

Telephone call with T. T. Guillory March 14, 1983

TTG This is Troy Guillory.

BPW Oh, Mr. Guillory.

TTG How you getting along?

BPW I'm all right. As the saying goes, bearing up a little. How are you?

TTG We're just getting along fine down here. Our weather's nice and warm today.

BPW I'll trade you Mr. Guillory. I'll trade you.

TTG My son is up, up in the northeast right now.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And it's not so nice and warm, is it?

BPW You heard a little bit about what happened up in Boston?

TTG Yes, I sure did.

BPW Gosh, why.....

TTG He was in New York yesterday...

BPW Oh yes.

TTG ...flying his own airplane.

BPW Uh-huh.

TTG And he called home last night and....

BPW I see.

TTG There's a lot of difference. I'm not sure he took his top coat with him and he wishes he had it.

BPW You better believe he does. Yes, sir. Why, Mr. Guillory, I'm calling you, I wanted to check with you, I want to try to reach my final conclusions about things in our research and it begins to look to me as I, you may recall, I sent you a track, a plat...

TTG Yes.

BPW that I had made up..

TTG Right

BPW of what happened to the fighters and projected some of the SBDs but I didn't have research about that, of course.

TTG Yes.

BPW But what... Oh, by the way, Mr. Guillory, I am recording this conversation. I don't do well remembering things sometimes.

TTG Well that's all right.

BPW Is that all right?

TTG Surely.

BPW All right, sir. I'll send you a copy if you would like.

TTG All right.

BPW At any rate, you.... Did you ever get a copy or did I send you a copy of the actual report of the Hornet?

TTG Yes, I did get that.

BPW You have it. Well let me ask you something. Did you write that up? Who in the world wrote that up? Who did that?

TTG I don't know.

BPW I'll bet you don't. Now listen. I have it on very good authority that you were a

good navigator.

TTG Well, I.... I was good later on. I don't know whether I was very good at that time or not.

BPW Well, you must have certainly tracked the, the squadron out, I'm sure. How much do remember about it? Do you remember back....

TTG Not very much. It's just been so much water under the bridge, you know...

BPW Sure.

TTG ... that I just don't remember very much detail.

BPW This seems so strange because I know what happened to the, uh, Rodee's bunch.

TTG Uh-huh.

BPW And it, it apparently, three of the VBs went with them but whether everybody else did, I'm beginning to wonder. Do you remember when you left the Hornet, do you remember consciously taking note of the position of the other, uh, Rodee's crowd, the scouting dive bombers?

TTG I don't.

BPW You do not.

TTG I do not. It seems to...

BPW Do you remember seeing Waldron?

TTG Uh, I remember this. I was present when Waldron pulled away from... See, Stanhope C. Ring led our group.

BPW Is that so?

TTG Stanhope C. Ring led our group right here. And as I remember the scouts and the bombers... This has been a long time now, you're taxing my memory. As I remember, Stanhope C. Ring was leading our group.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And by our group I'm saying the bombers and the scouts.

BPW Yeah.

TTG See, they made no difference in the two, both of them are bombers.

BPW Yeah.

TTG Now then. In route, let me, let me think now, in route to the, to.... We left the Hornet, Position A to go to Position B.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And in route, as I remember this, somebody broke radio silence and told us that Position B was not the Japanese carriers. That it was a support force.

BPW I see.

TTG And then we... There was some discussion over the radios between Stanhope C. Ring and Waldron I remember saying, "Hell, I know where the attack forces are." "I'll, I'll take us to the attack forces or I know where they are."

BPW Uh-huh.

TTG And that, this is as I remember it.

BPW Yeah. Yeah.

TTG Now then, that is when the, the torpedo planes pulled away from us.

BPW I see. Do you remember seeing them?

TTG Uh, I remember seeing them with us and seeing them pull away at that time.

BPW Yeah. Do you ever remember seeing the fighters?

TTG I don't remember seeing the fighters.

BPW That's good. All right. Okay. Well, anyway, in your thinking...

TTG Let me say this while I think of it so I won't forget it.

BPW Yes, sir.

TTG As I remember, as I remember, it was felt that the flight was too long to have the fighter escort.

BPW Right, right, right. That bears out all right. Is there any way or have you had an opportunity to, or did you... chance to think about how the conclusions that I showed on my chart.... how they could be reconciled with the Hornet's action report.

TTG I haven't, haven't thought of it in that light.

BPW All right. Okay. Well if you get a chance to, I sure as hell would like to know your thinking on that, Mr. Guillory...

TTG All right.

BPW ... because it's, it may be very important. There's a new book coming out and I've been able to substantiate my, my chart, my flight. Not with respect to Bombing Eight but with respect to the others. So that the Navy is tending to publish it and I'm not doing it. Don't misunderstand me.

TTG Uh-huh.

BPW I have nothing to do with it. My, I have no ulterior motives in my research. I have only one thing at all. And that's to find out what happened to Mark Kelly and...

TTG Yes.

BPW ... that's all I've done. But this other has kind of intrigued me and I wanted to catch up on loose ends if I could.

TTG Uh-huh.

BPW But if you've got a chance, would you kind of think that darned thing through and, and I just projected on my chart, I said, well, if Bombing Eight went with the rest of them they had to go up here but that's not... that doesn't jibe with the Hornet's action report...

TTG That's right.

BPW ...at all. Not at all. And so, if you would just kind of think that over a little bit because I have great respect for you on your navigating.

TTG Well thank you.

BPW And I would really appreciate any thoughts that you might have on that.

TTG All right.

BPW Just as a matter of interest and believe me, I'm not trying to do anything but my own little research and that's all.

TTG Yeah.

BPW Uh, I may be coming down to New Orleans a little later this spring and if I do, may I give you a call?

TTG I'd like for you to. And if you could come to Monroe, now we're about...

BPW Oh, I know you're somewhat away.

TTG ...200 miles from Monroe. I'd like you to, and we do have good air service into here...

BPW Sure.

TTG ...and if you can ever come here there's plenty of room for you to stay with us, you see. Just the wife and I are in this big house.

BPW Now you're doing the same thing that I'm doing. You got all the family gone and

all of a sudden you got a whole lot of house.

TTG Got all this room and don't need it any more, you see. When we were young and had all of the children home and needed the room we didn't have it and now it's just the two of us and we have all this room.

BPW That surely sounds familiar, Mr. Guillory. Well, listen. Okay, I'll be in touch with you some.....

TTG I've got your number here. I'm going to write it on my phone book.

BPW Put your thinking cap on.

TTG I'll, I'll try to do that.

BPW And listen, reverse charges, will you Mr. Guillory...

TTG All right. I'll do that.

BPW ... please. Thank you, sir.

TTG Thank you very much then.

BPW I'll see you.

TTG Bye-bye.

BPW Bye-bye.

Interview with T. T. Guillory 3/23/83

Tape 1/Side 1

BPW I tell you what the, the.... I want to make sure, first of all, Troy. Let me, let me give you the standard pitch, as it is, as it were. I was a friend of Mark's and we had hoisted a few in college fraternity.

TTG You went to school together?

BPW Yeah. Well, we were at school at the same time. We didn't go to the same school...

TTG Uh-huh.

BPW ...but I, we were friends and his father was a fine fellow and a very successful business man. An automobile dealer who sold Buicks. He had a Buick, Buick agency there in Baltimore and what...

TTG Did he have the Oldsmobile dealership, too, or just Buick?

BPW No, no. Just Buick. And he became a very.... well he went into politics and everything. He was acting mayor..(dead tape space) ... was his only family at all and it was a terrible blow to him. What happened was, a couple of fellows from the Navy showed up at the door one day and, you know, and that he had been lost at Midway. Well, they never gave any explanation at all, of anything at all about what had happened. They said simply that he had accompanied, uh, left the carrier on a strike and had not returned and they didn't have any information about it. Well, he died very unhappy not knowing anything more about it and about a year and a half or so ago.... Well, when the old man died, he funded a foundation which my father was director of and a couple of other fellows. Well, that's evolved down. I became a director of it and with one other man and now he's my age and so we're.... The foundation has been a very successful one locally. Very well thought of. We disburse about two hundred thousand dollars a year to the local institutions of all kinds and that pamphlet...

TTG Umm-hmm.

BPW ... tells about it.

TTG I've read that.

BPW Yeah. So it's, you know, a nice little local sort of a thing and we take it seriously, I'll tell you. I really take it seriously and try to do the best we can with it and so.... My son has now been just elected to the board and the handwriting is on the wall. When we pass out of the picture why he can name his own, his, his own assistants and that's how that will be. Hopefully it will perpetuate itself like that. Well, I got to thinking about it. I was going over some of the old records and everything that we have in the files and I got to thinking about it a little bit and I, well, it just occurred to me that I would like to know a little bit about what happened, too. So, to be perfectly honest with you and....

TTG Inquisitive.

BPW Yeah, and he was, he was a.... we had good times together. He was a nice fellow. At any rate, I started in on it and, and all I had was this right here and another thing that you may be surprised to see and that is a short-snorter bill.

Mrs.G I'd forgot all about, yeah.

BPW Short-snorter bill.

Mrs.G Mmm-hmm.

BPW It was, it must have been Ruehlow's. Gray disclaimed it and so did Mitchell but they both signed it and...

Mrs.G Yeah.

BPW ... said they knew...

Mrs.G How about that.

BPW ... all about it. But it identifies where they were picked up and so that was one end of the line and the other end of the line was the ship itself so I decided to try and see if we could fill in just what did happen. Now we have this bill and I have some much better pictures of this. These are the only ones I had at home when I started down here. It's one of those funny old sizes. See how big it is?

Mrs.G Yes, uh-huh, I noticed that.

BPW It's one of those funny old sized bills. It's in a, we have it in a case. The, uh, Dr. Allard over

TTG What is this latitude right here? It must be twenty eight point zero zero.

BPW Yeah, that's what it is.

TTG Yeah. They didn't know anything....

BPW The fellow that typed it, his typewriter didn't have a...

TTG Okay. I see what he's done right here, yeah.

BPW But, so, that's.... Gray remembered Fisler. Fisler was the skipper of that PBY.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW But it was not the same one that picked up Tallman.

TTG And it is not the same one that picked me up.

BPW Not that picked up you and it was not the same one that picked up Magda and McNerny.

TTG Twenty three (inaud) twelve picked me up. A VP23.

BPW Yeah. So, it's funny but, well, I don't know whether it is or not but that's, they, everybody got picked up by a different plane.

TTG They were still patrolling and from all the losses we had they knew there were lots of heavy hitters in the water out there.

BPW Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Yes.

TTG Now let me look at that, Mary Jo. I had to read every word of that. That's very interesting.

Mrs.G Yeah.

BPW I have a picture of the

TTG Now this is John Talbot.

Mrs.G Uh,huh. I noticed that.

BPW There's John. This is a picture of what you have. If you'd like to keep that....

Mrs.G All right. We'll appreciate that.

BPW I have some things here that you might, other things that you might like.

TTG R-I-P right here.

BPW No. R-I-P is requiem in pocke....

Mrs.G Okay.

BPW I guess he must have been a good religious fellow...

TTG Yes.

BPW ... that wrote that.

TTG Right.

BPW But in any event, those, those are pictures of it.

TTG Let me see the picture. Maybe....

BPW No, that one over there, see....

TTG Yes.

BPW I'll leave those with you, Troy.

TTG All right.

BPW These two. I don't know whether you can quite read it but it's almost good enough to read the... If I have any more of these made up, I'll shoot you one down.

TTG All right.

BPW This is a roster of the ship's officers. Now you'll see that you're midway in the middle of the, of the VB group.

TTG What was the initial date of the Battle of Midway, Bowen? What date am I talking to?

BPW June 4.

TTG June the 4th.

BPW Yes, sir.

TTG Well now, what gets me is they launched us at eight o'clock. That I remember.

BPW All right, now let me just...

TTG I'll be quiet and listen right here. This is nine thirty. That's an hour and a half after launch.

BPW Well, no, I think that was the... let's see, we picked them up at 9:30 on June 9.

TTG Oh, okay. All right.

BPW That's the pickup.

TTG I read that as in the port and that's what bothered me.

BPW Yeah. That was the pickup.

TTG All right. That's all.

BPW Here's a roster.

TTG Sure is.

BPW It starts VB here...

TTG Uh-huh

BPW ... and continues up here. You're right in there.

TTG Right. Now you sent me a copy of this.

BPW Uh-huh.

TTG And this was very interesting to read back these, these names.

BPW Well I guess it takes you on a little nostalgia trip, all right. Did you know these?

TTG Oh yes. We were married and she knew most

Mrs.G Here's old Tommy Woods, wanted to know what a dome was. That's what I remember about him.

TTG He got deathly sea sick.

BPW Oh, really?

TTG Ditching and during the Battle of Midway and his gunner had to row. Tommy ran out of fuel within sight of Midway.

BPW Uh-huh.

TTG And his gunner rowed him that distance in because Tommy was deathly sea sick.

BPW Oh, for heaven's sake.

TTG And he was.....

BPW Oh, or heaven's sake.

TTG ... a little, small Texan.

Mrs.G *Little, small, dark...*

TTG Liked to talk big and we gave him lots of static over that sea sickness.

BPW I see. He wasn't exactly a salt water man.

TTG Well this is good and I appreciate these...

BPW Yeah. Oh, that's all right. Now here are Hornet, copies of the Hornet's log of the appropriate times and I don't know whether I sent those along to you or not.

TTG You didn't, no.

BPW But I'll be glad to leave them with you too.

TTG All right. I guess I'd like to have them.

BPW And you can look at them when you, you know, whenever it's Now, what, Troy, I believe I did send you a list of all of the, a kind of a personnel list of people that I had contacted, I believe. Is that true? With the names and addresses?

TTG No, you didn't.

Mrs.G *No, uh-uh. You didn't....*

BPW One of those?

TTG No.

BPW You might keep that. This is just a list of names and the addresses.

Mrs.G *Yeah, uh-huh, right, that you have contacted.*

BPW These are people, most of the people that I have contacted. Now I can... In my conversation with John Talbot, he said, "Well, there's a guy that you ought to talk to. A fellow by the name of Guillory who knew his stuff about navigating." You keep that one and I'll take this one.

Mrs.G *Yes, uh-huh, right. And you have this one too, don't you?*

BPW Yes, all right, yeah. He has a couple...

Mrs.G *I think he has that one.*

BPW ... well I sent him one of those before. Here you'd better put that one... you just keep all of those together.

Mrs.G *Yes, in one spot.*

BPW I don't know whether you want them. Throw them away if you don't.

Mrs.G *Oh, yeah.*

TTG Sure.

