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THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY INCLUDING THE
ALEUTIAN PHASE, JUNE 3 TO JUNE 14, 1942.
STRATEGICAL AND TACTICAL ANALYSIS

Richard W. Bates

Naval War College

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| 13. ABSTRACT The Battle of Midway, a decisive engagement of World War II in the Pacific, was also of major importance in naval history. Following the precedent set in the Battle of the Coral Sea, Midway was fundamentally an air action. Japan's objective was to extend her eastern frontiers through the seizure of the Midway Atoll, and decisively to engage the American Navy under conditions favoring Japan, with the Aleutians operation as a diversion posing a threat to Alaska. The United States intent was to end the Japanese threat to Hawaii and Japan's offensive action in that area and to reestablish the balance of naval power in the Pacific. The outstanding American naval strategical and tactical victory confirmed the Allied concept, while Japan's heavy losses forced her to adopt a defensive role and to change her fleet organization, emphasizing carriers over battleships. Utilizing knowledge gained from both Japanese and Allied sources, this analysis introduces the preparations and plans of both sides as a preface to the particularized account of the actual battle operations for Midway and the Aleutians. Thereafter the effects and lessons of the Battle of Midway are considered. The final section of the volume consists of diagrams of the various stages of the battle, reflecting the events that occurred within each time frame; records of these events accompany each diagram. | | | |

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FOREWORD

1. This analysis of the Battle of Midway, including the Aleutian campaign, was prepared by the Naval War College. It is based on information from both Allied and Japanese sources which is wider, more complete, and more up to date than that available to writers on this subject up to this time.
2. Complete information from all sources was not available to the Naval War College. This is especially true concerning Japanese information. Orders appear to have been issued after the abortive Midway operation that all references to the defeat at Midway were to be deleted from war diaries and similar papers. Fortunately, however, all commands did not comply with this directive in its entirety, so that certain key information which should have been deleted was available for this analysis. For the above reasons new facts and circumstances may come to light from time to time which may change some of the analyses produced herein.
3. The Battle of Midway was one of the decisive naval battles of World War II. It was the first real test, following the Battle of the Coral Sea, of the lessons learned in that action, and it was the first test in a great fleet action of both Allied and Japanese strategical and tactical concepts, as well as of the combat ability of the various commanders. The pages of history have invariably revealed defects in command, and it would have been astonishing had such defects not appeared in an action of this scope.
4. As a result of battle lessons learned, and as quickly applied, the ability of the Navy to conduct warfare steadily improved. As time went on the lesson so often forgotten--that the test of battle is the only test which proves the combat ability of Commanders was relearned. The ability or the lack of ability of the various Commanders in the art of war became apparent. Valor alone was shown to be insufficient, for valor is not an attribute of only one race, but is an attribute and a heritage of many races. The indispensable qualification for command, the art of war, was shown to be the ability in combat to apply the science of war to active military situations.
5. The present senior officers of the Navy are well aware of the reasons for changes in established doctrines and in the development of new ones. But this cannot necessarily be said of the Commanders of the future, who very probably will be inexperienced in command in war.
6. Finally, all comments and criticisms are designed to be constructive. By indicating what appear to be sound and unsound decisions, and the apparent reasons for arriving at them, it is hoped to provoke earnest thought among prospective commanders and thus to improve professional judgment in command.

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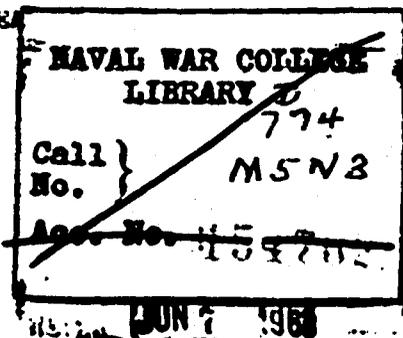
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PRINCIPAL COMMANDERS

American

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet (CINCPAC) | Admiral Chester W. NIMITZ, USN. |
| Commander Striking Force and Task Force 17 (CTF 17) | Rear Admiral Frank J. FLETCHER, USN. |
| Commander Task Force 16 (CTF 16) | Rear Admiral Raymond A. SPRUANCE, USN |
| Commander Task Force 11 (CTF 11) | Rear Admiral Aubrey W. FITCH, USN. |
| Commander Task Force 7 (CTF 7) | Rear Admiral Robert H. ENGLISH, USN. |
| Commander Task Force 1 (CTF 1) | Vice Admiral William S. PYE, USN. |
| Commander North Pacific Force, Task Force 8 (CTF 8) | Rear Admiral Robert A. Theobald, USN. |
| Commanding Officer, Naval Air Station, Midway Atoll (CNAS Midway) | Captain Cyril T. SIMARD, USN. |
| Commander Hawaiian Sea Frontier | Rear Admiral David W. BAGLEY, USN. |

Japanese

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Commander in Chief, Combined Fleet and Commander Main Force | Admiral Isoroku YAMAMATO, IJN. |
| Commander Mobile Force | Vice Admiral Chuichi NAGUMO, IJN. |
| Commander Occupation Force and Commander Second Fleet | Vice Admiral Nobutaki KONDO, IJN. |
| Commander Northern Force and Commander Fifth Fleet | Vice Admiral Shigejiro HOSOKAYA, IJN. |
| Commander Base Air Force and Commander Eleventh Air Fleet | Vice Admiral Nishiso TSUKAHARA, IJN. |
| Commander 4th Air Attack Force | Vice Admiral Hiji GOTO, IJN. |
| Commander Sixth Fleet (Submarines) | Vice Admiral Teruhisa KOMATSU, IJN. |

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INTRODUCTION

The Battle of Midway was one of the more important naval battles of history. Its pattern, in many features, was strikingly similar to that of the Battle of the Coral Sea. In this action, as well as in the Battle of the Coral Sea, weather played an important role and seriously affected the outcome.

In certain salient features, the Battle of the Coral Sea was a prototype of the Battle of Midway. In the Coral Sea action, which preceded Midway by one month, the Japanese fought far from their homeland. They approached in a number of widely separated groups. They sought to draw the American carrier forces into a disadvantageous position, and there to destroy them. The Coral Sea action included a secondary operation at Tulagi.

In the Battle of Midway, the Japanese repeated the pattern of these previous operations on a vaster scale. This time, Midway replaced Port Moresby, the Aleutians replaced Tulagi, and a sizable American Fleet opposed in place of merely an American carrier task force.* The battle was fought between carrier-based aircraft on the Japanese side and a combination of land-based and carrier-based aircraft on the American side. Midway was essentially an air action in which the battle was decided by air power without gun action taking place between surface units.

This battle was the direct result of the desire on the part of Japan to extend her frontiers ever more to the east, which conflicted with the desire on the part of the United States to deny this further expansion. The Japanese hoped to ensure the safety of the Japanese mainland from air attack by raiding forces similar to the Doolittle raid on Tokyo**, and to draw the American Navy into a decisive naval engagement under conditions highly favorable to Japan. The United States hoped to remove the threat to Hawaii and the West Coast of the United States, to put an end to Japanese offensive action in that area, and to restore the balance of naval power in the Pacific.***

Japan was influenced in her decisions by the ease with which her Army and Navy had completed their initial operations. In four months she had conquered vast areas including Wake, Guam and Rabaul, and had driven Allied forces out of Burma. She was also strongly influenced by the Doolittle raid of 18 April, 1942, on Tokyo, which attack took place at the very time her planners were discussing new operations for their successful forces. The effect on these planners of this sporadic attack was profound. As a result of these discussions in Tokyo, Japan initiated a new plan which provided as an initial move an advance into the Solomons and Port Moresby.

*Battle of Coral Sea-Analytical Study by Naval War College, 1947.

**Summary Report, Pacific War, USSBS, July 1946, page 3.

***U.S. Navy at War, 1941-1945, Official Report by Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, U.S.N., page 49.

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New Guinea. This move was to be followed by a further advance into New Caledonia, Samoa, and the Fiji Islands, and by operations to capture Midway and to occupy temporarily the Aleutians. Many of these objectives had been set forth in previous plans. It is quite evident that had these moves been successfully accomplished, the lines of communication between the United States and Australia would have been definitely cut, advanced staging areas west of Pearl Harbor would have been effectively denied, and the balance of naval power then existing in the Pacific would have been upset. This the United States could not permit. It therefore was necessary for her to attempt to turn back the above movements even though her training and production programs were not yet adequate to properly support such operations.

The Japanese apparently expected their operations in the Coral Sea to be successful, for on May 5th Imperial Headquarters issued the orders for the Midway and Aleutian operations, thus activating the third phase of the basic plan ahead of the second phase. They did this despite the facts that Tulagi had been attacked by carrier based aircraft, and that the operations for capturing Port Moresby by sea had been seriously jeopardized due to the presence in the area of an American carrier force.

After the Battle of the Coral Sea the Commander-in-Chief Combined Fleet issued on May 12th his operation order for the Midway operation. On May 18th Imperial Headquarters issued orders for the capture of New Caledonia, Fiji, and Samoa, thus activating the second phase of the basic plan. The Japanese at this time evidently considered that their operations in the Coral Sea had been advantageous, even though they had not succeeded in capturing Port Moresby. They appear to have believed that they had sunk the SARATOGA and YORKTOWN on May 8th, and had drawn two additional carriers into the area on May 14th. On that date the 11th Air Fleet reported contacting an American Task Force of two CV, four CA, and six DD bearing 098° (T), distant 445 miles from Tulagi. This was TF 16 commanded by Vice Admiral W.F. Halsey, USN, which had been sent to support TF 17 in the Coral Sea area."

Japanese information received since the surrender of Japan indicates it is quite possible that the strongest pressure for the movements above referred to came from the Doolittle raid. The combat narrative "The Battle of the Coral Sea" states: "Air bombing of Tokyo and the other Japanese centers of war industry on April 18th, while sheering was only a nuisance raid." Fleet Admiral King has stated: "Whatever the damage inflicted by these bombers, the attack was stimulating to morale, which at that time, considering the surrender of Bataan and the situation in general in the Far East, was at a low ebb". There seems to have been no serious reason for this raid other than that it was a "nuisance" raid, and that the public morale needed stimulating.

In addition, the Tokyo raid, by firming the plan to attack Port Moresby, had the overall effect of forcing the American Command to send a vital portion of the American means available for Pacific operations to the Coral Sea area to assist in denying to the Japanese further expansion in that area. The American means available so sent consisted of two carriers, the HORNET and ENTERPRISE. These were to join the LEXINGTON and YORKTOWN already in the

TF 16 War Diary, May 16, 1942.

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area. Had American intelligence been less correct than it proved to be, this diversion of the main strength of the American Pacific Fleet might have had disastrous results, and the Japanese Midway operations might have succeeded. Fortunately, American intelligence was excellent. Information concerning Japanese movements was received in time to permit the recall of all American carriers to the Hawaiian area, and thus to have them available for action in the Battle of Midway.

A Brief Narrative of the Battle of Midway

The order issued on May 12th by the Commander-in-Chief Combined Fleet for the Midway operation made effective the Japanese plan to expand their peripheral defenses to the eastward. This plan assembled the Combined Fleet for the purpose of seizing Midway Atoll, at the western extremity of the Hawaiian Chain, and Kiska and Attu in the Aleutian Chain. The seizure of Midway was the primary objective of this operation plan; the seizure and temporary occupation of Kiska and Attu was a secondary objective. Both operations were intimately related. The Aleutian operation was to be in the nature of a diversion. The attack on Dutch Harbor was designed to occur one day earlier than the Midway operation in order to confuse the Americans and to upset their plans. However, the basic motive of the Japanese Commander-in-Chief by these operations, was to precipitate decisive fleet action off Midway.

The Japanese planned the above operations with the utmost secrecy. However, the American Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet, CINCPAC, possessed an extraordinary intelligence system which informed him of the projected movements of the Combined Fleet and of the Midway and Aleutian operations in particular. This information included their air and surface strength; their objectives; the direction from which Japanese forces would strike; and the approximate time of attack.

On the basis of this information CINCPAC strengthened the defenses of Midway and the Aleutian area. He ordered additional air and naval forces to reinforce the present local forces; instituted 700 mile patrol plane searches in the western semicircle from Midway; and generally prepared to resist the enemy's advance by all means within his power. He rushed his three carriers with their supporting cruisers and destroyers back from the Solomon Islands area and sent them to the Midway area to form his Striking Force.

Meanwhile, the Japanese Combined Fleet was closing both Midway and the Aleutians. Its Commander hoped to achieve surprise. The Combined Fleet was not in one large fleet disposition but was instead in five major surface forces, three of which were divided into ten principal groups supported by land and tender based aircraft. These major forces were the Mobile Force, the Main Force, the Occupation Force, the Northern Force, and the Submarine Force. The Mobile Force consisted of four carriers with supporting battleships, cruisers and destroyers. The Main Force consisted primarily of one aircraft carrier with seven battleships and supporting cruisers and destroyers. One of the battleships was the flagship of the CinC Combined Fleet. The Occupation Force consisted primarily of the transports with supporting battleships, cruisers and destroyers. These three forces were in the Midway area. The Northern Force consisted of

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two amphibious task groups and a covering force of two carriers with their supporting cruisers and destroyers. This force was in the Aleutian area. The Submarine Force was deployed in both the Midway and Aleutian areas to perform supporting missions of reconnaissance and attack. A sixth force, the Base Air Force, was deployed principally in the Marshall Islands.

The two Japanese carrier striking forces were to make the initial blows. At the time of the air attack on Dutch Harbor on June 3rd the Mobile Force was approaching Midway to attack on June 4th. The American plan called for these carrier attacks in the Midway area to be countered by the Striking Force stationed about 325 miles north of Midway and supported by land and tender based aircraft at Midway and by submarines. It called for the attacks in the Aleutian area to be countered by land and tender based aircraft based in the Aleutians, and by submarines.

The first air attack by Japanese planes on June 3rd against Dutch Harbor accomplished little damage of military importance. A second attack launched on the same day against American destroyers in nearby Makushin Bay was driven off. Meanwhile, a Midway search plane had made a contact on the Japanese Occupation Force which was approaching Midway and was about 550 miles to the westward of that place. This force was attacked by Army horizontal bombers, but the attack was unsuccessful.

During the following day, June 4th, the Japanese attacked both Midway and Dutch Harbor in strength employing air power almost entirely. These attacks were quite successful and did considerable damage. Nevertheless, the American carrier based air in the Midway area succeeded in destroying the four Japanese first line carriers of the Mobile Force and in forcing the Japanese to retire and cancel the Midway operation. In accomplishing this the Americans lost one first line carrier to Japanese carrier based air. The Midway phase of the action continued for two more days and resulted in the sinking of one Japanese heavy cruiser and the damaging of one heavy cruiser and of two destroyers all by air power. The action ended on June 6th when the American forces, because of a shortage of oil and fatigue of pilots, were forced to retire. The Aleutian operation was more successful than the Midway operation. The Japanese seized both Attu and Kiska, established themselves there, and began developing the islands as bases.

As a result of this action the Japanese lost four aircraft carriers, one heavy cruiser and 243 aircraft, received heavy damage to one heavy cruiser and light damage to one tanker and two destroyers. The American losses were one carrier, one destroyer and 152 aircraft.

This battle deprived the Japanese Navy of a large and vital portion of its powerful carrier striking force; it stopped the Japanese expansion to the east; it restored the balance of power in the Pacific which thereafter steadily shifted to the American side; it removed the threat to Hawaii and to the West coast of the United States; and it greatly improved the morale of the American public which had suffered severe blows. On the other hand, the seizure of Attu and Kiska which was heavily exploited by Japanese propaganda was helpful to Japanese morale. It had some effect in forcing the United States to expel the Japanese from the Aleutians at the same time that she was endeavoring to counter Japanese operations in the Solomons.

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CHAPTER I

THE STRATEGIC AREA

The theater of operations of the Battle of Midway embraced in general the sea area within a sector between the radius 245° (T) clockwise to 050° (T) from Midway Atoll. These radii extended for a distance of about 2300 miles and included all of the Aleutians to the west of Dutch Harbor and the Japanese outlying bases in the Kuriles, Bonins, Eastern Carolines, Marshalls, Wake and Marcus Islands. This was a gigantic area in which island positions both supported and were supported by the area fleets. The area of decisive action was confined to a sector of 650 mile radius within this larger area, with a diversionary action off the Aleutian chain of Islands about 1700 miles north of Midway.

The theater of operations, therefore, was a vast expanse of open ocean and, except for the Aleutian chain, was entirely unhindered by large land masses. There was ample room for large naval task force operations.

Two principal currents exist in this area. One, the Japan Stream, a current of warm water, passes close to eastern Japan, then turns eastward and becomes the Northeast Drift. It passes about 500 miles south of the Aleutians and turns southward as it approaches the coast of North America. The other, the Kamohatka, or Subarctic Current, is a current of cold water which passes from Bering Strait to a point midway down the Kurile chain, then curves northeastward to pass between the Japan Stream and the Aleutians. The currents are unusually strong in the vicinity of the Aleutian Islands, attaining a velocity of 8 knots.

Central Pacific

The land areas of the Central Pacific which were affected by the Midway operation were, on the American side, the Hawaiian Group embracing the major Hawaiian Islands and the lesser atolls and islands of Midway, Johnston, Kure, Pearl and Hermes Reef, French Frigate Shoals, Lisianski, and Laysan. On the Japanese side there were Wake, Marcus, and the atolls and islands of the Marshalls and Caroline Groups. As the major action took place near Midway atoll, it is of interest to note its distance from certain bases which were important to both the Allies and the Japanese at this time.

| | |
|--------------|------|
| Pearl Harbor | 1150 |
| *Wake Island | 1030 |

*Note: Indicates those Japanese held.

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| | |
|----------------------------|------|
| *Truk Island | 2150 |
| *Ominato (Honshu) | 2150 |
| *Hashirashima (Inland Sea) | 2500 |
| Kiska Island | 1450 |
| Johnston Island | 820 |
| *Marcus Island | 1560 |
| *Jaluit Island | 1535 |
| *Guam Island | 2300 |
| *Saipan Island | 2150 |
| Dutch Harbor | 1650 |

These distances are shown here to stress the long distances involved in the passage of naval forces between the principal places of importance in this area of the Pacific. These distances plainly show the difficult logistics problems which faced both the Japanese and the Americans. The Japanese were permitted by the size of the area to approach Midway Atoll in numerous groups over a wide arc. This complicated the American reconnaissance problem to a considerable degree. Hence a number of the Japanese surface ship groups were not located by American search aircraft flying from Midway Atoll.

When the Battle of Midway occurred, the nearest American harbor suitably equipped for effecting major repairs to a damaged ship, and for docking a large ship, was at Pearl Harbor--over 1100 miles to the southeast of Midway Atoll. There were, however, small anchorages in the Hawaiian chain between Midway Atoll and Pearl Harbor which, although undeveloped, could be used in an emergency. Among these were Pearl and Hermes Reef and French Frigate Shoals.

There were no bases capable of effecting major repairs to Japanese ships nearer than the Japanese home islands, although there were many harbors in the Marshalls, Carolines, Bonins and Marianas, in which minor repairs might have been effected.

Northern Pacific

The Aleutian coast line is indented with numerous bays and harbors in many of which the land rises abruptly from the water's edge. There are many areas suitable for small airfields, but no extensive plains or plateaus. The

*Note: Indicates those Japanese-held.

islands are extremely mountainous, mostly of volcanic origin, with bold shores having off-lying islets, rocks, and reefs. Their average elevation is 2000 feet, with extremes of 4000 to 6000 feet. All of these islands were under the American flag until the Battle of Midway.

At this time there were three American harbors almost equally distant from Dutch Harbor which were suitably equipped for effecting major repairs to a damaged ship, and for docking a large ship. These bases were not near Dutch Harbor, but were instead about 2000 miles away. One was located at the Navy Yard, Pearl Harbor; one at the Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington, and one at the Navy Yard, Mare Island, California. There was also a Canadian government-owned graving dock capable of handling large ships located at Victoria, British Columbia. In addition there were numerous harbors throughout the Aleutian chain and in Southern Alaska which, while equipped with little or no support activities, could be used in an emergency. Among those were Cold Bay and Cook Inlet. Nearly all of the Aleutian Harbors were occasionally subject to "williwaws"--violent gusts of cold air--which adversely affected operations of both surface ships and aircraft.

There were no harbors capable of effecting major repairs to Japanese ships nearer than the Japanese home Islands, although there were some harbors in the western Aleutians which, while equipped with no support activities, might be used in an emergency for minor repairs. It is probable that Paramushiro in the Kurile chain might also have been used for repairs of a limited scope.

WEATHER Midway Area

Japanese plans for the Midway operation took into account the usual weather conditions which were to be expected along the several routes of movement. Since the weather moves eastward from the Japanese homeland, actual weather conditions to the north and west of Midway could be predicted accurately by the Japanese forecasters several days in advance. The American forecasters, on the other hand, without meteorological stations in the northwest Pacific to provide the data essential for forecasting, could not adequately predict the weather off Midway in advance.

During the months of May and June frequent storm disturbances either form in or traverse the area between Northern Japan and Midway Island. These storms moving eastward are accompanied by related frontal systems which are preceded by rain, clouds, and areas of low visibility. Between periods of storm disturbances frequent fog formations occur in the area commencing about 300 miles to the northwest of Midway and extending westward and northward. Behind the frontal systems approaching Midway from the west the weather usually clears quickly. As the frontal systems approach Midway they frequently dissipate rapidly, leaving broken low and intermediate clouds and reduced visibility at Midway as evidence of their earlier existence. The surface winds which circulate counterclockwise around the low pressure areas and clockwise around the highs in the northern hemisphere usually vary between northwest and

southeast near Midway.

During the latter part of May and the early part of June, 1942, a large high pressure area had its center northeast of Midway. As this air mass was nearly stationary, it caused the fronts to the northwest of Midway to stagnate and those to the west and southwest to break up. There was considerable fog to the northwest of Midway.

The actual weather conditions encountered by aircraft flying search missions from Midway on May 30th and 31st, June 1st, 2nd and the morning of the 3rd were as follows:

(a) May 30th--Between bearings 200° (T) and 325° (T) to the limit of a 700 mile search--excellent visibility. To the northward of bearing 325° (T) and beyond 350 miles from Midway--low visibility which prevented adequate search.

(b) May 31st--Between bearing 200° (T) and 285° (T) to the limit of a 700 mile search--excellent visibility. To the northward of bearing 285° (T) and beyond 300 miles from Midway--low ceilings and reduced visibility which prevented all search.

(c) June 1st--South of bearing 270° (T) and to the limit of a 700 mile search--excellent visibility. To the northward of bearing 270° (T) and beyond a distance of 300 miles--poor visibility because of fog which prevented all search.

(d) June 2nd--Excellent visibility with the exception of areas between 292° (T) and 315° (T) and beyond 400 miles--where reduced visibility prevented thorough search.

(e) June 3rd--Excellent visibility except beyond 400 miles to the north northwest.

The direction of the wind is of importance in any naval operation. It is particularly important in operations when carrier aircraft are used as the major weapon. When the wind is blowing from the enemy, a carrier commander desiring to close the distance is not delayed by launching and recovery of aircraft operations. If on the other hand, he should desire to open the distance, his rate of opening would be reduced by the necessity to alter course into the wind for conducting air operations. Also if the strength and direction of the surface winds necessitate higher speeds, the expenditure of fuel oil increases rapidly, and more frequent fueling with its attendant time loss becomes necessary.

On June 4th the surface winds in the vicinity of the fronts to the northwest of Midway were variable. Nearer Midway the surface winds under influence of the northeasterly high pressure area were from the southeast. This was generally advantageous to the Japanese by permitting their carrier forces to close their objective when steaming into the wind, conducting air operations. It was disadvantageous to the Americans, as they had to turn

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away from the enemy when launching and recovering aircraft, thus sacrificing time and fuel in closing the enemy.

WEATHER
Aleutians Area

Weather in the Aleutian area is cool, humid and cloudy. The area is subject to frequent cyclonic storms and heavy squalls, and to snow in the winter and fog in the summer. It is noted for the rapidity of its general weather changes, as well as for the way weather varies in adjacent localities. It is not an uncommon occurrence to encounter several types of weather while making a 50-mile flight.

During May and June the weather in the Aleutians is in a state of transition from the winter conditions of severe icing, frequent gales, and low clouds to the summer conditions of fogs, and low stratus clouds. In this season, most of the storms move directly through the Aleutians, causing extremely variable winds and weather. Although the flying conditions of spring and fall are highly treacherous, they are still better than those in winter and in summer.

Weather in the vicinity of Dutch Harbor from 26 May to 31 May 1942 was generally cloudy. The height of the clouds varied from 2000 to 4000 feet. Surface winds varied from south to west; velocities 4 to 18 knots. Visibility was generally good. There was no fog.

On June 1 and 2 the approach of a front from the west and its subsequent passage through the Dutch Harbor area caused overcast skies with low ceilings, rain and reduced visibility. This made flying conditions generally unsatisfactory.

The weather map for 0100 (+12) 3 June, 1942, showed a low pressure area centered 400 miles due east of Dutch Harbor. Another low pressure center was located about 150 miles northwest of ATTU. Both of these low pressure areas had related fronts which were moving easterly. Between the two low pressure areas and between their related frontal systems, there was a wedge of high pressure. Showers and low ceilings were characteristic of the weather associated with the low pressure areas, and relatively clear weather was associated with the wedge of high pressure where flying conditions were average except in isolated fog areas. Throughout the day the weather in the region of Dutch Harbor was average for flying with variable cloudiness.

The weather map for 0100 (+12) 4 June, 1942, showed a low pressure area centered just northwest of Dutch Harbor, and its related frontal system was just to the west of Dutch Harbor moving east. This low pressure area and its related frontal systems were the same ones that had been in the vicinity of Attu the previous day. A second low pressure area and frontal system was located about 380 miles to the west of Dutch Harbor moving in an easterly

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direction. During the morning, the weather in the vicinity of Dutch Harbor was characterized by low ceilings and by reduced visibility due to fog. By 1530 the first front had passed Dutch Harbor, and the weather cleared in that region. Overcast skies gave way to scattered clouds at 3000 feet, and the visibility improved except for fog in scattered areas.

CHAPTER II

JAPANESE ARRANGEMENTS

JAPANESE COMMAND RELATIONS

All of the Japanese Fleets including the Naval Air Fleets, excepting the China Seas Fleet, were under the command of the Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet. The Combined Fleet consisted of the mobile fleets which could operate anywhere in any area, and of the area fleets which were responsible for and restricted to certain geographical areas. The mobile fleets constituted the main striking force of the Combined Fleet. The area fleets were normally defensive in character and were generally unable to take any strong offensive action without assistance from the mobile fleets.*

The Combined Fleet was under the direct command of Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, I.J.N., during the Midway operation. It was organized into six coordinate task forces for this operation: the Carrier Force (1st Air Fleet) hereinafter called the Mobile Force; the Main Force (1st Fleet); the Occupation Force, hereinafter called the Midway Occupation Force; the Northern Area Force; the Base Air Force; and the Submarine Force. The detailed organization of these task forces is shown in Appendix I.

Admiral Yamamoto was embarked in the YAMATO, the flagship of the Combined Fleet and part of the Main Force. He exercised command over both the Midway operation and the Aleutian operation through the commanders of the principal task forces in the two sea areas.

His chain of command followed the surface fleet organization of forces from necessity. However, in view of the manner in which CinC Combined Fleet disposed his fleet, and because of the necessity to maintain radio silence en route to the objective, each of the more important Commanders in the chain of Command functioned more or less independently. The only way in which CinC Combined Fleet could exercise tactical command would have been to break radio silence. This he was reluctant to do. This, also his subordinate Commanders were reluctant to do. The consequences of such silence cannot be stated. It is noted, however, that the Chief of Staff of the Mobile Force remarked that in an investigation made after Midway it was disclosed that the CinC Combined Fleet knew in detail of the movements of the American Striking Force off Midway, but failed to send this information to Commander Mobile Force. This statement of the Chief of Staff appears extremely doubtful as no substantiating evidence is known to exist.

*Japan-Naval Organization, Change No.11 to CMI 40, pages 5-6.

All land based air forces in the Central Pacific area were naval, and were assigned to the 24th and 26th Air Flotillas. These flotillas were subdivisions of the 11th Air Fleet, sometimes called the Base Air Force, which was charged, in general, with the operation of all shore based aircraft in the Pacific Ocean areas. The 24th Air Flotilla was assigned to the Marshall Islands and Wake Island; the 26th Air Flotilla was assigned to the Homeland and to Marcus Island. Fighter units from the 26th Air Flotilla were also assigned temporarily to the aircraft carriers in the Midway and Aleutians operations.

The landing force involved in the Midway operation was the Second Special Naval Landing Force under the command of Captain Mineru Ota, I.J.N. This force was part of the Midway Occupation Force.* The landing force involved in the Aleutian operation was composed of the Kiska Occupation Force which was part of Special Naval Landing Force No. 3, under the command of Lieutenant Commander Hifumi Mukai, I.J.N., and the Adak-Attu Occupation Force which was composed of an Army battalion under Major S. Huzumi, I.J.A. These two Aleutian Occupation Force commanders were not unified locally, but were, instead, directly responsible to the CINC Northern Force, through the Naval chain of command.**

From the above it is seen that the Japanese command structure provided for unity of command. The necessity for radio silence and the wide dispersion of forces, however, adversely affected the operation of this command system until that necessity no longer obtained.

INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO JAPANESE COMMANDERS
Midway Phase

The Japanese Commander believed that owing to the "frequent" defeats the Americans had suffered throughout the first six months of the war, they would not have any powerful unit with carriers as its nucleus in the vicinity of Midway. As events proved, this belief was seriously in error. He also appeared to believe that the Americans lacked the will to fight, but that they would counterattack if the Japanese occupation operations progressed satisfactorily. Both of these beliefs indicate a strange psychological tendency to believe in the omnipotence of Japan and the superiority of Japanese manhood in comparison with the American. These beliefs, which were proven to be fallacious, were destined to have an adverse effect on Japanese thinking and planning throughout the action.

He believed that American air reconnaissance planes operated daily to a patrol radius of about 500 miles, and that they covered the area to the west and south of Midway quite thoroughly, but did not maintain a strict vigil to the northwest or the north.*** This was also in error, for the American planes from Midway flew a daily search to 700 miles and attempted to cover the northwest and northern areas with a density equivalent to that of the west and south. He also believed that since about May 29th, the aerial patrols at Midway, Hawaii, the Aleutians and Palmyra, had been more thorough, even under bad weather conditions.

*Nav-Memo No. 14, page 1.

**Naval Analysis Division USSBS Nav-Memo No. 12.

***ONI Review "Japanese Story of Battle of Midway", May 1947, page 5.

He believed that the enemy air strength at Midway consisted of two squadrons of reconnaissance flying boats, one squadron of Army bombers and one squadron of fighters, and that this air strength could be doubled in an emergency. This was an excellent estimate, as there were at Midway on June 3rd, two and one half squadrons or thirty PBY's, one Marine fighting squadron of twenty eight planes, one Marine dive bombing squadrons of thirty four planes, plus twenty one Army bombers (4 B-26 and 17 B-17) and six Navy TBF planes which had been flown up from Hawaii.

He believed that the ENTERPRISE and HORNET were in the Pacific Ocean. He was undecided as to whether the LEXINGTON was sunk or was under overhaul on the West Coast of the United States, due to earlier torpedo damage by a submarine. He was unable to obtain any information about the WASP.*

He estimated the American air strength in the Hawaiian area, part of which could be used for the speedy reinforcement of Midway, was as follows:

| | |
|--------------|----------|
| Flying boats | about 60 |
| Bombers | " 100 |
| Fighters | " 200* |

This was not entirely correct, but was a reasonable estimate. Actually, on May 31st there were about 100 PBY's, 82 bombers and 27 fighters. Although there were many fighters available in the Hawaiian area, they could not be moved rapidly to Midway Atoll, due to the lack of staging fields between Midway and Kauai.

He estimated that American surface units in the Hawaiian area were:

| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| Aircraft carriers | 2 to 3 |
| Special carriers | 2 to 3 |
| Battleships | 2 |
| Heavy Cruisers | 4 to 5 |
| Light Cruisers | 3 to 4 |
| Very light cruisers | 4 |
| Destroyers | 30 |
| Submarines | 25** |

This estimate was correct with respect to large aircraft carriers, cruisers of all types, destroyers and submarines. It was incorrect as regards to special carriers and battleships, as there were none in the entire Hawaiian area. However, at the time of the battle there were only 8 cruisers and 14 destroyers in the Midway area, the other forces having been transferred to the Aleutians.

He considered that American submarines might be stationed in the areas near Midway in which his forces would have to operate. He obtained this

*ONI Review "Japanese Story of Battle of Midway", May 1947, page 5.

**Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, page 6.

opinion from radio intelligence and from base reconnaissance aircraft bases on Wake.* This was a correct consideration.

He realized that the defenses of Midway were strong. He believed that Midway was defended by various types of level and high angle large caliber guns, as well as AA machine guns, and that the defending troops were principally U.S. Marines. This estimate was reasonably correct.**

Finally, he obtained considerable on-the-spot information from submarine reconnaissance. The I-168, for example, supplied intelligence information from 30 May to 1 June. This submarine informed him that there were no military installations on Kure Island, and that the patrol search planes left Midway each morning before sunrise. It also supplied meteorological information concerning weather and sea conditions.***

Aleutians Phase

The Japanese were engaged during May in obtaining information on American activities in the Aleutians. For this purpose they employed the seaplane tender KAMIKAWA MARU (not to be confused with KAMIKAWA MARU, a seaplane tender in the Occupation Force) and its seaplanes plus Subron 1 on scouting and reconnaissance missions in the Aleutians. They operated with clear weather in the Dutch Harbor area from May 26th to May 31st. From the reports obtained information concerning the American forces was collated and disseminated.****

The Japanese commander of the Aleutian forces therefore formed what he thought to be correct opinions concerning the American forces.

He believed that there were considerable military installations in Dutch Harbor and that the personnel there were being gradually increased.***** However, he felt that Dutch Harbor could be easily captured.

He believed that there were some military installations and land defense strength at Kiska and at Attu, and he estimated that patrol craft were stationed there.***** This was incorrect, as only mobile aerological units were based there.

He estimated that there were normally twenty patrol planes and ten fighters based at Dutch Harbor. He obtained this information, in part, from patrol plane

*Extracts of the War Diaries of Air Flot 24, May-July 1942, page 53.

**Mobile Force Detailed Pattle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947.

***Records of the Converted Seaplane Tender KAMIKAWA MARU, translation of WDC 160682, page 3.

****War Diary 6th Fleet-period 1 June-30 June 1942, WDC 160268, page 5.

*****Greater East Asia War-WDC Document 161074 Group 44, Item B44, page 2.

radio intercepts. Actually, there were twelve patrol planes at Dutch Harbor with four more at Cold Bay and Sand Point. There were no fighters at Dutch Harbor, but there were some at Fort Glenn on Umanak Island varying from twelve to seventeen.

The latter part of May a submarine had sighted three heavy cruisers, two destroyers and three patrol craft in the Kodiak area and one CA and one DD in the Adak area.

He learned through communication intelligence that after 5 June five enemy surface ships would be despatched from Hawaii to reinforce the Aleutians.* This, however, was only one of the several transfers made in late May and early June. At the time Dutch Harbor was attacked there were more ships in the Aleutians than were estimated by the Japanese.

Finally, on June 2nd, he received an intelligence communication disseminated by Imperial Navy Headquarters stating, "It seems that reinforcement to the extent of 18 patrol planes had been recently made. There are now two squadrons each in Kodiak Harbor and one at Sitka. Operations of patrol planes based at Dutch Harbor are frequent. It is difficult to determine accurately the radius of these operations, but it seems 300 miles."**

A study of the above intelligence indicates that the Japanese had a fair estimate of the situation in the Aleutians, of the location of some American forces there, and of the strength of the known positions. They failed, however, to learn of the newly constructed Army Airfield and its assigned aircraft at Fort Glenn, on Umanak Island. This failure had an adverse effect on the conduct of operations by Commander Northern Force.

A study also shows that the Japanese also had a fairly good estimate of the situation at Midway, but they made a deadly error when they overlooked the American capability of having carrier task forces in the Midway area. It was this error--this persisting hope of effecting limited surprise--that finally led to their disaster.

JAPANESE DISPOSITIONS

The Japanese Navy, in cooperation with the Army in carrying out the directive from the high command to cover the approaches to Japan by occupying Midway and the Western Aleutians, made preparations for this operation. Wake and Marcus had been fortified and reinforced generally by additional air power. The bases at Kwajalein, Notje, Taroa, and other islands of the Marshall Group which were considered necessary to support the defense of the Central Pacific, were being gradually reinforced and strengthened. Truk remained the great bastion of the Central Pacific for both Naval and air forces, and here the

*Greater East Asia War-WDC Document 181074 Group 44, Item B44, page 2.

**War Records and Action Reports of DesRon 1, translation of WDC 161718, page 8.

Japanese Combined Fleet usually based. For the Midway operation, however, the Japanese fleet fitted out and sortied from their home bases as shown on Diagram "B".

Japan had no bases in the Aleutian area, although her bases in the Kurile Islands, and especially that at Paramushiro, were much nearer the Aleutian Islands than the Marshall Islands were to Midway; Attu being but 600 miles from Paramushiro.

The general disposition of airfields, naval section bases, and submarine bases throughout the Central Pacific area was as follows:

Central Pacific

In this area, with the probable exception of Truk, there were no bases capable of major fleet repairs, although tender repairs could be made in numerous atoll lagoons. The more important bases with relation to the Midway operation were:

- (1) Marcus Island, which had facilities for handling a limited number of aircraft on two usable runways. There were no seaplane facilities and no ship base facilities.
- (2) Wake Island. This island had one runway in operation and had facilities for handling seaplanes, but there were no ship base facilities.
- (3) Marshall Islands.
 - (a) Kwajalein Atoll. An airfield of new construction and with excellent facilities existed on Roi Island. There was also a seaplane base and a submarine base on Ebeye Island. The lagoon is large and can accommodate large forces, although few, if any, repair facilities were available there.
 - (b) Maloelap. This was usable as a naval base and had an excellent fleet anchorage. There was a fine, newly-constructed airfield on Taroa Island, and there were seaplane facilities including ramps.
 - (c) Wotje. This had limited use as a naval base, and had limited facilities for supporting submarine operations. It possessed an excellent seaplane base with full facilities and there was an airplane base with two large runways for operating single and multi-engine land planes.
 - (d) Jaluit. This island was fortified and commanded an anchorage. There were excellent facilities available for handling seaplanes.
 - (e) Eniwetok. This is a good fleet anchorage. Seaplane and submarine base facilities were available.
 - (f) Other bases useful as fleet anchorages and for seaplane operations were Bikini and Rongelap.

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Northern Pacific

There were no bases in the Aleutian area which could support the Japanese Aleutian operation. The nearest base to the Aleutians was Paramushiro Island. This island had several seaplane bases and a single strip grass airfield for handling large planes, but the facilities of this airfield were limited. It also had a minor submarine and destroyer base established in 1940."

JAPANESE DEPLOYMENT LAND AND TENDER BASED AIRCRAFT

All land and tender based aircraft which supported the Midway operation appear to have been Navy airplanes of the 24th and 26th Air Flotillas, which were part of the 11th Air Fleet. The 24th Air Flotilla was composed of the CHITOSE Air Group, 1st Air Group, 14th Air Group, and the tenders, KAMO I and GOSHU MARU. The 26th Air Flotilla was composed of the KISARAZU Air Group, MISAWA Air Group, and the 8th Air Group. The 26th Air Flotilla was employed principally to provide reinforcements to the 24th Air Flotilla, and to provide 33 type zero fighters to five of the Japanese aircraft carriers prior to their departure from Japan.

The 24th Air Flotilla, as augmented by portions of the 26th Air Flotilla, was designated the 4th Air Attack Force. This force was a part of the Base Air Force, whose commander was in command of all naval land based aircraft assigned to the Combined Fleet. The CHITOSE Air Group became the 1st Force; the 1st Air Group became the 2nd Force; and the 14th Air Group, the 3rd Force. The surface units, KAMO I and the GOSHU MARU augmented by the TACHIKAZE and the PARAN MARU, were designated as special duty units employed in support of the air plan.

The 4th Air Attack Force was assigned the following tasks:

- (1) To patrol in the Marshall's area and, if circumstances required, in the Wake and the Gilberts area.
- (2) To intercept and destroy enemy occupation forces.
- (3) To intercept and destroy enemy fleet units.
- (4) To attack all enemy military installations on Oahu.
(This task #4 envisaged a long range reconnaissance and air attack on Pearl Harbor employing several multi-engine seaplanes and submarines acting as a tender. It was planned for the aircraft to depart Wotje Atoll, to refuel from submarines in the French Frigate Shoals, and then to proceed to the objective. The plan, designated the Second "K" Operation, was similar in concept to the first "K" Operation whereby several bombs were dropped on Honolulu on 4 March 1942. Due to the presence of enemy surface units off French Frigate Shoals, the operation was cancelled on May 31st.)

These tasks were broken down as follows:

*Survey of Kurile Island, S30-781 Military Intelligence Service War Department, General Staff, 1942, page 56.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1st Force | To patrol northern section of the Marshall Islands Wake area. |
| 2nd Force | To patrol central section of Marshall Islands. |
| 3rd Force | To patrol southern section of Marshall and Gilbert Islands areas and to reconnoiter Howland, Baker, Nauru, Ocean and Ellice Islands. |
| KAMOJ | To cooperate with 14th Air Group operations at Imeji and Notje. |
| GOSHU MARU | To transport supplies and base personnel of 14th Air Group during Midway Operation. |
| TACHIKAZE | To perform air screen duties with the 3rd Force, and to transport aviation supplies and materials. |
| PARAN MARU | To perform duties of transportation of personnel and supplies as assigned. |
| Detachment of FIRST and THIRD Force. | To move to Midway when directed, and to report to Commanding Officer 6th Air Attack Force basing there. |

In addition to providing detachments to other forces, the 26th Air Flotilla was assigned supporting missions in defense of the Japanese Mainland. A unit of attack land planes, numbering about twelve, was disposed on Marcus Island, augmenting the small search and defense force already there. This unit, later increased by another similar unit, was to perform search and attack functions consonant with this task.

Table 1 indicates the assignment of aircraft by types to the bases selected for use by the Japanese in the Marshall Islands, and at Marcus and Wake Islands. The modifications in this deployment which were effected in consequence of the changing military situation prior to initial contact with the enemy are shown as notes.

JAPANESE DEPLOYMENT NAVAL FORCES

The Strategic Deployment of the Japanese fleet at the Battle of Midway was in support of the basic plan to seize Midway Atoll in the Hawaiian chain, and Attu and Kiska in the Aleutian chain, and to thereby extend the perimeter of the Japanese conquered areas to the Hawaiian Group in the east and Aleutian Group in the north.

This deployment consisted of five major forces, three of which were divided into ten principal groups, supported by land based and tender based aircraft. Each force or group proceeded toward its destination more or less independently.

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ASSIGNMENT OF 4TH AIR ATTACK FORCE AIRCRAFT ON 31 MAY 1942

| LOCATION | FIGHTERS | LAND ATTACK PLANES | TYPE 2 PATROL PLANES | TYPE 97 PATROL PLANES |
|-------------------|----------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| NAKE | 14 | 13 | | |
| ROI KWAJALEIN | 23 | 29* | | |
| TOTJE | | 2 | 4 | |
| TAROA MALOELAP | 21 | 30 | | |
| IMEEJI JALUIT | | | 10 | |
| TOTAL | 58 | 72 | 2 | 14 |

NOTE: *Includes 9 land attack planes of MISAKA Air Group staging to Midway.

Changes effected in this deployment prior to 5 June were as follows:

- (A) May 31st Second "K" Operation cancelled. This released two patrol planes at Totje to assist in patrol activity.
- (B) Searches from MARCUS Island were conducted by the KISARAZU Air Group of the 26th Air Flotilla. On June 2nd at least 12 fighters and 12 land attack planes were based there, and were directed presumably by Commander 6th Air Attack Force.

TABLE 1

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18a

These forces and groups were the Mobile Force; Main Force with its component groups, the Main Group and the Aleutian Support Group; Midway Occupation Force with its component groups, the Transport Group, the Second Fleet Group, the Minesweeping Group, Seaplane Tender Group and the Close Support Group, the Northern Force with its component groups, the Second Mobile Task Group, the Adak-Attu Group, the Kiska Occupation Group; and the Submarine Force.

These forces and groups were moving to the eastward under the cover of ship based aircraft present with the forces and also of land based aircraft operating from island bases in proximity. These bases were on the Japanese Mainland, in the vicinity of Paramushiro, Marcus, and Wake Islands, and from Wotje and possibly other islands of the Marshall and Caroline Groups. This air coverage was fair and provided some reassurance to the various commanders that their advance was being covered by friendly air forces. However, due to the great distances involved in the Midway-Aleutian operation, there were large areas which were entirely unsearched by Japanese land based planes. These areas were searched whenever possible by employing ship based aircraft other than carrier types. The Japanese search doctrine appears to have been to conduct aerial reconnaissance whenever practicable with medium bombers, flying boats (patrol planes), float planes, and ship based aircraft other than carrier based types. The carrier based planes were thus available for striking in maximum strength since none of them need be used for scouting. For this reason we shall see the Japanese Mobile Force using primarily cruiser based planes, augmented of necessity by two carrier based planes to search for American surface forces at Midway. The remainder of the carrier based aircraft were employed for attacking and repelling enemy forces.

This practice of using land based aircraft to cover an area where carriers are operating is sound and is the logical method to be employed when air forces are adequate and can be relied upon to furnish the information required for the security of the surface force involved. In this case search coverage was far from adequate for either side, not only because of the limiting range of search aircraft, but also because of bad flying weather. The Japanese were experienced in the use of cruiser and battleship aircraft for search. Often, when land based aircraft were not available, they employed such ship-based aircraft in lieu of, or to reduce the load on, carrier based aircraft.

The deployment of the combatant forces appears to have been in accordance with the following directive by CinC Combined Fleet:

"Powerful enemy forces which make sorties will be met and crushed. Disposition of forces will be as shown on "separate Sheet 1". This disposition will be used unless special orders are issued."

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"Separate Sheet 1" called for the Main Group to be 600 miles to the northwest of the Mobile Force; the Aleutian Support Group 500 miles north of the Main Group; the 2nd Fleet 300 miles east of the Main Group; while the 2nd Mobile Task Group was to be 300 miles east of the Aleutian Support Group.* This placed the 2nd Mobile Task Group about 800 miles due south of Dutch Harbor. The submarines were to man the "KO", "OTSU" and "TEI" lines of deployment. All forces and groups were to be in the above positions on N-day, June 6th. The movements of the forces prior to N-day were directed towards the accomplishment of this plan, until the effects of American carrier attacks on June 4th caused the plan to be abandoned. The basis of this deployment appears to further the idea, so often expressed by the Japanese in their plans and in their doctrines, that the best method for employing striking forces was to adopt the methods of fighting decisive actions developed in land operations. They felt that the pattern for decisive battle should be to cut off the enemy's retreat by bold turning and envelopment, and then to destroy him by a superior concentration on the battlefield; pursuit being simply the mopping up of a routed enemy. To explain this, they did not employ naval battles as examples, but rather employed land battles such as Cannae, Tannenburg, Leuthen and Mukden. They pointed out that with naval striking forces, it was possible to envelop by means of tactical movements, such as turning or flanking movements from the existing approach disposition; also, that it was possible to envelop by means of strategical movements; that is, by the use of forces which had previously been disposed on exterior lines, and which were to be converged on the field of battle.**

The reasons for assuming this strategic deployment are obscure, but it is believed that the Japanese apparently hoped by this deployment to be able to envelop along the lines previously discussed any American forces which endeavored to retake Midway from the north, and to be able, at the same time, to support the Aleutian operations. It will be noted that the Japanese forces farthest north—the Aleutian Support Group and the 2nd Mobile Task Group—had 3 carriers. The Mobile Force farthest to the south had four carriers. The Main Unit and the 2nd Fleet in the center were entirely without carrier based aircraft. None of these forces were within immediate supporting distance of each other, although such a spacing could be accomplished in a matter of hours. This deployment, which was not based on the recognized military factors of mutual support and tactical concentration, made it possible for a fast carrier task force to destroy any of those units piece-meal. This is exactly what happened when the strongest unit, the Mobile Force, was destroyed by the American Striking Force. A discussion of movements in the deployment of each of the Japanese forces, groups, or units follows. (Diagram B).

*Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 14, Page 4., Appendix III.

**Japanese Striking Force Tactics "Know your enemy" Addendum to CinCPac-CinCPoa "Weekly Intelligence"-Vol. I, No. 10.

Mobile Force

The Mobile Force left Hashirashima anchorage in Hiroshima Bay, passed through the Inland Sea and Bungo Suido Channel between Kyushu and Shikoku during the early evening of May 28th, and proceeded on a southeasterly course at 14 knots towards position Lat. 28°-30' N., Long. 137°-35' E. (about 450 miles south of Tokyo) where it rendezvoused with its logistics supply units. Upon arrival at this point course was changed to 071° (T) and speed to an average of 18.3 knots. The Mobile Force fueled during May 31st and June 1st, and completed fueling just prior to entering thick fog. It passes through this fog for two days, from 1300 June 1st until 0200 June 3rd, arriving at Lat. 37°-20' N., Long. 171°-40' E., about 1330 June 2nd, while still in the fog. Here it changed course to the southeast. During the time that the Mobile Force was in the fog, all ships were being navigated by dead reckoning. No visual signals could be employed during the period. Since there seemed little likelihood of the fog lifting, and as it was necessary to change course, Commander Mobile Force decided to use radio as a last resort. At 1330 June 2nd, he broke silence to give a signal for a change of course from 071° (T) to 125° (T), which change of course appears to have been made immediately. At 1630, course was changed to 130° (T). He sent this first signal by long wave radio. This decision of Commander Mobile Force to break radio silence when but 800 miles from Midway, was a courageous one. For the entire Midway operation was one in which maintenance of radio silence was, necessarily, of extreme importance. However, the fog appears to have been so dense that it was impossible to see one ship from another in the same disposition. Commander Mobile Force therefore felt that breaking radio silence was necessary to the success of the basic plan. In view of the urgency of his operations, such a decision appears to have been sound, even though it might have cost him the factor of surprise. Fortunately for the Japanese, the Americans do not appear to have intercepted this dispatch, nor did they obtain any bearings on it. This is probably due to the fact that the Japanese at this time, thoroughly understood the limitations of radio. In this case they apparently sent the despatch at low power and after careful consideration of the radio frequency employed. It is of interest to note that the dense fog lifted a short time after course had been changed, making visual signals barely possible. This does not appear to have been due to the new course, but rather to a change in atmospheric conditions. Such are the fortunes of war!

The Japanese realized clearly the need for logistics support on distant operations such as Midway, and supported each of the major task forces with oilers and supply ships. These logistics groups usually followed behind the combatant units and came under the direct command of the force or group to which assigned. Japanese policy was to refuel all ships at every opportunity. In no case was the fuel on hand to be permitted to drop below 60% of the total fuel capacity. Fueling was to be accomplished normally from oilers, but when within enemy striking distance, or in time of emergency, the smaller ships were to be

fueled from the battleships. This is remarkably close to American practice, and shows how good seamen in resolving problems of this kind often arrive at similar solutions. In the Midway operations the Japanese also directed that all ships were to be loaded with a three months' supply of stores, food, and medical supplies, in addition to the normal load of arms and ammunitions.*

It is of particular interest to note that the Mobile Force was fueled on the two days preceding the arrival in the fog belt. This would indicate either that a complete knowledge of the bad weather conditions usually prevailing in the area was available, or that a weather plane had reported bad weather ahead. This latter thought is borne out by the fact that a weather plane was scheduled to be employed on the morning of June 4th. Perhaps one was employed prior to May 30th. The Japanese realized that fueling operations would be extremely difficult once this bad weather were entered. Whatever may have been the cause, suffice it to say, that the Japanese Mobile Force was fully fueled and ready for battle by afternoon of May 31st, at which time it was over 900 miles from Midway, and well outside the estimated radius of the American land based air searches from Midway.

Main Force

The Main Force departed Hashirashima May 26th, and passed through the Inland Sea and Bungo Suido Channel into the Pacific Ocean during that evening. Upon clearing Bungo Suido Channel a southeasterly course was steered at a speed of 14 knots to Lat. 28°-50' N., Long. 140° E., thence easterly to Lat. 28°-50' N., Long. 144°-40' E., thence on course 071° (T) towards Lat. 35°-00' N., Long. 165°-00' E., in which position the Aleutian Support Group was to be detached.

Midway Occupation Force

The Midway Occupation Force left Japanese waters in a number of widely separated groups.

(a) The Transport Group including the Seaplane Group and the Close Screen, departed the Saipan-Guam area at about 2040 May 27th, and at a speed of 12-14 knots, and headed for Lat. 26°-15' N., Long. 175°-40' E. Before reaching this position at 0000 June 2nd, course was changed to the eastward. This was to insure that the transport group approached Midway from a southwesterly direction. Desron 2 was assigned to the transports for anti-submarine protection, and was designated the Close Screen.

(b) The Seaplane Group proceeded with the transports, but remained in a loose formation in order to operate its planes.

*Japanese Plan of Operations and Supply in Pearl Harbor, Midway and Aleutians Campaign WW(Japan) SCAP 10053.

(c) The Close Support Group, which had left the Marianas in company with the Transport Group, appears to have been stationed about 50-75 miles ahead of that group.

(d) The Second Fleet Group departed Hashirashima at 0700 May 28th. It appears to have taken a position on the left flank of the Transport Group but beyond visual distance.

(e) The Minesweeping Group, less Subchaser Division 21, departed Saipan for Midway via Wake Island at 1700 May 25th. At 1740 May 29th, when in position Lat. 18°-03' N., Long. 159°-49' E., the SHOWA MARU 7 suffered an engineering casualty. As a result, the SHOWA MARU 7 and the SHOWA MARU 8 which remained behind to escort her, were delayed in their arrival at Wake. The Minesweeping Group, which now consisted of TAMA MARU's 3 and 5 only, arrived at Wake Island at 1400 May 31st, and at 2000 departed for Midway. At 1000 June 1st, Subchaser Division 21 escorting the MEIYO MARU and the YAMAFUKU MARU departed Wake for Midway. At 0900 June 2nd, SHOWA MARU 7 and 8 arrived at Wake where they remained until 1500 June 3rd, when they departed for Midway. At 0820 June 3rd, the TAMA MARU's 3 and 5, while on course 082° (T), speed 8, were sighted by an American PBY in position Lat. 24°-30' N., Long. 174°-08' E., which bore 244° (T) from Midway, distant 470 miles.* This was the first contact of the Battle of Midway, but in view of the small size of the Japanese units, and of the further sighting at 0925 of the Transport Group by other American planes, this initial contact became relatively unimportant.

Northern Force

The Northern Force left Japanese waters in three widely separated groups.

(a) The Second Mobile Task Group left Ominato, Northern Honshu on the afternoon of May 25th, and at an average speed of 10-11 knots headed for a point twenty miles south of the south coast of Hokkaido, thence to a point bearing 230° (T), 400 miles from Dutch Harbor. This group fueled twice, once on May 31st and again on June 2nd. On June 1st it conducted air searches using two 2-plane sections, searching ahead on both sides of the course and through an arc of 60° to a radius of 250 miles, but with negative results. This task group believed that it heard American planes, and certain observers thought that they saw a flying boat. A Japanese plane gave chase, but it was thought he lost the so-called flying boat in the fog. No contact was made by any American search plane.

At about 0050 on the morning of June 3rd from a position bearing about 186° (T), distant 165 miles from Dutch Harbor, the Second Mobile Task Force launched its first air strike against Dutch Harbor, consisting of thirty six planes from the RYUJO and JUNYO. This air strike was in accordance with

*Action Report Midway Operation, Extract translation WDC 160985B.

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the tasks assigned the Second Mobile Task Group to be discussed later under "Tasks". It was designed to create a diversion to aid the Mobile Force which was to attack Midway the following day. Due to the poor weather conditions en route to the objective, only about half of the attack group reached the target. These were four sections of fourteen bombers and one section of three fighters all from the carrier RYUJO.

Weather conditions in the vicinity of Dutch Harbor were excellent for that area. Visibility was good, with the ceiling at 10,000 feet. The attack group approached from the east, circled the objective area, and initiated the bombing approach from the southwest at about 0355. The first section of four bombers and the second section of three bombers attacked the congested area of Fort Mears, dropping sixteen bombs. The third section of three bombers attacked the radio station. The fourth section of four bombers attacked the oil tank farm. All sections dropped their bombs from an altitude of about 9,000 feet. The fighters attacked installations including the oil tank farm by strafing. Several PBV aircraft were heavily strafed on the water. Two of the attacking bombers were shot down by defending anti-aircraft batteries. Two other aircraft, one of which was a fighter, were damaged.* The attack group took departure at 0415 forming up on a northwesterly direction. They then altered course to the southward, passing over Makushin Bay en route to their carrier, where they sighted five destroyers anchored, and reported this information to the Commander Second Mobile Task Group.

A second strike consisting of nine fighters, fifteen bombers and four type 95 float scouting planes** was made ready for launching after the departure of the first strike. At about 0700 on receipt of information that five destroyers were anchored in Makushin Bay, these planes were launched to sink the destroyers.*** Again bad weather interfered, preventing the aircraft from joining up. The planes proceeded toward the objective in several groups. Two seaplanes, the #2 and #3 planes from the heavy cruiser TAKAO were attacked at 0910 by about six enemy type P-40 fighters as they passed Otter Point. The #2 plane was shot down in flames; the #3 plane escaped in the clouds.*** It did not proceed on to Makushin Bay, but returned to the task group. Some fighters also encountered defending American fighters over Otter Point, and retired from the area. None reached their objectives in Makushin Bay.

An American PBV type searchplane had been sighted flying beneath the overcast and had been successfully attacked by the combat air patrol at about 0500. The burning plane had made a landing on the water. Somewhat later, at about 0930, the cruiser TAKAO sighted three of the survivors in a rubber boat, and took them aboard for questioning and return to Japan.***

(b) The Kiska Occupation Group (Captain Takeji Ohno) departed Ominato at

*Reports of Action of CVL RYUJO to Naval Board of Merit-Extract Translation of WDC 161733.

**U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey-Naval Memorandum No. 12.

***Records of activities of Japanese cruisers, CA TAKAO, May, June, 1942-Translation of WDC 160623.

1830, May 27th, for Paramushiro To. At 0800, May 28th, it joined its two transports. It arrived at Paramushiro To at 2020 May 31st. The assembled force departed Paramushiro To for Kiska at 1557 June 1st.

(c) The Adak-Attu Occupation Group departed Ominato at 1400 May 28th for Lat. 44° N., Long. 178° W.

(d) Commander Northern Force in the heavy cruiser NACHI remained at Paramushiro until 2 June and after that date appears to have operated at sea.

Submarine Force

Little is known concerning the movements of the Submarine Force to its stations for the Battle of Midway. What information is available follows:

(a) Midway area--Japanese plans provided for submarines to be assigned as follows:

Subron 3, initially composed of the I-169, 171, 174 and 175, was to be on station on June 1st along "KO" line of deployment between geographical positions Lat. 20°-00' N., Long. 166°-20' W., and Lat. 23°-30' N., Long. 166°-20' W., as shown on Diagram D-2. It is assumed that these submarines were on station. The I-168 departed Kure, Japan, upon completion of repairs, and proceeded independently by way of Kure Island and Midway Island for the purpose of reconnaissance. It appears to have remained in the vicinity of Midway from June 1st until directed to attack the crippled carrier YORKTOWN.

Subron 5, the I-156, 157, 158, 159, 164, 165 and 166 was to be on station on June 1st between Lat. 28°-20' N., Long. 162°-20' W., and Lat. 28°-00' N., Long. 165°-00' W. along "OTSU" line of deployment. As there is no information to the contrary, it is assumed that these submarines operated as planned. The route along which they proceeded to their assigned positions presumably did not concern the high command, for the submarines seem to have approached their scouting line either from a northerly or southerly direction. Apparently no effort was made to employ them as scouts on the approach to their stations. Had they advanced in a scouting line along the flank of the atoll chain linking Midway with Oahu, or had they arrived in position two days earlier, they might have sighted the American Carrier Task Forces proceeding toward Midway. (Diagram B). Why the Japanese Submarine Commander did not properly estimate the situation, and make provision for an earlier and more complete employment of the submarines is obscure. Perhaps the thought that it was not the enemy's intention to move forces north before June 1st caused the error. It should have been apparent, however, that any surface force interfering with the initial attack on Midway

*Combined Fleet OpOrd No. 14-Ultra Secret, Page 4, See Appendix III.

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would almost of necessity be forced to pass these lines prior to June 1st. Actually, TF 16 crossed the "OTSU" line on the night of 29-30 May and TF 17 on the night of 31 May-1 June. Furthermore, the routes most likely to be employed by the enemy in any reinforcement activity for Midway were along either side of the atoll chain from Oahu. Movements of such forces might well have indicated that perhaps other undetected movements by defense forces were proceeding, and might well have served to tip off the Japanese Commander as to the opposition he might encounter. This delay in stationing submarines is considered to be a major flaw in the Japanese plan.

Subdiv 13, composed of I-121, 122 and 123, was to be employed in logistic support of a planned air attack by flying boats on Oahu from French Frigate Shoals. The I-122 was stationed off Layson Island; the I-121 and I-123 were stationed off French Frigate Shoals. Each of these submarines carried 40 tons of aviation gasoline and 12 tons of lubricating oil. The submarines apparently had removed their torpedoes, in order to accommodate this cargo. On its arrival at French Frigate Shoals on May 25th, the I-121 sighted an enemy seaplane tender and several patrol boats stationed there.* The Commanding Officer reported this information by radio. The operation was thereupon cancelled by higher authority, although through some failure the submarines concerned were not notified. However, they appear to have surmised this fact, when the participating aircraft did not arrive for servicing. So on May 31st they commenced a retirement to the westward toward Layson Island.

The plan for submarine employment provided for the "HEI" line of deployment (See Diagram B) but information contained in a document called "Deployment Method 1", Separate Sheet 1", indicates that "HEI" was NOT manned at this time.

(b) Aleutian Area--The locations of the I-9, 16, 17, and 19 are not entirely clear, but it is assumed that they were along scouting line "TEI", where they could be advantageously employed in both reconnaissance and attack. The I-25 and 26 were stationed off Seattle for the same purpose.

JAPANESE POSITIONS AT 0925 JUNE 3RD

The position of the various Japanese forces and groups at 0925, June 3rd, the time of the initial sighting by Midway aircraft on an important element of the Japanese fleet, is summarized as follows: (Diagram B).

- (a) The Mobile Force was bearing 310° (T), distant 600 miles from Midway.
- (b) The Main Force was bearing 293° (T), distant 800 miles from Midway.
- (c) Midway Occupation Force
 - (1) The Transport Group was bearing 250° (T), distant 650 miles from Midway.

*Interrogation of Comdr. Yasho Fujimari, IJN. U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey Interrogation NavNo. 108.

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- (2) The Seaplane Tender Group was in company with the Transport Group.
 - (3) The Second Fleet Group of the Midway Occupation Force was bearing 284° (T), distant 670 miles from Midway.
 - (4) The Minesweeping Group of the Midway Occupation Force was bearing 242° (T), distant 430 miles from Midway.
 - (5) The Close Support Group was bearing 259° (T), distant 575 miles from Midway.
- (d) Northern Force
 - (1) The Second Mobile Task Group was bearing 188° (T), distant about 130 miles from Dutch Harbor. This group had launched a carrier air attack on Dutch Harbor at 0050 this date.
 - (2) The Adak-Attu Occupation Group was bearing 240° (T), distant 1100 miles from Dutch Harbor.
 - (3) The Kiska Occupation Group was bearing 255° (T), distant 800 miles from Dutch Harbor.
 - (e) Submarine Force
 - (1) Midway Submarine Group was variously located throughout the Midway area. (See Diagram B).
 - (2) Aleutian Submarine Group was variously located throughout the Aleutian area. (See Diagram B).

Tasks Assigned

The tasks assigned these forces by the Japanese were:

- (a) Mobile Force
 - (1) To destroy enemy fleet by decisive naval action.
 - (2) To support the Midway Occupation Force by air attacks on the aircraft, surface craft, and base facilities of Midway Atoll.
- (b) Main Force
 - (1) To destroy enemy fleet by decisive naval action.
 - (2) To support the Mobile Force from a position to the westward.
 - (3) To support the Midway Occupation Force.
- (c) The Midway Occupation Force
 - (1) To capture and occupy Midway Atoll.
 - (A) The Transport Group

- (1) To transport the landing force with necessary supplies.
- (B) Seaplane Tender Group.
To set up a tender base for seaplanes at Kure Island.
- (C) Second Fleet Group.
To cover the Transport Group and support landing operations.
- (D) Close Support Group.
To cover the Transport Group and support landing operations.
- (E) Minesweeping Group.
To sweep up mines in areas designated.
- (d) The Northern Force
 - (1) To invade principal points in the Western Aleutians; to destroy enemy installations there, and to prevent American advances from the north.
 - (2) To create a diversion for the Midway operation.
 - (A) Second Mobile Task Group.
 - (1) To create a diversion for the Midway operation by raiding Dutch Harbor.
 - (2) To support landing operations in the Western Aleutians.
 - (B) Adak-Attu Occupation Group.
To occupy Adak and destroy installations there, then to occupy Attu.
 - (C) Kiska Occupation Group.
To occupy Kiska.
- (e) Submarine Force
 - (1) To assist the Midway and Aleutian operations through reconnaissance and through destruction of enemy forces.

