



Crewmen on the MONTEREY watch the Marianas Turkey Shoot in progress on 19 June. Contrails formed in the clear atmosphere at high altitude making for extreme interest in the battle. (Photo — National Archives 80-G-238157)

ANATOMY OF AN AIR BATTLE

By THOMAS G. MILLER, JR.

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On 15 June 1944, two divisions of United States Marines and one of Army Infantry landed on Saipan in the Marianas Islands, 1500 miles south of Tokyo. This bold stroke threatened immediately to place the main Japanese islands within range of land-based American bombers and also to sever sea communications between these islands and the rich resources of the Indies, captured two years before. The reaction of the Japanese Navy had to be swift and decisive or the rapid erosion of the Empire's strategic position would inevitably follow. This reaction, when it came, led to one of the largest and most intense air battles in history.

The decision (made only in March) to capture the Marianas was one of the boldest and most decisive of the Pacific War. It established the direct approach across the central Pacific as the main thrust of the American offensive against Japan, it brought U.S. forces 1,000 miles closer to the main enemy islands and it offered the previously mentioned strategic advantages. From the viewpoint of the United States Navy it established once and for all the primacy of that service in the Pacific and gave it a mission worthy of its strength.

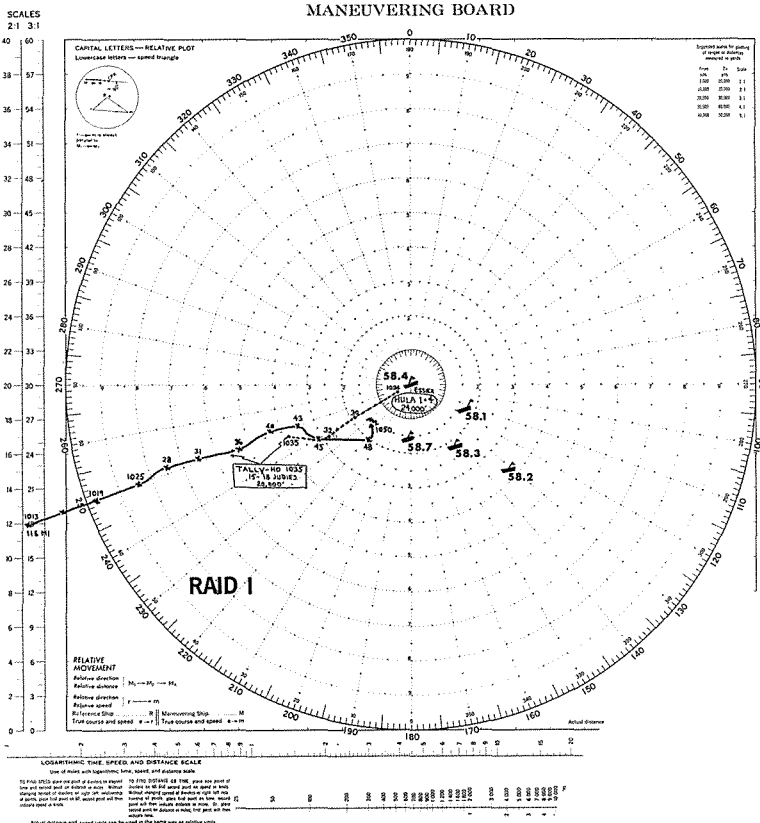
The Marianas landings (the capture of Saipan was followed by

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an attack on Guam July 21 and a landing on Tinian the 24th) were executed by the Fifth Fleet, commanded by Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, USN. The principal combat element of this fleet was Task Force 58, commanded by Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher, USN, a naval aviator since 1915 and a pioneer of American carrier aviation. Mitscher had been the first air officer of the SARATOGA, Executive Officer of the LANGLEY from 1929 to 1932 and C.O. of the HORNET in 1941-1942, in which capacity he launched Jimmy Doolittle's raid on Tokyo and participated in the Battle of Midway.

Now "Pete" Mitscher led a force the size and composition of which would have seemed fantastic only two years before. Task Force 58 was divided into four Task Groups, each normally consisting of a four-ship division of two large and two light carriers, a division each of two or three battleships and three or four cruisers, all screened by 12 to 16 destroyers. Approximately 900 aircraft were based on the carriers, the long-range striking arm of a modern fleet.

