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# Wing and a Prayer

By Jerome Cady

Where is our navy?  
Three months have passed  
since the tragedy  
at Pearl Harbor...  
12 die as Jap submarines  
strike near San Francisco.  
Committee demands probe  
of navy failure to fight.  
Where is our navy?  
Why doesn't it fight?  
We cannot  
answer that question.  
We must force ourselves  
not to listen to it.  
We do not intend  
to tell the Japanese  
how badly our navy  
was damaged at Pearl Harbor.  
Since December the 7 th,  
our prewar strategy  
is useless.  
The defense  
of the Aleutians  
and our Pacific Coast  
with the Hawaiiis  
at the apex  
of the Triangle  
is almost impossible  
with what remains  
of our navy.  
But we are not considering  
a defensive campaign.  
You all realize  
I'm indulging in  
no false heroics  
when I say  
our only hope  
of evading destruction  
is to destroy  
the enemy.  
The Japanese have won  
a quick and staggering  
succession of victories.  
They're aiming now

at the final knockout...  
the capture  
of Pearl Harbor.  
To accomplish this,  
they must first  
take Midway.  
If they are permitted  
to choose the time  
and conditions of attack,  
we haven't  
much of a chance,  
but if we can trick them  
into meeting us  
when they think  
we are weak,  
we then have a chance  
of cutting their navy  
down to our size  
and proceeding with the rest  
of the Pacific strategy.  
We have learned  
there are heavy concentrations  
of enemy carriers  
and other fleet units  
in the Marshall Islands  
and a numerous  
transport force  
making up at Truk.  
So our strategy is this.  
We shall concentrate  
our strength near Midway  
in our effort  
to spring a trap.  
One of our carriers  
is already at sea  
waiting to carry out  
the initial phases  
of this strategy.  
On April the 28th,  
this carrier  
and its escort  
will be off  
the Marshall Islands,  
close enough

to be detected.  
On May the 3rd,  
it is to be seen  
near the Gilbert Islands  
by the Japanese.  
On May the 8th,  
it will be detected  
near Ocean Island,  
as if heading  
for the Jap fleet at Truk,  
but it will not attack.  
It will turn south,  
be seen on May the 15th  
at Guadalcanal.  
Every time one of our pilots  
encounters a Jap plane,  
he will return  
to the carrier,  
as if he did  
not stomach a fight.  
By sending this one carrier  
on such a mission,  
we hope  
to convince the enemy  
that our fleet  
is scattered,  
our fighting morale...  
shattered.  
Actually, we shall be  
waiting for them in force  
near Midway.  
If they fall  
for this bait  
and attempt an invasion,  
we shall then be able  
to answer the question...  
"Where is our navy?  
Why doesn't it fight?"  
Pilot to crew.  
There's mama.  
I see her, Commander.  
Pilot to crew.  
If you need  
a toothpick,

I know where  
you can find one.  
We'd only need  
half that space, Mr. Scott.  
Just lower your wheels  
and drop your hook,  
like putting  
a baby to bed.  
Set condition one  
in the air department.  
Stand by  
to land planes.  
Stand by  
to land planes.  
Torpedo planes sighted  
broad on the port quarter.  
Altitude 2-5-0-0.  
Range 8,000 yards.  
Stand by  
for practice run.  
If those were only meatballs  
instead of TBFs.  
O.K. Hook.  
Stand clear.  
I'm O'Donnell, commanding Bomber Six.  
Welcome aboard.  
Molton, commanding  
Torpedo Five.  
What's the scuttlebutt?  
What gives?  
I thought we'd find out  
when we got aboard.  
Not from us.  
I thought with  
you guys aboard,  
we'd have some action.  
Name's Shubert.  
I'm Manning.  
We're on a cook's tour.  
Your guess is  
as good as mine.  
See you around.  
Sir.  
Lieutenant Commander

Edward Molton  
reporting for  
Torpedo Squadron Five.  
Glad to have you aboard.  
Molton, Commander Harper,  
our air officer.  
How do you do?  
Good to see you.  
I've a message for you.  
Hey, what's eating Oscar?  
Sure making  
a long approach.  
He's building up  
an entrance.  
Just feel your way  
in, sir. Lightly.  
And politely.  
Do we have  
to shoot him down?  
What does he want,  
a spotlight?  
He's coming in too fast.  
Can't he see  
that wave-off?  
[Siren Sounds]  
Assemble your squadron  
in the ready room.  
Aye, aye, sir.  
Boy, I thought  
for a while there...  
until 1900...  
I thought I'd have  
to turn back.  
Maybe you should have.  
Didn't you see  
the wave-off?  
Yes, sir.  
Did you think the flagman  
was waving bye-bye?  
To tell you the truth,  
I couldn't think.  
I had my hands  
too full of airplane  
at the time.

