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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE FIGHTING SQUADRON 221, MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP 22,
2ND MARINE AIRCRAFT WING, FLEET MARINE FORCE,
c/o FLEET P.O., SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

ANNEX E

6 June, 1942.

From: The Commanding Officer.
To: The Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 22.
Subject: Enemy contact, report on.
Reference: (a) U.S. Navy Regulations, art 874 (6).
Enclosures: (A) Statement of Capt. Kirk Armistead, USMC.
(B) Statement of Capt. M. E. Carl, USMC.
(C) Statement of Capt. W. C. Humberd, USMC.
(D) Statement of Capt. P. R. White, USMC.
(E) Statement of 2ndLt C. M. Canfield, USMCR.
(F) Statement of 2ndLt R. A. Corry, USMCR.
(G) Statement of 2ndLt C. S. Hughes, USMCR.
(H) Statement of 2ndLt H. Phillips, USMCR.
(I) Statement of 2ndLt J. C. Musselman, USMCR.
(J) Statement of 2ndLt C. M. Kuntz, USMCR.
(K) Statement of 2ndLt W. V. Brooks, USMCR.
(L) Statement of 2ndLt D. D. Irwin, USMCR.

1. At approximately 0600, 4 June, 1942, twenty-six airplanes of VMF-221 took off to engage enemy aircraft which were reported to be approaching the area. One plane of this squadron, piloted by Lieutenant C. S. Hughes, returned and landed shortly after take off due to a faulty engine.

2. The squadron then consisted of one five plane division of F2A-3 airplanes led by Major Parks, one six plane division of F2A-3 airplanes led by Captain Hennessy, one seven plane division of six F2A-3 airplanes and one F4F-3 airplane which tagged on to the normal airplane division of Captain Armistead, one two plane division led by Captain Carey, and the two plane division of F4F-3 airplanes led by Captain McCarthy.

3. All divisions were acting as separate units, and were vectored out at 310 - 320 degrees. The enemy bombers were contacted at from twenty to forty miles away from Midway Islands. I saw two waves consisting of approximately forty dive bombers each. These two waves had been attacked by friendly fighters before I made sight contact with them. All divisions attacked these dive bombers. All pilots who returned did not claim any victories that they were not absolutely certain of. According to all reliable sources, one for example, Captain M. A. Tyler of VMSB-241, who was on Midway Islands during the entire attack, not more than eighteen dive bombers reached the entire area. I, personally, saw at least eighty dive bombers thirty miles away, heading towards Midway. I thereby claim at least fifty enemy dive bombers, Aichi Type 99, for the VMF-221 squadron, plus an undisclosed number of 00 Fighters.

Subject: Enemy contact, report on. (cont'd)

4. The enemy bombers showed superb air discipline, staying in tight VEE formations and keeping on their compass course throughout our entire attack. It is our belief that the escort fighters were flying at approximately the same level, or at lower altitude than the bombers. Fighters worked in sections or divisions of from three to nine planes. They greatly outnumbered our fighters.

5. Our initial contact was made at approximately 14,000 feet. All of the divisions of this squadron were broken up after their first attack, and were forced to operate as single planes.

6. The F2A-3 is sadly out-classed in all respects by the Japanese OO Fighters. Although all pilots of this squadron were aware of this fact, they drove their attack home with daring and skill.

Kirk Armistead
KIRK ARMISTEAD.

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4 June, 1942.

Statement of Capt. K. Armistead, USMC.

My airplane was an F2A-3, Bureau number 01562. My guns were loaded with 2 tracer, 2 armor piercing, 1 ball and 1 incendiary every six rounds.