The Japanese Navy had lost two-thirds of its prewar force of first-line carriers at Midway, and the survivors had not accepted battle with the United States Navy since Santa Cruz on October 26, 1942. Since then the Japanese had been working unceasingly to rebuild the fleet ruined at Midway and in the disastrous campaign for Guadalcanal. The two large, handsome carriers completed in 1941, SHOKAKU and

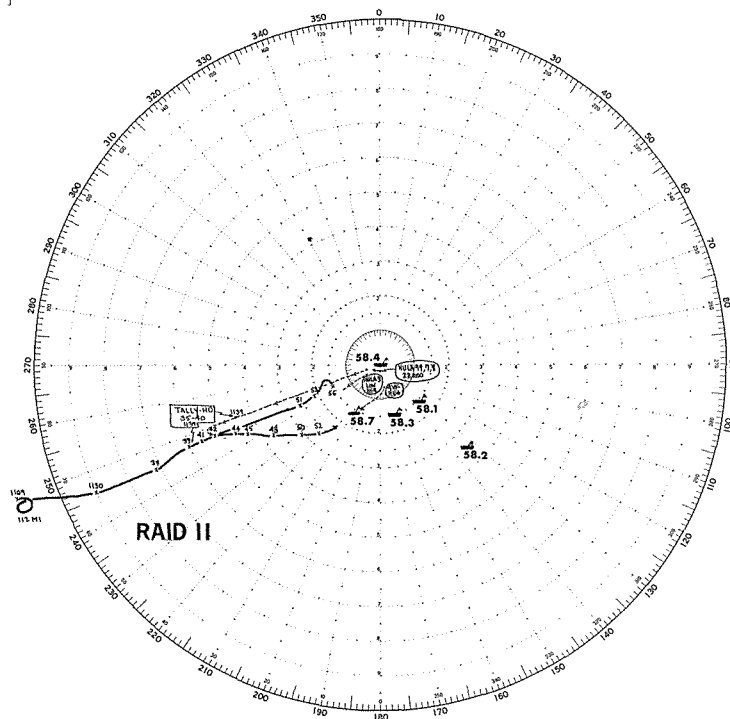


The three Maneuvering Board diagrams shown here are copies of the HORNET's CIC (Combat Information Center) plots of the major raids of the "Marianas Turkey Shoot." The voice calls of YORKTOWN, HORNET and ESSEX were "Coal," "Iron," and "Hula" respectively.

The diagrams are here reduced to one-sixth size, and the original plots were on the scale of one inch equals one hundred miles. Hence the incoming Japanese aircraft were shown starting at something over one hundred miles from the center, the HORNET.

ZUIKAKU, each carrying 75 aircraft, were joined by the 34,000-ton TAIHO with a similar capacity. These three fast carriers were supplemented by six others. Two of these, HIYO and JUNYO were converted NYK passenger liners, capable of operating some 48 aircraft and with a maximum speed of 25 knots. ZUIHO and the approximately similar RYUHO were both converted submarine tenders with maximum speeds of 26-28 knots and standard aircraft complements of 24-27. CHITOSE and CHIYODA were converted seaplane carriers capable of 29 knots and operating some 30 aircraft each. The three large carriers formed Carrier Division 1, HIYO, JUNYO, and RYUHO Division 2 and CHITOSE, CHIYODA and ZUIHO the 3rd Carrier Division.

More important than the ships were the men who flew off them and here Japan was fatally weak. She entered the war with a small elite force of highly trained and experienced naval aviators. Most of those veterans were killed at Midway



