and topography, although the elevations are not as great. The Marianas too are volcanic peaks of a mountain range which rises six miles from the bottom of the Pacific Ocean.

The southern end of Guam has hills up to one thousand feet; the rest of the island is rolling country with a lower altitude. Corn, copra, sugar and rice are produced. A coral reef completely surrounds the island so that it is as a whole a plateau, 200 to 500 feet high.

The Rehabilitation Camp, situated amongst palm and pine trees, was comfortable and spacious. Ten officers were assigned to a Quonset Hut, each equipped with two showers and wash stands. The constant shipboard admonition to: "(1) Wet down; (2) Soap down; (3) Rinse off; (4) Save water!" was welcome by its absence.

The bar in the Officers' Club enjoyed a second priority on the island for beer and liquor. Its supply was temporarily depleted each day before lunch and dinner and after the movies. Slot machines made the rest profitable for a few and expensive for all others. We swam, pitched

horseshoes and played softball at the camp. VC 71 was defeated handily by our first team and forfeited two cases of beer for their miscalculation of our abilities. Some made daily trips to Camp Dealey, the luxurious submarine rest camp two miles down the beach where four tennis courts and an officers' swimming pool, blasted out of the coral reef, were available to us.

This Officers' Club was called "Trader Vicks". The entrance was a replica of the famous restaurant in Honolulu, the home of the lethal Zombie and Fog Cutter.

A small group attended graduation exercises of a grade school class in the native village of Talofofo, three miles from the camp. The graduates, all Chamorros, are the result of the marriages between the native women and Spaniards and Filipinos. (We took over Guam from Spain in 1898, paying her four and one-half million dollars.) They demonstrated spiritedly an extraordinary knowledge of our Flag, the history of the Constitution and the advantages to them of a democracy. The last-named was perhaps forcibly impressed upon them by the Japanese assault and occupation on December 10, 1941 which we attempted to drive back with one hundred and sixty Marines equipped with four 30-calibre machine guns. The main feature of the exercises, a school play in two acts entitled "For All", was dedicated to the ex-Governor of Guam, Captain McMillin, U.S.N., who was taken prisoner by the Japanese at the outbreak of the war. Commander F. M. Votaw, head of the Military Government and the Department of Education, presented the certificates to the graduates, immaculately dressed in white.

An announcement was made one day during our visit that P.O.W.'s were being sent out into the hills in an attempt to bring back fellow Japanese, many of whom were still at large. We were cautioned to carry pistols outside the camp. Enlisted P.O.W.'s delegated did not return. It is assumed they were killed. A Major, however, was a more successful proselyter, returning with 30 Japanese to the P.O.W. camp.

It was Admiral Nimitz' responsibility to provide Air-Sea Rescue facilities to the Army's B-29s based on the Marianas that were bombing Japan. The Twenty-First Bomber Command coordinated and directed this important work for the five wings located on Guam, Tinian and Saipan. Lieut. Bill Street, former A.C.I.O. of VT-46 was in charge of the details. He seemed completely recovered from the ravages of chronic seasickness. Lieut.-Comdr. Rex Van Atta, former Administrative Officer of VF-46, was also located on Guam as liaison officer of CASU (F) 12 between that organization and the CVEs, which they serviced with planes. He also conducted all Deck Court hearings for the 1700 men in CASU (F) 12.

"OURS NOT TO REASON WHY, OURS BUT TO GRACIOUSLY COMPLY"

Martin C. Christiansen, ART 1/c, Dante O. Columbo, AMM 2/c, Norman A. Colwell, AMM 2/c, William H. Funk, AMM 3/c, James L. Hines, AM 1/c, Ernest M. Klander, ADM 1/c, Robert C. Kloeppel, AMM 2/c and Alexander M. Mazepink, PR 1/c were detached at Guam and ordered to report to Commander Nab 939 by ComAirPacSubComFwd for future assignment. This meant an additional 8-12 months overseas duty to complete the 18 months minimum requirements before they would return home. It didn't seem that the above men with only one

tour of overseas duty had received sufficient warning of the possibility of being detached at Guam. The effect was not good on their morale.

