

# THE WEISHEIT TRANSCRIPTS

## Decoding the *Flight to Nowhere*

Compiled by Ron Russell, December 2021

### INTRODUCTION

By now, just about everyone having a solid familiarity with the Battle of Midway is aware of the contribution of Bowen P. Weisheit to its body of knowledge. He didn't start out to change the history of the battle, but his research into the fate of his close personal friend Mark Kelly eventually did exactly that. That research culminated in the publication of Weisheit's book, *The Last Flight of Ensign C. Markland Kelly, Junior, USNR* (1993), which caused a stir among authors, veterans, historians, and just about everyone with a strong BOM focus.

Kelly was a VF-8 fighter pilot in the USS *Hornet* air group (HAG) at Midway, and was lost in what has become known as "the Flight to Nowhere" on the first day of the air-sea battle—a saga of misfortune, bad judgment, and disaster that saw all of VF-8's escort fighters ditched in the ocean for lack of fuel. Weisheit's campaign to find out exactly what had happened to his friend took an unexpected turn when multiple veterans of the *Hornet* and its air group told him of a curiosity in the established history of the battle: the course flown by the HAG on the morning of 4 June 1942 bore no resemblance to what had been officially recorded by the ship's captain, Marc Mitscher.

The core of Weisheit's research consists of a series of interviews conducted in the early 1980s. He tape recorded most of them, and both transcripts and audio copies of the recordings are now held by the Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHHC) in Washington, DC. Thanks to the kind assistance of various Roundtable members and the NHHHC, cited below, we now have those transcripts and recordings on our website.



Ensign Mark Kelly



Bowen Weisheit, 1946



Weisheit's Book

What follows is a brief synopsis of each of the Weisheit interviews, plus the testimony of a few other veterans whom Weisheit never contacted but who had directly relevant experiences to share. Finally, there's an important reexamination of the eyewitness account of VB-8 pilot Clayton E. Fisher, whom the Roundtable has credited for years with primary source testimony that seemed to support Mitscher's version of the flight.

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### SUMMARY

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## PART 1: THE WEISHEIT INTERVIEWS

### 1. ENS Benjamin Tappan, Jr., VS-8 pilot (transcript and audio tape):

This was Weisheit's first interview, reported as conducted early in 1981. It may have been late in 1980, as there is a suggestion that the third interview was done in the first week of January 1981—see the Gray transcript below.

At this point Weisheit had not yet developed his westbound course thesis. He was focused on his friend Mark Kelly and a major discrepancy concerning an artifact from VF-8's ordeal that he had acquired: a "short snorter" from a PBY that clearly showed the latitude-longitude coordinates where several VF-8 survivors were picked up. Those coordinates differed dramatically from the *Hornet's* official after-action report that showed a vastly different location. As a former navigation instructor for Marine Corps pilots, that captured Weisheit's attention. He knew aerial and ocean navigation at the expert level, and something wasn't right.

Consequently, since Weisheit had not yet found a reason to question Mitscher's official report, both men in the first Tappan interview were going with course 240 degrees True because that was their understanding at the time—the HAG flew essentially the same track as the *Enterprise* planes, from which Waldron and VT-8 departed to the *right* (or north) to engage the enemy fleet. For example, Tappan says:

“...the torpedo bombers were down a lot lower than we were running in there, and then when they left us...they turned *right* and left us...turned to the *right* and bored out there and then [Waldron] could see something on the horizon and that was it.” [Italics added.]

However, there's very little substance in that since Tappan later admitted that he might have been remembering what others had reported instead of what he experienced himself. All of the interviews were conducted 40 years after the battle, and Tappan clearly was not remembering details well; possibly relying more than he realized on Mitscher's report plus recent histories that repeat it, such as the Lord and Prange books.

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## 2. LCDR Samuel. G. Mitchell, VF-8 C.O. (transcript and audio tape):

Mitchell's Interview apparently was conducted in 1980 or early 1981, after the first with Tappan. (Weisheit appears to have been rather lax in managing his tape recordings and in logging the dates of his various interviews. More on that below.)

Mitchell contributed little to Weisheit's cause, being unable (or possibly unwilling) to remember key details of the flight. Much of what he said appeared to parrot the official report or traditional accounts of the battle. He states that he flew over and saw the three IJN carriers burning, but Weisheit points out in his book (p. 46) that Mitchell would have had to do that 25 minutes before they were actually bombed. Weisheit says he did find value in the Mitchell interview upon later analysis, but the transcript itself would not suggest it.

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### 3. LTjg Richard Gray, VF-8 pilot (transcript)

Weisheit called this interview #3, apparently sometime in 1981. It may have been January 7th, which is mentioned in the transcript at one point without explanation. (That would likely place the first two interviews in 1980).

