

BOMBING SQUADRON THREE,  
June 10, 1942

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From: Commander, Bombing Squadron THREE.  
To: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. ENTERPRISE.  
Via: Commander, ENTERPRISE Air Group.  
Subject: Report of Action - period 4 June 1942 to  
6 June 1942, inclusive.

Reference: (a) U.S. Navy Regulations, Article 712.

A. First day, 4 June, 1942. First phase: Bombing Squadron THREE, composed of seventeen SB2U-3 and 3A type airplanes, was launched from the U.S.S. YORKTOWN at 1100 LZT (Plus 10) in company with VT-3, Lt-Cdr. L.E. Massey, USN, and VF-3, Lt-Cdr. J.S. Thach, USN, with orders to attack an aircraft carrier within a large Japanese task force in the vicinity of Lat. 30-00 N, Long. 179-00 W. The visibility was excellent, ceiling unlimited with scattered clouds at 3,000 ft. The sea was calm with little or no wind. Bombing Squadron THREE's tactical organization was as follows:

First Division

3-B-1 ✓ Lt-Cdr. M.F. Leslie ✓	✓ GALLAGHER, W.E., ARM1c
3-B-2 ✓ Lt(jg) P.A. Holmberg ✓	✓ LA PLANT, G.A., ARM2c
3-B-3 ✓ Ensign P.W. Schlegel ✓	✓ SHROPSHIRE, J.A., ARM3c
3-B-4 ✓ Ensign R.K. Campbell ✓	✓ CRAIG, H.E., ARM1c
3-B-5 ✓ Ensign A.W. Hanson ✓	✓ GODFREY, J.V., ARM3c
3-B-6 ✓ Ensign R.H. Benson ✓	✓ BERGERON, F.P., ARM3c

Second Division

3-B-7 ✓ Lt(jg) G.A. Sherwood ✓	✓ BENNETT, H.D., ARM2c
3-B-8 ✓ Ensign R.M. Isaman ✓	✓ WEAVER, S.K., ARM3c
3-B-9 ✓ Ensign P.W. Cobb ✓	✓ ZIMMERSHEAD, C.E., ARM2c
3-B-10 ✓ Lt. H.S. Bottomley, Jr. ✓	✓ JOHNSON, D.F., ARM2c
3-B-11 ✓ Ensign C.S. Lane ✓	✓ HENNING, J.U., ARM2c
3-B-12 ✓ Ensign J.C. Butler ✓	✓ BERG, D.D., ARM3c

Third Division

3-B-13 ✓ Lt. D.W. Shumway ✓	✓ COONS, R.E., ARM1c
3-B-14 ✓ Ensign R.M. Elder ✓	✓ TILL, L.A., RM3c
3-B-15 ✓ Ensign B.R. Cooner ✓	✓ BASSETT, C.R., ARM2c
3-B-16 ✓ Lt(jg) O.B. Wiseman ✓	✓ DAWN, G.U., ARM3c
3-B-17 ✓ Ensign M.A. Merrill ✓	✓ BERGERON, D.J., ARM3c

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Upon taking departure from the U.S.S. YORKTOWN the squadron climbed to 15,000 ft. enroute to the reported enemy position, remaining above VT-3 and VF-3, proceeding at low altitude and utilizing clouds for screening purposes. Due to faulty electrical bomb release connections, four planes 3-B-1, 3-B-8, 3-B-11, and 3-B-17, inadvertently dropped their bombs soon after departure.

At about 1200 the enemy was sighted about 35 miles to the northwest steaming on an easterly course, speed about 20 knots. Their forces were estimated to consist of four carriers, two battleships, at least four heavy cruisers, one or more light cruisers, and numerous destroyers. The formation appeared scattered; apparently the carriers had just previously taken aboard their planes that had participated in the attack on Midway Island earlier that morning.

Our combined mission was to attack and destroy by coordinated torpedo and dive bombing action any Japanese carrier encountered.

The squadron swung to the northward as the torpedo planes had not yet reported ready for the attack. At about 1220 Commander, Bombing Squadron Three called Commander, Torpedo Squadron Three and asked if he were ready to commence the attack. ComTorpron Three replied in the affirmative. Almost immediately thereafter ComTorpron Three called ComFitron Three and frantically informed him that there were fighters attacking his squadron.

