**BOMBING SQUADRON SIX ACTION REPORT - 4-6 June 1942**

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Battle of Midway - 4-6 June 1942

This is the after-action report submitted by LT Richard H. Best, Commanding Officer of Enterprise Air Group's Bombing Squadron Six, detailing that squadron's operations during the Battle of Midway.

Sections:

[First Attack of 4 June.](http://www.cv6.org/ship/logs/action19420604-vb6.htm#first)

[Second Attack of 4 June.](http://www.cv6.org/ship/logs/action19420604-vb6.htm#second)

[Action of 5 June.](http://www.cv6.org/ship/logs/action19420604-vb6.htm#search)

[Attack of 6 June.](http://www.cv6.org/ship/logs/action19420604-vb6.htm#fourth)

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| FVB-6/A16/nhn |  | BOMBING SQUADRON SIX, June 10, 1942 |
| CONFIDENTIAL |  | |
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| From: | Commander Bombing Squadron Six. |
| To: | Commanding Officer, U.S.S. ENTERPRISE. |
| Via: | Commander ENTERPRISE Air Group. |
| Subject: | Report of Action, June 4-6, 1942. |
| Reference: | (a) U.S. Navy Regulations, Art. 874, para. 6. |
| Enclosure: | (A) Bombing Squadron Six Tactical Organization of June 1, 1942. |

1. Bombing Squadron Six participated in four separate attacks against Japanese naval forces during the period June 4 to June 6, 1942, and in one photographic flight over Japanese naval forces on June 6, 1942. On June 4, 1942, the squadron consisted of twenty-one pilots, eleven of whom had been in the squadron for more than nine months, three others since December, 1941, and seven for about two months. There were eighteen SBD-2 and SBD-3 planes assigned and all were in commission. Action was expected. Following is a chronological account of the part Bombing Squadron Six played in the actions.
2. Thursday, forenoon and afternoon.
   1. On Thursday, June 4, 1942, Bombing Squadron Six participated in an attack on a Japanese force consisting of four aircraft carriers, several battleships or heavy cruisers, and a number of destroyers, about 150 miles northwest of Midway Island. The attack group was lead by the Enterprise Air Group Commander and consisted of thirty-two SBD's; fifteen from VB-6, loaded with one 1,000 lb bomb each, sixteen from VS-6, loaded with one 500 lb bomb and two 100 lb bombs each, and the EAGC plane loaded with one 500 lb bomb and two 100 lb bombs. The squadron tactical organization was as follows:

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| First Division | | |
| 6-B-1 | Lt. R.H. Best | MURRAY, J.F., ACRM(PA) |
| 6-B-2 | Lt(jg) E.J. Kroeger | HALTERMAN, G.W.,RM3c |
| 6-B-3 | Ensign F.T. Weber | HILBERT, E.L.,AOM3c |
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| 6-B-5 | Lt(jg) W.E. Roberts | STEINMAN, W.B.,AMM1c |
| 6-B-6 | Ensign D.W. Halsey | JENKINS, J.W.,RM3c |
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| Second Division | | |
| 6-B-7 | Lt. J.R. Penland | HEARD, H.F.,ARM2c |
| 6-B-8 | Ensign T.F. Schneider | HOLDEN, G.L.,ARM2c |
| 6-B-9 | Ensign E.A. Greene | MUNTEAN, S.A.,RM3c |
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| 6-B-11 | Ensign T.W. Ramsay | DUNCAN, S.L., ARM2c |
| 6-B-12 | Ensign L.A. Hopkins | ANDERSON, E.R., RM3c |
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| Third Division | | |
| 6-B-13 | Lt(jg) J.J. Van Buren | NELSON, H.W.,JR., ARM1c |
| 6-B-14 | Ensign N.F. Vandivier | KEANEY, L.E.J., Sea1c |
| 6-B-15 | Ensign G.H. Goldsmith | PATTERSON, J.W.,JR., ARM3c |
|  | | |
| 6-B-16 | Lt(jg) E.L. Anderson | MASON, S.J.,JR., ARM2c |
| 6-B-18 | Ensign B.S. Varian, jr. | YOUNG C.R., ARM3c |