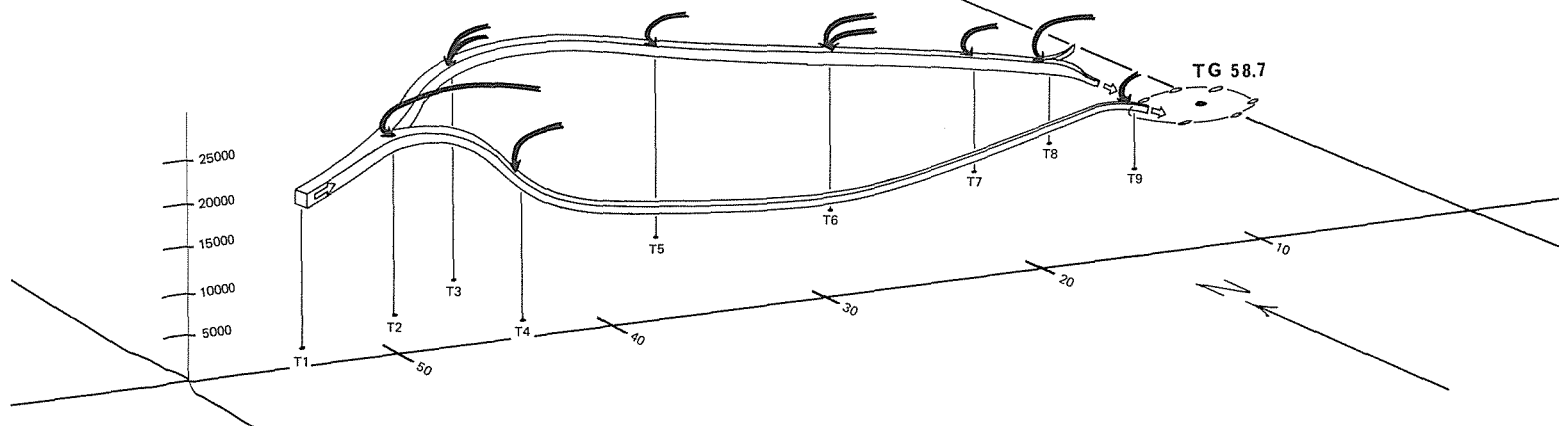
and in the fighting around Guadalcanal. A new group of carrier pilots were trained but were decimated in fruitless land-based combats during Operation I-Go, Admiral Yamamoto's ill-advised attempt to regain control of the air over the Solomons in April 1943. Still another group trained through 1943, then were sent south to operate from Rabaul in November where they lost heavily in the U.S. carrier raids on the 5th and 11th. Once again the Japanese were without pilots to man their carriers.

Three new Air Groups were organized starting in January, 1944; the 601st Air Group was based on the three largest Japanese carriers; the 652nd and 653rd Air Groups were assigned to the 2nd and 3rd Carrier Divisions. As of June these groups had received, respectively six, two and three months of operational training, and not very intensive training at that. Only the pilots of the 601st Air Group could fly combat aircraft and operated from carriers with any reasonable degree of competence.

RAID I

MAJOR EVENTS OF RAID I

- T1 1035. Air Group 653 Tallyhoed by 8 F6F of VF-15 which in turn in for an overhead run from 24,000, Japanese altitude about 18,000.
- T2 1038. VF-15 hits the Zeke VFB formation. The Jills apparently split away from the main group formation at this time.
- T3 1041. Eight aircraft from VF-2 and 12 from VF-27 attack from 27,000 and 25,000 respectively.
- T4 1043. Eight F6F of VF-25 attack the Jills from 20,000.
- T5 1046. Six VF-31 aircraft attack from 23,000.
- T6 Time not certain. 6 F6F of VF-28 attack from 24,000 and 8 from VF-31 from 20,000.
- T7 Time not certain. Eight VF-8 aircraft attack from 21,000.
- T8 Time not certain. Final attack by 6 VF-51 F6's on scattered aircraft from main formation.
- T9 Time not certain. Twelve aircraft of VF-10 break up attempted torpedo attack on TG 58.7.



The aircraft operated by the Air Groups of the First Mobile Fleet were a mixture of the new and the obsolescent. The fighter squadrons all used the A6M5 Zero Type 52 (Zeke), basically the same fighter with which Japan entered the Pacific War but with an engine of increased power. Most of the dive bombing and torpedo planes, though, were new since the last encounters between the U.S. and Japanese carrier aviation. The old fixed-gear Aichi D3A1 (Val) had been phased out on the larger carriers in favor of the D4Y1-4 (Judy) which was over 100 knots faster. The Nakajima B5N (Kate) torpedo plane was replaced by the B6N (Jill) which was far superior to its predecessor in both speed and range. However, because of the short flight decks and limited hangar capacity of the six smaller Japanese carriers, it was impossible to operate the larger, high-performance Judys and Jills.

In order to give them some offensive capability a special unit of 72 old-model Zeke 21's was converted to carry 550-lb bombs, given the mission of dive bombing, and assigned to Air Groups 652 and 653. Additionally, one squadron of Vals and one of Kates were retained in service. For the forthcoming battle Air Group 601 had available 70 Zeke fighters, 70 Judys and 51 Jills. Air Group 652 on the 2nd Carrier Division had 45 Zeke VF, 27 Zeke VBF, 27 Judys, 27 Vals and 18 Jills. Air Group 653 operated 45 Zeke VF, 45 Zeke VBF, 9 Jills and 17 Kates.

Admiral Ozawa's First Mobile Fleet sailed from Tawi Tawi in the Sulu Archipelago, east of Borneo on the 13th, passed through the Philippine Islands via San Bernardino Strait, rendezvoused with other units 400 miles east of Samar on the 16th and set a direct course for the Marianas. Its progress was followed and reported by U.S. submarines from its departure until early morning of the 17th when it was temporarily lost.