Mrs.G *I wanted to be sure he only had a single copy though, so you can give one to someone else.*

BPW Well, all right. Now... and Dr. Allard learned of my investigation. Dr. Allard is the fellow in charge of the Navy archives and all of Navy records over in Washington and he was very nice and I don't know where he got wind of it or whatever. Anyhow, I got in touch with him and he was very cooperative and said sort of like, "Well, I'd like to know what you find out and I'll try to help you find it out." So I said, "Okay" and I went around and I found that there were so, what I was investigating, you must remember, was what happened to Mark Kelly. I didn't care anything about anything

else. I didn't know anything about anything else. I didn't know anything about, really, about the Battle of Midway as far as the actual things that happened and all, other than the, the history books.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW Well, I had read Lord and Morison and Fujita and those things and that, but that was it. But I wanted to just see if I could find out what happened to Mark. And Mrs. Guillory, to give you a little better understanding of what my activity, I used to teach for Captain Weems, right before the war down in Annapolis and over in Washington. And so I, once upon a time, was a very good navigator and a teacher, too, I hope. But in any event, I knew my stuff about it and I still do, I say. So, that put things into perspective. You understand when I want to make a chart, I know how to do it. All right. And Allard, believe me, he made darn certain that I did; without my knowledge. But in any event, I decided to try to find the fellows that were in the flight and I, he sent me the log and it talked about ten fighters going out. I didn't even know that there had been ten. Well, and so I just went from there and Mitchell... And then I decided to, to try to find any of them. I just had names. I had that roster of just names. Mitchell's the... thing... So I called up down at, I belong to Naval, Naval Institute down at the academy and I called down there and I said, "Hey, you got a fellow by the name of Mitchell on your mailing list"? Yeah, here we are." So I said, "Well, I won't tell anybody, tell me where he lives." You know you're not supposed to do that. This freedom of information thing. And Allard over in Washington, he said, "Listen, I'd like to help you but the only way you can do it is to write a letter addressed to these guys, send it to the Navy Department and they will, if they have an address for them, forward it on."

TTG Yes.

BPW But you never know, see.

TTG Right.

BPW Well I wasn't very thrilled with that prospect, see. So anyhow I ended up going to see Mitchell and, uh, down at... and had a conversation with him and I didn't know a darned thing. Remember, all I had, let's get that chart out, that chart out. All I had before me was this right here. And this is the battle action report off of the Hornet. Here, here was our fleet over here in this configuration right over here. Now, this shows that all of our planes took off and flew right down this line. Here was the Jap fleet coming down. We, all of our planes, the torpedo bombers, scout bombers, dive bombers and fighters all allegedly flew down here, then down here, around like this. The torpedo bombers dropped off there, went up and got annihilated. The rest, everybody else did all kinds of things and finally got back to the Hornet and 14 went down here, including Troy.

TTG Umm-hmm.

Mrs.G Umm-hmm.

BPW Now, that's all I had to go by. So I talked to Mitchell and talked to him for a long, long time. Mitchell's about 80 now and he's still pretty...

TTG I'm sixty-three.

BPW Well, I'm sixty-four. So we're hanging in there.

TTG I knew we were close together.

BPW Okay. We're hanging in there.

TTG And he said, he, Kelly....

Mrs.G Yes, I know....

TTG I knew...

BPW Kelly was a year, about a year or was it a year and a half or something like that, maybe two years older.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW But I went down to see Mitchell and I thought well, I says, Geez, all I have to do is to see the commanding officer. The guy who lead the thing. I mean, I'll get the whole story with one shot. I mean, I was just floating on cloud nine. No problems at all, see. Famous last words. Gosh, Mitchell, he, I began to get the sense or a feeling, all of a sudden I began to get personality conflicts that he, when he would talk about people and things and he was, he would talk. I could have stayed there forever. He would have talked but he was very cautious about what he was saying and he wasn't about to deviate one iota from the published history.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW That's how it was. He wasn't about to. And when I asked things about, well, what course did you fly, he couldn't remember. "I don't remember anything like that." And finally talked for a long time and I said "Well, who was the first plane that fell out?" Oh, he says, "Hill", right off. I said, "Hill?" He said, "Yeah". I said, "Well, where was he flying?" "He was Ruehlow's wing man." And he said, I said, "Okay, that's great." Who was next?" "Don't know." Have no, hadn't any idea. I said, "Well..... He said, "Well, I was leading the formation." "I was up front and I wasn't in the back." I didn't...dropped out, I presumed but that was how that was." Well it, uh, it didn't progress very much better the more we talked.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW And he couldn't remember who Gray's wing man was or who his own wing man was. He didn't know and, and incredible as it may seem to this day, after, you know, this was early in the game of my research, to this day I don't know whether Ruehlow, Gray or Mitchell was the last one down.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW Each said he was. Each one said he was. Now why in the sam hill, they wanted to be the last one down is a little beyond me. Ruehlow told Lord and Morison that he was the last one down. Mitchell told me he was the last one down and Gray told me he was the last one down.

TTG Here is a possible answer. Back then, radio silence was...

BPW Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

TTG ... and our transmitters, Bowen, were wired in the off position, you see...

BPW Uh-huh, I see.

TTG ... and some of us didn't even open up to, to declare that we were ditching in the ocean, you see.

BPW Right, right.

TTG See, that can cause this, these unknowns that he's talking about.

BPW Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

TTG And, now I'm going to keep quiet and listen to him, now. Mary Jo doesn't believe I can keep quiet. She's lived with me 42 years. She doesn't think I can keep quiet but...

BPW Well I want to make sure that you, I want to give you background because I want to prompt your memory. You're my last shot here and I want to have you as knowledgeable as is possible to be and as informed as you can be, Troy. And I don't want to, you'll see as I progress with the story a little bit that I've had my problems on some of the interviews. But at any rate, the Mitchell one was only half satisfactory. He did tell me about the, some of the people within the squadron. Who was on it. I guess I, I picked that up. In any event, I've found that there were five guys still alive that had been on it. Now I didn't.. he didn't tell me that but, and I'm not quite sure now where I found it out, but I got the names and, or maybe I just did it by, well between Gray and Mitchell and Tappan. Tappan, Ben Tappan.

TTG Ben Tappan. I remember that name.

BPW He lives up at Gibson Island and I saw him next.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW Saw Ben and talked to him. He was right in the middle of VS. Right in the middle and he said, "All I did was to follow right along with the guy behind me and the guy in front of me and I didn't do anything." "I was scared to death." "I was just flying right along." "That's all I did." "I don't know nothing." And we laughed and laughed. But anyhow, then I went up to see Gray. Well, Kelly was Gray's wing man. Now, and Gray knew him. Gray was, Gray was a, I don't know whether you really knew Gray, but he was a amiable sort of a guy but you had to be a little careful not to cross him, I would say. He said, I called him up and he said, "Sure, come on up, I'll talk to you." He said, "All these other guys, Lord and these other guys have written me and I just throw it in the can." I said, "I appreciate your talking to me and I'll go up and see you." He lived up in Philadelphia, Chestnut Hill. Get up there, "Okay, come on in" and we're, I told him that I had flown and this, that and the other thing. We were sort of on a one on one proposition. This is 10:30 in the morning I get there and he sits down and place similar right like here and he said, "Excuse me a minute." He goes over and says, "I need a little eye opener." "Have one?" Ten thirty in the morning.

TTG Ten thirty in the morning.

BPW I said...

TTG That always gives me....

BPW I just got up from the breakfast table. I'll catch you on the next one. God. So, well, the interview lasted all right for a little while but then it went on down hill.

TTG He had several eye openers?

BPW He had a couple of more eye openers and he said, "Well you know damn well, Weisheit, that naval aviators are the biggest liars on this earth, don't you?" And I said, "Yeah, I know that." "Don't worry about that." He said, "I'll tell you anything." But, but you know, he was only half, I mean he was serious at the same time and he tried to contribute. He did. And he added something, a few things. He talked about the YE-ZB equipment. Everybody seemed to think they could do something a little better than maybe the next guy.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW And Gray thought he knew how to operate the YE-ZB. Well, I don't really think he did but be that as it may, he added a little something to that. But he, and he took a guess at the course. I said, "What course were you flying?" "Aw, I was west about three hundred and four degrees", he said. Three hundred and four degrees. I'm looking

at this chart. Ho, ho, ho. Two hundred and forty and he's saying three..... all right. I got it all down, okay, okay. Well, then got away. Those two guys and then I ran out of gas on addresses. They were both down in the Naval Institute. They were at the institute. Nobody else was. So I didn't know what to do. Well, went back to our files and I found Mark's graduation from Pensacola. Book, the flight jacket, you know.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW Everybody's name was in there and it had their home town and what college...

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW ... they went to. Well I just, I wanted, I was looking for McNerny, Jennings, Talbot and Tallman. Tallman, I, Rochester, Massachusetts. Called the operator on the telephone, just like that and asked her for Humphrey Tallman. Gives me the number.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW Same thing with Johnny Talbot out in Iowa. Just gave me the number, see. Just like breaking sticks. They're all on here.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW So, and, so then, and, and but no McNerny. No McNerny. Magda, I knew had died. He was the blue angel guy and he went in.... So, I didn't know about Jennings and I couldn't find that lead on him because he was not in that class down there with ...

TTG No.

BPW ... at all. Well I guess he was ahead of you all, substantially, somewhere.

TTG That sounds right.

BPW But, but in any event, what I did was to go up and see... I went out to see Talbot and we talked for a long time and Johnny, I, I think he told the story once or twice too often and he got locked into it, Troy. You can do that, you know.

Mrs.G That's right.

TTG Yeah.

Mrs.G Believe in what...

BPW Once you get kind of committed, it's hard to back up. So I got all I could out of that and it was nice and he was very kind and very pleasant and very helpful and all that sort of thing. But couldn't get me to the end of the line at all and so.... and I talked a long time, a long time. There were four and five hour interviews. But I got... each one would add something. Then I went up to see Tallman, Humphrey Tallman. He's a heck of a nice guy, wonderful fellow. He's up in, not far from New Bedford, Fall River, up that way in Massachusetts, near south Dartmouth. Well, got up there to see him. Now then, he was the very last tail-end charlie in the flight.

TTG The fighter planes, he....

Mrs.G Uh-huh, I remember....

BPW Fighters, of fighters, see. And by piecing things together I began to get a pretty good picture of how, how the thing worked. Tallman added a great deal to it but, and I taped his and got all of his and Tallman was the, he seemed to be the most level headed of all of the guys. Anybody that I had talked to at all. So I made a deal with him. I said, "Now, listen, I need a confidant here." I've got to have somebody that can feed it back to me and tell me about the, you know, and I need somebody to do it. "Will you do it?" "Yeah," he said. "I'll do it, sure. It's all right." So and I said on these

tappings, I, some of the people made remarks, as you can well imagine, that I didn't want to hear that nobody else really wants to hear.

TTG Right.

BPW And, but they're very bitter today about some things. And uh, and so, but I wanted them to express themselves as freely as possible so I said, "I won't..." "These tapes will never go out of my possession." And that is going to be true. I'm not going to disclose the tapes at all with the exception of Hump and he, he has agreed to honor that situation, too. So they'll never be disclosed but I had to disclose to him because I had to have somebody to help me to work the things out and he is a very fine, fine man. I'll tell you. But in any event, that left, oh, he told me that Jennings had killed, had been killed in a crash up at Quonset, apparently. After the war sometime. That left McNerny. Well, McNerny is a big, heavy set Irishman. I don't know whether you remember....

TTG Oh, I remember that face.

BPW Bigger, he's bigger than I am. And he was.... and everybody remembered him. Everybody remembered him that had ever met him. I think that anybody who, that ever meets him, will remember him. But in any event, it said he was from Wooster. The flight jacket said he was from Wooster and that he had gone to Holy Cross. Well, all right. I left Tallman. I said, "I'm going up to Holy Cross." There's no McNernys and no, no, telephone didn't work and that's... didn't work. I ran out of gas on that. So go up there, my golly, I walk in the place and the alumni, into the alumni association. See him. I thought that's the most appropriate guy to talk to. He says, "All right, let's..." and I told him what it was about. I said, "Listen, I'm doing research and I know you're not supposed to give out this information and all but give me a break. I'm really trying to reach this fellow." He comes back with a great big picture and he says, "Is that the guy?" and you'd know it in a second. I mean all I had to do is look at it. That's McNerny. No question. He says, "Well, your hit, hit right on the thing." "Here's his address", so and so and so and so, Miami and here's telephone number. The whole ball of wax. Make a long story short, I take the plane and go down to Miami. Well, that was a revelation because McNerny, in those days was a twenty-three year old wild-eyed Irishman and today he is a seventy-year old wild-eyed Irishman and he has not changed one single bit. And he, he told me.... He was really one of the most interesting characters that you'd ever meet in this world. He's one of these guys that just blundered his way through. He was competent but he blundered a lot, too. I mean he did crazy things like, well, an example. When he got into torpedo, he got reassigned to torpedoes and I don't know where they were, near some darned place. But anyhow, one day the C.O. called him in and said, "Mack, be out on the flight line at exactly two o'clock because Admiral Halsey's got to get in his flight time this month and you'll be there and you're going to take the Admiral for a buggy ride and that's that." Okay. So he gets out there and he said, "Have the plane all warmed up and ready to go." So he gets out there at one thirty or something, you know. Got the thing going and by two o'clock it was overheating and one thing and another and he took off without the Admiral at exactly two o'clock. So when he gets back, he flew around for a half hour, comes back, lands. C.O.'s right there, right on the apron waiting for him. "McNerny, you get out of there and you go in there." There's Halsey. Halsey said, "Weren't you told to

have that plane ready at two o'clock?" McNerny said, "Yes, sir, exactly two o'clock." And Halsey knew he had been five minutes late. So instead of killing him, Halsey knew he'd been five minutes late. So he said, (phone call interruption) Well anyhow, what happened was that he contributed a lot to the story. His bit, the thing that he thought he could do better than anybody else was keep track of gas, fuel consumption, okay? Now those F4F-4s had 145 gallon tank and they burned about 45 to 50 gallons an hour and, but what they did on take-off, they went higher than anybody in the squadron that I talked to had ever been before. They went up 22,000 feet and McNerny said that he sweated every inch of the way because he didn't think that Mitchell had the proper settings and he thought that the thing they were.... it was a slow, laborious, gruel kind of a plane. You could feel the fuel going out of the thing.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW It was just awful. So he watches it and watches it and when it gets down to where it's half, he's beginning to get a little nervous, indeed. Well, anyhow, what had happened was this, Troy. They, when they left that ship, nobody was given a point option course for the ship and apparently the reason for that was this. Spruance was on the Enterprise. There was no communication. No radio communication. The Hornet's orders must have been to conform to her, the Enterprises', movements and that's about it. So they never knew what their point option was going to be so they couldn't give it to anybody. And everybody that I've talked to bears that out including, you know, Foster, and all of the whole... the ship's officers and everything. That's no point option was given. Well, okay. But in lieu of that, as the reports have it, they were given a course for the enemy. Now, that remains to be seen. Mr.... there are three that said that it was about west, and Rodee was extremely positive about it. Rodee is very much with it today and he's... I've only talked to him on the telephone but he, he's no man.... He's a man to be reckoned with, I'll tell you. He's with it and he... there's no question whatever in his mind about it. Well with that much information, what I did was to... and, and with McNerny, well what McNerny did was, you have to, you have to understand McNerny. He's the funniest guy. He, he said that when they got down here and his gas gauge goes below half, he says, "What the hell am I doing? I've got to get this thing turned around." And they're still following the dive bombers,

TTG Right.

BPW okay? Following right along. And Mitchell's orders were follow Ring. Follow VS, the scout bombers...