Vaughan A. Bradley, Jr., AEM 1/c had served with VC-1 on the *U.S.S. Card*, *Croatian* and *Block Island* in Atlantic combat duty prior to joining VF-46. John R. Daisey, AMM 1/c also served in VC-1 where he was awarded the Air Medal for participation as turret gunner in attacking two submarines. Henry O. Fogelman, Jr., PhOM 2/c previously served on AVP 29, *U.S.S. Rockaway* in ferrying squadrons to Iceland, England, Wales, Greenland, Scotland and North Africa. Their overseas duty totaled well over 18 months, so they were allowed to remain with the squadron. Christal, Y1/c was proclaimed by Commander Rooney essential to the completion of the squadron paper work and thus escaped the axe.

Leon R. Hathaway, ACRM had been retired to inactive status on his application in March 1945. He was 42 years of age. Howard C. Lemon, ACMM, Ishmael G. Mason, ACRM, who replaced Chief Hathaway, and Ray Rigmaiden, ACOM were allowed to return with us as there was no additional demand for chiefs overseas at that time.

THE MEN

Jim Hines—The Squadron's sole barber and negotiator on big deals for the leading chief.

Chris Christiansen—Hard-working aviation radio technician often seen testing the set on the Captain's plane at 0300. Always had an answer and liked an argument.

Hank Colwell—Proficient in engineering but by necessity became a plane Captain.

Red Funk—Red-headed soap salesman who made good in the Navy.

Ernest Klander—The youngest member of the Squadron. Conscientious, willing and able. From the hills of North Carolina.

Doc Kloeppel—Co-owner of Frigate. With two years of college he was invaluable as a trouble-shooter in engineering topside.

Alexander Mazepink—Lieut. (jg) Sparks' able right-hand man for parachute tailoring.

Dick Christal—Sole efficient recorder of gripes and praises. Authority on horse flesh.

Doc Columbo—Ex-automotive machinist and a good one. Subject to tropical diseases which resulted in the loss of his finger nail and toe nail.

Tex Bradley—Jack-of-all trades. Well-qualified as electrician and mechanic. Co-owner of Frigate. Squadron master-at-arms. Kept generators, running-lights, and starters in good order and checked on men's quarters and clothes.

John R. Daisey—Leading 1/c Petty Officer. Trained odd rates such as PR, PhOM, AM and EM for plane captains. Helped set up the line at Ponam.

Snapshot Fogelman—Wasn't rated as PhOM until we got to Groton but made up for lost time by his ability to learn fast.

Ray Rigmaiden—Rated Chief 1 April 1944. Fire cracker mechanic. Dependable and able. Well informed on Ordnance.

Pudgy Mason—Filled Hathaway's shoes ably and cheerfully. Joined us at Ford Island after Hilo as 1/c. He later became Chief.

Howard Lemon—Affable and able leading Chief. Joined the Navy 1 January 1929. (1) Trained at Great Lakes Aviation Utility School for 6 months as S 2/c; (2) served 26 months in Pearl Harbor as AMM 3/c; (3) served with VF-5 in *U.S.S. Lexington*; (4) 3 years in Squadron 2 as AMM 2/c; (5) 2 years in A & R at Ford Island; (6) served in *U.S.S. Trenton*; (7) 2 years in A & R at Norfolk; (8) became ACMM in September 1942, (9) then line chief of CASU at Atlantic City and (10) finally leading Chief of VF-46 in April 1945.

WE START THE SECOND LEG OF OUR JOURNEY EASTWARD

On 1 July 1945 at 0830 all personal and squadron gear was loaded on trucks and at 1115 we boarded the *U.S.S. Bouganville* (CVE 100) at 1830. We were underway for Pearl. Accompanied by VC-83 and VOC 1, the trip to Pearl where we put in for 24 hours and then on to San Diego became progressively more pleasant as we got nearer home. The DE which provided submarine interference left us on 4 July to deliver mail to Eniwetok. We spent two Saturdays on 7 August when we crossed the International Date Line.

After defeating VOC 1 40 to 23 in basketball, we followed this with another victory over ship's company 17 to 13 the next day. The latter opponent had previously won 17 straight games; their victims included the *U.S.S. Massachusetts*. They claimed the mythical championship of the South Pacific. We now claim same. The court on the Hangar Deck measured 90 feet by 51 feet. Wes Shaw, Buck Rogg, Bill Schroeder, Racehorse Flodquist, Jack Rivers and John Ballard all played beautiful ball.