Oh.  
But...  
Oh, men, this is our air officer  
Commander Harper.  
Commander Harper,  
this is Mr. Brainard,  
Mr. Chisholm.  
Mr. Markham.  
How do you do?  
Mr. Jacobson.  
How do you do?  
Mr. White.  
Sir.  
Mr. Holloway.  
Mr. Scott.  
How do you do?  
I'm glad to know you  
and welcome you aboard.  
- Thank you.  
- Thank you, sir.  
You've been assigned  
to quarters  
which I hope you find  
to your liking.  
We have some pretty  
good men on board.  
I've been very proud of  
all of our squadrons...  
torpedoes,  
bombers, and fighters.  
I hope  
you equal their record.  
Read that, please,  
Mr. Molton.  
Aloud.  
"Memorandum for commander,  
Air Group Five.  
Subject...  
Report of casualty  
which occurred  
during maneuvers,  
September 19, 1941.  
Roy K. Spangler,  
number 4328112,

aviation machinist's mate,  
first class,  
United States Navy,  
died at 1600  
while under anesthesia  
for surgery following  
accident on flight deck.  
Spangler's next of kin,  
his mother  
Mrs. Edward R. Spangler,  
3617 Lee Avenue,  
Minneapolis, Minnesota.  
Signed J.B. Golden, commander,  
senior medical officer."

A hot pilot  
ignored a wave-off.  
Spangler couldn't  
get out of the way.  
The prop cut him  
nearly in half.  
I'm sorry, sir.  
So was the other pilot.

So was  
Spangler's mother.

I'd like  
to explain, sir...

I don't  
like explanations.

Secure.

Sorry, sir.

The way you and the  
others had to take it  
on account of me.

Just don't ignore  
any more wave-offs.

Aye, aye, sir.

Mr. Scott.

Here's some  
mail for you.

Oh, thanks.

I see the movie fans  
haven't forgotten you, sir.

Cunningham?

Yes, sir.



I've received this letter  
from the admiral.  
I thought you'd  
like to read it.  
Congratulations.  
Gentlemen!  
Gentlemen!  
I give you  
Cookie Cunningham!  
The man who studied  
Japanese mathematics  
and found you always  
get the right answer  
by subtracting zero.  
Who says we don't know  
where we're going?  
I tell you what  
I'm going to do.  
I'll fly my TBF  
clear to Tokyo.  
I'll drag that  
little monkey to 15,000  
and drop him  
like a bomb,  
right smack on Fujiyama.  
I can't stand the  
canned vegetables  
you get  
on shipboard.  
But our squadron's  
different.  
We'll have  
fresh vegetables.  
How come?  
How?  
You going to plow up  
the flight deck?  
No, I'm not kidding.  
We'll have  
some fresh celery,  
real juicy tomatoes,  
green onions...  
What are you going  
to use for dirt?

Water and chemicals.  
That's the agriculture  
of the future.  
Ya-hoo!  
Hey, fellows!  
Look!  
Get a load of this!  
Wait a minute!  
Hey, wait!  
Now don't do that.  
You did it!  
It shows it right there.  
You kissed Betty Grable.  
If I didn't see it,  
I wouldn't believe it.  
Did you  
ever kiss Garbo?  
I've never seen her.  
When you're in a picture  
and you have  
to kiss Betty Grable...  
Listen to me...  
have to...  
When you kiss her,  
what's it feel like?  
Ah, let it lay.  
I'm serious  
about this, Oscar.  
I really mean it.  
I mean, do you feel  
anything at all,  
or is it all just  
part of the day's work?  
Does she breathe deep?  
Does she kiss you  
or you her?  
Does she kiss back?  
What I want to know is,  
how does it make  
you feel?  
The rest of us can only dream  
about those girls,  
but you've  
actually kissed them.

What's it like?  
Well, it's, uh...  
it's like nothing  
else in this world.  
- Ahh.  
- Ahh.  
I'll never forget  
that first girl  
I kissed in a picture.  
Who was it?  
Yeah. Who?  
You think  
I'd kiss and tell?  
In a wardrobe?  
Come on, Oscar.  
Well, it's, um...  
The night before  
the scene was to be shot,  
I didn't sleep.  
I lay awake all night,  
just daydreaming  
about that kiss.  
How do you  
daydream at night?  
Quiet.  
Well, how do you?  
The next morning  
I got to the studio  
an hour earlier,  
got into my wardrobe,  
dashed over to the set.  
I waited all day  
for that one moment  
when I'd get  
to kiss her.  
Finally, it was time  
for the scene to be shot.  
We took our places.  
She was wearing the most beautiful  
black negligee.  
Lovely...  
revealing.  
Her hair was swept back  
from her forehead.