* * *

It is noted that whereas the objective of the Midway, Adak-Attu, and Kiska Occupation Groups was essentially "occupation", the objective of the other forces and groups was "destruction" and "protection". The Mobile Force was a typically

highly mobile carrier force consisting of four first-line carriers, the AKAGI, KAGA, HIRYU and SORYU in one disposition, carrying 234 aircraft, with a screen of two battleships, the HARUNA and KIRISHIMA, two heavy cruisers, the TONE and CHIKUMA, one light cruiser, the HAGARA, and twelve destroyers, the NOWAKI, ARASHI, HAGIKAZE, MAIKAZE, ISOKAZE, URAKAZE, HAMAKAZE, TAMIKAZE, KAZAGUMO, YUGUMO, MAKIGUMO and AKIGUMO. There were about fourteen seaplanes on the cruisers and battleships. This force was self-supporting and was accompanied initially by its own supply ships and oilers. The supply ships were the SHINKOKU MARU and the HOKO MARU. The oilers were the KYOKUTO MARU, TOHO MARU, NIPPON MARU, and NAICHIRO MARU.

The Mobile Force appears to have been designed to meet any air threat that the Americans might be able to launch against it. The Japanese information did not indicate that there was any strong American carrier based air strength in the Midway area. But even though there were, the Japanese Mobile Force was considered to be in sufficient strength to destroy it. This task force, composed of four first-line carriers, with what appeared to the Japanese to have been adequate supporting ships, was a most powerful offensive weapon. The Japanese confidently expected it to be successful. The Japanese do not appear to have felt the need for more supporting gunfire despite the lesson of the Coral Sea, where the American planes destroyed the SHOHO with comparative ease, and where they damaged the SHOKAKU without suffering important plane losses. The YAMATO, MUTSU, and NAGATO were capable of 26 knots, and would have been an invaluable addition to the anti-aircraft defenses of the Mobile Force because of their powerful armament. Although their inclusion in the Mobile Force must have been considered by the Japanese high command in view of the inclusion of both the HARUNA and the KIRISHIMA, other considerations governed their placement. The Japanese apparently desired to keep their newer battleships well to the westward of their Mobile Force. The inclusion of the HARUNA and KIRISHIMA in the Mobile Force was apparently due to their high speed, light armor, and relatively light armament, when compared with the other battleships. The inclusion of the YAMATO would have placed Admiral Yamamoto with the Mobile Force, but this consideration did not prevail. The Mobile Force was designed to be of sufficient strength to oppose successfully both the carrier based aircraft available to the enemy and the aircraft based on Midway. For this latter purpose it appears to have been adequate, but it was not adequate to oppose successfully the concentrated carrier air strength with which the Americans might oppose him.

* * *

The Main Force was a surface force composed of seven battleships, the YAMATO, MUTSU, NAGATO, ISE HYUGA, FUSO and YAMASHIRO; one aircraft carrier, the ZUIHO; three light cruisers, the KITAGAMI, OI, and the SENDAI, plus 15 destroyers, the FUBUKI, SHIRAYUKI, HATSU YUKI, SHIRAKUMO, SHINONOME, USUGUMO, MURAKUMO, ISONAMI, SHIKINAMI, AYANAMI, URANAMI, AMAGIRI, ASAGIRI, YUGIRI, and SAGIRI. This force

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was self-supporting. It was accompanied by one supply ship, the SACREMENT MARU, and by three oilers, the NARUTO MARU, TOEI MARU and the TORA MARU.

The Main Force was evidently designed to play a supporting role to the Mobile Force and to the occupation forces. As will be shown later, the Japanese do not appear to have hesitated in exposing the Midway Occupation Force to the possibility of early contact with American planes. They appear to have been reluctant, however, to expose their battleships, and kept them well to the westward of the Mobile Force. The Main Force until June 3rd was an extremely powerful surface force, assisted by carrier based aircraft in the ZUIHO. It should have been able to defeat the American Main Body had it been moved against it. However, on June 3rd, it was separated into two groups; one consisted of the YAMATO, MUTSU and NAGATO; the other, renamed the Aleutian Support Group, consisted of the ISE, HYUGA, FUSO, YAMA:SHIRO, ZUIHO, KITAGAMI, OI, and SENDAI, plus the fifteen destroyers originally included in the Main Force. The YAMATO-MUTSU-NAGATO Group, hereinafter called the Main Unit, was a small, powerful surface force apparently without carrier based air or destroyers. It, therefore, became highly vulnerable to American carrier type raiding forces, as well as to submarines. The Aleutian Support Group was much better balanced than the YAMATO group. This appears to have been because it was designed to support both the Aleutian and the Midway forces, although its title would indicate that its primary responsibility lay with the Aleutian area. Actually, it was directed to take station about half way between the Aleutians and Midway, but it was recalled on June 4th before it had reached its assigned position.

The failure of the Japanese high command to provide the Main Force with more than one carrier indicates that the Japanese did not expect opposition from American aircraft in the vicinity of this force. The Japanese Estimate of the Situation preceding the Midway action was based on an incorrect calculation of possible enemy strength in the Midway area, especially in carriers. The calculation that two-three carriers were in the Hawaiian area, however, was correct. Perhaps the reported sinkings in the Battle of the Coral Sea and later sightings of TF 16 affected Japanese judgment adversely.

* * *

The Midway Occupation Force consisted of five groups. The Transport Group was composed of thirteen transports and supply ships, NANKAI MARU, ZENYO MARU, GOSHU MARU, BRAZIL MARU, ARGENTINA MARU, SEICHO MARU, AZUMA MARU, KIRISHIMA MARU, KANO MARU, #2 TOA MARU, KEIYO MARU, AKEBONO MARU and the HOKURUKU MARU. They were escorted by the JINTSU and destroyers of Destroyer Squadron Two plus three patrol boats which composed the Close Screen. The destroyers were the KUROSHIO, OYASHIO, NATSUSHIO, HATSUKAZE, YUKIKAZE, AMATSUKAZE, TOKITSUKAZE, KASUMI, ARARE, KAGERO and SHIRANUKI. The Close Support Group was composed of four heavy cruisers,

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KUMANO, SUZUYA, MOGAMI and MIKUMA, screened by four destroyers, ASASHIO, ARASHIO, OSHIO, and MICHISHIO. The Seaplane Tender Group was composed of two seaplane tenders, CHITOSE and KAMIKAWA MARU, escorted by the destroyer HAYASHIO and by patrol boat #15. The Second Fleet Group was composed of two battleships, KONGO, HIEI; four heavy cruisers, ATAGO, GHOKAI, HAGURO, MYOKO; one light cruiser YURA; and seven destroyers, YUDACHI, MURASAME, HARUSAME, SAMIDARE, ASAGUMO, MINEGUMO NATSUGUMO; and three supply ships. The Minesweeping Group was composed of minesweepers TAMA MARU 3 and 5 and SHOWA MARU 7 and 8 plus subchasers 4, 5 and 6.

The Midway Occupation Force was without adequate air protection. The two Seaplane Tenders in company provided aircraft for search and anti-submarine missions, and possibly a few float plane fighters for air defense; however, this was far from adequate. As the force was directed to approach Midway through an area in which the weather was generally good for flying, the Transport Group was particularly vulnerable to air attack, not only from American land based planes, but also from any carrier based planes in the area. The manner in which the Midway Occupation Force was disposed indicates the Japanese mental process in the solution of their military problems. The Japanese appear to have believed that the Midway attack would come as a surprise to the Americans. They considered that it was the American intention not to have any powerful task forces with carriers as the nucleus in the Midway area.* As pointed out previously they thought they had sunk the SARATOGA and YORKTOWN on May 8th and that they had sighted two additional carriers in the South Pacific on May 14th. They therefore appear to have felt free to divide their forces in any convenient manner without any regard to the factors of mutual support and concentration. The Second Fleet Group was rarely nearer to the Transport Group than fifty miles to the north or northwest, while the Close Support Group was usually about 75 miles ahead and to the east. Why this disposition was assumed is not clear. However, it may have been that the Japanese hoped to entice light American surface forces to close action by giving them the "bait" either of the Transport Group or of the Close Support Group. Perhaps the Japanese hoped to draw American surface forces towards either the Transport Group or the Close Support Group, in which case these groups would retire in the direction of the Second Fleet Group. The Second Fleet Group was designed to have sufficient strength to destroy such forces as the Japanese considered likely to be encountered. However, in the event a major American force should proceed against the Occupation Force, they thought the Mobile Force could quickly envelop it from its flanking position. From the viewpoint of hindsight such a plan appears visionary, but at the time it may have seemed sound to the Japanese.

The Minesweeping Group does not appear to have been adequate for the task assigned. There should have been a larger number of minesweepers available in order to insure that the minesweeping not only was thorough but was also completed expeditiously. This is an important consideration since there are

*Mobile Forces Detailed Battle Report #8 ONI Review, May 1947, p.6.

often a high casualty rate which necessitates ample replacements. Actually there were 380 controlled mines at Midway to be swept up. This would have presented a very difficult problem to the minesweepers. This information does not appear to have been known to the Japanese.

* * *

The Northern Force consisted of three groups, plus the heavy cruiser NACHI escorted by two destroyers, names not available. The Second Mobile Task Group was composed of the carriers RYUJO and JUNYO; the heavy cruisers TAKAO and MAYA; the destroyers USHIO, OBORO and AKEBONO; and the oiler TEIYO MARU. The Kiska Occupation Group was composed of the light cruisers KISO and TAMA; two auxiliary cruisers the AWATA and ASAKA MARU; five destroyers, names not available; the transports HAKUSAN MARU; and KUMAGAWA MARU; the three gunboats KAIHO MARU, SHUMKOTSU MARU, and HAKUHO MARU; and seven-eight subchasers.*

The Adak-Attu Occupation Group was composed of the light cruiser ABUKUMA; five destroyers, the WAKABA, HATSUSHIMO, NENOHI, SHIOKAZE, and HATSULARU; the transport KINUGASA MARU; the minelayer KOGANE MARU and the auxiliary aircraft carrier KIMIKAWA MARU.**

The Northern Force was designed for capturing certain Aleutian Islands, and for creating a diversion of such nature as to attract American forces from the Midway area, or from the American Mainland, to the Aleutian area. For these purposes it appears to have been in adequate strength and composition. It is of interest to note that the Kiska Occupation Group was composed of a naval landing force, whereas the Adak-Attu Group was composed of an Army Landing Force. These forces were not designed to operate together, but each presumably acted independently. The Second Mobile Task Group was a powerful task group designed essentially as a raiding group for creating the diversion referred to above. It was of such strength as to make it a real problem to the American command. The major strength of this group was in its two carriers.

* * *

The Submarine Force consisted of two groups, the Midway Submarine Group and the Aleutian Submarine Group. The Midway Submarine Group consisted of the fifteen submarines comprising Subrons Three and Five plus Subdiv Thirteen. These were the I-121, 122, 123, 156, 157, 158, 159, 164, 165, 166, 168, 169, 171, 174 and 175. The Aleutian Submarine Group consisted of six submarines of Subron One, the I-9, 15, 17, 19, 25 and 26. The remaining submarines of Subron One, the I-131, 132 and 133 were in the Empire.***

*USSBS, NavMoemo No. 12

**Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Vol. II, USSBS. Interrogation of Vice Admiral Sentaro Omori, IJN. Also War Records and Action Reports Desron 1 - May-June 1942, WDC 161718.

***War Diary 6th Flt. Period 1-30 June, 1942, extract translation WDC 160268.

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The task assigned the Submarine Force was reconnaissance and destruction. There does not appear to have been sufficient submarines assigned to effectively carry out their mission in this operation, as the submarine force was dissipated over large areas; fifteen were in the Midway area on both combat and logistics missions; four were in the Aleutian area, and two were off Seattle.

In view of the limited surface forces available to the American command, the danger to Japanese submarines from surface ship attack as well as from air attack was small.

JAPANESE PLAN
Midway Phase

The plan for the Midway-Aleutian operation appears to have been first proposed by CinC Combined Fleet. He felt, in view of the remarkable successes of the Japanese forces in the first stage of the war, that every effort should be made to strengthen the defense perimeters covering the approaches to Japan as soon as possible and to force a decisive fleet action at the same time. CinC Combined Fleet felt confident in view of the American losses at Pearl Harbor that the American fleet was temporarily inferior to the Japanese. He realized that American production capacity was vastly greater than that of the Japanese, and that the inevitable result of this American superiority in production would be an American fleet of ever-increasing strength. In time it would be able to challenge successfully the Japanese fleet and thereby gain control of the Pacific Ocean areas.

Japanese naval policy prior to the Midway operation was to hold the fleet in Japanese controlled waters in order to engage the enemy in an area most advantageous to Japanese arms. This policy had its greatest triumph in the Russo-Japanese war. The Japanese Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Togo, decided to await the arrival of the Russian fleet in the Straits of Tsushima between Japan and Korea, and there engage it, rather than to engage it in relatively distant waters. CinC Combined Fleet pointed out to the Japanese Imperial General Staff the advantages which might obtain should this policy be changed. He realized, in making his recommendations that if he desired to bring the American fleet into a vulnerable position, something the Americans valued must be threatened or captured. The Americans might then feel compelled to expose themselves in order to protect it or to recapture it; or an opportunity must appear to be presented to the Americans, as the weaker adversary, to inflict a relatively greater loss on the Japanese, as the stronger adversary, than the Americans expected to suffer themselves. This was, apparently, the basis of the Commander Combined Fleet's plan.

Based on the above, it would appear that CinC Combined Fleet's plan for the Midway phase of the Battle of Midway was as follows:-

(1) He hoped to bring on a decisive action off Midway in defense of that place. He was not optimistic concerning this, but felt that it was possible, and he was prepared for it mentally. What he actually expected, was that the Americans would endeavor to retake Midway after he had seized it, and that this would bring on the decisive engagement. For this reason he planned to employ Midway as a base for long distance reconnaissance planes which would alert his forces should any such counteraction be taken by the Americans. CinC Combined Fleet realized that after Midway was occupied his freedom of action would be restricted to the extent necessary for defending the atoll. He therefore planned to retain certain forces of the Combined Fleet in the Midway area. The main strength of the Combined Fleet would base in the Marshalls - probably at Kwajalein. He anticipated that if the decisive action occurred, and he was successful, the Japanese would then use Midway as a base for further extension to the east, probably as far as Hawaii."

(2) It is possible also that he had hoped, in line with the thought that it might be possible to bring about a fleet action, to present to the enemy what seemed to be an important, vulnerable target. Although not mentioned in his Operation Order, he may have believed that the Midway Occupation Force would be considered such a target by the American Commander, who would be lured into attacking it. This would indicate why the Midway Occupation Force was so far to the south in generally good weather, whereas the Mobile Force was well to the north in generally bad weather.

Such a plan as indicated in subparagraph (2) above would correspond in a general way with the maneuvers which brought on the Battle of Jutland twenty-seven years before. There both the Germans and British had exposed minor forces for the purpose of drawing out strong enemy forces and then destroying them with their battle fleet. It happened, however, that the strong forces so drawn out were the German High Seas Fleet and the British Grand Fleet, with the result that the greatest naval action in history up to that time occurred. In this instance it was ineffective.

The broad Japanese plan, based on their own evaluated information, appears strategically sound, although the deployment of the principal forces does not appear sound. CinC Combined Fleet's analysis of the situation, based on his expectation that American production capacity would in a relatively short time far exceed that of the Japanese, made it imperative for the Japanese to fight a fleet action as early as possible. This appears sound. Certainly the American high command was not going to carry willingly the war to Japan's front door until prepared to do so. Therefore, decisive action at an early date could only be forced when American public opinion demanded it. How best could this public opinion be aroused? CinC Combined Fleet believed that the answer lay in his proposed plan. This belief was finally accepted by the

*USSBS, Interrogation #524, page 2.

Japanese Imperial Staff, for on May 5th, 1942, Imperial Headquarters issued orders as follows:

"CinC Combined Fleet will, in cooperation with the Army, attack and occupy AF and AO." (NOTE: AF was Midway and AO was the Western Aleutians).

Yet why the CinC Combined Fleet separated his forces so widely in the Midway phase is not clear. Certainly the deployment for that phase, as has been pointed out, was so loose as to deny mutual support and concentration to the principal forces. At the time the O225 June 3rd contact was made on the Occupation Force, which was then 875 miles west of Midway, the Mobile Force was about 600 miles northwest of Midway, and the Main Force was about 1050 miles westnorthwest of Midway. The Occupation Force, moreover, was about 600 miles to the southsouthwest of the Mobile Force, and 600 miles southeast of the Main Force. It was therefore subject to destruction by strong American carrier forces operating from the south or east. The Mobile Force could not support the Occupation Force unless American forces in the Hawaiian area approached from a northerly direction.

However, should the Occupation Force in a retirement succeed in luring such American forces to the westward, it might have been possible for the Mobile Force to interpose between the American forces and their Hawaiian bases.

The Main Force could not support either the Mobile Force or the Occupation Force unless these latter forces retired on the Main Force. The Japanese at this time appear to have been battleship minded. They did not choose to move their battleships forward with their carriers, either in formation with them or in an adequate supporting position. In this connection it should be stressed that to be in a supporting position does not necessarily mean that the forces concerned have to be within visual signal distance of each other, although with radio silence in effect this factor is worthy of serious consideration. It does mean, however, that they must be so disposed as to be able to coordinate their effort with other friendly units in the most effective manner. Did this condition obtain with the principal Japanese forces? Would it not have been a much sounder deployment had the Main Force and the Mobile Force been in mutually supporting positions, with the Occupation Force safely to the westward of these units under protection until needed.

Aleutian Phase

The Aleutian and Midway operations were intimately related. The Japanese plan called for the Japanese main fleet strength to be employed in the seizure of Midway and, as has been stated previously, to engage the American fleet in

decisive battle if possible. Meanwhile, certain other fleet forces were to make a reconnaissance in force against Dutch Harbor. This reconnaissance was to be in the nature of a diversion, and for that reason was to precede the Midway operation by one day. It seems that one day would be of doubtful diversionary value except in a tactical situation. Dutch Harbor was to be struck a paralyzing blow which would cover the operations of the forces which were to seize Adak, Kiska, and Attu. The occupation of Adak was to be temporary--merely long enough to destroy any American installations there, and to mine the harbor. The occupation forces were then to withdraw to Attu. Meanwhile, Kiska was to be captured. Both Attu and Kiska were to be held until fall, but were to be abandoned before the onset of severe winter weather.*

The occupation of Attu and Kiska was for the purpose of checking any American amphibious advance towards the Japanese Mainland, and of denying to the Americans an advanced base in the Aleutians from which long range planes could attack the Kuriles and the northern home islands. This was to be accomplished in part, according to the initial plan, by employing Adak, considered to afford the best anchorage in the Western Aleutians, as a northern base for Japanese patrol planes. This base used in conjunction with Midway, could provide aircraft to patrol the 1400 miles between Adak and Midway. A barrier air patrol could then be established, in order to prevent a surprise penetration by the American Fleet beyond Midway Atoll and towards the Empire. It was hoped this would make raids similar to the Doolittle raid much more difficult to accomplish.

CinC Combined Fleet's plan for projected air searches for the Midway-Aleutians operation makes no mention of Adak. Nor does the diagram show any searches to be conducted from Adak, but it does show searches to be conducted from Kiska after its capture. It is therefore assumed that the plan for employing Adak as a base must have been modified to one employing Kiska. This seems logical when it is remembered that Kiska was to be somewhat protected, whereas Adak was to be devoid of defense, except that provided by the tender and its escorts.

The raid on Dutch Harbor, although it did not actually cause the diversion of additional forces from TFs 16 and 17, did, nevertheless, succeed somewhat in its diversionary objective. For CINCPAC, having learned through intelligence of the projected raid, transferred some of his naval strength in the Hawaiian area to the Aleutian area to counter this raid. He thereby weakened the combatant strength of his carrier groups.

The deployment of the Northern Force was well planned. The Second Mobile Task Group was both a Striking Force and a Covering Force for the Adak-Attu and Kiska Occupation Groups. It was in an excellent covering position and its composition well adapted to the type of action planned. The operations of the

*Campaigns of The Pacific War, the Aleutian Campaign, page 97.

Occupation Groups were in areas where the probability of American counteraction was low and therefore the need for mutual support and concentration was not the controlling factor.

CHAPTER III

AMERICAN ARRANGEMENTS

AMERICAN COMMAND RELATIONS

The Pacific Theater had been designated as an area of U.S. strategic responsibility.* For this purpose it had been divided into three large areas: the Southwest Pacific Area, the Southeast Pacific Area, and the Pacific Ocean Area, the latter being further subdivided in the North, Central, and South Pacific areas.**

In this study the North and Central areas of the Pacific Ocean areas are of primary interest, as it was in them that the Battle of Midway occurred. As neither the Southwest Pacific area, the Southeast Pacific area, nor the South Pacific area were concerned with the Midway operation, no further mention of them is made. The North Pacific Area was the ocean area north of Lat. 42° N.; the Central Pacific area was the ocean area between the Equator and Lat. 42° N.***

Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, U.S. Navy, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CINCPAC), on April 3rd was directed to assume command of all armed forces in the Pacific Ocean areas which have been or might be assigned to that area, except the land defenses of New Zealand. He was given the title of Commander-in-Chief Pacific Ocean Areas. (CINCPOA). "Armed Forces" was interpreted to mean that CINCPOA would have command of only such armed forces as were specifically assigned or attached to his area. This was unified command, designed to provide coordination between the Army and Navy. He assumed this command at 1200, May 7th.****

Admiral Nimitz as Commander-in-Chief of Pacific Ocean Areas was directed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff among other tasks to:

- (a) Hold Island positions between the United States and the Southwest Pacific area necessary for the security of the line of communications between these regions and for supporting naval, air, and amphibious operations against Japanese forces.
- (b) Contain Japanese forces within the Pacific Theater.
- (c) Support the defense of the continent of North America.
- (d) Protect the essential sea and air communications.*****

*Review of War in Pacific, Army & Navy Staff College, Captain T.H. Robbins, USN. 1943.

**Employment of Forces in Southwest Pacific Command, USSRS, February 1947 - pp.5,6.

***Secnav Secret Ltr. (SC)A-16-3(28) of April 20, 1942.

****CincPac War Diary, May 1942.

*****Cominch Serial 00254 of 3 April 1942.

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It is apparent from a study of this directive that CINCPAC had the responsibility of defending the Hawaiian Islands as well as the Aleutian areas.

On May 12th the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet (COMINCH), and the Chief of Staffs of the Army informed all subordinates that area boundaries should in no way be interpreted as restricting movements on operations which might aid the common cause.* This was considerable improvement over the situation which had existed in the Coral Sea, where boundaries caused restraint.

In view of intelligence received concerning Japanese operations against Midway, a state of Fleet Opposed Invasion was declared on May 14th in the Hawaiian Coastal and Sea Frontiers.* This declaration was made by agreement between COMINCH and the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army.

At the time of this action Fleet Opposed Invasion meant that the Navy was assigned the principal responsibility for repelling invasion. It also meant that unity of command was vested in the Navy as regards fleet forces and sea frontier forces, excluding naval local defense forces. Sea frontier forces continued to be under command of the Navy for operations over the sea against enemy seaborne activities as in a state of non-invasion. Unity of command in a Fleet Opposed Invasion was vested in the Army over all naval local defense forces specifically assigned by CINCPAC and over all Army forces except air units allocated by defense commanders to sea frontiers for operations over the sea.** The responsibility for the defense of Midway was placed by CINCPAC under the Commander Hawaiian Sea Frontier.***

On May 30th CINCPAC informed the Commanding General Hawaiian Department and Commander Patrol Wing Two that Commander Naval Base Air Defense had authority to order Army bombers on missions which included basing on Midway.****

Commander Task Force 9 (TF 9), who was Commander Patrol Wings, Pacific Fleet, and Naval Base Air Defense, therefore had operational control over all Navy reconnaissance planes, excepting those on Midway and Johnston Island, and over specifically assigned Army bombers, based on Oahu Island. This according to Commander 7th Air Force meant operational control over the planes of the Seventh Bomber Command.***** Under such operational command, as pointed out above, he was authorized to order Army bombers to Midway Island or to Johnston Island. However, should these bombers be based at those islands, they came under the immediate operational command of the Commanding

*CINCPAC War Diary, May 1942.

**Enclosure B to COMINCH Confidential Serial 0733 of May 1, 1942.

***CINCPAC Operation Plan 29-42, Serial 0014W of 27 May 1942.

****CINCPAC Operation Plan 28-42

*****Air Force Employment at Midway, Office of Air Force Commander, dated 13 June 1942, signed H.C. Davidson.

Officer of the base or station involved." This was somewhat confusing, for the Commanding Officers of both Midway Island and Johnston Island were under Commander Task Force Four, the Hawaiian Sea Frontier.**

On May 21st CINCPAC formed Task Force Eight, called the Northern Pacific Force, under command of Rear Admiral Robert A. Theobald, U.S.N. He directed CTF 8 to oppose, in coordination with the Army, the advance of the enemy into the Aleutian-Alaska area. He also directed CTF 8 to coordinate with the Army Force in Alaska other than the Air Force (Alaska Defense Command under General Simon Bolivar Buckner, USA). Commander Alaskan Army Air, General Butler, USA, was directed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to report to CTF 8 as a task group Commander to command all U.S. Army and Navy air units in Alaska. This was for the purpose of obtaining unified air command. Such unified air command, however, did not fully obtain, for as will be discussed later, CTF 8 set up his naval search planes in an Air Search Group under Captain L.E. Gehres, USN. This group was to be directly under CTF 8.***

CINCPAC's principal striking forces consisted of three carrier task forces. These were TF 11, Rear Admiral Aubrey Fitch; TF 16, Rear Admiral Raymond A. Spruance; and TF 17, Rear Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher. Unfortunately TF 11 did not arrive in the combat area in time to engage in the Battle of Midway. TF 16 and TF 17 operated under the command of the senior Carrier Task Force Commander, Rear Admiral Fletcher (CTF 17). His immediate superior was CINCPAC.

The Commanding General, Hawaiian Department, Lieutenant-General Delos Emmons, USA, had command of certain naval local defense forces specifically assigned by CINCPAC in addition to Army forces other than those assigned to TF 9.

From the above discussion it should be apparent that in the Hawaiian area, the lesson of the Coral Sea concerning unity of command had been learned and applied. CINCPAC-CINCPAC had the overall command of the operations in the North and Central Pacific. In line with this situation CINCPAC stated, "Broad Tactical direction of all of the forces in the Midway area was retained by CINCPAC".**** However, as regards the operations in the Aleutians, CINCPAC retained overall command of sea and air forces, but he left the tactical direction of his forces there to JTF 8, as discussed previously. This denied complete unity of command in that there was no overall command, and the Army ground forces and the Navy were forced to coordinate their operations through mutual cooperation.

*CINCPAC War Diary, May 1942.

**CINCPAC Operation Plan 29-42.

***CINCPAC Operation Plan 28-42.

****CINCPAC Serial 01849 of June 28th, 1942. Battle of Midway.

INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE AMERICAN COMMANDER

Midway Phase

Because of information received early in May through various intelligence channels, the American Commander (CINCPAC) believed that the Japanese planned a two-pronged invasion thrust at Midway and the Aleutians to take place in early June. This information was remarkably complete. He not only considered that he knew of the projected operations, but he also had quite comprehensive information of the strength of Japanese forces involved, their general direction of approach and the approximate date on which each phase of the operation was to be launched.

The date on which CINCPAC first obtained this information is not to be found in any of the documents available at this time, but entries in his War Diary indicate that he may have had some inkling of the pending Japanese operation prior to May 2nd. An entry on that date stated that the AA guns at Midway should be increased to twenty four as soon as possible. An entry on May 5th states that, in accordance with a directive from COMTNC, he had directed Commander Fourteenth Naval District to reinforce the defenses at Midway by preparing that island to receive 12-3" AA, 8-37mm AA, and 12-20mm guns. On the same day he requested COMINCH to send 12-20mm AA guns, sixteen officers and 455 enlisted Marines to Midway. If CINCPAC needed any confirmation of the above inklings, he must have obtained it by May 14th when a state of "Fleet Opposed Invasion" was declared in effect in the Hawaiian Sea Frontier.

On May 27th CINCPAC issued his Operation Plan No. 29-42 activating his forces for the defense of Midway. He believed that the number of Japanese combatant ships which would be employed in this phase of the operation would be (left hand column)-

| <u>CINCPAC's Estimate</u> | <u>Type</u> | <u>Japanese Ships Actually Present</u> |
|---------------------------|-------------|--|
| 2 to 4 | BB | 11 |
| 4 or 8 | CV | 4 |
| | CVL | 1 |
| 8 or 9 | CA | 10 |
| | CL | 6 |
| 16 to 24 | DD | 49 |
| 8 to 12 | SS | 16 |
| Some with | XCV | 1 |
| Landing Force } | XAV | 1 |

As will be noted from the right hand column, his estimate of carriers, heavy cruisers, and submarines was reasonably correct, but his estimate of the number of Japanese battleships, light cruisers, and destroyers was seriously in error.

In this estimate CINCPAC was of the opinion that the Japanese action against Midway would comprise a full-scale attack for its capture, quick occupation, and use against the Hawaiian area. He anticipated operations beginning probably as soon as May 30th. His conception of the nature of these operations based on an evaluation of his intelligence was:-*

- (1) Preliminary reconnaissance by submarines.
- (2) Possible diversionary bombing of positions including Oahu by patrol planes fueled by submarines.
- (3) Preliminary attacks by carrier aircraft on Midway beginning at daylight, or during moonlight and continuing for about two days, until the defending aircraft had been eliminated. These attacks were expected to be launched from the Northwest Sector.
- (4) The attacking carriers to be covered against American surface forces by additional carrier groups and fast battleships.
- (5) Covering with concentrations of submarines designed to intercept the American supporting forces both in the Midway area and about two hundred miles west of Oahu.
- (6) Japanese carrier plane attacks on American carriers as primary objectives if they were sighted early in the operation.
- (7) Employment incendiary bombs and possibly gas against Midway.
- (8) A landing attack on Midway, probably at night, and the immediate occupation of the island followed up with full base equipment, aircraft, and motor torpedo boats if the landing was successful.*

His intelligence in these matters appears to have been generally correct, with the exception, in so far as can be ascertained, that the Japanese did not contemplate the use of gas in this operation.

He knew that, ordinarily, an area of reduced visibility could be expected about 300 to 400 miles to the northwest of Midway, and that as a result the discovery of Japanese carriers approaching the Island from that direction on the day prior to any attack was doubtful.**

Aleutians Phase

On May 21st, CINCPAC issued his Operation Plan No. 28-42, in which he activated Task Force B, North Pacific Force, under command of Rear Admiral Robert A. Theobald, USN, with orders to oppose the expected Japanese advance into the Aleutian-Alaska area. At this time he was reasonably sure that the

*CINCPAC Operation Plan 28-42, Serial 0114 of 27 May 1942.

**Report of Comdr. Logan C. Ramsey, USN, to CincPac. Subject, Air Operations of Midway Defense Forces during Battle of Midway, serial 0027 dated June 15, 1942.

Japanese had completed plans for an amphibious operation to secure an advanced base in the Aleutian Islands. The operation would commence the latter part of May, 1942. He expected that the following enemy forces would be involved in this operation:

| | |
|---|------------|
| CarDiv Three (RYUNO and 1 or 2 others) | 2 or 3 CV |
| NACHI (Flag CinC Fifth Fleet) plus possibly HAGURO and MYOKO | 1 to 3 CA |
| One section of CruDiv Four | 2 CA |
| One old cruiser of TAMA type | 1 OCL |
| Desron One less 1 Desdiv, plus Desdiv Two | 16 DD |
| Subron One | 8 to 10 SS |

He believed that on May 25, 1942, the above forces would arrive in Northern Japan, fuel, and would then proceed to the Aleutians. He believed further that they would probably cover and escort a group of auxiliary types consisting of transports, landing boat carriers, seaplane tenders, cargo vessels, and tankers. He also believed it quite possible that Japanese Fifth Fleet vessels could accompany these auxiliary types and expected some auxiliary patrol vessels to reconnoiter and patrol the Aleutians.

This information was reasonably correct as to the numbers and types of Japanese combatant ships that participated in the early stages of the Aleutian operations. This force actually included:

| | |
|---|-------------|
| CarDiv Four (RYUNO JUNYO) | 1 CV, 1 OVL |
| KENTAKAWA MARU | 1 KAV |
| CruDiv Four, less one section (TAKAO, MAYA) plus NACHI | 3 CA |
| CruDiv Twenty One less one section (KISO, TAMA) plus ABUKUMA | 3 OCL |
| ASAYA MARU | 1 KCL |
| Desdiv Seven (3 DD) | |
| Desdiv Twenty-Seven (3 DD) | |
| Desdiv Six (4 DD) | |
| Desdiv Twenty-One (4 DD) | |
| HOKAZE, SUIKAZE (2 DD) | 16 DD |
| Subron One | 6 SS |
| Minelayers (unknown number) | |
| Subchaser Division Thirteen | 7 or 8 SC |
| Gunboats | 3 |

It is of interest to note that the day of departure of the Japanese Northern Force (May 23rd) for the Aleutian area from Ominato was within two days of CINCPAC's earliest predicted time of departure (May 25th) of this force. The remainder of the Northern Area Force, consisting of the Adak

Occupation Group and the Kiska Occupation Group departed from Ominato four days later on May 27th.*

The American Commander knew that Japanese submarines had been engaged in reconnaissance operations in the Aleutian area, and that a Japanese seaplane had reconnoitered Kiska on May 24th. He realized that other areas were also under Japanese scrutiny, but he did not know which areas these were.

He did not know the exact area in which the Japanese Aleutian landings were to be made, but CINCPAC's Commander in Aleutian waters, CTF 8, in his estimate assumed that the Japanese intended to seize bases in the Umnak-Dutch Harbor-Cold Bay area, and that the first move would be a surprise bombing and strafing attack on the United States airfields in supporting distance of the selected landing area.

CTF 8's assumptions as to the location of the planned amphibious operations were wrong. He received intelligence on May 28th that the Japanese Alaskan Force had one task group earmarked for the capture of Kiska; another task group for a second place in that area which intelligence said might be Attu. He reasoned that as this information was derived from intercepted Japanese radio transmissions, it might have been inspired by the Japanese for the purpose of deceiving the American forces; hoping thereby to draw the naval forces sent to intercept them farther to the westward.**

AMERICAN DISPOSITIONS

The American Navy, in cooperation with the Army, in carrying out the directive from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to repel the threat on Midway and the Aleutians, as well as in carrying out the various tasks assigned to CINCPAC listed under American Command Relations, had established bases in the Central Pacific and in the Northern Pacific.

The general disposition of airfields, naval section bases, and submarine bases throughout both the Central Pacific and the Northern Pacific areas was as follows:

Central Pacific

In the Central Pacific the primary and only major base of operation for both the Army and the Navy was in the Hawaiian Islands. Pearl Harbor, backed up by Mainland ports of supply, furnished all the logistic repair and maintenance needs of the fleet. For the Army Oahu was a large ground force and air force center. The numerous Army and Navy land plane fields on Oahu and other islands

*War Records and Action Reports of Desron 1, translation of WDC 161718, page 3.

**CTF 8 Estimate of the Situation, Para. 14.

of the Hawaiian Group provided bases for the air protection of the Islands and staging fields for aircraft movements.

The Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet, the Commander Hawaiian Sea Frontier, the Commander Naval Base Air Defense, the Commanding General Hawaiian Department, and the Commander of the Seventh Air Force all maintained headquarters on Oahu.

Midway Atoll contained a small land and seaplane base. It was used primarily as a reconnaissance outpost for the security of the Hawaiian Islands. It also had a small submarine base utilized primarily as a fueling point for submarines en route to or retiring from patrol. Only one plane field had been constructed at this time in the Midway Atoll. This was on Eastern Island. Seaplane operating facilities existed inside of the lagoon. It had limited fuel supplies for surface vessels. A submarine cable connecting Sand Island with Honolulu was available and was extensively used for communication purposes. By using it to handle the greatly increased volume of traffic incident to the defense of Midway, the volume of radio traffic was kept within normal limits and the Japanese did not suspect that the Americans had knowledge of this plan. Two radar stations had been constructed and were operating; one on Eastern Island, the other on Sand Island.

Johnston Island contained only a small naval air station from which a few Navy patrol planes and, on occasion, Army planes were operated. It is so located that search flights to the westward cover the southern approaches to Midway. It therefore was strategically important.

Kure Island, 55 miles to the westward of Midway, was not occupied by American troops. It had an emergency seaplane anchorage and operating area within its lagoon, and also had a potential land plane site on the main island.

Northern Pacific

In this area there were no well-developed naval and air bases. Kodiak and Dutch Harbor were the principal bases of this type, but they had to be supported to a large extent from Seattle, which contained the nearest drydock and repair facilities of any extent.

Kodiak, on Kodiak Island off the Alaska Peninsula, had a modern naval air station for land and seaplanes, a submarine base, and limited logistic facilities and was protected by army ground troops at Fort Greely. The harbor here was excellent. It was here the Army Commanders involved maintained their headquarters.

At Dutch Harbor, Unalaska, there was an advanced seaplane base, and a submarine and section base. Protecting army ground troops were at nearby Fort Mears. Other important bases were:

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(a) Fort Glenn (Otter Point), on Unalakleet Island, was the main Army airfield in the Aleutian chain, and its construction had been given high priority by the Army. Its principal purpose was to furnish fighter air support for Dutch Harbor and to serve as a base for future operations against the Japanese. It was the only airfield in Alaska at that time equipped with a metallic landing mat. Runways 8,000 feet by 150 feet were ready for use and aircraft warning radar was in the process of being installed. Aviation gasoline and bombs were available. Its construction was apparently entirely unknown to the Japanese.

(b) Seward, on the Kenai Peninsula, had a Navy section base, and there was an Army garrison at nearby Fort Raymond.

(c) Sitka, on Baranof Island, had a naval air station and protective Army garrison at Fort Ray. This was the most important joint operations base in Southeastern Alaska. Fuel stowage capacity was limited to fifteen days supply. This necessitated frequent tanker calls at this port, and curtailed the amount of fuel available to the operating forces.

(d) Cold Bay, at the end of the Alaskan Peninsula, had a naval section base and served as an Army staging and operationing airfield. It was reported to possess an excellent harbor in which the whole United States Fleet could be based, and was considered to be the safest anchorage for large ships from submarine attack. Its Army airfield at Fort Randall which was practically completed, had runways 8,000 feet by 150 feet ready for use, and had aviation gasoline and a supply of bombs available. Army infantry and field artillery troops with 75 mm pack howitzers were installed at Cold Bay for the defense of the base.

(e) Sand Point, Popof Island in the Shumagin group, had a naval section base, and Popof Strait provided an ample seaplane anchorage and operating area.

(f) Ladd Field, near Fairbanks, Alaska, was an Army Air Base and Cold Weather Experimental Station. It had a reinforced concrete runway of 9,000 feet and two runways of 10,000 and 10,500 feet. It was protected by about 700 Army troops, including infantry, artillery, and an Air Corps Cold Weather Test Squadron. The field was stocked with gasoline and bombs, and on May 19th supported six type P-36 fighter planes.

(g) Nome had an Army staging field with a small infantry garrison. The airfield was stocked with gasoline, but had no hangars or airplanes.

(h) Anchorage had two operational airfields where as of May 19th over one half of the Army Air Force planes in the Alaskan area--forty four planes of various types--were operating.

(i) Cordova had airfield runways so constructed as to be available for year-round operation. It was an Army staging field protected by about 471

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troops of various categories.

(j) Yukatat had an excellent 9,000 foot runway for land planes. It was stocked with aviation gas and bombs, but had no planes. It was an Army staging field to Northern and Western Alaska. Its defense was provided by about 815 Army troops consisting of a coast artillery battery, a reinforced infantry company and various service units.

(k) Juneau had an Army staging field with about 485 Army troops attached to the base for its defense and maintenance.

(l) Ketchikan was the headquarters for the U.S. Coast Guard in Alaska, and was also a Coast Guard repair base.

(m) Annette Island was an Army staging field. It was also an operating base for a squadron of Royal Canadian Air Force pursuit planes.

(n) Kodiak and Dutch Harbor had permanent aerological stations. Six additional mobile aerological stations with limited radio facilities were located on Unak, Atka, Kanaga, Anchitka, Kiaka, and Attu. These latter stations were not permanently located, but operated in the approximate vicinity of the islands indicated.

AMERICAN LAND AND TENDER BASED AIRCRAFT
Central Pacific

The land and tender based aircraft involved in operations from Midway included patrol planes of Patrol Wings ONE and TWO, Army bombers of the Seventh Air Force, fighters, and dive bombers of Marine Air Group 22, and torpedo planes of Torpedo Squadron Eight. Planes of Patrol Wing ONE were also engaged in searches from Johnston Island. Additional patrol planes of Patrol Wings ONE and TWO, together with Army bombers of the Seventh Air Force, were engaged in security searches for the main islands of the Hawaiian Group. Some became involved in the action off Midway.

All Army and Navy aircraft sent to Midway to participate in the defense of Midway reported for duty to the Commanding Officer, Naval Air Station, Midway, and operated under his command. Likewise, all Army and Navy aircraft sent to Johnston Island reported for duty to the Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station who exercised operational control.

CTF 9, Commander Patrol Wings, Pacific, who was also Commander Naval Base Air Defense for the Hawaiian Sea Frontier, as well as Commander Patrol Wing TWO, was charged, initially, insofar as the defense of Midway was concerned,

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only with despatching such patrol planes to Midway and Johnston Island as might be required. Later, on May 29th, his authority was extended to include the ordering of Seventh Bomber Command aircraft on missions that included landing or basing at Midway.

Prior to May 22nd, the entire land based air defense for Midway consisted of four PBX-5 patrol planes from Patrol Wing TWO, and twenty-one fighters and twenty-one dive bombers from Marine Air Group 22. This Marine Air Group strength was increased on May 26th, when the USS KITTY HAWK arrived at Midway with nineteen SBD-2, seven F4F-3 aircraft, and twenty-two officers and thirty-five men. Seventeen of the new pilots arriving in this group, however, were fresh out of flight school.

During the latter part of May the number of patrol planes at Midway was gradually increased. Some Army bombers were also flown into Midway to form a nucleus for the proposed air striking group to be based on that island.

Six patrol planes were despatched to Johnston Island to provide the planes necessary to conduct the air searches planned from that island.

As of May 31st the number of airplanes available at Midway and at Johnston Island, and available to CTF 9 in the Oahu area are shown in the attached Table 1.

It should be noted that the total number of aircraft at Midway was increased about two and one-half times between May 22nd and June 1st. However, service and maintenance personnel were not augmented in equal proportion. This required combat crews to assist in rearming and servicing their own aircraft after the completion of each flight. The inadequate facilities available made these tasks long and arduous. In addition, the searches and other air operations were very extensive, requiring the daily employment of the majority of the patrol and heavy bombing aircraft personnel. Few relief crews were available. As a result some of the crews entered the battle on June 4th in a near state of exhaustion. This naturally affected their efficiency, although it in no wise dampened their courage and determination. Despite this overloading of the personnel, an unusually high percentage of the total planes available were operational prior to contact with the enemy.

In this connection it is interesting to note that the congestion of planes and personnel on Midway was extreme. Plane personnel slept in dugouts alongside the landing strips. On June 2nd it became necessary for the CMAS Midway to return six B-17's and three PBX-5A to Pearl in order to relieve this congestion. The physical limitations imposed by the size of the island and the limited facilities available placed a definite limit on the number of personnel which could be sustained on the island. It is doubtful if any command was satisfied with the personnel situation. Certainly the air units were not. In the absence of sufficient ground personnel to properly support the extensive air operations

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Distribution of Army, Navy and Marine Corps
Landed Aircraft Available to Combatant 1-40
C.O. Midway, and S.O. Johnston Island
As of 0000 May 31st

| LOCATION | PBY NAVY | PBY-5 NAVY | PBY-5A NAVY | PBY-1 NAVY | B-17 ARMY | B-26 ARMY | A-30 ARMY | SB2U-2 MARINE | SB2U-3 MARINE | F2A-3 MARINE | F4U-3 MARINE | TOTAL |
|------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|
| PEARL | 3 | 4 | 16 | 1 | | | | | | | | 24 |
| KANBOHE | | 14 | 14 | | | | | | | | | 28 |
| BARKING SARDS | 3 | | 15 | | | | | | | | | 19 |
| ERA | | | | | | | 8 | | | | | 8 |
| MIDWAY | | 12 | 12 | | 17 | 4 | 19 | 17 | 21 | 7 | | 109 |
| JOHNSTON | | 6 | | | | | | | | | | 6 |
| HICKAM | | | | | 12 | | | | | | | 12 |
| MAKOLEA | | | | | 6 | | | | | | | 6 |
| KIPAPA | | | | | 3 | | | | | | | 3 |
| WEBSTER | | | | | 3 | | 4 | | | | | 7 |
| BELLWES | | | | | 4 | | | | | | | 4 |
| TOTAL | 6 | 36 | 57 | 1 | 45 | 4 | 4 | 27 | 17 | 21 | 7 | 225 |

Total number planes at Midway between 0000 May 31st and 2400 June 3rd

| DATE | PBY-5 NAVY | PBY-5A NAVY | B-17 ARMY | B-26 ARMY | TBF-1 NAVY | SB2 MARINE | F2A-3 MARINE | F4U-3 MARINE | F4P-3 MARINE | TOTAL |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|
| 2400 May 31st | 12 | 14 | 17 | 4 | 6 | 19 | 19 | 17 | 7 | 111 |
| 2400 June 1 | 12 | 15 | 17 | 4 | 6 | 19 | 19 | 17 | 7 | 118 |
| 2400 June 2 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 4 | 6 | 19 | 19 | 17 | 7 | 119 |
| 2400 June 3 | 14 | 16 | 17 | 4 | 6 | 19 | 19 | 17 | 7 | 121 |

* One Plane with General Hale.

** 5 out of commission.

TABLE 2

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undertaken, the plane crews were worked to the point of exhaustion, and were then relieved in some cases by fresh crews from Pearl. In this way the operations were carried on with a minimum of personnel. Since Midway was somewhat of an emergency operation covering only a few days, such a plan could be carried out. Had the operation been extended over a longer period, the search plan would have undoubtedly collapsed for want of proper ground and logistic support.

The F2A-3 fighter planes and the SB2U-3 dive bombers assigned to Marine Air Group 22 were not the newest American types. These planes upon their replacement on the carriers with F4F and SBD's some months previously, had been transferred to the Marine Corps. This policy of equipping the Marine Corps Air Groups with old types of planes, giving the carrier Air Groups priority in assignment of new types, was a contributing factor to the excessive losses sustained in the Midway action by Marine Air Group 22.

Many of the Army B-17's had recently arrived from the Mainland. Some required structural changes, including the installation of extra gas tanks and other new equipment. One squadron received heavy bomber replacements in lieu of medium bomber replacements, i.e. B-17's for B-18's, only a few days prior to being sent to Midway. Time simply was not available for training or indoctrination in the new type.

The Marine pilots who arrived on May 26th were so inexperienced in dive bombing that the squadron commander considered it advisable to employ glide bombing, although glide bombing was recognized as a much less effective procedure against the strong fighter and anti-aircraft opposition expected.

AMERICAN SEARCH AND RECONNAISSANCE
CENTRAL PACIFIC

Commander Pacific Ocean areas, in preparation for the defense of Midway, had transferred PBV type planes to Midway and Johnston Island as shown in the preceding table. Owing to the limited facilities at both bases, relatively few planes were initially assigned. However, as the information concerning the planned Japanese attack on Midway was believed to be accurate, it was necessary that the areas from which the attack was most likely to come be thoroughly searched daily. This required a maximum search effort be made from both Midway and Johnston Island by the patrol plane groups established there. The scope of these searches was as shown in Diagram "C" and as presented in the following table:

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Midway Searches (PBY's)

| DATE | SECTOR | DISTANCE | NO. OF PLANES | REMARKS |
|--------|------------------|----------|---------------|---|
| 30 May | 200°-020°T | 700 | 22 | Search northward of 325° T beyond 350 miles not thorough, due to weather. Contact with two twin engine enemy bombers was made. |
| 31 May | 208°-020° (T) | 700 | 21 | No search north of 285°T beyond 350 miles due zero-zero weather. |
| 1 June | 200°-020° (T) | 700 | 22 | Excellent coverage except beyond line-running east and west 300 miles north of Midway. Contacts with enemy twin engine bombers was made. |
| 2 June | 200°-020° (T) | 700 | 22 | Excellent coverage except between 292° and 315° T beyond 400 miles north of Midway. |
| 3 June | 200°-020° (T) | 700 | 22 | Excellent coverage except beyond 400 miles to north-northwest of Midway. First contact two Jap cargo vessels. Several other contacts. |
| 4 June | 200°-020° (T) | 425 | 22 | Planes ordered to go to 425 miles unless 4 carriers were located earlier; upon completion of search, planes were to proceed to Laysan Lisianski Islands and await orders. |
| 5 June | 250°-020° (T) | 250 | 10 | Coverage excellent. |

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Midway Searches (PBYS)
(cont)

| DATE | SECTOR | DISTANCE | NO. OF PLANES | REMARKS |
|--------|------------------|----------|---------------|--|
| 6 June | 220°-350° (T) | 600 | -- | 100% coverage. Several contacts and attacks. |
| 7 June | 263°-283° (T) | 550 | -- | Coverage was excellent. |
| 7 June | 270°-000° (T) | -- | 21 | Area search bounded by line drawn 220 miles to northward and 350 miles to westward. This was a rescue operation. |

Johnston Island Searches (PBYS)

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|------------|--------|---|
| 31 May | 261°-329° (T) | 500 | 6 | 90% coverage. Searches began this date. |
| 1 June | 261°-329° (T) | 500 | 6 | 90% coverage. |
| 2 June | (261°-270°T 270°-309°T) | 610 700 | 1 4 | These searches overlapped Midway search. |
| 3-7 June incl. | 261°-309°T | 700 | 4 | All searches negative. (31 May-7 June) |

TF 16 and 17 Searches

| DATE | TIME | SECTOR | DISTANCE | REMARKS |
|--------|------|-----------|----------|---|
| 31 May | 1430 | 270°-030° | 150 | TF 16 routine searches begun. Passed out of area covered by Pearl search. |
| 1 June | 0400 | 330°-090° | 150 | HORNET made forenoon search. No afternoon search--due fog. |
| 2 June | 0543 | 270°-060° | 150 | ENTERPRISE searched. All planes encountered bad weather and returned early. Afternoon search cancelled due to rain and fog. Made rendezvous with TF 17. |

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TF 16 and 17 Searches
(cont)

| DATE | TIME | SECTOR | DISTANCE | REMARKS |
|--------|------|-----------|----------|---|
| 3 June | 0400 | 240°-060° | 200 | YORKTOWN search. Poor visibility and squally weather. |
| 3 June | 1300 | 240°-060° | 175 | YORKTOWN search. |
| 4 June | 0421 | 270°-090° | 100 | YORKTOWN search. 10 VSB |
| 4 June | 1100 | 280°-020° | 250 | YORKTOWN search. 10 VSB |
| 5 June | | | | No searches this date. |
| 6 June | 0502 | 180°-360° | 200 | ENTERPRISE search. 18 VSB |
| 6 June | 0746 | 209°-268° | 150 | GA search. 4 VOS |

* * *

The land based search plan for Midway was based on the following assumptions:

1. That visibility, in general, would permit a large force, or small force making high speed, to be detected at a distance of 25 miles.
2. That the Japanese would launch carrier strikes against Midway at dawn at a distance no greater than 200 miles.
3. That the Japanese carrier force would use a speed no greater than 27 knots for the run-in to launching position.
4. That a 180° sector search from Midway would cover the Japanese most probable approaches, provided:
 - (a) The southern flank of the Midway search was covered by an inter-connecting search from Johnston Island.
 - (b) The eastern flank was covered by the American carrier task forces stationed thereon.

The provisions of 4(a) were obtained on May 31st, when the Commanding Officer, Naval Air Station, Johnston Island commenced covering the southern flank by searches from that base, and the provisions of 4(b) were obtained, when on May 30th, an American Carrier Task Force arrived and commenced operating in the eastern sector from Midway. The carrier task forces were then outside the sector searched by the planes based on Oahu. The 180° sector selected for search from Midway was between

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bearings 200° (T) and 020° (T).

The problem, then, was to search this sector in such a manner that the planes available for search would detect the Japanese forces before they could reach the launching position. This would give the American air attack forces the opportunity to strike the first blow, a factor which experience had proved vital to success in a carrier duel.

Other considerations which governed the solution of the search and patrol problem were: that--(a) the American planes must not be caught on the ground and destroyed, nor, (b) the runways and facilities so damaged as to make it impossible for them to get off. It was expected that the Japanese carriers would not launch planes at a distance greater than 200 miles. It was necessary, therefore, that each day's search be conducted to such a distance that any enemy force which might be undiscovered just beyond, could not approach within 200 miles of Midway before the next day's search. A search to 700 miles seemed adequate to meet these conditions.* It was also about the limiting radius of the PBV's when equipped with two five-hundred-pound bombs.

CNAS Midway felt that since an area of poor visibility prevailed 300 to 400 miles to the northwest, it might be impossible to discover the Japanese carriers the day before they reached the launching position, if they approached from that direction. On the other hand, he felt that the same bad weather area would also be likely to prevent sufficiently accurate navigation to enable the Japanese to make a night launching. It seemed probable that upon passing from a bad weather area in the early hours of morning, the Japanese Commander would wait for dawn to fix his position before launching planes. If this assumption proved to be correct, since dawn was about 0415, the Japanese planes might be expected to strike Midway about 0600. It is of interest to note the accuracy of this analysis, for the Japanese struck Midway at 0630.**

CNAS Midway placed in effect a search plan based on an estimate by Commander Patrol Wing TWO. He decided that a 22-plane search--each plane covering a sector of 8 1/2°--to a distance of 700 miles--could accomplish this purpose. Accordingly, he prepared such a search plan. This plan called for twenty two PBV 5 and PBV 8A planes to depart Midway at dawn (about 0415) daily, to fly out to a radius of 700 miles at an indicated airspeed of about 100 knots, and to return to Midway at an indicated airspeed of 111 knots or better, in order to land before dark.*** In view of the limited number of PBV's and PBV pilots, and because of the advantages in speed and moment of Army B-17's, CNAS Midway, considered substituting B-17's for PBV's. He found it necessary to discard this consideration for the following reasons:

*Pat Wing TWO Secret Memorandum to CINCPAC on Employment of Aircraft in connection with enemy attack on Midway, dated May 23, 1942.

**Captain Logan Ramsey, USN, Air Operations Midway Defense Force, Battle of Midway, serial 0027 June 15th, 1942.

***Commander Naval Base Air Defense, Battle of Midway, serial 0028 June 30th, 1942.

- (a) He did not think it wise to inform the Japanese by chance sighting that 4-engine bombers were operating from Midway.
- (b) He did not desire to weaken his Striking Force of 4-engine bombers by employing them for daily searches.*

This decision of CNAS, Midway, appears sound. Although he does not say so, nevertheless there is little doubt but that his decision must have been affected by the lack of training in over-water navigation and search by the B-17 pilots. The results of this lack of experience were demonstrated on May 31st.

The Midway search plan provided for the withdrawal to Pearl Harbor of all PBV planes after they had located the Japanese Mobile Force and had made any night attacks that seemed practicable. This portion of the plan was executed in part only.

The Midway searches were augmented, on occasions, by operations of other units. The most important of these operations, because they were offensive in nature, were those made by special search and attack groups of Army B-17's on May 31st and June 1st. CINCPAC, through his intelligence channels, had reason to believe that an expected enemy rendezvous would be about 700 miles bearing 276° (T) from Midway and, therefore, he directed that this rendezvous position be reconnoitered at about 1500 on the above dates. In compliance with these orders the CNAS, Midway, despatched fifteen B-17's on May 31st. These planes flew the full distance with negative results. They nearly ran into disaster upon their return, however, because they became lost, and were finally homed by a combination of radar and radio direction finder bearings. The last plane landed four and a half hours overdue.**

This near disaster is cited here to indicate the lack of experience of the Army flyers in flying over water and in overwater navigation. Such inexperience cannot fail to have had an adverse effect, not only on the pilots themselves, but also on the various commanders concerned. This marked limitation in the capabilities of the Army pilots at the time was a factor which had to be considered in determining their employment at Midway.

On June 1st, CNAS, Midway, despatched six B-17's to the same rendezvous point, but once again results were negative. This was primarily due to unfavorable flying weather which was so poor as to force the planes to turn back after a search of only 350 miles.**

On June 2nd, CNAS, Midway, despatched a special long range B-17 with no bomb load on a similar search to a distance of about 300 miles. However, this search

*Commander Logan Ramsey, USN, Air Operations Midway Defense Force, Battle of Midway, Serial 0027 of June 15th, 1942.

**Commander Logan Ramsey, USN, Air Operations Midway Defense Force, Battle of Midway, serial 0027 of June 15th, 1942, page 2.

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was to the northwestward rather than to the westward.* Why this chance was made is not clear, but it is reported that CNAS, Midway, made this search upon the strong representations of Commander 7th Air Force, who was on Midway Atoll at the time and who appears to have considered that the northwest was the most probable area for the approach of the Japanese Mobile Forces, as indicated in CINCPAC Operation Plan. As events disclosed later, the Japanese approached from both the west and northwest. The 7th Air Force Liaison Officer concerning this flight states, under the date of June 2nd, "One B-17 flight No. 1 V58 search mission 292°-300° x 400 miles took off at 0800, landed 1400. No contacts."** It is apparent from this journal that the pilot of this plane, owing to bad weather, was unable to search the full distance of 800 miles and was forced to turn back after searching but 400 miles. Had he been able to search the full 800 miles on the designated track the search would have been ineffective, as the Japanese Mobile Force was to the north of the areas searched and not within visual sighting distance. At the time this plane was due to reach the outer limit of its search, the Mobile Force was bearing approximately 315° T distance 770 miles from Midway.

On the morning of June 3rd the usual daily search by patrol planes (PB7's) was made. These planes were launched at about 0415 and were followed at 0430 by the B-17's which CNAS Midway desired to keep in the air. During the time that these heavy planes were taking off, it was customary for the fighter planes to fly combat air patrol. The remainder of the planes were kept on the ground in a fully alert status until after the search planes had passed beyond 400 miles on their outward leg. As it was not considered practicable to land the B-17's until they had been in the air about four hours, and had reduced their loading to a point where landings could be safely made, this daily plan for the B-17's increased the logistics problem on Eastern Island, Midway Atoll. CNAS, Midway felt that the risk of having the B-17's caught on the ground warranted the acceptance of this difficulty. Consequently, as they had not completed refueling when the 0925, June 3rd contact report was received, the B-17's were not ready for immediate take-off. Regardless, CNAS, Midway did not desire to commit this force until he was satisfied that this was the best target.***

The weather on the morning of June 3rd was excellent except beyond 400 miles to the north-northwest, and it was expected that contacts might be made. At 0904 the first surface contact of this action was made when one of the patrol planes reported "Two Japanese cargo vessels sighted bearing 247°, distant 470 miles. Fired on by AA". This was followed by a report from another patrol plane at 0925, "Main Body bearing 261, distance 700, six large ships in column".*** This latter contact was on the Transport Group of the Midway Occupation Force, whereas the first contact was on Section I of the Japanese Minesweeping Group.

*Commander Logan Ramsey, USN, Air Operations Midway Defense Forces, Battle of Midway, serial 0027 of June 15th, 1942, page 2.

**Liaison Journal, Battle of Midway, Jo.K. Warner, Major Air Corps, page 9.

***Commander Logan Ramsey, USN, Air Operations Midway Defense Forces, Battle of Midway, serial 0027 of June 15th, 1942, page 1-2.

route to Midway.

The search from Johnston Island overlapped the Midway search. No contacts were made by Johnston Island planes.

All searches called for by the above planes were executed almost exactly as planned. All of the assumptions on which the search plan was based were correct, with the exception that the weather to the northwest was poorer than anticipated.

It is of interest to note that prior to June 4th more than 90% of all of the PBY's were flown on searches daily. This shows that the condition of the planes upon their arrival at Midway was excellent, and it further shows that the maintenance of the planes, even though accomplished with inadequate ground crews, was remarkably well done.

The searches from Midway were augmented by searches from Oahu. Searches were made daily from Oahu, extending to a radius in some sectors of 800 miles. They were designed to search the most probable area of Japanese approach to Oahu and covered the sector between bearing 162° (T) and 059° (T) measured clockwise from Pearl Harbor.

However, the sector between bearings 277° and 307° (T), containing the Hawaiian Chain of Islands, was not searched. It was considered that a surface force attempting to penetrate this area would be detected by the other searches which completely "boxed in" the area.

During the first two days that the American carrier task forces, TF 16 and TF 17, were en route to their operating areas, they were well covered by these long range searches. It was not necessary therefore for the carriers to fly (long range) air searches. This was an important item in the combat efficiency of the American pilots, as it insured that many pilots would be allowed to rest during this time. The Japanese, as has been stated previously, followed similar practices whenever possible, in order to have their carrier based planes available for striking in maximum strength. This indicates again how closely the two nations' navies paralleled one another in their search plans.

After the American carriers had reached a position where the Oahu searches were no longer adequate for their protection, the carriers were forced to conduct their own searches. These searches are indicated on Diagram "C" and they show how CNAS Midway (PatWing 2) requirement for the search of Midway's eastern flank was provided for by the carriers through instructions from CINCPAC."

*CINCPAC Operation Plan 29-42, May 27, 1942 Serial 0114 W page 6. Also PatWing 2 memorandum to CINCPAC, Employment of Aircraft in connection with enemy attack on Midway, May 23, 1942, page 2.

AMERICAN LAND AND TENDER BASED AIRCRAFT
Alaska-Aleutian Area

The land and tender based aircraft involved in the operations from the Aleutians during the Northern Pacific phase of the Battle of Midway included Navy patrol planes of Patrol Wing Four and Army bombers and fighters of the 11th Air Force. Based at Annette, but not participating in the action were fighters of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

On May 21st COMINCH declared that a prospective state of Fleet Opposed Invasion would exist in the Aleutians until an invasion in force of Kodiak or Continental Alaska became imminent, or a fact. A state of Land Opposed Invasion would then be in effect. CTF 8 and the Commanding General Defense Command agreed on May 27th that if the enemy captured a base in the Umnak-Dutch Harbor-Gold Bay area, an "invasion" of the Mainland would be imminent.*

At this time the air strength in the Aleutians proper, according to CINGPAC's information, appears to have consisted of four navy patrol planes of Patrol Squadron 42, and twenty-three fighters and five bombers of the 11th Army Air Force. Eight additional patrol planes of Patrol Squadron 42 were at Kodiak and at Continental Alaskan bases. Additional Army planes were at Kodiak.

Commander Patrol Wing Four was initially at Seattle operating as an Air Task Group Commander under Commander Northwest Sea Frontier. This Task Group was composed of twenty-four PBY-5A planes of Patrol Squadrons 41 and 42, which had been assigned by CINGPAC together with their respective tenders. They conducted searches from Alaskan and Continental bases. The immediate problems which confronted Commander Patrol Wing Four were to equip additional patrol planes with radar, effected at NAS Alameda, California; to get them to the Aleutians in order to permit an adequate search; and to get aerial torpedoes to the forward area as rapidly as possible. It appears that prior to May 26th, four additional search planes of Patrol Squadron 42 were dispatched to the Alaskan-Aleutian area. On May 26th Commander Patrol Wing Four with part of his staff departed for Kodiak in four planes of Patrol Squadron 41. This brought the total number of patrol planes in the Alaskan-Aleutian area to twenty. His operations officer and the remainder of his staff were left behind to conduct search operations out of Seattle, Port Angeles, and Tongue Point. Upon his arrival at Kodiak, Commander Patrol Wing Four reported to the Commanding General of the 11th Air Force, who had been named the Commander of all Air Forces, Army and Navy attached to TF 8.**

On May 27th Commander North Pacific Force, CTF 8, arrived at Kodiak. Operational control of the 11th Air Force and the Naval Air Detachment in the Alaskan-Aleutian area passed to him. His plan, issued after a conference with several Naval and Army officers, including the Commanding General Alaskan

*Advanced Intelligence Center North Pacific and (AIC Norpac 880) page 18.

**War Diary Commander Patrol Wing Four, May 27 to 30 June 1942.

Defense Command, CTF 8 designated the Naval Air Detachment Alaskan-Aleutian area as Air Search Group T.G. 8.1 under the command of Captain L. E. Gehres, USN, and the 11th Air Force as Air Striking Group T.G. 8.3 under the command of Brigadier General Butler, USA. Thus we see that unity of command of all air forces in the Alaskan-Aleutian area, which had obtained under Commander Northwest Sea Frontier and continued under CINCPAC's Operation Plan 28-42, now ceased to be in effect. The seaplane tenders CASCO, WILLIAMSON, and GILLIS, and patrol squadrons 41 and 42 of Patrol Wing 4, plus two B-17's, three VSO's and two LB-30's constituted the Air Search Group.* On May 28th those units not already on station proceeded to their assigned station, and on the following day, May 29th, search operations commenced. The CASCO was to provide services at Cold Bay; the WILLIAMSON at Sand Point; and the GILLIS was to operate in Akutan Pass as a rescue and homing vessel for the planes based at Dutch Harbor.

CTF 8 desired to base the entire 11th Air Force at Umnak and Cold Bay. CTG 8.3, however, did not believe that the combined parking facilities at those bases were sufficient for more than one medium bombardment squadron (twelve planes) and two pursuit squadrons as the initial force.** Actually, it appears that this was not the controlling reason for not operating more attack planes initially from those bases for CTG 8.3 stated that he was strongly opposed to the assignment of any important units of his command to these western bases as they were completely without revetments or other cover and had no early warning systems. He felt that any Japanese attack on these airfields must result in the total loss of the planes caught on the ground there. He also made the point that his planes must be held at Kodiak and Anchorage to assist in the defense of the mainland of Alaska. The Commanding General Alaska Defense command appeared to support the above opinions of CTG 8.3. Prolonged discussions resulted throughout the better part of the day. CTF 8 pointed out that the best defense of the Alaskan Mainland would be obtained by strongly defending the Umnak-Dutch Harbor-Cold Bay area and that this could only be effected by providing strong air support to the ground and sea forces stationed there. CTG 8.3 finally agreed to send 60% of his planes to the western bases. This was to be done with the understanding that the remaining planes would also be advanced to these positions once the Japanese were known to be in waters threatening them.*** That he was not too happy about this agreement was apparent from the fact that as late as June 18th he stated that a dive bombing attack would probably destroy most of the planes based on both fields.**** However, within five days following the agreement he increased the bomber strength at Umnak and Cold Bay from twelve bombers to thirty-one, of which eight were B-17's. He increased the fighter strength from thirty-three to fifty.