On 11 August at 0945 the announcement "All tugs duty completed. Thank you very much", was heard over the loudspeaker and the anchor was dropped in Pearl Harbor. A twenty-two piece band greeted us with "Anchors Aweigh", a welcome contrast to "Aloha" which was rendered to us on the same pier at Ford Island 2 December 1944. 1000 12 August saw us underway for San Diego. The next day the shelling of the east coast of Japan by the Third Fleet was announced and on 16 August we heard our first commercial broadcast from the States. "Tums" was the sponsor. We looked forward to conditions which would warrant the use of their product. That night we smelled Uncle Sugar and we slept under a sheet for the first time in many weeks. On the morning of 18 August two Dolphins paced the ship just off the bow until we sighted San Clemente Island at 0930 and at 1430 we dropped anchor at San

Diego. Greeted by efficient, genial Lieut.-Comdr. C. E. Davis, Jr., of Princeton hockey fame, we were immediately taken by bus to Fleet Air West Coast Receiving Center at Coronado Heights Annex, N.A.S. San Diego, California, located 10 miles toward the Mexican border on the Silver Strand Peninsula. We had the pleasure of being the first Air Group returning from combat to stay at this new Receiving Center. That night those of us not fortunate enough to be met by their better-halves christened the bar in the "O" Club with customary thoroughness.

What later developed to be Fighting Squadron 46's first and last combat tour of duty in World War II had been completed. By late afternoon on 20 July all orders for our next assignment were received and we started our well-earned thirty-day leave.

Fighting Squadron 46 was to re-form at Alameda, California on 31 August 1945 under the well-qualified leadership of Lieut.-Comdr. R. A. Weatherup. This order was belayed, however, and the Squadron decommissioned after President Truman's announcement on 14 August 1945 of Japan's unconditional surrender.

ONE YEAR LATER—A CITATION AND A DEMISE

The August 1946 issue of *Naval Aviation News* announced the Navy Unit Citation for the *U.S.S. Cowpens* and Air Groups serving therein. Congratulations all Frigates, Cockers and Rumcokes! Coincidentally, the *U.S.S. Independence* was destroyed during the same month at Bikini Atoll in the interest of atomic bomb research.

IN CONCLUSION—FACTUAL DATA FOR THE SKEPTICS

We quote herewith from the United States Strategic Bombing Survey's Summary Report. Colonel Franklin D'Olier, President of Prudential Life Insurance Co. and a Charter Trustee of Princeton University, was the chairman of the officials of the survey in Germany and Japan. In recognition of his organization and supervision of this survey he received the Medal for Merit, the highest civilian award the President of the United States can bestow.

Japan started the war with 10 carriers. Six were sunk during the engagements of 1942. The Japanese did not employ their carriers again until 1944 by which time they had constructed or converted a total of 17 additional carriers; one of the conversions was made on a Yamato-class battleship hull and two, hermaphrodites, were the result of removing the after turrets of battleships and installing small hangars and launching decks. During 1944, 14 Japanese carriers were sunk by carrier-based aircraft or submarines with the exception of one which was sunk by surface vessels after it had been mortally damaged by carrier airplanes. The Japanese had two Yamato-class battleships, each of 64,000 tons, armed with 18-inch guns which were more powerful than any of our battleships. One, the *Musashi*, was sunk in the Visayan Sea in the Battle of Leyte by a sweep led by Commander Daniel Fletcher Smith, Executive Officer of the *U.S.S. Independence* (see page 29). The other was sunk south of Kyushu in June 1945. Both were victims of carrier-based TBMs.

Japan began the war with 381 warships aggregating approximately 1,271,000 tons, and during the war augmented this with an additional 816 combat ships totalling 1,048,000 tons. 549 ships or 1,744,000 tons were sunk, of which 1,300,000 tons were capital ships of carrier, battleship, cruiser and destroyer class. 625,000 tons were sunk by Navy and Marine aircraft, 375,000 tons by submarines, 183,000 tons by surface vessels, 55,000 tons by Army aircraft, and 65,000 tons by various agents. Only 196,000 tons of Japanese capital ships remained afloat at the end of the war. Japan had 10,100,000 tons of merchant shipping during the war. Of this total, 8,900,000 tons of shipping were sunk or incapacitated at the end of the war. 54.7% of this total was accounted for by submarines, 16.3% by carrier-based planes, 10.2% by Army land-based planes and 4.3% by Navy and Marine land-based planes, 9.3% by mines (largely dropped by B-29s), less than 1% by surface gunfire, and the balance of 4% by marine accidents.