As would be seen in most of the interviews, there was a lot of irrelevant discussion, i.e. the Doolittle mission, Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal, various flights other than at Midway, etc. Gray was clearly confused in several instances, mistaking Waldron for Mitchell at one point, and saying in another that the HAG's course outbound from the *Hornet* was something like 304 degrees (northwest).

Gray believed that he had seen the three IJN carriers burning, saw the *Hiryu* bearing away to the north, flew over Kure Atoll, and saw the fires on Midway. Considering the timing of the bomb hits on the carriers and Gray's actual distance from Kure and Midway, all of that is either a stretch or virtually impossible. It's easy to suspect while reading those passages in the transcript that, like Tappan, Gray's recollections 40 years after the battle were colored somewhat by what he knew from published history.

Nevertheless, Weisheit got a lot of value from Gray's testimony in his description of the final moments of VF-8's flight—the ordeal of ditching in the ocean and surviving in a raft until rescued.

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### 4. ENS Johnny A. Talbot, VF-8 pilot (transcript and audio tape)

This interview does have a firm date, 31 March 1982. Like the others, there was a lot of irrelevant discussion, but Weisheit credits Talbot with the best eyewitness account of seeing Kelly ditch. Talbot says he warned Kelly by radio that he was descending downwind, which is presumed to have contributed to a very hazardous ditching. There was a lot of discussion about the *Hornet's* YE homing system, which Weisheit believed to have had both technical and operational problems. Also, it's important to note that by this time he still had not found reason to question the course 240 assumption.

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### 5. ENS Humphrey L. Tallman, VF-8 pilot (transcript 1 of 2 and audio tape)

Weisheit identified the Tallman interview as number 5, commencing on 4 April 1982, but it's actually two separate interviews, the first on that date and the second sometime later in the year by at least four months and possibly more.

A critical point in the interview is reached when Tallman offhandedly remarks that VT-8 broke off to the left from the HAG's course. He also added that Waldron's new direction was toward the enemy's position, implying that the course they were on was not, all of which caught Weisheit by surprise. Here's the exchange, from page 9 in the transcript:

**Tallman:** "...I can remember seeing the torpedo squadron taking off...to our port, in the direction that I had the enemy plotted."

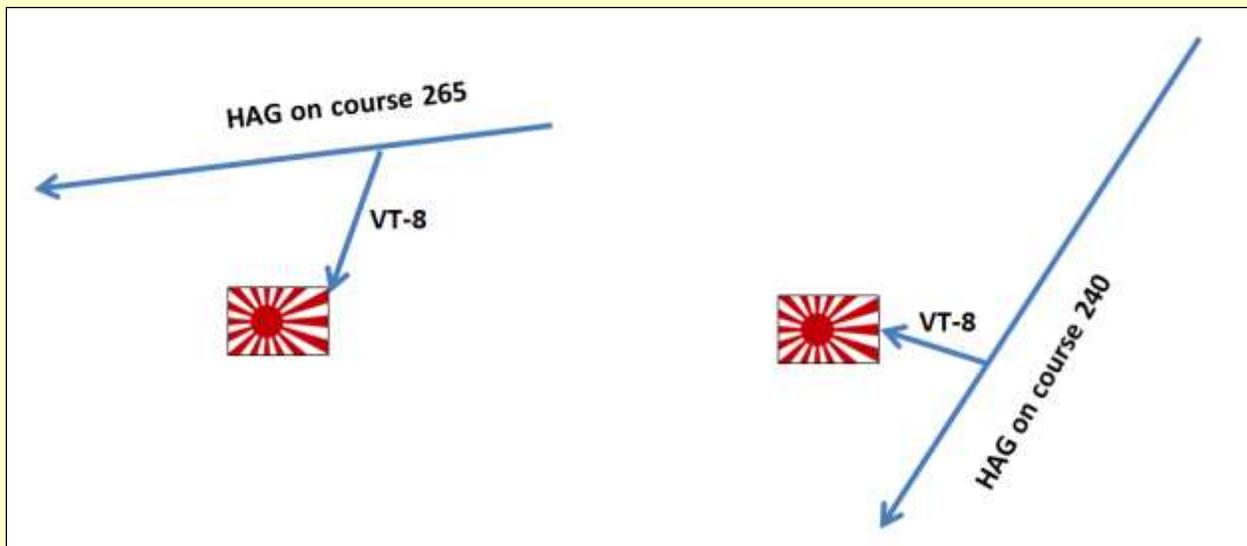
**Weisheit:** "Well, that was at the starboard."