Meanwhile Bombing Squadron Three commenced its approach from the north with the objective a very large carrier of about 25,000 tons believed to be the AKAGI. Its flight deck was covered with planes spotted aft. Upon sighting our aircraft, the objective turned left 90 degrees to the north in order to launch planes and the sides of the carrier turned into a veritable ring of flame as the enemy commenced firing small calibre and anti-aircraft guns. There was no fighter opposition at altitude. The attack signal was executed and individual planes of VB-3 took interval for diving as the first enemy plane was being launched. Diving from the north, all pilots had a steady dive along the fore and aft line of the target, Lt (jg) Holmberg, 3-B-8, was the first to drop, and his bomb exploded directly in the midst of the spotted planes, turning the after part of the flight deck into sheets of flame. A fighter was blown over the side as it was being launched. Five direct hits and three very near misses were scored immediately thereafter. 3-B-14 and 3-B-15 upon seeing the carrier so heavily hit and burning furiously, shifted their dives

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to the light cruiser plane guard, scoring a near miss and a hit on the fantail. 3-B-13 and 3-B-16 likewise shifted to a nearby battleship and scored a direct hit on the stern and a near miss.

BUTLER WISEMAN

Release altitudes averaged 2,500 feet and withdrawal was made to the northeast with radical maneuvering at high speed close to the water amidst heavy anti-aircraft fire. On retirement, 3-B-8 reported being attacked by a twin-float bi-plane, possibly a Kawanishi 95 with no damage resulting.

Thirteen Mk.13, 1,000 lb. bombs with Mk.21 nose and Mk.23 tail fuzed were dropped, the remaining four having been lost as previously explained.

The carrier was an inferno of flame and undoubtedly a total loss, the battleship was smoking from the stern, the light cruiser attacked was stopped and had settled slightly by the stern, but was not afire.

All Bombing Squadron Three aircraft returned undamaged to U.S.S. YORKTOWN by 1315. Two of our torpedo planes were also observed returning. At 1407 while in the landing circle the YORKTOWN directed over voice radio that all planes get clear as she was about to be attacked. As the squadron had broken up into sections for landing, section leaders took their sections eastward into the area midway between Task Force 17 and Task Force 16 to await the completion of the attack. Jettisoned enemy bombs were observed falling well clear of surface vessels and several Japanese planes fell in flames. One direct hit was observed aft and one amidships on the YORKTOWN. There were several near misses.

While maneuvering in the clear, our planes were mistaken for Japanese, and several sections reported that our fighters fired at them.

When the attack on the YORKTOWN was completed, all section leaders took their sections over to Task Force 16 and landed aboard the U.S.S. ENTERPRISE except 3-B-1, Lt-Cdr. M.F. Leslie, USN, pilot; GALLAGHER, W.E., ARM10, USN, passenger, and 3-B-8, Lt(j). P.A. Holmberg, USN, pilot; LA PLANT, G.A., ARM50, USN, passenger, which planes have not been seen since they were together in the YORKTOWN landing circle.

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B. First day, 4 June 1942. Second phase: At 1730 LZT (Plus 10) Bombing Squadron THREE, now composed of fourteen SB2C-3 and -3A type airplanes, was launched from the U.S.S. ENTERPRISE in company with six Scouting Squadron Six planes and four Bombing Squadron Six planes as a result of a new contact with the enemy fleet by Scouting Squadron Five scout planes. The enemy was reported to consist of one carrier, two battleships, three heavy cruisers, and four destroyers in position, Lat. 31-40 N, Long. 179-10 W. The attack group was under the command of Commander, Scouting Squadron Six. Bombing Squadron Three's tactical organization was as follows:

3-B-13 ✓ Lt. D.W. Shumway ✓	✓ COONS, R.E., ARM1c
3-B-15 ✓ Ens. B.R. Cooner ✓	✓ BASSETT, C.R., AOM2c
3-B-3 ✓ Ens. P.W. Schlegel ✓	✓ SHROPSHIRE, J.A., ARM3c
3-B-16 ✓ Lt(jg) O.B. Wiseman ✓	✓ DANN, G.U., ARM3c
3-B-17 ✓ Ens. M.A. Merrill ✓	✓ BERGERON, D.J., ARM3c
6-B-12 ✓ Ens. S.C. Hogan, jr. (VBS)	✓ BRAUN, E.K., Seals
3-B-7 ✓ Lt(jg) G.A. Sherwood ✓	✓ BENNETT, H.D., ARM2c
3-B-8 ✓ Ens. R.M. Inaman ✓	✓ WEAVER, S.K., ARM3c
3-B-2 ✓ Ens. P.W. Cobb ✓	✓ ZIMMERSHEAD, C.E., ARM2c
3-B-10 ✓ Lt. H.S. Bottailey, jr. ✓	✓ JOHNSON, D.F., ARM2c
3-B-11 ✓ Ens. C.S. Lane ✓	✓ HENNING, J.C., ARM2c
3-B-12 ✓ Ens. J.C. Butler ✓	✓ BERG, D.D., ARM3c
3-B-4 ✓ Ens. R.K. Campbell ✓	✓ CRAIG, H.H., ARM1c
3-B-5 ✓ Ens. A.W. Hanson ✓	✓ GODFREY, J.V., ARM3c
<del>3-B-6 ✓ Ens. R.H. Benson ✓</del>	✓ BERGERON, F.P., ARM3c