*CTF 8 Op Plan 1-42, Ser. T01 of May 27th, 1942.

**Alaskan Air Defense and Japanese Invasion of the Aleutians (Army Air Forces Historical Study No.4, page 52).

***Statement by CTF 8 to Captain Richard W. Bates, USN. Head of Department of Analysis, Naval War College, May 25th, 1948.

****Alaskan Air Defense and Japanese Invasion of the Aleutians (Army Air Forces Historical Study No.4, page 50).

These discussions between CTF 8, his Air Commander CTG 8.3 and the Commander Alaskan Defense Command are of great importance as they indicate the difficulties which may arise in endeavoring to obtain unity of command with mixed forces. CTF 8 has since stated that he realized that he was empowered by his basic orders to order CTG 8.3 to make any initial disposition of his planes that he (CTF 8) considered necessary and desirable. However, he has also stated that he realized that should he order such a deployment in opposition to the best judgment of the Army Air Force Commander, and should severe losses result from such action, irreparable harm would be done to the future Navy, Army and Army Air Force cooperation, not only in Alaska, but also in all other theaters of operation, where similar cooperation might be required in the days ahead.

CTF 8's search plan, Diagram B, directed that the Air Search Group locate enemy carrier groups, transport groups, and covering cruisers approaching the Alaskan-Aleutian area. Search flights were to be made daily from Cold Bay, Otter Point, Umnak Island, and Sand Point to a distance of 400 miles, and from NAS Kodiak to a distance of 700 miles, covering the area indicated in the search diagram. CTG 8.1 was directed to begin searches daily at 2000 local wartime which converted to plus 12 time meant 1800 from Otter Point and Cold Bay and 1700 from Kodiak. The limiting distance of 400 miles presumably was dictated by the shortage of radar-equipped patrol planes, the adverse weather conditions, and pilot fatigue due to consecutive all night flights. CTF 8 established a priority of search as follows--(1) South of the Aleutians, in sectors adjacent to the line of approach normal to the Aleutian chain at the Dutch Harbor-Umnak-Cold Bay area, (2) North of the Aleutian chain, in sectors adjacent to the Pribilof Islands. These searches required fourteen patrol planes for the sector searches. Another search of one B-17 was to be made daily along the Aleutian chain of islands to the westward from Umnak. The plan also directed that an area south of bearing 210° (T) from Kodiak was to be searched if planes were available.

CTG 8.1 immediately perceived that the extensive searches called for could not be maintained without plane replacements, and that the seaplane tenders available were inadequate to meet the requirements set forth in CTF 8 operation plan. Accordingly, he sent a despatch to Commander Northwest Sea Frontier, requesting that the remaining four planes of Patrol Squadron 41 be released from Continental searches and despatched to the Aleutians. As a result of this request Commander Northwest Sea Frontier released one plane, which was the only operational plane of the four remaining planes of Patrol Squadron 41. CTG 8.1 also requested Commander Patrol Wings Pacific Fleet, CTF 9, at Pearl Harbor for the services of the HULBERT (AVD), then in Hawaiian waters. This request was granted, and that vessel was dispatched on May 31st.

CTG 8.1 also realized that it was essential to increase the number of aerial torpedoes in the Aleutian area. It is not clear how many torpedoes were there. However, it is believed that on May 21st a maximum of twenty four aerial torpedoes

were in the Aleutian area - twelve on Umnak Island and twelve at Cold Bay. Additional torpedoes were rushed in, so that by 0700, May 28th, there were forty-two torpedoes in the area. At that time twelve were at Umnak, twelve at Kodiak and eighteen at Cold Bay, six of which were on board the seaplane tender CASCO.*

The above shortages of planes and aerial torpedoes will be of interest to students of naval warfare. They will wish to know why it was that positive measures to reinforce suitably the patrol plane strength of the Alaska-Aleutian area were not undertaken until such a late date that haste and confusion were unavoidable; why it was that additional patrol planes were not released until June 7th when there were many on the West Coast of the United States; and why the number of torpedoes was so low. Perhaps high command concern over the possibility of a Japanese raid on West Coast cities, such as Seattle, adversely affected command decisions.

The command relationship between Naval and Army Air Forces existing at the time of CINCPAC's Operation Plan of May 21st was changed by CTF 8 Operation Plan of May 27th.

As of June 1st, land and tender based aircraft in the area were distributed as shown in the following table.

DISTRIBUTION OF ARMY, NAVY AND RCAP LAND
(and TENDER BASED AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED TO OPERATIONAL
CONTROL OF CTF 8 AS OF 1 JUNE 1942

| LOCATION | FBY | | B-17 | | LB-30 | B-26 | P-38 P-40 | VF | RECCO | VSO | TOTAL |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|------|-------|------|-------|
| | PATWING 4 | PATWING 4 | ARMY AIR | PATWING 4 | ARMY AIR | ARMY AIR | ARMY AIR | RCAP | RCAP | NAVY | |
| *KODIAK | | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2C | | | | 3 | 30 |
| **DUTCH HARBOR | 12 | 1 | | | | | | | | | 13 |
| ***COLD BAY | 4 | | | | 6 | 16 | | | | | 26 |
| ****SAND POINT | 4 | | | | | | | | | | 4 |
| FORT GLENN UMVAK ISLAND | | | 1 | | 6 | 17 | | | | | 24 |
| *****ANCHORAGE | | | | | 17 | 3 | | | | | 20 |
| ANNETTE | | | | | | | 30 | 15 | | | 45 |
| TOTAL | 20 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 31 | 56 | 30 | 15 | 3 | | 162 |

- * 8 B-17 and 25 P-40 or P-38 en route, arrival date unknown.
- ** GILLIS (AVD) operating in Akutan Pass as rescue vessel for Dutch Harbor planes.
- *** FBY-5A operating from Army field at Cold Bay-CASCO (AVD) tending.
- **** Tender based-WILLIAMSON (AVD) tending.
- ***** 1 B-26 and 25 P-40 or P-38 en route.

NOTE: Above information obtained from Report on Aleutian Campaign Advanced
Intelligence Center North Pacific Area No. 880 and from CTC 8.1 OpOrder
1-42 of 28 May 1942.

TABLE 3

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AMERICAN SEARCH AND RECONNAISSANCE
Aleutian Area

CTF 8's searches in the Aleutian area were based on his estimate of the situation wherein he concluded that the enemy would attempt to seize a foothold in the Unnak-Dutch Harbor-Cold Bay area, and that this attempt would be preceded by carrier air strikes against American airfields within supporting distance of their landing site. His searches were therefore drawn up to cover the approaches to this vital area. They included both air and surface ship reconnaissance because of the bad weather normally encountered.

The air search portion of his plan was discussed under "American Land and Tender Based Aircraft". The surface ship portion consisted of twenty small surface vessels. These patrol vessels were stationed at a radius of about 200 miles from Dutch Harbor as shown in Diagrams "B" and "C" in order to discover the enemy carriers prior to launching. Eleven of these scouts were stationed south of Dutch Harbor, five were due west of Dutch Harbor in the Bering Sea, and four were north of Dutch Harbor and due east of the Pribilof Islands. The planned distance between these vessels was thirty miles. Each was directed to patrol station.

Although they were stationed in the logical positions to intercept a Japanese carrier force which might be attempting to attack Dutch Harbor, the carrier group attacking Dutch Harbor penetrated the southern patrol line undetected. Nor were they discovered by search planes prior to launching their attack. The first knowledge of the presence of this carrier force off Dutch Harbor was the report of a radar contact on a large group of planes made at 0337 June 3rd by the GILLIS which was alongside the dock in Dutch Harbor. The reasons for the failure of the surface patrols to locate this enemy force appear to have been bad weather, the fact that the enemy force passed through the patrol line at its westernmost end, and the fact that, owing to navigation difficulties, some of the patrol vessels may not have been in position.

CTG 8.1 commenced his air search operations on May 29th. It was the first time that extensive overnight searches had been conducted from Alaskan bases. However, no sooner had these searches started, than the good weather which had prevailed during the preceding week turned bad. This was hard on the pilots, as they were, for the most part, inexperienced in Alaskan and Aleutian operations. Fortunately, their planes were equipped with radar and they, of necessity, placed great reliance upon it. It prevented collisions with fog-shrouded mountains, it made instrument flying and dead reckoning navigation practicable and it increased the effectiveness of search. As a matter of fact, all contacts made, prior to the detection of the Jap Occupation Force at Kiska, were initially radar contacts.*

*War Diary Commander Patrol Wing FOUR, June 1942.

The plan called for the employment of all available search planes daily. No planes were available to replace those grounded for necessary repairs, or lost operationally or in combat. This fact, and the lack of adequate base and tender facilities for maintenance and servicing of aircraft for such operations, served to curtail somewhat the coverage which was planned. Detailed information is lacking of the percentage of coverage obtained daily by each search plane, but it appears that CTF 8 search plan was followed insofar as availability of planes and weather conditions permitted.

ALLIED DEPLOYMENT NAVAL FORCES

The strategic deployment of the Allied forces at the time of the Battle of Midway was in furtherance of the basic plan to hold Midway and to inflict maximum damage on the enemy by strong attrition tactics, in order to repel the Japanese attack in the Midway-Aleutian area.

This deployment consisted of major surface task forces, supported by land based and tender based aircraft, proceeding towards their destinations independently. These forces or groups were the Striking Force, consisting of three carrier task forces, TF 16, TF 17 and TF 11; the Northern Pacific Force, TF 8; the Surface Force of old battleships, TF 1, and the Submarine Force, TF 7. Most of these forces were deployed in the Central Pacific area in defense of Midway. The Northern Pacific Force and a portion of the Submarine Force were located in the Aleutians for the defense of that area, and TF 1 was at San Francisco.

TF 16 had recently arrived from the South Pacific area, having been recalled on May 16th. This force sortied from Pearl Harbor on May 28th, and proceeded to its assigned area about 350 miles northeast of Midway Island. TF 17, containing the carrier YORKTOWN damaged in the Battle of the Coral Sea, arrived in Pearl Harbor on May 27th. Emergency repairs were made with such rapidity that TF 17 was able to sortie on May 30th and it then proceeded to its assigned area northeast of Midway Island. Both of these carrier forces were under the cover of land based aircraft from Oahu for about the first two days of their deployment, after which they used their own aircraft to provide additional security and augment the Midway searches. The tracks of the two forces are shown on Diagram "B". These courses were designed to keep the task forces well clear of the Hawaiian Island chain and to thereby avoid Japanese submarines.

After TF 16, on May 31st, and TF 17 on June 1st, had been fueled from the oilers, CIMARRON and PLATTE, escorted by the DEWEY and MONSSEN, they effected a rendezvous at 1600, June 2nd, in a position bearing 045° (T), distant about 325 miles from Midway. Although they had been organized by CINCPAC into a single striking force under CTF 17, they were not combined into a single disposition, but operated independently. However, they were within supporting distance and generally were within visual signal distance. The

reasons for not combining them into a single disposition are not clear, but appear to have been,

- (a) the fact that TF 16 and TF 17 had each, prior to this time, been operated under its own individual task force instructions. These instructions were not necessarily the same. It did not appear wise therefore to merge two task groups which had not operated together previously. After the Battle of Midway on July 2nd, 1942 CINCOPAC issued standard cruising instructions for carrier task forces U.S. Pacific Fleet, which were binding on all carrier task forces.
- (b) The belief that protection for carrier task forces under air attack could best be accomplished by separation of the force into units containing only one carrier, and that this separation should be effected prior to expected air attack. This was because maneuverability at this early date was given almost equal importance with anti-aircraft fire in defense of a task force. It was felt that separation would reduce the risk of collision which would otherwise exist in a tight formation when the carriers were taking independent avoiding action. In later actions, as the volume of anti-aircraft fire of a task group increased owing to an increased number of anti-aircraft guns and improved fire control, the importance of maneuverability decreased.

It must be remembered that these were the early days of the war, and carrier task force instructions were still in a serious state of evolution and were being constantly revised as battle experience was gained. The decision of CTF 17 not to combine TF 16 and TF 17 therefore was in accordance with the practice at the time.

TF 11.1 a major subdivision of TF 11 departed San Diego at 0531 on June 1st, and headed towards Pearl Harbor. CTF 11, in the CHESTER, remained at San Diego.

* * *

TF 8 did not proceed to its rendezvous south of Kodiak, Alaska in one force, but instead, proceeded in several groups or units and from different areas. The largest of these groups or units departed from Oahu, and therefore had land based air cover for the first two days, as did the destroyer REID. The ST. LOUIS and CASE, reporting from Midway, had no air cover after passing outside of the Midway search then in effect and before coming within the area of the Aleutian search. Those units departing from the West Coast were covered in part by the searches then being conducted from the West Coast of the U.S. Diagram B, shows that the land based air searches from Oahu were made to a maximum radius of 800 miles. It shows that the air searches from Midway were

in the western semicircle from that base, leaving the eastern semicircle almost entirely unsearched. Finally, it shows that the searches to the south from Kodiak were made to a radius of 700 miles, when availability of aircraft permitted. There was, therefore, a large sea area between the limits of the Aleutian and Oahu searches, about 800 miles in width as a minimum, which could not be reached by land based or tender based planes. It was through this area that TF 8 had to pass without air cover.

The decision to send surface forces to the Aleutians at this time was a difficult one for CINCPAC to make. He believed that the primary objective of the enemy attack was Midway Atoll, with the Western Aleutians as a secondary objective, and therefore he must have felt that it would be prudent to maintain his maximum strength in the Midway area. On the other hand, he realized that the Aleutians were of extreme importance. They were the gateway to Alaska, and their seizure could have a very adverse effect on American morale, which had already received the blow of the surrender of Corrigidor on May 6th. He appears to have felt that a small surface force in the Aleutians, supported by limited land based aircraft, could take advantage of the occasional heavy fogs in that area in June, and defeat Japanese attempts to seize one or more important areas of the Eastern Aleutians, such as Dutch Harbor or even Kodiak. He appears to have been of the opinion that his carrier task groups as constituted and trained, would not be increased sufficiently in strength by the addition of the ships sent to the Aleutians to warrant retention of these ships in the Midway area.

The light cruiser ST. LOUIS and the destroyer CASE left the Midway area at about 1800, May 26th, for Kodiak. They arrived at Kodiak at 0830, May 31st. After a short stay, the ST. LOUIS, at 1548 May 31st, accompanied by the destroyer GILMER, departed for its designated patrol line, Lat. 65° N. between Long. 148° to 152° W. At the same time the CASE proceeded to Dutch Harbor. The light cruiser NASHVILLE left station about 100 miles to the northwest of Midway at 0900 May 22nd where she had been sent by CINCPAC to break radio silence for purposes of radio deception. It is to be regretted that the value of this radio deception cannot be determined as the Japanese reports available are silent in the matter. The NASHVILLE headed for Kodiak via Dutch Harbor where she arrived at 0927, May 27th. Commander Northern Pacific Force, who had departed Pearl Harbor on May 22nd in the REID and had arrived at Kodiak at 0600 May 27th, now hoisted his flag in the NASHVILLE. At 1700 June 1st, in company with the oiler SABINE and the destroyer HUMPHREYS, the NASHVILLE departed from Kodiak to rendezvous with the ST. LOUIS and GILMER, which she did at 0400 June 2nd. The ST. LOUIS, NASHVILLE, SABINE, HUMPHREYS and GILMER then, at 0630 June 2nd, headed for a rendezvous with the INDIANAPOLIS task group. This rendezvous was 400 miles due south of Kodiak. The INDIANAPOLIS group consisting of the heavy cruiser INDIANAPOLIS, the light cruiser HONOLULU, and the destroyers BRIDLEY and McCALL had departed Pearl Harbor at 0600, May 22nd for Kodiak. While en route the destination was changed to the above designated

rendezvous.* The meeting with the NASHVILLE-ST. LOUIS group was effected at 0600 June 3rd, and all groups joined together as one group. At this moment Japanese carrier planes were making their approach for the attack on Dutch Harbor. This group, now known as TG 8.8, headed on course 035°(T), speed 17 knots toward its station south of Kodiak.

The REID and the KANE at 1300, May 29th, in company with the oiler BRAZOS had departed from Kodiak for Dutch Harbor, where they arrived at 1600 May 31st.

CTG 8.4 in the CASE departed Kodiak on May 31st for Dutch Harbor. While en route on June 1st he encountered the REID and KANE conducting anti-submarine sweeps, and directed them to proceed to Makushin Bay to await the formation of the Destroyer Striking Group. CTG 8.4 on June 2nd encountered the BROOKS, DENT, and SANDS and he directed them to also proceed to Makushin Bay. At about noon on June 2nd he arrived at Dutch Harbor. In the late afternoon he departed for Makushin Bay, arriving early on June 3rd. During the 3rd the destroyer TALBOT arrived. Except for the destroyers WATERS and KING which would arrive on June 4th, TG 8.4 was formed up on June 3rd at Makushin Bay. At about 0355 June 3rd the REID observed Japanese planes which it reported as four bombers and fourteen fighters. Actually there were three fighters and fourteen bombers.

* * *

TF 1 was at San Francisco during this time. CINCOPAC thoroughly studied the possibility of the employment of this task force in the approaching battle, and decided against its use, because it was lacking in adequate screening units, both air and surface. He considered that it was undesirable to divert to its screen any units which would add to the long range striking power of American forces against the expected enemy carriers.** However, he was willing to divert units useful for screening carriers to the Northern Pacific Force (TF 8) to oppose the Japanese objectives in that area. As has been shown, he detached five cruisers and four destroyers to the Aleutians as part of TF 8.

CINCOPAC's reason for not diverting screening forces to TF 1 appears logical. However, he had an additional important reason which he expressed in his action report--"The Commander-in-Chief United States Fleet estimated that the enemy's plans included an attempt to trap a large portion of our fleet."** As a result of this opinion by COMINCH, CINCOPAC instructed his striking force commanders as follows: "you will be governed by the principle of calculated risk, which you shall interpret to mean the avoidance of exposure of your force to attack by superior enemy forces without the prospect of inflicting, as a result of such exposure, greater damage on the enemy". It appears from this that CINCOPAC did not choose to bring the slow battleship force, TF 1, into the Midway area, as

*CINCOPAC OpPlan 28-42 modified by despatches May 280151 & 280941.

**CINCOPAC's Report on Battle of Midway, 28 June 1942.

it was too slow to operate within the carrier task force, and separate air coverage could not be provided. It should be apparent that had the Japanese carriers gained the advantage without, at the same time, suffering excessive aircraft damage, and had TF 1 been in the area, its destruction would probably have resulted. The Japanese Commander-in-Chief was seeking decisive action, and he had adequate forces to carry out that task.

CTF 1 based his operations during this time on his own Operation Plan 1-42 and his own Operation Order 8-42.

On May 31st CTU 1.1.4 (Commander Battleships Battle Fleet) was operating in compliance with CTF 1's Op Plan 1-42, wherein he was directed to destroy any enemy surface force about to raid the West Coast. He sortied from San Francisco with TU 1.1.4, consisting of the battleships MARYLAND (F) and COLORADO, screened by three destroyers, the PORTER, DRAYTON and CUSHING. He proceeded to a point bearing 300° (T), distant 650 miles from San Francisco, where he had been ordered to intercept and destroy an enemy force of one or two converted carriers or cruisers which CTF 1 had assumed might be in that area.* His problem was a difficult one for he had no carriers in company, and except for his battleship based planes, he enjoyed no air cover other than that which might be provided by land based aircraft from the San Francisco area. It should be noted that the rendezvous was well beyond the normal range of both fighter and bomber aircraft, although just within the range of search aircraft. CTF 1 stated as an assumption in his Operation Plan that the Japanese air force might deliver an air attack on San Francisco, but that the planes would, in such case, probably fly to Mexico, and there be interned, as they might be unable to return to their own carriers because of the range.

CTF 1 Op Plan 1-42 directed CTU 1.1.4 to remain in this area until June 4th, at which time he was to commence his return to port. It further directed that the remaining ships of TF 1 were to remain in San Francisco and defend the harbor against air attack.

* * *

TF 7, the Submarine Force, was divided into three groups; for the Midway operations. There were: The Midway Patrol of twelve submarines, the CACALOT, FLYING FISH, TAMBOR, TROUT, GRAYLING, NAUTILUS, GROUPEE, DOLPHIN, GATO, CUTTLEFISH, GUDGEON and GRENADIER; the Support Patrol of three submarines, the NARWHAL, PLUNGER and TRIGGER; and the Oahu Patrol of the TARPON, PIKE, FINBACK and GROWLER. A portion of TF 7, composed of six submarines, the S-18, 23, 27, 28, 34, and 35 was detached on May 21st and ordered to report to CTF 8 in the Aleutians. At that time the S-34 and 35 were patrolling off Dutch Harbor, and the others were at San Diego operating in connection with the Sound School.

*War Diary, Commander Battleships, Battle Fleet, Rear Admiral W.S. Anderson, USN. May- June 1942.

In the Midway area the submarines were assigned stations as follows:

- (a) Midway Patrol (TG 7.1)-Three submarines, the DOLPHIN, GATO and GRENADIER were disposed on the arc 250-310° (T), distant 200 miles from Midway; six submarines, the TAMBOR, TROUT, GRAYLING, NAUTILUS, GROOPER and GODGEON were disposed on the arc 240-360° (T), distant 150 miles from Midway, two submarines, the FLYING FISH and the CACHALOT were disposed on the arc 310-350° (T), distant 50 miles from Midway. The CUTTLEFISH was stationed about 700 miles due west of Midway in the vicinity of the expected rendezvous of approaching Japanese forces. The submarines of this Patrol were each assigned a 20° sector and ordered to operate within a circle of 20 miles of the mid-point of their sector chord, except the CACHALOT, FLYING FISH and CUTTLEFISH, which were directed to conduct station patrol. All submarines were directed to conduct periscope patrol during daylight, and be ready to surface and chase the enemy in case of a contact report.
- (b) Support Patrol (TG 7.2)-This patrol was disposed at intervals of 30 miles on a line of bearing 045-225° (T), the center of which bore 075° (T), distant 425 miles from Midway. It could be readily reassigned once contact with the enemy had been made. Its mission was to support Striking Force which might be forced to retire over its patrol line.* All submarines of this patrol were directed to conduct submerged station patrol and move the line or chase the enemy as ordered.
- (c) Oahu Patrol (TG 7.3)-The four submarines of this patrol were disposed on a line of bearing normal to the north-south line through Oahu and distant from that base about 300 miles. They were directed to conduct station submerged patrol, and to move the line or chase the enemy when ordered. This patrol did not participate in the Midway action. It appears to have been positioned so as to present formidable interference should the Japanese attempt to raid Oahu from the north. For CINCPAC has stated, "Simultaneously, a strong Japanese force is expected to attempt the capture of Midway and to raid Hawaii".**

All submarines were on assigned station by the morning of June 3rd, and at 2400 were patrolling these stations.

In addition to the above submarines, which were assigned definite duties

*CINCPAC Operation Plan 28-42 of May 27th, Serial 0014 W, p.7.

**CINCPAC Operation Plan 28-42 of May 21st, 1942, p.2.

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during the Battle of Midway, other submarines returning from patrol missions in the Western Pacific were ordered to attempt to intercept the Japanese forces as they retreated. These submarines were the GREENLING, DRUM, POLLACK, TUNA, POMPANO and PORPOISE.

The six submarines assigned the Northern Pacific Force in the Aleutians were assigned stations where they could assist in providing early warning of approaching enemy forces by acting as listening and observation posts.

AMERICAN POSITION AT 0925 JUNE 3RD

The position of the various American forces and groups on June 3rd at 0925, the time of the sighting of the Japanese Occupation Force by Midway aircraft, is summarized as follows:

- (a) The Striking Force
 - (1) TF's 16 and 17 were on station bearing 013° (T), distant 320 miles from Midway.
 - (2) CTF 11 in the CHESTER was anchored in San Diego, having arrived from Tongatabu at 1340, June 1st. TG 11.1 was heading for Pearl Harbor and was bearing 255° (T), distant 1250 miles from San Diego, having departed that place at 0531 June 1st.
- (b) The Northern Pacific Force
 - (1) TG 8.6, Main Body, was heading for its covering position south of Kodiak, and was bearing 177° (T), distant 370 miles therefrom.
 - (2) TG 8.4 Destroyer Striking Group, was on station at Makushin Bay, Unalaska Island.
 - (3) TG 8.2, Surface Search Group, was on station as described under Search and Reconnaissance.
 - (4) TG 8.5, Submarine Group, was on station with its submarines disposed as follows: two in the southern approach to Umnak Pass; two north of Umnak Pass; and two in the approaches to Cold Bay.
- (c) TF 1 was divided into two groups. One group TU 1.1.4 flying the flag of Combatships in the MARYLAND was at sea bearing 307° (T), distant 725 miles from San Francisco. The remainder of TF 1 was at anchor in San Francisco Bay.
- (d) TF 7, Submarines, was on station, as discussed previously under Allied deployment.

TASKS ASSIGNED AND COMPOSITION OF FORCES

The basic objectives given by CINCPAC to his forces was the holding of Midway, the opposing of the advance of the Japanese in the Aleutian-Alaska

area, and the infliction of maximum damage on the enemy by attrition.

The tasks assigned these forces in support of the basic objectives were:

(a) Striking Force

To inflict maximum damage on the enemy by employing strong attrition tactics. This force was not to accept decisive action in which it might suffer heavy losses in own carriers and cruisers.

(b) Northern Pacific Force

To oppose the advance of the enemy in the Aleutian-Alaska area.

(1) Main Body

To exploit favorable opportunity to deliver attrition attacks on enemy forces.

(2) Destroyer Striking Group.

To destroy, under conditions of low visibility, enemy forces approaching either Umnak-Dutch Harbor area or the Cold Bay area.

(3) Submarine Group

To destroy enemy forces approaching Umnak-Dutch Harbor area and the Cold Bay area.

(c) Battleship Force

No assigned task in connection with Midway operation.

(d) Submarine Force

To inflict maximum damage to enemy.

* * *

The Striking Force was a typical highly mobile carrier task force of three task groups, TF 16, TF 17, and TF 11. TF 16 was composed of two first line carriers, the ENTERPRISE and HORNET; with a screen of five heavy cruisers, the NORTHAMPTON, VINCENNES, PENSACOLA, MINNEAPOLIS, NEW ORLEANS; one light cruiser AA, the ATLANTA; and nine destroyers, the WORDEN, MONAGHAN, AYLWIN, PHELPS, BALCH, CONYNGHAM, BENHAM, ELLET and MAURY. TF 17 was composed of one first line carrier, the YORKTOWN; with a screen of two heavy cruisers, the ASTORIA and PORTLAND; and five destroyers, the MORRIS, RUSSELL, HAMMANN, ANDERSON and HUGHES. These two task forces were supported logistically by the oilers CIMARRON and PLATTE escorted by the DEWEY and MONSSEN. TF 11 was composed of one first line carrier, the SARATOGA; with a screen of one heavy cruiser, the CHESTER, one light cruiser (AA), the SAN DIEGO; and four destroyers, the MAHAN, SMITH, PRESTON and LAFFEY. No ships of TF 11 arrived off Midway in time to participate in the action.

This Striking Force was designed to deliver, in cooperation with the land based air forces at Midway Atoll, the principal opposition to the Japanese thrust to seize Midway. It was a strong carrier task force, and had what appeared to have been well-trained, highly effective air groups in all carriers, although the air group of the HORNET had not as yet been in aerial combat in the Pacific Ocean. As the objective of the Striking Force was the infliction of maximum damage through attrition, without at the same time entering into decisive action, it is apparent that the Striking Force was suitably composed.

* * *

TF 8 consisted of four surface and submarine groups. TG 8.5 was composed of three light cruisers, the NASHVILLE (F), ST. LOUIS, HONOLULU; two heavy cruisers, the INDIANAPOLIS, LOUISVILLE; and four destroyers, the GRIDLEY, McCALL, GILMER and HUMPHREYS. TG 8.4 was composed of nine destroyers, the CASE, REID, BROOKS, SANDS, KANE, DENT, TALBOT, KING and WATERS. TG 8.2 was composed of one gunboat, the CHARLESTON; one minesweeper, the ORIOLE; five coast guard cutters, and fourteen District Patrol Vessels. TG 8.5 was composed of SS 18, 23, 24, 27, 28, 34 and 35.

This force, in coordination with attached land and tender based aircraft, was assigned the objective of opposing the advance of the Japanese in the Aleutian-Alaskan area. It appears inadequate to properly accomplish this objective, as it was provided with insufficient air strength. This followed since all carriers available in the Pacific area were required at Midway, and consequently, any surface forces operating in the Aleutians were necessarily forced to rely upon land and tender based aircraft for search and reconnaissance and for strike and air protection. Such protection could be provided with limited effectiveness as far west as Dutch Harbor, and with increasing effectiveness, as one neared the Alaskan air bases. However, there were only the seventeen Army fighters (P-38 and P-40's) based at Ft. Glenn, Unak Island, and the sixteen at Cold Bay, available to counter those carried on the two Japanese carriers. This limitation made it infeasible for CTF 8 to oppose the Japanese landing anywhere in the western Aleutians, for, surface forces without air cover cannot long remain in areas where they do not enjoy, at least temporarily, local air superiority. How CINCPAC anticipated that CTF 8 would oppose the Japanese objective in the Aleutians when he assigned forces to TF 8 is, therefore, not clear.

* * *

TF 1 was composed of seven battleships, the PENNSYLVANIA, MARYLAND, COLORADO, IDAHO, TENNESSEE, NEW MEXICO, MISSISSIPPI; eight destroyers, the PORTER, GRAVEN, CUSHING, DALE, FANNING, AARON WARD, DRAYTON, DUNLAP; and one escort carrier, the LONG ISLAND. No objectives were assigned this force in this action, for reason previously stated.

* * *

TF 7 was composed of, as has been stated previously, the CACHALOT, FLYING FISH, TAMOR, TROUT, GRAYLING, NAUTILUS, GROUPER, DOLPHIN, GATO, CUTTLEFISH, GUDGEON, GRENADIER, NARWHAL, PLUNGER, TRIGGER, TARPON, PIKE, FINBACK, and GROWLER. This force was given the objective of inflicting maximum damage on the enemy. Such an objective is in line with the normal capabilities of a submarine. The number and type of submarines available seem scarcely adequate. Had sufficient submarines been available, it might not have been necessary to move the submarines to close in positions as was done during the action. However, so many factors, such as communications operating areas and incorrect reports, enter into such problems that the determination of submarine adequacy is of doubtful accuracy. The submarines appear to have been initially stationed in excellent position, and were sufficient in number to intercept and report Japanese forces in the northwest quadrant, but were not sufficient in number to inflict maximum damage. Perhaps had more submarines been available and had they been placed closer together, more damage might have been inflicted than was actually accomplished in this action.

AMERICAN PLAN
Midway Phase

The American plan for the defense of Midway was necessarily based on an analysis of those enemy capabilities most dangerous from the American point of view. The American high command realized that the Japanese would not long remain inactive; that they could be expected to strike at some important American outpost. A study of the intelligence, which was surprisingly complete and accurate, concerning the broad Japanese strategic plans for their next operation, and even concerning their more narrow tactical dispositions, plainly showed that Midway Atoll and the Aleutians, with particular emphasis on the Western Aleutians, were the two areas where the next Japanese blow would most likely fall. As Midway was of great importance to the defense of the Hawaiian group, the American high command arrived at the conclusion that one of the major Japanese objectives in the seizing of Midway would be to trap a large portion of the American fleet. As has been shown earlier, this was an excellent conclusion. The Commander Combined Fleet was actually seeking decisive action and had sufficient forces, provided that he gained superiority in the air, to destroy the smaller American fleet. COMINCH, therefore, directed CINCPAC to oppose the Japanese forces by using strong attrition tactics only, and further directed that the cruisers and carriers not be unduly risked.

CINCPAC in compliance with this directive, directed his Striking Force task force commanders to be governed by the principle of calculated risk. He issued his instructions in the form of Letters of Instruction, which defined the above principle as the avoidance of exposure to attack by superior enemy forces without good prospect of inflicting, as a result of such exposure, greater damage

to the enemy than they suffered themselves.*

Although CINCPAC had considerable forces in the Pacific, he decided, in view of the limitation to attrition tactics and to the shortage of air and surface screening units, to employ only those units which would contribute to his long range striking power. He therefore decided to use the following forces:

- (a) A fast carrier striking force composed of the available carriers (3) with provision for use of a fourth carrier if it arrived in the area in time.
- (b) The maximum number of shore based aircraft that Midway could operate. These were to consist of:
 - (1) Long range search aircraft in order to insure that the enemy was contacted at such a distance as to provide an opportunity for the American Striking Force to strike the first blow.
 - (2) Heavy air bombardment force.
 - (3) Dive bomber and torpedo planes for close-in attacks.
 - (4) Fighter aircraft for defense of Midway from enemy air attacks.
- (c) All available submarines were to be stationed along the approaches to Midway and Oahu, and as a support for the Carrier Striking Force in the event of forced retirement.
- (d) Additional ground forces for the Midway garrison equipped with new batteries and mechanized equipment for opposing a landing assault, and for the installation of underwater obstacles and the laying of mines.
- (e) Motor Torpedo Boats and YP's.

The above were the only available forces that could be soundly employed in the defense of Midway.

The correct positioning of the above forces, and in particular, the correct positioning of the American Striking Force, was of the utmost importance. CINCPAC appears to have made an estimate of the situation in which he decided that his Striking Force should be located to the northeast of Midway in a position that would give him a flanking position against the Japanese forces expected to come in from the northwest. It is probable that had American intelligence been less correct, the positioning of the American forces would have been more difficult, the forces would probably have been less adequate, and some of the carriers might not have been present at all. CINCPAC stated in this connection, "Had we lacked early information of the Japanese movements, and had we been caught with carrier task forces dis-

*CINCPAC Letter of Instructions to Commander Striking Forces, Serial 0116 W of May 28th, 1942.

persed, possibly as far as the Coral Sea, the Battle of Midway would have ended differently.**

It is presumed that an additional reason for placing his Striking Force northeast of Midway was to have it in a relative position favorable to both Midway and the Aleutians. Then, should later intelligence show a greater need for the carrier force in the Aleutians than in the Midway area, it would have been in suitable position to expedite its transfer to the new area.

AMERICAN PLAN
Aleutian Phase

A study of the intelligence showed that a portion of the prospective Japanese blow would be delivered in the Aleutians. One of the reasons for such Japanese action as stated by them appears to have been the desire to force the diversion of American naval strength from Midway to counter this blow.

CTF 8, mindful of his assigned objective of opposing the advance of the enemy in the Aleutian-Alaska area taking advantage of seizing every favorable opportunity to inflict strong attrition estimated that the most probable area of a Japanese landing would be the Umnak-Dutch Harbor-Cold Bay area, with Kodiak-Kenai a further objective, should the initial operations prove successful.** He decided, therefore, to defend this area. He planned to accomplish this by:

- (a) Early detection of enemy surface forces by long range aircraft and picket boats.
- (b) Air strikes by available land based bombers based at Fort Glenn on Umnak Island and Fort Randall on Cold Bay.
- (c) A destroyer attack force to be employed as a weapon of opportunity based on Makushin Bay, Unalaska Island.
- (d) A cruiser force with a small destroyer screen operating in the southern approaches to Kodiak Island.
- (e) Fighters based at Fort Glenn for the defense of Dutch Harbor.***

In this plan, CTF 8's freedom of action was apparently seriously affected, as he was forced to rely upon land based aircraft for the essential protection of his ships. As the number of his airplanes was also limited, and as there were no airfields west of Ft. Glenn on Umnak Island, the ability of his surface

*CINCPAC report Battle of Midway, Serial 01849 of June 28th, 1942, p.24.

**CTF 8 Estimate of the Situation, May 20th, 1942.

***CTF 8 Operation Plan 1-42 of May 27th, 1942.

vessels to venture far to sea was restricted to those areas where his forces could be adequately protected by the above land based air power. In addition, the distances between his naval surface forces and the bases from which his supporting aircraft operated, plus the time lag, adversely affected the problem. All of the above caused him considerable concern as a result of which he issued a directive, in which he stated, "It should be thoroughly understood by all parties involved that seconds, not minutes or hours, are the units employed in measurement of efficiency in air operations. The Commander at sea expects the minimum of delay between the moment he expresses his desires and the moment they are fulfilled."

CTF 8 realized that his problem was further complicated by the fact that there was an almost total lack of darkness in a military sense. This meant that under suitable flying conditions his surface forces were offered little opportunity of advancing or retiring without being detected and attacked by Japanese carrier based aircraft. He therefore informed CINCPAC that "in the absence of a naval force adequate in all types, the answer to Alaska defense was adequate land based air,"** and he requested that his limited air forces be immediately increased. Prior to this, on May 24th, while he was en route to the Aleutians, he made a request for additional air support, in which he stated: "Submit maximum concentration of available mainland based Navy planes and large concentration of similar Army planes alone can assure decisive tactical results--a temporary lessening of defensive dispositions on the West Coast should offer chance of quick favorable decision in north, which would permit early return of planes to Mainland defense stations, and would further defensive security of West Coast in best possible manner."*** No appreciable results were obtained from this request until June 7th, when COMINCH released all Navy search planes on the West Coast for movement to Alaska.**** Commander Northwest Sea Frontier requested this action from COMINCH.

His overall plan for the defense of Alaska, appears to have been sound, based on his means available and on the principle of calculated risk. His means available, however, were not adequate, and failed to detect the Japanese Second Mobile Task Group approaching Dutch Harbor on June 2nd. This was primarily due to the poor flying weather then prevailing.

GENERAL SUMMARY

The preceding discussion completes the background for the action at Midway and in the Aleutians. In general, it shows:

- (a) On the Japanese side, two distinct efforts; one, the main effort, which was directed toward Midway; the other, a secondary effort, which served as a diversion to support the main effort, and was

•CTF 8 Directive for Provision of Aircraft Support to Ships at Sea.

••CTF 8 Dispatch to CINCPAC 301959, May 1942.

•••CTF 8 Dispatch to CINCPAC 25004, May 1942.

••••Commander Northwest Sea Frontier War Diary, June 1942.

(a) directed at the Aleutians. The main effort was spearheaded by the (cont) Mobile Force - a four carrier task force-supported by other task forces including the Main Force and Submarine Force. All of these forces supported the operations of the Midway Occupation Force. The secondary effort was spearheaded by the Second Mobile Task Group-- a two-carrier task group--which supported the operations of the two occupation groups. In overall command of the above Japanese efforts was the CinC Combined Fleet in the battleship YAMATO with the Main Force.

(b) On the American side, two distinct efforts; one to counter the Midway operation; the other to counter the Aleutian operation. The Midway counter-effort was spearheaded by a Striking Force consisting of one two-carrier task force, and one one-carrier task force both supported by land based aircraft operating from Midway and by submarines. The Aleutian counter-effort was spearheaded by land based aircraft operating from Aleutian bases and supported by a striking force of surface ships and submarines. The Midway counter-effort was commanded by CINCPAC himself, from his headquarters at Pearl Harbor, although the carrier task force commanders and the ONAS Midway operated with considerable freedom of action. The Aleutian effort was commanded by CTF 8 in the cruiser NASHVILLE. CTF 8 enjoyed complete freedom of action in his relations with CINCPAC.

CHAPTER IV
PRELIMINARY OPERATIONS (JAPANESE)
0925-2400 June 3rd

Commander Mobile Force, if he heard of the contact on the ships of the Occupation Force, appears to have considered that neither this contact nor the contact on the Minesweeping Group made at 0804 in any way affected his basic plan. For at 1500 he commenced his run in on course 130° (T), speed 24 knots for his attack on Midway. It is presumed that in reality he felt gratified, as these contacts would probably tend to increase the tempo and density of the searches in the southwest area from Midway, thereby lessening his chances of being discovered. This would probably cause the expenditure of effort and material on the Occupation Force, which would otherwise be launched against his own forces if discovered. In this connection it is of interest to note that there is nothing in the Japanese reports nor in the war diaries which states that the contact by American planes on the Minesweeping Group and on the Transport Group were either reported to the CinC Combined Fleet, or broadcast to the entire command. However, such reports must have been made, for there is no reason for radio silence when a ship or force is under observation by known enemy forces. And in this case the vital importance of these contacts must have been apparent to the Japanese commanders of all echelons. At 2400 June 3rd the Mobile Force was bearing 315° (T), distant 350 miles from Midway.

CinC Combined Fleet with the Main Force appears to have reacted exactly as did Commander Mobile Force, and he likewise, maintained course and speed. At 1500, having arrived at Lat. 35° N. Long. 165° E. bearing 294° (T), distant 975 miles from Midway, in accordance with the basic plan he detached the Aleutian Support Group, and directed it to take a covering position along Long. 171° E. between Lats. 40° N. and 44° N. The Aleutian Support Group changed course to the northeast, and headed for the above designated covering position. At 2400 June 3rd it was bearing 301° (T), distant 930 miles from Midway. The Main Group headed to the eastward and at 2400 June 3rd was bearing 298° (T), distant 840 miles from Midway.

The Occupation Force remained in 4 groups as heretofore. The Transport Group, the first large unit of the principal Japanese forces to be discovered, made no change of course or speed, but continued on. Commander Transport Group must have realized that an air attack would be forthcoming, and that his anti-aircraft defenses were probably inadequate, although, on the basis of Japanese standards, his eleven destroyers and one cruiser anti-aircraft screen was relatively strong. He could not have enjoyed the situation, as it was an unfavorable one. In any case, Commander Transport Group appears to have been confident that his immediate superior in command, Commander Occupation Force, knew of his discovery by American planes. He therefore continued on towards Midway. At 1624 the Transport Group was attacked by nine B-17's from Midway.

Little information is available as to the disposition assumed by the Japanese to repel this attack, or as to the evasive maneuvers employed. An evaluation of several diagrams indicates the thirteen transports and supply ships were in two parallel columns with the cruiser JINTSU in the van, and with one destroyer leading each column. Eight destroyers formed a semi-circle ahead of the two columns. The 11th destroyer followed astern between the two columns. Several patrol boats stationed among the transports and supply vessels in undisclosed positions complete this formation.

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CROSS SECTION OF THE ATMOSPHERE, 1300, JUNE 3, SHOWING THE POSITION OF THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION FORCE TO THE SOUTHWEST RELATIVE TO MIDWAY



THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION FORCE WAS DISCOVERED IN A RELATIVELY CLEAR AREA SOUTHWEST OF MIDWAY. AT THE TIME CONTACT WAS MADE, AND DURING SUBSEQUENT HIGH LEVEL BOMBING ATTACKS, THE ENEMY WAS IN THE "WARM SECTOR" BEHIND A DYING WARM FRONT.

DURING THE NIGHT OF 3 JUNE, 3 PBY'S FROM MIDWAY MADE A NIGHT TORPEDO ATTACK AND SUCCEEDED IN SURPRISING THE JAPANESE. ANOTHER PBY FAILED TO ATTACK.

Plate I

The only report available on this air action was that of the ARGENTINA MARU, which appears to have been the sixth ship in the port column. The ARGENTINA MARU stated that six B-17's approached in an attack from the rear of the column at an altitude of about 10,000 feet. She increased speed to 20 knots, changed course to the left to 045° (T), and at 1638 opened fire. The B-17's, which had split into two groups of three planes each, dropped their bombs at about 1640 and missed the ARGENTINA MARU, which appears to have been the target ship, by from 100 to 200 yards. No hits were reported by the Japanese in this attack. Upon completion of the attack the B-17's departed to the northeast.

The ARGENTINA MARU also stated that she had been heavily strafed by the B-17's.* This was quite possible from a medium altitude, for the B-17's had tunnel guns which fired in the lower hemisphere. The Japanese were not greatly alarmed by the prospect of horizontal bombing attacks. Previous experience revealed this type of attack to be largely ineffective. The Transport Group continued on course 081° (T) and speed 12 knots heading towards Midway, and at 2400 June 3rd was bearing 259° (T), distant 540 miles from that place.

The Close Support Group appears to have disregarded both the original contact on the Transport Group and the bombing attack, and continued on towards Midway. It appears to have been operating about 50-75 miles ahead of the Transport Group.

The Second Fleet Group also continued on towards Midway. Whether it endeavored to close the Transport Group to assist in its defense is obscure. At 2400 Second Fleet Group was bearing 263° (T), distant 540 miles from Midway.

The Seaplane Group, which operated in the vicinity of the transport formation, was operating apart from the Transport Group on the morning of June 3rd and appears to have been about 50 miles ahead of the transports. It provided air cover for that group during the day. At 0958 June 3rd the CHAROSE which was providing the air cover reported sighting a flying boat, and at 1020 the KAMIKAWA MARU sighted another flying boat.** An American report by PBX 44-P-5 at 1030 concerning sighting two large and two small auxiliaries bearing 263° (T), distant 630 miles from Midway was evidently a contact on this Seaplane Group.*** At 1100 June 3rd or about one-half hour after the original contact, the Seaplane Group appears to have been detached, apparently in accordance with the basic plan, and headed at 17 knots for Kure Island where it was to establish a seaplane base.** The detachment of this group at this time indicates the Japanese disregard for land based high and medium horizontal bombing, which their information led them to believe would be the principal opposition they would encounter at long ranges from Midway. At 2400 June 3rd the Seaplane Group was bearing 262° (T), distant 450 miles from Midway.

Section I, of the Minesweeping Group, the TAMA MARU's 3 and 5 continued on course 062° (T), speed 8 knots, although it had encountered at 0920 a PBX on bearing 244° (T), distant 470 miles from Midway. It had fired at this PBX at 0923, without apparent results. At 2400 June 3rd Section I was bearing 246° (T), distant 390 miles from Midway. Section II, the SHOWA MARU's 7 and 8, which had been undergoing voyage repairs at Wake, departed Wake for Midway at 1600 June 3rd. No further record of this section is available.

*ARGENTINA MARU, Combat Report, WDC 160232, p.2.

**Action Report KAMIKAWA MARU 1942, WDC 160682, p.4.

***War Diary, Patrol Squadron 24, June 1942, p.2.

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The Submarine Force, Midway area, continued patrolling awaiting contact on enemy forces. At 2400 they were in station as shown on Diagram B.

PRELIMINARY OPERATIONS (AMERICAN)
0925-2400 June 3rd

Commander N.A.S. Midway, having received the report at 0925 of "Main Body bearing 261° (T), distant 700 miles, six large ships in column", amplified by a second report at 1100 to eleven ships, course 090° (T), speed 19, delayed taking offensive action until further information had been received. This was because his intelligence was so complete as to even indicate the direction of approach. The principal attack was expected to come from the northwest sector, and as yet he had heard nothing from the search planes in that area. This appears to have been due to the fact that the weather to the north-northwest and beyond 400 miles was apparently poor. CNAS Midway at this time recalled the patrol plane which was trailing the Transport Group, as its gasoline was low and its ability to defend itself poor.*

At 1130 another patrol plane reported two cargo vessels and two small vessels, course 050, bearing 251°, distance 270 miles. It was apparent to the CNAS Midway that the reported distance was in error, as the search planes were at that time over 500 miles away.*

CNAS Midway desired to track the Transport Group. Realizing that a PBY would have little chance of surviving a tactical scouting (shadowing) mission against such a force, he directed a special long range B-17, which had just arrived from Pearl Harbor that morning equipped with extra gas tanks, to refuel and stand by to scout.**

At 1158 this plane with a Naval observer on board took off. It had orders to track the enemy force previously referred to as "Main Body," and upon contact, to transmit MO's, in order to guide an attack group to the target. This plane failed to discover the Transport Group, but at 1640 it reported "Two transports and two destroyers bearing 261°, distant 700 miles." It made no other contacts.

This employment of a B-17 for tactical scouting appears to have been the first and only occasion during the ensuing battle when these planes were so employed. It is unfortunate that more of them could not have been so used, for, as will be seen later, the operations of the Striking Force were greatly handicapped by the absence of tactical information, which B-17's might have been able to obtain. However, B-17's were rarely employed for such missions as they were restricted to attack missions. This went back to pre-war Washington.

At 1230 nine B-17's took off to attack the Transport Group. These planes were armed with half bomb-loads (four 800 lb. bombs fused for 1/10 second delay) and one bomb bay gas tank.***

*Air Operations, Midway Defense Forces, Battle of Midway, May 30th-June 6th, 1942-Serial 0027 dated June 15, 1942.

**Liaison Journal, Battle of Midway, Jo K. Warner, Major Air Corps, p. 5.

***Air Operations, Midway Defense Forces, Battle of Midway, May 30th-June 6th, 1942, Serial 0027 dated June 15, 1942.

At 1639 the strike leader reported "attacking target." The attack was made by flights of three airplanes at altitudes of 8,000, 10,000 and 12,000 feet respectively.* The Japanese started maneuvering their ships more or less individually, and threw up heavy anti-aircraft fire. This fire continued throughout the attack and was consistently behind the attacking planes. Thirty-six 600-pound bombs were dropped. Although a total of five sure hits, one probable hit, and four near misses were claimed on two battleships or heavy cruisers and two large transports,**no hits actually were made.*** This is consistent with the results of the Battle of the Coral Sea, where high-level, horizontal bombing attacks made by both Allied and Japanese aircraft on maneuvering targets failed to obtain a single hit.

At 2115 a second attack was launched from Midway. This time the attack-group consisted of four PBY5A planes, each with one torpedo. The pilots were volunteers. These four planes had flown in from Pearl Harbor the same day after a 10-hour flight. The planes were equipped with radar, and appear to have been chosen for this mission because of this fact. The weather was clear, with broken cumulus clouds at 1000 feet. At 2400 this group was about 355 miles from Midway.****

There may be some question as to the wisdom of launching an attack group of but four patrol planes to attack an enemy force considered to be composed of carriers, battleships, and transports. However, CNAS Midway, in view of the discovery of the Transport Group of the Japanese Occupation Force, had decided that the Japanese carrier forces would strike Midway on the following morning at about 0800. He had sufficient planes to make his morning search, and he appears to have felt that with his limited defense forces, and more particularly, his limited number of fighters, there would be no means of servicing his patrol planes after the Japanese had attacked. Consequently he appears to have thought it wise to launch this unsupported night attack on the Japanese transport rather than to return the extra planes with their torpedoes either to Pearl Harbor or to one of the small bases such as Lisianski Island, without having struck a blow. This decision was sound, for the defense forces were poorly constituted and it was necessary to accomplish any damage possible against the Japanese forces with whatever means available.

Commander Striking Force, CTF 17 in YORKTOWN, heard of the two contacts on Japanese ship groups; the first contact on two AK at 0904; the second and more important contact on a larger group bearing 261° (T), distant 700 miles from Midway at 0925. He estimated the situation and decided, apparently, that these contacts were not important enough for action at this time by the Striking Force. He realized that his great advantage lay with surprise, and he did not choose to expose his position until he was satisfied that the time for decisive action had come. He therefore continued operating in his designated area, which was approximately 020° (T), distant 300 miles from Midway, and took such courses and speeds as were necessary to maintain station in the area, and to launch and recover planes.

*Action Report, C.O. 431st Bombardment Squadron (H), Hickham Field, 7 June 1942, p.1.

**Hdq. 7th Air Force Letter dated 17 July 1942-Subject Operational Report Air Force Employment at Midway, p.1.

***ARGENTINA MARU Combat Report WDC 160232, p.2.

****Air Operations, Midway Defense Forces, Battle of Midway, May 30th-June 6th, Serial 0027 dated June 15, 1942.

TF 16 continued operating about 10 miles to the south of TF 17.

However, Commander Striking Force appears to have realized that it was possible for the Midway planes to miss the Japanese striking forces, with a possible result of surprise attack on his own task force in the afternoon. He therefore ordered an afternoon search to cover the same sector as did the 0400 search, excepting that the search in this case was reduced to a radius of 175 miles. This sector was from 240° (T) clockwise to 060° (T), and appears to have been accomplished by 10 planes. The sector covered by these searches seems to have been excellently chosen, but as there were no Japanese forces in the area at that time, no contacts were made.

At 1940 he changed the base course to 215° (T) and speed to 13.5 knots in order to be in the selected launching position about 200 miles north of Midway at daylight, June 4th. At 2400 the Striking Force was bearing 017° (T), distant 271 miles from Midway. During this time TF 16 continued to maintain station about 10 miles south of TF 17.

At the time of the 0925 contact on the Japanese Occupation Force all submarines of TF 7 were on station and all were within their given areas in accordance with instructions. The submarines of the Midway patrol had been directed to operate at periscope depth during daylight and to surface during darkness.

The 0925 contact report appears to have been received by but one submarine--the GRENADIER. The time of reception was not immediate, but was, instead, about 12 hours later. It should be noted that at 0925 the CUTTLEFISH was about 55 miles from the Occupation Force and in an advantageous position to exploit the contact, but with the passing of 12 hours she had lost her advantage.

At 2200 she received orders from CTF 7 at Pearl Harbor to close Midway, and to search for and destroy a damaged Japanese battleship. This ship had been reportedly set on fire by the B-17 horizontal bombers which had attacked the Occupation Force at 1639. The CUTTLEFISH proceeded toward Midway as directed, but failed to discover any battleship. The report of damage by the B-17's was in error, as no hits had been made. As a matter of interest, as has been pointed out earlier, it is quite probable that no battleships were present in the Transport formation. This dispatch from CTF 7 was the first information that the CUTTLEFISH had received concerning the enemy.

At 2400 all submarines of all groups with the exception of the CUTTLEFISH were on assigned stations in readiness for contact with the enemy. The CUTTLEFISH was closing Midway, and bore 263° (T), distant 690 miles therefrom at 2400.

* * *

CTF 11, in the CHESTER, remained at San Diego. TG 11.1 continued on towards Pearl Harbor and at 2400 was in Lat. 28°-00' N., Long. 141°-30' W.

* * *

TF 1, less TU 1.1.4, remained at anchor in San Francisco, and at 2400 June 3rd was still there. TU 1.1.4 was at sea with instructions to repel an expected Japanese air attack on San Francisco. At 2400 it was on course 191° (T), speed 11.5 knots and was bearing 294° (T), distant 670 miles from San Francisco.

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CHAPTER V

BATTLE OF MIDWAY

Midway Action, 4 June 1942

FORCES ENGAGED

(a) American Striking Force

(1) Task Force 16

ENTERPRISE (F), HORNET (CV), NORTHAMPTON (CA), VINCENNES (CA),
MINNEAPOLIS (CA), NEW ORLEANS (CA), PENSACOLA (CA), ATLANTA (CLAA),
WORDEN (DD), MONAGHAN (DD), AYLWIN (DD), PHELPS (DD), BALCH (DD),
CONYNGHAM (DD), BENHAM (DD), ELLET (DD), MAURY (DD).

Total 2 CV, 5 CA, 1 CL (AA), 9 DD.

| Carrier based planes assigned | VF | VSB | VT | VOS | TOTAL |
|--------------------------------|----|-----|----|-----|-------|
| | 54 | 71 | 29 | 20 | 154 |
| Cruiser based planes assigned. | | | | 20 | 20 |
| 1st Attack | 20 | 68 | 29 | | |
| Retained for CAP | 34 | | | | |

(2) Task Force 17

YORKTOWN (FF) (CV), ASTORIA (CA), PORTLAND (CA), MORRIS (DD),
RUSSELL (DD), HAMMANN (DD), ANDERSON (DD), HUGHES (DD).

Total 1 CV, 2 CA, 5 DD.

| Carrier based planes assigned | VF | VSB | VT | VOS | TOTAL |
|-------------------------------|----|-----|----|-----|-------|
| | 26 | 36 | 12 | | 78 |
| Cruiser based planes assigned | | | | 8 | 8 |
| 1st Attack | 6 | 17 | 12 | | |
| Search | | 10 | | | |
| Retained for CAP | 19 | | | | |

(3) Midway Island Forces

Total planes assigned 110
Planes launched for search 22 PBV's
Planes on 1st attack 11 SB2U-3, 4 B-26, 6 TBF, 15 B-17, 16 SBD2.
Planes flying CAP 26 VF

Total planes available:

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|---------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| In the 3 carriers | 79 VF | 107 VSB | 41 VT | 227 |
| In the CA & BB | | | | <u>28</u> |
| | | | Total Afloat | 255 |
| At Midway | | | Shore Based | 110 |
| | | | Total Aircraft | <u>365</u> |

(b) Japanese Mobile Force

AKAGI (F) (CV), KAGA (CV), HIRYU (CV), SORYU (CV), HARUNA (BB), KIRISHIMA (BB),
TONE (CA), CHIKUMA (CA), HAGARA (CL), NOWAKI (DD), ARASHI (DD), HAGIKAZE (DD),
MAIKAZE (DD), ISOKAZE (DD), URAKAZE (DD), HAMAKAZE (DD), TAMIKAZE (DD),
KAZAGUMO (DD), YUGUMO (DD), MAKIGUMO (DD), AKIGUMO (DD).

Total 4 CV, 2 BB, 2 CA, 1 CL, 12 DD.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Total planes available: | Total |
| In the 4 carriers 90 VF 72 VB 72 VT | 234 |
| In CA & BB 14 VOS (about) | <u>14</u> |
| | 248 |

STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS FACTORS

The following survey of pertinent strength and weakness factors of each force has been made to summarize the material for testing the feasibility and acceptability of possible courses of action.

American Striking Force

Strength Factors

Superior intelligence.
Surprise.
Possession of radar.
Fighter direction using radar.
More cruisers (8 to 5)
More destroyers (14 to 12)
High task force speed capability.
Automatic homing equipment on CV's (YE).
Self-sealing fuel tanks and aircraft armor.
Occupation of fleeting position.
Presence of own land based aircraft for search, reconnaissance, and attack.
(110 planes)

Weakness Factors

Failure to concentrate anti-aircraft and fighter defense due to separation of carriers.
Independent task forces operating under different sets of cruising instructions.
Task Forces had not operated together prior to this time.
HORNET air group was new and lacked previous battle experience.
YORKTOWN Air Group was a composite group from three carriers, and had never operated as a unit.

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Strength Factors (cont'd)

More submarines (19 to 15)
Nearer to major fleet base and logistic support.
Greater number cruiser planes (28-14)

Weakness Factors

Carrier planes not homogeneous as to speed and range.
Inferior performance characteristics of American fighters.
Insufficient AA heavy machine guns.
Torpedo characteristics poor.
Slow torpedo planes.

JAPANESE MOBILE FORCE

Strength Factors

Greater number CV (4 to 3)
Two (fast) battleships.
(16-14" guns)
Greater number 4.7" to 6" guns (171 to 140)
Higher performance fighter planes.
More balanced fast carrier task force with 4 CV; 2 BB, 2 CA, 1 CL and 12 DD.
More balanced air striking force.
More nearly homogeneous design of planes assigned the air groups permitting their tactical employment as one unit.
Pilots had long combat experience.

Weakness Factors

Inferior intelligence.
No radar.
Insufficient AA heavy machine guns.
Aircraft had less protection and no self-sealing gas tanks.
Limited land based air search and reconnaissance from Wake.
No automatic aircraft homing equipment on CV's.

This analysis indicates that insofar as numbers of carriers, combat experience of pilots, and design of aircraft, the advantage lay with the Japanese; that insofar as intelligence, surprise, relative position, technical operation of carriers, including radar and homing devices and support by land based aircraft for search and combat, the advantage lay with the Americans. All other advantages and disadvantages above listed, while important, are not decisive, and may be considered to balance one another.

JAPANESE OPERATIONS

AIR ACTION

0000 June 4th to 2400 June 4th

Commander Mobile Force continued from his midnight position on course 150° (T), speed 24 knots. He presumably felt reasonably certain that the Mobile Force had not been discovered, although he must also have felt reasonably certain that it would be merely a matter of time before he was located by aircraft from Midway. No doubt he had heard of the land based air attack on the Occupation Force to the south on the preceding day, but, as yet, the presence of American carrier forces in his vicinity remained unknown to him. Nothing had yet occurred to change his original view that there were no American surface ships with carrier based aircraft in the vicinity of Midway, for he continued on without change.

The weather was clear with .8 scattered clouds, visibility excellent, ceiling 1500-3000 feet, and a wind from the southeast. This must have been gratifying to him, as it would permit launching planes on his approach course, with the subsequent reduction of the distance between the recovery point and Midway. With these favorable weather conditions, he could reasonably expect to obtain a navigational fix at dawn, and to launch his first attack wave before being discovered by the Midway search planes.

At 0354 June 4th, about one hour before sunrise, he slowed the Mobile Force to 20 knots to launch planes into the light, southeasterly wind.* Thirty-six minutes later at the break of dawn (0430) and in a position bearing 314° (T), distant 240 miles from Midway, he launched his air attack group, under the command of the flight officer of the HIRYU, to attack Midway. This attack unit was composed of one hundred eight carrier based planes; thirty-six fighters, thirty-six bombers and thirty-six torpedo planes, although the latter were armed with bombs at this time instead of with torpedoes. The bombers carried 242 kg bombs and the torpedo planes carried 805 kg bombs.** One VT from the HIRYU soon returned due to engine trouble.***

Immediately following the departure of the Midway attack group, Commander Mobile Force launched seven search planes to search the area included between 025 and 185° (T) from his launching position, Diagram "D-1", and two anti-submarine patrol planes. In connection with these search planes it is of particular importance to note the various times at which the cruiser planes were actually launched, as this had a vitally important bearing on the failure of the Japanese at Midway. The time of these launchings is as follows:*

| | | | | |
|------|---------------|--------------|----|-----------------|
| 0435 | CHIKUMA plane | takes off on | #5 | search line. |
| 0438 | " | " | " | #6 search line. |
| 0442 | TONE plane | " | " | #3 search line. |
| 0500 | " | " | " | #4 search line. |

*Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6-ONI Review, May 1947, p.16.
** " " " " " #6-ONI Review, May 1947, pp.7, 16, 46, 48, 47, 48.
*** " " " " " #6-ONI Review, May 1947, p.7.

**CROSS SECTION OF THE ATMOSPHERE, 0100, JUNE 4, SHOWING
RELATIVE POSITION OF JAPANESE MOBILE FORCE, AND AMERICAN
STRIKING FORCE IN THE VICINITY OF MIDWAY.**



THE JAPANESE MOBILE FORCE APPROACHED FROM THE NORTHWEST UNDER COVER OF A MOVING COLD FRONT. BEHIND THIS FRONT WEPE LOWER BROKEN CLOUDS WITH SCATTERED SHOWERS AND A VARIABLE CEILING BETWEEN 1000 AND 2300 FEET. AT THE FRONT AN AREA OF OVERCAST, TOWERING CUMULUS CLOUDS, HEAVY SHOWERS, AND LOWERED VISIBILITY PREVENTED EFFECTIVE SCOUTING BY AMERICAN AIR FORCES OPERATING FROM MIDWAY. FARTHER TO THE EAST, THE AMERICAN STRIKING FORCE WAS OPERATING IN AN AREA UNDER A DYING WARM FRONT. THE SKY WAS CLOUDY, WITH HIGH BROKEN AND LOWER SCATTERED CLOUDS. CEILINGS WERE UNLIMITED OVER THE TASK FORCE BUT LOWERED TO 1000 FEET IN A WESTERLY DIRECTION.

Plate II

According to Japanese reports, the TONE's plane on #4 search line made the initial contact on the American carrier task forces. This plane was delayed in launching about 30 minutes. Presumably, the above initial contact was made 30 minutes later than might have occurred had the plane been launched on time. Had Commander Mobile Force received the contact report at about 0700 rather than at 0728, he could have ordered his organization #4, consisting of twelve fighter planes and eighty-one attack planes in readiness on decks, to attack the American carriers. However, Commander Mobile Force, having heard nothing from his search planes, at 0715 discontinued the condition of readiness for his standby planes, then armed with torpedoes and bombs suitably fused for use against surface ships. He sent the attack planes below in order to clear the carrier flight decks for recovery of the planes returning from the Midway attack, and to arm the torpedo planes with bombs for a second attack on Midway.*

In view of the importance of early contact in carrier operations, students of naval history will wonder why it was that Commander Mobile Force did not launch his search planes at the earliest practicable moment to permit their prompt departure at dawn. Carrier launching commenced at 0354. Dawn was at 0430. Sunrise was at 0457. It should be apparent that had the search planes departed promptly at dawn, they might have made contact on the American carrier task forces much earlier--from one half hour to one hour earlier--and perhaps before the Midway search planes discovered the Mobile Force.

Japanese practice in the operation of their ship based planes was, in general, excellent throughout the early days of the war. It was, however, apparently inferior to American practice as regards "launching" on time. American practice called for ship based planes to be launched promptly on signal, so that all planes might be expected to take the air at once. Had Japanese practice been as demanding as the American practice, and had the TONE plane been launched on time, the course of the battle might have turned favorable to the Japanese.

The reasons for delaying the launching of the search planes until after the attack groups had departed for Midway are not clear, but were probably because Commander Mobile Force did not expect to locate any strong American surface and carrier forces, and was perfunctory in carrying out his plan providing against this American capability. Possibly, he delayed because, for security reasons, he did not care to have his search planes sighted by the enemy before his attack group had struck. This Midway attack was to be a surprise!