Her eyes  
were partly closed.  
I took her  
into my arms...  
Go on.  
Kiss her, you dope!  
The hairdresser yelled,  
"You're mussing up  
her hairdo."  
The director screamed, " Move your arm.  
You're tilting her collar."  
The cameraman said,  
"I can't see her nose."  
So I kissed her off-center  
and smacked the air.  
If you want  
to kiss a girl right,  
you got  
to join the navy.  
Hey! You can't  
get away with that!  
Hey! Hey! Gather 'round.  
I want  
to tell you something.  
Your worries are over.  
Listen to the voice  
of Superman.  
I'll tell you what  
I'm going to do.  
I'll fly my TBF  
clear to Tokyo.  
Throw a rope  
around Tojo's neck,  
like I roped coyotes  
back in Texas.  
I'll drag that  
monkey to 15,000 feet  
and drop him  
like a bomb...  
Very funny.  
I wouldn't want  
to bore you guys  
with what I'm  
really going to do.

It sure takes  
a load off our minds.  
That guy there  
might possibly give you  
a few pointers.  
He's only shot down  
three Zeros.  
I'm just a bag of wind  
from Texas.  
I must sound funny  
to a guy who's done  
the things you've done.  
How do you feel  
when those meatballs  
come at you?  
I didn't see them  
until they were  
pretty close.  
Did they attack  
from above?  
From below.  
They missed  
with their first pass.  
They say they can attack,  
pull out,  
and dive again  
before you see them.  
Slow but with  
maneuverability?  
I don't know, really...  
They machine-gun you  
on the way down?  
I'm writing my memoirs  
for the Saturday Evening Post.  
You can read them  
after the war.  
All right.  
Break it up.  
Let's cut a record.  
Hey, you want me  
to make another one?  
I could knock that moon  
out of the sky.  
Leave it alone.

I'll need that moon  
when I get home.  
Right on the beam, kid.  
What's your name?  
Benjamin K. O'Neal,  
sir.  
Aviation radioman,  
first class.  
Did you come in  
with Torpedo Five?  
That's right, sir.  
Haven't you served  
under me before?  
I was in and out  
of Pensacola, sir.  
I thought I'd  
seen you before.  
As you were.  
# Bring back #  
# Bring back  
my Bonny to me #  
#To me... ##  
What's wrong, Benny?  
I've been ducking him  
since I came on board.  
If he figures how long  
ago he saw me,  
he'll ground me sure.  
How come?  
Too old  
for air combat duty.  
Are you kidding?  
There's no law...  
That man's  
the whole navy  
in one pair of pants.  
Do you know what  
kind of guy he is?  
He's the only officer whose men  
wouldn't give him a nickname.  
What's the matter?  
What if he  
finds out about me?  
What about you?

Benny, how old  
would you take me to be?  
Oh, I'd say  
about 20, 21.  
Thanks.  
But if he ever  
sees my birth certifcate,  
I'm cooked.  
When I joined the navy,  
I made a mistake  
about my age.  
You mean you  
weren't 17?  
I won't be 17  
for 3 months.  
So that's  
the way it is.  
We're either  
too old or young.  
Well, kid,  
we're in this together.  
# Every tear #  
#Will be a memory #  
# So wait and pray #  
# Each night for me #  
#Till we meet again ##  
[Ding Ding]  
[Ding Ding]  
Well, gentlemen...  
we have our orders.  
[Plays Reveille]  
Do it again.  
I love it.  
Come on, Scott.  
30 minutes  
to flight quarters.  
O.K., O.K.  
Come on.  
Come on.  
No wonder they gave you  
the Navy Cross.  
Waking people up at night,  
you have to be a hero.  
Your squadron

ahead of ours?  
I'm not flying  
right now.  
Just shower call  
and such.  
I was on the sick list  
after Pearl Harbor.  
Still wobbly  
on the pins.  
Wake Chisholm, will you?  
Yeah.  
Good morning.  
I'll need  
five empty fuel containers,  
some potassium nitrate,  
some calcium nitrate,  
manganese sulfate...  
Manganese what, sir?  
Manganese sulfate,  
and about 30 feet of wire mesh.  
And get lots of excelsior  
from the engine packings,  
and, um...  
a big ball of heavy string.  
Yeah.  
Very good, sir.  
May I ask what all these things  
are for, sir?  
Tomatoes.  
Oh, tomatoes.  
When you return  
from your search,  
you will notice the carrier  
will be towing a sled.  
It's more like a spar  
about the size  
of a telephone pole.  
As each plane comes in,  
it will make one pass,  
dropping its bomb  
well astern of the sled.  
Don't hit it. We don't want  
the flight deck  
showered



with bomb fragments.  
Every hour we continue  
on our present course  
brings nearer the possibility  
of contact  
with enemy aircraft.  
Your orders are these.  
When enemy planes  
are encountered...  
do not engage them.  
Return to the carrier  
at once.  
By "Do not engage,"  
you mean...  
I mean  
avoid all contact  
with them.  
But, sir,  
that's running away.  
Any other questions?  
But suppose the enemy  
attacks us, sir?  
May we interpret  
the orders...  
You will not  
interpret the orders.  
You will obey them.  
Pilots,  
man your planes.  
Pilots,  
man your planes.  
That's all.  
Let's go.  
Pilot to Radioman.  
You got the dope  
on the radio frequencies?  
Radioman to Pilot.  
Yes, sir.  
Frequency 69-70.  
Secondary 61-50.  
All set, sir.  
Pilot to Gunner.  
Gunner to Pilot.  
All set, sir.