In addition to its participation in the ship sinking program, air power softened up the defenses of the critical islands captured, over which we maintained command of the air during the invasion period. Absolute command of the air was essential to the success of these operations. The total tonnage of bombs dropped by Allied planes in the Pacific war was 656,400. 24% of this total or 160,800 tons were dropped on the Japanese mainland. In the aggregate some 40% of the built-up area of the 66 cities attacked was destroyed. Approximately 30% of the entire urban population of Japan lost their homes. Navy aircraft accounted for 6,800 tons, Army aircraft other than B-29s for 7000 tons and the B-29s for 147,000 tons. Three quarters of the 6,800 tons of bombs dropped by carrier planes had airfields, warships and miscellaneous military targets as their quarry. The accuracy of low-level carrier plane attack was high, being at least 50% of hits within 250 feet of the target.

Based on their aircraft, capital ship and merchant ship losses alone, the Japanese Supreme War Direction Council in May 1945 discussed ways and means of ending the war. Soviet Russia was approached as a mediator. A plan to send Prince Konoye to Moscow with private instructions from the Emperor to negotiate peace at any price, if absolutely necessary, was interfered with by deliberations on the Potsdam Declaration.

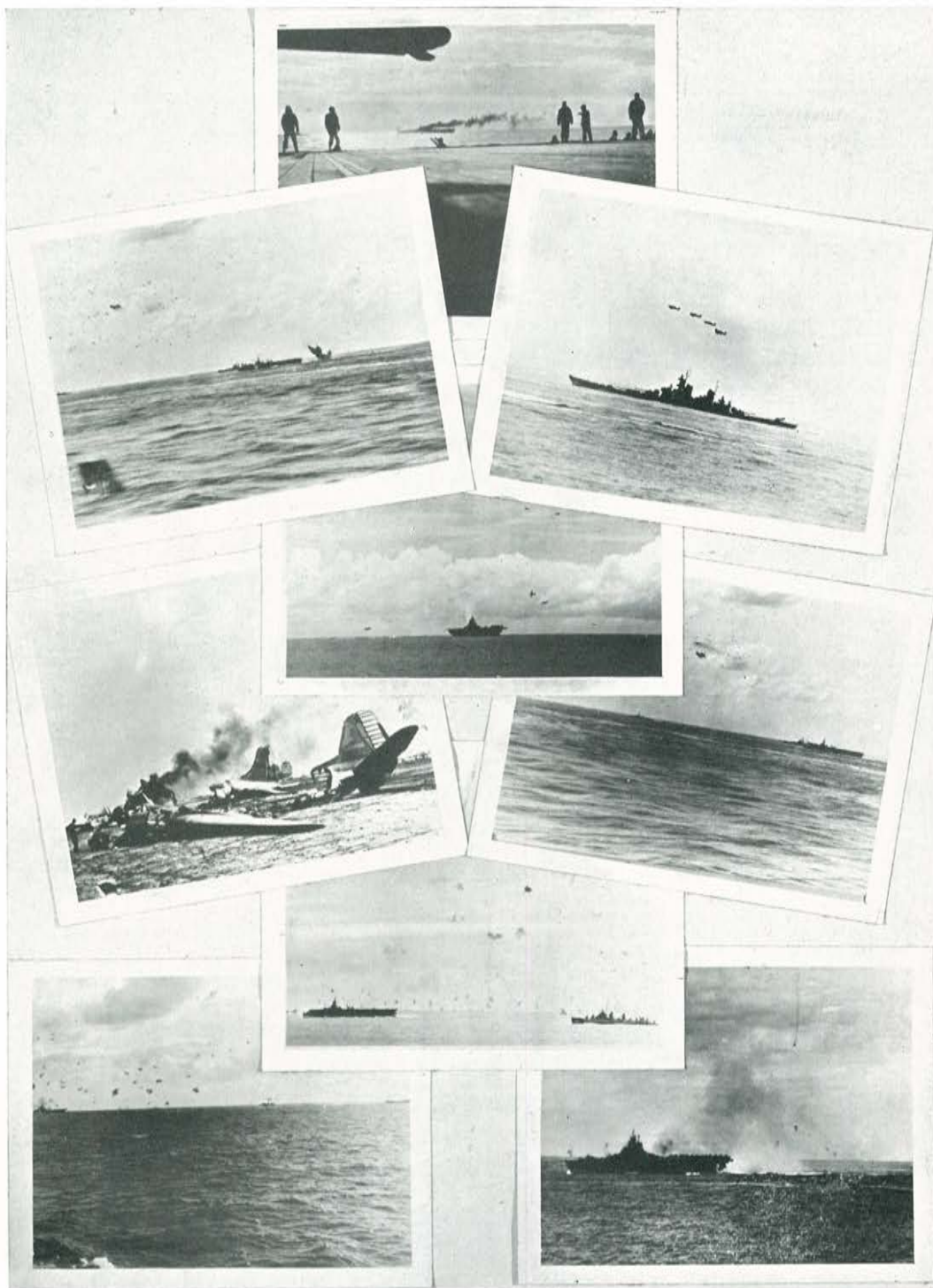
It is the opinion of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey that prior to 1 November 1945 Hirohito would have thrown in the towel even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war and even if no invasion of the Japanese mainland had been planned! Check and double check.