**Tallman:** "No...I'm pretty sure I saw them going out..."

**Weisheit:** "To the left?"

**Tallman:** "Yeah...That was the course I would have gone...I remember thinking...they are headed for the enemy, but where are we going?"

Weisheit apparently discounted Tallman's report of VT-8 going left, as he continued to assume the conventional theory for the HAG's course throughout his lengthy interview with McInerney that followed. The rest of Tallman's first interview focused on extensive details relating to VF-8's ditching and his ultimate rescue.



This simple diagram illustrates the issue as to whether Waldron and VT-8 broke to the left or right from the HAG's outbound course. If VT-8 goes right, as related in the *Hornet's* official after-action report, then the HAG was flying course 240 degrees True. If VT-8 goes left, as witnessed by Tallman and other HAG airmen, then they were on course 265 degrees True.

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## 6. ENS John E. McInerny, VF-8 pilot (transcript and audio tape)

NHHC dates this interview as 1 January 1981, but it had to be after the first Tallman interview on 4 April 1982, which is cited a number of times in the transcript. It opens with a lot of irrelevant discussion like the others (Doolittle, etc.). When they got around to the BOM, McInerny reinforced Weisheit's mistaken belief that the escort fighters launched last after the TBDs, as Weisheit suggests in the photo on page 7 of his book.

In spite of Tallman's prior "Waldron went left" testimony, Weisheit had not yet been shaken from the assumption that Mitscher, Morison, and Lord all had it correct: the HAG flew southwest on 240 and Waldron broke to the right. That notion is repeated several times in the transcript, as on page 30: "And when Waldron turned...right, up to the north..."

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## 7. LCDR John G. Foster, Jr., CV-8 Air Operations Officer (book excerpt)

In his book on page 53, Weisheit cites a telephone interview with the *Hornet's* "Air Officer," J. G. Foster, Jr. (Actually, Foster had been the Air Operations Officer, subordinate to Air Officer Apollo Soucek.) It was during that call that Weisheit's epiphany must have occurred re the HAG's course. Foster told him that "the air group set out together at 0746 and were tracked straight out to the limit of the ship's radar (about 50-60 miles) on a heading of almost due west." That, coupled with Tallman's observation of VT-8 going left had to have started him thinking that there was something wrong with course 240. Rodee put the seal on it in the next interview with his unambiguous statement about a course that went "almost due west."

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## 8. LCDR Walter F. Rodee, VS-8 C.O. (transcript and audio tape)

The interview was conducted by phone sometime in 1982. Rodee was among the most articulate of the interviewees, being very definite about those points that he remembered. If he couldn't recall an answer to a question, he said so up front; there was no pondering or guessing. The key part of his interview is recorded in the last page of Weisheit's book, in which he gave the HAG's outbound course as "260 or 265... almost due west." This in spite of Weisheit trying to influence him to say it was 240, but the admiral wasn't having it. (You get a feel for how definite he was about it by listening to the audio recording. His voice is very resolute.)

Another key point made by Rodee: there was nothing wrong with the *Hornet's* YE. Weisheit probed that subject several times during the interview, but like his "due west"

statement, the admiral was adamant. The YE “got us back...It was fine...it took us right back to the carrier.”

Rodee also corrected Weisheit with regard to his notion that the escort fighters had been spotted on deck behind the other squadrons, as suggested in that photo on page 7 of his book. “The fighters took off first,” he said, with strong emphasis. He further explained that VT-8 launched last, after the fighters and the two SBD squadrons. That must have been disconcerting to Weisheit, as I know from my own conversation with him in 2005 that he still believed his photo on page 7 showed the actual VF-8 escort launch on the morning of 4 June.



Weisheit’s VF-8 launch photo, from page 7 in his book. For the *Hornet’s* actual launch and forming sequence, see Cressman, et al, *A Glorious Page In Our History*, p. 86.



Walter F. Rodee

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9. ENS Humphrey L. Tallman, VF-8 pilot (interview 2 of 2, see #5 above)

The second Tallman interview starts on page 33 of the transcript with an inserted date of “Fall 1982.” Separately, the NHC labels it as “1 September 1982,” but that is probably just an expedient, like labeling many of the others “1 January 1981.” At the end, Weisheit dates it simply “the 5th or 6th” of the month without identifying what month or year. The ambiguous “Fall 1982” date may be an indicator of Weisheit’s mishandling of the tapes long after the interviews were complete; long enough that he couldn’t remember or find any record of exactly when that interview was conducted. More about Weisheit’s tape handling problems follow below.