Students of naval history will also wonder why it was that Commander Mobile Force, with an aircraft complement in his four carriers of 234 planes of which ninety were fighters, seventy-two bombers and seventy-two torpedo planes, initially allotted but 108 planes, or roughly 50%, in the attack on Midway.** There is no information available from Japanese sources to explain the mental process of the Commander Mobile Force in making this decision. However, from the intelligence available to the Japanese, it would seem that Commander Mobile Force had thoroughly weighed all courses of action, and had finally arrived at the above figures on the basis of the three factors of superiority, economy of force, and security. His intelligence indicated about thirty American fighters at Midway, and although he realized that other types of planes were also there, he appears to have felt that

*Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.17

** " " " " " " ONI Review, May 1947, pp.46,47,48.

none of these other types would be able to offer effective opposition to his air attack group. He had definite knowledge of the destructive capabilities of his bombs on Allied defenses as learned during the preceding 8 months of war. He seems to have felt, therefore, that the one hundred and eight planes were adequate in number and in type to accomplish their mission. He also appears to have felt that with the prospect of unknown opposition in view, it was unwise to send forces far above those considered necessary to accomplish their mission, but rather to hold the remainder in readiness against the contingency of additional forces being in the area. This was an excellent example of economy of force and of security. In addition, it appears probable that Commander Mobile Force did not care to accept the additional delay incident to launching a complete striking group. This delay is due to the mechanics of carrier operation, whereby all planes of the carrier complement cannot be spotted on deck at one time and flown off.

Commander Mobile Force's attitude regarding security is of great interest, for despite that fact that he seems to have felt confident that there were no American surface forces supported by carrier based aircraft in the Midway area, confidence which was reinforced by the fact that the submarines which appeared to be in good intercept positions had failed to report any American forces, he nevertheless seems to have viewed his intelligence with some skepticism. His plan therefore provided for a search to a radius of 300 miles for American surface forces in the area which he considered most dangerous to his own command. It was also for this reason that he decided to hold a second aircraft striking group in standby condition, armed with bombs and torpedoes, ready to launch against any such surface forces discovered.

Why Commander Mobile Force launched only seven search planes is not clear, for if a search for enemy forces was warranted, such a search should necessarily have been designed so as to insure the detection of any enemy forces within the danger area. The seven-plane search was not sufficiently dense to accomplish this beyond 150 miles from the Mobile Force, and therefore the search was not adequate. Fortunately for Commander Mobile Force, the American surface forces were sufficiently near to make the search reasonably effective and the visibility was unusually high in the vicinity of the American carrier forces.* This resulted in the discovery of the American forces on the outgoing search leg by the TONE plane.

At 0430, when the Japanese attack units were departing for their strikes on Midway, the American carrier task forces were bearing 083° (T), distant 215 miles. The YORKTOWN was launching a search of 10 planes to a distance of 100 miles in the northern semi-circle. At the same time, Midway was launching a 22-patrol plane search to the westward in the sector between 200 and 020 degrees to a radius of 425 miles, and a strike mission of fifteen B-17's to the westward to attack the Transport Group of the Midway Occupation Force.

After launching all designated attack and search planes with the exception of the second TONE plane, which was not launched until 0500, the Mobile Force at 0450 increased speed to 24 knots. Commander Mobile Force at 0520, after having estimated the existing situation, sent the following message to his task force:

"Unless unforeseen changes in the situation occur, the second attack wave in organization No. 4 will be carried out today."

*Action Report USS ENTERPRISE--Serial 0133 June 8, 1942, p. 2.

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This was a preparatory message, sent well in advance to keep his own force apprised of his intentions. It was not an isolated incident, for, as repeatedly shown, Commander Mobile Force never faltered throughout the ensuing battle to keep his superior, as well as his own forces, advised as to his plans. This is an important item in leadership, for in the profession of arms, every man, even on the lowest echelon, is at once a leader and a follower, who may be suddenly confronted by the uncertainties of war with the call to exercise command. Information of the intentions of the commander is invaluable, not only in insuring that the basic plan is carried out with correctness and dispatch, but also in insuring that anyone who succeeds to command is adequately informed as to the demands of the situation.

At 0532 the NAGARA commenced making smoke, and Commander Mobile Force increased the speed of the force to 26 knots. At 0534 the KIRISHIMA commenced making smoke.* Why the NAGARA and KIRISHIMA made smoke is not clear, but it is presumed that the smoke was employed as a means of cover to make enemy observation and attack more difficult. It appears to have been successful, as the report made by the Midway search plane was incorrect in that it only reported about half of the ships present in the task force. At this time the Mobile Force apparently had no fighters in the air, but it was steaming into the wind, and could launch planes at any time without maneuvering. In view of the lack of radar, fighter interception on incoming attacking planes was largely left to the pilots when airborne. This was because it was not possible to direct interception of fighters flying combat air patrol beyond visual distance; and because it was desirable to maintain radio silence as the carriers approached the launching position.

Commander Mobile Force's decision not to launch fighters for combat air patrol was of doubtful correctness. Fighters in the air are better able to intercept the enemy on short notice than are those on deck. The Japanese action in this case was quite different from the American practice, which called for the combat air patrol to be airborne at dawn. In this instance Commander Mobile Force's decision must have been made in the expectation of striking Midway before his location could be made known to the Atoll command, and therefore prior to the launching of strike aircraft by that command. Maintenance of radio silence was therefore vitally important. Since visual fighter direction required the use of radio, Commander Mobile Force presumably considered it wise to retain his fighter patrol on deck until a first contact on the enemy had been made. There is no thumb rule for situations of this kind or for any other military situation. Each situation is a different problem and must be solved in the light of existing circumstances.

At 0542 a flying boat was sighted bearing 166°, distant 25 miles. At 0543 fighters were launched from all four carriers to attack this flying boat.* This American PBV and others apparently not discovered by the Japanese reported the position of the Japanese Mobile Force to Midway, and to the American Striking Force. These reports placed the Mobile Force 40 miles bearing 115° (T) from its actual position.

At 0545 the Mobile Force received the first contact report from its search planes. A TONE plane sighted and reported two surfaced submarines.* These submarines were evidently the GROUPE and the NAUTILUS, which had been directed to keep at periscope depth during daylight hours.

*Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.16.

The presence of these submarines does not appear to have alarmed Commander Mobile Force. He seems to have felt his anti-submarine defenses, including a destroyer screen, an anti-submarine air patrol, and his speed and maneuverability were adequate protection. His plot of their position which placed them about 15 miles from his planned track seemed to indicate that his force would pass clear. He therefore maintained his course.

Commander Mobile Force realized, of course, that his presence must have been reported. But as he had heard nothing from his search planes, and, as he did not think that there were any American carriers in the area anyway, he must have expected that any important American air attack on his force would come from Midway. As for the Americans at Midway, they now had a fairly good estimate of the location, course and speed of the Japanese Mobile Force. The opposing carrier forces were about 204 miles apart, bearing 074°-254° (T) from each other. Diagram "D-1" shows the relative locations of the opposing carrier forces at this critical time.

At 0600 Commander Carrier Division 2 signalled that enemy planes were visible on bearing 090° (T), distant 28.5 miles, and directed that fighters take off. Commander Mobile Force increased speed to 28 knots, changed course slightly to 140° (T), and continued closing Midway.*

At 0619 the Japanese air attack group, which was approaching Midway on course 225° (T), was intercepted by the American Marine fighters. These fighters pressed home their attack against the Japanese bombers. After their initial pass the Japanese escorting fighters attacked the Marine fighters, shooting down most of them, and preventing further effective attacks by them against the bombers. The Japanese continued on, and did considerable damage on both Eastern Island and Sand Island, slowing the American operations considerably and greatly reducing the effectiveness of Midway as a base. Although the Americans claimed that they had shot down 31 Japanese planes by air action alone, this figure is incorrect.** The Japanese reported their own losses as n's planes, with two additional made inoperative.*** Many others received minor damage.

At 0643 the cruiser TONE sighted three enemy planes and commenced making smoke.

At 0645 the flight officer of the HIRYU in command of the Midway attack reported "We have completed our attack and are homeward bound."

At 0700 the Japanese Mobile Force bore 315° (T), distant 170 miles from Midway. Course had been changed to 135° (T). Speed remained at 28 knots. At this moment the commander of the Midway air attack group reported "There is need for a second attack wave."****

Unknown to the Commander Mobile Force, CTF 16 at 0705 from a position bearing 065° (T), distant 175 miles from the Mobile Force, had commenced launching his attack groups of dive bombers, torpedo, and fighting planes from the HORNET and ENTERPRISE.*****

*Mobile For. Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.16.

**Marine Air Group 22, Rep. of Exe. Officer, Bat. Midway, June 7, 1942, p.9.

***Mobile For. Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, pp.45,46,47,48.

****Mobile For. Bat. Rept. #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.17.

*****Action Rpt. USS ENTERPRISE-0133 of Jun. 8th, 1942, p.2 and of USS HORNET-0018 of June 13, 1942, p.2.

At 0705 the TONE, CHIKUMA, and AKAGI sighted the first two attack groups from Midway; four B-26's and six TBF's, approaching at low altitudes. The four B-26 planes and the six TBF's during the ensuing 10 minutes attacked the Mobile Force in two separate groups. Each of these planes was armed with one torpedo. Their attack failed to hit any of the Japanese ships.* Five of the six TBF's and two of the four B-26's were shot down. The three planes which finally returned from this attack to Midway were so damaged that they were unfit for further use.** Most of these planes appear to have been shot down by fighter aircraft. In avoiding this attack the Japanese made radical maneuvers by individual ships and threw up heavy AA fire. Individual maneuver under air attack appears to have been standard Japanese procedure or doctrine for ships within a carrier task force disposition. The American planes appear to have attacked from ahead, slightly on both bows of the disposition.

While the above action was occurring, Commander Mobile Force had to make the decision which so vitally affected the entire outcome of the battle. He had been advised at 0700 that another attack was required at Midway. His search planes, which he had sent out to locate any American surface forces, and which had now been gone 2 to 2½ hours and were, therefore, anywhere from 200 to 250 miles away, had not reported any contacts. About half of the planes assigned to his four carriers had been standing by armed with torpedoes, ready to attack an enemy surface force should one be discovered. His force was being attacked by planes from Midway. Finally, his first attack wave of planes was due back from Midway in a very short time, and required rearming and refueling for future missions. He therefore decided that since there were no American surface forces to give him concern, it would be wise to carry out the recommended additional attack on Midway. He directed his force at 0715 as follows: "Planes in second attack wave stand by to carry out attack today. Re-equip yourselves with bombs.*** At the moment that he transmitted this message, his flagship, the AKAGI, successfully maneuvered to avoid a torpedo dropped by one of the ten attacking planes from Midway.

This decision of Commander Mobile Force to launch a second attack on Midway, employing the planes which he had reserved for a possible American surface force, was an unfortunate one from the Japanese viewpoint. For it became necessary to re-arm the planes with land bombs and to remove the torpedoes and the ordinary bombs which were for use against ships. This placed his carriers in a state of non-readiness for instant action which was to have a very adverse effect on the fortunes of the Mobile Force. As will be shown later, this was in a large part due to the element of chance and indicates how often in battle success or failure may hinge on an incorrect decision, however correct and logical such decision may seem to the Commander at that time.

While it is clear that Commander Mobile Force's search had not as yet been completed and while it is also clear that the search density was low, it appears that the search was purely precautionary and was not expected to discover any enemy forces which could offer serious opposition to the Mobile Force.

*Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.17.

**Air Operations, Midway Defense Forces during Battle of Midway, May 30th to June 6th, 1942, Serial 0027 dated June 15th, 1942.

***Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.17

While these attacks by the Midway planes were underway, TONE plane #4 provided very valuable intelligence, for at 0820 it reported, "The enemy is accompanied by what appears to be a carrier." It is believed that this was the first information received by Commander Mobile Force indicating the presence of a carrier in the American task force. It must have been somewhat of a surprise to him, for, as stated previously, his information indicated that there would probably not be American forces with carriers as a nucleus in the Midway area. It is probable that the original report from the TONE #4 plane alerted him to the possibility of a carrier being present. It was for that reason, apparently, that he repeatedly requested the TONE plane for a report as to types of ships in the group. He must have been extremely anxious about this, for he must have realized that the presence of an American carrier might seriously jeopardize his plan. This was particularly true at this time, as almost one hour had elapsed since the initial contact report on the American surface forces.

At about this same time (0820) TONE plane #4 bearing 185° (T), distant 30 miles, was sighted by the ASTORIA in TF 16, and at 0825 by the ATLANTA in TF 17. This plane had been in the vicinity of TF 16 and 17 for nearly one hour; it had reported one task group, and an approximation of its composition; and it had up to this time escaped observation not only by radar but also by visual observation. The pilot did not see both task groups. This is probably due to the fact that he had to retire at intervals for security reasons and had to remain at considerable distance from the force trailed. The plot of the positions of the American task forces, Diagram D-2, shows that this plane first sighted TF 16.

At 0824 a submarine was detected, and all ships turned away. Some fired at the periscope as they turned. The light cruiser NAGARA and the destroyer ARASKI attacked with depth charges. Although the submarine, which was the NAUTILUS, stated that she had fired one torpedo at a battleship, distant 4500 yards, no torpedo appears to have been reported by any ships of the Mobile Force.

The fourth attack against the Mobile Force was made by eleven Marine Vought scout bombers and commenced at about 0827. These bombers made a high speed glide bombing attack against the battleship HARUNA, releasing the bombs at a low level, but owing to heavy anti-aircraft fire and maneuver made no hits.

Commander Mobile Force throughout these four attacks by the different Midway groups appears to have relied for defense on the same features relied on in the Battle of the Coral Sea. First and foremost, he relied upon fighters. The Japanese fighter pilots were excellent, having been trained through long years of war with China, and through 6 months of war with the Allies. This experience paid off in strong fighter defense. As the Japanese did not have radar, they used bursts of anti-aircraft fire to indicate to their own fighters and to their own disposition the location of enemy planes.

The Mobile Force continued on a southeasterly course while recovering planes from the Midway attack. During this time the TONE #4 plane reported two additional cruisers in position bearing 8°, distant 250 miles from Midway on course 150°, speed 20 knots. At 0834, 0848 and 0850 this plane reported that it was now homeward bound. Commander Mobile Force, mindful of the scouting course this plane had been directed

to fly and noting that the reported contact positions were too far to the north of the search line, ordered the plane at 0854, "Go on the air with transmitter for DF purposes." He apparently did this to obtain a bearing on the plane before it had left the contact area and thus to more closely approximate the bearing of the enemy. At 0855 this plane was ordered to remain on station until relieved by four CHIKUMA planes which were en route. The misgivings of Commander Mobile Force were correct, for the TONE plane had mislocated TF 16. The reported position was about 50 miles north of the actual location, and about 31 miles nearer the Mobile Force. The plot of the positions of the Mobile Force and TF 16, Diagram D-2, shows that at the time of the 0728 contact TF 16 bore 067° (T), distant 173 miles from the Mobile Force, and was on course 160° (T), speed 25; whereas its position, as reported by the TONE plane #4, was bearing 052° (T), distant 204 miles, course 150° (T), speed 20.

At 0855 Commander Mobile Force notified CinC Combined Fleet and Commander Second Fleet that, "Enemy composed of one carrier, five cruisers, and five destroyers sighted at 8 A.M. in position bearing 10°, distant 240 miles from Midway. We are heading for it."* The time of sighting as given in this message is questionable. The first contact on American surface forces was at 0728. While it is true that there is a statement in Commander Mobile Force's Battle Report that this contact was made at 0728 but was not delivered until 0800, this statement does not appear to be in accordance with other entries, for Commander Mobile Force ordered his force at 0745 to prepare to carry out attacks on enemy fleet units.

At 0905 the TONE plane #4 reported that at 0855 it had sighted ten enemy torpedo planes heading toward the Mobile Force. Commander Mobile Force at the same time directed all ships to proceed northward after recovering all planes,* in order to close and destroy the enemy task force.

At 0910 the destroyer ARASHI sighted a periscope and attacked. She noted that a torpedo had been fired at her, and alerted the force by the following message, "Received an enemy torpedo attack at 0910. Countered immediately with depth charges, but results unknown." This attack, like the preceding one at 0824, was made by the NAUTILUS.

Commander Mobile Force completed landing his Midway strike at 0918, changed course to 070° (T), and increased speed to battle speed. His recovery was completed one hour and fifty minutes after the original contact at 0728, and one hour after the report of a carrier in the American task force, and, as yet, he had made no attack on the American task force. When it is remembered that the Japanese, as well as the Americans, realized the power of an all-out air strike and the vital necessity for striking the first blow, this long delay requires examination. In the first place, the importance of a complete knowledge of the mechanics of carrier operation must be stressed, for these mechanics affect and color the Commander's decisions. In the case of Commander Mobile Force it is apparent that once he had made his decision at 0715 to make a second strike on Midway and to change the arming of the standby planes, he became the victim of the mechanics of carrier operations. This was because between 0705 and 0830 the Mobile Force was under attack by Midway planes, and between 0738 and 0818 it was recovering planes of the Midway strike. It was necessary to recover these planes, as they were low on fuel.

*Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.20.

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Then, once they had been recovered, it became necessary to strike them below and to bring up and spot on deck those planes which were to make the next attack on Midway. This was a time-consuming operation, but it was made even more lengthy and difficult by the radical, evasive maneuvers which each carrier was forced to make during the American air attacks.

Commander Mobile Force appears to have done everything possible to hasten the recovery and rearming operations. He also attempted to close the range on the American carrier force which, as has been pointed out earlier, was reported about 31 miles farther away than it actually was. He might have delayed the recovery of his planes. To do this might have caused the loss of many planes, as they must have been low in gasoline. As there were no replacements immediately available, and as Commander Mobile Force knew of only one enemy carrier against his four, he must have mentally minimized the danger from a single carrier, and decided to continue the recovery of his planes.

About the time that the last Midway attack plane was recovered, the CHIKUMA sighted an estimated sixteen enemy planes to starboard at a range of 35,000 meters, Diagram "D-3". This was the fifteen planes of Torpedo Squadron 8 of the HORNET heading in from the southeast for a torpedo attack. Commander Mobile Force increased speed to 30 knots and alerted the anti-aircraft batteries; destroyers and cruisers made smoke screens; and the carriers began evasive maneuvers. The ships of the Mobile Force commenced firing at these planes, apparently with all weapons, including the main battery guns. The CHIKUMA first opened fire with main battery guns at 0927, followed by the TONE at 0929. Both the KAGA at 0929 and the AKAGI at 0932 launched additional fighter planes. Firing continued until 0936 when it became evident that the Japanese fighter planes were shooting down the HORNET torpedo planes. The attack on the Mobile Force was over by 0946. Fifteen American torpedo planes were destroyed. No direct damage appears to have been incurred by any ships of the Mobile Force as the result of this attack.

After this attack Commander Mobile Force sent a message to CinC Combined Fleet stating: "Carried out air attack of Midway at 0630. Many enemy shore based planes attacked us subsequent to 0715. We have suffered no damages. At 0728 enemy composed one carrier, seven cruisers and five destroyers sighted in position Lat. 32°-07' N., Long. 176°-40' W. on course southwest, speed 20 knots. After destroying this, we plan to resume our Midway attack. Our position at 1000 is Lat. 30° N., Long. 179° W., course 30 degrees, speed 24 knots."

As he was sending out this message the American carrier attack planes were heading in to strike the critical blow which set afire three of the four Japanese carriers and turned the tide of the Battle of Midway in favor of the American forces. The YORKTOWN dive bombers were guided to the Mobile Force by the smoke screens laid by the Japanese in order to confuse the HORNET torpedo planes. On this occasion the smoke screen had become a greater danger than an aid.

As the Japanese appear to have been more fearful of torpedoes than they were of bombs, they centered all anti-aircraft activity against the torpedo planes and ignored the dive bombers as well as the horizontal bombers. Practically all Japanese fighter cover was therefore drawn to the low levels, where most of the enemy attack planes had so far been. As a result it appears that the YORKTOWN and ENTERPRISE dive bomber squadrons approached undetected until the AKAGI reported

observing a dive bombing attack against the KAGA at 1022. The AKAGI promptly commenced evasive maneuvers. At 1024 the KAGA was attacked by nine dive bombers which made four hits and five near misses. Two bomb hits were made on the starboard bow, one on the starboard quarter, and one on the port side amidships. At 1025 the SORYU recorded being attacked by twelve dive bombers, which made three hits.* These three hits were along the centerline of flight deck. At 1026 the AKAGI was bombed by three dive bombers. The first bomb is reported as a near miss, the second hit near the elevator amidships, and the third hit the flight deck on the port side.** These three carriers were so heavily damaged by these hits that they were completely disabled. As a result of these attacks the Mobile Force had been reduced in strength to one operating carrier. The HIRYU continued on a northerly course under the temporary tactical command of Commander Cruiser Division 8, as Commander Mobile Force was on the heavily damaged AKAGI.

The prompt manner in which Comcrudiv 8 assumed tactical command is indicated by the message he sent at 1050 to CinC Combined Fleet and to Commander Second Fleet stating, "Fires are raging aboard KAGA, SORYU and AKAGI resulting from attacks carried out by land based and carrier based attack planes. We plan to have the HIRYU engage enemy carriers. In the meantime, we are temporarily retiring to the north and assembling our forces. My position is Lat. 30°-10' N. Long. 178°-50' W.*** He directed Commander Carrier Division 2 in the HIRYU to "attack the enemy carriers." At the same time Comcardiv 2 notified him, "all of our planes are taking off now for purpose of destroying enemy carriers."

Meanwhile, Commander Mobile Force was transferring from the AKAGI to the NAGARA via the destroyer NOWAKE.

As shown on Diagram "D-3", the HIRYU appears to have launched her attack group of eighteen bombers and six fighters while on a northerly course. This indicates light winds at the time. Each of the twelve bombers were armed with one 250 kilogram ordinary bomb suitable for attack against ships, and the remaining six bombers were armed with one 242 kilogram bomb each.**** These latter six planes appear to have been some which had not had time to shift bombs after the second attack on Midway had been cancelled. The launching was completed by 1058, and the attack group departed to attack the American carrier.

Comcardiv 2 advised Comcrudiv 8 that he planned to launch a second attack in about one hour to consist of nine torpedo planes and three fighters.

By 1130 Commander Mobile Force had completed his transfer to the NAGARA and was steaming northward to rejoin the HIRYU. He notified CinC Combined Fleet, "AKAGI, KAGA, and SORYU sustained considerable damage as a result of enemy bombing at about 1030. Fires have broken out aboard them and they are unable to participate in any operations. I have transferred to the NAGARA. After attacking the enemy, I plan to lead my forces to the north."

Meanwhile, two destroyers were dispatched to each of the three damaged carriers and Comcardiv 2 asked Comcrudiv 8 to maintain contact with the American carrier by

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| *Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #8, OMI Review-May 1947, p.56 |
| ** " " " " " " " " " p.24 |
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20, at 1200. 2. The Midway Occupation Force will assign a portion to escort the transports and retire temporarily to the northwest. 3. The Second Fleet will rendezvous with the Mobile Force as soon as possible. Subron 3 and Subron 5 will assume position along dispersal lines "HEI".* At about this time he also ordered the Aleutian Support Group which was en route to its 4 day position, to rejoin the Main Group.

This seems to be the first occasion when CinC Combined Fleet felt that the situation required additional directives to support the basic plan. It was so important as to negate the necessity for maintaining radio silence. Hereafter he employed his radio as necessary.

During this time the battle picture was not clear to Commander Mobile Force now in the NAGARA, who reassumed tactical command of the Mobile Force. At 1225 he signalled his command that he intended to destroy the enemy by daylight action, and that he expected to encounter the enemy momentarily. Five minutes later, at 1230, he received a message from the HIRYU's bombers, stating that the enemy air force had as its nucleus three carriers, accompanied by twenty-two destroyers. This message was delayed 80 minutes in transit. The receipt of this message must have increased considerably his concern regarding the outcome, for his force was now reduced to one carrier, whereas the enemy had two operational carriers, and possibly three, if the HIRYU attack was less successful than thought.

It is strange that he could have thought of immediate surface action in the light of his information, for the opposing surface forces were well separated. At 1300 they were, in fact, from post battle plots bearing 085-263 degrees from each other, distant 101 miles. Although he could not have known these exact figures, he had information which did not indicate contact momentarily. The Mobile Force was, at this time, steaming northward at 24 knots; on the HIRYU all available torpedo planes were being serviced and armed to make another air attack against the enemy carriers; and surface battle was far from imminent. Perhaps he was suffering somewhat from shock.

At 1245 he received word from a HIRYU plane stating that the carrier attacked was burning fiercely. This carrier was the YORKTOWN.

At 1300 Commander Mobile Force directed Comcrudiv 8 to launch a search of float reconnaissance planes in the northeast quadrant to a distance of 150 miles. At the same time he received CinC Combined Fleet's message sent out at 1220, and a message from Comdesdiv 4 to CinC Combined Fleet, which stated that a prisoner, an Ensign from the YORKTOWN, revealed that the carriers involved were the YORKTOWN, ENTERPRISE, and HORNET escorted by six cruisers and ten destroyers; that the YORKTOWN with two cruisers and three destroyers was acting independently of the others; that they had sortied from Pearl Harbor during morning of May 31st, had arrived in vicinity of Midway on June 1st and had patrolled along a north and south course ever since; and that there were no capital ships in Pearl Harbor up to May 31st. This dispatch confirmed the report from the HIRYU's plane that there were three carriers, and it identified them. The information revealed by the Ensign was information which he had obtained through his own observation. Had he been advised

*Combined Fleet despard #185, Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.25.

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as to any of the Commander's future plans, this also would probably have been revealed by him. This shows the necessity for limiting the information given to men who stand a likelihood of being taken prisoner, such as airplane pilots, as the enemy have means of forcing information out of many of them. This information was of extreme importance to the Japanese command, as it apprised them of the composition of the American forces.

At 1310 Comcrudiv 8 advised Commander Mobile Force that he had informed CinC Combined Fleet of the situation including the fact that the Mobile Force was retiring to the northward. He also advised Commander Mobile Force of the location of the American carriers, but this position was erroneous.

CinC Combined Fleet now appears to have decided that a decisive action in the Midway area was imminent, as his search planes reported the enemy on generally westerly courses, and he felt that any action should be fought by the entire fleet. He realized that the enemy had two carriers, whereas he had but one available, and that, if he desired to gain air superiority, it was necessary to recall the Second Mobile Task Group with its two carriers, the RYUJO and the JUNYO. With the ZUIHO and the HIRYU this would give him four carriers. Meanwhile he prepared for night action. He apparently realized that in decisive naval actions it is wise to engage all of own forces available and not to commit them in inferior strength or with limited superiority when a greater superiority is necessary and obtainable. This is a major difference from land warfare. In land warfare, inferior forces having once engaged can, if defeated, often retire and reform, whereas naval forces are usually sunk. For this reason, Commander Mobile Force made his first modification of his basic plan. He cancelled temporarily the Aleutian and Midway Operations, and ordered the Second Mobile Task Group containing the aircraft carriers RYUJO and JUNYO to join Commander Second Fleet. He desired that his maximum strength be available for combat. He therefore issued his second dispatch operation order, indicating the method he desired to employ and coordinating the overall movements of his separated forces. This dispatch order stated, "1. Employ method C in attacking enemy fleet. 2. The Occupation Force will assign a portion of its force to shell and destroy enemy air bases on Midway. The occupation of Midway and Kiska are temporarily postponed."

Method C for attacking enemy fleets is described as follows:

- (1) When major elements of the enemy fleet move westward, a major engagement will be fought in accordance with doctrine for the entire fleet.
- (2) The Second Fleet and the Second Mobile Task Group will be under the command of Commander Second Fleet, and subrons 1, 3 and 5 will be under command of Commander Submarine Force.
- (3) The forces of the Main Force operating in the northern area will be combined with the Main Group. (Presumably refers to the Aleutian's Support Group).

At 1315 Comcrudiv 8 directed Batdiv 3, Crudiv 8, and NAGARA to carry out air searches in the northeast quadrant to a radius of 180 miles. Commander Batdiv 3 reported that he had sent out three planes at 1300 to carry out searches from 340° to 040° to a distance of 180 miles. Why Combatdiv 3 initiated this action is not

clear, as Comcrudiv 8 appears to have been the next senior in command after Commander Mobile Force. However, the HARUNA search area contributed its share to the desired search of the northeast quadrant.

As an indication of the accuracy of some of the Japanese intelligence provided by its search planes, it is of interest to note that at 1320 CHIKUMA's plane #5 reported four large enemy cruisers had been detached and were proceeding on course 278°, speed 24 knots. This report was generally correct. Actually, two cruisers and two destroyers were en route from TF 16 to reinforce TF 17 and the damaged YORKTOWN.

At 1331 the HIRYU launched her second air attack against the YORKTOWN. The strike leader was the same one who had led the attack on Midway about 9 hours earlier. The group consisted of ten torpedo planes and six fighters from the HIRYU and was directed against the American carrier force reportedly bearing 080°, distant 90 miles from the Mobile Force at 1240.** Diagram D-4 shows that the American carrier force was sufficiently close to this position to make interception a simple matter.

During this time the Japanese forces were carrying out CinC Combined Fleet's orders to prepare for action with the enemy. The Main Group was heading towards the Mobile Force; the Aleutian Support Group had changed course to rejoin the Main Group; the Second Fleet was rapidly approaching the rendezvous with the Mobile Force; and Crudiv 7 was steaming at high speed towards Midway to bombard the island installations during the night. The transports and seaplane tenders were retiring to the northwest, while the submarines were presumably taking station on dispersal lines "HEI".

At 1359 the SORYU was making steerageway and endeavoring to extinguish the fires caused by the American dive bomber attack. Fires were apparently under control. At that time she was hit by two or three torpedoes fired by a submarine. This submarine was the NAUTILUS.

The HIRYU's planes attacked the YORKTOWN a second time at 1441. It was not clear to the Japanese whether they had hit the same carrier in both attacks or had hit different carriers. This is understandable, since shortly after the YORKTOWN was hit by bombs, she brought the fires under control. When the second Japanese air attack came in, the YORKTOWN was making 17 knots into the wind, and was launching planes. In making this second attack the HIRYU strike group lost five torpedo planes and three fighters.* The Strike leader notified Commander Mobile Force at 1445 as follows: "I carried out torpedo attack against an enemy carrier and saw two certain hits." This report was correct, and shows the accuracy of this air group commander's observation and evaluation.

At this same time one of the YORKTOWN search planes which had started its search at 1150, sighted the Mobile Force, and made a complete contact report accurate in all details except position. The reported position was about 42 miles bearing 276 degrees from its actual position. This is shown on Diagram "D-4".

*Midway Operation CVL HIRYU Extract Translation Doc.No.160985B, p.22

**Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, pp.48-49.

Although the Japanese reports do not state that the Japanese were aware of the above sighting, nevertheless, Commander Mobile Force appears to have taken all possible precautions for anti-aircraft defense. He ordered Batdiv 3 and Crudiv 8 to take stations to the northwest and southeast of the HIRYU, respectively, and to make the distance between ships long for the enemy,* i.e., to make the distance between the HIRYU and her screening units long, so that the enemy planes would be under fire for a longer time during the approaches.

Why Commander Mobile Force directed this broad disposition is obscure, for broad dispositions of this nature have a possible defect in that the distance from the screens to the carriers may be so great as to permit a determined attack to avoid the screen and still have time to re-orient itself against the carrier target. Perhaps he was obsessed by a fear of torpedoes; perhaps he hoped to have his heavy ships in the direction of enemy attack, whether by torpedo plane or dive bomber. In this connection, it must be remembered that during the devastating attacks earlier in the day on the Mobile Force, the first group of dive bombers had approached from the northwest, but circled the formation to initiate attack from out of the sun; whereas the other dive bombers had made their approach from the southeast and also attacked from out of the sun. The torpedo planes had approached and attacked from the southeast.

At 1531 Comcardiv 2 advised Commander Mobile Force that he intended to make a dusk air attack with his entire remaining airplanes consisting of five bombers, five torpedo planes and ten fighters. At this same time, Commander Mobile Force, who was still uncertain as to the number and types of ships of the American carrier forces, directed Comorudiv 8 to, "Ascertain the main units in the large enemy force."**

At 1550 TONE plane #4, which had been relaunched on a patrol mission, reported "Enemy is composed of two carriers which are accompanied by two destroyers."

At 1615 Commander Mobile Force was informed by Comcardiv 2 that his flyers reported the enemy to be composed of three carriers, five large cruisers and fifteen destroyers, and that own attacks had damaged two of these carriers.

At 1617 TONE's plane #3 reported that the enemy at 1545 was on course 120°, speed 24 knots.

At 1620 an American flying boat was sighted. This indicated to the Japanese that they were being shadowed by planes from Midway.

At 1632 Comorudiv 8 radioed his planes that he would be on course 315 degrees, speed 28 knots from 1600.

At 1630 Commander Mobile Force notified the Mobile Force that he would endeavor to maintain contact with the main force of the enemy that night, and that Batdiv 3 and Crudiv 8 would be prepared to make dawn searches in the morning. At the same time he changed course to due west.**

*Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #8, ONI Review, May 1947, p.29
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At 1650 Comorudiv 8 advised the Mobile Force that an evaluation of contact reports indicated that the large enemy force was apparently composed of two carriers, six large cruisers and about eight destroyers. At the same time Commander Mobile Force directed the NAMIKAZE and ISOKAZE to screen the damaged SORYU, and to retire to the northwest.

One minute later, Commander Mobile Force changed the course of the Mobile Force to 120 degrees, speed 24 knots. This appears to have been to permit the HIRYU to launch her attack groups. When first sighted by the planes of the ENTERPRISE and the HORNET, which were approaching to attack the Mobile Force, the HIRYU was commencing to launch planes. At 1701 the American planes were sighted by the CHIKUMA directly over the HIRYU. The HIRYU opened fire immediately. The TONE and CHIKUMA, indicating poor fire discipline, did not open fire until 4 minutes later. The Mobile Force, with the exception of the HIRYU, appears to have been caught by surprise. The HIRYU reports being hit by 4 bombs. The Japanese stated that these carrier attacks on the Mobile Force continued until 1746. During these attacks the CHIKUMA reports 16 near misses from horizontal bombers at 1732, 1745, and 1810.*

At 1728 CHIKUMA's #2 plane reported to Commander Mobile Force, "The enemy is retiring to the east. Enemy's course 70°, speed 20 knots."

About this time Commander Combined Fleet appears to have decided that it was unnecessary to cancel the Aleutian operation and that although the situation in the Midway area was bad, it could not seriously affect the Aleutian operations at this time. He therefore decided to go ahead with the Aleutian operation, and sent a despatch relating thereto. This despatch, addressed to all fleet commanders and all Division Commanders, stated, "1. Commander Northern Force will carry out the occupation of the Aleutians at opportune time. 2. Desron 1 (less two destroyer divisions) and Subron 1 are restored to the Northern Force."** About the time this message was sent out, Commander Mobile Force informed CinC Combined Fleet, "HIRYU burning as a result of bomb hit." What the reactions of CinC Combined Fleet were upon the receipt of this despatch, can be readily imagined, for he had now lost, at least temporarily, all of the carrier strength of the Mobile Force.

At 1750 the destroyer MAIKAZE notified Commander Mobile Force that the KAGA was inoperational, and all survivors had been taken on board destroyers.

At 1810 the CHIKUMA #2 plane reported to Commander Mobile Force that the enemy consisted of one carrier, two cruisers, and four destroyers, in position bearing 95 degrees, distant 105 miles from his take-off point. He reported this force on course 170°.

At 1815 Commander Mobile Force intercepted a message to CinC Combined Fleet from Commander Northern Force which stated that, with the exception of the Second Mobile Task Group, the Aleutian operation will be carried out as scheduled with no change in M-day.***

*Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.60.

**Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 187-Mobile Force Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.33.

***Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.34

At 1915 the destroyer HAMAKAZE reported to Commander Mobile Force that the SORYU had sunk. At the same time CinC Combined Fleet directed his command by despatch as follows, "1. The enemy fleet which has practically been destroyed is retiring to the east. 2. Combined Fleet units in the vicinity are preparing to pursue the remnants and at the same time occupy Midway. The Main Unit is scheduled to reach position Lat. 32°-10' N., Long. 175°-45' E, on course 90°, speed 20 knots by 0300, 5th. The Mobile Force, Second Fleet and Submarine Force will immediately contact and attack the enemy."* This is a remarkable message, and indicates that CinC Combined Fleet must have been confused in his evaluations of his information, for, if his fondest hopes were correct, he had disabled only two of the three American carriers and none of their supporting ships, whereas the carriers of his Mobile Force were all disabled or sunk. Perhaps he thought that the reports of the enemy retiring to the east were an indication that the enemy was in poorer shape than had been reported; perhaps he underestimated the combatant qualities of the American Commander. Whatever it was, CinC Combined Fleet was determined to seize the advantage during the night. He apparently realized that to abandon the offensive state of mind is to forewear victory.

At 1925 the KAGA blew up and sank in Lat. 30°-23' N., Long. 179°-17' W. as a result of fuel tank explosions induced by the bombing she had undergone.

At 1942 Comcrudiv 8 advised Commander Mobile Force that the enemy force of six large cruisers and two carriers was at 1900 in position bearing 100°, distant 200 miles from the Mobile Force and was steaming southeast.

At 2030 Commander Mobile Force intercepted the following despatch from CinC Combined Fleet to Submarine I-168, Comcrudiv 8, info Comcrudiv 7: "Submarine I-168 will shell and destroy enemy air base on Midway until 0200. Crudiv 7 will carry on after 0200."**

At 2100 Commander Mobile Force was advised by the destroyer MANTIGUMO that the HIRYU could make 28 knots. This seems doubtful, as the HIRYU at this time was burning with raging fires.

During this time Commander Mobile Force reconsidered his situation, after which he sent a message to CinC Combined Fleet which must have been most confusing to that officer. In this estimate sent at 2130 he became befuddled in his evaluation of his search plane reports, for his message stated: "The total strength of the enemy is five carriers, six cruisers, and fifteen destroyers. These are steaming westward and were in the vicinity of position Lat. 30°-57' N. Long. 176°-17' W. at 1830. We are offering protection to the HIRYU and are retiring to the northwest at 18 knots. Our 2130 position is Lat. 31°-30' N., Long. 179°-50' E." He overestimated the number of American carriers, and he determined that they were steaming in a westerly direction when his reports indicated that

*Combined Fleet Despatch to 168 Mobile Force Battle Report #6,ONI Review,May 1947,p.36.
** " " " " 159 Mobile Force Battle Report #6,ONI Review,May 1947,p.36.

they were steaming east and southeast. Why he became so confused is not clear. Perhaps he had not received all of the latest reports. Perhaps the shock of having all four of his carriers heavily damaged, one of which was his flagship, temporarily affected his judgment and revealed a weakness in his military character.

Not receiving any change in plan from CinC Combined Fleet, and believing the CinC had made an erroneous estimate of enemy strength, he sent an additional message at 2250 referring to Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 158; stating, "There still exists four enemy carriers (may include auxiliary carriers), six cruisers and sixteen destroyers. These are steaming westward. None of our carriers are operational. We plan to contact the enemy with float recon planes tomorrow morning."

Five minutes later, at 2255, CinC Combined Fleet issued a directive to Commander Mobile Force and Commander Second Fleet stating, "CinC 2nd Fleet will take command of the Mobile Force (excepting the HIRYU, AKAGI and the ships escorting them)". CinC Combined Fleet had evidently planned to employ the Mobile Force as a striking force. Now, with no operational carriers in the Mobile Force, it became a surface force without carriers which should be attached to some other commander. The logical commander was Commander Second Fleet. On the other hand, a controlling factor may have been CinC Combined Fleet's irritation at Commander Mobile Force, who was not in an offensive frame of mind. Commander Mobile Force appeared to believe that he should not engage in a night action. His surface ship commanders were more anxious than he to get into battle. The Commanding Officer of the KIRISHIMA signalled to Comcrudiv 8 at 2320 stating that he thought that they should participate in the night action, or in the morning's action, either with or independently of the Second Fleet.

Commander Second Fleet, after receiving Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 160 giving him command of the Mobile Force, issued the following despatch: "1. The Main Unit of the 2nd Fleet plans to be in position Lat. 31° N., Long. 178°-57 W. by 0300, 5th. Thereafter it plans to search for the enemy to the east and participate in a night engagement in accordance with Mobile Force Secret Despatch 56C. 2. The Mobile Force (less HIRYU, AKAGI, and their escorts) will immediately turn about and participate in the 2nd Fleet's night engagement." He followed this despatch 20 minutes later with another despatch: "1. Expect to encounter the enemy some time after 2200. 2. Search disposition from right to left Desron 2, Crudiv 5, Crudiv 4 and Desron 4 spacing 8 kilometers. Batdiv 3 will assume position approximately 10 kilometers behind Crudiv 4. Course 65°, speed 24 knots. (Note. This reference to Batdiv 3 refers to the 1st section of that Batdiv consisting of the KONGO and HIEI, and not to the second section, the HARUNA and KIRISHIMA, already with the Mobile Force). 3. The Mobile Force will participate in the night engagement from the north."

Here then we have the genesis of the Japanese plan for night action as conceived by Commander Second Fleet. This plan probably would have located the American Striking Force had that force continued to the westward instead of retiring to the eastward. A night action might have ensued, which was what the Japanese desired, and which, had it been successful, would have clearly given the

*Mobile Force Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, pp.37,38.

Japanese command of the sea in the Midway area. The forces which might have been engaged in a night action at this time were: the carriers ENTERPRISE and HORNET, the heavy cruisers NORTHAMPTON, VINCENNES, PENSACOLA, MINNEAPOLIS, NEW ORLEANS, ASTORIA, PORTLAND, the light cruiser ATLANTA, the destroyers WORDEN, MONAGHAN, AYLWIN, PHELPS, BALCH, CONYNGHAN, BENHAM, ELLET, MAURY, MORRIS, RUSSELL, HAMMANN, ANDERSON, and HUGHES; a total of two CV, seven CA, one CL, fourteen DD. The Japanese could oppose this force with the fast battleships HARUNA, KIRISHIMA, KONGO, and Hiei; the heavy cruisers, TONE, CHIKUMA, ATAGO, CHOKAI, HAGURO, MYOKO, the light cruisers NAGARA, JINTSU, YURA, the destroyers YUDACHI, MURASAME, HARUSAME, SAMIDARE, ASAGUMO, URAKAZE, TAMIKAZE, MINEGUMO, NATSUGUMO, HATSAKAZE, YUKIKAZE, AMATSUKAZE, TOKITSUKAZE, KAZABUMO, AKIGUMO, KASUMI, ARARE, KAGERO and SHIRANUHI; a total of four BB, six CA, three CL and nineteen DD. These forces would have been evenly matched had not the aircraft carriers been in the American disposition and the four battleships in the Japanese disposition. This difference in composition heavily favored the Japanese, as it gave them much greater fire power and full freedom of action. At the same time it seriously restricted freedom of action of the Americans, who would be forced to remain near their carriers unless they were able to retire them at high speed to the eastward on first radar contact. On the other hand, the Americans had in their search type radars which were installed on some of their ships, a new instrument of extraordinary value for taking ranges and bearings. This the Japanese did not have. It might be used effectively to avoid action. However, it was still in its infancy, its reliability and correct employment had not been fully determined and American forces were not trained for night radar fighting.

Commander Mobile Force does not appear to have acted immediately on these orders. He had previously determined that the enemy was over 100 miles away. He decided that, since his destroyers were with the damaged carriers and as he was not in contact with the enemy, he probably could not regain contact with them after nightfall.*

He apparently felt that a night attack on the enemy was almost out of the question. At 2400 he was on a westerly course bearing 337° (T), distant 222 miles from Midway.

Operations of Other Japanese Task Forces and Groups
0000-2400 June 4th

CinC Combined Fleet in the Main Group continued on course 095, speed 15 knots toward Midway from his midnight June 3rd position. At 1200 he changed course to 120° (T), speed 20 knots and headed towards the battle area. At 2400 he was in position Lat. 32°-40' N., Long. 174°-45' E. bearing 303° (T), distant 479 miles from Midway.

The Aleutian Support Force continued on towards its deployment. At 1200 June 4th, apparently in obedience to orders from CinC Combined Fleet, it changed course to the southeast to rejoin the Main Group. It did not succeed in rejoining on the 4th. Its possible position at 2400 is as shown in Diagram "D".

*Mobile Force Battle Report #8, ONI Review, May 1947, p.14.

2. Depending on circumstances, CruDiv 5 and Desron 2 (or Desron 4) may be detached.
3. Torpedo depth setting will be 4 meters.
4. Position indicator method #4 will be employed with ATAGO's position at time of rendezvous as the point of origin."*

At 1915 he received orders from CinC Combined Fleet that the Second Fleet, the Mobile Force, and the Submarine Force were immediately to contact and attack the enemy.** At 2255, as he was hastening towards the Mobile Force, he received orders to take command of that force.*** Therefore, at 2340, he notified all commanders that by 0300, June 5th, he would be in position Lat. 31° N., Long. 178°-57' W., that he planned to fight a night battle, and that the Mobile Force was directed to turn about immediately and participate in the night engagement. Twenty minutes later he sent out a dispatch stationing his forces for the night action, giving the search disposition and directing the Mobile Force to attack from the north.

The Second Fleet was in a position at 2400 bearing 324°, distant 200 miles from Midway and was on course 065, speed 20 knots.

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At 0000 June 4th the Transport Group of the Midway Occupation Force continued on course 081° (T), speed 12 knots. At 0210 it was alerted by American PBY planes from Midway making a night torpedo attack. It appears that the transports and supply ships were in two columns, with the light cruiser JINTSU and the destroyers in a close semi-circular anti-submarine screen. In addition, there seems to have been one destroyer ahead of each column, and a single destroyer between both columns astern. Several patrol boats were also stationed in the disposition.

Due to the lack of radar on the Japanese ships the major portion of the PBY attack was over before the Japanese became alerted to the fact they were being attacked. The American attack commenced at about 0143 when the first torpedo was dropped. The transport group maneuvered, but too late to avoid successful attack. The AKEBONO MARU, an oiler, which was the last large ship of the left hand or northern column, was torpedoed in the bow by one torpedo during the action. She was selected as the target since she presented the largest silhouette. However, the damage from the hit was slight, and the AKEBONO MARU was able to continue in the disposition. Some of the transports report being strafed by the PBY's with little effect.

The Transport Group continued on towards Midway until 1340 when it changed course to 310°, speed 12 knots, to retire to the northwest in obedience to orders received from CinC Combined Fleet. These orders, which were delayed in receipt

*Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #8, ONI Review, May 1947, p.34
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until 1300, had been issued at 1220, and provided that the Midway Occupation Force, less the Second Fleet, would provide escorts for the transports and would retire to the northwest.* Also, at 1300 Commander Occupation Force directed the Escort Unit (a newly formed unit composed of Desdiv 15 (3DD), the Transport Group, and the Seaplane Group to retire immediately to the northwest.** This message was executed at 1415.

Accordingly, Commander Close Screen with his flagship, JINTSU, and Desdivs 16 and 18 (8 DD) departed from the transports at 1415 in a north-easterly direction at high speed to join the Second Fleet Group. The Escort Unit, which remained behind to screen the Transport Group, was an extremely weak screen against submarines and an ineffective screen against aircraft. Why, then, was such a poor screen provided? Probably the CinC Combined Fleet, having suffered heavily in the loss of many aircraft and carriers, was now satisfied that the major portion of the American surface forces were with their carriers north of Midway, and that there were few, if any, additional American surface forces in the Midway area. Presumably, he felt that the only way remaining to achieve victory lay in a night attack on the American forces, and that insofar as his disposition permitted, all forces should be thrown into battle in mutual support rather than in a piecemeal fashion. Although desirable, this was not feasible, since his forces were too far apart to permit rapid concentration before about 0900 the next morning. He therefore arranged for the concentration of such forces as would be able to deliver a night attack. He knew that the position of his transports was known to the enemy but this did not particularly concern him, as he felt that Midway was destroyed as an effective air base, and he appears to have felt little concern over the probability of submarine attack at that time.

The Transport Group and its escorts effected a rendezvous at 1930 with the Commander Seaplane Group in the CHITOSE accompanied by the HAYASHIO. At 2400 they were in Lat. 28°-40' N., Long. 174°-15' E.

* * *

The Close Screen (JINTSU and Desron 2) which was en route to join the Second Fleet was in Lat. 29°-55' N., Long. 179°-20' E.

* * *

The Seaplane Group at 0000 June 4th was about 50 miles ahead of the Transport Group steaming on a parallel course at 16-17 knots en route to Kure Island. This group employed its tender based seaplanes for reconnaissance A/S patrol and air cover. The KAMIKAWA MARU maintained one patrol plane in the vicinity of the Seaplane Group, and conducted a search ahead by another patrol plane. This latter plane advanced to the maximum distance possible permitting its returning to its tender by 1530.

*Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.26.

**Records of Converted Seaplane Tender KAMIKAWA MARU, WDC 160682, p.7.

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The Minesweeping Group Section I of the Midway Occupation Force, the TAMA MARUs 3 and 5, continued on course 060, speed 8 knots throughout the night of June 3rd en route to Midway. At 1210 this section while in position Lat. 26°-15' N., Long. 177°-23' E. intercepted a dispatch from Comcrudiv 8 to CinC Combined Fleet indicating a battle off Midway. Anticipating instructions, these ships reversed course and proceeded at slow speed awaiting orders. At 1332, having received orders from Commander Close Screen (Comdesron 2), to return to Wake, they increased speed to 8 knots and proceeded in that direction. At 2400 they were in position Lat. 25°-50' N., Long 173°-55' E.

* * *

The Close Support Group (SUZUYA, KUMANO, MIKUMA, MOGAMI and 4 DD's) continued toward Midway from a position about 100 miles ahead of the Transport Group. In compliance with orders from the CinC Combined Fleet issued at 1310, the Commander Second Fleet directed Commander Close Support Group to "Shell and destroy enemy air bases on Midway."* Thirty minutes later, when the Transport Group commenced retiring to the northwest and Commander Close Screen continued to close Midway, they became separated. The 1915 directive issued by CinC Combined Fleet instructed the Second Fleet, the Submarines, and the remnants of the Mobile Force to contact and attack the enemy task force. This directive especially excepted Crudiv 7, which continued toward Midway. One hour and fifteen minutes later CinC Combined Fleet directed: "Submarine I-168 will shell and destroy the enemy air base on Midway until 0200. Crudiv 7 will carry on after 0200."**

CinC Combined Fleet apparently considered the threat of air attack on his forces on the following morning. He planned to destroy the enemy carrier task force in a night engagement. He seems to have felt that while it might be possible for the enemy carriers to evade him by retiring to the eastward, he could at least reduce to impotency the enemy air strength on Midway by gunfire. It is interesting to note that these same tactics were employed by the American 5th Fleet, one and one half year later, in its operations in the Marshall Islands.

* * *

SUBMARINES JUNE 4th

The submarines in the vicinity of Midway continued scouting and reconnaissance assignments on the 4th in accordance with the basic plan. It was immediately apparent to the CinC Combined Fleet that, in view of the surprise effected by the American carrier task forces in their attack on the carriers of the Mobile Force, his submarines were now out of position. Consequently, at 1220 he directed by dispatch Submarine Force Three (4 SS on the KO line, see Diagram "B") and Submarine Force Five (7 SS on the OTSU line) to proceed

*Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 156-Mobile Force Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.27

**Mobile Force Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.36.

toward the "HEI" line of deployment, and to attack the enemy task force. In accordance with this directive these units proceeded in a northwesterly direction during the remainder of the day.

The movements of the three submarines of Submarine Division 13 are vague. The Japanese submarine plan provided that upon completion of the second "X" operation (servicing by submarines of Japanese patrol aircraft staging through French Frigate Shoals and Laysan Island for an attack on Oahu) the I-121 and I-123 would take station on the "OTSU" scouting line north of French Frigate Shoals. The I-122 would, at the same time, take station 60 miles north of Laysan Island. During the afternoon of June 4th the Cinc Combined Fleet modified this directive and ordered these submarines to proceed to positions to the south of Laysan Island "because of the need of guarding the south of the archipelago."* However, available information indicates that the I-121, 122 and 123 had already, apparently on their own initiative, proceeded in this direction. They joined up south of Laysan Island during the 4th and scouted westward in a line throughout that day. These ships had no torpedoes, their removal having been necessitated in order to provide storage for the aviation gasoline and oil required for servicing the long range patrol aircraft.

OPERATIONS AT MIDWAY
(American)

0000 June 4th to 0945 June 4th

The four patrol planes which had been launched from Midway at 2115 to attack the Japanese Occupation Force continued toward their objective. At 0115 June 4th, at a distance of 560 miles from Midway, radar contact was made, and at 0120 sight contact was made on a group of transports. The group commander decided to attack up-moon. During the approach the four planes became separated. Three planes made individual attacks dropping one torpedo each; the fourth was unable to reach the target. The silhouettes of the larger enemy ships were plainly visible in the moonlight. There were no carriers or battleships sighted in the formation, so an attempt was made to attack the transports. The leading plane dropped at 0143, the other two planes followed. Two hits were claimed, one on a tanker. Actually, but one hit was made, and that was on a tanker. The fourth pilot stated that he had located the target screen, but had been driven off by gunfire and by an unidentified aircraft which made passes at his plane. Although information from Japanese sources is not complete, there appears to be enough information to indicate that there is little probability that any night fighters were employed by the Japanese in this case.

This attack by the four patrol planes demonstrated for the first time the practicability of using long range shore based aircraft, when radar equipped, to deliver unsupported night torpedo attacks or low altitude bombing attacks

*Sixth Fleet War Diary, 1-30 June 1942, p.3 of translation.

against ships.

Meanwhile, Midway was alert to a Japanese attack. CNAS Midway had long estimated that the Japanese planes would launch their attack at dawn and would strike Midway at about 0600. He therefore launched fighters at 0355 to cover the dawn take-off. Once these fighters were on station he dispatched at about 0415 the usual search group of 22 PBY's to search through an arc of from 200° (T) to 020° (T) for the enemy carrier force. He reduced the radius of search, however, from 700 to 425 miles, but he added the proviso that all contacts were to be fully reported, and that the search of 425 miles must be completed unless four enemy carriers were located earlier. He also directed that the PBY's were then to rendezvous at Laysan and Lisianski Islands, and there await orders. CNAS Midway did not desire these PBY's to return to Midway, as their presence there would merely invite their destruction.

Upon the departure of the search group from Midway, sixteen B-17's took off immediately in order to be airborne during the probable time of the expected Japanese attack. Since they could not be landed until their load had been lightened by the consumption of gasoline, CNAS Midway directed them to attack the enemy group to the westward (the Japanese Occupation Force). He cautioned them to be on the alert for a change of orders should the enemy carrier force be discovered in the northwest.

During this time the 27 Marine VSB's armed with bombs, and the 4 Army B-26's and the 6 Navy TBF's each armed with one torpedo were manned, their engines were warmed up, and their radios were energized in order to permit the pilots to receive timely instructions. All but two of the fighters which had covered the dawn take-offs were landed by 0500.

At 0520 PBY, 4V58, reported, "aircraft sighted." At 0530 the same plane reported a carrier bearing 320° (T), distant 180 miles. This was the first report of an enemy carrier. As a result of this contact, all remaining aircraft crews were alerted and ordered to stand by in their assigned aircraft with the engines turning up and radios on. This was accomplished by 0645. At this same time PBY 3V58 reported in plain English, "Many planes heading Midway bearing 320°, distant 180." At 0552 PBY 4V58 sent an amplifying report stating, "2 CV and Main Body ships, carriers in front, course 135, speed 25." PBY 3V58 reported, "Many planes heading Midway, course 135, speed 25, bearing 320°, distant 180." This latter message is evidently in error. What must have been meant was "many ships" rather than "many planes", but the message does not seem to have caused confusion.

At 0553 the Midway radar picked up the Japanese air attack groups approaching Midway, and reported to CNAS Midway, "Many bogey aircraft 95 miles, 310 degrees, altitude 11,000." CNAS Midway immediately ordered the air raid siren sounded, and the planes began to take off. By 0615 the field was clear of all flyable aircraft except for two VF which had returned late from the early morning flight. These were partially refueled and cleared by 0625.

All of the planes which flew off the Midway fields just prior to the raid were directed to attack the Japanese carriers, excepting the fighters which were ordered to defend Midway. At this time there were twenty-four fighters in the air.

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The fighter director at Midway broke up his fighters into two groups, one of three divisions composed of eight F2A-3 and three F4F-3, the other of two divisions of twelve F2A-3 and one F4F-3. At 0605 he vectored the first group of eleven fighters against the reported enemy planes. Only ten fighters actually went with this group, as one landed at 0620 with engine trouble. This group made contact on the enemy air attack force at 0615 on bearing 320°, distant about 30 miles from Midway. The fighter director officer then, at 0625, vectored the remaining thirteen fighters into action. Also at 0625 the two fighters which had landed to refuel, took off partially refueled and acted thereafter as a separate unit.

These fighters discovered that the Japanese bombers were in a rigid vee formation with three division vees of from seven to nine planes in each separate formation. The bombers were escorted by thirty-six fighters. They made their first attack on the bomber formation unopposed by the escorting fighters but, after that, they were heavily attacked, outnumbered, and outmaneuvered. They estimated that the Japanese fighters had been escorting the bombers at about 14,000 feet. The American fighters came in on a high level, 17,000 feet. The American fighter pilots reported, "All VMF pilots of various degrees of experience and capability were awed by the performance of the Japanese fighter (OO 1 Sento K1) claiming that it had 20% more speed climb and maneuverability than does the F2A-3 or F4F-3." As a result of this attack, the Marine fighters stated that they believed that they had destroyed twenty-three Japanese bombers and eight fighters not including the damaged planes. In return, they reported having lost twelve F2A-3 and two F4F-3 fighters with five F2A-3 and two F4F-3 fighters heavily damaged.

* * *

The leader of the six torpedo planes of Torpedo Squadron 8 detachment on Midway took departure at about 0600 and proceeded toward the enemy carrier force. He steered course 320° (T) at an air speed of 160 knots, and at an altitude of 2000 feet. He formed his six planes into three 2-plane sections. A few minutes after departure his group was attacked by Japanese fighters which appeared to be the vanguard of the Japanese air attack group heading for Midway.

The leader then increased the altitude to 4,000 feet above the cloud level. He was not troubled by any more enemy planes until the Mobile Force was sighted about 15 miles away. Then his group was attacked by a large number of enemy fighters. The formation at 0705 dived at full throttle through the clouds to 150 feet and headed for the carriers. Five of the six planes including that of the flight leader were shot down. No information is available concerning the details of this attack. However, it appears that but one torpedo was dropped against the enemy. Only one torpedo plane returned to Midway. It was badly shot up.* This abortive attack made no hits.**

* * *

*Executive Officer's Report Marine Air Group Twenty-two, Battle of Midway, June 7, 1942, p.10.

**Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #8, ONI Review, May 1947 pp.55-61 incl.

At 0615 the leader of the B-26 group of four B-26's was directed to attack enemy carriers bearing 320° (T), distant 180 miles from Midway. He immediately took off with his group. Departure from Midway was taken at 0625. He steered an interception course and sighted the enemy at 0705, or at about the same time that the torpedo planes of Torpedo Squadron 8 were attacking. The leader of the B-26 group made a quick study of the enemy disposition, and then changed course in order to pass through the enemy screening vessels with minimum damage from anti-aircraft fire.

At about this time the six torpedo planes were sighted making their approach from the right and across the path of the B-26 planes. Meanwhile, the B-26 planes ran into heavy anti-aircraft fire from the Japanese outer screen. They succeeded in avoiding this fire without casualty, but immediately ran into six enemy fighters, head on, at 700 feet. The leader dove to 200 feet, which is correct evasive tactics for torpedo planes. It was at this time he believes that he lost two of his four planes.

He continued on and closed the selected carrier. When 800 yards from this carrier and at an altitude of 220 feet and a speed of 210 MPH, two of his planes released their torpedoes from a direction about 20° on the bow.* No hits were made.** These planes then commenced their retirement and were heavily attacked by Japanese "Zero" fighters for about 15 minutes, after which time they succeeded in reaching cloud cover. The leader reported that his B-26's had operated unsatisfactorily throughout the action due to guns jamming. The two planes which finally reached Midway were so badly shot up as to be unserviceable.

This was an historic event, as it was apparently the first time in history that Army planes had attacked with torpedoes.

* * *

The dive bomber group, consisting of sixteen SBD-2 and eleven SB2U-3 planes of VMSB Squadron 241 each armed with one 500-pound bomb, after launching, proceeded to its prearranged rendezvous about 20 miles east of Midway. At about 0645 this group was directed by both voice and CW transmission to attack the enemy carrier bearing 320° (T), distant 180 miles from Midway, then on course 145° (T), speed 25 knots. The squadron took departure and climbed for altitude.

Commander VMSB 241 realized that the directive under which the group was operating divided the 28 planes of the squadron into three attack units, which were to make coordinated attacks. Such a plan was sound for trained pilots. However, he also realized that as a large portion of his pilots were new and untrained in group tactics, the plan was of doubtful value. He therefore decided to modify the directive by dividing the dive bombers into two units, one

*Action Report 69th Bomb Squadron (M) dated June 6th, 1942 signed James F. Collins, Jr., Capt. (AC)

**Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, pp. 85-81 Incl.

composed of trained pilots, the other composed for the most part of untrained pilots, but led by experienced pilots. By doing this he hoped to maintain, in at least one of the two attack units, the teamwork of the squadron which had already been developed through training.

As has been pointed out earlier, Commander VMSB 241 decided to make an attack from 4,000 feet with a release point below 500 feet employing glide bombing technique instead of dive bombing from high altitudes.* In making this decision he realized that a dive bombing attack is much more effective than a glide bombing attack if the pilots are trained. However, he felt that this change was necessary for the following reasons:

(1) The SB2U-3 were nearing obsolescence and had been restricted to speeds less than those obtained in a properly executed dive bombing attack. Consequently, they had only been employed in practice for glide bombing. Although the speed limitation would probably not obtain in battle, it is not wise to train for one type of attack and then, when battle appears, to discard that for another type of attack.

(2) The SBD-2 planes had been received but one week earlier (26 May). This fact, coupled with the necessity to conserve gasoline, had permitted only a one-hour familiarisation flight by the pilots of these planes and no training in dive bombing.

(3) Only three pilots had previously flown the SBD plane.*

The two bomber units proceeded independently towards the enemy. Why Commander VMSB 241 permitted this situation to develop is not clear, but it is possible that he may have felt that since he was not accompanied by a fighter escort, he might have a better opportunity of getting past the enemy fighters with two groups operating separately rather than with one concentrated group. Whatever may have been the reason, it did not prove effective, for instead of making a coordinated attack the two units attacked about one half hour apart.

Commander VMSB-241 led the dive bombers. He sighted the Japanese Mobile Force at 0755 and began a high speed approach. His planes were immediately attacked by swarms of fighters which concentrated on the formation leaders. As a result of this attack Commander VMSB-241 was shot down. The squadron continued the attack and encountered heavy anti-aircraft fire. The leader of the second section assumed command and selected a large carrier which was taking violent evasive action as the target. He made a glide attack through the heavy clouds which partially screened the carrier. He emerged from the clouds at about 2000 feet and found himself under heavy small caliber fire. He pressed home the attack with his unit, which dropped fifteen 500-pound bombs. Although the leader claimed two direct hits and two close misses on the carrier, Japanese reports state no hits were made in this attack.** He retired his unit under persistent attack by enemy fighters, employing cloud cover in the retirement. Eight of the sixteen dive bombers which composed this unit failed to return. Of the eight which returned, two were so badly shot up as to be inoperative, leaving six for future operations.

*Report of activities of VMSB 241 during June 4th and June 5th, 1942, Battle of Midway dated June 12th, 1942.

**Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #8, ONI Review, May 1947, Dispatch #837 timed 1000 from Commander Mobile Force to CincO Combined Fleet, page 22; statement of bomb hits in AKAGI at 1026 page 23 and Enemy Action and Damage suffered by us AKAGI page 55.

The leader of the SB2U unit sighted the enemy force at 0820 from an altitude of 13,000 feet and proceeded to an attack position. He looked for a carrier; however, his formation was so heavily attacked by defending Japanese fighters that in order to attack at all, he had to commence his dive immediately. He saw a battleship, which appears to have been the HARUNA.

He employed glide bombing technique, and attacked through heavy anti-aircraft fire from the battleship and other supporting ships and dropped eleven 500-pound bombs. His formation was under constant harassment from enemy fighters, which attacked his planes throughout their dives and for a considerable distance thereafter. The leader of the SB2U-3 unit claimed two direct hits on the battleship. Actually, all bombs missed. Four of the twelve planes which composed this unit failed to return. Of the eight which returned, three were so badly shot up as to be inoperative, leaving five for future operations.

* * *

At 0600, and when about 200 miles west of Midway en route to attack the Japanese Occupation Force, the leader of the B-17 group received a message in plain English changing his target from the Occupation Force to the enemy carriers. The message gave the composition, location, course and speed of the enemy carrier force. He therefore altered the course of his formation to an interception course with that force and began climbing for altitude. His group at this time consisted of fourteen B-17's. Ten were armed with eight 500-pound bombs and four with 600-pound bombs fused for 1/10 second delay. While sixteen B-17's took off initially, two must have returned to the field for some unknown reason.

At 0732 he sighted the enemy task force, and at 0810 he was able to distinguish the carriers. He gave the order to attack.

This attack was made in elements of three planes from altitudes varying from 20,000 to 23,000 feet. Although a few Japanese fighters appeared, they did not interfere with the attacks, and the anti-aircraft fire from the Japanese carrier force was generally behind and inaccurate. After the attack, the leader claimed at least five hits, two probable hits and nine near misses on aircraft carriers.* Again no hits were made according to the Japanese records.**

All B-17 planes landed at Midway by 0945.

* * *

This completed the morning air attacks made by the Midway planes. It embraced attacks by SBD-3, SB2U-3, B17, TBF, and B-26 planes. It will be noted that all attacks made on the Japanese Mobile Force by these planes

*Hdq. 7th Air Force ltr. dated 17 July 1942, subj. Operational Report, Air Force Employment at Midway, p.2.

**Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #8, ONI Review, May 1947, pp.55-61 incl. (Note particularly SORYU)

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were entirely unsupported by fighter planes, and that all attacks were made independently and without any attempt at coordination. There appears to have been no plan for coordination of the attacks, and no Air Group Strike Commander appointed to coordinate such attacks. The fact that the TBF's and the B-26's hit the Mobile Force simultaneously, appears to have been purely a fortuitous circumstance.