At 1750 the group took departure from Task Force 16 and commenced climbing for attack position. The enemy was first sighted to the northwest about 30 miles distant at 1345 from 13,000 ft. on a westerly course, speed 20 knots. Their formation was again widely spaced, as in the previous attack, with little or no screening. The air group immediately swung wide to the southwest in order to approach from the direction of the sun. Weather conditions were ideal with excellent visibility unlimited ceiling, low scattered clouds at 8,500 ft, and smooth sea.

By 1858 the group was in attack position, altitude 19,000 ft. approaching the enemy at high speed from the sun; divisions and sections were stacked down. Commander Scouting Squadron Six

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-----SUMMARY-----  
directed by voice radio the ENTERPRISE planes to attack the lone carrier, believed to be of the HOSYO class, and Bombing Squadron Three to attack the nearer battleship. At the same time it was announced that enemy fighters were ahead and above. These were believed to consist of at least twelve of the "Zero" type. At 1905 amidst heavy anti-aircraft fire, Scouting Squadron Six broke off to commence the attack. While these planes were in the dive, the enemy carrier swung sharply to a southerly heading. Observing no direct hits by the Scouting Squadron Six planes, Bombing Squadron Three changed the objective from the battleship to the carrier, which was the specific objective ordered, and commenced the attack. Bombing Squadron Six dove last. 3-B-13, 3-B-15, 3-B-10, and 3-B-17 were attacked in the dive by the enemy fighters. 3-B-12 and 3-B-16 were reported to have been attacked by fighters and are believed shot down. It is further believed that these casualties occurred after releasing their bombs. 3-B-4 and 3-B-6 attacked the battleship as previously directed, scoring a near miss and a direct hit which started fires. There were four direct hits by Bombing Squadron Three alone on the carrier and it was burning furiously.

Retirement was effected by radically maneuvering at high speed near the water both to the east and southwest through heavy anti-aircraft fire and fighter attacks.

3-B-13, Lt Shumway, UEN, was attacked by three fighters, both during the dive and retirement, which made sweeping passes from the rear. Two of these were lost in clouds, the other continuing the attack during retirement in the clouds, firing small calibre sighting shots with intermittent 20 mm cannon. The plane was hit by several 20 mm shells damaging right diving and landing flap, right main gas tank (resulting in loss of oil fuel remaining in that tank), right elevator and stabilizer, and baggage compartment, exploding therein and throwing fragments into the rear cockpit which resulted in injuring the gunner, COONS, R.E., ARM10, slightly in the left arm. Several small calibre holes were later discovered about the fuselage and nose section.

PH  
3-B-15, Ensign B.R. Cooner, USNR, was similarly attacked by three fighters which used the same tactics. The pilots also believes some of the fighters to have been Me 109's. One 20 mm shell passed through the rear cockpit exploding in the radio transmitter, thereby seriously wounding the gunner, BASSETT, G.R., AOM20, in the right knee. The pilot received a slight leg wound.

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One explosive small calibre bullet entered and shattered the life raft compartment. One "Zero" fighter was shot down by twin .30 cal. fire according to the gunner.

Likewise Ensign M.A. Merrill, USNR, pilot of 3-B-17, was attacked by two enemy fighters which used scissor tactics, diving simultaneously from high on each quarter. These broke off the attack after about 5 minutes damaging the fuselage with small calibre. Two 20 mm shells struck just aft of rear cockpit ripping control cables slightly and injuring the gunner, PH BERGERON, D.J., ARM3c, in both feet.

3-B-7, Lt(jg) G.A. Sherwood, USNR, had an experience similar to Ensign Merrill's in 3-B-17, but sustained no damage.