Task Force 58, which had split up to attack the Japanese air bases in the Bonin Islands, rendezvoused 200 miles west of Saipan at noon on the 18th to await the oncoming enemy. Mitscher placed his three strongest carrier task groups, 58.1, 58.2, and 58.3 around twelve miles apart in a north-south line roughly perpendicular to the prevailing wind. The battleships were pulled out of their screening positions around the carriers and formed into a separate task group, 58.7 in order

to avoid any necessity for performing so complicated a maneuver in the middle of a battle. TG 58.7 was stationed 15 miles west of the main force of carriers and give air protection from TG 58.4 twelve miles to the north.

Ozawa's longer-ranged carrier search planes located Task Force 58 on the 18th. He hoped to trap the American carriers between his own fleet and the considerable force of land-based Navy aircraft based on Guam and Rota. As yet he was unaware that the bulk of these had been destroyed in pre-invasion fighter sweeps by Mitscher's F6F's.

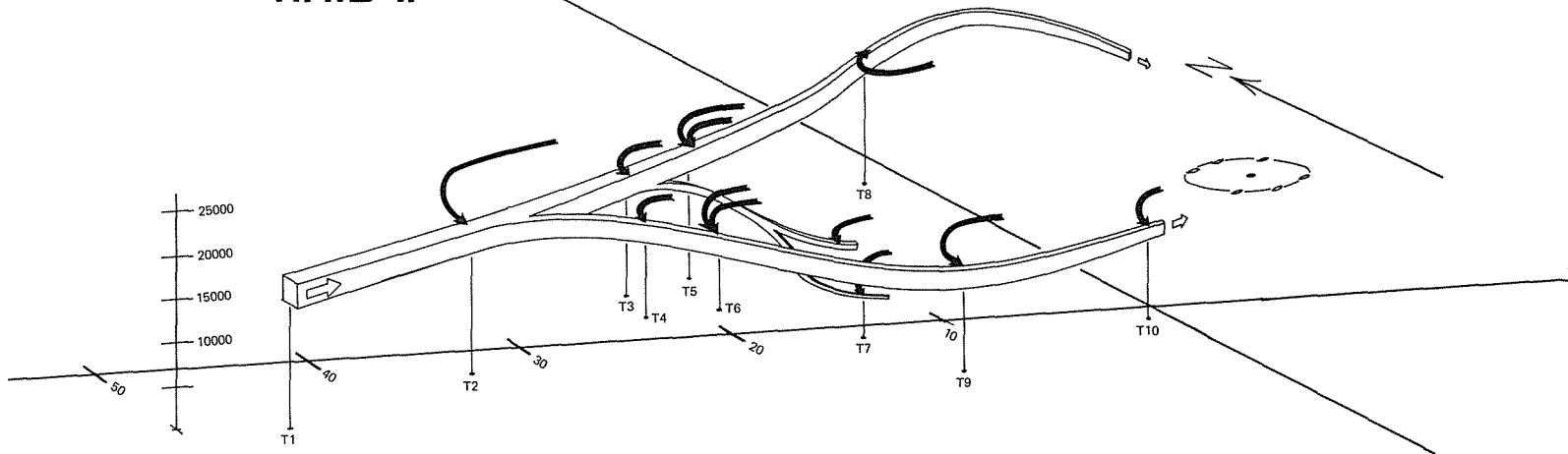
Early in the morning of June 19th, a Combat Air Patrol from BELLEAU WOOD discovered considerable enemy air activity around Guam, and Mitscher realized "that we were probably due for a working over by both land-based and carrier-based planes." There was sharp but sporadic air fighting over Guam from about 0800 on. Meanwhile, Ozawa, steaming steadily toward Saipan, flew off three groups of search aircraft which sighted the American carriers. At 0830 he launched the first of four major attack groups, this one Air Group 653 from the 3rd Carrier Division, located 100 miles ahead of the main body of his fleet with the so-called Van Force. The raid consisted of 14 Zeke VF, 43 Zeke 21 dive bombers and 7 Jill torpedo bombers.

The 653rd Air Group was first picked up at 1003 by the radar of the battleship ALABAMA at a range of 130 miles, remarkable performance for the air search gear of the time. The contact was quickly verified by the CABOT in TG 58.2 and ENTERPRISE in TG 58.3 and estimated as a formation of over 50 aircraft at 20,000 feet. Almost as soon as it was detected the Japanese formation started to circle while the air group commander briefed his inexperienced pilots on their forthcoming attack. This tactic proved doubly damaging to the 653rd: not only did the delay give Task Force 58 time to clear its flight decks, launch additional fighters and get its Combat Air Patrol into intercept position, but a Japanese language interpreter, Ltjg Charles A. Sims was monitoring the enemy's aircraft frequency aboard the LEXINGTON and relayed a translation to the Task Force Fighter Director Officer.