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW ...and Ring. All right, now. When they get down here, this is what McNerny did. Now McNerny says this. Nobody else would admit it or nobody else said it. Not generally Talbot, not Mitchell, not Gray, nobody. But McNerny, you have to believe McNerny. There isn't a lie in his body. He wouldn't... He'll let you beat him over the head before he'd lie to you.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW I mean that's the kind of guy he is. He says, "I watched the gauge and I knew that we were going to have to go, we were going to be ditching if we didn't get turned around." So he says, "I broke formation. I flew right up beside Mitchell and I said

look..” No, no radio, all radio silence. I said, “Look,” like this. I said, “Turn around, turn around.” See, Mitchell goes like this, “back, back, you get back in your position,” see. He drops back with Magda and waits for a couple of more minutes, four or five more minutes. Can’t stand it. He goes, pulls right up beside Mitchell again. Breaks formation, pulls right up beside him. “Look at the gauge and turn around,” see. Mitchell says, “Back, back,” like that. He, Mac says, “That’s all. He was motioning me to go home. I turned around.”

TTG Went home.

BPW Well, but it was enough to turn them all around too. They all turned around with, right as soon as Mac did. But Mac turned around first with Magda and took Magda with him. He was, Magda’s wing man and...

TTG McInerny was Magda’s wing man?

BPW Yeah.

TTG Uh-huh.

BPW But he did it anyhow. You understand? You have to understand. That’s the kind of a guy he is, see.

TTG Yeah.

BPW I mean he’s, he’s devil take the hind most. That’s all there is to it. He never saw, when he turned, in this turn, he saw far off in the turn he saw the Jap, what he thought was the Jap fleet.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW But he saw ships’ wakes, okay? They’re at 22,000 feet and you can see a long, long way. One point one five times the square root of your height, give it to you in nautical miles. It’s a long, long way. So when he turned around, however, I said, “Okay, what did you, what were you thinking about doing?” He said, “My God, I wasn’t thinking about doing anything but getting back to ship. We were out of gas. There wasn’t any way, we couldn’t do anything anyhow and the damn SBDs, they just kept right on going. They didn’t care anything about us. They just kept right on going. We weren’t tuned in on them or their frequency or anything and never heard anything, nothing on the radio at all. Turned around, turned on the YE-ZB, try to come on back.” He said, “I never saw anything anymore. I didn’t see our fighter planes. I didn’t see anything at all.” The reason he didn’t see... they saw him though. But he was a little to the, ahead of them and then a little to the south of them...

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW ... after they turned back. He came down here in approximately this. They ditched here and this is pretty well established also because the next day, one of our destroyers goes by and he’s dying. Never saw him at all. See, he’s in the water. But he said, “I was worried. I was so worried the whole time I was in the water.” I said, “Well, sure you were worried about getting picked up.” “Hell, no,” he says, “I was worried about getting court marshaled.”

Mrs.G Oh, gosh.

BPW “I knew they were going to court martial me.” You just have to see McInerny. He’s a riot. I’m telling you he’s the funniest guy. So anyhow, and when he was picked up, John Ford, the movie man was, had the films going down there and McInerny and Magda hamming it up all.... they were being... oh, gosh, it was a riot and port, Johnny Talbot was brought in. He was pretty badly sun burned and in not so good....

Mrs.G *He's fair anyway.*

BPW Yeah. Mmm-hmm. And he had a rough time of it but McInerny and Magda.....

TTG **I think Talbot was by himself.**

BPW Yeah.

TTG **And these others were together, weren't they?**

BPW Oh, yes. Oh, yes. That's right.

TTG **That makes a difference.**

BPW Oh, yes.

Mrs.G *Oh, yes.*

BPW But what happened was, Talbot said this. This is what Talbot said. He said now when they were coming back at about this time, they looked off to port. Tallman, Talbot, Mitchell, Ruehlow and Gray. All saw ships off to their, well, to the.... they were, well it was on their port. Right on their port wing. They thought that it was the Jap fleet. They thought that it was the Jap fleet. They could not engage, of course. They had no gas left. So they kept following on down and they just ran out of gas. Dropped off one by one as they went on down. This is the, this, it works very well actually. The average winds and current would have put them right back in here.

TTG **Mmm-hmm.**

BPW This is the, which is the pickup spot. This just worked beautifully for that week that they were in the water. The winds were light. The current had the most effect. This is what it looks like on the pilot charts you know. It wasn't hard to do, really, to redo it. Tallman, if anything, it was a little, this track could have been down about there a little bit more...

TTG **Mmm-hmm.**

BPW ... like that. Tallman was picked up a little bit, would have been a little bit more over like this.

TTG **Mmm-hmm.**

BPW A little bit more west than north. This was a little one, might have been a little more north, like this, a sweep. But in any event, that was where he was picked up and the, the pilot that picked him up told him that he was, oh, I forget how many miles northeast of Midway. Which would, well, which is no question in my mind, it was in this area. In this general area right here. Now, so we had three guys saying this was the course out that was taken. We had Ruehlow, we had Rodee and Rodee was a pretty strong guy. He, he was the leader of his scouts.

TTG **VS, VS8s.**

BPW Mmm-hmm and he lead them. What I mean is he lead them.

Tape 1 Side 2

BPW Let's see, where was I? So, this was established. It was 265 out from the Hornet at this time. Now all of the time, all of the history books use Zone 12 time which was two hours away. See, Zone 12 time's here. Hornet time was on Zone 10 which was two hours...

TTG **Different.**

BPW ... plus two, see. In other words, Zone 12 says it's six fifty-five.

TTG **All right.**

BPW Or seven o'clock.

TTG Right.

BPW But you were, you really took off at nine o'clock.

TTG All right.

BPW It started to go, CAP started taking off at just about seven o'clock. And by seven forty-six, all planes had been cleared.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW And it was much faster than the Enterprise did. But, excuse me, so we have pretty good verification of this. Further more we have one other very interesting thing. And this is where, now we're getting down to the nitty gritty here on this. And this is where, if you're going to be able to help, it'll be an immense..... This... All the squadrons are supposed to file these battle action reports.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW All of them were. Well, I don't know whether they all did or not but none of them survived except one (inaud)

TTG Johnson?

BPW Mmm-hmm. And, and uh, he signed these. Now, we see in here that on 0900 on June the 4th which we've just verified this at seven and two hours, nine o'clock.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW Launched 19 airplanes. I don't think it was 19 but that's not what were accounted for subsequently but anyhow, this is what it says. Launched 19 airplanes in company with Scouting Eight and ten airplanes of Fighting Eight to attack a Japanese force of carriers. This was written three weeks later.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW Battle ships, cruisers, destroyers reported in latitude 30, 35 north 178, 35 west. The group climbed to 19,000 feet. Now that direction is right down that pike. Right down that pike. All right, now. Let's see what it looks like. Here we have the same set up. Can you see it all right?

Mrs.G Mmm-hmm. Yes, I can see. Go on.

BPW Now what I said, when I, when I had this information, what I said, let me take one more reference to the back of my chart.

TTG Would you like a glass of water? I can get you one real quick.

BPW I don't know what's the matter.

TTG Or Coke.

BPW A little water would be...

TTG All right.

BPW ...swell, Troy. Thank you very much, sir. I seem to have a post nasal drip or something. See what's happened is if we say that all went out here...the VFs...

Mrs.G Yes.

BPW We know that the torpedo bombers went out 240 because Waldron was the very first squadron of any, any of the carrier planes that hit the Jap fleet. He went right down there direct to them, see.

Mrs.G Mmm-hmm.

BPW Direct to them.

TTG I'm going to be right back, now. Can you hold that for me just a minute.

BPW That's fine. Sure. You see, Mrs. Guillory, I'll say that for the benefit of I'm

talking to you now while Troy's out. The problem is how to reconcile this with that.

Mrs.G Yes.

BPW That's my problem and that's what I'm here for. And if we can, that's fine. If we can't, that's all right, too.

Mrs.G Yeah. You will have tried.

BPW I will have tried.

Mrs.G Yeah, Mmm-hmm.

BPW It's a fascinating kind of thing

Mrs.G Oh, it's...

BPW You know, what's happened is this.

Mrs.G It's been so long with their minds, you know.

BPW Oh, it's not easy. It's not easy. Because what happened was that there was a great deal, you know, the war went on. These fellows were just sort of forgotten.

All those fighters, they were just kind of passed on and then when the Navy ultimately caught up with them, they had gotten reassigned and things like that but it was, they just went on. Well, okay now, Troy. Here we go. Now in order for me to account for everybody, I know that Waldron and the VTs had to have gone down 240 because he was the first of any carrier plane at all that got to the Jap fleet and he had to go right direct and that's the way he went and why he went down 240, I don't know. The Enterprise, other planes went down 240 and 235 and 239, too. But these planes, according to four sources then. Four pretty solid sources flew out in this direction. Now, what planes were they? Well I drew this chart a few months ago, I said it had to be all of them. I couldn't imagine. Now they didn't come back together. They didn't do the same thing once they got out there and couldn't find the fleet. Then all kinds of things began to happen but, I, I know that the, the scouts, Rodee, very clear, very careful. So was Tappan and Tappan's a solid kind of a guy. He didn't say anything that's not right. I mean he won't say anything before he'll say something wrong.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW I mean he just, that's the guy he is. He said, "We didn't hold it five minutes. We turned around." That's what he said. "We turned around and flew straight back."

And that's exactly what Rodee says without knowing anything about my having talked to Tappan. Okay, now, radar tracked them out, according to Foster and they never varied two degrees all the way out to the limit of radar which was only sixty miles. But tracking out, okay. Coming back, here they are. The radar picks them up back here. The ship has gone down here, mean time.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW Radar picks them up here, they're right here on the YE-ZB coming back. Right straight without a turn. Right straight back in... So the thing looks good. All right, now. I still, however, have this.... Well, the only way that I can account for everybody is to say, "Well, okay. When they turned around then VBs went on down to Midway." What else is there to say. I couldn't... these fourteen airplanes, three of them came back, and Ring, three VBs and Ring came back together right at... and were picked up on this radar thing, right at the same time as the VS's. So they came right on in within a few minutes of each other. There's hardly any doubt that that's what they did. All right. This, I just (inaud). There's no, no other way of

saying it anything else. If you didn't see the Jap fleet when you were here, it would have been over there. Okay, that seemed come see-come saw, but you're only thirty, forty miles away, you should have seen them without any trouble but, okay. Maybe you didn't. Clouds, all right, all right.

TTG There were clouds.

BPW Yeah, oh, I know. Right. Right. No question about that.

TTG And the clouds were below us. They weren't above us right here. We were high.

BPW You were pretty high. 19,000, something like that.

TTG I remember 20,000 feet...

BPW 20?

TTG ...but I won't argue with 19 at all, right here because my, my memory's not that good.

BPW Well now, before we go on here, let me ask you a couple of things, Troy. You've been very patient and I thank you. Where were you in your formation?

TTG All right. I was flying 8 Baker 13.

BPW Okay.

TTG I was flying wing on John Lynch.

BPW All right.

TTG John J. Lynch.

BPW And approximately where was that in the formation?

TTG Quite, quite a bit after...

BPW From front to back. Wasn't all the way back?

TTG No.

BPW Three quarters back. Something like that.

TTG That's right. Three quarters back.

BPW Three quarters. Okay.

TTG See an 18 plane squadron and they're going to be 5 airplanes....

BPW All right. That's right. All right. Now have you any ... Have you any idea why that VB report said 19 airplanes? Do you have any report or any knowledge of one having turned back?

TTG No, I can't, I can't....

BPW No answer. All right, fine.

TTG I can't respond to that right here.

BPW Fine.

TTG I thought we had 18 airplanes...

BPW I think you did.

TTG ...and that's what I think. Now, it's possible that Pearl gave us an extra airplane because some of our airplanes were, were old Lexington airplanes and the fuselages had been wrinkled from hard carrier landings and so forth...

BPW I see.

TTG ... and our airplanes weren't in mint condition at all.

BPW Yeah.

TTG They were, they were ex-Lexington and Saratoga SBDs, you see.

BPW Right. Right. All right. Now, but there, the Hornet can account...and her logs and all the report on the Hornet, the ship's papers, say that the VB planes, there were

three that came back with Ring and they count Ring as one of the VBs, that's four. Fourteen only went to Midway.

TTG Uh-huh.

BPW And that makes 18 airplanes any way you slice it.

TTG Right.

BPW So the only thing that I have that says 19, unfortunately, is...

TTG Russ Johnson's...

BPW Johnson's...

TTG Is he still living, Bowen?

BPW No.

TTG He's not living?

BPW No.

TTG His wife's name was Helen, Mary Jo.

BPW Well, all right. Now, so, the question is where in my mind when I, when I reached these conclusions, I said, "What in the world.. how in the world did.... where did this Hornet action report come from?" Well, and this, this is simply a blowup of this, you understand, I mean this is just blown up.

TTG Yes.

BPW All right. Now then I see that VB is the only one that filed an action report. The only one, the only one that's left or the only one that we have anything of. Now there are some funny things. Let me ask you this before we get really digging into it, Troy. You're on radio silence. Waldron and Ring pretty definitely broke radio silence.

TTG No questions about that. I remember this.

BPW Yeah. Tappan remembers it...

TTG Yes.

BPW ... clearly and Rodee did too. There seemed to be, from Tappan's point of view, a kind of a bitter exchange...

TTG Uh, I verify that. Between Ring...

BPW Ring and Waldron.

TTG ... and Waldron.

BPW Uh, and he didn't want to quote anything but he said it was a bitter exchange.

TTG I, I...

BPW And because Waldron wanted to go north and was bound and determined to go north and Ring was bound and determined to go south. This was after they had gotten to the point of intercept and there was no Jap fleet where they were supposed to be. Waldron said, "I'm turning north." Ring said. "No you're not, you're turning south." He said, "You know where to stick that?" or words to that effect and so Waldron turned to the north and he was right smack into the Jap fleet. Just he no sooner turned and within five minutes he was right into them and got clobbered. They were just waiting for him. Now, what happened up here with the turn around. When Ring turned around, Johnny Talbot said that Ring turned around way early. Much earlier than I have any indication of but I think he must have gone at least that far because he would of had to go that far to intercept...

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW ...it would seem to me. Here's the Jap fleet...

TTG Yes.

BPW ... coming down. He would have had to go that far to intercept. So he must... I think Johnny was probably, I don't know. But in any event, Waldron, uh, I mean Ring turned around and went back by himself and the three VBs went back as an entity, too. They were picked up separately and that sort of thing and Rodee kept his entire gang together very carefully and Tappan was very certain of that. He said, "We turned around. We flew right straight out, we turned right around and flew right straight back. There were no turns, there was nothing. That's all there was." He said, "As far as I'm concerned", this is Tappan, "I never saw anything but the airplane right in front of me and the airplane right... I mean that's all there was and that's all I did and I wasn't looking this way or that way or the other way." So, so, so it gave me a pretty good picture of this. Now, then but when you take the rest of the, this report, this battle action report. You can see where it might have been used as the basis for this. It was general.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW The phraseology was not positive except in certain, some critical moments. Now it didn't say that there was any conversation between Ring and Waldron, for instance. That's never mentioned at all. They said, this report says that when they got past the point of intercept, they flew on for a while, then turned south until they saw Kure and then turned back toward the carrier and it said that when they realized they were lost, these were the words, they turned toward Midway and went to Midway. Now, okay, that, oh, and they, they, it said, and somewhere along the way they became separated from the others. That's all. No definite nothing positive, just that casual type of a remark. But if you sort of read between the lines you can see where this would have flowed from that. It could have, could have, in other words, this could fit this configuration but...