It will also be noted that most, if not all, of the torpedo planes which were lost were shot down by Japanese fighters. The heavy losses sustained in this manner by the torpedo planes were due in a large part to the lack of fighter support and served to support the belief, then gaining strength among the American commanders, that air strikes as well as naval surface or even land operations, were dependent for success on local air superiority.

JAPANESE AIR ATTACKS ON MIDWAY
0638-0655 June 4th

Prior to the above attacks by Midway planes on the Japanese Mobile Force and to the attack on Midway by the Japanese aircraft, CNAS Midway was making every effort to prepare Midway for the expected attack. His principal worry had been to insure that the airfield on Eastern Island was cleared of all flyable aircraft as soon as radar had reported the approach of enemy planes. This had now been accomplished; his battle stations were all manned; and he awaited the attack. He began to receive various reports of planes falling in flames, and he realized that the air battle was in progress. It was a tense moment for the commanding officer. If his fighter planes and pilots excelled or outnumbered those of the Japanese, perhaps the attack might not be too effective. On the other hand, should the enemy be stronger, then Midway was in for a terrific pounding. He did not have long to ponder, for at 0632 the first bombs fell on Eastern Island. During the following 20 minutes a total of fourteen bombs were dropped on that island by both horizontal and dive bombers. Other bombs hit Sand Island where the Command Center for CNAS Midway was located. The Midway defense batteries and the Motor Torpedo Boats gallantly attempted to repel this attack, but, although they appear to have accomplished some damage to the enemy attacking planes, most of the attacking planes got through to do serious damage to the Midway installations. The defense batteries picked up the incoming enemy planes at 50,000 yards, and tracked them continuously from that time on in, opening fire at 0631. They were thereafter continuously informed of the location of the enemy planes by radar.

It is estimated that thirty enemy planes bombed Eastern Island. The horizontal bombers made their approaches in Vee of Vees. The leading Vee appeared to be in good formation, but the two rear Vees were ragged. Approach was made from the northeast. Immediately following the horizontal bombing, the dive bombers and fighters bombed and strafed. After these attacks had ceased, some of the Japanese fighters remained over Midway to strafe and to attack any planes attempting to land or take off.

The damage on Midway was heavy, the principal items being--(a) Power House demolished, cutting out all electrical supply, (b) Gas lines from main gasoline stowage broken, thus isolating large gasoline stowage and starting oil fires, (c) One rearming pit destroyed, (d) Command Post and Mess Hall heavily damaged through direct hits, (e) Three holes in the runways, which were readily repaired, and (f) Bomb hits in the vicinity of Sick Bay and of VMSB engineering tents, (g) Numerous casualties to ground personnel.

As a result of the destruction of the power house, it became necessary to use the auxiliary power for radio communication and for lighting at the Command Post.

One of the enemy planes shot down was equipped with a camera. The Japanese had apparently learned that the accuracy of a pilot's observations as to the effectiveness of his attacks decreases as the strength of the defense increases, and that, in order to properly arm their aircraft for subsequent attacks, photographic interpretation of the facilities was required.

OPERATIONS AT MIDWAY
0945 June 4th to 2400 June 4th

By 0945 all surviving planes which had attacked the Mobile Force had landed at Midway. Some of the planes which landed there were not serviceable thereafter due to damage by enemy fire. The planes remaining operative appear to have been two F2A-3, one F4F-3, fourteen B-17's, six SBD-2 and five SB2U-3--a total of twenty-eight planes of all types. It appears that an additional B-17, which was employed for long range reconnaissance, was also available.

All serviceable planes were refueled and rearmed. The B-17's were the last to be refueled. The fueling was slow because the Japanese air attack had destroyed the distribution line to one of the two fuel tanks in which about 70,000 gallons of gasoline was isolated. Only two gasoline trucks were available. Most of the fueling was done from drums with hand pumps. While the fueling of the B-17's was underway, the radar picked up some planes coming in from the north. Then, at 1121, twelve planes were sighted approaching from 0° (T). These planes began jettisoning their bombs in the water about ten miles outside the Midway atoll reef as an evidence of their friendly character. However, despite this, Midway sounded an air raid alarm at 1123. These strange planes were taken under fire by the local anti-aircraft batteries at this time, and three of them were damaged by this fire. Finally, their friendly character was recognized, and they were allowed to land. They turned out to be eleven planes of VB-8 from the HORNET. There had been fourteen of these planes, but as they neared Midway, two of them landed in the sea and one landed in the lagoon because of fuel exhaustion.

Shortly after this CNAS Midway reestimated his situation. The following basic information was available to him:

- (a) One carrier of the Japanese Mobile Force was believed to have been damaged by the Army Air Force.

War Diary, VB Squadron 8, June 1942.

- (b) One American carrier, the YORKTOWN, had been damaged by the Japanese in an attack on TF 17.

He determined from this that the two carriers of TF 16 would have to deal with the three apparently undamaged carriers of the Mobile Force. In addition to this, he had a report of a possible enemy carrier with destroyer escort which had been reported as bearing 262° (T), distant 330 miles from Midway, of four cruisers on bearing 265° (T), of battleships to the northwest, and of a large force to the west (the Occupation Force). He believed that all of these forces were closing Midway. At this time, CNAS Midway had not received any reports concerning damage to enemy carriers from the Midway Marine Air Groups. However, he knew that the Marine Air Groups had suffered extremely heavy losses, and he believed that their attack had been broken up before reaching the enemy. Marine pilots had reported by voice to their headquarters on Eastern Island. These reports for some unexplained reason were delayed for several hours reaching CNAS Midway on Sand Island.*

CNAS Midway realized that his air power was now so greatly reduced as to be practically ineffective against the enemy who had already beaten off the attack of his Midway planes. As stated previously, he now had only three operational fighter planes. He felt, in view of the above situation, that he would be heavily bombarded by surface vessels by sunset. He therefore decided to evacuate all search planes and personnel not considered necessary to the functioning of the air station, and gave the senior officer present of the search plane group orders to depart with all remaining patrol planes and to collect these at Laysan and Lisianski Islands, and to act on his own initiative thereafter. This decision by CNAS Midway appears sound, as the search planes had served their purpose at Midway. If they remained there they stood an excellent chance of being destroyed. They could be employed in later phases of this action if removed to a safer area.

At 1253 the senior officer present of the B-17 group reported that unless otherwise directed seven B-17's would be sent to Pearl because there were only eight protective revetments on Midway for the B-17's, and because of engine difficulties. This message which appears to have been received at the Command Center was overlooked by CNAS Midway for reasons of "turmoil", and he failed to reply to it. Therefore, the SOP of the B-17 Group felt authorized to proceed without further delay and directed six B-17's to return to Pearl Harbor.*

CNAS Midway reports that about 30 minutes after he had directed the senior officer present of the search plane group to depart Midway "the picture changed with startling rapidity" as more combat information was received from the Marine Air Group.** This information was that Marine planes had started fires on two Japanese carriers and one battleship. CNAS Midway then directed PBY 1V58 which had just completed a search on bearing 296° (T), distant 300, to search the sector with a median bearing of 335° (T) from Midway.

*Report of Cdr. Logan C. Ramsey, USN to CINCPAC, subject, Air Operations of Midway Defense Forces during Battle of Midway, Serial 0027 dated June 15, 1942, p.5.

**Same report as above, p.6.

At 1500 the four available operational B-17's, to be called group one, each armed with eight 500-pound bombs, were ordered to take off and attack the convoy approaching from 265° (T), whose estimated 1700 position was 265 miles from Midway.

At 1558 PEY-1 V58 reported three burning ships plus two cruisers bearing 320° (T), distant 170 miles from Midway. It is of interest to note that this contact was only 10 miles away from the position of the Mobile Force as reported at 0530. It is also interesting to note that more than 10 hours had elapsed between these two patrol plane contacts, and 8 hours had elapsed since the last carrier attack had been made on the Mobile Force in that position. During this time it appears that no tracking information was available either to CNAS Midway or to the Commander Striking Force. It also appears that this 1558 contact report was not received by the Striking Force Commander.

In contrast, it is noteworthy that Commander Japanese Mobile Force, despite his operational loss of four carriers and the absence of long range land based search planes, kept the Striking Force under almost continuous observation from the time first sighted until darkness. This was done by observation and scouting planes from his battleships and cruisers, and indicates the high state of training in this type of work within the Mobile Force.

CNAS Midway directed the Strike Leader of the B-17 Group, which was en route to attack the Japanese Occupation Force, to attack the force with the burning ships to the northwest rather than the original objective.*

At 1610 six B-17's, to be called group two, en route from Pearl Harbor to Midway with a half load of bombs (4 500-pound bombs each) were ordered to "attack damaged enemy carrier" reported bearing 320° (T), distant 170 miles from Midway. The leader of this group stated, "About 15 miles east of Midway at approximately 1700 decoded message which read--attack damaged enemy carrier bearing 332° (T), distant 170 miles." He turned to an interception course and later picked up a task force which was composed of one large and one small CV, two CA's and five DD's. He reported that the large CV was burning and was under attack, as splashes were observed in the target area. He did not know that other B-17's from Midway were also attacking at the same time.

Meanwhile, the leader of group one, who had arrived at the burning ships at 1820, reported sighting a burning carrier and a burning capital ship in company with undamaged cruisers and destroyers. As sunset was approaching he decided to attack a cruiser. At about 1830 he made an attack on that vessel from 25,000 feet in a closed Vee formation, and was surprised to receive no fighter or anti-aircraft opposition. He claimed two hits on cruisers but there is no confirmation from Japanese sources. It developed that No. 2 and No. 4 planes had failed to drop with the Leader, so he directed those planes to pull out of formation and attack singly. The results of this second attack were not observed. In these attacks, a total of twenty-eight 500-pound bombs were dropped.**

*Report of Commander Logan C. Ramsey to CINCPAC, subject Air Operations of the Midway Defense Forces during the Battle of Midway, Ser.0027, June 15, 1942, p.4.
**Action Report U.S. Aircraft Battle of Midway, Reports signed, Willard G. Woodbury, 1st Lt.(AC) 131st Bombing Group, Walter C. Sweeney, Jr., Lt.Col.(AC), B.E. Allen, Lt.Col.(AC), Paul I. Williams, 1st Lt.(AC), June 4, 1942.

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Five minutes after the above attack, the leader of B-17 group two attacked from out of the sun in two 3-plane elements at 1835 and 1840 from 3800 to 3600 feet. This was a low altitude for high-level bombers, but the leader stated that his fuel supply was so low as to preclude climbing to a high level. Of the twenty-four 500-pound bombs carried by these planes, only eight were dropped, due to malfunctioning of the release mechanisms. The planes strafed the Japanese ships in passing. In this attack these bombers met anti-aircraft fire which did some slight damage to all six planes, but there were no personnel casualties. After the attack was over, Japanese fighters attacked the bombing group, but did no damage. The leader of group two claimed having made one hit on a CV and one on a destroyer and two near misses.* Japanese information on this subject is meager, but it appears that no hits were made.**

Two additional B-17's each armed with eight 500-pound bombs whose departure had been delayed at Midway due to engine trouble and which had taken off at 1620 with orders to attack the carrier to the northwest, arrived over a burning carrier at about the same time as the other two B-17 groups and delivered attacks from 10,000 feet against light anti-aircraft fire and slight fighter opposition. They reported making four runs on a BB, CV, CA and DD respectively and dropped sixteen bombs. As a result they claimed two hits on a CV, one on a BB, and five near misses.*** Both planes suffered some anti-aircraft damage, but no personnel damage. There is no confirmation of these claims from Japanese sources.**

Upon completion of these attacks all three B-17 groups landed at Midway. They reported that the tactics of the Japanese ships in avoiding high level bombing attack consisted of steaming at high speeds while making short turning maneuvers which added up to a complete circle in each case. The Japanese ships also appeared to make continuous efforts to obtain the protection of cloud cover.

* * *

During the time that the B-17's were proceeding to attack the damaged carrier group, PSY-1V48--which had made the 1558 report, now, at 1745, amplified that report as follows, "three burning ships are Japanese carriers; not damaged, two enemy cruisers, four destroyers bearing 320° (T), distant 170 miles." CNAS Midway decided to attack this force with VMSB 241 employing all available dive bombers, but he felt that the consequences as to costs in a daylight attack as demonstrated in the forenoon attacks, were too great without adequate fighter protection. He therefore on the advice of the Commander VMSB-211 decided to make a night attack where fighters would not be effective.**** He appreciated the difficulties of night dive bombing, but the

*Action Report-U.S.Aircraft-Battle of Midway-Reports signed Ernest R. Manierre, Capt.(AC); N. Whitaker, Capt.(AC); Otto R. Haney, 1st Lt.(AC); Jack D. Whidden, 1st Lt. (AC); dated June 4th, 1942, Also Special Reports by Capt. Manierre dated 9 June 1942, and by Capt. N. Whitaker dated 8 June.

**Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.65-61 incl.

***Hdq. 7th Air Force ltr dated 17 July 1942, subj. Operations Report Air Force Employment at Midway, p.2-3.

****Executive Officers Report, Marine Aircraft Group 22, Second Marine Aircraft Wing, NAS Midway, Battle of Midway, June 7th, 1942.

Squadron Commander felt that the illumination provided by the burning carriers would make the operations feasible. He launched the attack group consisting of six SBD-2 and five SB2U-3 planes, but due to darkness and overcast sky and to the fact that two of the carriers had sunk, the attack group was unable to locate the targets and therefore returned to Midway. The carrier SORYU appears to have sunk at 1920 and the AKAGI at 1925.

While returning, the SBD group became separated from the SB2U group when about 40 miles from Midway, and landed at 2200 without incident. The leader of the SB2U group, on the other hand, while letting down through an overcast from 10,000 feet, went into a steep right turn and lost altitude to 500 feet at which time wing men pulled away, the leader crashed into the sea, the formation broke up and the pilots became lost. With the aid of searchlights, oil fires, and homing devices all planes excepting the leader finally returned safely by 0145.

* * *

Meanwhile, at 1920 CNAS Midway decided to employ his motor torpedo boats as an attack squadron and sent a squadron of nine MTB's from Midway and two MTB's from Kure Island to attack the task force containing the burning carriers. They were unable to locate the target. With the coming of daylight they commenced their return to Midway.*

THE STRIKING FORCE
0000 June 4th to 2400 June 4th

American

Commander Striking Force (CTF 17) with TFs 16 and 17 continued on base course 210° (T), speed 13.5 knots, zigzagging towards an 0430 position in Lat. 31°-30' N., Long. 176°-30' W., which position bore 015° (T), distant 202 miles from Midway.

The reasons for heading towards this position are clear. In the first place CTF 17 considered his situation after the Midway search plane had reported the enemy "Main Body" as bearing 261° (T), distant 700 miles from Midway at 0925 June 3rd, and had decided from the information available that this "Main Body" was not, in fact, the Main Body at all but was instead an enemy transport group. Secondly, he felt that the enemy carrier force would still come from the northwest, as indicated in the original intelligence, and that it would launch an all-out air attack against Midway about dawn on June 4th. It would then continue into the wind, expected to be from the southeast, in order to close Midway and speed recovery of its planes for subsequent attack. Thirdly, he knew that he must strike the enemy carriers before they were able to launch a second attack, in order to prevent further damage to Midway and to insure his own safety. Finally, he seems to have assumed that his presence was unknown to the enemy. In this he was correct.

*Commander Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron One, Action Report Battle of Midway, Serial 003 of June 8th, 1942, pp.1 and 2.

In light of the above, CTF 17 had chosen a 0430 daylight position for launching which would place him, if his intelligence was correct, on the eastern flank of the enemy's daylight launching position. In choosing this position he hoped to avoid detection by Japanese search planes until after the Japanese attack groups had become committed to the Midway attack. At the same time he hoped that he would be near enough to the Japanese carriers to permit the American carriers to deliver an attack before the Japanese air attack groups had had time to land aboard, refuel, rearm, and launch. It is of interest to note that the Japanese plan provided for the contingency that American surface forces might be in the area and Commander Mobile Force was prepared for them. He not only launched a search, but he retained on board a strong air striking force armed with torpedoes and bombs suitable against surface ships for use against any such force reported.

Commander Striking Force was also concerned with the situation should the enemy approach from the north and east. He had been informed that he was expected to guard the eastern flank of the 180° sector search from Midway and he was now concerned in ascertaining what searches were necessary at this time for accomplishing this. He appears to have realized also that should the Japanese approach Midway from the north or eastward, the Striking Force would no longer be on the flank of the Japanese Mobile Force, but would instead be between that force and Midway. In this case the Japanese might discover his force and attack it before attacking Midway. This was a distinct Japanese capability, and Commander Striking Force recognized its danger to himself. He therefore decided to conduct a dawn search from the YORKTOWN in the northern semi-circle (180° sector) to a radius of 100 miles,** which radius added to the Striking Force's distance from Midway would cover the attack radius of the Japanese planes. He also decided to maintain the ENTERPRISE and the HORNET in a standby condition with pilots in the ready room and planes on deck readied for immediate launching.

As the Striking Force approached its 0430 launching position, the wind was 5 knots from the southeast--the clouds were cumulus and four-tenths overcast, the visibility excellent and the sea smooth. At this time the Japanese Mobile Force was closing on a converging course which was to place it bearing 265° (T), distant 215 from the Striking Force at 0430. The Mobile Force had already launched its attack on Midway. At 0431, in accordance with plan, the YORKTOWN launched ten VSB to search the northern semi-circle to a radius of 100 miles. (Diagram "D-1").

At 0534 CTF 16 intercepted a radio report from a Midway search plane 3V58 to Midway, stating simply, "Enemy carriers." This was a flash contact which appears to be the first information which he had received. However, there was more to follow. At 0545 he intercepted another report from the same plane, "Many enemy planes heading Midway bearing 320, distant 150", and at 0603 he received a report from plane 4V58 sent at 0552 which stated, "Two carriers and battleships bearing 320°, distant 180, course 135, speed 25." This latter

*CINCPAC Operation Plan 29-42, Serial 0114 W of 27 May 1942, p.6.

**Action Report USS YORKTOWN, Battle of Midway, 18 June 1942, p.1

report, a most vital one, was an amplifying report to an original contact received by Midway at 0530 but not by either CTF 16 or CTF 17. This probably resulted because the 0530 contact had been sent in code. The 0552 amplifying report was in plain English, and therefore received early attention. Delays of this nature in the decoding and delivering of important messages are serious at any time, but in air warfare where minutes and seconds have such a vital effect on relative position, they can be an important contributing factor to the defeat or victory of any force. Plain English, authenticated, would have saved vital minutes in this case. It is presumed that the above reports were also received by Commander Striking Force although due to the loss of the YORKTOWN records are not available to corroborate.

The Striking Force at 0552 was on an easterly course following the movements of the YORKTOWN, which was closing "Point Option"* preparatory to landing her search planes. At 0607 CTF 17 directed CTF 16 to, "Proceed southwesterly and attack enemy carriers when definitely located." The reason for "when definitely located" is not clear, but it may indicate that CTF 17 did not trust the air report, and desired that CTF 16 obtain a confirmation before launching his attack. Perhaps he was mindful of the intelligence errors in the Battle of the Coral Sea, which by indicating that all three Japanese carriers reported to be in the area were to the northwest, nearly caused him to be caught by surprise. TF 17 continued on to the eastward until 0630 when the YORKTOWN recovered her search planes.

Meanwhile, at 0600 and before receipt of this, CTF 17 directive, CTF 16 began to turn to the westward. At 0614 in obedience to the directive he changed to course 240° (T) and headed for the enemy contact at 28 knots. His combat patrol of eight VF from the HORNET was overhead, having been launched about one half hour before sunrise. It was the practice to change the combat air patrol every two hours. His carrier air groups were on deck and ready for take-off. The enemy was bearing 247° (T), distant 175 miles from TF 16; air action was imminent. He was now faced with the necessity of making a vitally important decision. He had to determine whether he should launch his attack now at the extreme range of his torpedo planes and without further verification of the enemy position and composition, or whether he should wait until the range had shortened and more information had become available. Although the mental process followed by CTF 16 in arriving at a decision is not fully explained, it would appear that he realized any unnecessary delay in launching his attacks might have most unfortunate results; that in carrier warfare, time is of the essence; and that his greatest chance for safety lay in striking the enemy first. Other important considerations were: Was the reported position of the enemy carriers correct? Was the Japanese attack committed to Midway, or could it be diverted to attack the American carriers? Was his presence known to the enemy? Would his attack groups break radio silence once they had been launched and thereby make his presence known? Actually, the reported position of the enemy carriers was in error. It was 40 miles southeast of the actual position. Therefore the distance by run-up which separated the Japanese Mobile Force and the American Striking Force at 0600 was not 175 miles, but 202 miles. It is possible that the Japanese air attack destined for Midway might have been diverted against the American carriers. This depended on when the Japanese discovered TF 16. The Japanese planes had a much greater radius of action than did the American planes. CTF 16's presence was not

*Pt. Option is an imaginary point moving on a specified course and speed such that at any instant it represents the predicted position of the carrier, or of the guide of a carrier task group, or of the guide task group, with an allowable error of less than one half the radius of visibility.

known to the enemy at this time, but several bogies had been picked up on the screen and he could not be sure.

He may have given consideration to the obvious advantage which accrues to a commander who can catch an enemy carrier with its planes on deck being fueled and rearmed. This would have necessitated delaying his air attacks until sufficient time had elapsed for the enemy's planes which had attacked Midway to return to their carriers. It also placed his task force in serious jeopardy, for, while waiting, a Japanese air attack might well strike his force. However, despite the above considerations the controlling factor in making his decision to close the range appears to have been the combat radius of the torpedo planes which was about 175 miles.

Whatever the reason, CTF 16 decided to take a calculated risk and delay the launching of his attack groups for about 1 hour. This was a courageous decision, and one which paid off handsomely. It was an excellent demonstration of the will of the Commander; that quality which, in conjunction with the mental ability to understand what is required, enables the Commander to ensure for his command every possible advantage which can be obtained.

At 0700, having received no verification of the enemy's position, but being fairly confident of its location because of the reports from Midway search planes, CTF 16 now estimated that the Japanese Mobile Force was bearing 230° (T), distant 155 miles from his force. He commenced launching his air attack groups at 0705 from both his carriers. The order of launching was, (1) fighters for combat air patrol, (2) dive bombers, (3) fighters to accompany the torpedo planes and (4) torpedo planes. The last plane left the ENTERPRISE at 0806. It took more than one hour to launch the attack groups.

At about 0848 prior to the launching of its planes, TF 16 separated into two task groups.* One, to be called the ENTERPRISE Group, consisted of the ENTERPRISE, NORTHAMPTON, VINCENNES, PENSACOLA, BALCH, BENHAM, ALWYN, MONAGHAN, PHELPS; the other to be called the HORNET Group, consisted of HORNET, MINNEAPOLIS, NEW ORLEANS, ATLANTA, MAURY, ELLET, WORDEN, CONYNGHAM. The reason for this is that it was usual in TF 16 when launching and recovering planes and when air attack was expected, to separate into single carrier task groups with the result that carriers on occasions became widely separated. The advantage to be gained appears to have been based on the idea that a single carrier task group, with its own screen and maneuvering generally without signal, would be better able to defeat air attacks than would a carrier force consisting of two or more carriers. Later when more AA weapons and screening vessels became available, tactics were changed whereby the carriers remained together when under attack. It was found that close proximity of carriers imposed restrictions on their freedom of action due to possible interference with each other. On the other hand, wide separation imposed a reduced AA defense not only in guns but also in combat air patrol, as the planes available to protect the task force were necessarily divided among the single carrier task groups. TF 16 Carrier Task Force instructions in effect at this time provided for separation into single carrier groups prior to expected air attack.

*Action Report Commander Crudly 6, Battle of Midway, Serial 088, June 11th, 1942-
Enclosure A, page 1.

The ENTERPRISE and HORNET task groups once they had separated remained separated until 1930 although the order to form AA formation 11V was executed at 0835. They were separated at times by as little as several thousands of yards, and, at times, by as much as 20 miles.

The ENTERPRISE attack group consisted of fifteen dive bombers of Bombing Squadron 6; seventeen dive bombers of Scouting Squadron 6 plus the Air Group Commander; fourteen torpedo planes of Torpedo Squadron 6; and ten fighters of Fighting Squadron 6. The fifteen dive bombers were armed with one 1000-pound bomb each; the seventeen dive bombers and the AGC plane with one 500-pound bomb each. Eleven of these latter dive bombers also carried two 100-pound bombs in addition. Each torpedo plane carried one torpedo. The HORNET attack group consisted of thirty-four dive bombers of VB Squadron 8 and VS Squadron 8; fifteen torpedo planes of VT Squadron 8; and ten fighters of VF Squadron 8. The dive bombers spotted farthest forward on the flight deck appear to have been armed with one 500-pound bomb each; each of the torpedo planes carried one torpedo. All bombs were fused 1/100 second delay. The ENTERPRISE launched eight fighters and the HORNET eight fighters for combat air patrol.

The ENTERPRISE group consisted of thirty-three dive bombers and was the first group to depart. The delay on the carriers incident to launching their torpedo planes with their accompanying fighters was not acceptable to CTF 16, who at 0745 directed the ENTERPRISE Air Group Commander and the ENTERPRISE dive bombers, "to proceed on mission assigned." The advisability of this move is open to question, as the plan for the attack called for each carrier attack group to make a coordinated bombing and torpedo attack. The above instructions to the ENTERPRISE Air Group Commander made such coordination much more difficult. It is assumed that CTF 16 realized that the planes which had attacked Midway were now due back at the Mobile Force and could soon be relaunched.

In accordance with the above instructions, the ENTERPRISE Air Group Commander, who had been circling overhead waiting for the remainder of the ENTERPRISE attack group, departed with his bombers at 0752. The launching operations continued. Upon completion of launching the attack groups at 0806 CTF 16 changed the disposition course to 240° (T), and its speed to 25 knots, which course and speed he had previously designated as the course and speed of Point Option. He appears to have selected this course and speed because of his desire to close the enemy as rapidly as possible. This would reduce the distance the air groups would have to fly in returning to their parent carriers and would, at the same time, increase the effectiveness of subsequent air operations owing to the decreased flying time.

At 0806 the ENTERPRISE torpedo planes departed for the objective. They were unaccompanied by their fighters which through a mistake in recognition had joined up with the HORNET torpedo planes launched about the same time.

Action Report, USS ENTERPRISE, Battle of Midway, Serial 0137 of June 15th, 1942, p.1.

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The HORNET planes departed at the same time. Their dive bombers accompanied by the fighters climbed to 18,000 feet and flew at that level. The torpedo planes, accompanied through a mistake in identification by Commander VF Squadron 8, flew at 1500-2000 feet. Visual contact between the two groups was soon lost because of the intervening cloud layers, and was never regained. Thus both the ENTERPRISE and HORNET air groups became separated into four separate units at the start with the predictable result that some units would fail to make contact, and other units would make uncoordinated, piecemeal attacks.

Meanwhile, CTF 17 at 0830 recovered the YORKTOWN search planes, which had conducted a search with negative results. He then changed the task force course to 240° (T) and its speed to 25 knots. This course and speed were the same as that steered by TF 16 after it had launched its attack group. CTF 17 apparently considered that it was advisable to keep his two task forces together in order to increase the strength of the combat air patrol by combining both patrols. This would have provided a patrol of twenty-eight fighters of which sixteen were from TF 16 and twelve from TF 17. However, owing in part to the frequent air operations which followed during the course of the air battle between the Mobile Force and the Striking Force, and in part to the damage later sustained by the YORKTOWN, CTF 17 was unable to rejoin until nightfall.

CTF 17 now faced the necessity of making another important decision. He had intelligence which led him to believe that there were four or five carriers in the Midway Attack Force, and his information was that only two of these had as yet been located. An attack against those by two first-line American carriers was now underway. He was therefore concerned as to whether it would be wiser to reinforce that attack with the YORKTOWN planes, or to wait pending receipt of further information relative to possible enemy carriers not as yet reported by Midway search planes.* He decided to withhold launching. It is presumed that his actions were somewhat colored by his experiences in the Battle of the Coral Sea wherein the Japanese nearly surprised him. This must have carried more weight than the fact so often repeated concerning surface ships, but which in some situations is equally applicable to carrier operations, namely: that it is generally best to throw all of your available strength into action against enemy surface or aircraft in a coordinated attack than to launch them piecemeal in uncoordinated attacks. However, he realized that to leave the flight decks of two or three enemy carriers undamaged would invite the destruction of his own force. Finally, at 0838, having received no additional contact reports from the Midway search planes, and fearing that he might be attacked with all planes on board, he decided to reinforce the air groups from TF 16 by launching half of his bombers and all of his torpedo planes with fighter support. By 0906 he had launched seventeen dive bombers of Bombing Squadron 3, twelve torpedo planes of Torpedo Squadron 3, and six fighters of Fighting Squadron 3. He launched twelve fighters as his combat air patrol. The seventeen dive bombers each were armed with one 1000-pound bomb fused for 1/100 second delay and the twelve torpedo planes were armed with one torpedo each. He directed that the remaining half of the bombers (VF Squadron 5) be brought up from the hangar deck, and made ready for an attack on any additional carriers which might be discovered.** By doing this he acted similarly to Commander Mobile Force, who did not launch all of his planes against Midway, but retained a strong air attack force on board his carriers to strike any American surface forces discovered.

*Action Report Commanders Cruisers Pacific Fleet, 14 June 1942, p.1.

**Action Report, USS YORKTOWN, Battle of Midway, dated 18 June 1942

It is of interest to note that, although CTF 16 had initially directed both the attack groups of his command to take deferred departure, he subsequently modified this directive for the ENTERPRISE group by directing the ENTERPRISE dive bombers to proceed before the ENTERPRISE torpedo planes and fighters were all airborne. The ENTERPRISE fighters inadvertently joined up with the HORNET torpedo planes. This was due to a mistake in identification which was not unexpected, as the planes had no markings which distinguished one squadron from another. The HORNET group, on the other hand, was escorted initially by her own fighters, as well as by those of the ENTERPRISE. It is unfortunate that these two air groups were not able to proceed together, so that the limited number of fighters might have been employed as escorts more effectively. This is particularly so when one considers the necessity for the dive bombers to gain altitude for attack, and the inability of the slower torpedo planes to climb over 10,000 feet when armed with torpedoes. Had the groups flown together, the dive bombers of both carriers might have been combined into one attack group and the torpedo planes into another, with a reasonably powerful fighter escort available for each group. Such an arrangement would have facilitated coordination, and might have permitted attacks on one bearing. To have obtained such coordination would have required that the carrier flight decks be spotted in similar fashion and previous plans be made for rendezvous. As the attack developed, what might have been two powerful attack groups, actually separated into five different units.

With regard to the fighter escorts it might be well to point out that as a general thing, the American Navy had not, at the time, properly appreciated the necessity for gaining even local air superiority in order to insure the success of an air attack mission. The numbers of fighters were all too few on the carriers, and the question as to the division of those few between the defense requirements of the carrier task force and the escort requirements of an air attack mission was subject to serious consideration in each case, with the task force defense requirements normally gaining the advantage. This appeared to be so, despite the fact that the carrier fighter complement had been increased from eighteen fighters to twenty-seven fighters after the Battle of the Coral Sea but one month earlier.

As has been noted previously, the air attacks by the aircraft of the Striking Force were uncoordinated attacks. In view of this lack of coordination the attack groups of each carrier will be considered separately.

In order to evaluate properly the events which followed, attention is invited to the weather conditions existing in the vicinity of TF 16. These conditions were:

- 0700 (Start of launching by TF 16) Overcast sky, sea calm, wind 4-8 knots from 135° (T).
- 0730 Sky clouding rapidly. Heavy detached clouds predominate the blue sky.
- 0800 (Start of launching TF 17) Sky overhead mostly clear. Heavy clouds all around horizon.

Between 0752-0806 (Time of departure of TF 16 attack group) and 0906 (time of departure of TF 17 attack group) vertical visibility had improved greatly.

* * *

(a) Hornet Air Group

The HORNET Air Group joined up, and by 0806 took deferred departure. The various squadrons making up her air group assumed the formation previously determined upon. The bombing and scouting squadrons commenced a climb to 20,000 feet with the fighter aircraft in close proximity. The torpedo squadron flew at 1500 feet beneath the cloud level. Radio silence was in effect. Because of the cloud conditions, visual contact between the high and low elements of this air group was soon lost, and was never regained. However, Commander VF Squadron 6, mistaking VT Squadron 8 for VT Squadron 6, as those squadrons were circling prior to departure, positioned himself with his fighter group on VT Squadron 8, and departed from the task force accompanying that squadron. Thus he inadvertently became part of the HORNET Air Group.

Commander VF Squadron 6 in his report of the action states that he was launched "for the purpose of covering the approach of the ENTERPRISE attack group on the Japanese main fleet." He was concerned with the protection of dive bombers proceeding at high altitude and torpedo planes proceeding at low altitudes. In his awareness of the advantage of altitude in aerial combat with enemy fighters, he climbed to 20,000 feet while maintaining intermittent sight contact with VT Squadron 8. It had been previously arranged between the commanders of VF Squadron 6 and VT Squadron 8 that, when needed, the torpedo squadron commander would signal to him by radio for help. He continued to maintain periodic sight contact with VT Squadron 8 until that squadron reached a position about 10 miles from its objective, when a low cloud formation prevented further sight contact. It must have been about this time that the first defending Japanese fighters commenced attacking VT Squadron 8. Commander VF Squadron 6 states, however, that no prearranged call for help was given and he continued on toward the Japanese Mobile Force where he circled overhead for more than thirty minutes.*

It should be pointed out that the Mobile Force had undergone five separate air attacks and two submarine attacks during the 2½ hours prior to the arrival of VT Squadron 8. In repelling these attacks the Japanese brought most, if not all, of the defending fighters down to low altitudes in order to concentrate maximum effort against the more greatly feared American torpedo planes, leaving few if any fighters to oppose incoming dive bombing attacks.

At about 0920 Commander VT Squadron 8 sighted the Japanese carrier force to the northwestward, and commenced his approach. The other squadrons of the HORNET Air Group, which must have been ahead of VT Squadron 8, had not seen the Japanese, and, consequently, were continuing on toward the southwest. It does not appear that Commander VT Squadron 8 reported by radio the information of this contact. Perhaps he did not want to alert the Japanese. Perhaps he thought that the other squadrons were able to see the Japanese force. However,

*C.O. VF-6 Report of Action 4-6 June 1942, June 8th, 1942.

he appears to have overlooked the fact that the ENTERPRISE air groups might require information and that it was important to CTF 16 and 17 to know the progress of the air groups.

As Commander VT Squadron 8 approached the enemy he sighted three carriers in the enemy disposition, and headed for the southernmost carrier. The first division was divided into four 2-plane sections; the second into one 3-plane section and two 2-plane sections. These divisions passed beneath the low cloud layer and headed for their target in close formation. They were attacked at 0928 by Japanese type "Zero" fighters flown by veteran pilots, who were able to make repeated attacks on the slow, cumbersome torpedo planes before they fanned out in dispersed elements for final attack. All fifteen planes of VT Squadron 8 were shot down. There was only one surviving participant of this heroic attack who observed the action while floating in the water. This surviving participant stated that he had launched his torpedo before being shot down. No information concerning the other planes is available. Only one torpedo is definitely known to have been launched. It is possible that more were launched but scarcely probable, as this group met the fury of concentrated enemy fighter defense. Japanese reports indicate that most of these planes were shot down by fighters before reaching torpedo firing points.* This is supported by the statement of the sole survivor.**

Commander Fighting Squadron 8 continued circling at a high altitude while the torpedo planes were being attacked. Presumably, Fighting Squadron 8 was guarding a common frequency with Torpedo Squadron 6, which appears to have been other than the frequency assigned and being used by Torpedo Squadron 8. He could not then know when these planes required his help. He could not see them for the intervening cloud layer. If his help was to be effective, it had to be available immediately. It required, therefore, both the maintenance of sight contact with the torpedo planes and a positioning of the protective fighters in close or intermediate covering position. His mission of covering both the bombing element and the torpedo element, obviously impossible of attainment except under ideal conditions, was not accomplished. The device of the callup for help by which Commander VF Squadron 8 hoped to achieve the desired result, was probably also impossible of attainment through mistaking the identity of the torpedo squadron which he accompanied. The possibility remained to him that by engaging in combat the high altitude Japanese combat air patrol, he would reduce the opposition to his dive bombers when they arrived. However, there seem to have been no fighters at high altitude, the Japanese having brought them down to oppose the low altitude attacks.

At 0952 he reported being over the target running short of fuel, and that he would have to return soon. On hearing nothing concerning this dispatch, he sent another message at 1000 in which he reported the composition of the enemy force as two carriers, two battleships, and eight destroyers on course north and that there appeared to be no combat air patrol. He then returned to the ENTERPRISE without having been engaged.

*Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #8, ONI Review, May 1947, p.20-21.

**Narrative of sole survivor Torpedo Squadron 8 conducted by Chief of Naval Operations, Oct. 12, 1943 signed by George H. GAY, Lt. USNR.

The failure of VF Squadron 6 to contribute to the success of this attack may be attributed partially to the dual objective assigned, i.e., protection of both dive bombers and torpedo planes which had different flight characteristics; partially to the weather which prevented sight contact with the torpedo planes at vital times and partially to his justified belief that fighters would be found at a high altitude.

* * *

Commander HORNET Air Group, with the dive bombers, who was being escorted by VF Squadron 8, did not sight the Japanese forces at 0920 when VT Squadron 8 sighted them, and as Commander VT Squadron 8 did not report this contact, VS Squadron 8, VB Squadron 8 and VF Squadron 8 continued onward to the southwest. Commander HORNET Air Group must have been well aware of the fact that he had reached the estimated point of contact with the Japanese Mobile Force. The actions of the HORNET Air Group Commander after failing to sight the enemy where expected require analysis. Unfortunately, information concerning the reasons for Commander HORNET Air Group's action are not available to this command, and therefore the analysis must be made on doctrine and conjecture.

In endeavoring to discover Commander Air Group's reason for flying south rather than north, certain information must be presented. In the first place, it appears that he headed for the enemy rendezvous on the assumption that the enemy reported position, its speed - 25 knots, and its course - 140° (T) - were correct. In the second place, it appears that although he might have felt that the enemy had been attacked by the Midway planes he did not necessarily know that this was so. Therefore, when he had arrived at the expected rendezvous and did not discover the enemy there he was faced with the serious problem of locating them. There were several possibilities. One was that his navigation was off because of the effect of drift which was difficult to determine because of overcast sky at the time of launching. A second was that the original reported enemy position was in error. A third was that the estimated course and speed made good by the enemy was incorrect.

It must have been apparent to him that if the enemy initial position was considerably in error--he could see 25 miles--then the possibility of his finding them was poor. If the enemy course and speed were radically incorrect or if he had excessive drift then the possibility of finding them was also poor. However, if the course and speed were not seriously incorrect, or the drift was slight he should be able to locate them by the employment of the expanding square.* This expanding square was the method prescribed for locating own carrier when not sighted upon return from a mission with no radio aids available. Its employment would assist not only in searching the areas for slight errors in course and speed or for slight navigation errors due to drift, but as the square expanded, would also assist in searching the area for incorrect position and for larger errors in course and speed. As has been pointed out earlier, he did not employ the expanding square but headed in a southerly direction, presumably on the

*Current Tactical Orders, Aircraft Carriers U.S. Fleet, USF 77A, p.28-Feb.1943.

assumption that that direction was as logical as any. His failure to employ the expanding square is questionable, for he must have realized that contact reports by aircraft are seldom accurate and allowance for such inaccuracies must always be made. Also he knew that the estimated speed of advance along the enemy course from its reported position was 25 knots and that this speed of advance was about all that could be sustained.

He does not appear to have realized that if the enemy slowed for any reason, including maneuvers in avoidance of air attack or to launch and recover planes, or if they turned to the north, the employment of the expanding square in that direction might bring interception, whereas the employment of the expanding square in the southerly direction would probably bring failure.

After the above failure to locate the enemy carriers, the HORNET dive bombers appear to have broken up into three groups; one composed of seventeen planes from VS Squadron 3; another composed of three planes from VB Squadron 6 and a third composed of fourteen planes of VB Squadron 3 and ten planes of VF Squadron 8. VS Squadron 3, three planes of VB Squadron 6 and the HORNET Air Group Commander succeeded in landing back aboard the HORNET. The remaining fourteen planes of VB Squadron 3, after a futile search for the enemy, finally reached Midway where three of them were lost through crashes--one in the lagoon. The eleven planes which finally landed were fueled. They returned to the carrier at 1510.*

The ten planes of VF Squadron 8 remained with VB Squadron 3 until forced to head for Midway because of shortage of gas. None of them reached Midway. All landed in the sea, as the fuel supply was exhausted. Five of the ten pilots were later rescued.

* * *

(b) ENTERPRISE Group

The fourteen torpedo planes of VT Squadron 6 departed from the task force at 0806 at the same time as the HORNET torpedo planes. Commander VT Squadron 6 noted, apparently, that the ENTERPRISE fighters did not join up as expected, so he decided to proceed independently. He flew at an altitude of about 1500 feet, which was just below the clouds, at a speed of advance of about 100 knots. At about 0930 he sighted the enemy task force bearing 320° (T), distant 30 miles. In view of the relative short combat radius of his torpedo planes he decided to attack immediately and not wait for his dive bombers which were supposed by doctrine to precede him into the attack. He divided his squadron into two divisions of seven planes each, to permit a coordinated approach on both bows of the enemy formation. In this they were unsuccessful.

At the time of this contact the enemy was in a loose formation, with battleships and cruisers as much as 12 miles away from the carriers, which appeared to be closely escorted by destroyers only. Such a dispersion was probably due in part to the numerous attacks that the Japanese Mobile Force had suffered all morning from the Midway planes and in part to the Japanese

*Track Chart attached to the HORNET's Report of Action 4-6 June 1942, Serial 0018, of 13 June 1942.

doctrine of allowing the cruisers and battleships to take evasive action of their own. It was an ineffective disposition, as will be shown later.

The disposition was on course about 270° (T). During the approach of the VT Squadron 6 planes the enemy changed course to 000° (T) and finally, before VT Squadron 6 had reached the dropping point, he reversed course to 180° (T). He did this maneuvering to keep the torpedo planes continuously on his quarter. By so doing, he increased the time the planes were under fire by both his anti-aircraft guns and his defending fighters.* His maneuver, also facilitated avoiding the torpedoes which had about the same speed as the ships (30 knots). These tactics were so successful that the torpedo planes could not reach an advantageous dropping point, and failed to make any hits.

In this attack which occurred between 0940 and 0958,** VT Squadron 6 lost ten of the fourteen torpedo planes. One of the four which returned was so badly damaged as to be unserviceable. The Commander VT Squadron 6 appears to have been one of the first to be shot down. Most of these planes, if not all of them, were lost to about twenty-five Japanese fighters which attacked repeatedly without opposition from the American fighters of VF Squadron 6 which were apparently at that time overhead at 20,000 feet. It is believed that this group launched about eight torpedoes.

The drawing down of the Japanese fighters from a high to a low altitude, while not part of the American plan, was nevertheless a vitally important factor in the successful bombing attacks which followed the torpedo plane attacks. Although the torpedo attack was unsuccessful in making hits, it contributed very greatly to the ultimate success of the overall attack.

* * *

Upon departing from the ENTERPRISE at 0752, the dive bomber attack group began a climb to 20,000 feet, with a speed of advance of about 115 knots. Commander ENTERPRISE air group knew that a run-up on course 136° (T) of the enemy's 0552 position, which had been reported by a search plane from Midway, placed that force at 0920 in a position bearing about 323.8° (T), distant 111 miles from Midway. Based on this information he worked his interception problem. He calculated that he would have to steer 231° (T) to a distance of 142 miles to reach the interception point. Upon reaching the expected interception point about 0920 he did not discover the enemy task force. He realized the importance of the decisions which he must make in the next few minutes. He had to determine the location of the missing task force. If he erred in his analysis, he not only would probably not discover the enemy forces, but he might not return to his own carrier at all. He first estimated that the speed of advance assumed for the Japanese Mobile Force was about 20

*Japanese Mobile Force Report #3, ONI Review, May 1947, p.21.

**Report senior surviving officer, VT-6, June 4th, 1942 signed R.E. Lamb (Lt.jg) USN.

quote and that this was about the maximum that could be expected, since the carriers of that force would have been forced to maneuver to recover their air groups during the run-up period, and since they had probably been attacked by planes from Midway and, consequently, delayed to an unknown degree. (He may have estimated this prior to take-off) He therefore reasoned that the Japanese Mobile Force must be to the northward. This reasoning was correct. See Diagram "D-3". He next had to determine the best method for locating this Mobile Force. He decided to employ the expanding square. Accordingly, he continued on the interception course for 55 miles, at which time (0935) he turned to the second leg which was the reverse of the enemy's assumed course of 185° (f). He had expected to fly 50 miles along this leg, but did not quite do so, for at 0955 just before he was to turn again to the right to fly the third leg, he sighted a destroyer almost directly below, heading northeast at high speed. He reasoned that this destroyer was heading for the enemy carrier force, and, as this was roughly the direction of the third leg of his square, he immediately turned his attack group to the same course as the destroyer.* This reasoning also proved to be correct, for the destroyer was apparently the ARASHI which had dropped behind to deliver a depth charge attack against the NAUTILUS, and had in turn been attacked by the NAUTILUS at 0910.

A few minutes later, at 1008, the Air Group Commander sighted the Mobile Force from the northwest sector. His search problem was over. He could be pleased with himself, for he had made decisions which were the most important decisions made by an airborne tactical commander in the Battle of Midway.

He now began his approach on the Mobile Force at 1010 from an altitude of 19,000 feet. He noted that four enemy carriers were visible. He decided to lead the sixteen planes of VS 6 in an attack on the carrier on his port bow in the northwest sector. Seventeen planes of VS Squadron 6 had originally taken off, but one had been forced to return to its carrier because of engine trouble. He directed the remainder of his dive bombers, fifteen dive bombers of VB Squadron 6, to attack the carrier on his starboard bow.

Both VB Squadron 6 and VS Squadron 6 were divided into three attack divisions. Each division was in a step-down formation in sections of vees in column. This close formation of divisions was maintained as a protection against fighter attack until almost to the push-over point. As this point was approached, the Air Group Commander turned towards his target, split his flaps and at 1024 entered the dive. This maneuver was repeated by successive planes at intervals of about 10 seconds, while the remaining planes continued to circle the target.

His attack appears to have been a surprise to the Japanese, for he encountered no fighter opposition and little anti-aircraft fire. He dropped fifteen 1000-pound, seventeen 500-pound and twenty-two 100-pound bombs.

*Action Report USS ENTERPRISE, Air Battle of the Pacific, Serial 0137 dated June 13th, 1942, p.2.

The carrier attacked by the first division of VB Squadron 6 was launching planes. There was little anti-aircraft fire. The attacks by the first division of VB Squadron 6 appeared to be highly successful, and left the carrier in flames. Meanwhile, the commander of the second division of VB Squadron 6 noted that the carrier which had been attacked by VB Squadron 6 was not yet in flames and he therefore attacked that carrier. She then burst into flames. He stated later that he saw hits in this carrier by VB Squadron 6 as he dived. The third division of VB Squadron 6 attacked both carriers. One reason for the apparently greater damage done by VB Squadron 6 was that its planes were armed with 1000-pound bombs, whereas VS 6 had 500-pound bombs.

The Commander ENTERPRISE Air Group reported that upon pulling out of his dive he noted three carriers on fire. He did not discover until he had returned to the ENTERPRISE that the third carrier, which was to the east of the two attacked by his own planes, had been hit by the YORKTOWN planes whose presence was unknown to him.

The retirement of the ENTERPRISE dive bombers was made at low altitude through gaps in the Japanese screening force.

The initial retirement course was flown initially in the direction of Midway in order to deceive the enemy. After that, a course was taken towards Point Option.

This attack, which was highly successful, was not without its losses. Eighteen dive bombers failed to return to the ENTERPRISE, but four of these landed on the YORKTOWN. Of the remainder, four and possibly as many as seven dive bombers landed in the water because of a shortage of gasoline due in part to the inability of TF 16 to close Point Option. VS 6 lost seven planes; VB 6 lost seven planes and VF 6 lost one plane which landed in the water.

* * *

(a) YORKTOWN Group

The YORKTOWN Air Group, which had departed TF 17 at 0908, headed towards the expected enemy position with orders to intercept the enemy carriers and destroy them. Since the assumed speed of advance of the enemy carriers (25 knots) was slightly greater than the average speed which the enemy could be expected to maintain under the prevailing conditions of attack by both ENTERPRISE and HORNET planes, Commander Air Group had been directed to turn north if he failed to locate the enemy at the assumed interception point.

Commander YORKTOWN Air Group planned that all three squadrons of his strike group should arrive at the target almost simultaneously. He planned that his seventeen dive bombers would attack first, followed by the twelve torpedo planes escorted by the six fighters. He therefore directed the

torpedo planes, which were slow, to proceed directly towards the objective after taking off. The dive bombers were directed to circle over the YORKTOWN for 12 minutes and then to head for the target overtaking the VT's en route. The fighters were launched last, with orders to rendezvous en route with the torpedo planes. This procedure was followed in order to enable the dive bombers and torpedo planes to arrive at their objective at proper altitude at about the same time. It also saved fuel. This plan worked very well. The Air Group Commander was particularly fortunate in that the clearing skies provided sufficient horizontal and vertical visibility to permit the units to join up en route and to maintain contact thereafter. Had he been forced to do this one hour earlier, at the same time that the ENTERPRISE and HORNET air groups were taking their departure, he might not have been so successful, because at that time the sky was generally overcast.

The Air Group Commander succeeded in rendezvousing his squadrons at 0945 and then assumed a vertical formation which was markedly different from that assumed by the air groups of TF 16. In this case the torpedo planes were at 1600 feet, which was just below the cloud level; two fighters were at 2500 feet to provide low cover; four fighters were at 5000-6000 feet to protect the torpedo planes and the low fighters; the dive bombers were at 16,000 feet without fighter protection. Sufficient visibility existed to permit this formation to be maintained.

At about 1000 Commander VT Squadron 3 sighted the Japanese Mobile Force bearing about 345° (T), distant 30-40 miles. He immediately changed course and headed towards the enemy. He did not report the contact on the enemy carriers. His reason for not doing so is not clear, as there can be no doubt but that CTF 17 was impatient to know the progress of his air group. It is presumed, however, that Commander VT Squadron 3 felt that, as he had discovered the enemy force where expected, it had also been sighted by the other squadrons and no report was necessary. He did not appear to appreciate any more than did the torpedo plane commanders of the ENTERPRISE and HORNET the importance of notifying their carriers of this contact, so that it might be rebroadcast to other attacking squadrons.

Commander Torpedo planes change of course was fortunately observed by Commander VB Squadron 3 leading the dive bombers. He promptly broke radio silence, called Commander VT Squadron 3 and asked in code if he had sighted the enemy. Commander VT Squadron 3 apparently failed to reply, so Commander VB Squadron 3 changed course to head in the general direction taken by the torpedo planes.

Shortly thereafter when about 14 miles from the enemy, VT Squadron 3 was heavily attacked by Japanese fighters, which appeared to have been directed towards his squadron by bursts of AA fire. In order to eliminate attacks from below, the squadron decreased altitude to 150 feet, and maneuvered in an attempt to avoid other attacks while closing the enemy. AA fire, as well as enemy fighters was encountered. Commander VT-3's plane was the first plane of VT Squadron 3 to be shot down. Of the twelve torpedo planes which commenced the attack at about 1016, only two returned to the carrier. Seven planes were destroyed during the approach; three more after making their attack; only five

dropped their torpedoes, none of which hit.*

During this attack, although heavily outnumbered by the Japanese fighters, the six fighters of VF Squadron 3 defended their torpedo planes. They formed a line astern formation in an attempt to stay together and to give the leader an opportunity to turn and fire at the enemy fighters. However, they soon became separated from the torpedo planes and from each other. They were insufficient in number to protect adequately the torpedo planes, most of which were shot down by enemy fighters.

* * *

Meanwhile, the Commander VB Squadron 3 continued on toward the target. His first contact on the enemy was made about 1005, and was a smoke contact; his second contact was on the task force itself. As has been pointed out previously, the Japanese had a doctrine of making smoke when sighted by enemy planes to screen their vessels. Perhaps it was this smoke that was sighted by Commander VB Squadron 3.

Commander VB Squadron 3 now endeavored to employ voice radio to effect a coordinated attack, but as the enemy was engaging the torpedo planes and the fighters, no coordination could be effected. His messages did not appear to get through, so he proceeded with his own approach.

When the YORKTOWN dive bombers had arrived over the target, Commander VB Squadron 3 noted that the Japanese were launching planes. He also noted that the Japanese carriers appeared to be unharmed. It would be of interest to know what thoughts were passing through his mind when he discovered that all of the many air attacks, which he thought the Midway and TF 16 forces had thrown against the enemy, appeared to have failed in inflicting any apparent damage on the enemy.

At this time, 1024, the weather was clear, the visibility excellent. There were scattered cumulus clouds from 1800-2500 feet. The ceiling was unlimited and surface winds were 5-8 knots from the southeast. The sea was calm.

It should be remembered that the YORKTOWN dive bombing squadron took departure from its carrier about one hour and twenty minutes after the ENTERPRISE dive bombing squadron. Yet by a strange coincidence both dive bombing squadrons sighted the enemy at the same time and made simultaneous attacks on different targets of the same formation. Although the presence of each was unknown to the other, it so happened that Commander VB Squadron 3 selected one of the carriers not taken under attack by either VB Squadron 3 or VS Squadron 6. He made his approach from out of the sun. He encountered

*Action Report, USS YORKTOWN, Battle of Midway dated 18 June 1942, p.9.

no fighter opposition and his first plane to dive received no anti-aircraft fire. However, his subsequent planes did receive some light anti-aircraft fire. Only thirteen of his seventeen planes dropped bombs. The reason for this was that the pilots of the other four planes, which included his own, had dropped their bombs prematurely shortly after take-off, due apparently to a defect in the electric bomb release mechanism which had recently been installed. Commander VBS although he knew that he had released his bomb through mistake, nevertheless continued to lead the attack group, and used his fixed guns for strafing the carrier deck during the dive.

All seventeen planes made the dive. Thirteen 1000-pound bombs were dropped. Several hits were scored by the first few planes to dive on the carrier which was soon enveloped in flame and smoke. As a result, the pilots of the last four planes to dive shifted their targets. Two planes attacked a nearby battleship, and two others a cruiser, but no hits were made by them. Upon completion of the attack, all planes returned to the vicinity of the YORKTOWN. It was then found that despite the enemy anti-aircraft fire which had been encountered in the dives, none of the planes had been lost or damaged.

* * *

After the air groups had departed at 0808 to attack the Japanese carriers, CTF 16 discovered that he was unable to maintain his combat air patrols and keep up with Point Option--25 knots on 2400 (T). This was due to--(a) the fact that the wind was easterly and therefore away from Point Option, (b) the fact that the wind was light--about 4 knots--necessitating that the carriers steam at about 27 knots in an easterly direction when launching and recovering aircraft and (c) the fact that the task force was forced to steam into the wind frequently, not only to launch and recover the combat air patrols, but also to recover planes which made forced landings. In this connection, it is apparent that the selection of a course and speed for Point Option is always a delicate problem which is often complicated by unforeseen operations and variable wind conditions. However, it is not clear why this difficulty arose in this operation. The enemy's position was known reasonably closely, the planned operations should have been known and allowed for in the computations; experience must have indicated that some planes would have forced landings and there was no noticeable change in the force and direction of the wind. In addition, the fact that the task force was not at Point Option does not appear to have been broadcast by CTF 16. Why he failed to broadcast this information and to advise his returning attack groups as to his present location with relation to Point Option is obscure.

It therefore happened as might be expected that when the ENTERPRISE dive bombing group returned to Point Option about 1100, TF 16 was not in sight. The Air Group Commander, therefore, because his fuel was low, called in and requested information as to the location of the task force with relation to Point Option. CTF 16 made this information available. However, despite this, some of the dive bombers, which may have suffered radio difficulties and which may have been unable to employ their automatic homing, ran out of fuel before reaching the ENTERPRISE and were lost.

In this connection it is noted that all of the American carriers at Midway were equipped with ultra-high frequency automatic homing equipment and that many planes from TF 16 employed it successfully in locating the parent carrier. However, it is to be expected that owing to damage to radio equipment not only

in the planes but also in the parent carriers, these homing devices may during battle become ineffective, in which case reliance will then have to be placed on dead reckoning navigation back to Point Option.

By 1205 the ENTERPRISE had landed the attack group and CTF 16 then learned the losses suffered by the ENTERPRISE: one fighter, ten torpedo planes and fourteen dive bombers.

* * *

Meanwhile CTF 17 had not been idle. After launching his attack group at 0848 he had changed course to 225° (T) and speed to 25 knots, and endeavored to close TF 16. This was a converging course on TF 16 as shown on Diagram "D-3". At 0900 TF 16 was bearing 183° (T), distant 15 miles from the YORKTOWN.

CTF 17 was concerned as to the location of the two or three Japanese carriers which were believed to be in the Midway area and which had not as yet been located. He decided to launch a search for them. At 1133 he changed course to 070° (T), and commenced launching a search group of ten dive bombers of VS Squadron 5 to search the sector from 280° (T) clockwise to 020° (T) to a radius of 200 miles and a relief combat air patrol of twelve fighters. This launching was completed at 1150. Then the former CAP of six fighters plus four fighters of the escort group were landed for refueling. The dive bombers were divided into five 2-plane search sections, and each plane was armed with one 1000-pound bomb.

At about 1159, while fueling the fighters of the combat air patrol, CTF 17 was informed of a YORKTOWN radar contact on an incoming group of enemy planes on bearing 280° (T), distant 45 miles. The fueling was immediately discontinued. The carriers' fuel lines were then drained and filled with CO₂ and the gas tanks were also surrounded with CO₂. It is believed that this prevented gasoline fires. The seventeen dive bombers of VBS Squadron, which had just returned from the attack on the Mobile Force and which were in the landing circle, were ordered to clear the general area of AA fire. Fighter direction for TF 17 was in the YORKTOWN. The Fighter Direction of TF 16 was in the ENTERPRISE. The combined CAP of TF 16 and TF 17 when YORKTOWN was attacked appears to have been twenty-eight planes.

At the time of this attack the YORKTOWN was in a circular anti-aircraft disposition with the YORKTOWN in the center, the cruiser PORTLAND 60° on the starboard bow, and the cruiser ASTORIA 60° on the port bow. The MORRIS was in position 340°, the HAMMANN 020°, the RUSSELL 120°, the HUGHES 240°, and the ANDERSON 180°. The cruisers were on the 2000 yard circle; the destroyers on the 3000 yard circle. Speed was 30.5 knots; the axis 225° (T).

Weather at the time of this attack was excellent: wind from SE, force 2; temperature air 76; clouds 3/10 overcast; visibility 20 miles; sea smooth with swells from east.

As there were several unidentified plane groups on the YORKTOWN radar screen bearing from 255° to 315° (T), several sections of fighters from the combat air patrol were being vectored to intercept and identify these groups. The remaining planes of the two groups of defending fighters succeeded in intercepting the incoming Japanese planes and attacked them.

As a result of the interception by the fighters from both TF 16 and TF 17, the Japanese air group, which consisted of eighteen dive bombers escorted by six fighters broke up into smaller groups. Most of the attacking planes were shot down by the combat air patrols before they began their dive on the YORKTOWN. About eight of the bombers finally succeeded in attacking the YORKTOWN. Several were shot down by gunfire. Most of these appear to have been shot down during the withdrawal. Although the YORKTOWN endeavored to avoid this attack through maneuver and anti-aircraft fire, she was unsuccessful, for at 1205 the Japanese succeeded in making three bomb hits from 500 feet altitude. The first hit struck just abaft the #2 elevator on the starboard side, making a hole in the flight deck about 10x10 feet. This hole was repaired in 25 minutes. The second bomb pierced the flight deck and exploded in the stack, starting small fires. This bomb ruptured the uptakes from boilers 1, 2 and 3, completely disabled boilers 2 and 3, and extinguished fires in boilers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. This caused the speed to drop to six knots and after about 20 minutes to zero. The third bomb pierced the starboard side of #1 elevator and exploded on the fourth deck, necessitating the flooding of the magazines in the vicinity. Thirteen Japanese bombers and three fighters were shot down in the engagement; a fourth fighter made a forced landing in the water on returning to the Mobile Force.*

CTF 16 ordered the PENSACOLA, VINCENNES, BENHAM and BALCH at 1235 to assist the YORKTOWN. The ENTERPRISE and HORNET fueled and armed the YORKTOWN's attack planes and her combat air patrols. The ENTERPRISE at 1237 commenced taking aboard about fifteen dive bombers of the YORKTOWN Air Group. At 1245 the NEW ORLEANS, from the HORNET Group, was directed to join the ENTERPRISE Group. At about 1313 CTF 17 and staff transferred from the YORKTOWN to the ASTORIA. At 1324 PENSACOLA, VINCENNES, BENHAM and BALCH joined TF 17. At about 1350 the command was notified over the fighter director net that the enemy was using deception and was ordering American fighters to return to station and land. At about this time the situation on the YORKTOWN had improved enough to warrant fueling the ten fighters on deck. At 1410 TF 16 combat air patrol shot down a seaplane snoopers about 50 miles south of that force. On several occasions TF 16 combat air patrols had been vectored out to intercept bogies which later turned out to be friendly. This was due to the fact that IFF equipment had not at that time been standardized within services or between services, with the result that all IFF signals did not show on all types of radar. In TF 16 the HORNET had an SC radar, whereas the ENTERPRISE had a CXAM.

At 1421 the YORKTOWN, which had been steaming at 5 knots, increased speed to 15 knots and at 1437 to 18 knots. At 1452, just after she had com-

*Battle Report on Midway, Vol. B, including 10th Deacon, 16th Minesweepdiv, AKAGI, KAGA, SORYU and HIRYU, WDC #160985-B.

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menced fueling her fighters. another approaching enemy air group was picked up by radar bearing 280° (T), distant 40 miles.

The YORKTOWN immediately discontinued fueling of planes, drained her gasoline system and secured it with CO₂ as before. She vectored out six fighters to intercept this enemy group and commenced launching in addition eight of the fighters on deck, which then had 23 gallons each of gasoline. These planes were also vectored towards the enemy.

The YORKTOWN fighters, plus the TF 16 combat air patrol, intercepted the enemy planes at a point 10-14 miles away from TF 17. They discovered that the attack group consisted of about ten torpedo planes escorted by six fighters and succeeded in shooting down several. Japanese losses in this attack from all sources totalled five torpedo planes and three fighters.* This group had been launched by the HIRYU at 1331.

At 1441 the YORKTOWN was attacked. At this time she was in an anti-aircraft disposition with the YORKTOWN at the center and with the screen on a circle 2000 yards from the center. The course and axis appear to have been 090° (T) at the time of forming the disposition. Ships were positioned with reference to the axis approximately as follows--MORRIS 022°, ASTORIA 060°, HAMMANN 060°, HUGHES 125°, VINCENNES 155°, ANDERSON 187°, RUSSELL 216°, PENNSACOLA 250°, BENHAM 280°, PORTLAND 320°, BALCH 352°. This disposition was unusual in that it appears to have been the first time that the screening ships had been located on the same circle. Heretofore they had been located on different circles with the cruisers always on an inner circle to gain certain anti-submarine protection from the destroyer screen.

As the Japanese planes came in, the YORKTOWN continued launching fighters, and succeeded in launching the last three planes available for action after the task force had opened fire. The YORKTOWN was caught in this operation launching planes when under air attack, which misfortune had also befallen the Japanese.

After her last plane had been launched, the YORKTOWN commenced maneuvering radically to avoid enemy torpedoes. Meanwhile, the anti-aircraft batteries of all ships which could bear commenced effective firing on the Japanese planes. However, despite what was reported by the Japanese strike leader to be highly effective anti-aircraft fire, the YORKTOWN was hit on the port side at 1443 by two torpedoes. One torpedo hit at approximately frame 92; the second hit at frame 80. As a result the port side fuel tanks from frame 68 to frame 107 were reported breached and open to the sea. Fire rooms 2, 5, and 8 and the forward generator room were flooded. All power was lost, steam pressure dropping immediately. All the electric power failed completely. Even though the emergency generator cut in automatically, the control board shorted, tripping the circuit breakers. The rudder jammed at 15° left rudder and the ship became dead in the water. After the torpedo hits, the YORKTOWN immediately took a list of 17°, which in 17 minutes increased to 23°.

At 1444 the ENTERPRISE took over all fighter direction.

*The Midway Operation, CVL HIRYU Translation of WDC 180988-B, p.23.

At 1445 a YORKTOWN scout, who had taken departure at 1150, reported "1 CV, 2 BB, 3 CA, 4 DD, 179-05 W, 31-15 N. course 000, speed 15." This report was first sent in plain English by voice radio and was followed up by a key transmission. This contact was made in the extreme left hand search sector (280°-300°) close to the limiting bearing line 280° (T) on the return leg of the sector search. Had the sector been flown in the opposite direction the force would probably not have been sighted. Such are the fortunes of war! This contact placed the enemy force in a position bearing 279° (T), distant 110 miles from the 1150 position of the YORKTOWN, (the point of departure of the search group). This contact report was in error by 38 miles. Actually, the enemy was bearing 281°, distant 72 miles.

The Commanding Officer of the YORKTOWN was now faced with a serious decision. His ship was heavily listing, his power lost, his auxiliary power unusable. A contact had been made on an enemy carrier force but 110 miles away, and a new air attack might be coming in momentarily. He decided to abandon ship. He commenced that operation at 1600, the BALOH, BENHAM, RUSSELL and ANDERSON rescuing the survivors. The sea was fairly calm with much fuel oil on the water. The soundness of the decision to abandon ship completely is open to question, as the value of carriers to the United States was of transcending importance and demanded the most extraordinary efforts in endeavoring to save them. It would, in the light of hindsight, have been wiser to remove personnel not required for immediate salvage operations, and to endeavor with the remainder to conduct salvage operations in an attempt to save the ship.