By the time of the second Tallman interview, “course 265” had entered the discussion and Weisheit appeared to have realized and accepted the HAG’s westbound course. Beyond that, the interview focused on the ordeal of VF-8 after turning about and trying

to get back to the *Hornet*. There are a lot of details about ditching, the survivors' direction and speed of drift in the their rafts, and their rescue by the PBY.

There is a confusion factor in this second segment of Tallman's transcript. There are a couple of spots where Weisheit indicates he hasn't yet interviewed McInerney, although that had occurred prior the Foster and Rodee interviews, as related on pages 52-53 in his book. Close examination of the text of the individual sides of the cassette tapes in the Tallman set suggests that Weisheit got two or more of them mixed up when he was putting them together for the archives. The last segment, labeled "Tape 3, Side 1" appears to belong to the end of the *first* interview, not the second. The first interview did have two 2-sided tapes, with dialogue at the end of the second tape that does seem to continue somewhere. So it's highly possible that "Tape 3" should actually go there instead of at the end of the second interview.

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**10. ENS Troy T. Guillory, VB-8 pilot (transcript and audio tape—see note below)**

Guillory was interviewed twice by phone, on 14 and 23 Mar 1983. The discussion includes a lot of recap of the other interviews. When asked by Weisheit what track he flew in VB-8 upon leaving the *Hornet*, he stated "westerly is all I can say...we went westerly." In discussing the VT-8 deviation from the HAG's course, he said "And then [Waldron] broke off to the left..."

Note: the NHHHC files include a set of four .wav audio recordings with the label, "Guillery, Charles...pilot assigned to USS HORNET..." That's the recordings of the Troy Guillory interviews, not "Charles Guillery" who did not exist. Evidently, the recordings were mislabeled at the NHHHC. I have renamed those four files in our collection with the correct name, *Guillory*.

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**11. ENS Jerry Crawford, PBY navigator/copilot (transcript)**

This was Weisheit's last interview in the series, conducted on 28 August 1984. Jerry Crawford changed his name early in 1942 due to family issues; he graduated from pilot training at Pensacola on 11/19/1941 under his birth certificate name, Eugene C. Balland, Jr. Some Navy records show him as Balland; others as Crawford. He was a PBY navigator at Midway with pilot Frank Fisler. They rescued Talbot on 8 June and Mitchell, Gray, and Ensign S. E. Ruehlow on the 9th. The interview included a lot of detail on the rigors of making the rescues (in 22 foot waves on the 9th, for example). Crawford also provided interesting detail of their patrol over the *Yorktown* at the time of the 4 June torpedo attack by *Hiryu* aircraft.

## PART 2: OTHER INTERVIEWS AND TESTIMONY

Part 2 consists of additional veteran commentary about their experiences during the “Flight to Nowhere.” Weisheit never contacted any of these HAG airmen, although it’s likely that he would have done so had he known of them.

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### 12. ARM2/c Richard T. Woodson, VS-8 radioman-gunner (R/G)

Richard Woodson retired from the Navy as a Chief Aviation Electronics Technician. I had a lengthy telephone interview with him in 2005 while writing *No Right to Win*, and was very impressed during the call with the strength of his voice and his resolute testimony, very much like Admiral Rodee.

Woodson’s contribution to our topic is particularly important because he was another HAG airman who saw Waldron and VT-8 break to the left from the HAG’s outbound course, but his testimony is wholly independent from Bowen Weisheit’s research—he had never heard of Weisheit nor his book until I mentioned them to him.

During our phone call, Woodson was not the least bit ambiguous about which way VT-8 had turned. Here is a portion of my interview notes from the call, and this is very close to verbatim. “RW” is Richard Woodson and “RR” is me:

RR: “You’ve previously told us on the Roundtable that you saw Torpedo Squadron 8 break off to the left, is that correct?”

RW: “Yes, they turned away from the rest of the air group on a bearing of about 30 degrees to the left of our heading.”

RR: “You’re quite certain that they turned left, not right?”

RW: “Yes, and I couldn’t figure out what they were doing, so I asked Kirk.”

RR: “Kirk?”

RW: “Don Kirkpatrick, my pilot. I asked him where VT-8 was going; I thought we were all supposed to stay together. He said we were, and he had no idea what Waldron was up to. Of course, our squadron stayed with the group commander, like we were supposed to.”

RR: “It’s interesting that you saw them go left, since the traditional version in the history books is that they broke to the right in order to close the enemy on a northwesterly track.”

RW: “No, they broke left. I know, because when we’re formation flying, the pilot is too busy watching out for our planes off his port and starboard wing to notice a whole lot in the distance. It was up to us gunners to be alert for such things. I was facing aft like I always did and I saw VT-8, below and a little behind us, veer off to the left. It was a deliberate turn, too—they stayed nicely in formation.”