Maybe I'll get  
my first meatball today.  
If you see any Japs,  
blow them a kiss.  
But don't shoot...  
that's an order.  
Pilots...  
stand by  
to start engines.  
Stand clear  
propellers.  
Start engines.  
[Engine Starts]  
Oh, boy!  
I ought to pop you  
on the chin.  
That's how Billy Tom  
knocked me out.  
I was born  
with a glass jaw,  
but otherwise, in the torso,  
I'm invulnerable.  
Come on.  
Hit me.  
Infinitesimal fortitude.  
That's what I call it.  
Rock of Gibraltar.  
Hold everything.  
What you got  
there?  
Oh, isn't she lovely?  
[Wolf Whistles]  
Look at that!  
Wow!  
A love note.  
Come on, read it.  
Get out.  
Come on.  
"Dearest Hallam,  
I couldn't sleep thinking  
how lucky the girl was  
in your picture  
I saw last night  
and thinking

how wonderful it would be  
if I could have been her  
and feel your strong arms  
around me...

and your lips

pressed close to mine."

- Wait a minute!

- Hey!

Hey, get a load of this,  
fellas.

"Dear hunk of man,

I'm a hep chick

who thinks

you're a solid piece

of what it takes."

Potassium phosphate,

potassium nitrate,

magnesium sulfate,

and calcium nitrate.

O.K.

What are you going

to use these for?

Shh.

Tomatoes.

Tomatoes.

Tomatoes?

Yeah.

I'm glad you dropped in,

Mr. Cunningham.

I wanted to congratulate you  
on your citation.

Thank you very much,

Commander.

[Whistling My Bonny  
Lies Over The Ocean]

Sir,

the medical officer says

I'm completely O.K. Again,

in every respect.

That's great.

You agree with the M. O?

Yes, sir. I'd like

reassignment to flight duty

as soon as possible.

All right, Cunningham.

As soon as possible.

Thank you, sir.

O.K.

Torpedo Squadron Five  
returning from search, sir.

Mmm.

Nice kid,  
that Cunningham.

Yes, sir.

#The stars at night #

#Are big and bright #

[Fires Four Times]

# Deep in the heart  
ofTexas #

#The prairie sky #

# Is wide and high #

[Fires Four Times]

# Deep in the heart  
ofTexas ##

What are you shooting at,  
Mr. Scott?

Well, nothing.

I'm just testing my guns.

Oh.

All personnel,  
clear the afterdeck  
during bombing practice.

All personnel,  
clear the afterdeck  
during bombing practice.

200 yards

astern of the sled.

10 yards to starboard.

Foley,

watch that sled.

Hear this!

All flight deck personnel  
form line a port ship.

Clear deck

of bomb fragments.

[Whistle]

Lieutenant Commander Molton,  
report to Air Plot.

Lieutenant Commander Molton,  
report to Air Plot.  
Landing  
against wave-offs,  
blowing up the sled.  
Are you trying to kill  
half the men here?  
I'll talk  
with him, sir.  
I want  
that man grounded.  
Take that whole squadron  
in hand, or I will.  
Is that clear?  
Quite clear, sir.  
That's all.  
[Laughing]  
Got a match, Paducah?  
Oh, yeah.  
You've gotten off to a bad start  
on this carrier.  
There was very little  
excuse for you, Scott,  
and none at all  
for you today, Brainard.  
Hitting that sled  
wasn't just carelessness.  
No, sir. I wanted to see  
if I could hit something.  
You will.  
You're going  
to hit the deck.  
You're grounded.  
Grounded, sir?  
Report to  
the squadron duty officer  
as his assistant  
until further orders.  
Yes, sir.  
Secure.  
[Whistle]  
Attention, all hands.  
Movies for tonight...  
Alice Faye and Betty Grable

in Tin Pan Alley.  
The way  
this navy operates,  
we'll be expected to take  
one look at their gams and run.  
Oh, uh, Cunningham,  
I talked  
to your commanding officer.  
You go up tomorrow.  
Thank you, sir.  
That's all.  
Be sure the plants  
get plenty of sun,  
and keep  
this excelsior moist.  
The chemicals in the water  
will do the rest.  
In a few weeks we'll have  
some nice, fresh tomatoes,  
lettuce, celery,  
onions.  
Yes, sir.  
Arnie Devlin  
was flying my wing.  
Arnie Devlin  
was flying my wing.  
He got the first Zero.  
The others dove past,  
came up under my tail.  
I got one. Then two more  
came head on.  
I couldn't escape them,  
so I fired on them.  
One exploded...  
the other fell in flames.  
Do they bust up  
when they're hit?  
They fall apart.  
There's so much magnesium,  
they just can't take it.  
Here's where  
you made the mistake.  
This type of cruiser  
has three stacks.