TTG Oh, yeah.

BPW ... this does not fit this. And that's my problem.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW I am left now in the untenable position of saying that 14 airplanes of VB went down ahead of Waldron and behind McClusky, behind McClusky...

TTG McClusky's the other air group.

BPW McClusky flew right on through here at the same time.

TTG McClusky's another air group.

BPW Right. Off the Enterprise.

TTG Right.

BPW He went right on through like this. Went right like this and like that. That's how he went and hit them.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW Now, then, Johnson, a way of reading it says that you came through, held a few minutes, turned south, saw Kure, turned north toward back to the ship. Then got lost and got disengaged from the others and went down here.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW Now that is the only thing that I have to support this position.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW And I, for the life of me, I can't understand it. This, what I said here was, and I

showed this on my chart that I made, there's no other logical way that it could have happened. Just from, and on time wise, would have been very difficult for it to be anything else. Of this business of going down and coming back, you could scrub off time and so on and it would work, too.

TTG Can I ask a question?

BPW But you, now, now it's your turn, old boy. You, it's your ball game.

TTG What distance are we talking about from here down to here? What, in mileage, are we talking about?

BPW That's about 175 miles.

TTG All right. And, and that sounds right to me then.

BPW Same as this.

TTG And we went further in this direction than these other boys is showing you up here. We went...

BPW south..

TTG ... further uh, north, south, east and west...

BPW That's right.

TTG We went further south...

BPW But what tract? Do you remember what tract...

TTG I'm sorry.

BPW ... you left the plane, left the ship on?

TTG Westerly is all I can say.

BPW Westerly.

TTG Westerly, right here, is all I can say.

BPW Let me ask you this.

TTG You haven't asked me this, yet, right here. I want to say this right here.

BPW Yeah, go ahead.

TTG Now I want to tell you why I didn't get to Midway island.

BPW Oh, all right.

TTG Some of us were "Lucky Pierre's".

BPW Okay.

TTG And drew one thousand pound bombs.

BPW Uh-huh.

TTG And I'm saying lucky with a question mark behind it because what does weight do to your fuel consumption?

BPW Unlucky, unlucky is what....

TTG Unlucky, right.

BPW You're right. I understand.

TTG And those of us that had thousand pound bombs that knew cruise control and how to take care of the gasoline, we ditched in the ocean logically before those that had five hundred pound bombs. And you and I'll buy that every day of the week you see.

BPW Absolutely. No question. No question.

TTG Now, when I was picked up by... I remember this. I remember a long leg, I remember a much longer leg than they show over here, turning right around.

BPW A longer leg.

TTG I remember a longer leg to the south.

BPW Yep.

TTG **No question about that at all.**

BPW All right.

TTG **And then we did not find the enemy because we were south of him, you see.**

BPW Did you see Kure?

TTG **No, sir. I could not see Kure and**

BPW Beautiful.

TTG **Now, uh, you say that I have a reputation of being a good navigator...**

BPW Yes, you do.

TTG **... and I still feel like I have that same reputation...**

BPW You do have.

TTG **... and I can sure tell you north from south from east and west.**

BPW You damn better believe it.

TTG **And I think I have what I taught myself early in the game, which I call direction sense.**

BPW Right.

TTG **And you can almost put me back there where I don't have anything but a compass and with my compass and my clock, I can tell you where I am on this chart, right here.**

BPW I know. I know.

TTG **Now, whenever twenty three prep twelve picked me up out of the water...**

BPW Yes.

TTG **...we had come back here and it was established we couldn't get to the ship. Especially those that had thousand pound bombs and I'm not sure what John J. Lynch had right here, my section leader.**

BPW Was there talk on the radio at this point?

TTG **Yeah, by this time we were beginning to talk on the radio, right here.**

BPW Okay.

TTG **Now then. The, the, says we were changing our navigation to go to Midway Island and we, whenever I was picked up from Midway by, whenever I was picked up by twenty three prep twelve,**

BPW Yep.

TTG **...and I says, "Can you tell me where we are?" And you're a hundred to a hundred ten miles north of Midway.**

BPW Directly north?

TTG **See, that's loosely.**

BPW Just north.

TTG **That's loosely.**

BPW Loosely north.

TTG **Loosely. And I think that I was more northwest than I was north.**

BPW But he said 120. You think you were more northwest.

TTG **He says, "A hundred to a hundred and ten miles."**

BPW Oh, I see. Okay.

TTG **Is that what I said?**

BPW Yeah.

TTG **A hundred to a hundred and ten miles from Midway, meaning I went this**

way a little bit.

BPW Yeah.

TTG I know. I steamed on a southerly heading and I was searching for the sandy islands to show up ahead and then the... do you remember how many fuel tanks we had in an SBD? Four of them.

BPW Four. Yeah, that's right.

TTG And I had, I had exhausted all four of those tanks and the engine quit running.

BPW Yeah. What altitude were you then, Troy?

TTG I think that we had...

BPW Still up there?

TTG We were still high in event we could, we ran into the fleet we wanted to be high enough to dive bomb them and high enough to give us the maximum vision...

BPW Yeah, yeah, I see.

TTG But the reason we went the wrong way to start with is our Japanese, our enemy report was in error right here. And that never was the Japanese carrier fleet. It was another fleet and that's the reason we went the wrong way to start with. Be it 240 or 265 and I wonder what the magnetic variation is ...

BPW It's 10 degrees.

TTG 10 degrees is all the variation was.

BPW That won't account for it.

TTG That won't account for this much difference right here.

BPW The thing of it is this. This line right here, even VB's own report, their own report, says this is where we went...

TTG Uh-huh.

BPW ... in effect. And yet this is what comes out.

TTG Yes.

BPW It's the damndest thing I ever saw.

TTG All right, now. This could be...

BPW Because this, this is the Jap fleet position here is given.

TTG Right.

BPW Where they, where they were to go and it's right straight out that line. P65 right down the road.

TTG All right. Now as I remember, the position we were given, and I think I've read this in Lord and other books and Lord sent me a paper to interview me and so forth...

BPW Yeah.

TTG ... that we were given the wrong position and went to where support ships were, not where the carrier forces were.

BPW I see.

TTG You understand what I'm saying?

BPW That figures.

TTG Now. Another thing I want...

BPW That's right. Here's the carrier down there, the support figures were back here a bit further.

TTG Okay. Now that confirms this right here.

BPW Yeah.

TTG That confirms that.

BPW By that, you're pointing to the course...

TTG To the 265 line.

BPW To the 265 line. Okay. All right.

TTG Now here's something I would like to ask you. 110 miles up here, would that be more in conformity with this, or more in conformity with this? Do we have a... well, we can say what is this, 1 degree latitude, here?

BPW Here's 60.

TTG All right. Measure me about a hundred and ten miles. Let's do this right here. This is Midway, that's 60.

BPW Here you are.

TTG Uh-huh. That, that, that could be more of this and this right here.

BPW If you'd come, If you'd come, well, I don't know about that but if you went down here...

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW ...or you went down here, then you came back like that..

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW ... you're in good shape there.

TTG Right.

BPW Then you're in good shape.

TTG All right.

BPW You were picked up the same day, though, weren't you?

TTG Yes.

BPW Yeah.

TTG I ditched at twelve o'clock noon, Hornet time.

BPW Mmm-hmm.

TTG Which would have been ...

BPW Twelve noon, Hornet time?

TTG Hornet time.

BPW You ditched?

TTG Yes.

BPW Okay. All right.

TTG That's important to us I think.

BPW Oh yes, indeed. That tells us... that nails that down pretty well. How sure are you about that?

TTG Oh, no question about that.

BPW No question...

TTG Yes, sir.

BPW ... at all. Okay.

TTG Also, I'm sure of something else. Excuse me. And I want to say this while I, while it's on my mind.

BPW Right. Anytime.

TTG John C. Waldron stayed with us longer than the break right away. He, he road with the scouts and the bombers for at least 30 minutes right here, before

he broke away from us.

BPW Waldron stayed with you?

TTG Waldron stayed.

BPW How sure are you of that? Weren't you ahead of him?

TTG I....

BPW He took off last.

TTG That's all right.

BPW You saw him.

TTG This was the argument that I remember hearing right here.

BPW All right. Okay.

TTG And Waldron stayed with the scouts and bombers. Now he could have been behind us a little bit, Bowen.

BPW Yeah.

TTG Nothing wrong with that.

BPW I understand.

TTG But he stayed with us longer than just take-off and rendezvous and break away.

BPW Now that's what Tallman said.

TTG And we cruised together, I'm going to say, at least thirty to forty-five minutes.

BPW Uh-huh.

TTG And it's funny how I can remember this, Mary Jo. I'm talking forty-two years ago, sweetheart.

BPW Yep.

TTG But, John C. Waldron stayed with us 30 to 45 minutes which would be ...

BPW And then he broke off to the left.

TTG And then he broke off.

BPW Is that right.

TTG Broke off to the left, right here.

BPW Exactly what Tallman said.

TTG And he and Ring had quite a discussion...

BPW Sometime later.

TTG Uh...

BPW It wouldn't have been then because you weren't far enough down the road then. You hadn't gotten to the point of intercept.

TTG Uh, I, I think I remember that discussion closer to the time that...

BPW That they separated?

TTG ...they separated. Yes, sir.

BPW What, what do you think was said.

TTG What did I think was.....

BPW Tell me what was said.

TTG Bowen, I'm taxing my memory...

BPW Best you can. Best you can.

TTG You'll have to... the words were from Waldron, "I know where the damn Jap fleet is."

BPW All right.

TTG "I know where the damn Jap fleet is." And Ring says, "You fly on us. I'm leading this formation; you fly on us."

BPW Right. Okay.

TTG And it's funny I can remember certain things and can't remember the other but this is the way I remember it. Waldron says, "I know where the Jap fleet is" and Ring says, "I'm leading this formation; you, you stay with us. You ride with us right here."

BPW I see.

TTG And there could have been other words said that I don't remember but that's the way I remember it.

BPW And about that time Waldron broke off.

TTG About that time Waldron broke off and the conversation and his breaking off were closer together than, than somebody else has indicated.

BPW I see.

TTG Now, possibly, see, I'm eight baker thirteen, further back in a formation than maybe...

BPW You would have been closer to him. You would have been closer... You would have been closer to Waldron than almost any of the SBDs.

TTG That's right. Oh, yes, that's right.

BPW And Hump's on... Hump was the last fighter. The very tail end fighter. He saw Waldron going off to the left and he said, "My God, that's the way we ought to be going." But he said, "We didn't. We just kept on going straight."

TTG That's right.

BPW Now is that what your recollection, too?

TTG That's what I remember right here.

BPW You remember the same sort of thing.

TTG That's what I remember, right.

BPW Waldron going off, easing off to the south, as it were; the southeast.

TTG Now, the, this pattern looks good to me. It could have well been higher. It could have been further north.

BPW I see. But the configuration...

TTG The configuration looks good.

BPW I see. I see. Okay.

TTG Now, why don't you, why don't you do this. You'll never get it right here. Why don't you take the cruise speed of an SBD...

BPW Now you've got it. Sure...

TTG ... and with all of our climbing and everything, can actually....

BPW Oh, that's on here. That's all on here. This is just what, the way it worked out.

TTG All right. You've already worked that out.

BPW Oh, yes.

TTG All right.

BPW Absolutely. Fighters, everything is on the right, uh, right fuel consumption, everything else.

TTG Now, from eight o'clock in the morning until twelve o'clock noon, I ran my SBD out of fuel and I was fuel conscious.

BPW Every minute.

TTG But I had to climb.
BPW Yeah.
TTG And back then, high was 20,000 feet.
BPW Oh, yeah.
TTG You and I know that 20,000 feet's not high today, it's low, you see.
BPW That's right.
TTG But that cost us fuel.
BPW Yeah, that's right.
TTG It cost the fighters fuel.
BPW Oh, McInerny.....
TTG That's what your fighters were fussing about.
BPW Right.
TTG That's what McInerny's talking about.
BPW Yeah.
TTG Now, then. The normal thing would be cruise decently, decent altitude...
BPW Right
TTG ...and then climb when you got a good position of the fleet to be there and do your thing and then come home low, you see.
BPW But that's not what you did.
TTG That's not what we did, right.
BPW I see. You turned right off.
TTG Now, if you can take our climb at about 90 knots and then this time here and come this way a little bit....
BPW How many minutes? How many minutes when you turned south?
TTG I've got to guess right here.
BPW All right.
TTG Forty-five minutes. I've got to guess forty-five minutes.
BPW Could it, would it, if you had to say whether it was more or less, would you say a little more or a little less?
TTG I would say maybe a little less than forty-five minutes.
BPW To south.
TTG Yeah.
BPW Then just generally south.
TTG Generally south.
BPW All right. Then what.
TTG All right. Then we set course back towards the ship. That would be reciprocal of, uh....
BPW 265
TTGwould be about 90 degrees and a little north of 90 would be about, what, 60 or seventy degrees?
BPW I see.
TTG 60 or 70 degrees and then we rode that for some time.
BPW How long now?
TTG Okay, I've got to guess with you but...
BPW All right.
TTG ... but this looks reasonable to me right here.

BPW All right.

TTG This looks reasonable to me right here and this is what helps me recall some things right here. This distance right here is a hundred and ten miles.

BPW Yeah.

TTG 50 minutes.

BPW 50 minutes, okay.

TTG And then is when we started going south to Midway Island because we had established we couldn't get back to the ship with the fuel we had.

BPW All right.

TTG And remember that some of us were flying thousand pound bombs...

BPW Yeah.

TTG ... old lucky Pierre. And a thousand pound bomb then was a big bomb.

BPW Oh, boy. I'm sure of that.

TTG See, and with a five hundred pound bomb, those fellows should have been able to stay in the air longer than the thousand pound bomb people, you see.

BPW All right. Let me ask you a sixty-four dollar question. Did you ever see any ships?

TTG No.

BPW No wakes? No ships?

TTG No. No ships did I ever see at all.

BPW Never saw Kure Island.

TTG No. No.

BPW Not at all?

TTG No.

BPW Did you ever see Midway burning? You were a hundred miles away, you had.....

TTG But I say Midway burning when the PBY picked me up.

BPW Picked you up, right. Okay. All right. Okay. But that nails it pretty much.

TTG Keep in mind that we had, and the Midway movie shows you this, the PBYs protected themselves in the cloud cover. The PBYs that were out...

BPW Oh yes, oh yes, yes.

TTG And see this same cloud cover was below us and that could keep you from seeing the ship that you'd almost fly directly over, you see.

BPW Oh, yeah. Let me show you something, Troy. I, I... You've got... You're getting there now. You're really, you're really getting there. Look. See how I drew you coming down here like that?

TTG Yes.

BPW All right. You didn't say that. You said south.

TTG Right.

BPW You project 45 minutes south down here, you go down like that.

TTG All right.

BPW Don't you? Now then, you come back toward the ship. Here you go.

TTG About 60 degrees.