While on standby on the morning of June 4, 1942, the air raid alarm was sounded at 0555. As our engines were turning up, we did not hear the alarm: but inquired, and found that it had been sounded. At approximately 0602 we took off. My division consisted of six F2A-3 airplanes, piloted by myself, Lt. Sandoval, Capt. Humberd, Lt. Brooks, Lt. Kunz, and Lt. Mahannah. Capt. Humberd was leading the second section, and Lt. Kunz was leading the third section. I climbed the division to 5,000 feet, at which time the base station instructed me to climb to 12,000 feet and vector 310°. I climbed to 12,000 feet and vectored 310°. I then received instructions to vector 320°. At about 0620 I heard Capt. Carey transmit "Tally-hoo" followed by hawks at angels 14, supported by fighters. I then started climbing, and sighted the enemy at approximately 14,000 feet at a distance of 5 to 7 miles out, and approximately 2 miles to my right. I immediately turned to a heading of about 70° and continued to climb. I was endeavoring to get a position above and ahead of the enemy and come down out of the sun. However, I was unable to reach this point in time. I was at 17,000 feet when I started my attack. The target consisted of five divisions of from 5 to 9 planes each, flying in division Vees. I figured this group to consist of from 30 to 40 dive bombers of the Aichi Type 99 SE DB. I was followed in column by five F2A-3 fighters and one F4F-3 fighter, pilot unknown. I made a head-on approach from above at a steep angle and at very high speed on the fourth enemy division which consisted of five planes. I saw my incendiary bullets travel from a point in front of the leader, up thru his plane and back through the planes on the left wing of the Vee. I continued in my dive, and looking back, saw two or three of those planes falling in flames. Some of the planes in my division centered their attack on the fifth enemy division. After my pullout, I zoomed back to an altitude of 14,000 feet, at this time I noticed another group of the same type bombers following along in their path. I looked back over my shoulder and about 2,000 feet below and behind me I saw three fighters in column, climbing up towards me, which I assumed to be planes of my division. However, they climbed at a very high rate, and a very steep path. When the nearest plane was about 500 feet below and behind me I realized that it was a Japanese Zero Fighter. I kicked over in a violent split S and received 3-20 mm shells, one in the right wing gun, one in the right wing root tank, and one in the top left side of the engine cowling. I also received about 20-7.7 rounds in the left aileron, which mangled the tab on the aileron, and sawed off a portion of the aileron. I continued in a verticle dive at full throttle, corkscrewing to the left, due to the effect of the damaged aileron. At about 3,000 feet, I started to pull out, and managed to hold the plane level at an altitude of 500 feet. As the speed decreased, the stick pressure became more

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manageable, and by giving it full left tab, at a low speed, the pressure was negligible.

I headed back towards the area, and called the base radio, asking them if I could land because of a damaged aileron. I received their "Roger, wait". I circled the area at a distance of about 15 miles, and saw that the area was under a heavy attack, so I proceeded to a spot up-sun from the area; and circled.

At approximately 0740 I heard the base radio call the fifth division and advise them to land, refuel, and re-arm. I could hear no reply, so asked for permission to land. I received an affirmative reply, so headed towards the area. I gave two recognition signals, circled the field, and was not fired at by anti aircraft batteries. My hydraulic system had been damaged, but the landing gear and flaps operated normally. The right brake was inoperative. A successful landing was effected at approximately 0800.

The Zero Fighter is exceptionally maneuverable, with an astounding rate of climb. It is capable of closing the range on an F2A-3 in a climb to such an extent that it seems useless to even try to make more than one pass at any target. It is my belief that they can climb at least 5,000 feet a minute, as these fighters climbing up at me were pointed at an angle of 50° in their climb.

I do not believe that they were zooming after a dive, because I am morally certain that at the time I attacked the bombers there were no enemy fighters above 14,000 feet. In fact, I believe that they were below the bombers at that time.

The Zero Fighter is faster in level flight than the F2A-3. It is much more maneuverable than the F2A-3. It can out climb the F2A-3. It has more fire power than the F2A-3.

In general, the Japanese airplanes appear to be very vulnerable to 50 cal. gun fire. They burst into flame in nearly all cases upon receiving any bullets.

It is my belief that the use of incendiary bullets greatly increases the effectiveness of attack against Japanese aircraft.