While this abandon ship operation was proceeding, the cruisers and destroyers circled the YORKTOWN. At 1514 CTF 17 directed all ships, "stand by to repel air attack." The BALOH and RUSSELL rejoined the screen; the BENHAM and ANDERSON continued rescuing the survivors. All screening ships steamed around the YORKTOWN at about 20 knots. All destroyers participated in the rescue operations, each destroyer being ordered to rejoin the screening circle when it was considered that sufficient survivors had been taken on board.*

At 1630 the ENTERPRISE in TF 16 commenced launching a second attack group of twenty-four dive bombers. This group consisted of six planes from VS Squadron 6; fourteen from VB Squadron 3 and four from VB Squadron 6. Commander VS Squadron 6 was designated as the strike leader. Eleven of these planes were armed with one 1000-pound bomb each, and thirteen were armed with one 500-pound bomb each. At 1600 the attack group took departure. It will be noted that no fighter escort was provided. This was because it was considered that these planes were necessary for the defense of the task forces.

Meanwhile the HORNET also launched an attack group of sixteen dive bombers, completing this launching at 1312. Two planes returned because of engine trouble. Eight of these planes were armed with one 1000-pound bomb each, and eight were armed with one 500-pound bomb each. The majority, if

*Commander Destroyer Squadron 6 (CTD 17.4) Battle of Midway, Ser.094 of June 12, 1942, p.2.

not all of these planes, were from VS Squadron 8, as only three planes from VS Squadron 8 had landed aboard after the morning's flight.

Both of these attack groups were directed to attack the carrier group believed to bear at 1630 278° (T), distant 102 miles from the HORNET. These two carriers once again launched their attack groups at different times, and directed them to attack independently rather than simultaneously under one Air Strike Commander.

By 1639 all survivors had been recovered from the YORKTOWN.

At 1650 the ENTERPRISE attack group sighted the enemy disposition, and noted that its composition was exactly as reported by the YORKTOWN planes--one carrier, two battleships, three heavy cruisers and four destroyers--but that its course was now westerly, and its speed about 20 knots.

The weather conditions at the target were ideal, with excellent visibility, unlimited ceiling, and scattered clouds at 2500 feet. The sea was smooth.

At 1700 the Strike Leader of the ENTERPRISE Air Group (Commander VS 6) ordered VB Squadron 8 and VS Squadron 6 to attack the carrier HIRYU, and the YORKTOWN VB Squadron 3 planes to attack a battleship which appears to have been the HARUNA. His reason for this target designation is not clear, for the most important target was the enemy carrier, and it was essential that it be destroyed. The importance of the battleships and other surface forces as targets was only secondary. Would it not have been prudent if the Strike Leader had directed all planes to attack the HIRYU? Such action would not have prevented the leaders of the various elements of each group from diverting their attacks to a secondary objective, once the first objective had ceased to be a profitable target. In this connection it is of interest that the leader of VB Squadron 3 did not attack the HARUNA but, instead, attacked the HIRYU, stating in his action report that he had observed no hits on the carrier by the first planeler to attack. Even so, two of his planes did attack the HARUNA, after the HIRYU was seen to be in flames. As a result of these attacks in which eleven 1000-pound bombs and thirteen 500-pound bombs were dropped, the HIRYU received four hits; size unknown; the HARUNA none.*

At 1712 CTF 17 decided to depart the YORKTOWN and join TF 16. He therefore formed column with his cruisers behind a bent line destroyer screen, and headed in a southeasterly direction to close TF 16. This decision of CTF 17 to abandon the YORKTOWN without making any further effort at this time to save her is subject to considerable analysis. It was a difficult decision. His main strength, TF 16, was well to the eastward; certain air contacts led him to fear an air attack at any time during the remainder of daylight; the enemy might attempt to destroy the YORKTOWN during the night; his forces were relatively weak; four of his destroyers were heavily crowded with survivors--what should he do? On the other hand, as stated previously, he knew that the YORKTOWN was of incalculable value to the American future operations and her salvage was almost essential. She was maintaining a steady trim** and appeared to have reached an equilibrium of buoyancy, (about 24°)*** He decided, however, that the best decision was to retire; to

*Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #78, ONI Review, May 1947, p. 57-58.

**CTF 17 Memorandum on action of June 4th off Midway Island, signed W.G. Schindler, Cdr. USN.

***USS YORKTOWN--Loss in action, Midway June 4-7, 1942, War Damage Report #25 of 9 March 1943, p. 9.

transfer the survivors to the PORTLAND during the night when practicable which was to then head for Pearl Harbor; to have the VINCENNES and PENSACOLA rejoin TF 16, and to return with the remainder of TF 17 to the YORKTOWN in the morning.* But was this decision correct? Might it not have been wiser to have endeavored to repair the YORKTOWN during the night, employing probably two destroyers, and a limited number of key salvage personnel? The destroyer radars should in such case give some warning of the enemy approach, so that, if necessary, the YORKTOWN might then be sunk and the destroyers retired before close action had occurred. After this action CINCPAC issued instructions that, "In the event a ship receives such severe battle damage that abandonment may be a possibility, a skeletonized crew to effect rescue of the ship shall be ready either to remain on board or to be placed in an attendant vessel.**

Meanwhile the HORNET Group of fourteen dive bombers had at 1720 arrived at its target and had found the carrier HIRYU burning throughout its entire length. The Strike Leader then decided that the HIRYU was no longer a profitable target and directed that his group attack a battleship and a cruiser. The attack was made, according to Japanese reports, only on the cruiser TONE. A total of seven 1000-pound bombs and seven 800-pound bombs were dropped. No hits were made.

CTF 17, who was now closing TF 16, realized that he could not allow the YORKTOWN to fall into Japanese hands, and that therefore he must leave some ship behind to sink her should the Japanese appear. He therefore at 1800 directed his Commander Screening Group, into HUGHES, as follows--"Direct HUGHES stand by YORKTOWN. Do not permit anyone to board her. Sink her if necessary to prevent capture, or if serious fires develop." In compliance with this dispatch the HUGHES at 1815 departed and shortly thereafter rejoined the YORKTOWN.

At 1816 CTF 17 received a dispatch from CTF 16 stating, "HORNET and ENTERPRISE groups now attacking fourth carrier reported by your search planes. HORNET about 20 miles east of me. Have you any instructions for future operations." To this important dispatch CTF 17 replied, "Negative. Will conform to your movements." CTF 17 appears to have preferred that CTF 16 operate as the Officer-in-Tactical Command and that he himself, with the remainder of TF 17 merely follow the movements of TF 16.

At 1829 as CTF 17 closed TF 16, he sighted the HORNET bearing 149° (T), distant 18 miles.

At 1834 the ENTERPRISE completed the recovery of her attack group of dive bombers. Three did not return.

At 1845 CTF 17 in line with his plan detached the VINCENNES and PENSACOLA from TF 17 and directed them to rejoin CTF 16. Whether or not he advised CTF 16 as to his reasons for this action is not known, but apparently CTF 17 had decided to allow CTF 16 to conduct the combat phases of this operation,

*General Account Battle of Midway, Com.Cruisers, Pacific Fleet, June 14, 1942, p.5.

**Pacific Fleet Ltr 25 L-42, of June 30, 1942.

***Commander Cruisers TF 17 War Diary, April, May, June 1942.

whereas he himself would conduct the salvage operations for the YORKTOWN. Excepting for the BALCH and the BENHAM he appears to have desired that CTF 16 be in full strength.

At 1859 the HORNET recovered her attack group of dive bombers; all returned safely.

At 1912 the HORNET and ENTERPRISE surface groups rejoined, and formed TF 16 again as a cohesive unit with CTF 16 as the Officer-in-Tactical Command.

CTF 16, meanwhile, on receipt of CTF 17's despatch that he had no instructions to offer for future operations, considered what he should do. He realized that the enemy Mobile Force was, at about 1700, about 150 miles to the west northwest; that it now consisted of two battleships, three heavy cruisers and four destroyers, that these ships had suffered probably only minor damage, and that it could easily reach the present location of TF 16 by midnight. He also realized that there was a possibility of an additional carrier being with another task force in the area. He reasoned that this fifth carrier might be present because of CINCPAC's original intelligence data which indicated a possibility of four-five first-line carriers in the area. He apparently believed that there were other forces in the area which were not as yet located. Finally, his knowledge of the Japanese led him to believe that in order to save face they would not retire without seeking night action, and possibly not before a landing attack on Midway had been attempted. He concluded that, as a calculated risk, it would not be wise to attempt a move to the westward during the early hours of the night, as he might well run into an ambush.* He therefore decided to head to the eastward at such a speed as would prevent Japanese surface contact and would be economical as regards fuel. Accordingly, at about 1915 he set course and axis as 090° (T), speed 15. Five minutes later the PENSACOLA and VINNENNE rejoined.

This decision of CTF 16 to retire to the east at this time has been the subject of considerable controversy, but in view of the Japanese intent which we now know there can no longer be doubt that the decision was correct. A study of Diagram "D" shows that the Japanese were assembling strong surface forces to destroy CTF 16 in night action should he move westward during the night. The essential element needed by the Japanese to continue eastward was intelligence that the American task forces were moving westward. In this event this diagram shows that night action would have been highly probable. CTF 16 stated, "I did not feel justified in risking a night encounter with possibly superior enemy forces, but, in the morning, I wished to have a position from which either to follow up retreating enemy forces or to break up a landing attack on Midway."**

At 2000 CTF 17, who had been closing TF 16 from the northwest, changed course to 090° (T), and speed to 15 knots in order to follow the actions of

*Action Report CTF 16, Battle of Midway, Serial 0144-A of June 18th, 1942 p.3.

**Personal letter from CTF 16 to CINCPAC, Battle of Midway, 13 June 1942.

CTF 16. By 2200 TF 17 was bearing 025° (T), distant 10 miles from the ENTERPRISE. This bearing and distance was maintained until midnight.

At 2400 the Striking Force (TFs 16 and 17) was bearing 050°, distant 190 miles from Midway.

SUBMARINES
(American)

0000 June 4th to 2400 June 4th

With the commencement of the new day, all submarines remained in their assigned stations with the exception of the CUTTLEFISH which continued closing Midway seeking the reported damaged Japanese battleship.

Shortly after midnight, at 0020, the CUTTLEFISH sighted a large heavily loaded tanker. She altered course to attack this vessel, and made a report of this contact to CTF 7 at Pearl Harbor, giving the latitude as 27° N., Long. 170°-02' E. CTF 7 directed the CUTTLEFISH to continue trailing. She was unable to reach an attack position before dawn. At daybreak she submerged to periscope depth and continued to trail.

In his review of the action taken by the CUTTLEFISH, CTF 7 stated "In such cases a valuable vessel such as this, upon which the future operations of the Main Body must depend so much, should have been kept in sight as well as possible by trailing on the surface if no opportunity to attack occurred, and further contact reports should have been sent, in order that planes could be directed to the tanker for her destruction."*

At 0544 the NAUTILUS intercepted the first plain language report sent out by Midway search planes. This report was to the effect that many enemy planes were headed towards Midway and were bearing 320° (T), distant 150 miles from that island. As this position was on the boundary of the patrol area of NAUTILUS, she proceeded towards that position. In this connection it is interesting to note that CINCPAC's operation plan directed that all submarines guard continuously 26.1 MCs** and to guard the aircraft frequency 4265, only between 0730 and 1830.*** As the search planes took off at 0430, this meant that the submarines, if the plan was strictly adhered to, would not be able to intercept a search plane contact until about 3 hours after the planes had left Midway. The fact that the NAUTILUS intercepted this contact report indicates that her Commanding Officer was alert to the requirements of the situation. Why the communication plan did not provide for the submarines to man this frequency earlier is obscure. Several contact reports had been made prior to 0544 by Midway search planes, but as these contacts were in aircraft code, the NAUTILUS does not appear to have been able to decode them. The inference is that the submarines were not provided with the aircraft code.

*ComSubPac, Battle of Midway, Extracts from War Diaries, Ser. 0737, June 28, 1942, p.1.

**ComSubPac Battle of Midway, Ser. 0867 July 31, 1942, p.7.

***CINCPAC Operation Plan 29-42, Serial 0014 W, 27 May 1942, para. 5a.

The information was most timely, for it enabled the NAUTILUS to close the Mobile Force. The submarines adjacent to her failed to receive this information until two to three hours later, when they were directed by CTF 7 to close the enemy. Had these submarines received the initial contact reports, additional submarines might have obtained attack positions.

As the NAUTILUS proceeded toward the probable position of the enemy carriers, she sighted at 0658 a formation of six planes, which presumably were the torpedo planes of VT Squadron 8 basing at Midway and at this time en route to attack the Mobile Force. At 0710 on sighting smoke and anti-aircraft bursts, she submerged to periscope depth. At this time CTF 7 directed all submarines of the Midway Patrol, excepting the CACHALOT, FLYING FISH, and CUTTLEFISH, to close and attack the enemy to the northwest and gave the location.* The NAUTILUS did not receive this message, due presumably to the fact that she was submerged at the time of its transmission. At 0755 she observed the tops of masts dead ahead and was strafed by aircraft. She dived to 100 feet, but continued to close.

At 0800 she sighted a formation of one battleship and three cruisers. She made an approach on the battleship and heard echo ranging for the first time. During her approach she was bombed by aircraft once and depth charged by surface vessels three times. When these attacks appeared ended, she came to periscope depth and saw ships on all sides. She had come up in the center of the Japanese disposition, which was loose and scattered somewhat because of air attacks. She was sighted by the Japanese. On sighting her, some of the ships moved away at high speed, others circled to avoid a torpedo, and many fired at her.

The NAUTILUS fired two torpedoes at a battleship, estimated range 4500 yards, speed 25 knots. However, she suffered a material casualty such that only one torpedo left the tube. This missed the maneuvering battleship. The NAUTILUS dove to 150 feet and there underwent considerable depth charging. At 0900 she sighted a carrier maneuvering, but again was forced to deep submergence, this time by the escort vessels. At 0910 she fired a torpedo at what she reported was a JINTSU class cruiser, but which was, in fact, the Japanese destroyer ARASHI. At 0935 she saw topmasts bearing 005° (T) and headed in that direction. She intercepted a message reporting one carrier burning and saw much smoke ahead. At 1145 she saw a burning carrier of the SORYU class 8 miles away in Lat. 30°-13 N., Long. 179°-17' W. She closed, and at 1359 fired three torpedoes into this carrier all of which appeared to hit. She was then forced to increase her depth again and underwent heavy depth charge attack. She remained at deep submergence until 1610, when she rose to periscope depth and found that the carrier had been abandoned. It appears to have sunk at about 1915. She then returned to her patrol area.**

Meanwhile the other submarines of the Midway Group, except the CACHALOT, FLYING FISH, and CUTTLEFISH, were steaming on such courses and speeds as would, in the opinions of their commanders, make contact with the Mobile Force. It will be remembered that these commanders had been informed by CTF 7 in a des-

*ConSubPac, Battle of Midway, Ser. 0867, July 31, 1942, p.3.

**Patrol Report NAUTILUS, Ser.027, June 7, 1942.

patch released at 0643 of the 0552 position of the Mobile Force. The approximate tracks of the American submarines are shown in Diagram "D-4."

At about 0832 the GROUPEL made contact on three Japanese ships bearing about 260° (T), which appeared to be under air attack. She saw many planes and noted that the three ships were firing their anti-aircraft guns with many bursts visible. At 1140 she sighted smoke from two burning ships bearing 311° (T), distant 10-12 miles. The Commanding Officer did not develop these contacts.* His stated reasons for not doing so were based primarily on enemy depth charge attacks which drove him down, and, secondarily, because he feared that an enemy ship might sink on him. In this connection it is noted that a large number of the attacks reported by the Commanding Officer closely coincided with the actual times of the American Striking Force attacks on the Japanese Mobile Force. CTF 7 expressed the opinion that "A statement such as this in the midst of an all-out engagement, clearly shows the mental attitude of the Commanding Officer. The abandonment of an attack through fear the target would sink on top of him is inconceivable. During the morning and early afternoon, he reported a total of over 100 'heavy explosions' many of them 'close aboard' and during the course of the entire day, approximately 200 such explosions were reported, submarine being at deep submergence practically the whole time, yet at the end of the day, even after a depth charge attack, he reported "no glass was broken and no apparent internal damage resulted from the attack". Periscope observations were necessary to develop the important contacts, and would have done much towards clarifying the whole situation."**

At about 1930 the Commanding Officer decided to fire his torpedoes at a destroyer which appeared to be circling overhead, and at 1950 and again at 2016 he fired a torpedo, on sound contact. These torpedoes apparently missed. There is no information from Japanese sources concerning the attack.***

At about 0842 the GUDGEON, while en route to intercept the enemy carriers, reported sighting two HARUNA class battleships under air attack; evidently by the Marine dive bombers from Midway. The Commanding Officer decided to attack. He closed on the battleships for 45 minutes, then lost contact, which he did not again regain.****

At 1525 CTF 7, who believed that a landing attempt by the forces proceeding towards Midway from the west was still possible, with the approval of CINCPAC ordered all submarines of the Midway patrol to form on the 100 mile circle from Midway by dawn June 5th.*****

*First War Patrol Report, Battle of Midway GROUPEL, June 4th-July 30, 1942.

**Commander Submarines Pacific Fleet, Battle of Midway, Extracts from War Diaries, Ser. 0737, June 28, 1942, p.6.

***First War Patrol Report, Battle of Midway, GROUPEL, June 4th to July 30, 1942

****War Diary Battle of Midway, GUDGEON, Ser. 038, no date.

*****Commander Submarines Pac. Fleet, Battle of Midway, Ser. 0867 of 31 Jul. 1942

At 2400 all submarines of the Midway patrol were en route to new stations on the 100 mile circle from Midway. Each of the twelve submarines was assigned a 10 degree sector 230°-350° from Midway. All submarines except the CUTLEFISH were in a position which would enable them to arrive at their new stations by dawn. The CUTLEFISH which had discontinued trailing at 2200* and was well to the westward, would not be able to take station for several days.

During the entire day of the 4th the submarines of the Support Patrol and the Oahu Patrol remained on station patrol, and at 2400 were in their original basic stations.

* * *

CTF 11, in the CHESTER, departed San Diego at 1230 June 4th in obedience to orders from CINCPAC to proceed immediately to Pearl Harbor at 20 knots.** At 2400 June 4th he was in approximate position Lat. 32°-45' N., Long. 123° W.

TG 11.1 (SARATOGA, SAN DIEGO, MAHAN, SMITH, PRESTON and LAFFEY) continued on toward Pearl Harbor from San Diego throughout June 4th. At midnight this group bore 083° (T), distant 530 miles from Midway.

* * *

TF 1 less TU 1.1.4 remained at San Francisco. TU 1.1.4, MARYLAND, COLORADO, PORTER, DRAYTON and CUSHING, continued operating on station bearing about 290° (T), distant about 600 miles from San Francisco throughout June 4th. At 2400 it was on course 035° (T) and was bearing 294° (T), distant 670 miles from San Francisco.

JAPANESE OPERATIONS
0000 June 5th to 2400 June 5th

June 5th commenced with the Commander Second Fleet in position bearing 324° (T), distant 200 miles from Midway, proceeding to the northeastward in anticipation of a night engagement with the American carrier task force. His command for night action now included three separate groups of ships; the Second Fleet of two battleships, four heavy cruisers, one light cruiser, and seven destroyers; Destroyer Squadron Ten of one light cruiser and eight destroyers; and the Mobile Force of two battleships, two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser, and four destroyers. His objective was the destruction of the

*USS CUTLEFISH, Second War Patrol, April 21 to June 15, 1942.

**CINCPAC classified despatch of 30 May 1942.

American task forces in a night action. He had sent out a dispatch at midnight, stating that he expected to encounter the enemy sometime after 0100; that he would initiate a search at 0300 on course 065° (T), speed 24, and that the Mobile Force would participate from the north.*

Desron 2 at 0000 bore to his southwest about 40 miles, and was making 26 knots closing the Second Fleet. The Mobile Force then bore 044° (T), distant 90 miles and was on a westerly course accompanying the damaged carrier HIRYU.

A few minutes after midnight, the exact time not now being determinable, Commander Mobile Force altered course to the south in compliance with the directive issued to him at 2340, June 4th by Commander Second Fleet. His directive to Commander Mobile Force, information Commander Submarines, gave the Second Fleet planned 0300 June 5th position, and ordered: "The Mobile Force less HIRYU, AKAGI, and their escorts will immediately turn about and participate in the Occupation Force's night engagement."** The effective units remaining to Commander Mobile Force were the battleships HARUNA and KIRISHIMA, the heavy cruisers TONE and CHIKUMA, the light cruiser NAGARA, and four destroyers. The other eight destroyers either were standing by the stricken carriers or were loaded with the survivors from those carriers which had sunk. His remaining mobile carrier, the HIRYU, did not head south with the Mobile Force, but proceeded on a westerly course accompanied by the destroyers MAKIGUMO and YUGUMO, which were assisting her in attempting to bring under control the fires resulting from the afternoon's dive bombing attack.

Commander Second Fleet did not complete the rendezvous of his forces, for at 0016 he received a dispatch from CinC Combined Fleet directing the Second Fleet and the Mobile Force to rendezvous with him, and informing them that at 0900 the Main Group would be in Lat. 32°-10' N., Long. 178° E. on course 0200, speed 20 knots.*** This position was bearing 313° (T), distant 350 miles from Midway. Shortly thereafter Commander Second Fleet altered course to the northward to about 305°. Likewise, Commander Destroyer Squadron Two altered course to about 310° in order to effect a junction with the Second Fleet.

Commander Mobile Force, however, did not appear to act promptly, presumably because of the disorganization resulting from the strenuous day's operations and the shift of his flag from the AKAGI to the cruiser NAGARA. Therefore, at 0111 the Commanding Officer CHIKUMA, who felt that Commander Mobile Force might not have received the directive, started to relay to him CinC Combined Fleet dispatch #303 directing a rendezvous with the Main Group at 0900. Before the message was fully transmitted, Commander Mobile Force

*Second Fleet Secret Desp. #756, Mobile Force's Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.37.

**Second Fleet Secret Desp. #761, Mobile Force's Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, page 37.

***CinC Combined Fleet Secret Desp. #303, Mobile Force's Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.37.

Fleet had made plans for the night engagement on this premise. He realized, however, that if he continued eastward throughout the night and failed to engage the enemy in a night action, the enemy, even though retreating, would still be able to attack him at dawn. It seemed that to allow his Second Fleet and Mobile Force to continue eastward would be unduly risky. He therefore directed their retirement toward the 0800 Fleet rendezvous.

By 0100 Commander Second Fleet had altered course to the northwest. At 0120 he initiated a dispatch informing his forces that his 0100 position was Lat. 30°-40' N., Long. 179°-43' W., course 305°, speed 24 knots. In this message he directed Commander Mobile Force to proceed independently to the 0800 rendezvous, and he instructed Commander Destroyer Squadron Two to assume a covering position astern of the Second Fleet.* He proceeded on without incident until he sighted the flagship of CinC Combined Fleet with the Main Group. Upon his rejoining at about 0815, CinC Combined Fleet commenced his retirement to the northwestward.

Commander Mobile Force commenced his retirement at 0112, changing course at that time to about 295° (T). As dawn approached, he launched an air search employing the CHIKUMA's search planes 1 and 4. Presumably, additional planes were launched by other units to provide a full search. He sent the CHIKUMA's #1 plane on a bearing of 090° to a distance of 120 miles; and her #4 plane on a bearing of 102° to a distance of 200 miles. At 0652 he was informed by despatch from #4 plane: "Sight an enemy YORKTOWN class carrier listing to starboard and drifting in position bearing 111 degrees, distant 240 miles from my take-off point. One destroyer is in the vicinity."** A plot of this position showed that at the time of contact it bore 106°, distant about 200 miles from the Mobile Force. Another search plane sighted the carrier HIRYU and reported this information to CinC Combined Fleet.

Meanwhile, the HIRYU and the AKAGI, which had remained afloat throughout the night, were in desperate condition. In view of this, CinC Combined Fleet directed the destroyers ARASHI and NOWAKE, which were standing by the carrier AKAGI, to receive her survivors and then to destroy her. In compliance with these instructions, these destroyers at 0450 fired torpedoes into her. The AKAGI sank at 0500 in reported position Lat. 30°-30' N., Long. 178°-40' W. Also the destroyers MAKIGUMO and YUGUMO, which were standing by the HIRYU, took her survivors on board and at 0510 fired torpedoes into her. This was reported to the CinC Combined Fleet, who then believed that she sank in Lat. 31°-22' N., Long. 179°-28' E.

The HIRYU did not sink immediately, however. Two Midway based patrol planes between 0719 and 0800 reported contacts with Japanese ships in the vicinity of Lat. 31°-15' N., Long. 179°-30' W. One report made by 6V5E described a burning carrier in this position screened by cruisers and destroyers, with two battleships well ahead on course 210° (T), speed 20 knots. This was

*Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.40.

**Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.38.

because the Mobile Force, which was proceeding northwestward from its 0112 position, again encountered the abandoned HIRYU. Commander Mobile Force evidently continued on. Shortly thereafter the HIRYU sank.

CinC Combined Fleet, on receiving information from a search plane that the damaged HIRYU was still afloat, inquired of Commander Mobile Force, "Has the HIRYU sunk? Advise situation and position."* Commander Mobile Force did not know, apparently not having kept himself informed regarding her. He had presumed that she had sunk until receipt of this message from the CinC Combined Fleet indicated the possibility that she was afloat. In order to clarify the matter he dispatched a search plane from the NAGARA, and sent, in addition, the destroyer TANIKAZE to search for her. They did not find her. The TANIKAZE when returning to the Mobile Force was dive bombed unsuccessfully by American land based and carrier planes.

While these occurrences were taking place, CinC Combined Fleet apparently decided that in the light of the present situation he would no longer need the assistance of the Second Mobile Task Group. At 1259 he directed, "Second Mobile Task Group is returned to Northern Force."** He thereby cancelled his orders to that group issued at 1220 the previous day (June 4th) to rendezvous with the First Mobile Force.

Meanwhile, Commander Mobile Force continued in a northwesterly direction in order to rejoin CinC Combined Fleet. He proceeded without incident and overtook the Main Group and the Second Fleet on a northwesterly course at about 1300. The Combined Fleet concentration was now a formidable surface force, but was still without air cover. Fortunately for the Japanese the American carrier forces were well to the eastward and out of range. There can be no doubt but that the Japanese high command awaited impatiently the return of the Aleutian Support Group with the carrier ZUIHO. That group, which was proceeding in a southeasterly direction, rejoined the Main Group at an undetermined time on June 6th, thereby reforming the Main Force. At about 1800 CinC Combined Fleet, when in Lat. 33°-20' N., Long. 175°-55' E. changed course to due west, (Diagram "E").

CinC Combined Fleet, as he continued toward his June 7th fueling rendezvous, considered that his forces had successfully disengaged, and that further attacks were unlikely. As no search planes had been observed by the Main Group during June 6th, he was of the opinion that the position of the Combined Fleet was unknown to the American forces. On the other hand, he did not know the position of the American forces, for the morning search from the Mobile Force had not located them. His only forces now in exposed positions were Grudiv 7 and escorts (See Diagram "F"). These were the MOGAMI, MIKUMA, KUMANO and SUZUYA, escorted by the ASASHIO, ARASHIO, OSHIO and MICHISHIO. As these ships had not reported encountering any enemy aircraft since early morning and as the night's run to the west yet remained, he appears to have felt

*CinC Combined Fleet, Secret Despatch #310 to Comdesdiv 10 Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #8, ONI Review, May 1947, p.38

**Mobile Force's Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.42.

that they also were secure from further enemy air attack.

In the late afternoon he was alerted to the fact that he was being pursued. At 1635 the destroyer TANIKAZE was unsuccessfully bombed by seven B-17's from Midway and at 1807 the same destroyer, which at that time was about 80 miles to the southeastward, reported being attacked by about 26 enemy aircraft as she was proceeding to the northwest to rejoin. Actually she was attacked by 44 dive bombers which dropped 44 bombs, many of which were near misses. At 1945 she was attacked, again unsuccessfully, by five B-17's which dropped 23 bombs. She made evasive turns and countered with anti-aircraft fire and succeeded in escaping damage. The Japanese thought that they had been attacked by a total of about 60 planes.* This is an excellent example of the extreme difficulty of hitting with bombs a fast-maneuvering target such as a destroyer. The suicide plane was more successful several years later.

CinC Combined Fleet must now have felt some relief. He felt that he had safely extricated his major surface forces, less the destroyed carriers, from an untenable position and he must now consider future operations. His Second Fleet, the remainder of his Mobile Force, the Aleutian Support Force, and Desron Two had all rejoined and, best of all, he had some air cover from the small carrier ZUIHO, which had now rejoined with the Aleutian Support Group.

CinC Combined Fleet was apparently keenly aware at this time of the situation in the Aleutians. The original plan for that area was still in effect. His forces, excepting the Second Mobile Task Group which he directed on June 4th to join the Main Force and then on June 5th redirected to continue the Aleutian operation, were continuing their operations. In view of his defeat at Midway, CinC Combined Fleet did not at first approve of continuing the Aleutian operation. He had desired previously to cancel it, but had deferred action at the request of Commander Northern Force, as has been pointed out earlier. He now re-examined the situation. He felt that a successful operation in the Aleutians would partially reestablish Japanese naval prestige in that Japanese forces would thereby occupy American soil. He further felt that this seizure of American territory would compensate somewhat for his disastrous losses off Midway. However, he realized that such an operation would not be a simple one, and that it would probably provoke immediate counteraction by American carrier task forces. It was apparent that his Northern Force would require reinforcements against this contingency.** On the other hand, it is probable that he reasoned also that American counteraction in the Aleutians area would not be an unmixed blessing, for the Japanese forces in the Solomon Islands were consolidating their easily won positions there and were carrying on the base development.*** These operations would require somewhere between 2-4 months more. Should he be able to divert American forces to the Aleutians, he might be making a major contribution to

*Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, p.14.

**Campaigns of the Pacific War, Chapter VI, The Aleutian Campaign USSBS, 1946, p.60.

***War Diary, Eighth Fleet, 7-10 August 1942, CIG 74633.

the security of the Solomon operations. He therefore finally decided in favor of continuing the Aleutian operation, and at 2340 issued Combined Fleet Op Order #163 to this effect, stating:

- "1. Batdiv 3, Crudiv 8, 1 desdiv of Desron 10, KAMIKAWA MARU and units under it, ZUIHO, Desdiv 4 after June 7th and Subdiv 3, Subron 2 after June 10th will join Northern Force. (Note: These units were formed into one group called the Aleutian Late Support Group).
2. The day of return to port of Subron 1 is changed to June 30th.
3. It is planned that upon completion of the Aleutian campaign Cardiv 4 and 1 Desdiv of Desron 10 will serve as support for the Northern Force instead of returning to the task force as an escort."

At 2400 June 8th the Main Force plus the Second Fleet was bearing 305° (T), distant 540 miles from Midway on course 270° (T), speed about 13 knots,

* * *

The four cruisers of Crudiv 7, KUMANO, SUZUYA, MOGAMI and MIKUMA and their four escorting destroyers, ASASHIO, ARASHIC, OSHIO and MICHISHIO, continued eastward to bombard Midway. How long they continued eastward is not entirely clear. However, the Commanding Officer of the American submarine TAMBOR sighted them to the southward and southeastward at 0215. At that time, they were on an easterly course and were in two columns. The TAMBOR then commenced trailing from the northwestward and temporarily lost contact. She regained contact at 0238 and discovered, at that time, that the cruisers and destroyers appeared to be on a northerly course. At 0251 she noted them change course farther to the left after which she lost contact.** From this it appears that Comorudiv 7 must have acted on CinC Combined Fleet's secret despatches #303 and #304 sometime between 0215 and 0238. Despatch #303, timed 0018, directed that the Mobile Force, Second Fleet and Crudiv 7 were to rendezvous with the Main Group. Despatch #304, timed 0020, directed the cancellation of the scheduled shelling of Midway and ordered the bombardment unit to rejoin the Main Group. Unfortunately, this latter message appears to have been sent to Comorudiv 8 for action rather than to Comorudiv 7. It appears then that Comorudiv 7 either did not get CinC Combined Fleet's messages #303 and #304 until after 0215, or that he had not realized that the message to Comorudiv 8 was actually meant for him, and was therefore somewhat confused. Whatever may have been the reason for the delay, it is sufficient to note that the retirement, which should have commenced soon after 0030, did not actually commence until about two hours later.

At about 0342 the TAMBOR regained contact again. It must have been about this time, rather than at 0200 as stated by the Commanding Officer MOGAMI,**

*War Records and Action Reports of Desron 1, WDC 161718.

**War Diary, TAMBOR, May-June 1942.

***Interrogation R. Adm. SOJI, IJN., Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Vol. II, USSBS, p.363.

that a serious collision occurred between the MOGAMI and MIKUMA.

This collision occurred when the flagship sighted a submarine on the starboard bow and directed an emergency turn to port. The MOGAMI did not receive the signal promptly. She commenced her turn late, and as a result she collided with the MIKUMA. The bow of the MOGAMI and the port quarter of the MIKUMA were damaged, forcing a reduction in speed of both ships. One of the MIKUMA's fuel oil tanks was breached, making a wake of oil easily seen by airmen in daylight.

Comcrudiv 7 kept his division intact until just before dawn. At that time, apparently realizing that neither the MOGAMI nor the MIKUMA would be of any particular value to CinC Combined Fleet in the present operation, he retired them to the westward with two destroyers as escorts. He, himself, with the KUMANO, SUZUYA, OSHIO and MICHISHIO headed in a northwesterly direction to rejoin the Main Group. It is of interest that the enemy character of Crudiv 7 was first determined at 0437 by the submarine TAMBOC which had been trailing them since 0218.

These two groups continued retiring on divergent courses without incident until a few minutes past 0800, when the MOGAMI Group was attacked by aircraft from Midway. These aircraft consisted of twelve dive bombers from Marine Air Group 22 which attacked first, followed immediately by eight B-17's in a horizontal bombing attack. During these attacks the MIKUMA was on the port bow of the MOGAMI. The dive bombers approached from the east and dove out of the sun on both cruisers, making anti-aircraft defense very difficult. These ships appear to have opened fire and commenced evasive turns, although the information as to measures taken is extremely sketchy. No measures were taken to avoid the horizontal bombing attack before the bombs landed, as the Japanese stated that they did not know it was occurring until the bombs fell. Once the splashes were noted (200-300 yards astern), the cruisers opened fire on the bombers, which were estimated to be at an altitude of 4000-5000 meters. Although the MOGAMI received no direct hits, she did receive six near misses. Many holes were made in her superstructure from flying metal.* The MIKUMA received no direct hits from bombs. One dive bomber did not pull out of his dive and crashed his plane into her after turret, causing fires and further reducing her speed.**

Thereafter, the MOGAMI Group took a course of about 285° (T) at the maximum speed available, which was about 15 knots, in order to get beyond the range of the Midway based planes. No more American planes were sighted that day. At 2400 this group was bearing 277°, distant 340 miles from Midway.

Meanwhile, the KUMANO group proceeded on a course of about 303° (T), at a speed of about 20 knots towards the rendezvous with CinC Combined Fleet. At 2400 the group was bearing 297°, distant 510 miles from Midway, and was only 80 miles south of the Combined Fleet.

*Interrogation, Rear Admiral SOJI, IJN, Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Vol. II, USIBS, p. 363.

**Interrogation, Commander OTOKICHI SHIBATA, IJN, Interrogation of Japanese officials, Vol. II, USIBS, p. 270.

* * *

The Transport Group with the Escort Unit, the CHITOSE and the destroyer HAYASHIO, continued in a northwesterly direction towards the 1000 rendezvous. This had been set at Lat. 30° N., Long. 173° E. Meanwhile, the KAMIKAWA MARU and Patrol Boat #35, which had been left behind the preceding day, were also hastening to the rendezvous.

Commander Seaplane Group, who was in command, was in the CHITOSE and had as his objective the retirement of the Transport Group to the westward beyond the range of Midway based aircraft. At dawn on June 5th his group was 480 miles west of Midway. While this was not beyond the range of Midway search planes, this did not appear to concern him. He seems to have felt that the Midway base was largely ineffective because of Japanese air attacks the day before. He also appears to have felt that there was little danger from the American carrier force because he slowed to 9 knots as he approached the rendezvous.

At about 0830 Commander Seaplane Group received a dispatch from CinC Combined Fleet indicating that commander's concern regarding the anti-submarine protection of the Transport Group. This dispatch purported to increase the anti-submarine protection for that command, for it stated: "Secret despatch No. 755, 0710 June 5th. 1. Commander Desron 2 acting in accordance with special orders, will take command of 1 desdiv and 2 destroyers and joining Transport Group and Escort Unit, take charge of escorting them. 2. After joining Commander Desron 2, Commander Seaplane Group will dissolve his command of Escort Unit and Transport Group."* This order for undiscovered reasons was never carried out, for Desron 2 remained with the Combined Fleet.

After the KAMIKAWA MARU and Patrol Boat #35 had joined the Transport Group at about 1000, Commander Seaplane Group formed his various groups into a cruising disposition for retirement, and set a base course of about 285° (T). The disposition appears to have consisted of two columns of transports with a destroyer screen. The two seaplane tenders were stationed astern of the disposition and maneuvered as required for air operations while providing anti-submarine patrols.

The day continued uneventful. At 2400 the group bore 277° (T), distant 670 miles from Midway.

* * *

Precise information of the movement of the submarines on June 5th is lacking. The twelve submarines of Subron 3 and 5 continued to sweep along a search line advancing along a course of about 285° for the purpose of locating and attacking the American carrier task forces somewhere to the north of Midway.** The I-121, 122, and 123 proceeding westward from south

*Records of the Converted Seaplane Tender KAMIKAWA MARU, 25 May-12 June 1942, WDC 160685.

**Campaigns of Pacific War, USSBS, 1946, p. 62. (Note: Analysis indicates date should be June 4th, See WDC 160268 War Diary, 6 Fleet for Midway Operation).

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of Midway also were in a search line, and had as their task the location of any enemy forces that area.* The I-168, in compliance with CinC Combined Fleet despatch operation order #159 issued at 2030 on June 4th, shelled Midway commencing at 0130 on the 5th. Six shells were fired, then the I-168 departed.**

Sometime after receipt of the OHIKUMA #4 search plane's message giving the location of the damaged YORKTOWN, the I-168 was directed to proceed to that position and sink her. That message did not accurately locate the YORKTOWN, and the I-168 commenced searching for her. The time of directing the I-168 to the YORKTOWN is not known; however, it is assumed that shortly after receipt of the 0652 message the directive was issued and that the I-168 spent the remainder of June 5th searching for the YORKTOWN.

At 2400 June 5th the position of advancing Japanese search line was about 50 miles east of Midway Island, course about 285°, with the submarines proceeding on the surface.

STRIKING FORCE
0000 June 5th to 2400 June 5th

At midnight CTF 16 changed course of TF 16 to 000° (T). CTF 17 did not follow this change of course, but continued on to the eastward. His reasons for failing to comply with his signalled intentions and to follow CTF 16's movements are somewhat obscure, but it is presumed that in view of the large number of survivors on four of his destroyers, which survivors he planned to transfer to the PORTLAND, if practicable during the night, he did not choose to take his task force into action.

Meanwhile, CTF 16 changed course to the north planning to run in that direction for one hour and then to head west, from which course he felt that he would be equally able to either defend Midway or attack the Mobile Force as the situation demanded.*** At 0044 he made a radar contact bearing 322° (T), distant 28,000 yards. As this was about the maximum range obtainable on surface ships at the time by radar, CTF 16 apparently considered that this contact was on a surface ship and not on a submarine. It is probable that he was puzzled as to how this surface ship got there, as it had not been reported. So he immediately changed course to 090° (T) again, and dispatched the destroyer ELLET to investigate. This contact, which appears to have been false, was an unfortunate one, as it had an adverse effect on CTF 16's plans. Prior to this contact, he felt that he had retired sufficiently far to the east to render it highly improbable that a night action would occur. Now this contact represented a danger to his force either from previously undiscovered surface forces or from a surfaced submarine, and prevented further safe movement to the north until the contact was investigated. He

*Naval Analysis Division, USSBS, Interrogation Nav. Number 108.

**War Diary 6th Fleet, Midway Operation, WDC 180288.

***Statement of CTF 16 to Captain R.W. Bates, USN, Head of Department of Analysis, Naval War College, January 20, 1948.

therefore ran on an easterly course for 18 minutes until 0103, when he headed south for 55 minutes. These courses delayed his movements toward the Japanese Mobile Force, and made the probability of morning contact on them more doubtful. At 0158 he changed course to the westward to 270° (T) which course he maintained until 0420 when he changed course to the southwest to 230° (T) and increased speed to 20 knots. This course took him into an area of temporary bad flying weather. At 0431 he increased speed to 25 knots. He made these latter changes because of a contact report by the submarine TAMBOR, which reported--"Many unidentified ships" and gave the position, but did not give any course or speed. This report was received for by Midway and Pearl Harbor at 0306, but it appears to have been rebroadcast by Midway or Pearl Harbor sometime later, for CTF 16 stated--"Our first contact June 5th was made by the TAMBOR reporting the enemy 90 miles west of Midway. This looked like a landing, so we took a course somewhat to the northward of Midway at 25 knots."* It is of interest to note that at 0306 the TAMBOR knew that these ships were on a westerly course and therefore her reasons for not reporting the course and speed of the contact are not clear. In addition, and this is highly important, there were but eight ships present and not "many unidentified ships." As will be shown later, this failure to make a correct report may have caused CINCPAC and CTF 7 to make decisions concerning the submarines which may have had an adverse effect on that day's operations.

At 0617 the TAMBOR obtained a report from both Pearl Harbor and Midway for a contact report in which "two M.AMI cruisers" were reported giving the position, course and speed,** which report was amplified at 0650-0652 when patrol plane 2V66 reported two battleships (evidently the MOGAMI and MIKUMA) bearing 264° (T), distant 126 miles from Midway on course 268° (T), speed 16 and streaming oil. These reports plainly indicated that the Japanese force which was thought at 0300 to be attempting a landing was now definitely retiring.

CTF 16 appears to have had this information, although he did not act on it. His reasons for not doing so are not explained. However, it would appear as if his judgment had been somewhat altered by two factors; one, the poor flying weather in the area in which he was steaming; the other, his desire to have a clear picture of the entire situation before making a decision. He realized that CINCPAC's objective was the holding of Midway and the infliction of maximum damage on the enemy by strong attrition tactics. In this connection, although he did not think it probable, he considered that it was possible that the enemy might still remain in an offensive state of mind*** and might therefore attempt to take Midway. He based this in part on the possibility that the Japanese had a 5th carrier in the area.

*CTF 16 Battle of Midway, Serial 0144A of 16 June 1942, p.4.

**War Diary, TAMBOR, June 1942.

***Personal ltr from CTF 16 to CINCPAC, Battle of Midway, June 13, 1942.

At 0700 patrol plane 4V51 reported two enemy cruisers bearing 286° (T), distant 174 miles from Midway on course 310° (T), speed 20. These were evidently the KUMANO and the SUZUYA. At 0719 patrol plane 7V55 reported five ships bearing 325° (T), distant 200 miles from Midway on course 338, speed 15. At 0800 and again at 0815 patrol plane 6V56 reported two BB, three CA, and destroyers screening burning carrier bearing 324° (T), distant 240 miles from Midway on course 310° (T), speed 12. This burning carrier appears to have been the HIRYU. At 0820 patrol plane 8V55 reported a carrier bearing 335°, distant 250 miles on course 245° (T).

These reports, concerning Japanese forces to the northwest, plainly showed that the Japanese were retiring that that direction also.

At 0830 CTF 16 launched his first combat air patrol of twelve fighters.* Thereafter, for the remainder of the day he maintained a combat air patrol of six fighters. At 0857 he changed course to the right to 280° (T) and at 0930 to 270° (T). At this latter time CTF 16 directed MONAGHAN to recover personnel of a downed patrol plane and to then report to senior officer present in vicinity of YORKTOWN.

He was now confronted with the necessity of determining in which direction he was to direct his effort. He stated later "as the general situation and the weather cleared, it became evident that a choice of objectives for chase and attack was the next matter for decision. We had reports of two groups, either of which contained good targets. One was to the west of Midway, the other to the northwest. I chose the one to the northwest. It was farther away, but it contained the crippled CV and two BB's, one of them damaged."** This comment of CTF 16 indicates that he had probably confused the report of the KUMANO and SUZUYA with those of the MUGAMI and MIYUMA and therefore considered that but two groups of enemy ships had been located, whereas as a matter of fact, three groups had been reported.

CTF 16 believed that he had sunk three carriers, the AKAGI, KAGA and SORUYU--and that this crippled carrier was the fourth carrier.** He believed also that there was the possibility of a fifth carrier in the area, the destruction of which would clear the area of Japanese carriers and force a full retirement of all Japanese surface forces. As he makes no mention of the Transport Group which had been reported on June 3rd, but which had not been reported on June 4th, it is assumed that CTF 16 had decided that this group had long since retired, which assumption was correct.

At 1120 he changed course to 300° (T) and began a stern chase at 25 knots to destroy, if possible, the carrier to the northwest. This carrier, which was the damaged HIRYU, appears to have sunk shortly after 0800, giving the Mobile Force, thereafter, complete freedom of action to retire at best speed.

At 1225 he sighted four motor torpedo boats returning to Midway after an ineffective search for Japanese forces.

*Action Report, Battle of Midway, ENTERPRISE, Ser.0135, June 8, 1942, p.6.

**CTF 16 Battle of Midway, Ser. 0144-A of June 16, 1942, p.4.

As the day wore on and no additional reports were received from the Midway planes concerning the movements of the force which he was chasing, CTF 16 grew more and more concerned. He realized that the morning contact had begun to grow cold.* He was forced to plot, therefore, his estimation of the movements of this force based on his 0800 information. When, based on this information, he had finally decided that the enemy force was bearing about 324° (T), distant 240 miles, he ordered launching.

Between 1512 and 1543 the ENTERPRISE launched 32 dive bombers. This group consisted of seven dive bombers from Scouting Squadron 6, six dive bombers from Bombing Squadron 6, ten dive bombers from Bombing Squadron 3, and nine dive bombers from Scouting Squadron 5. Each of these planes was armed with one 500-pound bomb.** During the same time, the HORNET launched 28 dive bombers. These consisted of nine dive bombers from Scouting Squadron 8 and seventeen dive bombers from Bombing Squadron 8. The armament of these planes was similar to that of the ENTERPRISE. After the planes had been launched CTF 16 changed course to 315° (T).

*Midway
routing*

* * *

As the HORNET group made contact first, that group will be discussed first. At 1530 eleven dive bombers of VB Squadron 8 and the Air Group Commander took departure from the HORNET and climbed to 18,000 feet. Commander HORNET Air Group was advised that the enemy consisted of one carrier, two battleships, two heavy cruisers and five destroyers bearing 315° (T), 40 miles from TF 16 and that it was on course 310° (T), speed 12. At this information was based on the early morning reports, which had received no amplification since that time. At 1630 Commander HORNET Air Group sighted five Army B-17's returning to Midway. At 1715 he sighted a single ship believed to be a cruiser on course 210° (T). However, this cruiser was not at this time a target sufficiently important to warrant the diversion of the Air Attack Group; therefore, he continued onward to a total distance of 315 miles in an effort to locate the carrier group, but without success. He then decided to attack the cruiser, which was actually the destroyer TANIKAZE. He launched an attack at 1810 dropping twelve 500-pound bombs. No hits were made.***

At 1543 the second group of HORNET dive bombers consisting of five planes from VB Squadron 8 and nine planes from VS Squadron 8, all led by Commander VS Squadron 8 were launched. The delay incident to the launching of these planes was caused by the necessity for bringing them up from the hangar deck and spotting them after the first flight had departed. Commander VS Squadron 8 failed to make contact on the TANIKAZE and, therefore, returned with his group to the HORNET. His return to the HORNET was not without incident, for on the return flight five planes of VB Squadron 8 became separated from the remainder of the squadron and had difficulty in locating the HORNET. CTF 16, therefore, illuminated the task force to assist the planes in finding the carrier. Three HORNET planes landed on the ENTERPRISE. All landings were made after dark--between 1858 and 2035.

*Action Report CTF 16, Battle of Midway, Serial 0144-A June 16, 1942, p.4.
**Action Report USS ENTERPRISE, Serial 0133, June 8, 1942, p.4.
***Action Report HORNET, Serial 0018, June 13, 1942, p.5.

It is of interest to note the general excellence of these night landings. They were particularly remarkable when it is remembered that many of the pilots had never landed on a carrier before at night. There was, however, a casualty to one plane. This plane, owing to a shortage of gasoline, landed in the water while endeavoring to land on the ENTERPRISE. The pilot was rescued.

* * *

The ENTERPRISE group departed together at 1530, having completed launching at 1528. En route to the target the Strike Leader decided to employ search and attack procedure. He formed a scouting line of nine planes of VS Squadron 6 and seven planes of VS Squadron 5 and flew on a course of 324° (T) for 265 miles. He was followed by the other dive bombers. The Attack Group remained at a low altitude until about 100 miles from the estimated position of the enemy, at which time it began a climb to 13,000 feet--just below the overcast, which was at about 13,000 feet.*

At about 1727, after flying 265 miles along the course without making a contact, the Strike Leader recalled his scouting line and effected a rendezvous. About this time he received a voice contact report from the HORNET planes, reporting a single unidentified vessel. The Strike Leader decided to attempt to locate this vessel by steering a course of 236° for 35 miles and then 176° (T).** At about 1750 he sighted a destroyer or a light cruiser in Lat. 33° N., Long. 176°-40' E. on course 310°, speed 20. This was the destroyer TANIKAZE. He thereupon launched his attack in order as follows; ten planes of VS Squadron 3, six planes of VS Squadron 6, seven planes of VS Squadron 6 and nine planes of VS Squadron 5. These planes dropped thirty-two 500-pound bombs. The TANIKAZE maneuvered radically and opened fire with her anti-aircraft guns. No hits were observed. One dive bomber was lost in the attack. The remaining planes returned to TF 16 and landed without incident. One plane landed on the HORNET.

After all planes had been recovered, about 2035 CTF 16 reestimated the situation. His planes had reported that no targets had been sighted for 265 miles ahead, excepting the destroyer TANIKAZE which they had bombed. Actually, his planes had gone out 315 miles and had made no contacts other than the TANIKAZE. His planes had also reported the visibility ahead as not so favorable. CTF 16 decided that the enemy would be informed of the air attacks on the TANIKAZE and would therefore either continue on to get the protection of bad weather or would change course to the westward to head for Japan and to throw the Americans off. He decided that it would be desirable to change course to the westward and immediately set course at 263° (T). However, at 2045 the NORTHAMPTON reported a submarine contact at 281° (T), distant 12,000 yards. As a result, CTF 16 changed course to the south for 32 minutes. Then he altered course to 280° (T), and set the speed at 15 knots for the rest of the night. He chose 15 knots because he did not desire to engage any Japanese battleships during the night and because

*Supplemental Action Report, USS ENTERPRISE, Serial 0137, June 4-5, 1942 p.6.

**Action Report Commander Scouting Squadron 5, June 7, 1942.

he desired to conserve fuel particularly in his destroyers. He realized the urgency of early information and therefore made plans to launch an air search at daylight to cover the sector 180° to 360° to a radius of 200 miles.* At 2400 he was bearing 305° (T), distant 255 miles from Midway.

* * *

Meanwhile, CTF 17 had continued on to the eastward after leaving CTF 16 at about midnight. He steamed on course 090° (T) at 15 knots until 0544 when he reversed course to 270° (T) and reduced speed to 10 knots. At 0600 he was bearing 084° (T), distant 240 miles from Midway. Between 0604 and 0929 he transferred all YORKTOWN personnel, less a selected salvage crew, from the four destroyers BENHAM, ANDERSON, HAMMANN, BALCH to the PORTLAND. The selected salvage crew was transferred to the ASTORIA.**

At 1035 the HAMMANN came alongside the ASTORIA and took on board a salvage crew for return to the YORKTOWN. This took until 1127 when the HAMMANN cleared the ASTORIA.**

At 1230 CTF 17 changed course to 125° (T) and commenced fueling his destroyers from the PORTLAND.

At 1800 all fueling having been completed, CTF 17 directed the HAMMANN, BALCH and BENHAM to return to the YORKTOWN. He, himself, with the remainder of TF 17, headed on an easterly course to rendezvous with the FULTON and the PLATTE. The FULTON had been sent out from Pearl Harbor to remove the YORKTOWN survivors.

At 2400 he was bearing 080° (T), distant 315 miles from Midway and was on course 110° (T), speed 25 knots.

During the above time the YORKTOWN, protected by the destroyer HUGHES, had been drifting in its abandoned position.

At 0741 the HUGHES, observing machine gun bullet splashes in the water on the port side of the YORKTOWN, sent an investigating party and discovered that two wounded men had been left on the YORKTOWN when she had been abandoned the day before. The HUGHES also discovered, in addition to these men, three secret coding devices which had not been disposed of. Why these wounded men and the secret devices were not removed prior to the abandonment of the YORKTOWN is not clear, but their presence gives the appearance of unnecessary haste.***

At 1508 she was taken in tow by the VIREO (AT-144), which had been directed by CINCPAC on the preceding day (June 4th) to assist her. The VIREO

*CTF 13 Battle of Midway, Serial 0144-A of June 16, 1942, p.5.

**War Diary USS PORTLAND, June 1942, and War Diary USS ASTORIA, June 1942.

***Action Report USS HUGHES concerning operations in connection with USS YORKTOWN at Midway from time of her abandonment. Serial 003, June 11, 1942, p.1

then headed for Pearl Harbor at 3 knots.*

At 1800 the YORKTOWN protective screen was increased by the arrival of the MONAGHAN from TF 16 and of the OWIN from Pearl Harbor. The OWIN was en route to join TF 16 and was diverted by CINCPAC.

The towing operation proceeded slowly, owing to heavy seas, and at times the maximum speed of towing was 2 knots or less. At 2400 the YORKTOWN was about 025° (T), distant 140 miles from Midway.

OPERATIONS AT MIDWAY
0000 June 5th to 2400 June 5th

Meanwhile, operations at Midway were continuing. At 0000 June 5th CNAS Midway mindful of the success which had been accomplished by the night attack of the PBY's on the early morning of June 4th, ordered two PBY's to deliver a night torpedo attack on the same target, the Transport Group, which was reportedly approaching Midway from the westward. Since the records make no further mention of this flight, it is presumed that it failed to make contact.

During the remainder of the night the personnel on Midway were engaged in the servicing and rearming of B-17's, PBY's and scout bombers. Approximately 45,000 gallons of gasoline were hand pumped into these aircraft from 55-gallon drums. In addition, these planes were armed with 35 500-pound bombs.

At 0130 the Japanese submarine I-168 fired six shells at Midway, but caused no damage. The Midway defense batteries returned the fire, but made no hits.

As a result of this attack, which CNAS Midway realized was by a submarine, CNAS Midway reestimated the situation and arrived at the conclusion that this "sub was following original plan to create diversion to cover attack of a landing party. However, in view of the losses sustained by the Japanese, it was felt that when no further attacks developed, a retreat had been ordered and that the Japanese submarine commander was the proverbial one who didn't get "the word."**

This conclusion does not appear to have been made available to CTF 7, for CTF 7 does not seem to have arrived at a similar decision for some 24 hours. This is shown by the fact that he retained his submarines on the 12-mile circle from Midway until dawn on June 6th. Neither does CTF 7 appear to have communicated to CNAS Midway his conclusions that a landing was still expected on Midway.

*War Diary, USS VIREO, June 1942.

**Report of Comdr. Logan C. Ramsey, USN to CINCPAC, subject Air Operations of Midway Defense Forces during Battle of Midway, Serial 0027 dated June 15, 1942.

At 0140 four B-17's which were no longer considered fit for combat duty departed for Pearl Harbor.

At 0415 ten PBX search planes departed on a morning search with orders to cover the area between 250° (T) and 020° (T) to a radius of 250 miles.

At 0430 eight B-17's took to the air in accordance with the early morning practice at Midway of getting them airborne to avoid possible damage from air attack. After becoming airborne they were directed to attack the large enemy force discovered by the TAMBOR at 0215.

At 0615 the leader of the B-17 Group reported that he had run into unfavorable weather and was unable to locate the target.

At 0617 CNAS Midway received for a report from the TAMBOR which stated that he sighted two MOGAMI class cruisers bearing 272° (T), distant 115 miles from Midway, course west, speed 17, damaged.

At 0625 CNAS Midway directed the B-17 Group to return to Kure Island and there await instructions.

At 0630 CNAS Midway received a despatch from PBX 2V65 which reported two BB's bearing 265° (T), distant 125 miles from Midway on course 268° (T), speed 15. This despatch confirmed his previous estimate that the Japanese had ordered a retreat. Further confirmation soon followed, as other Japanese forces to the west and northwest were also reported retiring. CNAS Midway, acting on the 0630 contact, decided to attack the two BB's, and directed VMSB 241 to make this attack. In obedience to this directive six SB2U's and six SB2U's, each armed with one 500-pound bomb, took off from Midway at 0700 and headed for the reported contact. When about 45 minutes out from Midway they picked up an oil slick to the westward which they followed. This slick led them directly to the target, which proved to be the heavy cruisers MOGAMI and MIKUMA with two escorting destroyers.

At 0805 Commander VMSB 241 commenced his attack. The dive bombers attacked first, followed immediately by the SB2U's. They delivered a dive bombing attack from 10,000 feet. The SB2U's followed with a glide bombing attack from 4,000 feet. This attack met heavy and accurate anti-aircraft fire from the cruisers and destroyers. Although not definitely known, it appears that the leader of the SB2U group was hit by the anti-aircraft fire, for he maintained his dive and crashed into the after turret of the MIKUMA, starting fires and further reducing her speed.* Eleven 500-pound bombs were dropped. No hits other than the crashed plane were made.

Meanwhile, the leader of the B-17 group had turned about and succeeded in locating the same target. After the Marines had completed their attack, he launched his attack from an altitude of 20,000 feet, employing two 4-plane elements. He dropped 39 500-pound bombs and completed his attack by 0830. No hits were made according to Japanese records,** although he believed his force

*Interrogation Commander Otokichi SHIBATA, IJN, Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Vol.I. USSBS, p.270.

**Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6, ONI Review, May 1947, pp.55-61 incl. and Interrogation of Rear Admiral SOJI, IJN, Interrogations of Japanese officials, Vol.II, USSBS, p. 363.

had made one hit, two probable hits, and seven near misses.*

At 0815 patrol plane 6V55 reported three cruisers and destroyers screening a burning carrier bearing 324° (T), distant 240 miles from Midway on course 510° (T), speed 12, with two battleships well ahead. This burning carrier was the HIRYU, which sank shortly thereafter.

At 1020 patrol plane 10V55 reported TF 16 bearing 018° (T), distant 80 miles from Midway.

Meanwhile, CNAS Midway realized that it was important to destroy the Japanese carrier reported at 0815, and as he had heard nothing from CTF 16 nor from his own planes in this regard, he dispatched at 1320 an attack group of seven B-17's with a naval observer on board, presumably to assist in identification.

At 1430 the Strike Leader of this B-17 group reported sighting TF 16. He proceeded onward on course 300° (T) to a distance of about 400 miles from Midway. He failed to locate the objective. On his return he sighted a destroyer, the TANIKAZE, and decided to attack it. He, therefore, divided his planes into two elements, one of four planes and one of three, and commenced his attack at 1835 from an altitude of 16,000 feet. On this run the second element failed to drop its bombs, so it made a second run from an altitude of 14,500 feet. During these attacks the B-17's dropped 88 500-pound bombs. No hits were made according to Japanese records,** although the pilots claimed two hits, one probable hit and three near misses on a cruiser.*** The Japanese appear to have been caught by surprise, for the first attack was unopposed by AA fire, although the destroyer seems to have taken evasive action in both attacks. The second attack encountered anti-aircraft fire which was ineffective. This B-17 group returned to Midway.

At 1845 CNAS Midway despatched five B-17's to attack the carrier group to the northwest. This group, like the preceding one, failed to locate the designated target, but found the TANIKAZE. The leader of this B-17 group decided to attack this ship, and at 1945 delivered an attack from 11,000 feet, dropping fifteen 500-pound bombs and eight 300-pound bombs with unobserved results.**** The TANIKAZE countered by taking evasive action and by heavy anti-aircraft fire with the result that the bombers made no hits. Of the five planes which attacked, only three returned to Pearl Harbor. Two planes failed to return. One ran out of fuel and landed in the sea. All except one of its crew were recovered. The other plane was never heard on the radio. It was seen to have dropped its belly tank, due possibly to having been hit by AA fire. These two B-17's were the only B-17's lost during the Battle of Midway.

*Headquarters 7th Air Force Ltr dated 17 July 1942, Subject, Operational Report Air Force Employment at Midway, p.31.

**Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report #6 ONI Review, May 1947, pp.55-61 incl.

***US Aircraft Action with the Enemy Forces Report signed B.E.Allen, Lt.Col. AC, June 5th, 1942.

****Hdq. 7th Air Force ltr dated 17 July 1942, Subject, Operational Report Air Force Employment at Midway, p.3.

At 1845 ONAS Midway received a report from patrol plane ZV88 which stated that it was being attacked by fighters in a position bearing 318° (T), distant 580 miles from Midway. How this plane happened to be in this area is not explained in the information available to this study. However, it is presumed that both ONAS Midway and the Commander Patrol Planes were making every effort to locate the fleeing enemy forces and that planes were flying from Laysan, Lisianski and Midway throughout the day on such search missions.

During the evening of June 5th nothing significant occurred at Midway. ONAS Midway was busy refueling his planes, repairing the base, and preparing for the next day's operations. During the day of June 5th and the night of June 5th-6th between 70,000 and 75,000 gallons of gasoline were poured or pumped from 55 gallon drums in the servicing of the aircraft at Midway. Some pumping was done with gasoline driven pumps but the majority of it was pumped through hand pumps. This work was accomplished by Marine Air Group 22 personnel assisted by two Raider Companies.*

SUBMARINE FORCE
(AMERICAN)

0000 June 5th to 2400 June 5th

As has been pointed out previously, all submarines of the Midway patrol either had arrived or were en route to station on the 100-mile circle from Midway, where they were ordered to be by dawn. With the exception of the CUTLEFISH, all of them were able to reach their stations on time. The CUTLEFISH, stationed initially 700 miles west of Midway, was now also en route, but, owing to the great distance involved, she did not arrive by 0800.

The Support Patrol and the Oahu Patrol were on the stations originally assigned (Diagram "B").

At 0400 CTF 7 at Pearl Harbor received the TAMBOR's report of "Many unidentified ships." The TAMBOR had made this contact at 0215, and had received a receipt for it from Midway at 0308. As previously indicated CTF 7 now consulted with CINCPAC at Pearl Harbor. As a result of this conference, both commanders were of the opinion that a landing attempt by the Japanese forces proceeding from the west was still possible. Therefore, at 0809 CTF 7 released a despatch which directed all ships of the Midway Patrol to take station on a circle of five miles radius from Midway, but to remain in their previously assigned sectors.** Eight minutes later both Midway and Pearl Harbor received for an amplifying report by the TAMBOR, which report stated that the two MOGAMI type cruisers were damaged and proceeding west at 17 knots from a position bearing 272° (T), distant 115 miles from Midway.

*Commander Naval Base Air Defense Aircraft in Battle of Midway, Serial 0026 of June 30th, 1942.

**CTF 7 Action Report, Battle of Midway, Serial 0887 of July 31st, 1942, p.3

This action by CINCPAC and by CTF 7 indicates the lack of information which appears to have obtained at Pearl Harbor at this time. The Midway search planes, which had been on search since 0415, had not disclosed any evidence that enemy forces were nearby, and yet on the assumption that they were nearby, the submarines were ordered in to an unfruitful area.

Meanwhile, at 0955 CTF 7 directed the Support Patrol--**NANWHAL**, **PLUNGER** and **TRIGGER**--to proceed west at best speed to designated points on the 100-mile circle north of Midway, and to search for survivors. These three submarines were directed to leave the search area in time to arrive on the 12-mile circle from Midway by the following dawn. Thus was initiated by CTF 7 what appears to have been the first instance of Air Sea Rescue by submarines of aviators down in combat in the Central Pacific, if not in the entire Pacific. That such rescues by submarines were of unquestioned importance, became more and more evident as the Pacific War progressed. Not only did they improve the morale of the airmen, and thus their fighting qualities, but also they saved for the Nation trained airmen scarcely replaceable. The Japanese, on the other hand, except on rare occasions, did not make much effort to save their pilots. They apparently underestimated the value of their original pilots, most of whom had enjoyed long peacetime and combat training, and they did not appear to have felt that the loss of these pilots might have a serious effect on their future operations.

The **PLUNGER** and the **TRIGGER** complied with CTF 7's order, but the **NANWHAL**, because of engine trouble, proceeded directly to the 12-mile circle.**

At 0829 CTF 7 changed the radius of the circle for the Midway Patrol from 5 to 12 miles.**

At 1030 the **GUDBON**, en route from the 100-mile circle to her position on the 12-mile circle, sighted TF 16 pursuing the enemy to the westward and exchanged recognition signals with one carrier.***

At 1142 CTF 7 notified the Midway Patrol and the Support Patrol to be careful not to attack units of TF 16 and TF 17.**

At 1224 CTF 7 ordered the **TAMBOUR**, **TROUT**, and **GRAYLING** to sink a damaged enemy battleship in position bearing 264° (T), distant 126 miles from Midway.**** This despatch appears to have been based on the 0650-0652 contact report made by Midway search planes which reported two damaged battleships bearing 264° (T), distant 125 miles from Midway on course 268° (T), speed 15. It is apparent

*War Diary, USS **NANWHAL**.

**CTF 7 Act on Report Battle of Midway, Ser.0667, July 31st, 1942, p.4.

***War Diary USS **GUDBON**, May 15th to June 30th, 1942, p.6.

****War Patrol Report USS **TROUT**, May-June 1942.

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that more than 8 hours had elapsed between the receipt of the above report and the time action was initiated.