RAID II

MAJOR EVENTS OF RAID II

- T1 1139. Air Group 601 Tallyhoed by 10 F6F of VF-15 which attack the high squadron of Judys with high side runs from 25,000. The Japanese formation stacked from 16,000 - 20,000.
- T2 1142. As VF-15's attack hits, the Japanese formation starts to break.
- T3-T4 1148. VF-14 joins the combat with 12 aircraft attacking from 23,000.
- T5 1149. Twenty-three aircraft of VF-16 and 8 from VF-27 attack the scattering enemy formation from 25,000.
- T6 1151. Seven VF-50 aircraft attack low-flying enemy units at 10,000.
- T7 1154. At about this time 21 F6F's from VF-1 joined the melee in three different groups.
- T8 1210. Ten aircraft of VF-28 attacked low-flying enemy aircraft at 10,000.
- T9
- T10



Task Force 58 had 59 F6F's in the air on Combat Air Patrol at the time the first Japanese raid was detected, and another 23 on a fighter sweep over Guam. As soon as the bogey was recognized as a major raid, the old circus call for help "Hey Rube" was relayed to the squadrons over Guam, meaning "return to the task force immediately." Mitscher also ordered all available fighters scrambled and the VB and VT aircraft on the flight decks flown off to orbit west of Guam; the decks had to be kept clear in order that the fighters could be recovered, rearmed and launched throughout the coming attack.

The fifteen carriers turned into the wind around 1015 and two minutes later the first aircraft of the fighter scramble roared down the deck of the COWPENS. One hundred and

forty F6F's were launched in the next 15 minutes to make a total just short of 200 available to intercept the hapless Japanese.

At 1018 the raid started to close the force and four minutes later two divisions of ESSEX's VF-15 were vectored out to intercept it. In rapid succession F6F's from VF-2 (HORNET), VF-27 (PRINCETON), VF-25 (COWPENS), and VF-31 (MONTEREY) followed.

The ESSEX's two divisions were led by Cdr. C.W. Brewer, VF-15's commanding officer. The eight F6F's tallyhoed the Japanese formation at 1035 when it was still 55 miles away from Task Force 58. At 24,000 feet Brewer had a 6000-foot altitude advantage, a perfect setup for an overhead run. He selected for his first target the Zeke dive bomber that was leading the formation. Rolling over to the inverted position he pulled through into a dive and opened fire at 800 feet. The Zeke exploded and Cdr. Brewer dove through, pulled back up into the enemy formation and shot down a second. He then pushed over to overtake a Zeke, which he shot down in flames with a no-deflection shot. Another Zeke tried to get onto his tail but Brewer promptly reversed the situation and shot him down after a brief dogfight. These were four of the enemy aircraft claimed by VF-15.

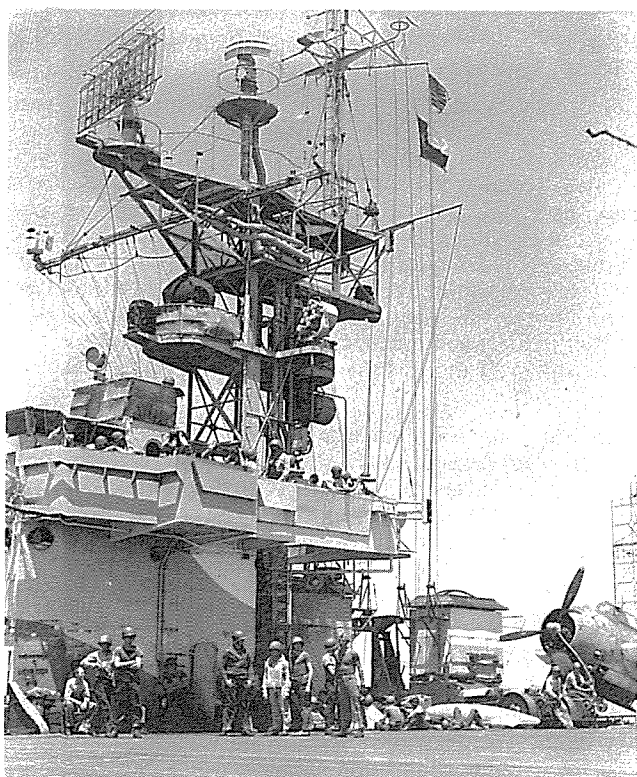
Three minutes after the enemy was sighted by VF-15, 20 more F6F's from HORNET and PRINCETON piled into the fight. Within the next five minutes a further 14 fighters from VF-25 and VF-31 intercepted the Japanese. Under this rapid succession of attacks the enemy formation began to break up. After 25 minutes of chaotic dogfighting a second wave of F6's arrived, the CABOT's VF-28, another two divisions from MONTEREY's VF-31 and eight from BUNKER HILL's VF-8. The pickings were slim for the latecomers.