Kirk Armistead
KIRK ARMISTEAD

Statement of Captain M. E. Carl, USMC. (cont'd)

I climbed to 10,000' in the vicinity of my base and a few minutes later at 0720 received an order to land. I landed at approximately 0730, having managed to clear but one of my four guns. I used a total of a little over 300 rounds.

In my opinion, I shot down one Zero Isento Ki Navy Fighter and inflicted unknown damage to two more of the same type.

M. E. Carl
M. E. CARL

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4 June, 1942.

Statement of Captain W. C. Humberd, USMC.

While in the standby division on morning of June 4, 1942, the air raid alarm sounded at 0559. Our division took off at approximately 0605. In our division of six planes, Capt. Kirk Armistead is division leader, 2nd Lt. W. B. Sandoval his wingman, myself section leader of second section with 2nd Lt. W. V. Brooks as wingman, 2nd Lt. C. Kunz 3rd section leader with 2nd Lt. M. E. Mahannah his wingman. We took off immediately after fourth division and started gaining altitude in direction of approaching enemy which was 310 degrees, altitude 12,000 feet given by base radio.

Sight contact was made of enemy formations at approximately 12,000 feet bearing about 30 degrees to port and distance of about 10-15 miles. We continued climbing to 17,000 feet, still keeping the enemy slightly to our port, then when in position of about 3,500 to 4,000 feet above and still to port we made attack, about 30-35 miles bearing 320° from islands.

By time to make attack, my division leaders wingman had dropped back some in which case I was second to attack. I followed the division leader in a high side approach shooting down one (1) bomber in this approach, then coming up for high side approach on other side I again attacked, thinking I might have shot down another bomber in this approach. I came up on other side and started another approach when, about half way through run, I heard a loud noise and turning around I saw a large hole in hood of my plane and also two type OO navy fighters on me about 200 yards astern, then I immediately pushed over in steep dive in which one (1) followed me. I descended to water level in trying to gain distance on the fighter, the plane staying with me; I stayed at water level with full throttle gaining distance slowly until I decided the distance was great enough to turn on the plane in which case we met head on, I gave a long burst when we were about 300 yards distant and the plane caught on fire and out of control dived in the water. By this time I was approximately 40 miles from first attack and started gaining altitude up to 10,000 feet. My fuel and ammunition were fairly low, about three-fourths exhausted, and I called to see if field was clear for landing, in which case I received an "affirmative". In the meantime, while climbing for altitude, I discovered my hydraulic fluid had been lost and my flaps and landing gear would not lower so I used emergency system and the wheels lowered, then made proper approach to field and landed. After refueling and rearming, I again took off and while I knew my wheels would not retract, I intended going some distance from field to remain for a period when orders to land were given to all fighting planes.

My plane was a F2A-3, Bureau Number 01553, loaded with 1300 rounds of 50 cal. ammunition, one ball, 2 armor piercing. The attack was made at approximately 0625 and I used approximately 400-600 rounds of ammunition; the final landing being about 0745.

The enemy formations were of a Vee consisting of about five to nine planes each, there being about 4 to 5 of such formations in group we attacked. I don't

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know what formation the fighters used or where they were as the first I knew of their presence was the loud burst in my plane and turning, saw them. The type of bombers seems to correspond to the type 99 Aichi (navy), and the fighters were navy type OO.

After my second approach, I saw about four or five planes going down in flames and only identified one as our own, all this was just a glance on my part. Their fighters seemed to out maneuver us in most all respects except in my case, I out dived the one after me and gained distance at sea-level. Frankly, I think the F2A-3 does not compare with their type OO fighters whatsoever.

My plane had a number of holes in it, three or four making the left beam tank unusable. Had two large holes in fuselage of what appeared to be 20 mm size. No apparent damage to plane except for left beam tank and hydraulic lines broken.

W. C. Humbert
W. C. HUMBERD

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6 June, 1942.

Statement of Captain P. R. White, USMC.

At 0600, June 4th, I took off in a F2A-3, bureau number 01568, with Captain D. J. Hennessy leading the division.

We climbed to twelve thousand feet and circled for two or three minutes and contacted the enemy formations.