RR: “Wait a minute—you were facing aft. So do you mean you saw them go to your right relative to you personally, but to the left relative to your aircraft?”

RW: “That’s correct. They definitely broke left from the course we were flying.”

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### 13. ARM2/c Oral T. Moore, VB-8 R/G

I had the distinct pleasure of meeting with Oral Moore several times while serving as the veterans coordinator for the Navy’s annual BOM commemoration in San Francisco during 2003-2009. He was exceptionally friendly and forthcoming during our several conversations about his experiences flying from the *Hornet*.

During the 2007 BOM anniversary event I asked Moore for some details about his squadron’s abortive attempt to find and attack the enemy carriers—what did he remember that hadn’t already been reported in the familiar published histories of the battle? He gave me a few anecdotes but promised more detail later. That arrived in the form of a postal letter, which we published in the Roundtable Forum on 1 July 2007, issue number 2007-25. In the letter, Moore says:

“I finished reading your excellent book on the Battle of Midway some time ago, and intend to read it again. Lots in it I didn’t know about.

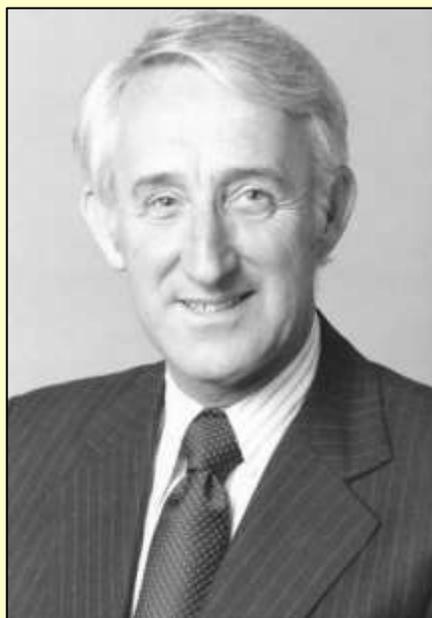
“For what it’s worth, I agree with Walt Rodee on the course Ring flew departing from *Hornet* that first day at Midway—265 true. You probably know the SBD had a stick, stowed normally against the fuselage in the rear seat. Doug Carter [Moore’s pilot] taught me to ship [engage] it and relieve him from time to time on long scouting hops. I got in a lot of stick time once I showed him I could fly straight and level.

“We also agreed I would ship the stick and face forward when he was diving on a target, being careful not touch it in the dive except if he were hit. I’d then be able to pull out. I had a compass and [always took care to] remember the course out to a target so I could get us close enough to the ship on the reciprocal course to get us picked up. I even practiced landings in the air to prepare for landing on the water.

“[Carter] was a good pilot and I was always grateful for his skill in getting us back on board...”

Moore was also extensively interviewed by author and Roundtable member Ian Toll for an in-depth article on the radioman-gunners at Midway. By sheer luck, there were three of them, one from each carrier, living within an easy commuting distance—Moore from VB-8 on the *Hornet*, Lloyd Childers from VT-3 on the *Yorktown*, and Ed Anderson from VB-6 on the *Enterprise*. Toll’s article was published in the May 2013 issue of *Naval History Magazine* and includes this passage concerning Moore:

For decades after the war, Midway accounts held that the *Hornet* strike group flew a heading of 240 degrees—the same southwesterly course flown by the *Enterprise* and *Yorktown* pilots. In the past 30 years, a new consensus has emerged that Ring flew a heading of 265 degrees, almost due west—a course that took the *Hornet*’s strike group far north of the Japanese fleet. Moore emphatically agrees: “I remember the compass reading 265.” He said he always paid attention to the course heading because if Carter was disabled he wanted to be able to fly back to the carrier. When Ring eventually turned back, most of VB-8 flew south to Midway. Carter and Moore landed there at about 1115 local time. Tense Marine gunners shot up their aircraft on its approach to the strip, and several holes punctured the fuselage just behind Moore’s rear cockpit position.



Carter (left) and Moore (Right) after most of VB-8 landed on Midway. Carter is pointing to friendly fire damage to their SBD, 8-B-13. This photo also appears in *A Glorious Page In Our History*, p. 137, although the caption there is incorrect.

Oral Moore, c. 2005

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#### 14. LTjg Lawrence C. French, VF-8 (CAP pilot)

While gathering information for this document in November 2021, I solicited help from a number of other historians affiliated with the Roundtable, seeking anything they could offer that might relate to Weisheit's research. Robert Mrazek, author of a superbly thorough study of VT-8 (*A Dawn Like Thunder*, 2008) replied with the following anecdote from another VF-8 pilot:

The only confirming information I was able to find about the actual HAG course during my research for ADLT that wasn't already uncovered....resulted from my being the first person to review the supporting materials utilized by Walter Lord in writing *Incredible Victory* when they were first made available by the archives.