The surviving Japanese had scattered into divisions, sections or individual aircraft, but were still flying indomitably onward toward the targets they had been briefed to attack. At 1120 six aircraft from SAN JACINTO's VF-51 found an estimated ten survivors about 30 miles west of the fleet, battling with three times their number of F6F's. Lcdr. C.L. Moore and his five pilots claimed six of the enemy.

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Uncle Pete thinks it over. Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher on the flag bridge of the LEXINGTON, 19 June 1944. (Photo — National Archives 80-G-236832)



The Lone Star Flag of Texas flies over SAN JACINTO's superstructure during the battle. The fighter planes were at the intercept and all flyable bomber and torpedo aircraft were off at Guam, some distance away, for rendezvous out of the battle area. (Nat'l Archives 80-G-238785)

Five minutes later three divisions from VF-10 (ENTERPRISE) tally-hoed four Zeke fighter-bombers preparing to attack TG 58.7. Lt. "Flash" Gordon, who had been in the squadron since it was formed in 1942 caught one of the enemy aircraft at 3000 feet from an overhead run and shot him down. His wingman, Ltjg. R.W. Mason got a second. Another of Fighting Ten's division leaders, Lt. M.O. Marks saw two Jills down low on the water making a torpedo run on one of the battleships. His run missed, upon which his wingman, Ens. C.D. Farmer settled on the tail of one of the Jills and blew it up with two bursts.

The remnants of the 653rd Air Group's scattered force made a few uncoordinated single-plane attacks on 58.7's battleships, the only direct hit being one scored on the SOUTH DAKOTA which killed 27 men and wounded 23. Then the survivors made their individual ways back to their carriers. Eight of the fourteen Zeke fighters were lost, 32 of the 43 Zeke 22 dive bombers and two Jills out of seven. Against the Japanese loss of 42 aircraft in this raid, three F6F's were shot down. Their pilots, LCdr. Ernest Weatherill Wood and Ltjg. Van Buren Carter of VF-27 and Ltjg. F.R. Steiglitz of VF-25 were missing in action.

While his first strike was on its way to attack Task Force 58 Admiral Ozawa launched his second. This constituted the bulk of the Japanese striking power, 53 Judys and 27 Jills of the 601st Air Group, escorted by 48 Zeke fighters. Shortly after launch, one of TAIHO's Jills sighted a torpedo fired at its carrier by the U.S. submarine ALBACORE and made a brave but unsuccessful attempt to stop it by diving into it. Eight more aircraft turned back at various times with engine trouble. A hundred miles on its way the Air Group was fired on by the ships of the Japanese *Van Force* as it flew over them. Two planes were shot down and eight others badly damaged enough to turn back.

After this fiasco, which would have been comic had it not
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cost the lives of good men, the tactics of the second raid closely resembled those of the first. The Japanese were detected by LEXINGTON's air search radar at 1107 at a range of 115 miles. Again almost as soon as they were picked up by the American radar the enemy air group started orbiting at high altitude while its commander briefed the pilots on the air. Once again the briefing was monitored aboard the LEXINGTON, while the delay made Task Force 58's interception much easier.

Not counting the aircraft that had intercepted Raid I, Task Force 58 had 129 F6F's in the air available to handle Raid II when it appeared. Another 33 were scrambled shortly after the enemy were detected. The first to be vectored out at 1126 were three divisions from ESSEX's VF-15 led by Cdr. David McCampbell, CAG 15. They sighted the Japanese thirteen minutes later, forty miles west of TG 58.7. At their altitude of 25,000, McCampbell's ten F6F's had a 5000-foot advantage over the enemy, which they promptly converted to airspeed by nosing over. The Air Group Commander led three sections in a formation high-side run on the Judys while the other four fighters maintained altitude and provided high cover. McCampbell provided a vivid account of this attack:

"My first target was a Judy on the left flank and approximately half way back in the formation. It was my planned intention after completing the run on this plane to pass under it, retire across the formation and take under fire a plane on the right flank with a low side attack. These plans became upset when the first plane fired at blew up practically in my face and caused a pull-out above the entire formation. I remember being unable to get to the other side fast enough, feeling as though every rear gunner had his fire directed at me."