Captain Hennessy led us in attack on the horizontal bombers. There were three formations of nine planes to the formation. After the first pass I lost my wing man and the rest of the division. I made a long low fast climb and made a second above side pass, and started for a third, when I saw a Zero Fighter climbing up on my tail very rapidly. I pushed my stick forward as hard as I could and went into a violent dive. When I recovered and looked around, I had lost the Zero Fighter.

I regained my altitude and received a transmission saying that an enemy plane was leaving the area on a heading of 310°. I made a long fast above side pass on this plane which I had spotted. After the pass I saw him waver and make an easy left turn into the water. He was at approximately one thousand feet when I initiated the pass. I believe I shot the pilot. The plane was an Aichi 99 Dive Bomber.

I again regained my altitude and saw another Aichi 99 weaving in and out of the clouds, returning to his carrier. I had six thousand feet and gave my Buffalo all the power I could get and just stayed in the same relative position. I finally gained enough to make a pass by nosing over and losing three thousand feet. After my first pass he slowed down a great deal, and I was able to make another pass quite easily. I believe that in my first pass, I had damaged his engine. After the second pass I got behind him and was going to bore in and found out that I was out of ammunition. I am sure that I shot the rear seat gunner in this plane because he did not fire on me on the third pass, and he could have easily.

I returned to the base and rearmed and took off and later received instructions to land.

The F2A-3 is not a combat aeroplane. It is inferior to the planes we were fighting in every respect. The F2A-3 has about the same speed as an Aichi 99 Dive Bomber. The Japanese Zero Fighter can run circles around the F2A-3. I estimated the top speed of a Zero Fighter, from what I saw, at better than 450 miles per hour.

It is my belief that any commander that orders pilots out for combat in a F2A-3 should consider the pilot as lost before leaving the ground.

During the combat I expended 1360 rounds of 50 caliber ammunition.

P. R. White
P. R. WHITE

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6 June, 1942.

Statement of Second Lieutenant C. M. Canfield, USMCR.

I took off as wingman on Captain Carl at approximately 0557, June 4, 1942. We joined on Captain Carey and were vectored out 310°. The three of us climbed to 1,400' on the vector, during which I was motioned to fly number three on Captain Carey. About nine minutes out Captain Carl began to drop back. At 0612 Captain Carey made a wide 270° turn; then a 90° diving turn while reporting to Zed, "Talley ho, large formation of bombers," a slight pause, then, "Accompanied by fighters." The bombers were at approximately 12,000'. I slid into a column on Captain Carey during the run, where I stayed until the engagement was over. The run was a high side from the right. I fired at the No. 3 plane in the No. 3 section until it exploded and went down in flames. In the middle of the run I saw a column of fighters diving on us from the left. There was no return fire from the bombers that I could see. Captain Carey pulled out of the dive and made a high wing over for another attack when we were attacked by their fighters. He then dived at about a 40° angle and headed for a large cloud about five miles away. I momentarily lagged looking for planes following us and went around the cloud the opposite direction from Captain Carey to have a better look behind. I saw a large trail of smoke and the bomber burning on the ocean, but no fighters, and then joined upon him again. He headed in the general direction of the Islands on an unsteady course. Finally I observed that he was badly wounded and he turned the lead over to me. He kept dropping and falling behind and I kept throttling back so he could keep up. When I had lead us to a 270° bearing from the Island, he called me and instructed me to join on him again. We had about forty gallons of gasoline left, including seventeen gallons of reserve. We rolled the wheels down outside of the reef and made our approach to the field from the 270° bearing. I made a normal approach but had no flaps, and when the wheels touched the ground the landing gear collapsed. The Island was under heavy attack, with fighters strafing runways and a Patrol Boat. When the plane had stopped sliding, I jumped out and ran for a trench, while a plane was strafing in the direction of my abandoned plane or the Patrol Boat.

All during the above encounter, I flew very close on Captain Carey, making all runs and dives in column. There were 100 rounds gone from three of my guns and 90 from the other. At least one-half of these were used up during two test fires I had made that morning.