There's  
a slight wrinkle,  
very little  
superstructure amidship.  
It didn't show on the quarterdecks.  
I see it now.  
Look how widely-spaced they are.  
Very little superstructure.  
Have you noticed?  
How about  
a little acey-deucey?  
Sure.  
It goes through  
this little gadget.  
That's  
the sound exciter.  
Please.  
We won't get anywhere this way.  
Will we?  
Go away.  
Go away. Go.  
Come on,  
you boot camp fanatics.  
We want to see  
Betty Grable.  
Uh-uh.  
Is there  
something wrong?  
You're diving  
at 15,000 feet...  
angle, 45-degree,  
air speed 380,  
and you release a 1,000-pound bomb  
at 2,000 feet.  
I've got to figure the effect  
of gravity and air resistance.  
Gravity's  
got nothing to do  
with the forward motion  
of a projectile.  
Say, you're right.  
I've been right  
for 35 years.  
"Dearest lover boy,

how I wish  
we could meet in person.  
We could have  
some swell times together."  
What are you doing?  
Come on, give me.  
A welterweight.  
I can train down,  
can't I?  
Beautiful.  
Beautiful.  
A doll.  
There!  
Let's see  
the picture now.  
Shall we?  
Yeah,  
let's see it.  
Come on.  
All right, all right.  
Pipe down.  
Whoopsie-daisy.  
He's the sheik of Araby  
His faithful wives  
are we  
But life  
is such a ball...  
[Whistling And Jeering]  
The flm broke.  
We can't help that, can we?  
[Whistling And Jeering]  
Go back  
to boot camp!  
Stand by  
for emergency signal.  
Stand by  
for emergency signal.  
Come on now, men.  
Patience, patience!  
I'm ready.  
Aw, look at that.  
It's upside down!  
Notify the escort  
we're changing course.



0-3-4 true.  
Speed 22 knots.  
Signal Bridge.  
Send the following message...  
Course 0-3-4 true.  
Speed 22 knots.  
[Chanting And Jeering]  
You want to see this,  
or don't you?  
Yeah, go on!  
All right.  
[Bell Rings  
And Reveille Plays]  
All hands.  
Man your battle stations.  
[Bell Rings]  
[Whistle]  
All hands.  
Man your battle stations.  
All hands.  
Man your battle stations.  
I guess  
this is it, sir.  
This is it.  
Torpedo Five  
ready room.  
Is that you, Brainard?  
Yeah, Red.  
All pilots present.  
[Explosions]  
Hey,  
do you hear that?  
[Explosions]  
I heard it,  
and I felt it, too.  
[Explosions]  
Our escort must be  
dropping depth charges.  
Hey, Red.  
Give us the lowdown, will you?  
Looks like  
we've hit the jackpot.  
We've picked up a submarine  
and some night snoopers.

Submarines  
and planes.  
Must be a wholeJap  
task force out there.  
Why don't  
they brief us?  
Ready.  
We're getting  
the dope now.  
Sir, message from Signal Bridge.  
Escort reports submarine  
no longer detected on sound screen.  
C.V. To Escort.  
Resume formation.  
C.V. To Escort.  
Resume formation.  
They're turning around.  
Aren't we going  
to flight?  
Are you kidding?  
What kind of war  
is this?  
We can't shootJaps.  
Now we're running away.  
That's enough.  
Good night.  
Commander Harper.  
Operations  
for tomorrow.  
Six TBFs  
on intermediate patrol,  
four hours.  
Takeoff 0600.  
Six SB2Cs.  
150-mile search.  
Takeoff 0600.  
Speed up, flight 31.  
[Siren]  
Right full rudder.  
Stop all engines.  
Left full rudder!  
Notify escort  
to pick up survivors.  
Continue launching planes.

Start  
that second fuggle line.  
Tough break.  
Too bad, Cook.  
Ensign Cunningham  
wanted in Air Plot.  
Ensign Cunningham  
wanted in Air Plot.  
Probably Harper.  
They get tougher.  
What  
was the matter?  
Engine?  
No, sir. Me.  
I'm sorry  
about the plane, sir.  
That can't be helped,  
but we won't take  
any more chances.  
For now, you'll serve better  
at a shore base.  
Sir, this may sound funny,  
but I'm sure I'm O.K.  
The shock of the crash  
was just what I needed.  
If you'll  
give me one more...  
We can't take any more chances.  
That's all.  
Yes, sir.  
Mr. Scott.  
Zeros at 5 o'clock.  
Hold your fre.  
Remember orders.  
[Machine Gun Fire]  
[Machine Gun Fire]  
The last thing I saw  
was the Japs diving to strafe Gus  
after his plane  
hit the water.  
He didn't have  
a ghost of a chance.  
When they dived at him,  
each of the three planes