BPW Come on back here like this.

TTG Uh-huh.

BPW Little longer.

TTG Right.

BPW And you're just ready to go right on down to Midway.

TTG Okay. That's, that's, that's, that's logical to me.

BPW That's how it works.

TTG That's logical to me.

BPW All right. Did you ever see, when you left the Hornet, did you see Ring, for instance? Could you see Ring?

TTG Uh...

BPW Could you see the VS's up in front of you?

TTG Yes.

BPW Could you see the fighters?

TTG No, I don't remember seeing any fighters.

BPW Don't remember seeing fighters.

TTG Uh-huh.

BPW All right. How about the, how about the scout bombers?

TTG Well...

BPW Scouts, could you see them for sure, now?

TTG I don't, don't

BPW Don't remember positive?

TTG Don't remember right here.

BPW Okay.

TTG You've got to, got to remember that....

BPW What kind of formation were you in? Was VB in?

TTG We were in the V, three plane sections.

BPW Three?

TTG Three plane sections.

BPW Okay.

TTG 18 airplanes.

BPW Okay.

TTG Three planes each, that's six sections, you see.

BPW Right, right.

TTG Six sections of airplanes and John Lance was leading my section and I was flying wing on him.

BPW I see. I see. Who was your other man?

TTG Forester C. Allman was in the....

BPW Allman, Allman went swimming, too, didn't he?

TTG Yes, uh-huh.

BPW And Woods.

TTG Allman and T.J. Woods went swimming.

BPW Yeah. Did they have thousand pounders?

TTG No.

BPW No.

TTG Wood didn't and that's what makes us tease him so right. Not sure about Allman.

BPW He just ran out of gas.

TTG It was quite possible Allman did because it seems that when they were loading the bombers, that these thousand pounders came up just about the time it

was time to put them on an airplane and, and this is what happened.

BPW Right.

TTG And I'm not even sure that John J. didn't have a thousand pounder because it was apparent to him along here and John was also a good navigator.

BPW Mmm-hmm.

TTG That we could not make the Hornet and the closest place to land was....

BPW Who broke, uh, who broke radio to talk about that?

TTG The, the first break in radio silence was the break between Stanhope C. Ring and John Waldron.

BPW That was the first break?

TTG Yes.

BPW All right.

TTG And that was...

BPW And that was a half hour after you'd left the ship.

TTG And that was within a half hour or so after we left the ship.

BPW When Waldron broke, broke off to the south.

TTG Waldron broke, he, as I remember, Waldron broke it first and says to Ring, "You're going the wrong direction for the Japanese carrier force right here."

And Stanhope Ring says, "I'm leading this flight, you fly with us right here."

And then...

BPW Okay.

TTG ...there was the break off from the formation and he goes his way...

BPW Waldron just went off by himself.

TTG Right. That's right. He took his squadron and went by himself.

BPW Right.

TTG And the scouts were ahead of us and the bombers were number two.

BPW Yeah, yeah, okay.

TTG And I think....

BPW The fighters must have been behind you.

TTG They, they bound to have been.

BPW And higher.

TTG Could have been. Now you know that CAG flies, that may have been the 19th airplane that CAG was flying that, that Johnson talks about, you know?

BPW Doesn't...

TTG It doesn't figure out?

BPW Doesn't come out.

TTG Okay, well...

BPW Only 20 airplanes got back to the Hornet.

TTG All right.

BPW Now the 20 airplanes were 3 VBs and, and Ring and that made 16 left. And there were 16 VSs.

TTG Okay.

BPW And that's how, that's how it came down. And that's all there were so I don't know where the... he got 19. I can't account for 19 and Lundstrum can't, nobody can.

TTG Right. Now here's....

BPW That's the only place where 19 ever was used.

TTG See, this looks good to me, in perspective right here.

BPW I think you've got it pretty well nailed.

TTG A hundred and ten miles right here would be right about here and whenever I looked...

BPW That's it.

TTG ...everything just looks, looks so good to me.

BPW Hundred and ten, let me put that hundred and ten.

TTG And that's where Troy was picked up. A hundred and ten miles and in numbers he gives me, you're north of Midway a hundred and ten miles.

BPW One hundred and ten miles north...

TTG ...of Midway.

BPW ... of Midway.

TTG Now I stayed in the water seven hours and a half. You might want to write that down.

BPW I will.

TTG I ditched at twelve noon and...

BPW Wait a minute. Wait a minute.

TTG Let me run again.

BPW In water seven and a half hours.

TTG Right.

BPW And ditched at 12 noon.

TTG And picked me up at 7:30 Hornet time.

BPW Picked up 7:30 Hornet time, okay.

TTG Would that have of been about 7:15?

BPW Yeah. Mmm-hmm. This is what I was hoping for. If that hasn't been the damnest riddle. Give me gray hair. The reason for this thing, you know, this is long, far, 20 miles from what I started out, aimed to do but what's happened is that there are a lot of other people have gotten interested in the thing and they want to know what the hell about the whole picture.

Mrs.G Yeah.

BPW And I couldn't tell them what about the whole picture. I said I don't know. I said that that's my guess.

Mrs.G Yeah.

TTG Now this....

BPW Now Troy has straightened me out on that and made the whole thing....

TTG Now this is another source of information for you. Are you still on record here?

BPW Yes, sir, I am. I'm about to go out.

TTG All right. This is another source of information for you.

BPW All right.

TTG 23 Prep 12 picked me up. That's Patrol Squadron 23, airplane number 12. 23 Prep 12.

BPW Right.

TTG PBY.

BPW Picked up, okay. Right. Okay.

TTG Ensign Lowe, L-O-W-E, was the plane commander.

BPW Oh, all right.

TTG See, that's a source of information for you.

BPW Right, right, okay.

TTG And their PBY flies low and slow...

BPW Oh, yeah.

TTG ... and he has, he does wind stars for wind drift and so forth, you know.

BPW Yeah, yeah.

TTG And, later on in life got into long range airplanes and because of the equipment they have and the number aboard, they can, they do more....

BPW Oh, yeah. Oh, they're great navigators. I love DC3s. We got those old beat up DC3s out there which gathered... I loved those. We used to navigate all over the whole damn ocean with them. And we never lost a plane to navigation.

TTG I...

BPW Never lost a one.

TTG Later on in life, got to a VP squadron, one VP squadron in my life and they were the good P2V Neptune's.

BPW Yeah, yeah.

TTG And that was a fine airplane.

BPW Yeah, oh yeah, it was.

TTG And I had great confidence in the airplane and would fly great distances and took pride in my navigation...

BPW Mmm-hmm, Mmm-hmm.

TTG ... and I loved that airplane.

BPW You know....

TTG Ended up that helped me later on in life. I got a nuclear bomb squadron off....

BPW Oh my gosh.

TTG ...the carriers...

BPW Oh, my...

TTG ... and it was a long range airplane, too.

BPW I see.

TTG So that just worked nicely for me to go from small carrier planes to a big VP airplane and then go to a big carrier based airplane with, with long range capabilities.

BPW Uh, huh, uh-huh. Well that was.... Well, several guys have said, you know, Guillory's thing was navigation. It's just like McNerny. McNerny's thing was watching the fuel gauges. Gray thought he was... Gray said, in his cups, well, I shouldn't say that, he was, he said, "dit, dit, dah, dit, dit, dah, dit, dit, dah." You know, let me tell you, let me talk for a moment about another thing. About YE-ZB equipment. You know where that YE-ZB equipment came from? It came from England.

TTG From England?

BPW Along with the radar, yeah. Let me tell you about it. It was the dag-gondest stuff you could have ever imagined, Troy and I don't think you guys ever knew really what you, what you were fighting. Over in England, if you have, let's say, here's

England and here's Germany. Okay, you want to go from here to bomb Germany and turn around and come back again. Now, all right, you have this field as setting out signals every 15 or whatever, the 20 degrees, whatever the segments were. You've got an A or a Z or a C or an E or whatever....

TTG Take the middle of that for those numbers, right.

BPW So you get, you get, yeah. That's the idea exactly. So you're over here and you're, after you've done your business, see, you want to come back. You turn the thing on and you hear a dit-dit-dah well, you know, you look on your chart or whatever you have... That's it. You're flying right here and you just take that heading right on back. Can't beat it. Sounds wonderful. Why didn't it always work? I have a good theory why it always didn't work and that is this. Wonderful when you're coming back to a, a airfield because this damn thing is oriented to north...

TTG Uh-huh.

BPW ... magnetic north. When a carrier, every time the carrier turns, that grid turns.

TTG That's right. The grid has to turn.

BPW Has to turn.

TTG Right.

BPW Talbot never understood that. I was afraid to even say it to him. I swear. But he said that he was (inaud) to this day he is tremendously bitter against the fellow that was in charge of that on the ship because he said, "He rotated the grid." Well that's not what happened. The damn ship changed it's course and they're flying.... when they were flying out, Talbot, he was a navigator, he navigated too. He was pretty good, I guess and he said, "We were flying straight and level absolutely. Then all of a sudden, the damn thing, the signal changes 60 degrees."

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW He said, "He had to have changed it back on that.." What happened was the durn ship changed it's nose. That's what happened to it. And it was when this turn was made for them to go back, this was Enterprise's point option.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW But the Hornet never knew it. Here was this turn, see. It was a darn near 90 degree turn. From the launch, although it was different, (blank space on tape) on the recovery, 20 degrees different. I had no idea why. They should have been heading into the wind...

TTG No, I can tell you why.

BPW ...and either they were heading in to the wind or they weren't heading into the wind.

TTG No, listen to me.

BPW Yeah.

TTG It's a commanding officer's pleasure as to where he wants to put that wind on that paper right there.

BPW All right.

Tape 2 (Side A)

TTG Bowen, we're talking about courses, both launch course and recovery course

of a carrier and my point of order is that two different C.O.s of two different carriers will interpret that recovery course and launch course a little differently. I'm remembering my operations officer's job on Hancock, 1959 to '60, I flew with my airgroup whenever the captain would let me and my pilots would tell me, Troy, you're the operations officer this carrier. We want the wind more to the right of the approach path of the airplane up to land on the deck and the carrier can steer it's, it's head such that will put that turbulent wind right behind the island structure over to the right of the approach path of the airplane and that's where I put it on the Hancock and my captain was such a fine fellow, that I could explain this to him and he'd do it. He'd say, "Troy, nobody's told me that before and that's where we'll put it. If that's where these pilots want it, that's where we'll put it." And then just as you come up right here...

BPW Beautiful, beautiful.

TTG ...there's no turbulent air. You've got smooth air there to make your landing by.

BPW Beautiful, beautiful, yeah.

TTG So that sort of explains a difference in the two C.O.'s.

BPW I see. I see. I couldn't understand why they wouldn't...

TTG And I'm offering that as a possibility.

BPW Sounds right. Absolutely. Sounds right. I think Mitscher... Did you know Mitscher?

TTG Just, just met him early in the game, right here.

BPW Well he must have been a pretty, pretty suave guy.

TTG Oh, undoubtedly, right here. And he was my first commanding officer of a carrier that I ever knew, you see.

BPW Yeah, yeah.

TTG Undoubtedly just real, real suave.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And one of the things I liked about him, uh, on the Doolittle, see, I was on the ship when we came through the canal, uh I believe...

BPW You got on down in Annapolis.

TTG No, no. No, no. No, no. No, no. No, no.

BPW I mean Norfolk.

TTG I joined the ship at Norfolk.

BPW Norfolk, yeah, okay.

TTG And we trained before Hornet was ever commissioned. I was there when Hornet was commissioned and I've got a commissioning ceremony in....

BPW Yeah, uh-huh.

TTG ... here. And Hornet was commissioned and Captain Marc A. Mitscher was our first C.O.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And I've got to tell you who made the first landing and the first crash on the U.S.S. Hornet.

BPW Who was that?

TTG Stanhope C. Ring.

BPW Oh, God.

TTG In an SBC-4 with Ensign Troy Guillory in his back seat.

BPW Hot dog.

TTG And this was my airplane that we made the first landing and the first crash on the U.S.S. Hornet right out off of Hampton Roads out there. The deal was that were going out for (inaud) and Troy, Commander Ring will fly you're airplane and after he makes the first landing then he's going to get out. It's always an honor to make a thousandth landing and the first landing, you know and so forth.

BPW Oh, yes.

TTG After he makes the first landing, he'll get out and then you can take your SBC-4, old biplane hell diver and make your landings right here. Why here we come high and fast right here and I hear this little tweeter going tweet, tweet, tweet, tweet and I said, "Man they're sounding the crash signal for somebody" but it was us they were sounding it for and we hit the barrier. See, this was not an angle deck back in those days.

BPW No, that's right.

TTG We hit the barrier and chopped it down real good but didn't do any damage to it. Didn't....

BPW Well why did you.... How did you hit it? Did you... didn't get it hooked on or...

TTG No, no. No, no. High and fast.

BPW Oh boy.

TTG High and fast.

BPW Oh boy.

TTG Caught, caught a late wire right here and hit the barrier. You could catch a late wire and hit the barrier.

BPW Oh, I see.

TTG Yeah.

BPW Oh, is that so? I didn't realize that.

TTG You could catch a late wire...

BPW Yeah.

TTG ...and...

BPW still hit it.

TTG And still hit the barrier. In fact, as airplanes got larger and heavier and longer, while that, that was possible. And the LSO would try to avoid that. You'd caught a.... you're speed and altitude wasn't right, he'd waive you off early so you could come around again and catch the closing wire.

BPW Well were on, well, of course you must have been on... Do you remember April the 18th, when Doolittle took off? Where were you? You watching him, I suppose?

TTG Oh, yes. Now let me tell you this.

BPW Yeah.

TTG In the movie, *The Battle of Midway*, it shows you Doolittle out on the flight deck prior to launch, pinning a medal on his bombs and his airplanes and he announced that he was going to return those medals to Japan and that Doolittle was Lieutenant Colonel then and I was on the deck standing right by the side of him whenever he pinned his medals on his bombs and said, "I'll return these to the

nation that gave them to us.” But our airplanes, Bowen, were, were stacked in the overhead. They were lashed to the overhead to the bulkhead. We had fighters sticking over here and so forth.

BPW It must have been awful.

TTG And uh, but...

BPW You had a full compliment of planes, didn't you?

TTG Yes, sir. We had all of our airplanes aboard plus sixteen B-25s. Now, then, as we steamed out under the Golden Gate Bridge, the B-25 boys knew where they were going but we, we sailors on the Hornet didn't know where we were going.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And then it was announced and it was announced that there would be a sample fly-off of one airplane.

BPW Ooooo.

TTG Listen to this. A sample fly-off of one airplane to convince the B-25s that this thing was operationally feasible and because the Hornet did not have room for all sixteen of them. Just fifteen of them and when they got them aboard and worked the oijii board, that's what it indicated.

BPW Yeah.

TTG Room for only fifteen.

BPW Yeah.

TTG When we got them aboard and actually did it real, why they go up to Captain Mitscher and say, “Captain, there's room for all sixteen aboard if you desire to take sixteen airplanes.” And with that, Captain Mitscher called Doolittle and he says, “You have the choice of launching as we planned to do or taking your sixteenth airplane to Japan.” And Doolittle said, “We'll take the sixteenth airplane to Japan.”