My entire focus was on the *Hornet* material and one of the interview questionnaires was submitted by Lawrence French, a fighter pilot who was flying cover directly above the *Hornet* that morning. He watched the group, including the high and low squadrons, head off "west northwest" until it disappeared from view.

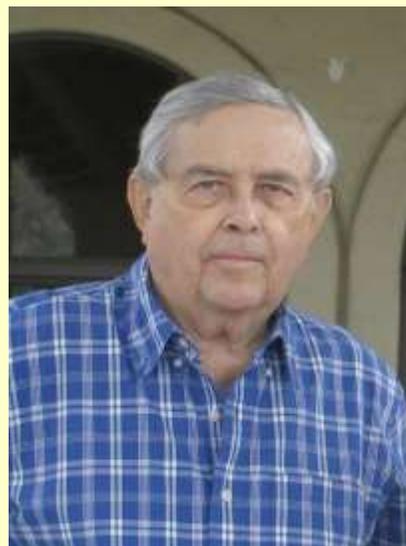
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#### 15. ENS Clayton E. Fisher, VB-8 pilot

Our final study of veteran testimony is one that you might not expect, for I've long credited Clay Fisher on the Roundtable with the one unshakeable primary source account that supports Mitscher's version of the Flight to Nowhere: he told me across his living room coffee table one night in 2005 that about 30 minutes after heading out from the *Hornet*, he saw smoke from Midway on the horizon at about 10 o'clock from his heading (300 degrees relative), which gradually moved back to 9 o'clock, then 8 o'clock when it disappeared.