My plane was hit on the right elevator, left wing and flap, and just ahead of the tail wheel by 20mm cannon. There was also a 30 caliber hole through the tail wheel and one that entered the hood on the right side about six inches up, passing just over the left rudder peddle and damaging the landing gear.

Statement of Second Lieutenant C. M. Canfield, USMCR. (cont'd)

Captain Carey's and my engagement was of very short duration, thereby limiting my impression. However, I am positive that the bomber I shot down was not an Aichi type 99, because when this bomber exploded, I was flat, at about a 140° angle, and I am positive that the landing gear was retracted. However, the planes were painted dark and the light was bad, so I couldn't tell the type of ship, but they were larger than our dive bombers. After talking to observers from the Island who were observing through field glasses, they were of a twin engine class, because they confirmed that the plane was missing in the afore said position.

During this encounter I flew a F4F-3 type plane, bureau No. 3997.

C. M. Canfield

C. M. CANFIELD

Al-1/olg

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6 June, 1942.

Statement of Second Lieutenant R. A. Corry, USMCR.

On the morning of June 4, 1942, Captain McCarthy and I were preparing to land after a routine patrol. We received a message from radio telling of enemy planes approaching the Island from a bearing of 310° true at a distance of approximately 35 miles.

As we were very short on fuel, we landed immediately, serviced our ships and took off.

We were at 8,000 feet heading for the enemy bombers which were around 12,000 or 15,000 feet when we were attacked by eight OO Fighters. We were immediately broken up by the first pass, and from then on we were fighting singly.

Captain McCarthy shot down one fighter immediately, and I shot one down on his tail.

I lost sight of Captain McCarthy shortly after due to the fact that I had three OO Fighters on my tail. Being unable to out maneuver them, I attacked a dive bomber that was leaving the area of Eastern Island. I fired a short burst and the dive bomber (Aichi 99) rolled over and crashed in the ocean.

By this time my tanks were all leaking badly and the fighters were shooting my plane up very effectively. I managed to stay low on the water and get back to the field safely. I was flying a F4F-3 type plane, bureau No. 2537.

I observed two F2A-3's shot down during the conflict, one pilot bailed out and was strafed.

The OO Fighter is by far the most maneuverable plane that exists at the present time. You cannot compare them with our service type ships. The OO Fighter is apparently very strong in construction, being able to withstand as much stress and strain as our own planes. The Japanese planes seem to be very vulnerable if you are fortunate enough to bring your guns to bear.

I expended a total of about 20 rounds out of each gun.

R. A. Corry
R. A. CORRY

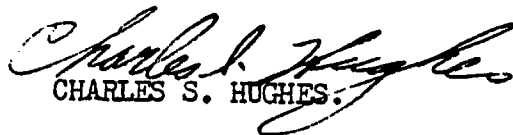
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4 June, 1942.

Statement of Second Lieutenant Charles S. Hughes, USMCR.

The morning of June 4, 1942, I warmed up my plane at approximately 0350. At 0530 (exactly by my watch) I received word to start the engine again. At approximately 0605 we took off, at five thousand feet I started having trouble keeping with my division, as the engine started vibrating and losing power. At sixteen thousand feet I was lagging badly and the engine was so rough I concluded it would be suicide to try to fight the plane. My decision was to get the plane back to its revetment where it could be readied to hit them later. I carried out this plan and had the plane in the revetment at about 0630. Minutes later the horizontal bombers arrived.

The anti-aircraft batteries went into action as soon as the enemy was in range and got two out of the eleven that started their run on Sand Island. I saw the bombs released over Sand Island and then had to hug the ground as six planes released their bombs over Eastern Island and they landed close to my position. The dive bombers came out of the sun a few minutes later. They appeared to be Aichi 99's. The Zeroes came in strafing immediately afterward. I saw two Brewsters trying to fight the Zeroes. One was shot down and the other was saved by ground fire covering his tail. Both looked like they were tied to a string while the zeroes made passes at them. I believe that our men with planes even half as good as the zeroes would have stopped the raid completely.