At 1847 CTF 7 ordered the Oahu Patrol to take station on the 250-mile circle northwest of Oahu. He did this because, "the locations and intentions of the enemy were not yet clear and the possibility existed of a raiding force proceeding towards Oahu."

Nothing further of interest occurred during the afternoon until 1809 when CTF 7 ordered the GROUPER, FLYING FISH, and GUDGON to a position bearing 310° (T), distant 200 miles from Midway. He directed them, "to search for two BB, three CA and about ten DD and two burning CV's reported in that position." This directive appears to have been based upon contact reports made to Midway by search planes between 0719 and 0800--some 10 to 11 hours earlier.

Also about this time, the CUTLEFISH was ordered to search for stragglers at her 1809 position which was about 350 miles from Midway.

All other submarines not specifically ordered to other stations, as noted above, closed Midway to the 12-mile circle. They arrived on this new station at various times in the afternoon where they remained during the night.

* * *

CTF 11 in the CHESTER continued on towards Pearl Harbor and made good an average 20.5 knots. At 2400 he was in approximate position, Lat. $30^{\circ}-10'$ N., Long. $150^{\circ}-10'$ W.**

TG 11.1 continued on towards Pearl Harbor throughout the day and made good an average of 10 knots. At 2400 he was in approximate position bearing 050° , distant 80 miles from Pearl Harbor.**

* * *

CTF 1, who had remained at anchor during the first two days of the action must have chafed at his failure to receive orders. He decided on his own initiative to take his command into the combat area. He stated later that he did this so that he might "be in a position to intercept the enemy if they broke through or evaded our forces at Midway, or landed in the Hawaiian Islands, and also to stand by to bombard the Japanese after they invaded Midway or landed in the Hawaiian Islands."****

Therefore, on June 5th he issued his Operation Order 8-42 wherein he assigned himself a mission, "To cruise to the westward in order to support the current operations against the enemy."***** In compliance with this order,

*CTF 7 Action Report, Battle of Midway, Ser. 0887, July 31st, 1942, p.4.

**War Diary, CTF 11, June 1942, p.6.

***War Diary, USS SARATOGA, June 1942, p.6.

****Memorandum by Capt. Clarkson J. Bright, USN concerning TF 1 and Battle of Midway, Naval War College, 26 January 1948.

*****CINCPAC Ser. 01849 of 28 June 1942 (Addenda to report on Battle of Midway)

which was effective immediately, he sortied from San Francisco at 0730 June 5th.

He had with him on June 5th the battleships PENNSYLVANIA, IDAHO, TENNESSEE, NEW MEXICO, and MISSISSIPPI, screened by the destroyers CRAVEN, DUNLAP, DALE, FANNING, and AARON WARD, and supported by the converted escort carrier LONG ISLAND. He had assembled this force from several sources. The battleships were his own; the five destroyers had been assigned originally by CINCPAC as part of TF 11 for the defense of Midway but had been ordered by CINCPAC on May 30th to report to CTF 1 for duty*, and the LONG ISLAND had recently arrived in San Francisco. TF 11 had been placed temporarily under his command while undergoing repairs on the West Coast. The air complement of the LONG ISLAND consisted at this time of twelve F4F fighters and eight SOC (cruiser type) planes with wheels installed in place of floats.

He headed for the 0800 June 6th rendezvous with TU 1.1.4 consisting of the MARYLAND, COLORADO, FORSTER, DRAYTON and CUSHING. This rendezvous had been designated in the Operation Order as Lat. 37°-40' N., Long. 127°-45' W. or about 260 miles due west of San Francisco. At 2400 he was in Lat. 37°-50' N., Long. 126°-45' W.

TU 1.1.4 also headed for this rendezvous and was at 2400 at Lat. 40°-30' N., Long. 132°-45' W.

Students of naval warfare will wish to know how CTF 1 planned with only the LONG ISLAND for aircover, to defend his battleship force against enemy aircraft should they succeed in breaking through or evading our forces at Midway, or how he planned to bombard a Japanese invaded Midway or a landing in the Hawaiian Islands. Certainly the Japanese could scarcely seize a resolutely defended Midway or Hawaiian Islands without having first obtained air superiority.

JAPANESE OPERATIONS 0000 June 5th to 2400 June 6th

CinC Combined Fleet with the Main Force, the Second Fleet and the remnants of the Mobile Force continued on a westerly course towards the fueling rendezvous in Lat. 35° N., Long. 165° E. He expected to be joined shortly by the cruisers KUMANO and SUEYUA, which, with their two escorting destroyers, the MICHISHIO and OSHIO, at midnight bore about 195° (T), distant 80 miles from the Main Force and were on a closing course.

The damaged cruisers MOGAMI and MIKUMA with their two escorting destroyers, the ARASHIO and ABASHIO, were moving out of the combat area, and at midnight bore 155° (T), distant 275 miles from the Main Force and 275° (T), distant 340 miles from Midway Island. They were proceeding to join the Transport Group, which with its Seaplane Group and its Close Escort Unit was heading to the westward, and at midnight was bearing 275° (T), distant 660 miles from Midway.

CinC Combined Fleet had been alerted on the preceding afternoon by the attacks on the destroyer TANIKAZE. He realized at that time that his forces

*CINCPAC Operation Plan 89-48, Ser. 0114W of 27 May 1942.

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were being pursued, but he appears to have felt reasonably confident that he had extricated them. However, he could not be certain, for if the pursuit were continued, certain of his ships, notably the MOGAMI and MIKUMA, were probable targets. At 0950 the MOGAMI and MIKUMA were attacked by American dive bombers.*

The attack on the MOGAMI and MIKUMA and the destroyers commenced at 0950 June 6th, and consisted of three separate dive bombing attacks. The first attack was made by dive bombers which approached from the northeast. The cruisers and destroyers maneuvered, and delivered heavy anti-aircraft fire. The MOGAMI was hit by two bombs, one of which pierced the top of Turret 5, killing everyone inside the turret. The other bomb hit amidships, damaging the torpedo tubes and starting fires below decks. The MIKUMA was hit by two or three bombs in this attack. The ARASHIO was hit by a bomb in the stern, which damaged her slightly, but did not disable her.**

At 1215 this group was subjected to another dive bomber attack which came in from the southwestward. All ships maneuvered and put up anti-aircraft fire, but with little success. The MOGAMI was hit again by two bombs; one of which hit amidships, and the other hit just forward of the bridge. The MIKUMA was also heavily hit by many bombs and set on fire. Every effort was made to extinguish these fires. The destroyer ARASHIO attempted to go alongside the MIKUMA to assist in the fire fighting, but because of the intensity of the fire she was unable to do so. Some of the MIKUMA personnel either jumped into the water or were blown overboard. Most of these were recovered by the ARASHIO.

By this time the MOGAMI and MIKUMA had suffered severely and there must have been a serious question as to whether the MIKUMA would finally survive. However, this question was soon resolved, for at about 1445 these two cruisers were given their third and last attack of the day. Once again the cruisers endeavored to avoid damage by maneuver and gunfire, but the gunfire was now weak and ineffective. The MOGAMI appears to have received one additional hit, which pierced the deck and did heavy personnel damage below decks. The MIKUMA, which was practically helpless, was heavily hit again and sank shortly after dark. The destroyer ARASHIO was hit by a bomb in the stern, which disabled her

*No Japanese records relating to the particulars of the 3 attacks on these cruisers are known to exist. The description contained herein is provided from interrogations conducted by the U.S. Strategic Bomb Survey of R. Adm. SOJI, IJN, Interrogation Nav. No. 83; Commander O. Shibata, IJN, Interrogation Nav. No. 66; Lt. Cdr. Nishikawa, IJN, Interrogation Nav. No. 68.
**Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Vol. I, USSBS, p. 270, Interrogation of Commander Otokichi Shibata, IJN, also Japanese reply to USSBS Memorandum No. 11 of 16 Oct. 1945, reply dated 17 November.

steering gear, but she was able to proceed with the MOGAMI. This bomb hit on the ARASHIO killed many of the MIKUMA survivors who were on deck.* At 2400 the MOGAMI was in Lat. 29°-45' N., Long. 171°-40' E.

CinC Combined Fleet, from the report of the first of these attacks, placed the American carrier task force to the eastward of and in the vicinity of the MOGAMI Group. His intelligence reported enemy cruiser based type aircraft observing the MOGAMI group. He decided to make every effort to protect that group.

He realized that the best method of protecting this group during the night was by increasing its strength with cruisers and destroyers. He realized that he not only had to protect this force against night attack, but also he had to protect it against day attack. This he apparently hoped to accomplish by the vastly increased anti-aircraft fire which this Screening Group would provide for the MOGAMI group.

Finally, he realized that a possibility for decisive action under favorable conditions also existed. The number of land based aircraft on Wake Island could be increased from the nearby bases in the Marshall Islands. With his air strength thus augmented, CinC Combined Fleet presumably felt that he could then undertake decisive action against the American carrier task force, provided such action took place within effective range of the aircraft on Wake--about 600 miles. Perhaps the ZUIHO with the Main Force would be in a supporting position, as this force could by the following morning reach a position within effective range of aircraft on Wake and had been directed by him to prepare to attack enemy carrier.**

In furtherance of this plan he constituted a new task force which he called the Screening Force, assigned to it seven cruisers and eight destroyers and gave it the task of contacting, attacking, and destroying the enemy aircraft carrier force.** These were the KUMANO and SUZUYA of Crudiv 7; ATAGO and CHOKAI of Crudiv 4; TONE and CHIKUMA of Crudiv 8, and the JINTSU of Desron 8; also the destroyers HATSUKAZE, YUKIKAZE, AMATSUKAZE, TOKITSUKAZE, KASUMI, ARARA, KAGERO and SHIRANUKI.*** At about 1800 this force turned southward at 20 knots to rendezvous with the MOGAMI and MIKUMA.***

While en route to this rendezvous Commander Screening Force appears to have decided that rather than rendezvous with the MOGAMI group during the night, he would endeavor to obtain a covering position between the enemy and that group.*** Whether he took any positive action to locate the enemy is not known. He must have launched a ship based plane search during the afternoon to search in the most probable danger area, which his information indicated was to the eastward of the MOGAMI group. Such a search appears to have been directed by CinC Occupa-

*Interrogation of R. Adm. Soji, IJN, Interrogation of Japanese officials, Vol. II, USSBS, p. 363.

**Midway Occupation Force Despatch Op. Order #15. Records of the Converted Sea-plane Tender KAMIKAWA MARU, WDU 160682.

***Interrogation of Capt. Y. Toyama, IJN, U.C. Strategic Bombing Survey, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Vol. I, p. 282.

tion Force in his DesOpOrd No. 18 issued at 1340.* In addition, he may have launched a destroyer search during the night; he may have formed a covering screen to cover the more probable directions of enemy approach; or he may have remained concentrated. The information is silent on these points. Suffice it to say that he made preparations for night action "in case fast units of the American Fleet were there.**"

At 1550 Cinc Combined Fleet advised his subordinate commanders by despatch as to his plans. This stated:

1. The Combined Fleet plans to contact and destroy the enemy task force when it is within effective air range of Wake Island.
2. The Main Force, the remainder of the Second Fleet, and the remainder of the Mobile Force will proceed at 1630 southward from Lat. 33°-24' N., Long. 169° E. on course 180° (T) at 18 knots. (Note: an interpretation of a number of different translations)
3. The Aleutian Late Support Group will support the Northern Force.
4. Base Air Force will attack the enemy with all its forces.
5. The supply units of the Main Force and the Second Fleet will arrive at Lat. 29° N., 166° E. tomorrow afternoon and will report their arrival time.***

In accordance with this despatch, which had changed the fueling rendezvous from Lat. 33° N., Long. 170° E. to Lat. 29° N., Long. 166° E., Cinc Combined Fleet changed course at 1630 to 180° (T) and speed to 18 knots. He continued on this course without incident. At 2400 he was in Lat. 31° 06' N., Long. 169°-55' E.

* * *

Meanwhile, Commander Base Air Force had been alerted into action by his receipt of Combined Fleet Secret Despatch #531, wherein he was directed to attack the enemy with all of his forces. He commenced concentrating his air power on Wake to the capacity of the airfield. At dawn on June 6th his air strength at Wake Island was thirteen fighters and fifteen attack planes of the CHITOSE Air Group and nine attack planes of the MISAWA Air Group. He ordered eight land attack planes of the 1st Air Group to report immediately to Wake Island from Tarea. These planes arrived during the evening of June 6th. He also ordered eighteen additional land attack planes and four additional fighters from Rei and Tarea to report to Wake Island, which planes arrived on the following day. A total of seventeen fighters and fifty attack planes were accommodated on the field.

Records of the Converted Seaplane Tender KAMIKAWA MARU, 25 May-18 June 1942, WDC 160683, p.10.

**Interrogation of Capt. Y. Toyama, IJN, U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, Interrogation of Japanese officials, Vol. I, p. 288

***Combined Fleet Secret Despatch #531, Air Fleet 24, War Diary, p.68 of Translation.

He then, at 2110, issued his classified despatch No. 77, which concerned the contemplated operations. This despatch stated:

1. While the enemy task force is operating northeast of Wake, the units of the Combined Fleet will attempt to contact and destroy him within effective air range of Wake.
2. C.O. 4th Air Attack Force will--contact and destroy the enemy carriers by utilizing the detachments at Wake as designated by the C.O.-----"

At 1240 he issued an amplifying despatch, Operation Order No. 47, which directed that:

"The Wake Island Land Attack Plane Detachment of the 2nd Force will take off 30 minutes before sunrise equipped for torpedo attack. Planes of the land attack unit, which are not on patrol, equipped for torpedo attack will be on 30 minutes standby from sunrise until 1100."*

Except for arrival of new planes and the preparations being made to oppose the American carrier forces, nothing of interest appears to have occurred at Wake throughout the day.

* * *

The Transport Group, which was escorted by the Escort Unit and the Seaplane Group, continued moving westward at 11 knots. At about 1340 Commander Seaplane Group, who was in command, received despatch information of the air attacks on the MOGAMI and MIKUMA. He immediately issued a directive to his command which stated:

"Section 2 of Crudiv 7 is engaging enemy carrier planes and reconnaissance planes at about 300 miles to the east; enemy carrier and surface vessels are apparently in pursuit in the area; put strict radio transmission silence and anti-aircraft and anti-submarine patrols into effect."**

At this same time, Commander Seaplane Group received Commander Occupation Force Despatch Operation Order #15 which stated in part his plan for night action and assigned tasks to the seaplanes. Ten minutes later, at 1350, the CHITOSE directed the KAMIKAWA MARU and Patrol Boat #55 to "take up position to the right rear of the convoy." For reasons which are unexplained, it was not until 1640 that Commander Seaplane Group became alarmed at the possibility of an encounter with the enemy. At that time he sent a message to all ships of the Transport Group directing "Hoist numeral signals indicating maximum possible speed."***

*Extracts from the War Diaries Air Flot 24 May-July 1942, CIG 96417

**Argentina Maru Combat Report 38, May-13 June WDC 160232

***Records of Converted Seaplane Tender KAMIKAWA MARU, Translation from WDC 160682, p.10.

Meanwhile, he estimated his situation. It is possible that he reasoned along the following lines. He had little means of defense against air attack except maneuver and anti-aircraft fire. These had not proven a particularly effective means of defense against carrier aircraft even when augmented by fighter cover, as had been demonstrated by the misfortune of the Mobile Force. He had slight hope that his Transport Group would be able to defend itself against such air attack. His defense against submarines was also limited, consisting of three destroyers in an anti-submarine screen, several patrol boats, and a limited number of aircraft in an anti-submarine air patrol. He appears to have decided therefore that it would be unwise to limit the freedom of action of his faster ships to that of his slower ships, and gave orders accordingly.

Therefore at 1750, as a result of the replies received to the above signal and as a result of his estimate, he broke the Transport Group into three units; one capable of 16 knots, one of 14 knots, and one of 13 knots, and directed that they proceed on the planned course at the above speeds. At 2400 these groups were in about Lat. 29° N., Long. 164°-20' E.

* * *

Submarine Squadrons 3 and 5 proceeded on course 285° (T) until they received word of the air attack on the MOGAMI and MIKUMA. At this time they changed course to the west in order to close the Striking Force.

The I-168, which had been searching for the damaged YORKTOWN, chanced upon her on the early afternoon of June 6th and torpedoed her. The details of this attack are not available. However, she apparently executed a courageous and clever attack against destroyer opposition, as a result of which she was severely attacked with depth charges in return. Her storage batteries and her forward and after torpedo tubes were so seriously damaged as to necessitate her return to Kure for repairs.*

STRIKING FORCE
0000 June 6th to 2400 June 6th

At 0000 TF 16 was in a position bearing 305° (T), distant 255 miles from Midway. CTF 16 continued on to the westward on course 280° (T), speed 15 knots. His task force was in cruising disposition 11-V in which the carriers were separated into two single carrier task groups about 8 miles apart.

The weather was clear with excellent visibility but with a few scattered cumulus clouds (2/10 overcast). The wind was from the southwest at 16 knots and the sea smooth.

*War Diary 6th Fleet 1-30 June 1942-Translation of WDC 160268, p.4.

At 0500 when TF 16 was bearing 300° (T), distant 340 miles from Midway, the ENTERPRISE, in accordance with instructions from CTF 16, commenced launching fifteen ENTERPRISE dive bombers and three HORNET dive bombers. The latter had landed on the ENTERPRISE the night before. These eighteen dive bombers were to search a sector 180° (T) through west to 360° (T) from TF 16 to a distance of 200 miles.* Each plane was armed with one 500-pound bomb. The search group departed at 0510.

At about the same time the ENTERPRISE and the HORNET each launched six fighters for combat air patrol. Thereafter throughout the day the combat air patrol for the Task Force was maintained at from 8-12 planes.

At 0645 HORNET plane 882 reported by voice radio, "1 BB, 1 CA, 3 DD, Lat. 29°-33' N., Long. 174°-30' E. on course 270° (T), speed 10." Unfortunately, this contact report was received on board the ENTERPRISE, and hence by CTF 16 as "1 CV and 5 DD."** The position placed the enemy group as bearing 233° (T), distant 128 miles from TF 16 at the time of contact. This plane immediately returned to the HORNET, and at about 0815 reported correctly "1 BB, 1 CA, 3 DD" by message drop and verbally. This information was signalled to CTF 16 by the HORNET.

At 0730 HORNET plane 888 returned to the ENTERPRISE and made a message drop. This drop reported "2 CA's, 2 DD's, Lat. 28°-55' N., Long 175°-10' E., course 215° (T), speed 15."** This position placed this enemy group as bearing 209° (T), 133 miles from TF 16 at the time of contact, which is assumed to have been about 0645.

A plot of both of the ^{actually 112} above contacts shows that the position of the second contact was bearing 139° (T), distant 52 miles from the first contact. CTF 16 now felt that he had discovered two groups of enemy surface ships. However, such was not the case, for there was but one Japanese group in the area at the time. This group was composed of the MOGAMI, MIKUMA, ARASHIO, and ASASHIO. The error arose from an incorrect contact report. Strange as it may appear, subsequent air strikes, as well as reconnaissance by cruiser planes, failed to clarify the situation, and CTF 16 continued to believe that he had contacted two different groups.

CTF 16 decided to search the area further. This was apparently done in order to amplify the previous contact reports as well as to endeavor to locate other Japanese ships. At 0710 he ordered a search by cruiser planes. At 0749 the MINNEAPOLIS and NEW ORLEANS launched two planes each. These planes were directed to search the sector 209°-269° (T) to a distance of 150 miles from the ENTERPRISE and to track any ships located.***

Meanwhile, TF 16 had been preparing to launch an attack. At 0757 the HORNET launched an air attack group. This consisted of twelve dive bombers

*Action Report USS HORNET, Battle of Midway, Ser. 0018, June 18, 1942, p. 6.

**Action Report USS ENTERPRISE, Battle of Midway, Ser. 0133, June 8, 1942, p. 6

***War Diary Comrudiv 6 (CTG 16.2) June 1942, p. 78.

of Bombing Squadron 8; fourteen dive bombers of Scouting Squadron 8; and eight fighters of Fighting Squadron 8. Some of these planes were armed with one 1000-pound bomb each; others with one 500-pound bomb. Although no air opposition had been reported by the pilots making contact, the Commanding Officer HORNET had included the fighters in the above attack group "in case previously undetected air opposition was encountered."* This was sound procedure, for he also considered that it was possible that these two recently discovered groups of enemy ships might not be all that were in the area. Under these conditions it was sound judgment to protect the air strike groups.

After the launching had been completed, CTF 16 closed the contact at 25 knots. The wind was from the southwest, which expedited closing as it permitted air operations to be conducted while on or near the fleet course.

At 0930 the Leader of the HORNET Air Group sighted an enemy force consisting of two heavy cruisers and two destroyers and attacked at about 0950. He approached from the direction of the sun. The Japanese maneuvered, and put up "brisk" anti-aircraft fire. However, the HORNET dive bombers succeeded in delivering an effective attack on both cruisers and on one destroyer. They dropped eighteen 1000-pound and eight 500-pound bombs. They claimed two 1000-pound bomb hits and one 500-pound bomb hit on a battleship, with two near misses; two 1000-pound bomb hits on the CA and one 500-pound bomb hit on the stern of one destroyer. The fighters were employed to strafe the destroyers.* One dive bomber was shot down by Japanese anti-aircraft fire. The Japanese say that on this attack the MOGAMI was hit by two bombs, the MIKUMA by two or three, and the ASASHIO was hit by one bomb. This verifies the claims of the HORNET, excepting that no battleship was present.

After this attack the HORNET planes returned to their carrier and landed aboard at 1035.

While the above operation was going on, the ENTERPRISE at about 0815 recovered her search planes, and prepared her air attack group for a follow-up attack. At 1045 she launched a group of thirty-one dive bombers with orders to attack the target recently attacked by the HORNET group. The attack group consisted of five dive bombers of Bombing Squadron 6; nine dive bombers of Scouting Squadron 8; ten dive bombers of Bombing Squadron 3; seven dive bombers of Scouting Squadron 5; and twelve fighters of Fighting Squadron 8. All dive bombers were armed with one 1000-pound 1/100 sec. fuse bomb. While en route to the target the leader of the ENTERPRISE Air Group (Commander Scouting Squadron 5) was directed by voice radio to search for and attack a battleship believed to be about 40 miles ahead of the force assigned as a target. He was also informed that three torpedo planes would be launched to join in the attack. The Group therefore began to climb for altitude to permit the torpedo planes to rendezvous. However, neither radio nor sight contact was made. It appears that the torpedo planes were directed not to attack if there was enemy opposition.**

*Action Report USS HORNET, Battle of Midway, Ser. 0018 June 13, 1942, p. 5.

**Supplementary Action Report USS ENTERPRISE, Battle of Midway, Ser. 0137 of June 13th, 1942, p. 7-8.

At 1100 MINNEAPOLIS plane #5 reported, "carrier sunk--2 CA's and 2 DD's on course 275° (T), speed 22 knots."

At 1147 CTF 16 directed the MAURY and the WORDEN to proceed in company and rendezvous with the CIMARRON for fueling in Lat. 32°-00' N., Long. 178°-00' W. This left CTF 16 with but four destroyers, the PHELPS, ALYWIN, CONYNGHAM and ELLET. CTF 16 stated that he was determined to pursue the enemy to his maximum capability. In order to accomplish this he was willing to retire those destroyers from his task force whose fuel requirements necessitated it, until he had been reduced to a minimum of four destroyers which he required for anti-submarine defense. He had now reached that minimum.

At 1200 the Leader of the ENTERPRISE Air Group sighted the MOGAMI group about 30 miles to his southwest, on a southwesterly course--about 240° (T)--and making approximately 26 knots.* The visibility was excellent and the ceiling unlimited except for a few scattered clouds.

He noted that no battleship was present with this group, so he continued the search. He searched for 30 miles in advance of the MOGAMI Group, but failing to discover any battleship, he returned to attack that group. He began his approach from 21,000 feet from out of the sun and down wind. At about this time he received instructions from CTF 16 to expedite his attack. The dive bombers attacked both the MOGAMI and MIKUMA at 1215 and dropped 31 1000-pound bombs. He employed six fighters to strafe each destroyer to reduce its anti-aircraft fire. These attacks were met by moderate anti-aircraft fire, mostly automatic fire and by maneuver. As a result of this attack he considered that his planes had heavily hit both cruisers, one of them being dead in the water.* The MOGAMI appeared to have been actually hit twice; the MIKUMA many times.** The ENTERPRISE group suffered no losses in this attack.

At 1200 the cruiser search planes were recalled, and at 1325 they were recovered, having sighted nothing which had not previously been reported.

At 1345 the HORNET finished launching another air attack group to complete the destruction.*** She launched twenty-four dive bombers of VB Squadron 8 and VS Squadron 8, and eight fighters for this attack. All dive bombers were armed with one 1000-pound 1/100 sec. fuse bombs. All proceeded to the attack with the exception of one, which was forced to return to the HORNET.***

It is of interest to note that at this time TF 16 had closed to within 90 miles of the MOGAMI group, and the pilots at altitude could see both forces at the same time. CTF 16 continued to close.

At 1415 the ENTERPRISE recovered her air attack group and combat air patrol. This latter assignment was taken over by the HORNET. Three of the ENTERPRISE dive bombers landed on board the HORNET.

*Supplementary Action Report USS ENTERPRISE, Battle of Midway, Ser. 0187, June 13, 1942 p.8.

**Interrogation R. Adm. Akira Soji, IJN. Interrogations of Japanese officials, Vol. II. USSBS, p. 363.

***Action Report USS HORNET., Battle of Midway, Ser. 0018, June 13th, 1942, p.6.

At 1430 the leader of HORNET Air Attack Group sighted the enemy and attacked at 1448. This time he met much less opposition from anti-aircraft fire, and the enemy maneuvering was less effective. He attacked both cruisers and apparently one or both destroyers with 23 1000-pound bombs. He considered that his attack had been highly successful. He claimed one 1000-pound bomb hit on one CA; six 1000-pound bomb hits on the other CA and one 1000-pound bomb hit on one destroyer.* This estimate appears quite accurate. The MOGAMI appears to have received one additional hit; the MIKUMA several additional hits and the destroyer ARASHIO one hit.** The HORNET Air Attack Group suffered no losses.

At 1528 the HORNET recovered her air attack group.

At 1558 the ENTERPRISE launched two dive bombers to photograph the damage to the enemy group. As a result of these pictures and of the pilot reports, CTF 16 decided that one CA would sink during the night, which it did.*** It is of interest that there is constant reference by the pilots to the fact that one cruiser was considerably larger than the other and that the larger cruiser or battleship was the one heavily damaged. This differentiation is not understood, for the MOGAMI and MIKUMA were sister ships of about 14,500 tons displacement. Perhaps the mast structures were different, with that of the MIKUMA the more massive.

Meanwhile, CTF 16 reestimated the situation. His pilots were tired, having fought steadily for three days; the fuel of his destroyers was low; night was coming on; he was nearing the outer range of Japanese aircraft based on Wake. It appeared that nothing further was to be gained by continued pursuit except possible damage to his own forces. He therefore decided to retire to the north of Midway for refueling, and at 1907 changed course and axis to 080° (T), assumed an anti-aircraft cruising disposition, and headed at 15 knots for the fueling rendezvous with the CIMARRON and GUADALUPE, which rendezvous was directed by CINCPAC.

At 2400 he was in Lat. 30°-40' N., Long. 175°-45' E.

* * *

CTF 17 with the ASTORIA, PORTLAND, ANDERSON, RUSSELL and MORRIS, proceeded towards the rendezvous with the FULTON and the PLATTE on course 110° (T), speed 25 knots. Meanwhile, the HUGHES was part of the protective screen of the damaged YORKTOWN, and the HAMMANN, which was in company with the BALCH and BENHAM, was en route to rejoin the YORKTOWN.

*Action Report USS HORNET, Battle of Midway, Ser. 0018, June 18th, 1942, p.6.

**Interrogation R. Adm. Akira Soji, IJN, Interrogation of Japanese officials, Vol. II USSBS, p.363.

***Action Report CTF 16, Battle of Midway, Ser. 0144-A, June 16, 1942. p.6.

At 0440 June 6th CTF 17 detached the PORTLAND, RUSSELL, and MORRIS to rendezvous with the FULTON for the purpose of transferring survivors, while he himself with the ASTORIA and ANDERSON continued eastward to rendezvous with the PLATTE for the purpose of fueling.

At 1233 CTF 17 sighted the PLATTE, which was escorted by the DEWEY, and at 1315 the ASTORIA went alongside the PLATTE for fuel. Between that hour and 1645 the PLATTE fueled the ASTORIA, ANDERSON, and DEWEY.* Upon completion of fueling, the ASTORIA, PLATTE, ANDERSON, and DEWEY headed for a rendezvous with the PORTLAND, RUSSELL, and MORRIS.

The PORTLAND, RUSSELL, and MORRIS rendezvoused with the FULTON at 1105 June 6th and commenced transferring personnel. The transfer was completed by 1945. This transfer of personnel was not effected very rapidly because of a submarine contact which caused the operations to be temporarily suspended. Upon completion of transfer of personnel the PORTLAND, RUSSELL, and MORRIS headed for a rendezvous with CTF 17.**

Meanwhile, the YORKTOWN was having difficulties. Owing to the lack of power and the heavy engine load, the tug VIREO was forced to slow down so much as to practically lose steerageway. At 0200 the 8th, the HAMMANN, BALCH, and BENHAM joined the YORKTOWN as screen. At about 0415 the HAMMANN secured to the starboard side of the YORKTOWN to commence salvage and counter-flooding.*** While this was underway, the ships in a protective circle were the GWIN, HUGHES, MONAGHAN, BENHAM, and BALCH. At 1336 the HAMMANN was hit by one torpedo and the YORKTOWN by two torpedoes; all hits were on the starboard side. The HAMMANN sank immediately, her depth charges exploding beneath the YORKTOWN. Efforts were made to rescue survivors and to destroy the submarine. At 1410 the VIREO cut the main tow line. It was decided to postpone further salvage attempts for the time being and remove the salvage crews to the destroyers.**** The screening vessels began patrolling the area in the vicinity of the YORKTOWN.

At 1550 the YORKTOWN was abandoned for the second time. Although there was one additional submarine alert later, no other attacks were made. At 2400 the YORKTOWN Group was in Lat. 30°-46' N. Long. 167°-24' W.

CNAS MIDWAY
0000 June 6th to 2400 June 6th

With the approach of dawn the activities at Midway increased, owing to the necessity for making the daily patrol plane search. By this time the magnitude of the American success in destroying Japanese air power was apparent. Consequently, CNAS Midway does not appear to have launched his B-17's at dawn. It is probable that he alerted the remaining planes of Marine Air Group 22. However, as the latest intelligence placed the enemy beyond the range of the

*War Diary USS PLATTE, June 1942, p.7.

**War Diary USS PORTLAND, June 1942, p.12.

***Action Report Battle of Midway, USS HAMMANN, June 18th, 1942, p.3.

****Action Report Battle of Midway, USS YORKTOWN, June 18th, 1942, p.7.

Marine aircraft and as the number of planes available was very limited, he may not have done so. The following planes were all that appear to have remained on Midway: thirteen PBV-5, fifteen PBV-5A, and PB2Y-2 of Patrol Wing Two; three P2A-3; one F4F-3; and six SBD-2 and five SE2U-3 of Marine Air Group 23; one TBF of Torpedo Squadron 8 Detachment and nineteen B-17's, two B-26 and two C-53 of the Seventh Bomber Command.* Some of the above planes were damaged and not fit for action. Among these were one PBV-5, one PBV-5A, one TBF, two B-26, and four B-17's. Sometime in the early morning the number of B-17's was increased to thirty through the arrival of eleven B-17's from Pearl Harbor. The number of PBV-5A's was increased by two. The PB2Y-2 and the two C-53 planes departed for Pearl Harbor.

At 0433 the patrol planes departed to search the sector 220° (T) and 330° (T) to a distance of 600 miles. No information is available as to the number of planes employed but, on the basis of the searches made on June 1st and 2nd, it would seem that fourteen planes would have been adequate. The visibility was excellent, and the search coverage was reported as 100%. On two occasions submarines were sighted which submerged promptly.

At 1030 CNAS Midway was advised by CINCPAC concerning enemy forces as follows: one BB and five DD bearing 278° (T), distant 510 from Midway, course 270° (T), speed 10; two CA, two DD's bearing 263° (T), distant 480 miles from Midway, course 216° (T), speed 16. As has been pointed out earlier, these were not two separate groups but were instead one group. The difference in position and composition was probably due to errors in reporting and to errors in communications.

As a result of this message from CINCPAC and of his own evaluations, CNAS Midway selected the two heavy cruisers and the two destroyers as the objective of his next strike. He did this because he thought that GTF-16 would attack the one battleship, five destroyers group which was the northern group, and that the cruiser group would join up with the transports. He desired to prevent or delay this. He therefore ordered all twenty-six available B-17's to take off and attack this target.

At 1105 he received a report from PBV 6V67 in position bearing 280° (T), distant 500 miles from Midway, which stated "investigating suspicious vessel."

At 1130 he ordered PBV's 4, 5, 6 and 7 V67 to proceed to positions 500 miles from Midway between bearings 266° (T) and 286° (T), and to locate and track enemy forces. This appears to have been the only instance during the Battle of Midway where the PBV's were directed to track. This was done because no carrier aircraft were thought to be in the vicinity, and because the need for immediate and continuous information concerning enemy forces was urgent.

At 1145 the twenty-six B-17's took departure. At this same time CNAS Midway received a report from PBV 6V67 which stated that four unidentified ships were being attacked by aircraft in a position bearing 277° (T), distant

*Commander Naval Base and Defense Aircraft in Battle of Midway, Serial 0028 of June 30th, 1942.

525 miles from Midway on course 200° (T), speed 30. The B-17's did not locate their target. However, one group of six B-17's reported sighting a single vessel believed to be a Japanese cruiser, which they attacked at 1640 from 9500 feet.* Five of these six B-17's dropped twenty 1000-pound bombs, as a result of which the cruiser was reported to have sunk in 15 seconds. This ship was not a cruiser, but was instead the American submarine, GRAYLING, which crash dived to avoid damage. No hits were made.

During the day patrol planes rescued a considerable number of survivors of the carrier action who were floating around the combat area in rafts. This shows the value of after action searches by all planes and ships which can be spared from the primary objective of destroying the enemy.

Also during the day the gasoline main to the main stowage system was repaired, making it no longer necessary to refuel planes from gasoline drums.**

SUBMARINE FORCE
0000 June 6th to 2400 June 6th

TF 7 was disposed at midnight as follows: the NARWHAL, PLUNGER, TRIGGER, DOLPHIN, GATO, GRENADIER, NAUTILUS, and CACHALOT were on the 12-mile circle from Midway; the TAMBOR, TROUT, and GRAYLING were searching for a damaged battleship last reported in a position bearing 204° (T), distant 125 miles from Midway; the FLYING FISH was searching for the Mobile Force last reported as bearing 310° (T), distant 200 miles from Midway. The GROUPEE was on station on the 5-mile circle off Midway and did not appear to have received the message changing his station to the 12-mile circle; the GUDGEON was on the 12-mile circle, and at 0000 received orders to search for the Mobile Force. She immediately proceeded. The TARPON, PIKE, FINBACK and GROWLER composing the Oahu Patrol were on station.

At 0140 the GROUPEE received orders to pursue the Mobile Force and immediately proceeded at 17 knots.

At 0253 the TRIGGER grounded on Eastern Reef, Midway.***

At 0430 the CUTTLEFISH received orders from CTF 7 to patrol present station.**** This message was received 11 hours after the time of origin, and appears to have been in reply to the CUTTLEFISH request that she be authorized to search for cripples in an area where she had encountered debris. In view of the long delay in replying, the CUTTLEFISH had long passed the area in question and was about 100 miles to the eastward. Why the CUTTLEFISH was ordered from her position 700 miles west of Midway to the 100-mile circle by dawn on the 6th is not clear, as she could not possibly have arrived there for several days. It is assumed that her inclusion among the submarines ordered to close Midway was an oversight, as she was part of TG 7.1 which was the Midway Patrol.

*Commander 7th Air Force, Operational Report of July 17th, 1942, p.8.

**Report of Executive Officer, Marine Air Grp. 22, Battle of Midway, June 7th, 1942.

***War Diary USS TRIGGER, May-August 1942.

****Commander Submarines Pacific Fleet, Battle of Midway, Ser. 0867 of July 31st, 1942.

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At 0445 CTF 7 directed the TAMBOR, TROUT, and GRAYLING to continue west at best possible speed in search of enemy forces.*

At 0526 CTF 7 received the TRIGGER's report of grounding.* At 0528 the TRIGGER succeeded in backing clear of the shoal with no apparent damage.** At 0655 CTF 7 received a report from the TRIGGER wherein she reported being afloat and proceeding to her assigned station.*

At 0816 he ordered FLYING FISH, GROUPEL, and GUDGEON to continue on until they reached the 500-mile circle from Midway between the bearing 300° (T) and 320° (T).*

At 0855 he directed the four submarines of the Oahu Patrol, the TARPON, PIKE, FINBACK, and GROWLER to return to Pearl Harbor, and at 0905 he directed the GATO, GRENADIER and NARWHAL to return to Pearl Harbor.*

At 1155 he informed the CUTTLEFISH that two enemy CA and two DD were bearing 276° (T), distant 410 miles from Midway on course 215° (T), speed 15.* This message was received by the CUTTLEFISH at 1235, at which time she was about 135 miles due east of the enemy reported position and was unable to intercept. This message indicates again the possibility that CTF 7 had not planned to include the CUTTLEFISH in his order to close to the 100-mile circle and did not realize that he had done so.

At 1255 CTF 7 directed the TAMBOR, TROUT, and GRAYLING to intercept the same two CA's and two DD's, and informed them that the CUTTLEFISH was also attempting to intercept them. At this same time he told the CUTTLEFISH that if she did not make contact prior to dark, she was to return to Pearl Harbor. Likewise, at 1320, he informed the FLYING FISH, GROUPEL, and GUDGEON that if they did not make contact prior to dark they were to retire to Midway.*

At 2015 he directed the TAMBOR, TROUT, and GRAYLING to continue search on bearings 300° (T), 310° (T) and 320° (T) respectively from Midway. At the same time he directed the remainder of the Midway patrol, the DOLPHIN, NAUTILUS, CACHALOT, TRIGGER, and PLUNGER to form on a 25-mile circle from Midway between bearings 200° (T) and 350° (T) as a precaution against a small landing attempt by a small unlocated unit.* Why he issued this order is obscure, as it was issued about 36 hours after a Midway search with excellent coverage had reported all contacts made in the searched area retiring.

At 2300 CTF 7 directed the CUTTLEFISH to proceed and sink an apparently damaged abandoned battleship in Lat. 28°-55' N., Long. 173°-08 E. This appears to have been the MIKUMA which had probably sunk by this time. At 2325 he received a report from the GRAYLING that she had been bombed at 1640 in Lat. 27°-40' N., Long. 174°-33' E. by three B-17's out of a group of twelve, but had dove and suffered no damage.

*Commander Submarines Pacific Fleet, Battle of Midway, Ser. 0867 of July 31st, 1942.
**War Diary USS TRIGGER, May-August 1942.

* * *

CTF 11, in the CHESTER, continued on towards Pearl Harbor. At 2400 he was in position bearing 085°, distant 700 miles from Pearl Harbor.*

* * *

TG 11.1 continued towards Pearl Harbor. At 0836 he passed the entrance buoys and at 0756 moored at the Naval Air Station. This Task Group remained in Pearl Harbor throughout the day.**

* * *

CTF 1 continued on towards the 0500 rendezvous with CTU 1.1.4 which rendezvous was about 280 miles due west of San Francisco. At 0210 he was joined by TU 1.1.4. This restored his command to full strength with seven battleships; the PENNSYLVANIA, IDAHO, TENNESSEE, NEW MEXICO, MISSISSIPPI, MARYLAND, and COLORADO; eight destroyers, the CRAVEN, DUNLAP, DALE, FANNING, AARON WARD, PORTER, DRAYTON, and CUSHING; and one converted escort carrier, the LONG ISLAND. At 2400 he was in Lat. 38°-11' N., Long. 133°-20' W.***

*War Diary, CTF 11, June 1942, p.8.

**War Diary, USS SARATOGA, June 1942, p.7.

***War Diary, CTF 1, June 1942.

CHAPTER VI

POST BATTLE OPERATIONS

JAPANESE OPERATIONS

0000 June 7th to 2400 June 14th

CinC Combined Fleet with the Main Force continued on a southerly course until 0700 when he altered course to 270° (T) and proceeded to the fueling rendezvous, where he arrived about 1500. During this time he had been seriously concerned lest the Americans locate Japanese units other than the MOCAMI and MIKUMA. However, when the anticipated night action did not occur and when the air searches from Wake on the 6th failed to locate the American carrier force, he appears to have decided that further major action was improbable.

He reestimated the situation, and, on the basis that the pursuit phase was almost over, made preparations to fuel his ships on the 8th. Perhaps he commenced fueling on the 7th, after his arrival at the fueling rendezvous, but the information on this matter is vague. He decided to continue his Aleutian operation; to attack with land based aircraft on Wake any enemy forces which continued the pursuit, and to return to Japan those forces not necessary for the above. He set forth his future plans in two despatches-- Combined Fleet Secret Despatch 332 and Combined Fleet Secret Despatch 334. He released Despatch 332 at 1400 and Despatch 334 at 2200. His basic plan was to lure the American carrier forces into a trap. For this, he created a new force which he termed the "Diversion Force" and composed it of Crudiv 5 minus the NACHI and one destroyer division of Desron 4. The cruisers appear to have been the HAGURO and MYOKO. His plan was simple. The Diversion Force was to operate to the northwest of Wake in the vicinity of the E sector which was a sector from 000° to 090° from Wake and extending to a radius of 600 miles. It was to pass from northwest to west to the south of Wake. While in this track it was to mislead the American carrier force by false messages concerning movements. The American carrier force in pursuing the Diversion Force would then be led through the E sector where the submarines, and the planes of the Base Air Force at Wake Island would destroy it.* For this purpose the concentration of aircraft was maintained on Wake Island until June 11th.

It is not clear when the Diversion Force was actually formed, but it is presumed that it was immediately after fueling on June 8th. This is borne out somewhat by the fact that the Aleutian Late Support Group was formed at 1500 on the same day.

*Extract from War Diaries of Air Flot-24 May-July 1942, CIG 96417.

As stated previously, the Aleutian Late Support Group was to consist of one aircraft carrier, the ZUIHO; two battleships, the KONGO, HIEI; two heavy cruisers, the TONE and CHIKUMA; eight destroyers, the NOWAKI, ARASHI, HAGIKAZE, MAIKAZE, KAZAGUMO, YUGUMO, MAKIGUMO, AKIGUMO; one seaplane tender KAMIKAWA MARU, and two supply ships, KYOKUTO MARU and TOHO MARU. All of the above ships appear to have joined at the fueling rendezvous with the exception of the KAMIKAWA MARU which was escorting the transports, and the TONE and CHIKUMA. Commander Aleutian Late Support Group therefore assembled his forces and headed to the southwest to pick up the KAMIKAWA MARU. At 1945 he rendezvoused with that vessel in Lat. 27°-30' N., Long. 162°-20' E; then headed on course 018° (T) for the Aleutian area. En route at 1230 June 9th he was joined by the TONE and CHIKUMA. He arrived off Kiska at 1000, June 14th, and thereafter operated with the Northern Force.*

* * *

Submarine Squadrons 3 and 5, which had headed to the westward to close the American Striking Force, were directed to take station on June 8th on the 180th meridian. On June 10th and 11th, Submarine Division 13 also took stations on the same meridian. It is assumed that these submarines were to furnish intelligence, as well as to attack the American forces. They were apparently to cooperate with the search operations of the Marshall Island air bases.

On June 12th it was learned that the major part of the American carrier forces were operating to the eastward of Midway. Commander Submarine Force therefore directed that Submarine Squadrons 3 and 5 search to the eastward for these forces. They searched as far eastward as 173° West** Longitude, but, as the search was unfruitful, it was discontinued sometime after June 13th. It is assumed that the submarines thereafter returned to Japan.

In connection with these submarines, it is of interest to note that Jint Combined Fleet continued to be concerned about the HIRYU. He had doubts that it had sunk. He therefore directed that a search be made for it by submarines. As a result, three submarines of Submarine Force 5 searched the area bounded by Lat. 31°-20' N.; Lat. 32°-40' N. and Long. 178° W. and 178° E. from sunset June 10th until June 12th to sink it if located, but the submarines discovered nothing.**

*Records of converted Seaplane Tender KAMIKAWA MARU, translation from WDC 180682.

**War Diary 6th Fleet 1-30 June 1942, Translation of WDC 160288, p.4.

AMERICAN OPERATIONS
0000 June 7th to 2400 June 14th

CTF 16 continued throughout the day towards his designated rendezvous with the CIMARRON and GUADALUPE in Lat. 32° N., Long. 178° W.

At 0130 June 8th he contacted the CIMARRON and commenced fueling destroyers. This was TF 16's first fueling since May 31st. Meanwhile, he directed the ATLANTA to proceed to the designated rendezvous to contact the GUADALUPE. At 0816 the ATLANTA contacted the GUADALUPE which was escorted by the MAURY, WORDEN, BLUE and RALPH TALBOT and escorted them all back to TF 16. At 0834 the BALCH, MONAGHAN and HUGHES joined TF 16. At 1200 the ATLANTA group joined. At 1400 the ENTERPRISE commenced fueling from the CIMARRON and completed fueling at 2000. CTF 16 now headed with all ships for a rendezvous with CTF 17 in Lat. 34°-45' N., Long. 167°-30' W. His command consisted of ENTERPRISE, HORNET, NORTHAMPTON, PENSACOLA, MINNEAPOLIS, NEW ORLEANS, VINCENNES, ATLANTA, BALCH, MAURY, ELLET, ALWIN, WORDEN, MONAGHAN, MONSSEN, CONYNGHAM, PHELPS plus CIMARRON, GUADALUPE, HUGHES, BLUE and RALPH TALBOT.

Nothing occurred during the night. At 0545 June 9th, CTF 16 commenced fueling his ships from both oilers. By 1445 all units had completed fueling except the ATLANTA. He then directed TU 16.6.2, PHELPS, BLUE, HUGHES, CIMARRON and GUADALUPE, upon completion of fueling ATLANTA to return to Pearl Harbor. This group arrived at Pearl Harbor without incident at 1642 June 12th.

Meanwhile CTF 16 proceeded to the northwest on course 060° (T), speed 20 knots to rendezvous with CTF 17. TF 16 now consisted of the ENTERPRISE, HORNET, NORTHAMPTON, PENSACOLA, MINNEAPOLIS, NEW ORLEANS, VINCENNES, BALCH, MAURY, ELLET, ALWIN, WORDEN, MONAGHAN, MONSSEN, CONYNGHAM, RALPH TALBOT. The ATLANTA rejoined at 1900.*

At 0814 he made radar contact on TF 17 bearing 048° (T), distant 18 miles. The weather was bad, with patches of heavy fog. Both task forces therefore maneuvered on generally southerly courses waiting for the weather to clear to transfer planes. Sometime after 1023 the KASKASKIA joined TF 16. Weather conditions remained poor until 0435 the following morning, June 11th, when the ENTERPRISE received five torpedo planes and ten dive bombers; the HORNET ten torpedo planes and nine dive bombers from the SARATOGA, a total of fifteen torpedo planes and nineteen dive bombers.

Upon the completion of this transfer CTF 16 headed north on course 000° (T), speed 14 knots to rendezvous with TF 8 and to pass under command of CTF 8 in compliance with orders received June 9th.** The rendezvous was designated as Lat. 48°-00' N., Long. 172°-00' W., at 1600 June 12th. However, at 0722 CTF 16 was directed to return with TF 16 to Pearl Harbor to arrive there at 1330 June 13th,** which he accomplished without incident.

*War Diary CTF 16, ENTERPRISE, HORNET June 1942.

**War Diary, CINCPAC, June 1942.

* * *

CTF 17 in the ASTORIA with the FLATTE, ANDERSON and DEWEY headed during the night for a rendezvous with the PORTLAND, RUSSELL, and MORRIS. At 0410 contact was made in about Lat. 27°-00' N., Long. 166°-59' W., the rendezvous was completed and the PORTLAND commenced fueling from the FLATTE at 0610. The PORTLAND completed fueling at 0820 and then the RUSSELL and MORRIS fueled. All fueling was completed by 0946. CTF 17 less the FLATTE and DEWEY, which returned to Pearl Harbor, proceeded on course 145° (T), speed 15 knots, toward a rendezvous with TG 11.1.

At 0643 June 8th TG 11.1 consisting of the SARATOGA, SAN DIEGO, MAHAN, MUSTIN, SMITH, PRESTON, LAFFEY and KASKASKIA was sighted bearing 180° (T), distant 17 miles. At 0915 TG 11.1 reported for duty and merged with TF 17 to form a new TF under the command of CTF 17. TF 17 now consisted of the SARATOGA, ASTORIA, PORTLAND, SAN DIEGO, MORRIS, RUSSELL, ANDERSON, MAHAN, MUSTIN, SMITH, PRESTON, LAFFEY and KASKASKIA. At 1034 CTF 17 transferred from the ASTORIA to the SARATOGA. CTF 17 with TF 17 now headed for a rendezvous with CTF 16 in Lat. 34°-45' N., Long. 167°-30' W. He continued toward that rendezvous during the remainder of the 8th, and all of June 9th. At 0934 on June 10th he made sight contact with CTF 16 bearing 225° (T), distant 14,000 yards. The weather was bad at this time with patches of heavy fog. At 1025 he detached the KASKASKIA and directed her to report to CTF 16 for duty.

CTF 17 then with CTF 16 in company, maneuvered on generally southerly courses waiting for the weather to clear to transfer planes. No plane transfers were effected until 0435 June 11th when SARATOGA transferred nineteen SB2 and fifteen TBF planes to the ENTERPRISE and HORNET. CTF 17 then headed for Pearl Harbor where he arrived without incident two days later. He moored at the Navy Yard at 0629 June 13th.**

The YORKTOWN, which had been torpedoed by a submarine on June 6th, remained afloat during the remainder of the day. An anti-submarine screen operated around her and was composed of the BALCH, BENHAM, HUGHES, MONAGHAN and GWIN. By 0400 June 7th the YORKTOWN list had increased to 30°. At 0444 she commenced capsizing to port and at 0601 sunk quietly in Lat. 30°-47' N., Long. 176°-24' W.

At 0823 June 7th all survivors were transferred to the BENHAM and the GWIN which immediately left for Pearl Harbor, arriving there at 1309 June 9th.

The BALCH, MONAGHAN, and HUGHES then proceeded towards their rendezvous with TF 16 which rendezvous was effected at 0634 the following morning, June 8th in approximate Lat. 31°-38' N., Long. 177°-22' W.**

* * *

CHAS Midway apparently during the morning launched a sector search of patrol planes to 550 miles between the bearings 263 and 283° (T) from Midway.

**War Diaries CTG 17.2 (Commander Cruisers), ASTORIA, PORTLAND, June 1942.

**War Diary CTG 17.4 (ComDesRon 6) June 4th-8th, 1942, p.7-8.

The coverage was reported excellent, but no contacts were made.

CNAS Midway also launched a rescue search composed of twenty-one patrol planes to search a sector 220 miles north of Midway to 350 miles west of Midway. A number of pilots not only from Midway but also from TF 16 and TF 17 were recovered. B-17's apparently assisted in these searches, but the information thereon is indefinite.

A similar rescue search was made daily for a number of days thereafter. It was still being made on June 14th.

Activities at Midway consisted of repairing, resupplying, and generally restoring the atoll facilities. Many of the remaining planes were returned to Pearl Harbor and some replacements were provided. CNAS Midway was directed on June 8th to retain at Midway eighteen patrol planes and twelve B-17's.*

* * *

SUBMARINE FORCE
0000 June 7th to 2400 June 14th

CTF 7 was disposed at midnight June 7th as follows: the DOLPHIN, NAUTILUS, CACHALOT, TRIGGER and PLUNGER on the 25-mile circle from Midway; the NARWHAL, GATO and GRENADIER were en route to Pearl Harbor. The GATO and GRENADIER arrived on June 10th; the NARWHAL on June 12th; the TAMBOR, TROUT and GRAYLING were searching for two enemy CA's and two DD's.

The FLYING FISH, GROUPE and GUDGEON were pursuing the Mobile Force to the 500-mile circle from Midway; the CUTTLEFISH was heading towards the reported position of an abandoned enemy battleship; which was apparently the MIKUMA, which appears to have already sunk; and the Oahu Patrol TG 7.3 (TARPOON, PIKE, FINBACK and GRAYFISH) were on station to the northwest of Oahu. Meanwhile, the TUNA, which was returning from operations in Japanese waters, had been directed to assist the CUTTLEFISH in locating the abandoned battleship and was heading towards the reported position.

At midnight CTF 7 directed the TROUT to proceed east through Lat. 29°-00' N., Long. 168°-00' E., the TAMBOR to search on a track 30 miles to the north, and the GRAYLING 30 miles to the south of the TROUT. At 0010 June 7th he directed TG 7.3 to return to Pearl Harbor where it arrived on June 9th.

At 1250 he ordered the CACHALOT, NAUTILUS, DOLPHIN and PLUNGER to return to Midway where they arrived on the same day.

At 1325 he directed the TRIGGER to return to Pearl Harbor where it arrived on June 12th.

At 1419 he notified the FLYING FISH, GROUPE and GUDGEON that the Commander-in-Chief Japanese 1st Air Fleet was in an unknown ship Lat. 35°-00' N.,

*ComPat Wing 2 War Diary, June 1942, Despatch 080827.

Long. 172°-25' E. It is of interest that this position was considerably in error. Actually, the Commander-in-Chief was in about Lat. 29°-00' N., Long. 168°-00' E. or about 500 miles to the southwest of his reported position.

At 1930 the CUTTLEFISH reported being bombed by Japanese plane at 1300 that day 420 miles from Midway. At 1931 CTF 7 directed the CUTTLEFISH to continue search on morning of June 8th for the abandoned battleship and if not located to return to Pearl Harbor.

At 2100 CTF 7 directed the FLYING FISH and GROUPEE to return to Midway where they arrived on June 9th. He directed the GUDGEON to return to Pearl Harbor where it arrived on June 14th.

Nothing unusual occurred during the remainder of the night. However, all submarines were now en route to Pearl Harbor or Midway except the TAMBOR, TROUT, GRAYLING and CUTTLEFISH.

At 1030 June 8th the CUTTLEFISH proceeded towards Pearl Harbor, where she arrived on June 15th.

At 1302 June 8th the FULTON, which had received 2025 survivors of the YORKTOWN, arrived at the Submarine Base Pearl Harbor.

At 2145 CTF 7 directed the TROUT and the TUNA to pass through a large area covered with wreckage reported at Lat. 28°-52' N., Long. 173°-18' E. and to obtain any material of value for identification of ships. Two hours and 15 minutes later he received a report from the TUNA of a large amount of oil in this area. This oil and wreckage appears to have been all that remained of the sunk MIKUMA.

Nothing of importance occurred during the remainder of the 8th.

At 0550 June 9th CTF 7 informed the GRAYLING of an enemy unit in Lat. 28°-00' N., Long. 170°-40' E. on June 8th on a southerly course and directed her to investigate. At 2342 he directed the TAMBOR, TROUT and GRAYLING to return to Pearl Harbor where they arrived on June 16th.

This ended the submarine activities during the Battle of Midway.

* * *

CTF 11 in the CHESTER continued on towards Pearl Harbor throughout June 7th. At 0835 on the 8th he arrived at Pearl Harbor and berthed at the Naval Air Station. He remained at Pearl Harbor during the remainder of the battle.*

*War Diary, CTF 11, June 1942, pp.7-8.

* * *

On the morning of June 7th at 0630 CTG 11.1 in compliance with CINCPAC despatch 0051 of June 7th sortied from Pearl Harbor and headed for a rendezvous with CTF 17. His forces, which were somewhat different than those designated in CINCPAC's despatch, were the SARATOGA, SAN DIEGO, MAHAN, MUSTIN, PRESTON, LAFFEY, SMITH and the oiler KASKASKIA. The SARATOGA airplane complement at this time consisted of 48 F4F-4, 20 SBD-3, 10 TBF and 8 TBD, a total of 84 planes.*

At 0843 June 8th CTG 11.1 made contact with CTF 17 in the ASTORIA with the PORTLAND, RUSSELL, MORRIS and ANDERSON. At 0915 TG 11.1 merged with TF 17 to form a new TF 17.

* * *

CTF 1 continued on in a generally westerly direction throughout the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th. On the 10th, having reached a position about 1850 miles northeast of Midway, he retired to the eastward and for the next four days operated in an area at a mean distance from Midway of about 1800 miles and there awaited orders until June 14th. On that day he headed for San Pedro in order to arrive there on June 18th. CTF 1 encountered very poor weather on June 10th, 11th, and 13th.** The remainder of the time, flying conditions were average.

*War Diary, USS SARATOGA, June 1942, p.7.
**War Diary CTF 1, June 1942.

BATTLE OF MIDWAY

ALUTIAN PHASE

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JAPANESE OPERATIONS ALEUTIANS
0925 June 3rd to 2400 June 14th

At 0925 June 3rd, the time of initial sighting by Midway search planes of the Transport Group of the Midway Occupation Force, the Second Mobile Task Group was bearing about 188° (T), distant 130 miles from Dutch Harbor. It was recovering the attack planes of its second air strike which were returning in scattered groups. Commander Second Mobile Task Group had launched two air strikes prior to this time. The first air strike from the carriers RYUJO and JUNYO had struck Dutch Harbor at 0345. The second air strike from the carriers RYUJO and JUNYO and the cruisers TAKAO and MAYA had been directed against the destroyers of TG 8.4, which were anchored in Makushin Bay. This strike was prevented from accomplishing its objective by the increasingly bad weather conditions en route to the target, and by the pursuit planes of the Army Air Force at Otter Point, Unalaska Island.

In view of the unsatisfactory weather conditions which prevailed in the sea areas to the south of Dutch Harbor and to the advisability of keeping beyond probable discovery range by surface craft or even search planes from Dutch Harbor, Commander Second Task Group altered course at 1100 to about 210° (T) and commenced his retirement.* He maintained a combat air patrol airborne throughout June 3rd. However, he was not attacked.

As he had been directed by Commander Northern Force in his Operation Plan to make an air attack on Adak on the following day, June 4th**, he decided to fuel his destroyers from the carriers in the afternoon of June 3rd. Upon completion of this fueling at about midnight he set course about 295° (T) for Adak. At sunrise June 4th he noted from his navigation plots that Adak was bearing about 300° (T), distant 250 miles. However, the conditions of wind and sea were unfavorable, so he did not launch any aircraft.*** He continued on towards Adak until about 0400. Then, in view of the increasingly poor weather conditions existing to the westward and in view of weather reports from Tokyo which indicated weather conditions improving in the Dutch Harbor area, he decided to proceed instead toward Dutch Harbor. He altered course to 035° (T), and commenced his run-in.

During the morning several reports of contacts with American PBY type search planes were made by units of his task group. He therefore maintained readiness to repel them. At about noon he launched two attack planes to report weather conditions en route to and at Dutch Harbor. On receiving a somewhat favorable report, at about 1400 he commenced launching a strike group of his most experienced pilots to hit Dutch Harbor. Eleven dive bombers, six torpedo bombers (loaded for horizontal bombing) and fifteen escorting fighters from the carriers RYUJO and JUNYO comprised this group.

Sporadic air attacks by American aircraft took place throughout the afternoon. As the visibility was poor, recognition of the enemy types was difficult and uncertain. Defending fighters shot down one PBY and damaged another. The cruiser TAKAO at 1733 shot down a B-17. Two bombs struck near a destroyer.

*Chart entitled "Movement of Japanese Force, Aleutians Campaign, U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey "Campaigns of the Pacific War", opposite p. 88.

**Interrogation Nav. No. 20 U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Vol. I.

***U.S. Strat. Bombing Survey, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Vol. I, Interrogation of Com. Masatake Okumeya, IEN.

Another bomb struck near the carrier JUNYO. Several type B-26 medium bombers made torpedo runs on the task group, but no torpedo wakes were sighted. One of these planes flew diagonally across the flight deck of the RYUJO and dropped his torpedo, which passed over the ship and struck the water about 200 yards beyond. No damage was done by these attacks.

Meanwhile, Commander Second Mobile Task Group had been receiving disturbing messages from the forces off Midway. Sometime around 1400 he seems to have received CinC Combined Fleet DesOpOrd #155 which directed in part "...Second Mobile Task Group join Mobile Force immediately." About the same time he appears to have received CinC Combined Fleet DesOpOrd #156, which stated in part, "The Occupation of Midway and the Aleutians are temporarily postponed." However, he did not recall his planes, but allowed them to continue the attack.

The attack group arrived over Dutch Harbor, and at about 1553 attacked. The eleven dive bombers attacked from the south employing glide bombing tactics and dropping their bombs from 1000 feet altitude.* They made hits which fired several storage tanks and damaged several buildings. They were accompanied by their fighters which strafed ground defenses. The torpedo bombers made horizontal bombing runs hitting in the congested area and the magazine area. The attack was completed and the planes departed for their parent carriers at about 1625. However, prior to returning home they rendezvoused in groups in the vicinity of Dutch Harbor. The rendezvous point for the JUNYO group was, unfortunately for the Japanese, over the western tip of Unalaska Island.

On arriving at this position the several scattered elements of the flight sighted a large landing field at Otter Point on nearby Umnak Island, which field was apparently a new discovery. While rendezvousing they were attacked by enemy pursuit planes, losing two bombers and two fighters shot down in the engagement.** A third bomber became separated during the flight. Due to inaccurate navigation and a faulty radio receiver, this plane became lost, and landed at sea when its fuel was exhausted.

The RYUJO strike group losses were less severe. One of its fighters failed to return. Two other fighters and four bombers were damaged in the attack on Dutch Harbor.***

Sometime after 1730 Commander Second Mobile Task Group received CinC Combined Fleet DesOpOrd number 157 which stated "Commander Northern Force will carry out the attack on the Aleutians at opportune time. Destroyer

*Action Report, ONAS Dutch Harbor, dated July 6th, 1942.

**U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey Interrogation Nav. No. 20, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Vol. I, Interrogation of Commander Masatake Okumeya, IJN.

***Reports of Action of CVL RYUJO to Naval Board of Merit, Extract translation of 'DC 161733.

June 14th they were operating as a part of his task group.

* * *

The Adak-Attu Occupation Group at 0925 June 3rd bore 240° (T), distant 1100 miles from Dutch Harbor. This group maintained course and speed approaching Adak throughout June 3rd and until 1500 June 4th. By this time Commander Adak-Attu Occupation Group had received CinC Combined Fleet directive postponing temporarily the attack on Midway and the Aleutians. As a consequence he informed his command at 1455 that "according to Combined Fleet Despatch Operation Order the Aleutians Campaign is postponed temporarily", and altered course to the southwestward to await further instructions.

He did not have long to wait, for he soon received Commander Northern Force's 1815 directive to proceed with the Aleutians Campaign. He therefore ordered his task group to "Carry out attack according to previous instructions...." Ten minutes later he signaled his group, "This unit will carry out the attack on Adak according to previous instructions." He then changed course to about 033° (T), and commenced his run-in to Adak.

However, he did not reach Adak, for early on the morning of June 5th he was informed by Commander Northern Force that he had cancelled the Adak operation. Why Commander Northern Force made this decision is not set forth in available information but it appears quite possible that he did so because of the discovery by the planes of the Second Mobile Task Group of the large airfield on Unmak Island. Under such conditions the cancellation of the Adak operation was sound, for without adequate air defense it would be unwise to place the ships of an invasion group only 350 miles from a major enemy airfield.

Upon cancellation of the Adak operation, Commander Adak-Attu Occupation Group appears to have been ordered to proceed with the Attu operation, for at 0730 June 5th he headed on course 270° (T) towards Attu.

At 1700 on the same day he was directed by Commander Northern Force to transfer the airplane tender KIMIKAWA MARU and escorting destroyer SHIOKAZU to the Kiska Operation Group.** This was done to provide the easternmost occupation groups with the available air cover.

Commander Adak-Attu Occupation Group subsequently altered course to pass Midway between Kiska and Attu, making a final approach to his objective from the northeast. He arrived off Attu outside Holtz Bay at midnight June 6th.* He immediately commenced sweeping operations in Holtz Bay and ahead of the transports. By 0515 June 7th the channel had been swept and his troops had been established safely ashore. At this time he reported by despatch to CinC Combined Fleet, "Success in sudden attack and landing."* From Holtz Bay

*War Records and Action Reports, DesRon 1, May-June 1942, WDC 161718.

**Northern Force Secret Despatch #811, War Records and Action Reports, DesRon 1, WDC 161718, p.22.

the troops moved overland to Chichagof Harbor, arriving there at about 0400 June 7th. The minesweepers commenced sweeping operations off shore. As no defenses existed on Attu Island, it was quickly secured. The few native inhabitants totaling 39 were made prisoners. There were only two Caucasians. Some communication material and documents relating to weather were taken.

While off Attu, Commander Adak-Attu Occupation Group, who was also Commander First Destroyer Squadron, was assigned the task to reconnoiter the Semichi Islands (about 20 miles east of Attu) and Amchitka to locate areas suitable for constructing airfields.* He decided to conduct this survey himself. Taking his flagship, the cruiser ABUKUMA and two destroyers, he completed the survey of the Semichi Islands on June 9th and then departed from that area for Amchitka. On arriving at Amchitka in the early morning of June 11th he put ashore a landing party in Constantine Bay from the destroyer NENOHU. At the same time he launched a seaplane from the cruiser ABUKUMA to conduct an examination of the shore line. After about three hours, an enemy search plane was reported sighted in the area. He terminated the reconnaissance and recovered the shore party for a quick departure. Defense stations were manned to repel attack. However, poor weather conditions prevailed, and the enemy aircraft was not again seen. He then assembled his three ships and took departure.