VF-15 had the huge Japanese formation to itself for six minutes when they were joined by 12 aircraft from WASP's VF-14, 23 from VF-16 (LEXINGTON) and 8 from VF-27's F6F's from PRINCETON. By this time the surviving scattered aircraft were coming within sight of TG 58.7 and starting to let down for their attacks. A division from BATAAN's VF-50 was vectored out and caught two of them heading toward the battleships. At three different times during this confused melee aircraft from YORKTOWN's VF-1 joined in the action: one group of six led by Cdr. J.M. Peters, CAG 1, another ten under VF-1's skipper, Cdr. B.M. Streat, and a flight of five which piled in at 1151 when not much was left of the 601st Air Group.

A few Japanese aircraft carried out small attacks on three of the five American Task Groups at intervals between 1145 and 1210. Without exception all were unsuccessful. One Jill crashed into the heavily armored waterline of the INDIANA in the center of TG 58.7's formation. ALABAMA, SOUTH DAKOTA and IOWA were attacked but not hit. Six Judys attacked TG 58.2 and a phosphorus bomb bursting over the WASP killed one man and wounded 12. Two of them dove on BUNKER HILL, a near miss killing three, wounding 73 and starting a few small fires. A few Jills reached TG 58.3 and torpedo attacks on ENTERPRISE and PRINCETON caused neither damage nor casualties.

Of the 117 aircraft of the 601st Air Group that attacked Task Force 58 only 23 survived. The cost to the Americans was four F6F's lost in combat. Three of the pilots, Ensigns C.R. Garman of VF-1, P.A. Neill of VF-14 and G.H. Rader of VF-15 were missing in action. The fourth, LCdr. Ron Hoel, "Exec" of VF-8 bailed out of his crippled aircraft and was rescued later from his liferaft.

Between 1000 and 1015, Ozawa's 2nd Carrier Division launched its first attack force, 16 Zeke fighters, 26 Zeke dive bombers and 7 Jills of the 652nd Air Group. (These aircraft initially flew toward a point approximately 60 miles north of

Task Force 58; one of the Japanese scout aircraft had forgotten to apply compass deviation in reporting the position of the Force earlier that morning, resulting in this considerable error.) After the 652nd Air Group left for its attack they were ordered to fly to another position, in this case the correct location of Task Force 58. However the Zeke dive bombers and the Jills never received the transmitted message, flew to the erroneous position, saw no ships and returned to their carriers. The covering fighters did get the message and began closing the Task Force. Two divisions of VF-2 and one from VF-1 were vectored out to intercept and the 17 F6F's tally-hoed the Zekes at 1304. In a brief dogfight 7 Japanese aircraft were shot down without loss to the Americans.

An hour after the launch of his third big raid, Admiral Ozawa started to send off his fourth and last of the day. This was the second wave from the 601st and 652nd Air Groups. Little was left of the former group after its heavy contribution to Raid II and the torpedoing of the TAIHO by the U.S. submarine ALBACORE at 0910. ZUIKAKU was able to launch only four Zeke fighters and four Jills.

Ten Zeke dive bombers were also listed as part of the 601st Air Group's second strike, but it is not clear if they in fact belonged to that organization. The Zeke dive bomber was a concession to limited deck space on their six smaller carriers and none were listed as being attached to Carrier Division 1's group. Probably they came from the 652nd Air Group and were assigned to fill out the tiny formation of the 601st on this particular strike. The contribution of the 652nd Air Group was more substantial, 27 Val dive bombers, 9 Judys and 2 Jills, escorted by 26 Zeke fighters.

Once again the bumbling inefficiency of the untrained Japanese pilots prevented any result commensurate with the size of the raid. Another false position for Task Force 58 was given to this group, this one 100 miles southwest of Guam. When the Japanese reached this position, they of course saw nothing of the American fleet. The ZUIKAKU's 18 aircraft elected to turn back; the 652nd Air Group decided to split and make for Guam and Rota.

Each of the three parts of Raid IV encountered American forces. The 601st Air Group by pure mischance was intercepted by a launch from LEXINGTON's Air Group 16 which had been sent off at 1350 to search to the westward for the Japanese fleet. One search team of two VT-16 TBF's and one VF-16 F6F was attacked at 1505 by a formation of ten Zekes — probably the fighter-bombers — and shot down three.