BPW For gosh sakes.

TTG That gave him some more bombs...

BPW yeah

TTG .. to drop.

BPW Yeah. Well, that was a dusty day to say the least, apparently. Do you, do you recall?

TTG Oh, are you talking about launch day or the B....

BPW Launch day.

TTG Oh, yes I do.

BPW Fine.

TTG I remember this. Of course we went for a long time. We boys didn't get to fly, see, from San Francisco to launch time right here.

BPW Oh yeah, right.

TTG And these dates are a matter of record but the B-25s were launched early, and I might say this, that neither the Navy or the Army Air Corp. ever told the truth where we launched them. The latitude and longitude that we launched them.

BPW I see.

TTG The Navy was telling the lies. We would infer that we would steam right up under the Japanese coastal guns and launch.

BPW Yeah.

TTG If the B-25s were telling it, they would... (TTG answers phone) Bowen Weisheit from Baltimore, Maryland and we're reminiscing the Battle of Midway which he's quite an expert at and he's here to reconfirm and try to tax our memories, some of we old bald headed codgers as to what happened when and so forth. Okay. The wash job in the morning. Oh, we can do it in the morning right here. All right. I'll tell you what, Jerry is prepared to do it and you could do this. If you could get the airplane put in the front of the hanger so they could pull it out for us easily. If it's not raining, Jerry's prepared to do it himself. He wants to do it for you. 8:00 was what we'd planned to do it this morning if weather permitted and David called me this morning at 7:30 and said, "I'm at Easy Air and Red Bowles tells me you were supposed to wash it before he worked on it." And I said, "Well that was sort of changed last night when Billy and I talked." Excuse me, and we all understood that the radio work was priority and then the wash job came after that and David said, "Okay, fine, we're going to start to work on it." Did they get through with it for you? Okay, if you could call the little girl at Tiger and ask her to put it in the front of the hanger like she had it for us this morning? Yeah, okay. That's good. That's good. So that she can just get right out with little, little fanfare. Mighty fine. That's fine. Bye-bye, now. (To BPW) What were we talking about, Bowen?

BPW Troy, Troy listen. Let me ask you something. Where were you spotted? Were, were you, did they have to bring you up or were you spotted on the deck?

TTG No, sir. I was on the deck.

BPW On the take-off time. Were all the S, uh, all the VB's?

TTG I think so, Bowen.

BPW But that would have been about it. None of the, I suppose, none of the torpedo planes were on the deck, were they or?

TTG I can't, I can't remember that. I, I don't want to, to say...

BPW You know McNerny. Let me tell you a funny story about McNerny. Another one. I mean, that guy goes on forever. McNerny was, couldn't get the damn thing started.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW He, they couldn't get it started. The, uh, Foster, the Deck Officer, I think it was Foster, I don't know. I forget. I think it was. Screaming at them to strike the plane below and to get it out of the way. McNerny, the guy looks at McNerny, McNerny says, "No, call another one", it had those breeze cartridges....

TTG Cartridge starters.

BPW ...to hit the thing with. So the guy slams one quart of it into the thing and it catches instantly. McNerny just gives it full throttle right off the bat, no testing, no (inaud) just boom, right off the deck he goes and kept right on flying. But he, he said that he almost didn't make the trip. I mean, it was just....

TTG Oh, I've flown those fighters and run out of shells. The breach would start leaking and then, you know, we'd have to pull them. That's why my....

BPW I see. I see.

TTG And then you don't get the full effect of the gas expansion to twirl the props like they're supposed to.

BPW Yeah. How did, How does it, you have to, It looks to me like you push it in hard or something. Is that....

TTG Well, you push it in sort of hard and then you got a lever to...

BPW Latch it?

TTG ...latch it, right.

BPW Latch it down.

TTG Latch it right down.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And then you're supposed to have it primed and the mixture rich and so forth.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And then when you fire it it's supposed to catch it...

BPW Right off, yeah. Well, he said he almost didn't make it but he yelled at the kid to put another one in the damn thing and he did and it caught.

TTG Are we still on...

BPW Yeah, we're recording. We're recording.

TTG Now, then. I want to tell you that he picked me up at 7:30 Hornet time.

BPW Right.

TTG And that should have been right at dusk when we, when we, when we...

BPW Right, just about.

TTG Right. Because it was so, so dusk when we, we put the PBY in the air to fly to Midway but despite that just like you asked a while ago, miles out, even though we weren't very high, we could see the...

BPW Yeah, oh, yeah.

TTG ... Midway Island. There's no question where Midway Island was...

BPW No question, no.

TTG ... in that PBY.

BPW You could see.

TTG And then we landed in the lagoon between Sand Island and East Island, the lagoon. See, this was a flying boat.

BPW Oh, yeah, sure.

TTG And we landed in the lagoon and went ashore and I'm going to guess it was near 8:30, 9:00 by the time they, that we got in there.

BPW Yeah, yeah.

TTG And got ashore. Probably 9:00 and I, I slept in a, in a fox hole.

BPW Uh-huh, Uh-huh.

TTG And Commander Ramsey was the C.O. of Midway Island.

BPW Yeah, that's right.

TTG And he sent his marine orderly to find Ensign Troy Guillory because he was told that they picked me up out of the water. See, I was fortunate enough to get picked up the first day.

BPW Yeah, yeah.

TTG And he sends his orderly to find Ensign Troy Guillory and the orderly finds me in a fox hole at 2:00 in the morning.

BPW My God.

TTG And he says, "The captain wants to see you."

BPW Oh, Lord!

TTG And I said, "All right. Can you take me to the captain?" "Yes, sir. I'm supposed to take you to the underground command post." And away way I go and I sort of remember a great big stocky Commander Ramsey...

BPW Yeah.

TTG ... the commanding officer of Midway Island.

BPW Right.

TTG And the underground command post and the arrangements were that yesterday, see, this was 2:00 the next morning.

BPW Yeah.

TTG Yesterday a B-17 reported sinking a submarine, excuse me, reported sinking a battle ship....

BPW Awww....

TTGand at the same instant of time that he was bombing at latitude and longitude, one of our own submarines crash dived because he reports on being bombed by our own B-17s. So Captain Ramsey says, "Will you fly in the B-17s on the morning launch?" And I said, "Yes, sir."

BPW Bad news.

TTG He said, "We need somebody that can identify ships for us."

BPW Oh, I see.

TTG And I flew. There were ten B-17s launched.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And, uh...

BPW This is the morning of the 5th?

TTG Morning of the 5th.

BPW All right.

TTG And let me correct myself just a little bit. We were supposed to have been launched in the morning. We were launched at 12:00 noon.

BPW All right.

TTG And it was supposed to have been a four hour mission for us. And we got back at 12:00 at night. It ended up to be a 12 hour mission right here but...

BPW Did you have any idea where you went?

TTG Oh, yes. We went north again, right here.

BPW Oh, I see.

TTG We went north of Midway Island. Where was the Japanese fleet up here a while ago?

BPW They were right here. Well that's the southern most penetration.

TTG All right.

BPW That was at 11:00

TTG 4th, 4th.

BPW Hornet time on the 4th. By the 5th, they were way up here.

TTG All right. We went northwest.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And...

BPW I have another plat of what they did.

TTG Right. And we were after and we bombed some cruisers that were

supposedly a...

BPW Part of those...

TTG ...part of the, they turned around and were steaming back to Japan.

BPW Oh, now that was, they were the two that were caught.... What happened was, after the Jap carriers were hit, Yamamoto sent, he figured to have a night attack and...

TTG Hand me a fat pen or pencil.

BPW Here you are. And, and to... he figured to have a night attack and the Japs had six, five or six brand new heavy crewed, beautiful ships. And two of them collided and they got left behind. And that's, that's the ones that uh, that the Hornet people subsequently sank.

TTG Sank later on.

BPW Yes.

TTG All right.

BPW On the 5th or 6th.

TTG Now, this was supposed to have been a four hour flight northwest, up here.

BPW Right.

TTG And we went to 10,000 feet to horizontally bomb them.

BPW All right.

TTG And I'm in the flight leader's plane and his name is Captain Riding, R-I-D-I-N-G.

BPW All right.

TTG B-17.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And I'm in the flight leader's plane.

BPW Okay.

TTG And I'm to help them identify ships.

BPW I see. Were you navigating?

TTG No, they had their own navigator, right here.

BPW Okay.

TTG But it ends up that we go and we find the ships and we bomb them right here.

BPW Oh, you did.

TTG And when we find the ships, well, Captain Riding released his ten to make their individual bomb runs on them.

BPW I see.

TTG And return singly to Midway Island.

BPW I see.

TTG Now then, this is the story that's humorous. We were due back at Midway at eight. Eight p.m., twenty-hundred local time.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And at twenty-hundred, local time, there were 10 B-17s sending M.O.s, Dah-Dah-Dah Dah, Dah-Dah-Dah-Dah-Dah, for Midway to take bearings on them and tell them where they were.

BPW God, that's awful.

TTG All right. Now listen to this.

BPW Aw, Troy, that's terrible.

TTG Radar was so new, Bowen...

BPW Yeah.

TTG That within 10 minutes of our ETA, I learned this in retrospect, I'm running on the way back from the cabin, pilot's compartment to navigator and to the radio right here. Do you see anything on radar to indicate Midway Island?

BPW Yeah.

TTG Within 10 minutes of our original ETA, radar picked up a blip. Do you think...

BPW Your radar?

TTG On the B-17.

BPW Yeah, yeah.

TTG Picked up a blip.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And remember this was the old Yogi radar...

BPW Oh, yeah, yeah.

TTG ...underneath the wing and you crank it to get a, to get a bearing right here.

BPW Yeah, I, I,

TTG All right. Within 10 minutes of when we were originally due there, radar got a blip. Do you think he told the navigator? No, sir. And whenever the navigator admitted that we were lost, right here, Troy, Ensign Guillory, goes back and we do the good old Navy square search...

BPW Box search, yeah.

TTG ...and we kept expanding our square search until I saw the lights on Midway Island. They'd turned on the search lights for us because there were 10 B- 17s lost that night and their state of training was, was terrible at that time. They didn't know...

BPW Isn't that awful. Isn't that awful.

TTG But two of the B-17s were lost that night. Not (inaud) to come back.

BPW They really were lost.

TTG Yes, sir. I mean lost at sea and never picked up. Never heard from right here. Two of the 10 B-17s from this flight here...

BPW Yeah.

TTG ... never got back. Not due to enemy action.

BPW God. Isn't that awful. Isn't that awful.

TTG But you know, we carrier boys knew the square search right here.

BPW Oh, man. That's the only way to go.

TTG And, and if you've got enough fuel, you're going to find it. The idea is to have enough fuel.

BPW You're right.

TTG But we didn't have a lot of fuel in our B-17 when we got back and...

BPW (inaud) That's a long haul.

TTG Old Troy had just been picked up out of the water....

Mrs.G Excuse me.

BPW Oh, thank you very much.

TTG the night before and I wasn't about to want to ditch in that water at midnight in a B-17.

BPW Hey, Troy. Let me ask you something. I don't know much about that SBD, the, I was never in one. Where was the life raft?

TTG All right. The life raft, here's the pilot and his gunner ride radio and ride in tandem, you know.

BPW Okay.

TTG All right. Now just aft....

BPW You had three....

TTG No, two crew.

BPW Two, two crew.

TTG Now just aft of the radioman, (inaud) crossed the airplane.

BPW Oh, okay.

TTG You got to it from outside. It was a little round container about that big that had a fastener on it and that's where the life raft was all rolled up in a yellow bag there and the regular boat was there.

BPW You have a panel that you took off?

TTG It just snapped up...

BPW Snapped off.

TTG Snapped up right here.

BPW I see.

TTG And then right inside was a, was a string that he could get and pull it up because our airplane sank in about seven seconds after we hit the water and the radioman had it out and had it inflated because we had rehearsed that so many times.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And some of us.

BPW It didn't inflate when you pulled it out.

TTG No, it didn't.

BPW Some of them did later, you know.

TTG Yes, some of them we had did, right.

BPW They had a way of doing that.

TTG Right.

BPW But I, those, they were, that was early in the game.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW So you had to... So you had to pull something to inflate it.

TTG We had to get out of our airplane and go back there and get that life raft out of the airplane.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And then unzip it and it was, it was fast because we'd rehearsed it. So, and then you had a blue CO-2 handle to pull to inflate it there.

BPW Yeah, yeah.

TTG And while he was doing that, I'm getting my life, my parachute. I'm on the wing and I've got my parachute thrown in the life boat..

BPW Oh, uh-huh.

TTG And I had my Very pistol and five shells and it sank out from under me.

BPW That wasn't in the boat? I mean that...

TTG No, the pyrotechnics weren't in the boat. They were in the airplane.

BPW I see.

TTG And the...

BPW How about a canteen or something...

TTG The water and the chocolates and the C-rations or whatever rations we had back then were in the airplane and... Mary Jo, I'd like to take him, when we get through talking, I'd like to take him to our, about a thirty minute tour around town. You think we've got time to do that?

Mrs.G Oh, yes. Uh-huh. Depends on how hungry you are.

TTG Okay.

BPW That sounds good.

TTG How about fixing yourself a biscuit like you like it there.

BPW Looks great.

TTG Put in it whatever you like in it.

BPW That sounds great. Yes, sir. Oh, boy, my favorite kind of apple. Are these Grimes Golden or...

Mrs.G Oh, yeah.

BPW ...somebody golden, I love them.

TTG I would judge that I stayed on Midway Island four or five days and was told by Captain Semard that I could go back to Pearl and I flew a four engine Coronado back to Pearl.

BPW You did?

TTG Four engine Coronado flying boat. I flew in, in one back to Pearl.

BPW I didn't know they had any out there.

TTG And I think it was just coming through at this time.

BPW I see. I see.

TTG And went back to Pearl and got a, a few days R&R at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel that submariners and aviators could go to then and in my scrapbook here somewhere is a phone call to Mary Jo that I made. Cost me ten dollars...

BPW Oh, God!

TTG ...and I was censored and the operator told me what I could say and couldn't say before the telephone conversation.

BPW Is that right?

TTG And I said, "Operator, my ship has me missing and if I can't tell my wife not to believe any messages she gets that I'm missing in action, there's no need in me making the phone call." She says, "Sir, you may tell her that she'll get a message from the ship saying you're missing, but you're no longer missing." And I said, "Well I want to tell her not to get a new husband, too." And she said, "You may tell her that but don't tell her what ship you're off of." I said, "No, I don't have to. She knows that." "And don't tell her where you were." I said, "I won't do that." But that phone call is in our scrapbook now.

BPW Oh, that's a good story. I can imagine those damn telephone operators telling you....

TTG But the idea was don't, don't say anything that would let the enemy...

BPW Oh, yes.

TTG ...learn where you were and so forth. What ships and so forth.

BPW Yeah, well, I don't know. Well...

TTG My name of my PBY that picked me up, my number and my name and my plane commander is... I'll never forget that, I'll take that to the graveyard with me. Ensign Lowe, 23 Prep 12. Now some of the other things that I've told you, I'm in doubt about, well, well I'm sorry that I can't remember better for you.