* 1. The attack group departed at 0930 and climbed to 20,000 ft. enroute to the objective. Shortly before reaching the objective several VB-6 pilots encountered difficulties with oxygen supply. The Squadron Commander noted the oxygen difficulties of his wing men. He removed his oxygen mask so that he would have the same reaction as other pilots and led the squadron to a position directly below the remainder of the attack force at an altitude of 15,000 ft.
     1. At about 1205, the enemy fleet was sighted and was seen to consist of 4 CV, 4 BB or CA and 8 to 10 DD. The weather was clear and visibility excellent. There were scattered cumulus clouds from 15,00 ft. to 2,500 ft. and the ceiling was unlimited. The surface wind was 5 to 8 knots from the southeast. It was known that other attack groups including three squadrons of SBD's, three squadrons of TBD's and accompanying fighters were due to arrive at the same objective at about the same time as the group of which Bombing Squadron Six was a part. The Enterprise Air Group Commander designated by voice radio one CV target for himself and VS-6 and another CV target for VB-6. Commander Bombing Squadron Six understood his target to be the "left hand" CV. He gave the attack signal, releasing his other two division leaders for individual division maneuvering and led his (first) division towards the "left hand" CV. Almost at once he saw that VS-6 was diving on the "left hand" CV and so led his division against the "right hand" CV which was of the "KAGA" type. It was launching planes as the attack was made. At least three 1,000 lb bomb hits were observed on that target and it became a mass of flame and smoke. The first section of the first division joined up immediately after pull-out from the dive. At that time they sighted own torpedo planes coming in under heavy attack from enemy fighters and AA fire. They also saw an attack by own dive bombers of a separate attack group on a third CV on which many hits were scored, the CV becoming enveloped in flames and smoke.  
          
        Shortly thereafter the first section was attacked by an enemy seaplane which was driven off by free gun fire. The first section then retired towards Midway for a short time, and when out of sight of the enemy fleet set course for parent ship and returned.
     2. The second division leader delayed attack momentarily. He observed misses near the "left hand" CV, and decided to dive on that target. While in his dive he observed several hits on that target, starting fires. He scored a direct hit in the middle of the carrier with his 1,00 lb bomb, and other 1,00 lb bomb hits were scored by planes following him. That CV appeared to suffer internal explosions in addition to bomb hits, and little of it was left visible in the midst of huge flames, and smoke. The third division apparently attacked the same target as did the second division. Only one pilot from that division returned.
     3. The first three planes of the first division returned. Personnel of 6-B-5 were rescued, but are not available for compilation of this report. The pilot of 6-B-6 reported by radio that he must make a forced landing near the enemy fleet.
     4. Only 6-B-12 of the second division returned. The division leader was attacked after pull-out from the dive by a "zero" fighter and all his gasoline tanks badly punctured. He made a forced landing about thirty miles from the enemy fleet and together with his gunner was rescued twenty-eight hours later. The personnel of 6-B-8 were rescued but are not available for compilation of this report. The personnel of 6-B-9 got into their rubber boat after a forced landing about forty miles from own fleet, but there is no report of their having been rescued. The personnel of 6-B-11 got into their rubber boat after a forced landing about ten miles from own fleet, but search by a DD failed to find them.
     5. Only 6-B-16 of the third division returned. 6-B-13 was in company with the second division leader until he was forced to land in the water, but has not been heard from since. 6-B-14 was sighted by another plane shortly after pull-out from the dive, and the later reported by radio that he was landing in the water, The personnel of 6-B-15 were rescued but are not avialabel for compilation in this report. The personnel of 6-B-18 got into their rubber boat after a forced landing about fifty miles northeast of the enemy fleet.
     6. Summarizing, five planes out of fifteen returned; the personnel of four other planes were rescued; the personnel of six planes are unaccounted for. One of the five planes which returned, 6-B-16, was so badly damaged by shrapnel and machine gun fire that it could not be flown on subsequent attacks.
  2. The gunner of 6-B-16, MASON, Stuart James, Jr., 393 29 71, ARM2c, USN, was wounded in the face and in the legs by shrapnel, bullets, and plane fragments during pull-out from the dive and retirement from the enemy fleet. He continually manned his twin mount guns against enemy fighters until clear of them and later repaired the plane's damaged radio enabling the use of ZB in locating parent ship.
  3. No fighter opposition was encountered prior to pull-outs from the dives. Apparently most of the AA fire was concentrated on the torpedo planes which were attacking at the same time. Most planes were attacked by fighters after pull-outs from dives.
  4. The conduct of all pilots and gunners left nothing to be desired. All pilots remained in formation despite the obvious fact that carrying a 1,000 lb bomb for as long as they were carried entailed gasoline consumption that rendered possible return to own ships unlikely and despite oxygen supply difficulties which at least four pilots encountered. Dives were continued to a very low altitude in spite of danger from explosion of bombs dropped ahead of each plane. Hits resulted.