3-B-10, Lt. H.S. Bottomley, USN, was attacked at the top of his dive by a single fighter which made an overhead pass. The pilot opened his diving flaps, thereby causing the enemy pilot to overshoot. Meanwhile two other fighters attacked from overhead, rear, but their runs were spoiled by the first fighter who pulled up vertically into them. At about 7,000 ft. in the dive another fighter appeared and commenced runs, which from a vertical attitude, appeared to be a form of "falling leaf". This plane was driven off by twin flexible .30 calibre fire shortly thereafter. No damage was sustained.

Eleven Mk. 13, 1,000 lb bombs and 3 Mk. 12, 500 lb bombs were dropped by this squadron at an average altitude of 2,500 ft. Fuses were Mk. 21, nose, and Mk. 23, tail, detonating 1/100 sec. after impact. Approximately 1,000 rounds of .30 calibre ammunition were expended against enemy fighter attacks.

The squadron returned to the ENTERPRISE between 2008 and 2034, landing aboard. Two planes failed to return: 3-B-12, Ensign J.C. Butler, USNR, pilot; ~~BERG, D.D., ARM3c, USN, Passenger;~~ and 3-B-16, Lt(jg) O.B. Wiseman, USN, Pilot; ~~DAVE, G.U., ARM3c, USN, Passenger.~~

SHAMWAY COOPER MERRILL  
The damage sustained by 3-B-13, 3-B-15, and 3-B-17 rendered them inoperative for further combat.

C. Second day, 5 June, 1942: At 1740 LZT (Plus 10), Bombing Squadron Three was launched from the U.S.S. ENTERPRISE in company with Bombing Squadron Six, Scouting Squadron Six, and Scouting Squadron Seven.

- 6 - SHAMWAY IN COMMAND

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Squadron Five, to attack and sink a crippled enemy carrier. The estimated location of the enemy force was 250 miles west northwest from Lat. 29-47 N, Long. 178-58 W. The tactical organization of Bombing Squadron Three was as follows:

	<u>First Division</u>	
SCHEFFEL - 3-B-3 ✓	Lt D.W. SHUMWAY ✓	✓ COONS, R.E., ARM1c
	3-B-14 ✓ Ens R.M. ELDER ✓	✓ TILL, L.A., RM3c
BENSON - 3-B-6 ✓	Ens P.W. SCHLEGEL ✓	✓ SHROPSHIRE, J.A., ARM2c
	3-B-4 ✓ Ens R.K. CAMPBELL ✓	✓ CRAIG, H.H., ARM1c
	3-B-5 ✓ Ens A.W. HANSON ✓	✓ GODFREY, J.V., ARM3c
	<u>Second Division</u>	
	3-B-7 ✓ Lt (jg) G.A. SHERWOOD ✓	✓ BENNETT, H.D., ARM2c
	3-B-8 ✓ Ens R. M. ISAMAN ✓	✓ WEAVER, S.K., ARM3c
	3-B-9 ✓ Ens P.W. COBB ✓	✓ ZIMMERSHEAD, C.E., ARM2c
	3-B-10 ✓ Lt H.S. BOTTOMLEY, Jr ✓	✓ JOHNSON, D.F., ARM2c
	3-B-11 ✓ Ens C.S. LANE ✓	✓ HENNING, J.O., ARM2c

The flight remained at a low altitude until approximately one hundred miles from the anticipated enemy position. Scouting squadron were on a scouting line. At this point Bombing Squadrons started climbing to altitude. At 2000 the positions at which the enemy was expected to be reached. The ceiling was 13,000 ft. above which was a heavy overcast, visibility conditions were hazy. There was no appreciable amount of wind and the sea was smooth.

As the enemy was nowhere in sight, the next twenty minutes were spent searching to the southwest. At 2020 a lone enemy vessel was sighted, believed to be a light cruiser of the KATORI class, on course west, speed 25 knots. It was decided to attack this light cruiser as it was growing dark, remaining gas load prevented further search, and there were no more enemy ships in the vicinity.

The attack was initiated by Bombing Squadron Three from an altitude of 13,000 ft. followed in order by Bombing Squadron Six, Scouting Squadron Six, and Scouting Squadron Five. Because of the cruiser's high speed, maneuverability, and the hazy weather conditions, a very elusive dive bombing target was presented. The enemy threw up a large volume of small calibre with intermittent anti-aircraft fire. There were no direct hits observed.