BPW Well, you've done a marvelous job. You know, I'll tell you. Talking about the life raft, Tallman did something unusual. When he went down, he got out. He went down with Jennings. He went down with power on. Jennings was out but they had a thing going that it would be better to, two of them stay together, these two stay together, you and you're wingman.

TTG Right.

BPW That's how it was. Well all kinds of funny things happened. Gray landed with his wheels down. If you can imagine.

TTG Well, they're smart damn things....

BPW Talbot, well anyhow let me tell you about Tallman.

TTG The sea was smooth.

BPW Yeah.

TTG Bowen, I remember the sea was just as smooth as that bayou is out there today.

BPW Yeah. That was one of the, that was one of the early complaints about not, uh, time of take-off, you only had about four or five knots...

TTG That's right. And those that were heavy, you could tell it when you went over...

BPW Yeah. Well Tallman was mad. He was just plain, unadulterated mad as a wet hen. He spent the first hour in the life raft writing on the side of the life raft what he was so mad about and everything. And when he was picked up a week later, it was a rough day. It was a rough day. It had gotten rough. When they picked up Mitchell and Gray and Ruehlow, it was very rough also. So when they picked up Tallman, he jumped in, onto the plane. The crewmen helped him and the crewman looked back into the raft and he saw his writing on the side of the raft and oh, don't we want to save that, we ought to save that. See, he was a pretty savvy guy. So Tallman said, "Oh my god, yes, yes." Well by that time it had blown off a little bit and the, uh, they, it was so rough that they, you know, they couldn't paddle around to get it.

TTG Two or three days after the, after the 4th, Mary Jo.

Mrs.G Uh-huh.

BPW That was about a week.

TTG On the day of the fourth, the winds were very, very calm and that's probably what a lot of us owe our lives to on the first day that made our ditching successful was the mild sea state that day.

BPW Yeah. Well, you know, Talbot claims that Kelly made it down wind. Now it's crazy. He, he said that he landed down wind. Now the only thing that I, Mark was a pretty good pilot from all reports. So, it's unthinkable. I mean, it doesn't, there's no, it couldn't happen unless there was a reason for him to do it.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW What happened was they came within, I'll say 30, maximum 50 miles of our fleet. Now they thought it was a Jap fleet but it was our fleet. There's no question about

it.

TTG I saw that on that...

BPW On here. Now Mitchell and Ruehlow and Gray, they all saw it but they thought it was a Jap fleet so they keep on going. Everybody else doesn't have any alternative, they've got to go on. Okay, they go on. Well, my theory is that Mark ran out of gas not first, but within a few minutes.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW And my theory is that they were still up high. They were still at 20, 22 thousand, according to Hump and he said that, well he might have turned around and regardless of hell or high water, gotten as much distance back. The wind was blowing, they were going directly into the wind. So once they passed the fleet, it was directly behind them. In other words, directly down wind. And his theory is that well, he was just trying to get every damn inch of...

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW ... that he could. And dead stick, he could never get turned around or get down low. The damn plane just flew like a rock.

TTG I feel like, I think you're saying this, that Mark's ditching was not a successful ditching.

BPW Not successful, no. I'm sure of that because Talbot was very positive about it. He said he ditched within a mile of him and never got out of the airplane. Never saw him even get out of the airplane at all. And Hill, nobody ever saw Hill. Hill just disappeared too.

TTG I have seen so many at sea. Now you know today we don't ride an airplane in the water today. We eject and we've got seat ejection that will throw us out and the parachute will open automatically and you got, and you're sitting on your rubber boat.

BPW Oh, God!

TTG It's a different ball game today but we had to ride our airplanes in the water to get the rubber boat out.

BPW Sure, yeah.

TTG Now, but I'm about to say this. I've seen ditchings and later on as I grew older in peace time aviation and I'd look and I'd say, "Well, don't worry about that, boy. That's a good ditching and you're going to get him out." And Bowen, we'd lose that pilot. We'd lose that crew in that airplane and you'd see one and be wild and he'd sort of spin into the water a cartwheel around out there and we'd, I'd say, standing on the ship, looking, "We going to lose that pilot" and he's the one you get.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And I've seen them go in after a catapult shot and the ship try to turn to avoid them. But that pilot, that airplane, that whole airplane would go right underneath it with, with four screws back there...

BPW Oh, God.

TTG And I'd say, "Well, we're not going to get that pilot out and...."

BPW Ohhh.

TTG But we'd run back there and look and that head would pop out of the water and he would not have one scratch on him.

BPW Good heavens.

TTG Now the good Lord is with you when you do that.

BPW Oh, that's keel hull in the worst way.

TTG The good Lord.....

BPW Well you know, do you remember when Mark went off, Mark and I believe it was, who was that, oh, Groves. They both went in on the same day. They, do you remember that incident? It was...

TTG I don't remember it.

BPW It was when they were, it was when you were on the way to the Coral Sea. You were a little late getting down there.

TTG We never, we never got there in time...

BPW Never...

TTG ..and we turned around before we got there and had somewhere else to go.

BPW Yeah, yeah.

TTG We had arrived to Lexington and what was the other one, Saratoga down there?

BPW Yorktown.

TTG Yorktown. Lexington and Yorktown.

BPW That's where the Yorktown got hit, see.

TTG That's right.

BPW She got banged up but and when they got, when she got back to Pearl, they put a million people on board and got her right out in time to go up to Midway.

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW Catch back up with the Enterprise and Hornet.

TTG That's right.

BPW That whole thing was such an incredible episode that the possibility of it happening if you had been writing fiction and said something like that, well you'd say well, don't be ridiculous. Make it more realistic. Couldn't have been. But it was....

TTG I'll always regret that we didn't find the Japanese fleet and couldn't of pulled off a real good old U.S. Navy coordinated attack with us and the Enterprise dive bombers working them over at the same time.

BPW Oh, boy.

TTG But as I look back and reminisce now, never has so few done so much in the way of a, of a naval action.

BPW That's right. Never, never, never. It was all dive bomber show.

TTG It was an all dive bomber show. And, of course, that Pacific Ocean is full of those old SBD's out there. I put one of them in it.

BPW Oh, my God.

TTG But it did it's duty and, uh (telephone ring) Troy Guillory. Yes, sir. Five's ready. Uh, Freddy down behind your (inaud) hanger there, there's some stakes out and the word is that that is being staked out for the cotton duster up here and they're saying, what's his name? Ray Wright. Now then, behind him is a, and I think this is a conversation stage right now, to build Lloyd Williams a hanger down there and you know Lloyd Williams, don't you? I would suggest that you write his name down and talk to him and see where he is with that

and see what Lloyd knows because he's been with the airport manager when I went to the airport at about 1:40 to pick up my friend, well, Durand Bailey came through the baggage door, there and we spoke but... There's two people that can tell you the state of, of things right now. Durand Bailey and I know him and I'd be glad to go with you to see him if you choose to pursue that. And Lloyd Williams sort of has the state of of the hanger building. He, he was just going to build one for a this old aero commander that he and Claude Smith owned together that he owns by himself, now, you know. No, but I haven't forgotten that we've talked about It and I'm sort of favoring Tiger Air right now as a place and, and then I'm I'm looking into this. John's (inaud) has a, help me remember this airplane now, the Haveland, the DH, that's tail is so tall that it won't go in there, uh, older hanger in the north end of the field and they're having the handle that with Eric (inaud) now. And this is a possible hanger space for you because they're Israeli aero commander, and what do we call that airplane? Do you remember what it's called? Yeah, okay. The aero commander is in there and not being flown now and it's for sale. And the (inaud) boys are flying the Haveland jet. It's and all jet airplane and a fine airplane and it's being stored in Eric's hanger but my hasty answer to you is Eric Mingledorf is a possible hanger space for you and are the Olin hanger the John Mandle hanger if they would consider such a thing. I think that Bill Armstrong is paying a hundred dollar a month for a twin and that number sticks.... Is that what you paid for your Senneca? But it won't hurt to touch base with old Bill and confirm that because, yeah, right, right. Uh, either one of these will will hanger you without buying fuel for them. That's right. And don't even bring that up right here. Just mention hanger fee. Yes, but I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll listen out and another place and Troy Jr. may be able to help you with this is Johnny (inaud) is in (inaud) you see. And Troy is sort of sociable with him, you know. You've got their gas pumps, you know what I'm saying there. Is that right. Okay. Let's stick with Tiger Air then and in the north end and still let's, let's research this hanger building in the south end of the field. And it needs somebody persuasive. I can name six people on my fingers now that want the build, buy and build hangers now. And it needs somebody that's willing to stand up and say let's do it and quit talking about it and the airport manager will help you. I'll tell you what's available to you. You know how you taxi down runway 1-7 and turn right to the "T" hangers? Well he wants to give you, turn left right there, he wants to give you that end of the old runway 9-2-7 and that'd be ideal. Uh-huh. Yes, sir, uh-huh. Now which hanger you talking... Okay. The number is six thousand dollars originally, close to that, sticks in my mind. Yes, sir. Okay. All right. Okay. You're right and what I'm remembering is this. You're right. Now what I'm remembering is some assessment and Billy paid Sam Henry six thousand dollars when he bought out that one. That's what I remember. Right now I think there's 12 spaces and we're number 5 from this end and we're not quite half way down. The whole thing, you're saying? Uh, I think, let me think. It may be that Sam can answer you. I don't know. It may be that Sam could answer you and Sally Green would be most logical to answer you. Right. Right now, Charles Masser is one of these on my fingers I was counting and he's

paying one hundred dollars a month for his to Bobby Poly. He's renting Bobby Poly's hanger and Bobby's finishing law school in May and coming home. Yes sir. He has a stall about the about the, well, he's, down where Bobby's stall is down where 7-3-4 yankee whiskey is right now. Where Charles is right now, you see. And that's the one with the three lines, taxi lines, left wheel. Yes, uh-huh. That's right. I'll tell you who could who could price that out for us real easily is Lewis Bickney at the Northeast Bank. We could get him to work on it for us tomorrow and....Uh-huh... I'll tell you another thing who can tell us what it costs to build them is old Durand Bailey, the airport manager. He got in on that. Yeah. Uh-huh. Yeah, oh yes. That's exactly right. I've picked up two of those in my tires on my Honda going down there, you know? Yes, I think it's a 99 year lease. Wait a minute. There's something 20 years in this thing right here. These answers we can get with the airport manager, 20 year re-negotiate at the end of 20 years or something on that effect. If I can help you by going with you or anything, I'll be glad to do so and at least in fact, a doctor up at Sterlington, let me think what that doctor's name is. Dr. Jones, old Dr. Jones, his daddy used to own an airplane. The young Dr. Jones wants to buy and airplane but wants a place to put it down here and he's the second one that's on my list and... you wouldn't.. end of tape.

Tape 2 (Side B)

TTG He's talking building hangers and so forth.

BPW Yeah.

TTG That's what we talked about.

BPW I see. I see. Well, I've got a couple of more questions and I think it's all over then.

Mrs.G Good.

BPW Gee, he's a God send. You know, he just put it together, just....

Mrs.G Oh, he was so sharp to even remember it. I mean that's his stuff.

BPW It just fell in together. It just did. Well, they, you see...

Mrs.G You just had the key to make him remember.

BPW You know who's published? The Navy is the one that the, there's a fellow by the name of Lundstrum, who is, at (inaud) didn't have the fighter detail information because he's publishing a new book on the fighters.

Mrs.G Mmm-hmm.

BPW And the Navy is publishing it.

Mrs.G Ooo...

BPW And the Navy said, "Listen, you get a hold.....

TTG Bowen, are we through talking to where I can take you for about 30 minutes on a little tour in the city?

BPW Let me ask you this. I've got three or four more things and that's all.

TTG All right.

BPW Can we do it tomorrow morning?

TTG Yes, we can do it in the morning. No, it will work out good in the morning.

What I've got is a 8:30 doctor's appointment just to run by and weigh in. And then you can get up and go with me then or I can come back here and get you.

BPW Well that's fine. No, that's all right.

TTG Whatever time you're used to getting up.

BPW Is that all right?

TTG Yes, oh yes, that's fine.

BPW Well I think we can wrap this thing up.

TTG Okay. Let's do it.

BPW All right.

TTG That's fine.

BPW Hope so. If that's all right.

TTG Sure, that's fine.

BPW The conversation that you heard between Ring and Waldron really didn't concern itself with whether I'm going to turn north or whether I'm going to turn south. I concerned myself with whether you leave or not. Is that your recollection? That's what you seem to say.

TTG Okay. No, here's what I meant to say, now.

BPW All right.

TTG Is Waldron made the first call to Ring.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And see, Ring was flying a dive bomber.

BPW Okay.

TTG Waldron's flying a torpedo plane.

BPW Right.

TTG You asked members, you know there's two men in a dive bomber and there was four men in those torpedo planes.

BPW Were there?

TTG Yes.

BPW Three.

TTG Three in some of them and four in others.

BPW All right. Okay. Fine. Okay.

TTG Now, the first call was Waldron talking to Ring and says, "You're going the wrong way for the Japanese carrier fleet."

BPW I see. All right.

TTG And Ring's response to that was not congenial at all. It was "I know what I'm doing and you, you fly with us right here."

BPW I see. Okay.

TTG And then behind that was, "Well I know where they are and I'm going to them."

BPW I see.

TTG Now, I haven't told you this.

BPW All right. Go ahead.

TTG I haven't told you this. Don't lose your question now.

BPW All right.

TTG But I censored a letter for Johnny, this is not really important.

BPW All right.

TTG But it is to me. I censored a letter the night before the Battle of Midway.

BPW Yeah.

TTG Because the ensigns were the mail censors on the carriers.

BPW Yeah.

TTG Duty officers had to censor the mail.

BPW Right.

TTG And guess who it befell my duty to censor a letter all right? John C. Waldron.

BPW All right.

TTG John C. Waldron.

BPW Okay.

TTG And he was, and I feel like this has come out in your interviewing various people, but he worked his people day and night.

BPW Yes, oh that's....

TTG And he was gun-ho. And then this letter to Mrs. Waldron was things are about to happen and I've devoted my entire life for the things that are about to happen right here. And he didn't say or do anything that I couldn't, that I couldn't censor so I just stamped my name on it and put TT, stamped and put TTG on it.

BPW For God's sake.

TTG But that was her last letter that she ever got from him.

BPW Oh, yeah.

TTG Now, then. Twenty years later at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on Ford Island, a young lady, married to a young ensign in my command, I'm commanding officer of fleet intelligence center, which is the operational planning part of really, (inaud) but we called ourselves an intelligence unit and they may give a commanding officer a job over there.

BPW Yeah.

TTG I do both nuclear planning and conventional planning, and a young lady comes to me at a party one time and said, "Captain Guillory, you say you were on the Hornet. You may have known my father." And I said, "Who was your father?"

BPW Oh, gosh.

TTG "John C. Waldron." Isn't it a small world? And she's married to a young ensign...

BPW I'll be darned.

TTG .. in my command. And this was '62 - 64, wasn't it, Mary Jo?

BPW I'll be...

TTG But now don't lose your train of thought. Do you remember what you were going to ask?

BPW Oh yes, yes. Well, they, so that the conversation for the conflict, to the extent that it was a conflict, was resolved by Waldron simply pulling away.

TTG That's right.

BPW That's how it was.

TTG That's right.