COMBAT STATISTICS

Name	Feb.	Combat Hours March	April	May	June	Total Combat Hours	Total Carrier Landings
COMMANDER C. W. ROONEY	40.5	59.2	76.2	48.2	28.1	252.2	73
LIEUT.-COMDR. R. A. WEATHERUP	36.2	49.7	82.7	48.2	32.8	249.6	73
LIEUT. H. J. BADGER	36.0	49.8	85.0	46.4	26.8	244.0	67
LIEUT. R. B. MCNEES	47.2	70.2	83.2	65.5	32.1	298.2	78
LIEUT. J. I. JONES	25.5	50.9	84.4	60.7	31.0	258.5	66
LIEUT. W. SCHROEDER	39.7	56.4	82.2	39.5	29.5	247.3	72
LIEUT. C. O. JONES	...	...	71.1	68.2	31.4	170.7	42
LIEUT. A. T. MORRISON	36.1	63.3	69.1	45.1	37.5	251.1	68
LIEUT. F. D. FOGDE	42.1	47.0	74.3	43.8	28.2	235.4	67
LIEUT. JACK RIVERS	38.8	48.3	79.7	41.0	35.1	242.9	72
LIEUT. (JG) C. T. JONES	34.4	56.4	79.0	51.1	26.8	251.7	67
LIEUT. (JG) B. R. APGAR	22.2	49.3	77.2	47.9	12.9	209.5	54
LIEUT. (JG) A. W. C. THOMAS	38.6	44.4	81.5	44.4	24.5	233.4	64
LIEUT. (JG) S. A. SPARKS	36.2	63.5	84.8	63.1	23.9	271.5	78
LIEUT. (JG) J. A. CRAMPTON, JR.	42.4	60.8	69.9	60.3	41.7	275.1	73
LIEUT. (JG) W. J. SCHLEIS	33.2	69.3	82.6	49.0	29.6	263.7	73
LIEUT. (JG) C. W. PURCELL	34.5	46.7	93.2	50.1	46.2	270.7	75
LIEUT. (JG) R. M. ROGG	31.5	62.3	61.7	62.2	40.8	258.5	67
LIEUT. (JG) W. R. SHAW	35.7	63.2	74.9	48.0	27.0	248.5	65
LIEUT. (JG) M. E. STEWART	35.3	69.6	79.0	53.7	27.8	265.4	74
LIEUT. (JG) R. J. BYRON	39.0	58.8	76.2	44.3	27.0	245.3	70
LIEUT. (JG) J. R. FIELDING	38.8	60.5	76.3	50.3	30.7	256.6	68
LIEUT. (JG) J. K. GENTRY	35.4	54.0	76.2	34.6	...	200.2	61
LIEUT. (JG) J. R. BUTLER	33.2	59.2	70.1	50.7	27.5	240.7	70
ENSIGN R. D. FLODQUIST	43.3	70.3	77.1	44.0	30.5	265.2	76
ENSIGN PETER KOYENGA	32.5	43.1	80.5	41.8	33.1	231.0	63
ENSIGN J. W. PRUETT	32.1	75.6	69.1	55.3	35.8	267.9	72
ENSIGN T. M. DELEHAUNTY	33.3	55.1	81.0	51.2	25.2	245.8	69
ENSIGN E. R. ROBINETT	41.5	50.7	65.8	45.9	31.8	235.7	67
ENSIGN B. M. AGESEN	22.3	55.8	73.0	43.5	34.8	229.4	60
ENSIGN J. V. BALLARD	...	...	61.3	51.1	41.0	153.4	41
ENSIGN A. W. ADAIR	38.6	65.2	74.8	47.7	19.1	245.4	65
ENSIGN L. V. ADGATE	...	...	56.2	61.4	34.4	152.0	37
ENSIGN D. W. ALBERTSON	34.1	55.0	65.8	60.5	28.2	243.6	61
ENSIGN R. T. DYER	...	...	57.9	67.3	14.2	139.4	32
ENSIGN Z. PLECHA	...	...	65.5	63.7	35.3	164.5	39
Total	1110.2	1784.5	2698.5	1849.7	1062.3	8514.3	2318
Average per Pilot	35.8	57.6	74.9	51.4	30.3	236.5	64.4