1. Thursday, afternoon and evening.
   1. On Thursday afternoon and evening, June 4, 1942, Bombing Squadron Six participated in a second attack against Japanese surface ships. Only four of the seven VB-6 planes which remained after the first attack could be launched. Three of the four formed a section led by Commander Bombing Squadron Six; the fourth was assigned to a section of VB-3. The attack group was led by Commander Scouting Squadron Six, and consisted of planes of VS-6, four planes of VB-6, each loaded with one 1,000 lb bomb, and fourteen planes of VB-3. VB-6 personnel on this flight consisted of:

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| 6-B-1 | Lt. R.H. Best | MURRAY, J.F., ACRM(PA) |
| 6-B-2 | Lt.(jg) E.J. Kroeger | HALTERMAN, G.W., RM3c |
| 6-B-3 | Ensign F.T. Weber | HILBERT, E.L., AOM3c |
| 6-B-12 | Ensign S.C. Hogan, jr. | BRAUN, E.K., Sea1c |

* 1. The objective was given as 1 CV, 2 BB, 3CA, and 4 DD at Lat. 31-40N, Long. 172-10 W.
  2. The attack group departed at 1745 and climbed to 13,000 ft. while enroute to the objective. The objective was sighted at about 1845 to the northwest. It was seen to consist of 1 CV, 1 BB, 1 CA or Cl and 3 to 4 DD, the heavy ships separated by several miles and each accompanied by a destroyer. Three additional destroyers were sighted about thirty miles to the southeast, headed for the main enemy formation. Beyond these three destroyers to the south could be seen three large columns of smoke near the scene of the first engagement. The weather was the same as described for the first attack. The attack group climbed to 19,000 ft. and circled to a position up-sun from the enemy. The attack was started at about 1905 with a high-speed run-in. At least four "zero" fighters attacked before the push-over point was reached, and 6-B-3 was shot down. VS-6 dove first with the CV as a target. Misses were observed and Commander Bombing Squadron Six decided to dive on the CV also. The first section of VB-3 dove ahead of VB-6, also on the CV as a target. Two direct hits were observed. Then VB-6 dove scoring one direct hit. The CV was seen to be burning for two-thirds of its length from the stern forward. A direct hit was observed on a BB. Retirement was made at high speed and at low altitude. Advantage was also taken of broken cloud over at 2,000 to 3,000 ft.
  3. Fairly heavy AA fire was encountered during the dive and after pull-out. "Zero" fighters also attacked after pull-out.
  4. At about 1920, 6-B-2 and 5-B-7, which were in company sighted and attacked a "Kawanishi 95" seaplane and probably damaged it with fixed gun fire. It jettisoned its bombs and escaped.
  5. At about 1940, Commander Bombing Squadron Six, who had retired initially to the westward, observed the enemy CV still burning, but moving with the fleet. Shortly thereafter he sighted an enemy low wing monoplane seaplane heading for the enemy fleet.
  6. All VB-6 planes except 6-B-3 returned safely.
  7. The pilots and gunners exhibited the same exemplary conduct as shown during the first attack of the day. All of the crews except that of 6-B-12 had flown on the first attack.