CHARLES S. HUGHES.

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6 June, 1942.

Statement of Second Lieutenant H. Phillips, USMCR.

My plane, F4F-3, #28, Bureau number 1864 was out of commission. I stood by the telephone in the ready tent with Lieutenant Musselman.

The bombs started dropping at 0630, at which time I went to a slit trench adjacent to the tent. After the bombing was over I went to the messhall where, with a detail recruited from men in slit trenches, we extinguished the fires. I found six boxes of Blood Plasona in the messhall wreckage which I delivered to the sick-bay.

During the action I saw a Brewster Fighter cut across the N.E. tip of Eastern Island to help another Brewster. This Brewster was shot down by a Zero Fighter. The pilot baled out and the Zero Fighter, with another, strafed the pilot about three times each.

Zero Fighters outnumbered our fighters, had greater speed, and vastly great maneuverability. The Japanese planes were flown with skill and daring. Brewsters and Grummans were no match for the Zero Fighters.

Island defenses were well and cleverly manned. There was no confusion evident during the raid and not a person visible in our sector of the Island, although the AA guns fired at every opportunity.

H. Phillips

H. PHILLIPS

Al-1/clg

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6 June, 1942.

Statement of Second Lieutenant J. C. Musselman, USMCR.

The morning of June 4th I was Duty Officer due to my plane being out of commission. At 0559 the air raid siren sounded and all the planes immediately took off. At 0615 Captain McCarthy and Second Lieutenant Corry landed to re-gas, having been on patrol since 0400. At 0618 Second Lieutenant Hughes landed with motor trouble. At 0625 Captain McCarthy and Second Lieutenant Corry took off. I immediately notified the Command Post and at the same time noticed enemy bombers approaching Sand Island. At 0630 enemy bombers hit Eastern Island, I having just made the nearest slit trench. The bombing attack lasted for approximately two minutes, after which I ran to a small two-man dug-out nearby due to the lack of covering in the slit trench. The nearest bombs landed about 100 yards from the Ready Tent causing no damage.

During the strafing attack that followed, Second Lieutenant Phillips and I were in the dug-out. Approximately at 0700 the attack was over. There was no damage to the Ready Tent, and only two holes in the windshield of the squadron truck parked near the tent. There were no injuries or casualties to officers or personnel within 100 yards of the Ready Tent.

What action I witnessed brought out the superiority of the Japanese OO Fighter over our F2A's and F4F's. The Japanese fighters and dive bombers showed very good skill and daring.

J. C. Musselman Jr.
J. C. MUSSELMAN, JR.

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4 June, 1942.

Statement of Second Lieutenant C. M. Kunz, USMCR.

I was pilot of F2A-3, Bureau number 01521, on the morning of June 4, 1942. Our division was led by Capt. Armistead with 2nd Lt. Sandoval flying on his wing. Leading the 2nd Section in the division was Capt. Humberd with 2nd Lt. Brooks on his wing. I was leading the 3rd section in the division with 2nd Lt. Mohannah flying on my wing.

Our division had taxied down to end of #2 runway to go on standby at 0515. We had all cut our engines, and at approximately 0545, Lt. Musselman, the duty officer, drove down in the squadron truck and told us to turn our engines up and await take off instructions. No one in our division had heard the alarm sound and several sections had taxied down and taken off. Our division was in the air at 0602 when the radar vectored us out on a heading of 310°, angels 12, and very shortly the radar vectored us to a heading of 320°. We had been climbing at almost full throttle and sighted about 40 enemy planes in 5 to 9 plane divisions. Shortly after reaching 17,000 ft., there was one lone F4F-3 thought to be 2nd Lt. Swansberger flying in my section at about 20 miles. I saw Capt. Armistead make his attack and Capt. Humberd. My attack was a high speed over head approach. I was firing at the 5th the last division and saw 2 planes in flames in the 4th division very likely shot by Armistead and Humberd. It is my belief that Lt. Sandoval was drawn flat in his approach and was shot by enemy back seat gunner. I saw my target burst into flames and pull out of formation.