[illegible]

OKINAWA



COMBAT STATISTICS

4 February 1945—13 June 1945

SQUADRON CASUALTIES

KILLED IN TRAINING:	LIEUT. ARNOLD C. HARWOOD
	ENSIGN T. E. SULLIVAN
SERIOUSLY INJURED IN TRAINING:	LIEUT (JG) ROBERT F. SHIMER
	ENSIGN BRUCE GARLOCK
KILLED IN COMBAT:	ENSIGN O. H. CLARK
KILLED IN COMBAT OPERATIONS:	LIEUT. (JG) F. E. LIEBER
MISSING IN ACTION:	LIEUT. (JG) D. K. BRIGHT
	LIEUT. (JG) R. J. REEDER
	LIEUT. (JG) B. R. APGAR
	ENSIGN R. T. DYER, JR.

SHIPS DAMAGED

2 Fox Bakers	1 Destroyer
2 Sugar Bakers	1 Destroyer Escort
1 Sugar Dog	6 Diesel Fishing Boats

AMMUNITION EXPENDED

500-pound bombs	425
Rockets	1,336
.50 Caliber Rounds	371,581

NUMBER OF VF-46 PLANES HIT BY JAP AA—38

NAUTICAL MILES TRAVELED IN COMBAT TOUR

<i>U.S.S. Cowpens</i> 6 February—4 March 1945	9,647
<i>U.S.S. Independence</i> 14 March—1 May 1945	21,049
<i>U.S.S. Independence</i> 1 May—13 June 1945	14,529
Total	45,225

CARRIERS IN TASK FORCE 58 DAMAGED BY THE ENEMY

<i>U.S.S. Hancock</i> (CV 19)	<i>U.S.S. Enterprise</i> (CV 6)
<i>U.S.S. Intrepid</i> (CV 11)	<i>U.S.S. Saratoga</i> (CV 3)
<i>U.S.S. Randolph</i> (CV 15)	<i>U.S.S. Franklin</i> (CV 13)

ANALYSIS OF COMBAT HOURS FLOWN

Strikes and Sweeps	339
Photo Missions	19
Search Missions	6
TCAP	360
CAP	1364
RAPCAP	364
RCAP	24
Total Sorties	2473

MILITARY INSTALLATIONS DAMAGED

4 February 1945-13 June 1945

HONSHU, JAPAN

Tateyama A/F (Control Tower, Hangars), Mito A/F (Barracks, Hangars), Tatebayshi A/F (Hangars), Nakajima Tama Engine Plant, Nakajima Musashino Engine Plant, Koizumi Aircraft Plant, Factories near Chofu, Hiratsuko Railway Station, Inubo Saki Light (Light House, Radar Station).

KYUSHU, JAPAN

USA A/F (Hangars), Kanoya A/F, Kushira A/F, Inujo A/F, Oita A/F (Hangars), Saeki A/F, Ibusuki Seaplane Base, Kagoshima Bay (Barracks, Villages), Minamata (Dock facilities, chemical factory), Miyazaki A/F (locomotive, radio tower, factory), Iwakawa A/F, Miyakonojo A/F, Shebushi A/F, Goshoura Island, Ashikuri Saki (Light House, Radar Station).