Of the 652nd Air Group, 9 Judys and 6 Zekes headed for Rota. Their course brought them within sight of TG 58.2 and at 1423 they delivered an ineffectual glide bombing attack on WASP and BUNKER HILL while they were recovering aircraft. No hits were scored and five of the Judys fell to the group's AA fire. The largest part of this raid headed for Orote Field on Guam. There they were intercepted by 41 F6F's and virtually annihilated. Twelve aircraft each from VF-25 (COWPENS), VF-15 (ESSEX) and VF-2 (HORNET) plus five from ENTERPRISE's VF-10 caught them in the landing pattern over the field at 1606. Thirty of the 49 enemy aircraft were shot down and the 19 that managed to land were too badly damaged to be flyable.

With the shattering of the fourth big raid of the day, that portion of the Battle of the Philippine Sea which has become known as the Marianas Turkey Shoot came to an end. Admiral Ozawa had thrown 328 of his 430 aircraft against Mitscher's carriers. 220 of them were shot down or otherwise lost, plus an additional 23 search aircraft. The total cost to the Americans was seven F6F's lost in air combat and 31 killed and 108 wounded in the few attacks made against the ships of Task Force 58. During the day nine more fighters were lost in other combats near or over Guam (including VF-15's skipper,

Cdr. C.W. Brewer and Lt. H.F. Clem, XO of VF-10) and a further six lost operationally. Seven bombers were lost in attacks on Guam and two others operationally.

The contrast between this flicking aside of one of the most concentrated air attacks ever made against a fleet at sea and the costly 1942 battles of the Coral Sea, Midway and Santa Cruz was striking. Part of the reason for it already has been mentioned: the Japanese pilots were virtually untrained, by American standards. But there were other reasons too. The complicated techniques of fighter direction using radar control developed during the Battle of Britain had been adopted *in toto* by the U.S. Navy and the Fast Carrier Task Force of the Pacific Fleet had practiced them to perfection in combat during the eight months since the Central Pacific offensive started.

In the F6F-3 the Navy had a splendid fighter, superior to the once-dreaded Zeke in every respect but rate of climb and low-speed maneuverability. Its fighter pilots were exceptionally well-trained, most of them veterans of several months of combat. In each of the major raids a large enemy formation was attacked without hesitation by smaller numbers of F6F's. The American pilots had absolute confidence in themselves and their aircraft, and this confidence was justified.

Against such superior defenses so well handled the fate of the Japanese airmen was virtually a foregone conclusion. Yet it remains nonetheless the high water mark of U.S. naval aviation in the Pacific War. After the Marianas Turkey Shoot Japanese naval aviation could remain a factor only by resort to suicide tactics.

APPENDIX A Task Force 58 VF Squadrons, June 19, 1944

Task Group 58.1			
HORNET	VF-2 (LCDR W.A. Dean)	36	F6F-3
YORKTOWN	VF-1 (LCDR B.M. Streat)	41	F6F-3
BELLEAU WOOD	VF-24 (LCDR E.M. Link)	26	F6F-3
BATAAN	VF-50 (LCDR J.C. Strange)	24	F6F-3
Task Group 58.2			
BUNKER HILL	VF-8 (LCDR W.M. Collins)	37	F6F-3
WASP	VF-14 (LCDR E.W. Biros)	34	F6F-3
MONTEREY	VF-28 (LCDR R.W. Mehle)	21	F6F-3
CABOT	VF-31 (LCDR R.A. Winston)	24	F6F-3
Task Group 58.3			
ENTERPRISE	VF-10 (LT R.W. Schumann)	31	F6F-3
LEXINGTON	VF-16 (LCDR P.W. Buie)	37	F6F-3
PRINCETON	VF-27 (LCDR E.W. Wood)	24	F6F-3
SAN JACINTO	VF-51 (LCDR C.L. Moore)	24	F6F-3
Task Group 58.4			
ESSEX	VF-15 (CDR C.W. Brewer)	38	F6F-3
COWPENS	VF-25 (LCDR R.H. Price)	23	F6F-3
LANGLEY	VF-32 (LCDR E.C. Outlaw)	23	F6F-3

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas G. Miller, Jr. is a former Navy carrier pilot, presently a management consultant for Arthur D. Little Co., and as an avocation, is one of the Editors of *Cross & Cockade*, Journal of the Society of World War One Aero Historians. He has been a member of the A.A.H.S. since 1960 and his first contribution to the JOURNAL of AAHS was "Carrier Task Force Markings," in Volume 6, Fall, 1961. He is also the author of *The Cactus Air Force*, reviewed in this issue. See Aviation Literature.