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Ten Mk. 12, 500 lb demolition bombs were dropped by Bombing Squadron Three. Mk. 21, nose, and Mk. 23, tail fuses were used, detonating 1/100 sec. after impact. During dives the ship was strafed by .50 caliber fixed machine guns, and on the pull-outs by .30 caliber flexible machine guns. Average release altitude was 2,500 ft. with retirement close to the water at high speed to the east.

The squadron made a running rendezvous and then proceeded back to the ENTERPRISE arriving over the ship at 2145 and landing aboard during darkness. All Bombing Squadron Three planes returned undamaged.

D. Third day, 6 June 1942: Ten SBD-3 and -3A type airplanes of Bombing Squadron Three were ordered to proceed to the vicinity of Lat. 29-33 N, Long 173-36 W, and attack a force reported to consist of a battleship and four destroyers. Five planes of VB-6 formed a third division and sixteen planes of Scouting Squadron Five and Scouting Squadron Six combined to form another squadron. Twelve F4F-4's of Fighting Squadron Six were launched to strafe the enemy destroyers, and 3 TBD's of Torpedo Squadron Six completed the group, which was under the command of Commander, Scouting Squadron Five. **SHORT**

The tactical organization of Bombing Squadron Three was as follows:

First Division

3-B-3 ✓ Lt. D.W. Shumway	✓ O'CONNOR, R.E., ARM10
3-B-14 ✓ Ens. R.M. Elder	✓ TILL, L.A., ARM30
3-B-6 ✓ Ens. M.A. Merrill	✓ EUROPSHIRE, J.A., ARM30 *
3-B-4 ✓ Ens. R.K. Campbell	✓ BERGERON, F.P., ARM30 *
3-B-5 ✓ Ens. A.W. Hanson	✓ GODFREY, J.V., ARM30

Second Division

3-B-7 ✓ Lt (JG) G.A. Sherwood	✓ BENNETT, H.D., ARM20
3-B-8 ✓ Ens. R.M. Isaman	✓ WEAVER, S.K., ARM30
3-B-9 ✓ Ens. B.R. Cooner	✓ ZIMMERHEAD, C.E., ARM20 *
3-B-10 ✓ Lt. H.S. Bottomley	✓ JOHNSON, D.F., ARM20
3-B-11 ✓ Ens. G.S. Lane	✓ HENNING, J.O., ARM20

Third Division

Composed of five Bombing Squadron Six planes.

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At 1240 LZT (Plus 10) the group was launched from the U.S.S. ENTERPRISE and at 1300 took departure and proceeded on a southwesterly heading in the direction of the enemy contact. On the way the group climbed to 15,000 ft. and made contact at about 1400 with an enemy force to the southwest, distance 30 miles, consisting of one battle or heavy cruiser of the MOGAMI class, one heavy cruiser believed to be of the ATAGO class, and two destroyers, course southwest, speed 15. Visibility was excellent, ceiling unlimited with low scattered clouds, wind 18 knots from the southwest.

As this force apparently did not contain a battleship, which was the specific objective, the group swung south around this force for thirty miles endeavoring to locate the battleship to no avail. At length Commander Scouting Squadron Five gave orders to attack the MOGAMI class cruiser, or battle cruiser as the case may be, at 1445. Divisions and sections made individual approaches from all directions. The attacks commenced at 1450 with little anti-aircraft fire encountered. There was no enemy air opposition.

Individual Bombing Squadron Three hits on the MOGAMI type are believed to be four direct hits and five near misses. After the attacks had been completed the topside was burning heavily; the ship, a complete shambles, slowed to a stop. Many topside personnel had either been blown or jumped into the water. Internal explosions were seen to follow.

3-B-8, Ens. R.M. Isaman, USNR, dove on the ATAGO class heavy cruiser upon seeing it undamaged, and, through heavy anti-aircraft fire directed at him alone, scored a direct hit aft. Another direct hit followed soon thereafter on this ship. No heavy fires were started, however, though its speed was undoubtedly reduced.

The F4F-4's made one pass at the destroyers, strafing them and retired.

The TBD's had orders not to go into anti-aircraft fire and therefore retired without launching torpedoes.

Ten Mk. 13, 1000 lb. bombs were dropped by Bombing Squadron Three from an average release altitude of 2,500 feet. Nose and tail fuses were Mk. 21 and 23 respectively, detonating 1/100 sec. after impact.

All ten planes of Bombing Squadron Three returned undamaged and landed aboard the U.S.S. ENTERPRISE at 1545.

D. W. SHUMWAY. *HCB*