After the initial attack, our division was completely separated and I zoomed up on the starboard side of the enemy Aichi type 99 V SE DB formation. I was about 2000 ft above the formation when I made my 2nd attack. I used the above side approach and was firing short burst frequently when this target caught fire. The pilot on the port outboard side of the VEE pulled out of formation to apparently let the plane on fire next to him get out. I started firing short bursts at long range at the plane that left the formation when I was attacked. I saw tracers go by my cockpit and some bullets nipping my wings. I was at an altitude at approximately 9,000 ft., and shoved over in a dive trying to shake the plane on my tail until I was flying about 20 feet from the water. I was making radical turns hoping the pilot couldn't get steadied on me. I glanced out of the rear and saw that it was a type OO ISENTO KI Navy fighter. I continued flying on a rapid turning course at full throttle when I was hit in the head by a glancing bullet. After he fired a few short bursts he left as I had been in a general direction of 205° heading away from the island. My plane was badly shot up and I knew it could not be used in another attack due to radio being shot and hydraulic system out. I flew for 10 or 15 minutes on this heading and circled until 0730 at which time I came in to the island and made my proper identifying approach and landed. I landed at 0750. I was very dizzy due to wound in head and immediately went to the dispensary. I expended 312 rounds from 3 of my guns. In my opinion the OO fighter has been by far underestimated. I think it is probably one of the finest fighters in the present war. As far the F2A-3, (or Brewster trainer) it should be in Miami as a training plane, rather than be used as a first line fighter.

C. M. Kunz
C. M. KUNZ.

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4-24-2002

H: Walt -

I know that this is a tardy response to your kind invitation for me to attend the reunion. I would certainly have enjoyed being there. For years, I have been leasing to a large operator a @ssoline station, Convenience store, a True Value hardware and a gun store. Since January we have discussed their buying it. Now, they want to close the deal on May 31 or June 3, — and I certainly want out of it, considering my two boats with cancer and my age.

If God is willing and if they have a get together, I will try to be there next year.

In the meantime, please give my regards to Ken Williamson and anyone else who might remember this long lanky junior kidman. I was having a recurrence of malaria after the battle, (caught originally in the swamps of S.E. Arkansas) and almost got taken to the hospital back at EWS. Capt. John Smith got the docs to let me go to Guadalcanal. I've always been grateful to him for that. He was a very nice person.

Thanks for thinking of me and I hope to see you next year.

Semper Par
— Bill

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4 June, 1942.

Statement of Second Lieutenant W. V. Brooks, USMCR.

I was pilot of F2A-3, Bureau number 01523. Our division under Capt. Armistead was on standby duty at the end of the runway on the morning of June 4, 1942, from 0415 until 0615. At about 0600, the alarm sounded and we took off. My division climbed rapidly, and I was having a hard time keeping up. I discovered afterwards that although my wheels indicator and hydraulic pressure indicator both registered "wheels up", they were in reality about 1/3 of the way down. We sighted the enemy at about 14,000 feet, I would say that there were 40 to 50 planes. At this time Lt. Sandoval was also dropping back. My radio was at this time putting out no volume, so I could not get the messages from Zed. At 17,000 feet, Capt. Armistead led the attack followed closely by Capt. Humberd. They went down the left side of the Vee, leaving two planes burning. Lt. Sandoval went down the right side of the formation and I followed. One of us got a plane from the right side of the Vee. At this time, I had completely lost sight of my division. As I started to pull up for another run on the bombers, I was attacked by two fighters. Because my wheels being jammed 1/3 way down, I could not out dive these planes, but managed to dodge them and fire a burst or so into them as they went past me and as I headed for the water. As I circled the island, the anti-aircraft fire drove them away. My tabs, instruments and cockpit were shot up to quite an extent, at this time and I was intending to come in for a landing.