1. Friday, evening.
   1. On Friday, June 5, 1942, the remaining six SBD planes of Bombing Squadron Six participated in an attack against a Japanese CL. The tactical organization consisted of:

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| 6-B-4 | Lt. L.A. Smith | CARUTHERS, H.H., AMM2c |
| 6-B-2 | Lt.(jg) E.J. Kroeger | HALTERMAN, G.W., RM3c |
| 6-B-12 | Ensign L.S. Hopkins | ANDERSON, E.R., RM3c |
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| 6-B-10 | Lt. H.P. Lanham | GARAUDY, E.J.,ARM1c |
| 6-B-1 | Lt.(jg) E.L. Anderson | CHOCHALOUSEK, W.G., ARM1c |
| 6-B-17 | Ensign A.L. Rausch | JONES, H.L., AOM3c |

* 1. The attack group was led by Lieutenant D.W. Shumway, VB-3 and consisted of a total of 32 SBD's from VB-3, VB-5, VB-6, and VS-6. All planes were armed with one 500 lb bomb.
  2. The objective was given as 1 CV (damaged), 2 BB, 3 CA and 4 DD which had been last reported at 1000 at Lat.30-00 N, Long.179-32 W, course 310° T., speed 1w knots.
  3. The attack group departed at 1730. Half of the group formed a scouting line at low altitude. The remainder of the group of which VB-3 was a part climbed to about 18,000 ft. enroute to the objective. The only contact made was with a CL at about 2030 at Lat.33-00 N, Lonh.177-00E. It was then dusk. The enemy Cl maneuvered at high speed. It was attacked and many near misses, but no direct hits, were observed.
  4. Unusually heavy small calibre AA fire was encountered. Apparently large calibre guns were employed for AA also, using unfused projectiles, because many splashes but no shell bursts were seen.
  5. All VB-6 planes returned safely.
  6. Landing aboard was accomplished after dark. The pilots of 6-B-12 and 6-B-17 made their first night carrier landings. These pilots had had no night field carrier landing instruction. Each had made more than twenty or more day carrier landings.

1. Saturday, afternoon.
   1. On Saturday, June 6, 1942, the remaining five SBD planes of Bombing Squadron Six participated in an attack against a Japanese force consisting of 1 CA, 1 CL and 2 DD. The tactical organization consisted of:

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| 6-B-1 | Lt. L.A. Smith | CARUTHERS, H.H., AMM2c |
| 6-B-16 | Lt(jg) E.L. Anderson | CHOCHALOUSEK, W.G., ARM1c |
| 6-B-2 | Ensign D.L. Ely | ARNOLD, G.H., Sea2c |
|  | | |
| 6-B-10 | Lt. H.P. Lanham | GARAUDY, E.J., ARM1c |
| 6-B-17 | Ensign H.W. Liffner | KIMBERLIN, M.L., AMM3c |

* 1. The attack group was lead by Lieut. Short, VS-5, and consisted of 31 SBD's from VB-3, VS-5, VB-6, VS-6; 3 TBD's from VT-6 and 12 f4f-4's from VF-6. All VB-6 planes carried 1,000 lb bombs as did most of the other SBD's.
  2. The objective was given as 2 BB, 2 CA and several DD at Lat.29-33 N, Long.175-35 E, course 270° T., speed 15 Knots.
  3. The attack group departed at 1315. The SBD's proceeded independently and climbed to about 19,000 ft. enroute to the objective. At 1400 1 CA, 1 CL and 2 DD were sighted. The SBD's continued thirty miles beyond this force searching for BB's. No other ships were sighted and a highspeed run-in was made on the force sighted at 1400 and attack delivered on it at about 1415. Most of the SBD's atacked the CA which was completely wrecked. Some individual pilots dove on the CL and at least one hit was observed.
  4. All Planes returned safely.
  5. At 1750 a photographic flight was sent out to obtain pictures of damage to enemy ships in the above action. The flight was led by Lt(jg) E.J. Kroeger, A-V(N), USNR, VB-6, and in consisted of 3-B-10 and one SBD from VS-6. The photographer in 3-B-10 was Mr. A.D. Brick of Fox Movietone News.
  6. At the conclusion of the three day-Battle the pilots and gunners remaining in Bombing Squadron Six are as indicated by enclosure (A).