BPW He said that he was going to. Ring said, "Don't do it" and then he went and did it

anyhow. Is that how....

TTG I don't remember Ring saying "...don't do it." I remember Ring saying, "You fly with us,"

BPW Yeah. I see.

TTG "You fly with us."

BPW I see.

TTG Now....

BPW But with that, Waldron pulls off.

TTG With that Waldron pulled off.

BPW And you saw him pull off.

TTG Oh, yes.

BPW And it was with, it was some time from between 10 minutes and 30 minutes at least...

TTG Yes.

BPW ... or something of that...

TTG They flew with us at least 30 minutes before they pulled off.

BPW You think it was 30 minutes.

TTG Yes.

BPW So actually then, Waldron was coming down from the north.

TTG Yes.

BPW He would have been coming down from the north...

TTG Mmm-hmm.

BPW ... into the fleet. Okay. All right. Now, I'm going to, I'm going to refer to the chart but I'll do it in such a way that it comes out on the tape, too.

TTG All right.

BPW I'm referring to the chart now that has the overlay and everything on it. And I'll ask you that, to the best of your thinking at this time, you believe that it seems correct that you went out approximately west or 265 looks reasonably good?

TTG Looks reasonable to me. We went westerly.

BPW And went past the point of intercept where the Jap fleet tracked the carrier fleet, Jap carrier fleet, had tracked down.

TTG That's right.

BPW You went past that then you turned approximately due south.

TTG We turned southerly.

BPW Or southerly.

TTG That's all I remember, southerly.

BPW Southerly, okay, for about 45 minutes then back toward the carrier for approximately...

TTG northeasterly, northeasterly.

BPW Northeasterly. Then you turned for Midway.

TTG Then we turned for Midway.

BPW How long after you turned for Midway did you ditch?

TTG I'm going to guess twenty minutes.

BPW Twenty minutes. All right. That's what I'm (inaud) That's what I wanted to know. Back to ship, 15 minutes. 50 minutes turned to Mid and 20 minutes later, ditched. And at that time of ditching,

TTG At 1200 local time.

BPW It was, I have all that. 200 local time, it's 110 miles.

TTG 110 miles north of Midway and north, northwest wouldn't be, wouldn't be...

BPW It would be possible.

TTG It would be possible, right.

BPW North, northeast a little. Northwest a little.

TTG I'd say north, northwest a little.

BPW North, northwest a little. Okay. All right that pins down that pretty well and that easily plots out. I can see that that's going to be an easy plot out. The configuration we're saying subscribes to the configuration of the Hornet's air plot but it's only by configuration only and not where the actual tracking was. So, all right. That's, we can put her to bed.

TTG That may try to explain....

BPW This will be my conclusion if, unless somebody proves to me otherwise.

TTG Let me try to explain the lack of combat reports.

BPW Yes, yes.

TTG Let me try to explain to you the lack of combat reports.

BPW Right, I'd love to know that.

TTG And this is just, just a possibility. Remember that Midway was our first bit of action.

BPW Oh, yeah.

TTG And the requirement for a combat report had never existed prior to this.

BPW That's right.

TTG And then I'm sure that these details were assigned to some officer in a squadron right here.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And those officers didn't get back.

BPW I see.

TTG You understand what I'm saying?

BPW I see. I see.

TTG And that jeopardized a meaningful come-back report from each of these, these units, you see. Now later on in life, we got more professional or whatever word we want to use and our intelligence officer was a non-flying, non-flying officer.

BPW AVS

TTG AVS and he stayed back on the ship.

BPW Right.

TTG And then whenever we'd get back, he'd say, "Okay, tell me where you went, what did you do and what did you see and what did you shoot and what did you sink", you see.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And then we started getting more meaningful combat reports from combat units, see.

BPW I see. Oh well, right. Well that was really, had, in effect, a historian and debriefer, as it were.

TTG That's right.

BPW Right. I see. Okay. Well, I guess that's it for right now then. We'll call it quits.

TTG I trust that what I've said has been somewhat helpful to you because I was worried that you'd come down here and I wouldn't be able to say anything that you were interested in and that it wouldn't be worth your while to come to see me and I wanted you to come to see me. I love to hear about the other fellows.

BPW Well, I'm going to, I'll put it to you this way, Mr. Guillory. I think that you're going to be hearing from other people because I think that Mr. Lundstrum was writing the book. The Navy has induced me to give them my information, my chart as it were. I said I would and not the tapes. That's understood that the tapes are not going to be released. This tape won't be released either. Nobody's will. I'll send you a copy of this tape however but that's all, where it will be. Outside of Tallman. Tallman will get a copy to listen to, too. He's my buddy.

TTG All right. That's fine. In fact I don't care, given what I've told to anybody right here.

BPW Right. I understand and some of the others are all right but some of the, some of the others don't want that so I've just, have a policy and that's it. You can do whatever you want with the tape. I'm going to send you the tape.

TTG All right.

BPW But that book is going to be published by the Naval Institute. So, I mean, you know, the Navy wants this information.

TTG Yeah.

BPW And they have, I would not really, I don't think I would be here if they had not made it very evident and very clear and very plain that they would like to know what in the sam hill really did and truly happened.

Mrs.G Happened, yeah.

BPW And I think that there's, that's really the reason for it and they were astounded that I was able to in some strange manner get the stuff all together. So that was how that was. But anyhow I'll cut it off.

Interview with T.T. Guillory 3/24/83

Tape 1/Side 1

TTG We can even, going to talk while we're eating. Full of corn bread and gumbo here.

BPW All right, now we're on, we're on the way down to the airport. This is the next day, Thursday. I've just remarked that the only thing that I'm, that seems to be a little inconsistent is the timing. Okay, we're recording.

TTG Okay.

BPW Now the times that I had on the flight chart that I made up showed that the flight off the, the Hornet, the flights began at, at 6:55 which was approximately 7:00 but that was Zone 12 time, you see. In other words, the, the, all of the times that I had put down on that flight chart are Zone 12 times and the Hornet's are two hours later than that if you want to look at it. In other words, the 6:55 would translate into 8:55 on board the Hornet if she was on Zone 10 time and apparently that's what it was. That's your recollection that she was on Zone 10 time or do you didn't really know?

TTG I don't, I don't comment on that at all right now.

BPW I see. All you know is that your watch was on Hornet time.

TTG My watch was on Hornet time....

BPW Right, okay, okay.

TTG ... uh, Bowen and we, we were awakened that morning at 3:00.

BPW Right.

TTG Oh-three-hundred.

BPW Yeah.

TTG Hornet time.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And we had our breakfast, went to the ready room and finally we're launched. We were getting irritable. We wanted to go ahead and get with it and get going....

BPW Right.

TTG ...and we were launched about 8:00, few minutes before, I believe 7:56...

BPW I see.

TTG ...the local time and with all the high powered and climbing involved in climbing the 19,000 feet or 20,000 feet, which is what I remember, about 20,000 feet...

BPW Yeah, right.

TTG ...and then all of that high powered cruise at the high altitude...

BPW Yeah.

TTG ...and I told you earlier that I was flying with a thousand pound bomb...

BPW Yeah.

TTG ...and with all that high power, I consumed my fuel and ditched in the water about 12:00 noon which would be about 4 hours and 4 minutes, I had burned all of my fuel.

BPW Yeah, you figure...

TTG And exhausted the fuel in 4 tanks.

BPW Right.

TTG He gives me a vitamin shot to help me with this dieting..

BPW I see.

TTG ... and checks my heart right there.

BPW I see.

TTG And it doesn't take long. The girls weigh me in there and we're learning a little more about weight control, obesity and all those things.

BPW Oh, yeah.

TTG And he sort of specializes in the term bariatrics which means obesity and weight control.

BPW Yeah, uh-huh. Well, it's a, it's a problem today. It's one of the biggest problems in the country, I guess.

TTG I'm sure it is.

BPW I, uh, how much weight did you lose? Did you figure when you were, well, you were only down one day, though, weren't you, that's right.

TTG Yes. But on Guadalcanal is where I lost the weight because, see, we didn't have any food when I went in there.

BPW Yeah.

TTG They brought the ammunition in and didn't bring us any food.

BPW I see.

TTG And, uh, I lost, I lost 20 pounds in 30 days. See, I was 22 years then and I could tie the tiger then.

BPW Gee, that was something. That was something. Well, to....

TTG We can talk some more when you want to.

BPW Yeah, all right. I've got this thing going and we're all set. Now, you see, the confusion on these times, I'll tell you something. When I talked to Talbot I got, he got all messed up on time, too. He was very positive about the time that he went down, he said, because he said his wrist watch stopped and uh, the time was ten, uh, was 12:35.

TTG Uh-huh.

BPW That's what he said. 12:35 his watch stopped. Subsequently he threw it away but in any event, he was very certain that that was it. Well he also said and as I say, I think that he was, he got locked into his story unfortunately because he said he had seen the Jap carriers sinking and all this sort of thing and listing and everything and I, I subsequently as time went along and we carried the conversation, it became very evident that at exactly the same time that he said he ditched, it was exactly the moment that McClusky was hitting the fleet.

TTG Uh-huh.

BPW So it would have been very awkward for him to have seen it...

TTG Yes.

BPW ...see and I didn't press the point but, but the confusion about time. That threw him into quite a confusion as you can....

TTG Well, here's what I remember if we haven't said this before on tape.

BPW Yeah.

TTG Here's what I remember is having been airborne some few minutes before eight and I even remember this, that they were holding up a little chalk, uh, position right here, of the Hornet...

BPW Yeah.

TTG ...and then a latitude and longitude for the enemy. So whenever I

BPW Is that right?

TTG ...Yes, sir. In the take-off spot but that enemy that we were given the latitude and longitude of ended up not to be the enemy. It ended up to be the support forces.

BPW Yeah, yeah.

TTG But, uh...

BPW Well it was well north of the carriers.

TTG Yes.

BPW Well north of the carriers.

TTG The...

BPW You, you'll agree with that. That, that course that they gave you was the course that took you, as it turned out, well north of...

TTG That's right.

BPW ... the carriers. It was approximately west, almost due west.

TTG Now back to, to my ditching time.

BPW Yeah.

TTG My ditching time was right close to 12:00. 12:00 noon and that was the time I had on my arm which was Hornet time and it, it's possible that a, a confusion in time exists by maybe the Hornet having gone on Zone 12 time.

BPW Well.

TTG You don't think that's possible?

BPW I don't have any indication of that.

TTG If they did. Well....

BPW I have, well, for instance, the times of the operation, the take-off I've established many

different ways. That's set and...

TTG Yes.

BPW ... it was, it doesn't jibe quite with your memory. Uh, it had to be on Hornet time, now. We'll talk about Hornet time. It is easier, probably, for you than, than the other and it had to be between 9 o'clock and 9:46. It had to be five minutes of nine and 9:46. All planes had cleared by 9:46. CAP, the first ones at CAP took off at 6, at uh, 8, 8:55 which was five minutes of nine. So the time frame is a little different than your, than your recollection is.

TTG Yes.

BPW But that's too established. I mean, we're locked into that.

TTG Right.

BPW I don't know what we can do about that. Now further more, now as far as the other end of the line, you're equally as positive and I am equally positive that it was something like four hours. It had to be four hours. That airplane was going to fly four hours.

TTG That's right.

BPW There's no question about it.

TTG That I feel good about right there.

BPW So we have those two locks. I mean the, uh, as far as other things, your recollections and things as to the time, well, I don't know. But those things, we can't overcome them hardly. And, and the four hours fits perfectly with, with your recollection as to how much time you spent going out and then turning south and then turning back and then turning around. All of those time frames which you gave me in approximate terms are beautiful with your four hour fuel consumption.

TTG Yes.

BPW And that... So, it looks very strong but the 12:00 noon looks, is tough. There's no way, it doesn't jibe with everything else.

TTG Yes.

BPW In other words, it was, I say it has to be closer to four hours having elapsed from 9:30...

TTG That's, that's possible.

BPW So...

TTG The only thing is that my memory just serves me that we were airborne earlier because we got up at 3:00 and that, that time....

BPW Oh, yeah, yeah.

TTG ... that time sticks in my mind.

BPW Yeah, yeah.

TTG And 0300 reveille...

BPW Yeah.

TTG and...

BPW That was a long wait. A pain in the neck.

TTG We had a hurried breakfast and went right to the ready room and stood by a long, long time in the ready room...

BPW Yeah, yeah.

TTG ...before launch and uh...

BPW I see. Well this is the first that I've heard about them holding up an indication of where, you know, you were to fly to was.

TTG Yes.

BPW But you recollect a board...

TTG Oh yes.

BPW ...being held up.

TTG A little, a little chalk, written in chalk, little black board.

BPW Latitude and longitude and you saw that. Did you mark it down on your plotting board?

TTG Yes, uh-huh.

BPW Yeah....

TTG Of course, I don't remember what it was.

BPW Yeah.

TTG But, another thing that I like is, I believe, that your, your red penciled...

BPW Yes.

TTG ...uh, track...

BPW Yeah.

TTG ... of the Hornet's combat report...

BPW Yes.

TTG ... that, that pattern, that, that track pattern coincides with what I remember, you know.

The direction out and a definite leg to the south. A short leg to the south.

BPW Yeah.

TTG Southward, I'll say.

BPW Yeah.

TTG And then back northeastward. The only inconsistency with the way I see it and remember it was that our path was a little north of what their path was. Don't you think?

BPW I, well, I, I'm, I have concluded without, I'm, I'm very sure in my mind that it was approximately 25 degrees. That it was 265 instead of 240.

TTG Right.

BPW And, and now, supporting of that and very strongly, and very strong support of that, your very strong feeling that, that Waldron started out with you and left you.

TTG He did and he...

BPW To the south, went to the left.

TTG ... he cruised with us a little while.

BPW Right. That is Hump Tallman's thought and description also. Now Hump was in a position to see him because he was at the very end of the fighters.

TTG Yes.

BPW Now you're verifying that. Further more, he said that it wasn't until, his feeling as I recollect, was that it wasn't until some time a little, some time maybe a half hour before Waldron did that.

TTG Right.

BPW And split off to the left and went to the south. So it, and yet we, we know that Waldron must have gone, Waldron was the first one down there so when he split off and went to the south, he must have gone right straight into the, into the Jap fleet. But as I say, the time of take-off was two, but we have many different checks on that. So that you were off and... your airplane rolled down that deck, Troy, at, at Hornet time, at, it was 9:30.

TTG Possible and...

BPW That's what it was.

TTG ...see I'm, I'm just....

BPW And if you add 4 hours to that you're well past noon of course, see.

TTG Right.

BPW So that was, that's the only thing but the four hours jibes so beautifully with everything else. With the, with the number of miles that you flew and the number of times, hours and minutes and time from this 265 track and when you turned south at approximately, that would have been approximately noon is when you turned south and then you flew 45 minutes south, then 50 minutes back toward the Hornet, we'll say and then a few minutes maybe up, maybe 20 minutes back toward Midway and you were down and there's your four hours and plus, and so.... That looks very good you know. It fits everything. The only, the only thing is that you were, on that basis you were not down in the water at 12 noon. Uh, you were...

TTG 1400, about two P.M.

BPW About two is what it looks like. So, okay, let's stop...

End of tape.