opened up  
with everything  
they had.  
Gus' plane  
was still burning.  
I could see the flames.  
Never mind that.  
Let's get back  
to the Jap planes.  
Did you see anything  
which might have  
indicated the presence  
of an enemy task force?  
I'm afraid  
I wasn't watching.  
What was your approximate position?  
In my area of search,  
it was possibly  
150 miles southeast.  
Possibly?  
I'm pretty sure.  
I got out of there  
as fast as I could,  
according to orders.  
Are you sure there were  
only three enemy planes?  
Could there  
have been more?  
How can I tell you  
what I didn't see?  
I saw the three of them  
make a pass  
at Gus' plane,  
coming down  
out of the sun.  
You're not certain  
they were Zeros?  
Did you notice the shape  
of their wings  
or whether they had  
single or multiple engines?  
I can't remember  
exactly, sir.  
Oh, come on now, Scott.

Pull yourself together.  
Yes, sir.  
I'm trying  
to tell you, sir,  
that this one Jap,  
the first,  
came in and made his pass  
under Gus' tail,  
then rolled over on  
his back and began to shoot.  
Gus' engine  
began to smoke,  
and the plane  
went into a dive.  
Scott, from what direction  
did the enemy planes approach?  
I told you,  
from out of the sun.  
That can mean anything.  
Sorry. That's the best  
I can tell you.  
What was your altitude?  
I think it  
was about 2,500.  
What was  
the Japs' altitude?  
I don't know, sir.  
They were diving  
when I saw them.  
If only I could have  
gone back to help Gus.  
Look, Scott...  
let's forget  
about Chisholm.  
You understand that?  
Very well, sir.  
I'll try.  
[Knock On Door]  
Come in.  
Sir,  
a destroyer  
is coming  
alongside.  
All right.

We'll go on  
with this later.  
Yes, sir.  
Is that all, sir?  
That's all.  
[Brakes Squeal]  
[Alarm Sounds]  
Now hear this.  
The smoking lamp is out  
throughout the ship.  
The smoking lamp is out  
throughout the ship.  
Hey, Paducah,  
the smoking lamp.  
I heard it. I heard it.  
Do you think I'm deaf?  
[Chattanooga Choo-Choo Plays]  
Is that the best  
you can do?  
Yeah. That's  
the best I can do.  
I'm no hero.  
I haven't got any citation  
from the admiral.  
I haven't  
shot down any Zero.  
Look here, Scott.  
I'm sorry.  
Well, then, shut up.  
Wait a minute, you two.  
Take it easy.  
What is this?  
Sorry. I guess  
we're all a little jumpy.  
Relax. As for you, Scott,  
there are no stars here.  
This isn't Hollywood.  
When it's time for you  
to take your bows,  
we'll turn  
on the spotlights.  
Now you're just a part  
of a team,  
and you'll play as

the team plays. Understood?

Yes, sir.

[Chattanooga Choo-Choo

Plays Loudly]

[Blows Whistle]

Now hear this.

Now hear this.

The captain will address  
the personnel of the ship.

Men, ever since

Pearl Harbor,

our country

has been asking,

"Where is our navy?

Why don't they fight?"

Because of our

unorthodox maneuvers,

I know you've been

asking the same question.

I must confess,

so have I.

We've suffered many

casualties, dead and wounded.

We've been humiliated.

We've had to avoid combat

and run away from the enemy

when we've been aching

to knock them

clean out of the sky.

We asked ourselves why

we're not permitted to fight,

why we could not

avenge our dead,

strike back in our defense.

Five minutes ago,

I received a message which

answers all our questions.

After Pearl Harbor,

our country was faced

with its greatest disaster.

The situation

was desperate,

and only a desperate and

brilliant strategy could save us.

Our navy pinned its hope  
on one thing...  
theJapanese inability  
to deviate from a plan  
once it had been made.  
We knew their next move was  
to capture Pearl Harbor,  
but first they'd  
have to take Midway.  
We deceived theJaps  
by making them think we'd  
scattered over the ocean,  
that Midway  
would be a pushover.  
In the meanwhile,  
we secretly concentrated  
our entire naval strength  
at Midway.  
That was our trap.  
You men, this carrier,  
and her escort  
were the bait  
to that trap.  
It was a nasty job.  
It has cost us heavily  
in men and equipment.  
TheJaps thought they saw  
four of our carriers  
at widely separated places.  
They only saw one.  
That was us.  
Three times Tokyo  
reported us sunk.  
Twice, we nearly were,  
but we're still afloat.  
I'm happy to tell you  
the strategy has worked.  
The trap has been sprung.  
Believing us scattered  
over the ocean,  
the mainJap fleet  
is headed for Midway.  
They're going in  
for the kill. So are we.



We're through  
running away.  
We're through  
pulling punches.  
Our mission  
is accomplished,  
and from here on in,  
we fight.