It was at this time that I noticed an important feature in their fighting. I saw two planes dog-fighting over in the east, and decided to go help my friend if at all possible. My plane was working very poorly, and my climb was slow. As I neared the fight both planes turned on me. It was then that I realized I had been tricked into a sham battle put on by two Japs and I had failed to recognize this because of the sun in my eyes. When I saw I was being out-numbered, I turned and made a fast retreat for the island, collecting a goodly number of bullets on the way. After one of these planes had been shaken, I managed to get a good burst into another as we passed head-on when I turned into him. I don't believe this ship could have gotten back to his carrier, because he immediately turned away and started north and down. I again decided to land, but as I circled the island I saw two Japs on a Brewster. Three of my guns were jammed, but I cut across the island, firing as I went with my one gun. But I could Not get there in time to help the American flier and as soon as the Brewster had gone into the water I came in for a landing at approximately 0715 (estimated).

It is my belief that the Japs have a very maneuverable and very fast ship in their OO fighters, plenty of fire-power. They can turn inside the Brewster, but of course on the speed I would be unable to say as my wheels were jammed about 1/3 way down all during the fight, causing considerable drag.

My plane was damaged somewhat, having 72 bullet and cannon holes in it, and I had a very slight flesh wound on my left leg.

It is my express desire that Lt. Sandoval, deceased, be logged up with the bomber which one of us got in our first run.

W. V. Brooks
W. V. BROOKS

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Al-1/olg UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE FIGHTING SQUADRON 221, MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP 22,
2ND MARINE AIRCRAFT WING, FLEET Marine FORCE,
c/o FLEET P.O., SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

6 June, 1942.

Statement of Second Lieutenant D. D. Irwin, USMCR.

I was pilot of a Brewster Fighter, F2A-3, Bureau No. 01550, on 4 June, 1942. The air raid siren sounded about 0600, and Captain R. E. Curtin and I, the two of us being the entire fourth division, took off approximately at 0603. I flew No. 2 position on Capt Curtin, and together we followed another division of five Brewsters to 14,000', on heading about 000°. About 20 miles out, at 0625, we saw, about 2,000' below, two divisions of single engine Japanese bombers in large Vee formation. Each bomber division contained from 7 to 9 planes. The division of Brewsters in front of us made an overhead approach followed by Captain Curtin and myself, after which I never again saw Captain Curtin or any of the first division. During the pull-out of my run, I saw one bomber in flames, presumably shot by someone in the first division. I, then, climbed to about 16,500' looking for my division leader. I was just preparing for another run on the bombers, when I saw a Japanese fighter already on my tail. I immediately dove to lose the fighter, attaining speed of at least 300 knots, pulling out about 3,500'. The Japanese fighter was still on my tail and that time shot most of my left aileron away. I dove again to about 500' and headed for Eastern Island, knowing I could not maneuver my plane well enough for combat. All this time, the Japanese fighter, supported by at least one other fighter, continued making runs on me, each time going by me and making steep wing-overs for another run. All this time I carried full throttle, making about 240 to 260 knots. Their gunnery was very good and I doubt if on any run that they missed hitting my plane. On several occasions, I heard bullets strike the armor plate in back of my seat which is only shoulder high, and several times I ducked my head as far as I could in the cockpit when a fighter was firing on me. I managed to land my plane with my head still in the cockpit and the Japanese still making runs on me. I landed approximately at 0650, during a full scale dive bombing attack.

On no occasion, did I have the distance between the Japanese fighter and myself to turn back and try any dog-fighting. The Japanese fighter, which I recognized to be a Zero Fighter, apparently had greater speed, much more maneuverability and at least as much fire power with both fuselage and wing guns. My plane has several cannon holes in it, although my right wing tank which was struck by cannon fire did not burn, but was hot enough to scorch and blister paint on the wing and aileron.

Statement of Second Lieutenant D. D. Irwin, USMCR. (cont'd)

I expended approximately 170 rounds from my four guns, and the ammunition was two armor piercing, two ball, and one tracer.

The Japanese had little regard for our ground anti-aircraft fire, which almost always burst behind the plane fired upon. I saw only one fighter shot down by anti-aircraft fire and he was strafing the field from about 100'.


D. D. IRWIN

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