OKINAWA, NANSEI SHOTO

Yontan A/F, Katena A/F, Naha A/F, Machinato A/F, Yonabura A/F, Naha Town, Sanega Shima; the following villages: Toyama, Gushichan, Kakinohana, Chibana, Tomigusuku, Osunohana, Ise, Ishiza, Katchin Hanto, Miyagusuku, Ike Shima, Taira, Kawata, Arumi, Abe, Taucha, Yagaji Shima, Kaniku, Yakata, Jaba, Awa, Takee, Okota, Shuizato, Sashik, Shuri.

IE SHIMA, OKINAWA GUNTO

Airfield, Light House and Buildings.

TORI SHIMA, AMAMI GUNTO

Sulphur Refinery, Buildings.

TOKUNO SHIMA, AMAMI GUNTO

Airfield, dock facilities; the following villages: Kitoku, Kamezu, Hakuchi, Kanami Zaki, Sammura Wan, Kami Zaki, Kinen Zaki.

KIKAI SHIMA, AMAMI GUNTO

Wan Airfield, buildings, villages.

AMAMI-O-SHIMA

Koniya Seaplane Base, Konuja Town, Nage Town, Kakeroma Shima (buildings and radio center), Sotsuki Zaki (light house).

MINAMI DAITO SHIMA

Airfield, Administration Building, Ammunition Storage, Revetments, Sugar Mill, Radio Station, Barracks, Boat Landing, Warehouses.

KITO AND OKINO DAITO SHIMA

Radio Towers, Buildings.

MIYAKA SHIMA, SAKISHIMO GUNTO

Nobara Airfield, Factory, Town.

TOTAL DAMAGE INFLICTED ON THE ENEMY AIRCRAFT

A/C destroyed in the air	26 plus 2 probables
A/C destroyed on the ground	80
A/C damaged on the ground	40

SHIPS DESTROYED

1 Fox Tare Dog	1 Speed Boat
5 Sugar Dogs	4 Small Boats
33 Fishing Boats	2 Sea Trucks
1 Troop Transport Boat	1 Net Tender

VF-46

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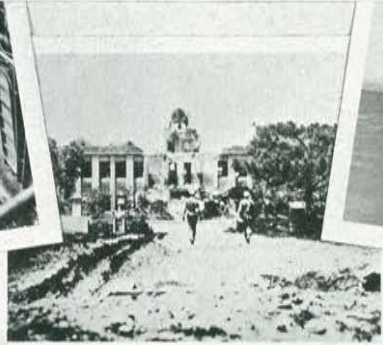
LIEUT. HIBBEN ZIESING
c/o Calco Chemical Company
Bound Brook, N. J.

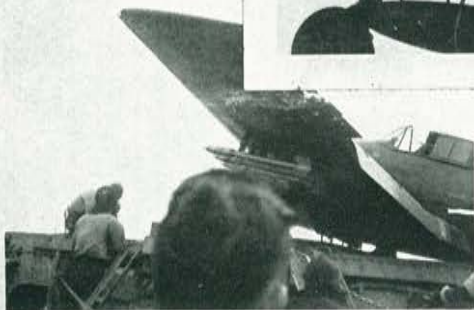
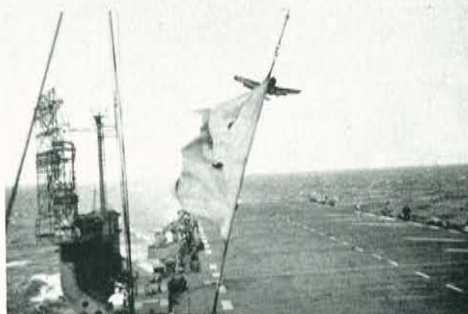


Above: A Kaminaze Plane crashes astern of an Independence Class Carrier

Below: A Suicide Jap Pilot nears the end of his dive







VF-46

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THREE HUNDRED COPIES OF THIS BOOK
WERE PRIVATELY PRINTED IN OCTOBER,
1946 BY THE PLANTIN PRESS, NEW YORK