- Yay!

- Yay!

TheJap fleet is headed for Midway  
in three columns.

One is here  
with the carrier Soyu.

One is here  
with the carrier Kaga.

One is with the carrier Hiru.

Now, their rear is protected  
by a formation  
headed by the cruisers  
Mikuma and Mogami.

Our heavy ships  
are hopelessly outnumbered.

TheJap fleet  
mustn't be allowed  
to get  
within range of them.

The battle of Midway  
must be won in the air  
by this carrier's planes,  
two that will join us,  
and the fortresses  
on Midway.

When theJaps find out  
what they've run into,  
they're going  
to come after you  
with everything they've got,  
but this is the battle  
we've been praying for.

We've got it...  
on our own grounds,  
on our own terms.  
Good luck.

Pilots...  
stand by  
to start engines.  
Stand clear propellers.  
Start engines.  
B.G., all set?  
Ready, sir.  
O'Neal, got your  
recognition code straight?  
Yes, sir.  
One for this morning  
and one  
for this afternoon.  
We'll celebrate tonight  
with a nice,  
fresh vegetable salad.  
The frst  
from my seagoing farm.  
Sir, last enemy position,  
bearing 2-1-5 true,  
150 miles.  
Molton to Squadron,  
there's our target.  
Molton to Squadron,  
remember, when you think  
you're in close,  
go in closer  
before you drop that fsh.  
Molton to Squadron,  
join up.  
Come on, join up.  
Lacobson, rendezvous,  
join up.  
I can't.  
There's a Zero on your tail.  
There's one on yours, too.  
Ioin up.  
You all right, Hale?  
Yeah, Mr. Molton.  
Relay this  
throughout the ship.  
Radio Room?  
Relay these messages  
throughout the ship.

Wassum's out  
like a flower.  
Stand by for anything.  
There ought to be fighters.  
Watch that Zero  
up there.  
He won't budge.  
He's an old-timer.  
What's that Zero  
doing, Hank?  
He ain't saying.  
Lust hanging there.  
They'll  
make a pass soon.  
They tagging  
our outfit?  
Are you kidding?  
Shut up. Never mind  
the crystal ball gazing.  
Come on, you...  
Shut up!  
12 o'clock! Something coming  
through the formation.  
Wait till they come in.  
Where's our fighters?  
Watch the ponies  
up there.  
All right,  
all right.  
[Gunfire]  
Criminy! There's  
another batch coming!  
All right,  
I've got him!  
You take him, Joe!  
Two more at 2 o'clock  
over your right wing.  
Get him!  
[Gunfire]  
Got him.  
Shut up.  
Everybody all right?  
Pilot to...  
11 o'clock!

Cri-ola.  
Ya-hoo!  
Shut up, will you...  
11 o'clock!  
They're  
rolling under.  
I got it.  
Key-ristmas!  
How many are there?  
Smack 'em down!  
Let 'em  
come around!  
All right, all right.  
Swing us around.  
Got him! Got him!  
11 o'clock!  
Ed! Ed!  
[Gunfire]  
They got Ed.  
No, I'm all right.  
Ed, is that you?  
Yeah.  
They got Hank.  
Gosh, there they go.  
There's one chute.  
Two to go.  
He's rolling over.  
Come on, guys.  
Get out of there.  
Bail out of there.  
Why don't they  
get out?  
Leepers,  
he's really spinning.  
Come on, you guys.  
Get out. Get out!  
There's one more out...  
2 o'clock!  
They're coming in!  
They're coming  
under you, Ben.  
Hold your hats.  
I'm coming.  
Take 'em, Bill,

take 'em!  
Look out!  
5 o'clock!  
I'm coming up from 5!  
[Gunfire]  
How's our sweetheart,  
Mr. Holloway?  
Spurting oil  
like her heart's busted.  
Close the intercom.  
Watch out.  
Zero on your tail.  
Blue plate special  
coming up.  
Get him! Get him!  
[Gunfire]  
Sink, you...  
[Explosion]  
Goodbye, him.  
Nice work.  
Square in the belly.  
[Gunfire]  
Pilot to Radioman,  
are you all right?  
Mike, are you  
all right?  
I think that burst got him,  
Mr. Jacobson.  
Better bail out,  
Tommy.  
We haven't much time.  
Were you hit, Mike?  
Shut off your intercom,  
Jacobson.  
I can't.  
My equipment's shot up.  
Mike, are you O. K?  
It's my leg, sir.  
Can you move them?  
Mike, can you  
move your legs?  
Uh-uh.  
We're burning  
back here.