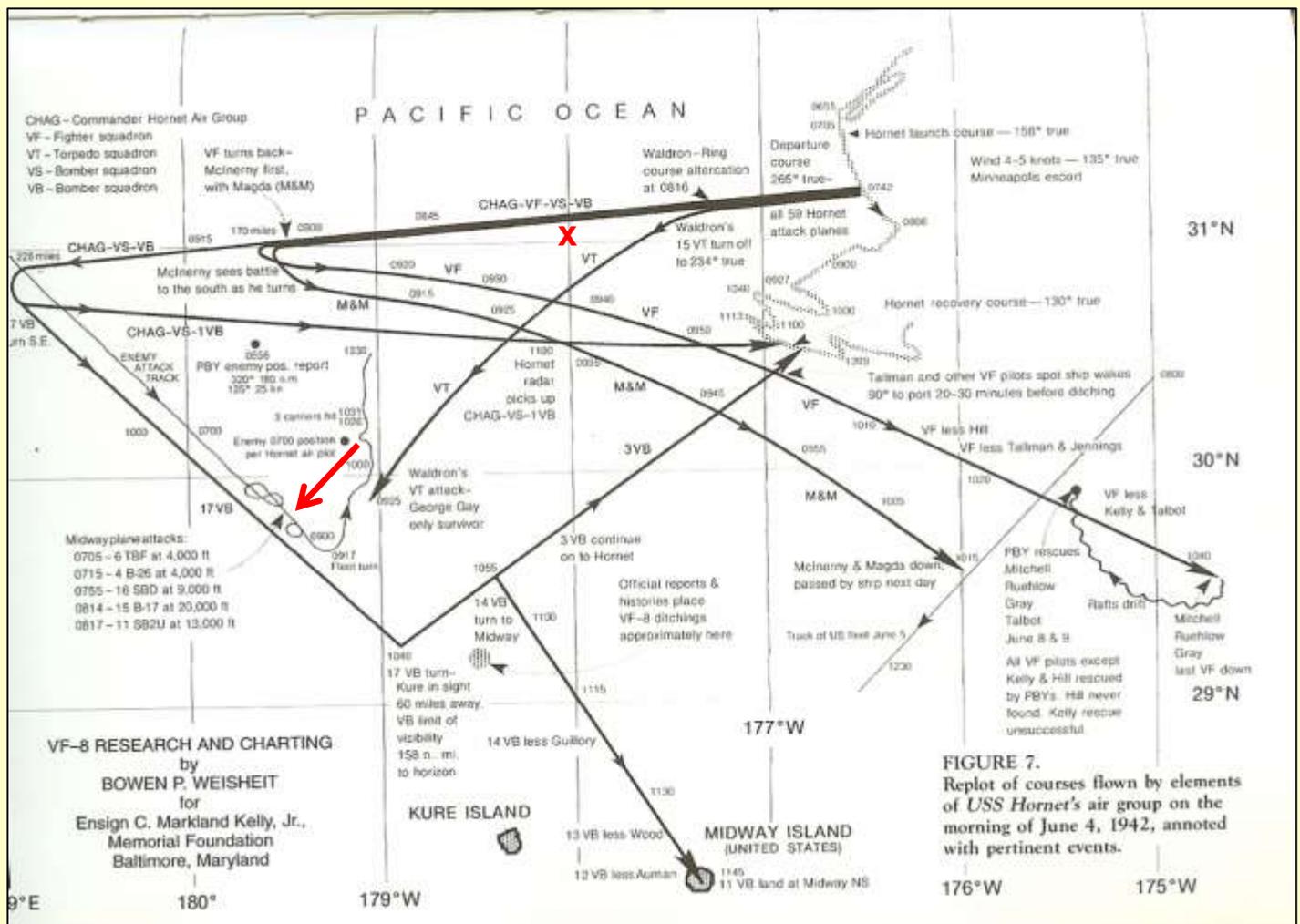
VB-8 pilots Clay Fisher and Roy Gee



Fisher in 2005

Years later I did an analysis on his bearing relative to Midway along both 240 and 265, and decided that he could have seen Midway's smoke on course 240 but likely not on 265. Hence my oft-repeated conclusion that in spite of broad support for course 265 from other veterans, Fisher's account forces us to simply accept both versions and move on. (If you want to review that report, it's in our June 2014 newsletter—click [Archives](http://www.Midway42.org) on the home page, [www.Midway42.org](http://www.Midway42.org).)

But after my recent deep dive into Weisheit's interviews, I resolved to take yet another look at Fisher's account while comparing it to Weisheit's carefully crafted scale chart of the Flight to Nowhere. Quite unexpectedly, that brought me to an entirely different conclusion. In the chart, which is from page 55 in the *Kelly* book, note where Fisher would have been about 30 minutes from departing the *Hornet*—roughly 0830 local time. That puts him near meridian 178 on the chart (the inserted red X). Notice three important facts about that location: (1) Kido Butai (the Japanese carrier force) bears roughly 300 degrees ("10 o'clock") relative to the HAG's track at that time, (2) Kido Butai was then in the midst of multiple attacks from Midway, causing a very large amount of maneuvering, signaling, and screening smoke from the ships (red arrow),



and (3), Fisher was, in fact, *much* closer to Kido Butai than Midway at that time, a point that I simply got wrong in my earlier study. The Japanese ships now appeared to be a far more plausible source than Midway for smoke on the horizon at “10 o’clock.”

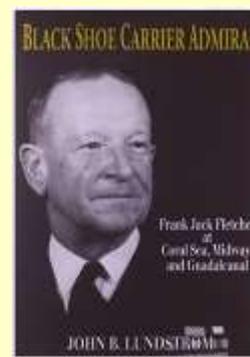
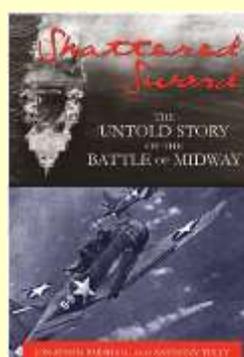
If a historian gets it wrong, he does well to admit it and correct the record, as John Lundstrom did for us in 2006 (see page 217 in *No Right to Win*). When an author of that caliber confesses an error and fixes it, I can only follow his example. I now believe I was incorrect in 2014 as well as all those other times that I’d suggested we need to accept both 240 and 265 and move on. We don’t. All the best evidence, especially those many accounts of Fisher’s fellow airmen who were on the same flight with him now convince me that Fisher went west during the Flight to Nowhere: course 265 True.

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## SUMMARY

Bowen Weisheit’s interest in the Flight to Nowhere wasn’t so much in exposing an apparent fabrication in Captain Mitscher’s after-action report, but in finding how it was possible for his friend Mark Kelly to have lost his life at a location so far distant from that recorded in the Navy’s official history. As it turned out, the fabrication—as it now appears to have been—was the fundamental answer that Weisheit’s was seeking: Kelly hit the water far from where Mitscher said he did because Mitscher’s planes had flown a far different course than he’d reported. That satisfied Weisheit’s quest, and he moved on to other matters.