You'd better  
bail out, sir.  
I haven't got  
the altitude, Mike.  
We'll take this ride  
together.  
Lacobson, join up.  
Do you hear me, Hans?  
Loin up, I tell you.  
Enemy planes approaching.  
All hands stand by.  
Enemy planes approaching.  
Hard left!  
Hard left!  
Hard right rudder!  
[Bomb Whistling]  
The bomb that hit aft  
damaged  
the hydraulic lines  
that control  
the landing gear.  
How long to repair?  
Hard to say, sir.  
The returning planes  
will be low on gas.  
I want that gear operating  
by the time they're in sight.  
I want a report  
on damage  
and our maximum  
possible speed.  
The engine room reports  
we can only make 20 knots.  
We'll need 25 knots  
to land our planes.  
Report that  
below.  
Aye, aye, sir.  
Call out the after-damage  
control party.  
20 men from the V-3 division.  
Clear that damage.  
Hurry it up!  
The flight deck officer reports

it's impossible to repair  
the after-flight deck  
in less than 45 minutes.  
You got just 20 minutes  
to repair that flight deck.  
When the planes return,  
they'll have a deck  
to land on.  
Sir, escort has picked up  
enemy submarine  
on the sound  
detector.  
We got a plane left  
to launch?  
One, sir.  
Just repaired.  
Launch her.  
Launch catapult bomber.  
Launch catapult bomber.  
Launch catapult bomber.  
Launch catapult bomber.  
Rapid gunners,  
hold your fire.  
Catapult plane  
being launched.  
We're going  
to be hit.  
Who was flying  
that plane?  
Ensign Cunningham, sir.  
That the one  
they call Cookie?  
Yes, sir.  
Sir, Torpedo Five  
and fighter escort returning.  
Prepare to land planes.  
Prepare to land planes.  
Code this  
to the other carriers...  
As soon as  
planes have landed,  
changing course  
60 degrees southeast  
for cover of rain squall

till repairs are completed.  
Aye, aye, sir.  
[Playing Reveille]  
Red, this is Molton.  
What now?  
Radar picked up disturbances  
at 85 miles,  
altitude 5,000 feet,  
but they've settled down  
to a single object.  
We can hear it now.  
Sounds like a TBF.  
You hear that, Molton?  
Could be a TBF.  
Any of yours  
straggling?  
Wait a minute.  
Oscar was just passing  
over the cargo  
when she blew up.  
Maybe...  
Scott is the only one  
not accounted for.  
Thanks, Red.  
Mr. Scott?  
You figure the carrier  
ducked under that soup?  
Maybe.  
They weren't  
at the rendezvous.  
Keep your chin up.  
I'm not afraid of anything anymore,  
Mr. Scott.  
Today's my birthday.  
How old are you  
today, B. G?  
17, sir.  
You hear that Benny?  
Hey, Benny.  
I'll get him down.  
Mr. Scott,  
couldn't we break radio silence  
long enough  
to get a fx?



Nobody would like that  
better than I would, B.G.  
No dice.  
Brother, how I could use  
a spotlight now.  
That's Ensign Scott, sir.  
He doesn't know  
our new course.  
Couldn't we break  
radio silence?  
You don't have to give him  
a position the Japs can check.  
Just say,  
"We're right under you.  
Ceiling, 50 feet.  
Come on down."  
If you think the Japs  
have a radar fix on him,  
let me go up.  
I can lead him down.  
That's as useful to the enemy  
as breaking radio silence.  
We can't risk  
this carrier.  
What about that kid...  
That's enough, Molton.  
Check  
your casualty list  
and reform  
your squadron.  
Yes, sir.  
[Engine Faltering]  
[Plane Diving]  
[Crash]  
First it was Gus,  
then Brainard,  
then Chuck,  
and then Hans.  
But at least he had  
a fighting chance.  
But not Oscar.  
He didn't have a chance.  
Up there,  
going back and forth,

and nobody made an effort  
to help him down.  
Do you know  
what these are?  
They're casualty lists.  
They're obituaries of  
a long list of friends of mine.  
Yes, friends.  
If I seemed too tough  
on the boys,  
it was because I was  
responsible for them.  
I didn't want to lose them  
any more than I wanted to  
lose those boys up there.  
You think I wanted  
to let Scott fly  
until he dove  
into the sea?  
You think I want to dream  
about them on a raft  
until their bodies rot?  
I'm an air officer.  
There are things I can do  
and things I can't do.  
I can check casualty lists,  
and I can order more men  
into the air  
to become new casualties.  
I can refuse to endanger  
the lives of 3,000 men  
in order to save the lives  
of three men.  
I do those things  
because they're my job,  
and I've got to do them.  
But to be accused  
of refusing  
to save those men  
because I didn't  
want to save them...  
[Ringing]  
Torpedo Ready Room.  
Molton speaking.

It's for you, sir.

Yes.

Very good.

A destroyer picked up

Scott and his crew.

His radioman was lost,

but he and his gunner

are O.K.

They got him!

He's back in!

How about that?

He's back in the ballgame.

Thanks, Ed.

Period.

Secure.

How about that?

Commander Harper.

Orders for tomorrow...

14 TBFs,

19 SB2Cs...