Enter a number of eminent naval history authors, starting with John Lundstrom, who concluded that Weisheit had done far more than merely solve a mystery about one pilot’s fate: he had inadvertently turned a major portion of the Battle of Midway’s history on its head. The HAG is on course 265 in Lundstrom’s *The First Team* (1984)



and in 1990 that was repeated in a book that would become Roundtable’s enduring top recommendation for a single-volume reference on the BOM: *A Glorious Page in Our History*, by NHHC historian Robert Cressman and a team of coauthors. Parshall and

Tully followed suit in 2005 in *Shattered Sword*, and Lundstrom held true in *Black Shoe Carrier Admiral* (2006). Thereafter, any serious discussion of the *Hornet* at Midway had to at least allow consideration of the HAG's deviant course on the morning of 4 June 1942, if not accept it as assumed fact. In time, course 240 was mostly relegated to prehistory; a flawed assumption that had waited four decades for a correction that came about by accident.

Of course, there are some who still hold to the traditional account despite all that; either unaware of abundant veteran testimony supporting course 265, or contriving ways to rationalize it away. All are welcome to their opinions, but in this case we are left with multiple primary source accounts that say the HAG went west, not southwest on the morning of June 4th. *Primary Source* is the key qualifier there, if you're not familiar with the term—it means information coming from someone who was there at the time as a participant, or at least as a direct observer. Unless you were also there and taking part in the event, it's really hard to debate a primary source.

Indeed, one cannot reasonably conclude that *all* of those veterans are imagining the same falsehood, especially since the evidence they leave is so different: Tallman says Waldron broke to the *left* from the HAG's course, Rodee says he flew "about course 265...almost due west," Guillory says "we went westerly" and Waldron "broke off to the left," Foster says the *Hornet's* radar showed the group heading due west, a CAP pilot watches them do exactly that, a VB-8 gunner carefully plots his outbound course toward the west because his pilot wanted him to know how to do it, and a VS-8 gunner reports seeing VT-8 break to the left, emphatically *not* to the right.

In summary then, Weisheit's transcripts and audio files have clarified the Flight to Nowhere for this reader to a degree that I did not anticipate. If you choose to dig into them as I have, you may or may not have a similar outcome, but I strongly wager that it will be a remarkable learning experience.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project only came about because of one young man's curiosity about the Flight to Nowhere and his persistence in seeking answers to questions about it that have puzzled many. He is university student Haakon Barman-Poppy in England, whom I must sincerely thank for his keen interest in the HAG's infamous flight and his perseverance in getting me to look into it in depth.

Intrigued by the mysteries of the Flight to Nowhere, Haakon reached out to the NHHC to obtain both the written transcripts as well as the actual audio recordings of Bowen Weisheit's interviews. He contacted me with a series of questions, which generated my own renewed interest in a subject that I thought I already knew fully well.

Getting my own copies of the transcripts and audio recordings took some doing, but thanks to a combination of online file sharing by Haakon, some inquiries to NHHC on my behalf by Midway authors Craig Symonds and Elliot Carlson, and the generous cooperation of NHHC lead archivist Laura Waayers, I ultimately acquired them all for the Roundtable, and now they're yours to experience.

I also want to thank Jon Parshall for pointing out that the best eyewitnesses to the Flight to Nowhere may have been the Japanese themselves, who logged *at the time* that VT-8 approached them from the northeast, not the southeast as indicated in the Mitscher report (see the chart on page 5 above). Unlike Mitscher, the Japanese had no motivation to color their account of the battle, intended only as an internal record for Kido Butai. And that, according to Jon, leaves all further speculation about which way the HAG went as unimportant. The Japanese knew 80 years ago, and now so do we.

Finally, we can all thank the Roundtable's webmaster Thom Walla for working through the lengthy process of getting the transcripts and audio files loaded, renamed, linked, and otherwise ready and accessible on our website. It was no small task.

Ron Russell  
19 December 2021

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**Links:**

<b>TAPPAN:</b>	<a href="#">Transcript</a>	<a href="#">Audio</a>
<b>MITCHELL:</b>	<a href="#">Transcript</a>	<a href="#">Audio</a>
<b>GRAY:</b>	<a href="#">Transcript</a>	
<b>TALBOT:</b>	<a href="#">Transcript</a>	<a href="#">Audio</a>
<b>TALLMAN (1 &amp; 2):</b>	<a href="#">Transcript</a>	<a href="#">Audio</a>
<b>McINERNY:</b>	<a href="#">Transcript</a>	<a href="#">Audio</a>
<b>RODEE:</b>	<a href="#">Transcript</a>	<a href="#">Audio</a>
<b>GUILLORY:</b>	<a href="#">Transcript</a>	<a href="#">Audio</a>
<b>CRAWFORD:</b>	<a href="#">Transcript</a>	

**NOTE:**

1. The .wav audio files are very large and require a high speed Internet connection to listen online or to download. They will work in just about any media player, such as Groove Music in Windows 10.
2. For the best experience with interviews having both a transcript and audio recording, start the audio in one browser tab, then follow the transcript in another tab or in your PDF reader.