He proceeded to the designated standby area for the Kiska and Adak-Attu Occupation Groups. This area seems to have been designated as a collecting point for units of the two occupation groups which, having completed their assignments off Kiska or Attu, were dispatched there for convoy back to Japan. Here he appears to have reassumed command of those ships of the Occupation Group not required at Attu. On receiving instructions to increase the number of destroyers at Kiska, he dispatched destroyer division 21 to that area. Then with the remaining units he proceeded to Japan, arriving at Ominato on June 24th.

* * *

The Kiska Occupation Group bore 255° (T), distance about 900 miles from Dutch Harbor at 0925 June 3rd and was on course 085° (T). This group continued on this course until receipt of the CinC Combined Fleet directive to postpone temporarily the Aleutians Campaign. Accordingly, at about 1800 June 4th Commander Kiska Occupation Group reversed course. He again reversed course and headed for Kiska immediately on receipt of the Commander Northern Force 1815 directive to proceed with the Aleutians campaign in accordance with previous instructions. He arrived at Kiska (Diagram G) without incident at about 1200 June 5th.

It appears that a redistribution of forces was made by Commander Northern Force following his cancellation of the invasion of Adak. The Kiska Occupation Group would now be the easternmost invasion force nearest the enemy air facilities and would be the most probable target for frequent air attacks. Commander Northern Force therefore transferred the seaplane tender KIKIKAWA MARU by his directive of 1700 June 5th from the Adak-Attu

*Interrogation No. 73 U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Vol. I.

Occupation Group to the Kiska Occupation Group, and ordered it to proceed at once to the Kiska area.*

The landing on Kiska was made at 1300 June 6th by about 1250 men of the 5th Special Naval Landing Force. The landing was made in Reynard Cove, and from there the main body proceeded overland to Kiska Harbor. Two other groups followed separate routes to Kiska; one proceeded along the ridge, the other along the shore line.** There was no opposition to the landing. No facilities were available to the defenders for opposing the landing.

Commander Kiska Occupation Group proceeded with his task group to Kiska Harbor, and there remained off shore awaiting the arrival of the landing force. By 0129, June 7th, he was assured of the success of the invasion. At this time, therefore, he advised CinC Combined Fleet by despatch of the results as follows: "success in sudden attack and landing."***

Several men of the small U.S. Weather Station were captured on the first day. Several others escaped into the hills. Despite intensive searches these men could not be located by the searching patrols. Finally, on June 21st, three of them gave themselves up, and on June 30th the last one was found behind the main camp.**

As soon as the troops established contact with their ships in Kiska Harbor, Commander Kiska Occupation Group commenced unloading additional labor troops and supplies and began the development of the base. A radar was installed below the crest of the ridge to the west and several coast defense guns and anti-aircraft batteries were emplaced on the high ground just east of the U.S. Weather Station.** As soon as the transports and supply ships had completed their tasks, Commander Kiska Occupation Group dispatched them to Japan by way of the Kiska-Adak-Attu Occupation Groups' standby area.

A search unit of six large flying boats to be based on Kiska arrived from Paramushiro on June 7th, a distance of about 800 miles. The personnel of this unit were established ashore. Aviation supplies were provided by the tender KAMITSU MARU which moved independently between Kiska and Paramushiro, making repeated trips in supporting the operations of the unit. Air searches of the area to the east and southeast of Kiska for a distance of about 300 miles were commenced at once.

Air attacks by the enemy commenced on June 10th. Attacks made by PBV aircraft on June 10th were followed by other PBV, B-17 and B-24 heavy bomber attacks on June 11th and 12th, 13th and 14th. No particular damage was done by these raids except to slow the progress of construction and to increase considerably the anxiety of the Japanese for the security of the forces there. One of the ships in the harbor shot down the leading bomber with anti-aircraft fire during one of the B-24 raids. It fell on the island****. The Second Mobile Task Group which arrived south of Kiska on

*War Records and Action Reports, Desron 1, Extract Translation, WDC 161718, p.22.

**Interrogation Nav.No.22 U.S.Strategic Bombing Survey, "Interrogation of Japanese Officials", Vol. I, page 102.

***War Records and Action Reports, Desron 1, Ext.Trans.WDC 161718, p.29.

****Interrogation Nav. No.23, U.S.Strategic Bombing Survey, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Vol.I, p.106.

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June 12th was unable to conduct fighter interception of the raiding aircraft due to unsuitable weather.

AMERICAN OPERATIONS
ALEUTIAN THEATER
0925 June 3rd to 2400 June 14th

*At 0925 June 3rd CTG 8.1, Commander Air Search Group, was at his headquarters at Kodiak. Dutch Harbor had been surprised at 0345 by an air attack lasting 30 minutes. His radar-equipped patrol planes which had been searching the areas shown on Diagram "B", apparently had failed to discover the enemy forces. It is of interest that these searches began at 1900 from Otter Point and Cold Bay and at 1800 from Kodiak, and were made to a distance of 400 miles. As a consequence of this attack CTG 8.1 endeavored to recall these search planes, refuel them, and get them out on search again. He succeeded in quickly establishing a daylight search. At about 1500 he received a garbled message from one of his patrol planes which indicated a heavy concentration of ships in Lat. 52°-45' N., Long. 184°-00' W. No amplifying report was received. This plane report is not understood, for apparently there were no enemy or friendly forces within 100 miles. It is presumed that either the pilot did not actually discover the above forces or his navigational position was considerably in error.

CTG 8.1 decided at the end of a fruitless day that the Japanese attack on Dutch Harbor had been made by a carrier force of at least two small carriers operating probably in the Bering Sea. He informed CTF 8 of this opinion by despatch, and further stated his belief that there was a large carrier south of the Aleutians in the outer limits of sector 10 which was heading east to attack Dutch Harbor from the south early June 4th. Both of these estimates were in error. There were no Japanese carrier groups in the Bering Sea at this time. The carrier group which made the Dutch Harbor strike was well to the southwest en route to attack Adak. The second attack on Dutch Harbor had not as yet been planned. It was decided on by the Japanese after they learned that weather conditions near Adak were poor.

On June 3rd in view of the losses in patrol planes, both combat and operational, CTG 8.1 requested additional planes from Commander Northwest Sea Frontier. As a result of this request Commander Northwest Sea Frontier sent two patrol planes to Alaska. He also sent two additional patrol planes to Alaska on June 4th. These planes were from Squadrons 41 and 43. Commander Northwest Sea Frontier also strongly requested COMINCH to increase the patrol plane strength in the Aleutians. On June 7th COMINCH released all patrol planes on the west coast of the United States for movement into Alaska.

CTG 8.1 made an extended search of the southern sectors on the night of June 3-4th with all available planes. At 0450 June 4th he received word that one of his patrol planes had made both radar and sight contact on an

*The major portion of the information concerning TG 8.1 was obtained from ComPatWing 4, War Diary, 27 May 1942 to 30 June 1942.

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enemy surface force on course 098° (T) in Lat. 50°-07' N., Long. 171°-14' W. This was an excellent position report. At 0550 the composition was reported as one enemy carrier, two destroyers, course 150, speed not known. This plane also reported the weather and sea conditions. Five minutes later it lost contact.

Two patrol planes loaded with torpedoes were awaiting clearance at Akutan to proceed to Umnak when the 0450 contact report was received by the senior pilot. He proceeded at once with both planes to the reported position of the enemy. At 0900 one of these planes succeeded in making contact with the Japanese Second Mobile Task Group, and sent a contact report, stating: "contact one CV, three CA, two DD, course 360, speed 15, bearing 215, distant 165 miles Dutch Harbor. Enemy in cruising disposition, carriers surrounded, few planes on deck, visibility fair. This is the same force previously reported. Take bearings on me." Thereafter he contact scouted the enemy task group, and made frequent reports of her changes of course and speed. When he was ordered to return to Dutch Harbor at about 1118 he endeavored to torpedo the carrier before departing. He was prevented from reaching a dropping position by AA fire which shot one engine out of commission. It is of interest that this patrol plane remained in sight contact with the Japanese task group for over two hours without receiving vital damage. This is in contrast to the performance of the patrol planes at Midway, which were unable to remain in close contact with the Mobile Force there. This appears to have been due to the fact that it was possible for the planes in the Aleutians when attacked, to seek shelter whereas in the Midway area neither clouds nor fog offered important cover.

During June 4th CTG 8.1 made a maximum daylight search of all sectors. He determined from the patrol plane reports that the enemy task group was operating within a circle about 30 miles in diameter from 1000 to 1850. During this time a patrol plane and an Army B-26 attempted to bomb and torpedo the carriers, but both were unsuccessful. The Army pilot reported the composition as one CV large, one CV small, two CA, three DD, and the bearing as 210°, distant 120 miles from Otter Point Field. He reported its course as 330° (T), its speed as 25 knots. This was the first correct report as to composition that had been received, but it was not accepted as such. There was a persistent belief that there was but one carrier present, as naval aviators had so reported.* On June 4th his command was reinforced by two patrol planes.**

At about 1553 Dutch Harbor was again attacked by Japanese carrier planes which appeared to have come from the Second Mobile Task Group, although no report that it was launching an attack group seems to have been received from the American patrol planes.

Observers at Dutch Harbor reported that the attack group apparently consisted of ten fighters, eight horizontal bombers, and eleven dive bombers.

*War Diary CTG 8.1 (ComPatWing 4) May 27th-June 30th, 1942, par. 23.

**War Diary Commander Northwest Sea Frontier, June 1942.

This was a reasonably close estimate, as the flight actually consisted of fifteen fighters, six horizontal bombers and eleven dive bombers. The bombing by the horizontal bombers and by the dive bombers was quite effective. One wing of the hospital was demolished; four new fuel oil tanks with their contents were completely destroyed, an uncompleted hangar was heavily damaged and the barracks ship NORTHWESTERN which supplied steam and electrical power was also hit. She was out of action for three days. As a result of this raid, as well as the raid of June 3rd, there were 33 Army, 8 Navy, 1 Marine Corps, and 1 civilian dead.*

Contact with the task group appears to have been lost about 1715 June 4th and then regained at 1917 by an Army B-17 which was attached to TG 8.1. This plane in company with another Army B-17 attacked the task group, but did not succeed in hitting the enemy. One B-17 was lost in the attack. After this, contact was lost and was never regained. During the night of June 4-5th, CTG 8.1 made an extended search in the southern search sectors with negative results. On the 5th he made maximum daylight searches in all sectors in addition to the usual B-17 search along the Aleutians Chain to Kiska. Results were negative. During this day his command was reinforced by two patrol planes. During the night of June 5-6th CTG 8.1 searched the sectors in the Bering Sea. Again results were negative.

On the morning of June 6th a contact on an enemy carrier task group was reported by a patrol plane. At 0235 this was amplified to eight DD, two CA, Lat. 53°-20' N., Long. 173°-10' W., ceiling unlimited. When the pilot landed at Otter Point it was discovered that the contact also included two CV in the enemy formation. As a consequence of this report as many planes as possible were recalled from patrol and were refueled and re-armed. This took considerable time. It was therefore some hours before they were in the air again and were in position on a scouting line endeavoring to discover the task group. The planes were unable to discover the Japanese task group. This was due to the fact that the original contact was in error. Diagram "G" shows that no Japanese carrier task groups were in the area referred to. This shows the confusion and the unnecessary expenditure of effort which can be caused through incorrect contact reports.

Although a number of radar contacts appear to have been made by some of the patrol planes on enemy planes, nothing substantial was reported.

CTG 8.1 apparently was convinced that the enemy task group was just north of Sequam Island. He held this belief despite the fact that search planes had failed to find the group reported, and despite the fact that Army air attack groups had also failed to discover any enemy forces in the area. He therefore directed intensified night searches during the night of June 6th and 7th. Nothing unusual was encountered, although several patrol planes, one in sector 4 at 2218 June 6th, another in sector 3 at 0034 June 7th, made contact on enemy planes. Nothing came of these contacts, although a small search group of three planes was vectored into the area. All of the preceding reports show the intense interest and effort being made by all

*Action Report on Bombing of Dutch Harbor, COMAS Dutch Harbor ltr. July 6, 1942.

hands to discover the Japanese surface and air striking forces. The reason that they were unable to locate them was not the fog, nor the lack of training of the crews in Aleutian weather, nor the failure of radar tracking. It was primarily the fact that despite all of the numerous contacts which were so confusing, there were no Japanese surface forces in the areas searched.

By the evening of June 7th CTG 8.1 had lost a total of nine patrol planes since June 2nd. These included one shot down, one sunk, two missing, five totally disabled. This left fourteen planes available for service.*

CTG 8.1 continued his efforts to discover Japanese forces. He carried out maximum searches during the nights of June 8th and 9th. In order to support these search operations he directed the GILLIS on June 8th to proceed to Nagan Bay, Atka Island. It arrived at Atka at 1512 June 9th.** Meanwhile the HULBERT had arrived at Dutch Harbor at 0845 the same day. It had come from Pearl Harbor via Kodiak. CTG 8.1 felt serious apprehension concerning the security of Attu and Kiska, as no weather reports had been received for two days from either place. Although the Army Air Force had been searching daily in the Kiska area with B-17's, no reports of enemy activity had been received. CTG 8.1 decided that he would search it also. So he directed one of his patrol planes to proceed to Atka on June 8th to refuel from a gasoline cache there, and closely scout Kiska and Attu on June 9th. This plane reached Atka on June 9th being delayed somewhat by weather. On the afternoon of June 10th the patrol plane reconnoitered Kiska and reported at 1520, "two unidentified ships in harbor." This was followed by another report at 1710 which stated that one possible cruiser and one possible destroyer were inside Kiska Harbor, and two ships similar to Coast Guard ships were at harbor entrance. CTG 8.1 immediately notified Cominch, Cinopac, CTF 8 and other interested commands.

The patrol plane which had made the discovery at Kiska now reconnoitered Attu, and discovered a tent camp and numerous small boats and landing barges. The Army B-24 which had reconnoitered Attu that day had reported no evidence of enemy activity.

On June 10th, eight additional patrol planes arrived at Kodiak to reinforce CTG 8.1. At this time but one torpedo remained at Dutch Harbor.*** During the night of June 10-11th the western semi-circle from Unnak was searched with negative results. However, at 0545 June 11th one heavy cruiser, two light cruisers, one destroyer and six transports, as well as enemy shore based or carrier based planes were observed in Kiska Harbor. Another plane reported that a large enemy landing force had been observed at Attu between 1630 and 1800. This latter plane reported attacking one light cruiser and one destroyer west of Kiska at 2000.

*War Diary, Commander Northwest Sea Frontier, June 1942.

**War Diary, USS GILLIS, June 1942.

***War Diary Commander Northwest Sea Frontier, June 1942.

CTG 8.1 now directed that all patrol planes out on night patrol during the night of June 10-11th return by way of Kiska, if fuel permitted, and drop their bombs on the enemy there. During June 11th many contacts reported enemy ships in the vicinity of Kiska and to the eastward, almost to Adak. During the day CTG 8.1 received orders, apparently from CINCPAC, to bomb the Japanese out of Kiska. He states "that this was considered as superseding my orders from CTF 8 which established Patwing Four as primarily a search group, and left attack to the Army." Without further orders he attacked the enemy at Kiska continuously with bombs and torpedoes for the next 48 hours, operating both day and night. He dispatched every plane available to his command on a "shuttle run" from Dutch Harbor to Kiska thence to Atka for refueling and rearming from the GILLIS, and then back to attack Kiska. He also ordered the HULBERT which had been sent to Sand Point to proceed to Nasan Bay and assist the GILLIS in supplying the flight squadrons.

In the afternoon of June 12th when the GILLIS had about fifteen patrol planes moored in Nasan Bay, an enemy scout seaplane discovered the American forces at anchor.* It seemed probable that the Japanese would launch an attack. The fuel situation was critical. The normal capacity of the fuel tanks and the bomb supply had been exhausted at 1500, leaving five of the planes without gasoline. The probability of an imminent attack now made advisable the extraction of every bit of gasoline from the ships tanks to provide the five unfueled planes with adequate gasoline to reach Otter Point. This was done. The remaining ten planes, and one which later landed, received additional fuel from the HULBERT on her arrival. This would permit their return to Dutch Harbor, instead of to Atka, after attacking Kiska.

At 2000 CTG 8.1 directed the GILLIS to evacuate the natives at Atka and to destroy the village. This was accomplished beginning at 2135. However, it was not possible to evacuate the native Aleuts at this time, as they ran into the hills.

At 1852 the HULBERT anchored in Nasan Bay** and commenced fueling the eleven planes. One plane was heavily damaged while trying to fuel, and was destroyed. Meanwhile, 62 of the natives had returned to the destroyed village, and were taken on board the HULBERT.

On June 12th, nine patrol planes of Patrol Squadron 51*** arrived at Cold Bay at 0500.

At 0225 June 13th the GILLIS departed for Kodiak, stopping briefly at Dutch Harbor en route. At 0322 the HULBERT got underway for Nicolski Bay, Unak Island, where the Aleut natives were to be put ashore. Several minutes later at 0528, eight patrol planes took off to bomb Kiska, thence to proceed to Dutch Harbor. Two patrol planes took off to proceed direct to Dutch Harbor. Three other patrol planes which were heavily damaged in operations had been disposed of.

*War Diary USS GILLIS, June 1942.

**War Diary, USS HULBERT, June 1942.

***War Diary, ComPatRon 42, May 28th, 1942 to June 30, 1942.

The evacuation of Nasan Bay had not been too soon, for CTG 8.1 was advised by CINCPAC on June 13th that Nasan Bay was about to be attacked. The attack occurred on the morning of June 14th, when five 4-engine bombers flew across the village and dropped bombs.

On June 14th CTG 8.1 held a conference at Dutch Harbor with commanders of Patrol Squadrons 41, 42, 43 and 51. As a result of this conference it was decided that:

- (a) Squadrons should be employed as units insofar as practicable.
- (b) Each squadron should be assigned a base even though temporary so that the problem of supply, repair and group personnel could be simplified.*

* * *

When the Midway forces made contact at 0925 June 3rd with the Japanese Occupation Force off Midway, the Aleutian area had already been alerted by an attack on Dutch Harbor. At this time the 11th Air Force Striking Force TG 8.3, at Fort Glenn and Fort Randall was "only more or less in position, quite inadequately supplied, insufficiently trained and completely lacking in routine administration machinery." This was due in part to the fact that one pursuit squadron and all the B-17 type heavy bombardment planes had only recently arrived in the Aleutian area from the United States. This was in accordance with the prevailing theory that Alaskan defense forces could be kept in the continental limits and sent north only when trouble arose. In this connection it is of interest that few of the pilots or crews were familiar enough with the problems of Alaskan flying to be either efficient or at home in the area.**

The attack on Dutch Harbor by the Second Mobile Task Force appears to have somewhat surprised CTG 8.3. He had been alerted by a reported radio bearing on an enemy carrier force 400 miles south of Kiska on June 2nd. But the precise moment of the expected attack was unknown. CTG 8.3 seems to have been under the opinion that the reason for the success of the Japanese attack was the prevalence of bad weather. This was incorrect. Actually, the Japanese success was due to the fact that instead of being 400 miles south of Kiska on June 2nd they were about 500 miles south of Dutch Harbor. This tended to mislead the American forces. The weather was not helpful to either side. It acted adversely insofar as the Japanese were concerned, and interfered with their attack plans, making it impossible for their planes to rendezvous after being launched.

After the attack on Dutch Harbor the personnel at Dutch Harbor worked hard to clear up the damage. However, about 0810 the situation again became aflame when the P-40's engaged two Japanese cruiser type planes over the air-

*War Diary, ComPatRon 42, May 28th, 1942 to June 30, 1942.

**Alaskan Air Defense and the Japanese Invasion of the Aleutians-Army Air Forces Historical Studies #4-April 1943, p.54.

field at Fort Glenn. One cruiser plane was shot down; the other escaped. Shortly thereafter about 1000, some enemy fighters appeared over Umnak Island and were driven off by Army fighters. No further contacts were made with the enemy on June 3rd, although flights of B-26 planes were twice despatched on false contacts. One B-26 was lost operationally.

Meanwhile, reinforcements were arriving in the Alaska area. Six B-17's were ordered by CTG 8.3 to the Naval Air Station on Kodiak Island. In addition, ten Canadian planes were transferred from Annette Island to Yukutat.

At 0450 June 4th CTG 8.1 reported a contact with three enemy ships including one and possibly two carriers south of Umnak. As CTF 8 had directed that when important Japanese forces had been located, all available aircraft for attacking the enemy were to be concentrated at Fort Glenn and Fort Randall, CTG 8.3 ordered a squadron of B-17's to attack from Kodiak refueling at Fort Randall. He also ordered a squadron of B-26's which was at Anchorage, to attack by way of Fort Randall and Fort Glenn. The squadron of B-26's, already split between Fort Randall and Fort Glenn, had standing orders to attack when the target had been located. Consequently the attack group of five B-26's stationed at Fort Glenn and armed with torpedoes was launched to the attack at 0900. At 1020 CTG 8.3 ordered the attack group of five B-26's based at Fort Randall to attack the enemy carriers with torpedoes. This Group became separated. Only two of the planes made contact on the enemy force. Neither made successful attacks. One B-26 was lost operationally. Meanwhile, the five B-26's which had been launched at 0900 returned to Fort Glenn at 1155 having failed, owing to bad weather conditions, to discover the target.

At 1340 an attack group of five B-17's escorted by one LB-30 plane equipped with radar, departed from Fort Randall on a search-attack mission southwest of Umnak. About this time one B-17, which had been left behind at Fort Randall, and one which had been assigned to the Navy, determined to make a joint effort to attack the Japanese carrier group. Each appear to have been armed with four 500-pound bombs. They located the target, but one B-17 was lost in attacking. Although the other B-17 claimed one direct hit, such apparently was not the case, for the Japanese report no hits made.

While the above attacks were occurring, the Japanese were proceeding toward Dutch Harbor in order to continue the destruction made the previous day. At 1553 an enemy air attack group, which the Army estimated to consist of ten bombers and sixteen fighters, struck Dutch Harbor. On their return to their carriers, four dive bombers and four fighters were sighted over the airfield at Fort Glenn. They were attacked by eight P-40's. The Army fighter pilots claimed that in this action they shot down three dive bombers and one fighter, and lost two fighters. The Japanese admit the loss of two bombers and two fighters, which verified closely the American claim.

At 1840 another attack group of five B-26's armed with torpedoes took off from Fort Glenn on an attack mission. Three of these planes located the enemy and dropped two torpedoes against a cruiser. Although one sure hit and one probable hit were claimed, no hits actually were made.

At 1900 the 1340 B-17 group from Fort Randall which had departed on a search-attack mission landed at Fort Glenn, having been unsuccessful in locating the Japanese task force.

Owing to the necessity for staging the attack aircraft through the fields most suitably placed with respect to the enemy's position, the location of the planes frequently changed. At the end of June 4th the Air Striking Group was disposed as follows: Fort Glenn seven P-40's, eight B-26's; Fort Randall twenty-five P-40's, twelve B-26's, five B-17's and one LB-30. In addition, there were at Fort Randall two B-17's and one LB-30 assigned to the Navy. One of these LB-30's was heavily damaged in landing at Kodiak and was inoperative.

No contacts appear to have been made on the Japanese task group after its departure from the Dutch Harbor vicinity, although a radar contact was reported on heavy cruisers by a Navy patrol plane at 0135 June 6th. After receipt of this contact, three waves of Army bombers left Fort Randall to attack. The first wave composed of five B-17's and one LB (radar equipped) departed at 0530; the second wave of six B-26's departed at 0730; the third wave of six B-26's departed at 0920. No contacts were made as the report was apparently false, and the planes returned to Fort Randall.

Both CTG 8.1 and CTG 8.3 continued to make extensive air searches both day and night. No verified contacts were made until June 10th, when enemy forces were discovered in both Kiska and Attu by Navy patrol planes. The last accurate report concerning the location of TG 8.3 planes during this period is dated June 9th. At the end of the day there were eighteen P-40's, seven P-38's and seven B-26's at Fort Glenn; and twenty-four P-40's, seven B-17's and sixteen B-26's at Fort Randall.* These figures indicate the constantly changing plane locations necessary to conduct the desired air operations, and show the changing logistics requirements at each base.

The Army commenced attacking Kiska June 11th on which day both Army heavy bombers and Navy patrol planes made bombing attacks. The Army attack group consisted of five B-24's which departed from Fort Randall at 0225, and of six B-17's which departed from Fort Randall at 0905.** These groups were fueled at Fort Glenn en route to Kiska and then attacked separately. The B-24's attacked at the same time as the patrol planes. The B-24's attacked first at an altitude of 1800 feet. The enemy fire was accurate, and they shot down the leader. The four remaining B-24's then increased altitude to 18,000 feet and attacked again. While they were attacking, they noted Patrol 43 attacking at much lower altitude. The six B-17's attacked later. The actual time of the attack is not recorded. However, the B-17's returned to Fort Glenn, arriving there at about 2155.

CTG 8.3 reported in his 1455 despatch that Kiska was beyond effective range of B-17's. He later amplified this at 2338 to say that although the distance to the objective area allowed no margin for search and combat, he would continue to employ the B-17's to bomb Kiska. He pointed out in the same despatch that B-24's had a range approximately 400 miles greater than the B-17's.

*Alaskan Air Defense and the Japanese Invasion of the Aleutians, Army Air Force Historical Studies #4 April 1943, p.112

**War Diary ComPatRon 42 May 28th to June 30th, 1942.

On June 12th, five additional B-26's arrived at Fort Randall making the number available there twenty-two.*

Air attacks by TG 8.3 appear to have been made on the 13th and the 14th. On the 13th Army bombers attacked shipping in the Kiska area rather than the base itself owing to the opposition offered by Japanese fighters. On the 14th, seven Army heavy bombers attacked Kiska. In both cases, the information concerning these attacks is incomplete.**

* * *

***At 0925 June 3rd, when the Midway Occupation Force had been contacted off Midway, CTF 8 in the NASHVILLE with TG 8.6, Main Body, consisting of the NASHVILLE (F), INDIANAPOLIS, LOUISVILLE, HONOLULU, ST. LOUIS, GRIDLEY, MCCALL, GILMER, HUMPHREYS, accompanied by the oiler SABINE, was operating in the approaches to the Kodiak-Kenai Peninsula. While operating in this area he maintained strict radio silence. He was kept informed as to the activities of his more important groups and units through radio interception and by direct messages from them. He had heard at 0800 of a 0345 attack on Dutch Harbor by four bombers and fourteen fighters. At 0842 he had learned that Dutch Harbor attack had been completed at 0415 when the Japanese aircraft departed to the northward. He knew that his commanders, and in particular CTG 8.1 at Kodiak, were bending all efforts to locate the enemy carriers which were believed to be in the Bering Sea.

At about 1015 he was informed by CNAS Dutch Harbor that an enemy carrier had been reported south of the Aleutians heading east to attack Dutch Harbor; that although the report was unconfirmed, it was believed to be correct.

During the time of the above battles and searches CTF 8 maintained radio silence. Students of warfare would be interested in learning his reactions to the reduction imposed on his freedom of action by the desirability of maintaining radio silence. This was a situation which paralleled that of Admiral Yamamoto in the battle then commencing off Midway. He must have wished to supervise the operations. He must have felt that by breaking radio silence he might thereby expose his position to the Japanese and thereby compromise his plan. At this time CTF 8 still believed that the enemy's plans called first for a seizure of Umnak-Dutch Harbor-Cold Bay Area, and later for a probable seizure of the Kodiak-Kenai Peninsula. The air attack made in the morning of June 3rd had tended to confirm this belief. He appears to have felt that the enemy operations were proceeding according to his expectations, that therefore his plan was sound and no changes therein were necessary, for he took no action.

At about 2112 he received word from CNAS Kodiak stating the belief that although the Dutch Harbor attack had come from small carriers in the Bering Sea, the major striking group was south of the Aleutians preparing to launch an attack on Dutch Harbor or Cold Bay.

*War Diary, ComPatron 42, May 25th to June 30th, 1942.

**War Diary, Commander NorthWestSeaFrontier, June 1942.

***The major portion of the information concerning CTF 8 and TG 8.6 was obtained from CTF 8, War Diary, June 1942.

Some time on June 3rd he sent an officer messenger by plane to Kodiak to deliver a memorandum to his task group commanders, CTG 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 who had their headquarters there. This memorandum stated in part that:

- (a) It was imperative that they furnish him with complete information concerning the operations.
- (b) That as he was maintaining radio silence by necessity he did not want them to send him a signal, "unless otherwise directed, certain action will be taken." He opposed this type of despatch on the ground that it required breaking radio silence or the assumption on the part of the sender that if no answer is received CTF 8 was in full accord with the action taken. He further stated that such an assumption could well be incorrect.

At 0455 June 4th CTF 8 intercepted a despatch which indicated a Japanese force in Lat. 50°-07' N., Long. 171°-14' W. This was amplified into two carriers with supporting ships. At 0555 he intercepted a despatch from CTG 8.3 to his air commander "attack immediately." He must have felt satisfied that the situation was progressing according to plan. At 0915 he was informed by Dutch Harbor that the enemy force consisted of one carrier, two cruisers, three destroyers, in fair visibility, on course 360 degrees with few planes on deck. He must have become deeply concerned, for several hours elapsed before he heard anything more definite concerning this enemy task group. Then he was informed that at 0800 the enemy appeared to have been in Lat. 51°-33' N., Long. 169°-35' W. This position was about 80 miles nearer Dutch Harbor than the actual position. He knew that his forces were endeavoring to contact scout and attack this group, but so far to no avail. He waited throughout the day for reports of successful action, but he heard nothing thereon as contacts were lost and his attacking air groups failed to find the target. Dutch Harbor was attacked this day for the second time by the Japanese carrier group. The flash report of this attack appears to have reached CTF 8, at 1910. At 1733 CTF 8 in the NASHVILLE and with the GRIDLEY as escort proceeded to Kodiak to discuss the developing situation with his task group commanders, CTG 8.1, CTG 8.2 and CTG 8.3. His radio silence had become too restrictive.

At 0300 on the morning of June 5th he was informed by CTG 8.1 that at 1825 the preceding day the enemy was contacted 90 miles southwest of Otter Point. It consisted of one CV and one CA with other supporting units. It was attacked with undetermined results after which it could not again be located. At 0430 he intercepted a despatch from the CASCO to CNAS Kodiak which indicated that at 1350 June 4th the enemy consisted of two CV, two CA and three DD, and described their formation. All of this must have been extremely confusing to him and to his subordinate commanders. It was evident that reports and communications were being delayed. He could not at this time be sure of the composition of the enemy forces. Since this last report was most definite, it is presumed that he gave more weight to

this report than to the others. What he actually thought at this time is not available. Throughout the 5th he intercepted numerous despatches which signified that his command was making an all-out effort to locate the enemy. However, no verified contacts were made on that day. At 0458 June 6th CTF 8 in the NASHVILLE with GRIDLEY rejoined TG 8.6.

At 0627 on June 6th he received a despatch from COMAS Dutch Harbor reporting eight destroyers and two heavy cruisers in Lat. 63°-20' N., Long. 173°-10' W. at 0226. This despatch which was completely in error must have been quite confusing to him, as it indicated that the Japanese forces were apparently in considerable strength and were converging on Dutch Harbor from both the Bering Sea and south of the Aleutians in the manner originally estimated on June 3rd by CTO 8.1. This despatch alerted all search and attack groups both air and surface in the area. Searches were made; attack groups stood by, but there were no more contacts. The original report was false!

Nothing of importance occurred on June 7th. At 1936 CTF 8, in the NASHVILLE with the INDIANAPOLIS and GRIDLEY, proceeded once more to Kodiak for conference with his task group commanders based there. He arrived at 0427 June 8th and conferred with CTO 8.1, CTO 8.2 and CTO 8.3. Following this conference he informed CTO 8.4 and Dutch Harbor by despatch that he was to be joined by CTF 16, and directed CTO 8.4 to prepare to join him with all but two old destroyers. He also directed that after 1600 June 12th, TF 16 and TG 8.4 would be integrated with his own command, TG 8.6, into an enlarged TG 8.6. He then notified CTO's 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 that TF 16 consisted of two CV, five CA, one OL and nine DD, and that once the merger of forces was effected he planned to engage decisively the enemy forces in the Aleutian-Alaska area or retiring therefrom. He further instructed CTO 8.1 to locate and scout the two enemy carrier task forces operating in the Aleutian area. He stated that he wished to locate the carrier task forces as primary objectives and the transports and train as secondary objectives. He ordered effective searches to be made to 600 miles from Atka and to 400 miles north and south of Aleutian-Alaska Peninsula to the eastward of Atka meridian.

At 1114 CTF 8, who at 0628 had shifted his flag to the INDIANAPOLIS, left Kodiak in company with the NASHVILLE and GRIDLEY to rejoin TG 8.6. Nothing of importance occurred during the remainder of the day.

At 0802 June 9th CTF 8 in the INDIANAPOLIS with the NASHVILLE and GRIDLEY rejoined TG 8.6, and all ships as they became available commenced fueling from the SABINE. Fueling was completed about 1248. Nothing further of interest occurred during the day. However, as no contacts had been made on enemy forces for some days, it was assumed that the enemy had retired temporarily.

CTF 8 continued operating with TG 8.6 in the designated area south of Kodiak throughout the 10th. He received word that four unidentified ships

had been seen in Kiska Harbor, one of which was a cruiser and one a destroyer. Also at 1034 he received word from CINCPAC that TF 16 would not, for the present, proceed to the Aleutians, but would instead remain near its present rendezvous off Midway, and that TF 17 would return to Pearl Harbor on June 13th. Meanwhile, he intercepted despatches which indicated that CTG 8.1 was endeavoring to identify the ships at Kiska. At 1925 he received word from CTG 8.2 of a Tokyo broadcast which claimed the Japanese had occupied two places in Alaska. CTG 8.2 suggested that these places might be Kiska and Attu.

At 0204 June 13th, CTF 8 despatched the destroyer HUMPHREYS to Point Blow to change the rendezvous with TG 8.4 to Point Afirm, Lat. 45°-00' N., Long. 172°-00' W. During the 11th CTF 8 received reports which indicated that the Japanese force at Kiska consisted of one CA, two CL, one DD and six transports, and that a large enemy force was at Attu. He noted that bombing attacks on Kiska were being made by the TG 8.3 from Fort Glenn and by planes of TG 8.1. He also was informed through an intercepted despatch that the enemy had landed on Attu and Kiska and appeared to have a land based airfield on Kiska.

It was on the 11th that CINCPAC issued what appears to have been a direct order to CTG 8.2 rather than to CTF 8, to make maximum use of submarines in Kiska-Attu area. He did this because CTF 8 was operating at sea under conditions of radio silence.

At 1731 June 11th CTF 8 proceeded with TF 8 towards a rendezvous at 0700 June 13th in Lat. 45°-00' N., Long. 172°-00' W.

At 0310 June 12th CTF 8 despatched the destroyer MC CALL to Point Blow to change the rendezvous to Point Baker, Lat. 43°-00' N., Long. 170°-00' W.

Nothing else of importance appears to have occurred on June 12th excepting more amplification of the Japanese activities on Kiska and Attu and reports of bombing of installations and forces there by both Army and Navy planes. CTF 8 was advised that according to CTG 8.3 Kiska was beyond effective range of B-17 planes. He would, however, do his best with them and with his B-24's. He was also advised that Commander Northwest Sea Frontier was doing his utmost to obtain reinforcements to ensure safety of Alaska. At 1226 CTF 8 intercepted a despatch from CINCPAC to CTG 8.1 and CTG 8.2 to include CTF 8 as information addressee on all reports. This shows how closely CINCPAC was following the operations in the Aleutians. CTF 8 with CTG 8.6 was at 2400 in Lat. 44°-05' N., Long. 165°-50' W. bearing 177° (T), distant 560 miles from Dutch Harbor.

Nothing of importance occurred on June 14th excepting that the HUMPHREYS rejoined after having failed to locate TG 8.4. Both TG 8.4 and 8.6 continued on towards their rendezvous the following day from which

position they would retire to the eastward. After rendezvousing, TG 8.6 would consist of the INDIANAPOLIS (F), LOUISVILLE, NASHVILLE, HONOLULU, ST. LOUIS, GRIDLEY, GILMER, HUMPHREYS, MC CALL, CASE, REID, BROOKS, SANDS, TALBOT, KANE and KING and the oiler SABINE.

* * *

At 0925 June 3rd, all of the destroyers of TG 8.4 excepting the WATERS and KING were at anchor in Makushin Bay, Unalaska Island. On June 4th the WATERS and KING stood in and anchored. TG 8.4 was now complete, and consisted at this time of Desdiv 5 (temporary) REID, BROOKS, SANDS, KING and Desdiv 6 (temporary) CASE, KANE, DENT, TALBOT and WATERS. CTG 8.4 was in the CASE.

During June 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th, nothing directly affecting the destroyers occurred. On June 8th, CTG 8.4 was directed to join CTF 8 at rendezvous Point Blow Lat. 48°-00' N., Long. 172°-00' W. He therefore commenced refueling his command. On the same day he sent the TALBOT and BROOKS to Dutch Harbor for fuel. On June 9th he sent the REID, SANDS, KANE and KING to Dutch Harbor and the DENT to Chernofski Harbor, Unalaska Island for fuel. On June 10th the BROOKS and TALBOT returned to Makushin Bay. Upon their return CTG 8.4, in the CASE, with the BROOKS and TALBOT, departed Makushin Bay at 2100 to rendezvous with CTF 8. At about 0428 June 11th the REID, KANE, KING and SANDS, which had departed Dutch Harbor for this purpose, rendezvoused with CTG 8.4. TG 8.4 was now complete, with the exception of the DENT and WATERS, which had been directed to take station in Seguan Pass as marker ships for passage of friendly naval forces through the Aleutians in low visibility.

After rendezvousing, CTG 8.4 continued on toward Point Blow where he arrived on the afternoon of June 12th. He remained there the remainder of that day and all of June 13th. At 0400 June 14th he was joined by the destroyer MC CALL, which directed him to proceed with TG 8.4 to a new rendezvous Point Baker, Lat. 43°-00' N., Long. 170° W. He immediately proceeded to carry out these new instructions, and arrived at Point Baker that evening.

On the following morning June 15th at about 0410 he joined CTG 8.6 in Lat. 42°-50' N., Long. 169°-40' W.

* * *

At 0925 June 3rd TG 8.5, Submarine Group was on station as follows: S-18 and S-35 in the southern approach to Umnak Pass; S-23 and S-34 north of Umnak Pass; S-27 and S-28 in the approaches to Cold Bay. During this time nothing unusual occurred and no hostile contacts were made.

On June 11th TG 8.5 was ordered to return to Dutch Harbor for replenishment prior to taking new positions to the westward. The S-35 arrived there on June 11th; the S-18, S-23, S-28, S-34 and presumably the S-27 on June 12th. This was in pursuance of an order from CINCPAC directing the submarines to take maximum offensive action against the enemy definitely located at Kiska and believed also to have landed at Attu.

On the evening of June 11th the S-35 departed Dutch Harbor for patrol station off Kiska. On June 12th the S-18, S-23 and S-34 departed Dutch Harbor for patrol station off Attu. The S-28 departed for patrol station off Kiska. No information is available concerning the operations of the S-27.

On June 14th all of these submarines were at sea en route to the above stations. On this date the patrol station of the S-18 was changed by Comsubdiv 41 from Attu to Lat. 52°-00' N., Long. 179°-00' W.

* * *

At 0925 June 3rd TG 8.2 was manning patrol stations north, west and south of Dutch Harbor as shown on Diagrams "B" and "C". Its function was to act as early warning pickets to locate enemy air groups, transports and covering cruisers approaching the Umnak-Dutch Harbor-Cold Bay area. This group had failed to locate the Japanese Second Mobile Task Group in its approach to Dutch Harbor that morning for reasons previously stated.

UTP 8 on May 31st had designated CTG 8.2 as his personal representative to perform the duties of coordinator of logistics. He also had directed him to act as his personal representative to take necessary action in minor administrative naval matters. Throughout the period of this analysis there is considerable evidence of the activities of CTG 8.2 in this regard."

CTG 8.2 was also Commander Alaskan Sector and as such was Commander Northwestern Sea Frontier's representative in the Alaska-Aleutian area. In this assignment he was charged with the administration of the naval bases in the area, with anti-submarine measures and with convoy and routing. There is also considerable evidence of his activities in this matter but no information concerning these activities directly is available.

TG 8.2 appears to have remained on the same stations on the 4th that it occupied on June 3rd. It again failed to contact the Japanese Second Mobile Force as it moved to within air striking range of Dutch Harbor. This was due to the fact that it was not correctly placed to intercept ships coming from the southwest. The Second Mobile Task Group appears to have passed to the westward of the picket line, and to have operated in that area for several hours.

Unfortunately there are no records available concerning the operations of TG 8.2. However, it is presumed that throughout the period of this report the patrol vessels remained on their picket stations, and that CTG 8.2 remained at Kodiak, performing the dual functions of CTG 8.2 and Commander Alaskan Sector.

*UTP 8, Serial T05 of May 31st, 1942 to CTG 8.2.

THE EFFECTS OF THE BATTLE

The Battle of Midway was, despite the seizure of Attu and Kiska in the Aleutians, an overwhelming American strategical and tactical victory. By destroying four of Japan's finest aircraft carriers together with many of her best pilots it deprived the Japanese Navy of a large and vital portion of her powerful carrier striking force; it had a stimulating effect on the morale of the American fighting forces; it must have had a sobering effect on the morale of those members of the Japanese fighting forces who witnessed the destruction of the four carriers; it stopped the Japanese expansion to the east; it put an end to Japanese offensive action which had been all conquering for the first six months of war; it restored the balance of naval power in the Pacific which thereafter steadily shifted to favor the American side; and it removed the threat to Hawaii and to the west coast of the United States.

The Battle caused two great changes in Japanese naval policy. One of these concerned decisive naval action, the other the concept of the organization of the fleet. As has been pointed out, CinC Combined Fleet desired to fight a decisive naval action with the American fleet at the earliest possible moment and before American construction could overwhelm the Japanese fleet by sheer force of numbers. He now was forced to give up the idea of holding such a fleet engagement at an early date and in remote waters. He was instead forced to wait until the Americans took the offensive, and owing to the loss of his carriers he was restricted to waters much nearer the Empire. Thus it was that the Japanese were forced to a defensive role. This was a distinct strategical success for the United States. The other great change, the one concerning the concept of the organization of the fleet, placed more emphasis upon carriers than upon battleships. Prior to Midway, the Japanese had given their battleships the primary emphasis. After Midway they reversed this because they found that battleships were not effective units without adequate air superiority, and that air superiority could only be obtained at sea in the pelagic areas by carrier aircraft.

The damage to the prestige of the Japanese Navy was so great as to cause the Japanese to suppress the truth about Midway from their own people. They felt that the effect on their public would be exceedingly harmful in loss of hope, in disappointment, and in will to victory. They succeeded very well in this aim, and it was only at the war's end that the Japanese public were allowed to know the truth.

The American public, on the other hand, were fully advised as to the magnitude and importance of the Midway victory. This had a most salutary effect on their morale which, until now, had been forced to bear some rather heavy blows.

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However, the American public was not entirely satisfied. The seizure by the Japanese of both Attu and Kiska in the Aleutians, and the resultant threat to Alaska did not pass unnoticed. Popular clamor appears to have had some effect, despite the shortage of combatant forces, on the decision of the American high command to expel the Japanese from the Aleutians at the same time that offensive operations were necessarily being carried out in the Solomon Islands.

The Japanese employed the Aleutian operation to kindle the Nation's resolve to victory. The seizure of American territory was given great emphasis in the Japanese press, and served to support Japan's contentions that she was all-powerful in Asia.

BATTLE LESSONS

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1. The Battle of Midway was brought on in part by the raid on Tokyo, April 8, 1942, and in part by the Japanese belief that they had been successful in the Battle of the Coral Sea one month later. The raid on Tokyo was not designed to accomplish nor did it accomplish any important material damage to Japanese installations. However, it raised the morale of the Allies which at the time, owing to Far Eastern defeats, was low. The Battle of the Coral Sea resulted in the loss of one large American carrier and slight damage to another and in the loss of one small Japanese carrier and in slight damage to a large carrier.

The net result of the above was that the Japanese, who after the Tokyo raid had commenced offensive operations towards Port Moresby and the Solomons, now activated the Midway operation well ahead of its original schedule. They appear to have been reinforced in this decision by the fact that they had sighted on May 14th two additional American carriers in the vicinity of the Solomon Islands, thereby definitely placing four carriers in the South Pacific. Of these four, the Japanese believed two to have been sunk in the Coral Sea.

Lesson:

The Battle of Midway stresses the fact that a raid may have strategic consequences far above those originally contemplated. In this case the raid on Tokyo was too weak to accomplish much material damage, yet it engendered such fear in the Japanese as to cause them to expedite action in other theaters. By doing this the Japanese hoped to ensure the safety of the Japanese mainland from further air attacks. This brought on the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of Midway at a time when the United States was scarcely ready for them.

2. The mental process followed by Commander Mobile Force in arriving at his plan for the Midway operation is not explained. However, there is evidence that he may have followed the method of intentions rather than the method of capabilities in his estimation of the enemy. This is borne out by the following facts. He assumed that the enemy did not have the will to fight, but might counter attack if the Japanese operations at Midway progressed successfully. He assumed further that they would not have surface forces with carriers as a nucleus in the Midway area at the time of the initial assault. A study of enemy capabilities would have disclosed that it was an enemy capability to have moved carriers into the Midway area for battle. Although he made a search for such forces and held an air group ready to strike should any such surface forces be discovered, he did not give the search that serious consideration to which such a study would have entitled it. He

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employed an inadequate number of search planes which he launched in a haphazard and staggered fashion. He disregarded the search before it was completed, broke the spot of his standby air group, and ordered it rearmed for land objectives.

All of this indicates that, although his plan gives evidence that the capability of fighting an air-sea action in defense of Midway may have been originally considered, the execution of the plan suggest that he did not believe such an air-sea action probable and accepted as the enemy's intention the defense of Midway by land based aircraft, primarily.

Lesson:

A Commander, in making his plans, should follow the method of enemy capabilities rather than the method of enemy intentions. The method of enemy intentions, which has been discarded by the United States Armed Forces, as the enemy's intentions are subject to change, but which is still used by certain important Navies, consisted of an estimate by the commander, based on that course of action which he thought, or even knew, the enemy intended to follow. The method of capabilities consists of an estimate by the Commander based on those courses of action which the enemy is capable of doing and which if adopted will materially affect the accomplishment of the Commander's objectives. He should, where possible, list the enemy courses of action in order of priority--that is he should list the more likely before the less likely. In case of doubt, he should give the higher priority to those enemy courses which he considers more dangerous to himself.

3. The Japanese and the Americans relied greatly on the factor of surprise in their basic planning. The Japanese appeared to believe that they could conduct an operation of such vast scope as the Midway operation with complete secrecy, and built their plans accordingly. They hoped to surprise the Americans at Midway and to overwhelm them by the power of their attack--especially by the power of their air attack. They were not successful in this, primarily because the Americans had considerable correct intelligence concerning the Japanese plans for the Midway operation. The Americans, on the other hand, hoped to surprise the Japanese by the presence of their two carrier task forces. They were somewhat more successful in this regard than were the Japanese. However, this was purely a fortuitous circumstance, as their carrier task forces would probably have been discovered much earlier had the Japanese commander conducted a more timely and better coordinated search of the area. Such a search appears to have been decided on in his plans, but was not fully adhered to.

Lesson:

Surprise is the injection of the unexpected for the purpose of

creating an unfavorable military situation for the enemy. Judiciously conceived and successfully employed, it may be a most potent factor. It produces both physical and morale effects. In general, the physical effect is to produce a decisive superiority at the decisive time and place. However, the effect of surprise is predominately one of morale and is not in proportion to physical gains and losses. It can therefore have a very adverse reaction upon the professional judgment of the surprised commander, as well as upon his command, in which case confusion, temporary loss of initiative, and even relaxation of effort may obtain. On the other hand, the commander who achieves surprise may thereby engender such confidence within his command as to contribute heavily towards victory.

Surprise must not be counted on too strongly in planning, although it should be considered as the soul of every operation. There must be sufficient means available to insure success even though surprise be not obtained. In considering surprise, the enemy's intelligence potentialities should not be overlooked.

4. American shore based aircraft from Midway, although it helped by making the initial contacts on the Japanese Occupation Force on June 3rd, by reporting the Japanese Mobile Force air attack approaching Midway on June 4th; by making the initial and several amplifying reports on the Japanese Mobile Force on June 4th; and by providing information on Grudiv 7 on June 6th, nevertheless failed to maintain continuous tactical scouting on the enemy forces with the result that not only CNAS Midway, but also CTF 16 and CTF 17 were seriously handicapped in making air strikes, particularly on June 4th and June 5th. The Midway search on June 5th to a distance of but 250 miles was particularly unfortunate, as a search to 700 miles would have discovered the Japanese Main Group, Second Fleet and Desron 2 to the northwest at a distance of but 400 miles. Had this been accomplished, considerably more damage might have been inflicted on the Japanese Fleet by aircraft and submarine.

Lesson:

It is essential that shore (and tender) based aircraft support the operations of the forces afloat by continuously supplying the most complete and accurate tactical intelligence to the more important combatant commands, so that positive and correct action may be taken immediately. It is also essential that there be training in this matter between shore based aircraft and the task forces at sea in order that there may be a thorough understanding of this vitally important problem.

5. The Japanese thoroughly understood the value of air reconnaissance and employed their battleship, cruiser and tender based planes whenever

possible in such reconnaissance duties throughout the battle. The battleship and cruiser planes of the Mobile Force were able to keep Commander Mobile Force reasonably well informed of the movements and composition of the American Striking Force throughout the day. Although of relatively slow speed and not equipped with radar, these planes unhesitatingly closed the American Striking Force to within visual range to make and develop each contact. By so doing they relieved certain of the carrier planes of the necessity of making such reconnaissance flights. This increased the number of carrier planes available for attack. The Americans, on the other hand, rarely employed their cruiser based planes during the battle for reconnaissance and contact scouting, but instead relied on the land based aircraft to obtain the necessary tactical information. As the American patrol planes based on Midway were slow and had little means of defense, they were not considered suitable for contact scouting. They were therefore employed on search missions only. The B-17's, which were available at Midway and which had the characteristics necessary for performing this work, were rarely so employed, but were instead used on what proved to be abortive attack missions. Because of this, the Japanese were much better informed from hour to hour concerning the enemy's movements than were the Americans.

Lesson:

Continuous accurate information concerning the enemy's movements and composition is essential for the proper functioning of command. Commanders of air groups designated to obtain such information should insure that adequate searches are made. They should employ for this purpose any planes within their group considered suitable for this purpose.

Commanders of naval task forces should not place their security on searches made by shore based planes unless they are confident that such searches are adequate. Whenever such Commanders feel that the shore based searches are inadequate and that additional searches are necessary, they should, if practicable, employ their ship based aircraft for such searches.

6. Recognition and identification of both ships and planes appeared to have improved considerably since the Battle of the Coral Sea but one month earlier. However, it was still only fair. Among the more important of these errors were, (a) the failure of the TONE #4 search plane to discover the American carriers in the surface forces until fifty two minutes after the original contact, (b) the failure to recognize and identify the planes from VB-8 which were making a forced landing at Midway, as a result of which Midway opened fire and three planes were damaged, (c) the error of the B-17 group in bombing a friendly submarine which was mistaken for a cruiser, (d)

the frequent failures of both sides to recognize and identify various types of ships.

Lesson:

The need for prompt and accurate recognition and identification of own and enemy air and surface craft is extremely important, as it may seriously affect the Commanders' decisions. Electronic identification is not enough; it must be paralleled with visual recognition, as electronic devices may fail. Also, there may be one type of enemy planes more dangerous than another. It may be desired, when under attack, to make such planes the primary objective of the defense activities. This can only be accomplished through prompt recognition.

Every effort, therefore, should be made to train personnel in recognition and identification so that a friendly plane may not be shot down; a friendly ship taken under fire; or an air or surface ship attack be allowed to gain an advantageous position without being subjected to attack by guns and planes.

7. The American forces, having gained air superiority by sinking or damaging the carriers of the Mobile Force, failed to exploit to the full this advantage, due to lack of aerial reconnaissance. This could best have been accomplished by B-17's from Midway. It was not done due perhaps to the lack of training in this type of work by Air Force pilots and the natural desire on the part of the Army to use those planes for their primary purpose--attack. The Navy possessed no aircraft at that time suitable for reconnaissance against air opposition.

Lesson:

The Navy must have whatever types of aircraft necessary to support the mission of the fleet, and be able to operate them from distant land bases.

8. At 0645 June 4th, CTF 16 separated TF 16 into two separate task groups. Each of these groups assumed an anti-aircraft formation similar to that employed by TF 17. This formation consisted of one carrier within a concentric double circular screen, with the cruisers stationed on the inner screen and the destroyers on the outer screen. The cruisers were stationed on 2000 yard circle and the destroyers on the 3000 yard circle from the carrier at the center. The support ships maneuvered directly with the carrier, often without signal. The defense was a combination of combat air patrol, maneuver, and anti-aircraft fire. Combat air patrol, and maneuver was the principal defense against high level bombers; combat air patrol and gunfire for close in action.

The Japanese, on the other hand, operated a four carrier task force with battleships, cruisers and destroyers as supporting ships. These supporting ships appear to have been stationed originally in inner and outer screens somewhat similar to the American practice. There were several marked variations, however. These were, (a) the Japanese screening ships appear to have been well out from the carriers initially-- at least twice as far from their carriers as were the American supporting ships, (b) the Japanese supporting ships maneuvered individually without too much reference to the carriers, (c) under air attack the carrier force broke up into four small groups, each small group consisting of one carrier supported by several destroyers. These small groups were inside a screen of heavy ships, which screen was, on occasions, of extremely wide radius-- of the order of ten miles. This dispersion was probably due to the effect of continuous American air attack and to individual maneuver especially of the larger ships, (d) finally, the Japanese relied on combat air patrol, maneuver and gunfire for air defense, but their principal reliance in addition to combat air patrol appears to have been the individual maneuver of each ship.

Neither the American nor the Japanese anti-aircraft formations were particularly successful in defeating enemy dive bomber attacks once the attacking planes had succeeded in evading the combat air patrol. The Americans were not successful in defeating Japanese torpedo plane attacks-- the Japanese, on the other hand, were highly successful in defeating numerous American torpedo plane attacks. This appears to have been due principally to the large combat air patrol which intercepted the American planes, but it was also due to the superiority of the Japanese torpedo planes and torpedoes over those employed by the Americans, and to the reduced maneuverability of the YORKTOWN incident to three bomb hits which had been received about two and one-half hours earlier. In either case, gunfire did not appear to be as effective as had been anticipated.

Lesson:

The air defense of a task force, exclusive of defending planes such as the combat air patrol, is based on the volume and accuracy of gunfire and on maneuverability. This maneuverability of ships, particularly of existing ships, cannot readily be changed. Therefore the only factor subject to change is gunfire. This battle emphasized the great necessity for increasing the volume and accuracy of fire from the ships of the task groups. So long as the gunfire within a task group remained weak, maneuver had a relatively high position in the defense. For this reason the Japanese defensive measures seemed of equal competence to those employed by the Americans. However, this action indicated that a marked increase in anti-aircraft gunfire was necessary. This could be gained by increasing the number of supporting ships in a task group; by increasing the number, rate

of fire and destructive qualities of the guns of the individual ships and by employing anti-aircraft formations designed to produce the maximum fire in any direction.

9. The Japanese captured several American prisoners during the early hours of June 4th. Among these prisoners were one commissioned pilot and one aviation machinist's mate recovered by the destroyer MAKIGUMO and one commissioned pilot recovered by the destroyer ARASHI. These prisoners divulged timely information of considerable value to the Japanese concerning the defenses of Midway and the composition and movements of the carrier task forces. They also divulged information concerning the commissioning of the ALABAMA; the fact that the United States did not announce the losses of their carriers; and the Navy air strength on Oahu.

Lesson:

Unscrupulous enemies have means of forcing information out of all but the hardiest. It is therefore unwise to brief personnel on operations any more than is necessary to enable them to carry out intelligently their assigned tasks. This applies particularly to aircraft personnel and to members of underwater demolition teams who are more subject to possible capture than are most personnel. However, it applies with almost equal force to all personnel. Of course, any intelligent man will absorb by sight and hearing a great deal of general and even of particular information concerning his own ship, base or unit. It is wise therefore to reduce this information to the minimum when practicable and sensible to do so as it may also be divulged to the enemy. On occasions, as indicated above, information so divulged can be of vital importance.

10. The Americans enjoyed an incalculable advantage with their surface search radars and more particularly with their air search radars in the three carriers. The Japanese do not appear to have had any radar whatsoever on any of the ships engaged in the Midway operation. As a result, the Americans were generally able to discover Japanese air strikes being made on their ships and on Midway in sufficient time to intercept each strike before it had reached a dangerous attack position. The Japanese, on the other hand, had no knowledge of air attacks against their ships until these air attacks were sighted by ship or plane. It is possible that, had the Japanese had air search radar, the destructive unopposed dive bombing attacks on the Japanese carriers made by the dive bombers of the ENTERPRISE and YORKTOWN, which turned the tide of battle, might have been intercepted, and the attacks made considerably less effective.

Lesson:

Radar is a technological device which gives a great advantage to

those possessed of it. Similarly, other technological devices may in future wars give unusual and, in some cases, almost unsurmountable advantages to those who have them. It is therefore of extreme importance that every effort is made to insure that own forces are equipped with the most advanced technological devices and that Commanders are not forced into action against an enemy better equipped in similar devices. It is of equal importance that Commanders understand the utility of these devices and know something of their capabilities and limitations.

11. The absence of adequate ground and maintenance crews on Midway for servicing and repairing aircraft based thereon, caused the flight crews to reach a state of exhaustion early in the battle.

Lesson:

Except in extreme cases such as existed at Midway, air operations should not be undertaken without making adequate provision for ground and maintenance crews at the base of operations. When flight crews are required to service their own aircraft, their combat efficiency is rapidly reduced below acceptable limits.

12. The carrier air groups were composed of planes having characteristics varying widely with respect to speed, range, climb and endurance. The delivery of a concentrated coordinated group attack employing each type of plane at its maximum design was therefore difficult even under the most favorable circumstances.

Lesson:

The necessity for gaining air superiority at the point of contact may be so vital to success as to demand a concentrated attack of all planes. In such case it may be desirable to sacrifice individual plane performance towards the success of the whole.

13. In a fashion similar to that shown at the Battle of the Coral Sea both the American and the Japanese aviators were inclined to be highly optimistic in their claims of damage inflicted on enemy ships and planes. They had a tendency to exaggerate considerably the effectiveness of their attacks. This exaggeration on the American side was not confined to the Navy alone but was equally noticeable among the Marine and Army pilots. It decreased as the effectiveness of the enemy defense decreased. For example, the American claims of damage against the ships of the Mobile Force appear to have been, in general, markedly incorrect. The claims of damage against the Japanese carriers when they were finally heavily hit by the YORKTOWN and ENTERPRISE dive bombers were approximately correct, due apparently to a lack of fighter opposition and anti-aircraft fire. Their claims of

damage against the lightly defended MOGAMI and MIKUMA were quite correct. Their claims of damage to enemy planes were highly exaggerated at all times.

The Japanese claims, on the other hand, while reasonably correct concerning damage to the YORKTOWN, were considerably exaggerated concerning enemy planes damaged.

Lesson:

The accuracy of a pilot's observations when engaged in combat appears to vary inversely with the intensity of the defense; that is, the stronger the defense the less accurate the observations are likely to be. It follows, therefore, that every pilot's observations, particularly those of positions strongly defended, should be supported by photographs taken during and after the attack as actual proof of damage. The importance of such actual proof of damage inflicted on the enemy cannot be stressed too greatly, as it may have considerable effect on succeeding tactical decisions. Whenever practicable the pilot's observations should also be supplemented by those of a trained observer not required to engage in combat.

14. This action gave prominence to the question as to whether it is preferable in a carrier action to destroy as many flight decks as possible at first, or to sink fewer carriers first. In this instance the four enemy carriers in the Mobile Force were the principal targets. One of them, the HIRYU, was not attacked, and consequently was able to launch two strike groups both of which damaged the YORKTOWN. The YORKTOWN Air Group struck the Mobile Force simultaneously with the ENTERPRISE dive bombers. By the fortuitous circumstance of the direction of their approach, the YORKTOWN Air Group Commander selected a carrier other than the two selected by the ENTERPRISE Air Group Commander. Subsequently, CTF 16 directed an attack against the undamaged carrier HIRYU in preference to additional attacks against the already damaged carrier.

Lesson:

In an action involving aircraft carriers on both sides, the priority of targets will vary depending upon the tactical situation. However, it is generally preferable to destroy the flight decks of as many of the enemy carriers as possible, even if only for a short period, in preference to attempting to sink a fewer number of carriers. The purpose of this is to increase one's own air strength relative to that of the enemy, in order to have air superiority during the decisive phase of the action. This is similar to the advisability long recognized in gunnery of keeping all ships of the enemy battle line under fire. The capabilities of attacking aircraft for inflicting decisive damage are so great, and vary so much with circumstances which themselves change from minute to minute, that a mere numerical

superiority in aircraft may not be enough. It may be necessary to gain a marked air superiority before a commander can with safety divert his strikes from destruction of the enemy's flight decks to the destruction of the enemy's carriers.

15. Both Commander Mobile Force and CTF 17, while the battle was still being fought and while it was still undecided, detached a large number of ships from combatant duties and assigned them to salvage duties. In the case of the Mobile Force, six destroyers were detached to attend the damaged AKAGI, KAGA and SORYU. They were therefore not available to augment the anti-aircraft screen of the HIRYU when she was being attacked. In the case of TF 17 the entire task group--two cruisers and five destroyers--was employed initially in the recovery and removal of the personnel of the damaged YORKTOWN. These ships were therefore not available to assist CTF 16 in continuing the action.

Lesson:

The decision as to whether to aid a damaged ship or to rescue survivors is one for the Officer-in-Tactical command alone. He is authorized, if the progress of the battle permits, to assign ships as necessary to provide anti-aircraft protection, anti-submarine protection, towing, alongside aid, or other aid demanded by the situation. In so doing, he should be guided by the factor of calculated risk.

16. The shore based planes from Midway launched uncoordinated piecemeal attacks against the Japanese Mobile Force on June 4th. The carrier based planes from TF 16 likewise launched uncoordinated piecemeal attacks against the same target during the same day. Such piecemeal attacks were repulsed with excessive losses in some cases.

In addition, the attacks by the Midway planes were not coordinated with those by the Striking Force planes or vice versa. There seemed to be an almost complete lack of understanding of this extremely important problem at this time within the Armed Services.

This resulted in serious plane losses to both TF 16 and Midway and reduced the damage that might have been inflicted on the Japanese forces.

Lesson:

Every effort should be made to obtain the maximum destruction by the application of the necessary power through the proper coordination of all weapons. Attacking air groups should be coordinated so that the maximum

effective blow may be delivered against the enemy. Piecemeal attacks in small ineffective groups can only result in the attrition of the air groups with little if any damage to the enemy. There must be intensive joint training between services so that they may learn how best to support one another's operations.

Finally, a flight of planes from any one carrier or base launched for a strike mission should have a designated Flight Leader in tactical command of the various elements of the flight. When attack planes from more than one carrier in a group, or from different groups or bases are launched for the same mission, a Strike Leader or Target Coordinator should be designated to exercise overall tactical command over the target. This Strike Leader or Target Coordinator should be designated by the Officer-in-Tactical command if not provided by doctrine.

17. The composition of the air group at Midway consisted at midnight June 3rd of fourteen PBV-5, sixteen PBV-5A, seventeen B-17, four B-26, six TBF, nineteen SBD, seventeen SB2U, twenty one F2A-3 and seven P4F-3. This was a most heterogeneous grouping and was not well suited to the defense of the atoll, as was thoroughly demonstrated during the action. The reason for this unusual composition appears to have been one of urgency, transportation limitations, base capacity and availability. It appears that it was not possible to obtain a more homogeneous distribution of planes at Midway when the above factors are considered.

Lesson:

The defense of any small isolated island base against seaborne forces can be active or passive. In an active defense which is the preferred method the defending planes would be launched against the attacking ships and planes in an attempt to destroy or damage the carriers and especially their launching platforms, as well as to damage or sink the escorting ships. In such case search planes, dive bombers, torpedo planes, fighters and horizontal bombers might well be employed. In a passive defense the island base would probably rely on fighters, and anti-aircraft batteries alone. CNAS Midway employed an active defense. In view of the lack of damage done to the enemy carriers, and to the light damage done to the Japanese Midway Strike Group, it may be considered that the defense was relatively ineffective.

While it is frequently necessary to employ search planes from exposed bases, it may not be necessary to employ attack planes there, or to place personnel and develop installations peculiar to attack missions there until after making adequate provision for fighter defense.

This brings forth that there are no simple rules for the solution of a military problem. Each situation is a problem which if time permits must be solved through a thorough study of its major components; i.e. the selection of the objective and a determination of the effective operations for its attainment.

18. The American carriers, despite the increase of fighter aircraft from the authorized eighteen to a temporary twenty seven, still possessed insufficient fighter aircraft. They were unable to provide adequate fighter protection for the different elements of the air attack groups and for the defense of the task forces. They lost, therefore, nearly all of their torpedo planes to enemy defending fighters, generally before the torpedo planes could reach a favorable position for dropping their torpedoes.

Lesson:

Adequate fighter strength both for offense and defense must be provided aboard carriers. An air attack group inadequately protected by fighters will probably suffer prohibitive losses before delivery of its attack; a carrier task group inadequately protected by fighters may lose one or more carriers in a single attack; a base may be completely destroyed.

It is important, therefore, to review continuously the composition of air groups in the light of their probable usage in order to make timely adjustments between types of planes assigned. As both procurement and training problems are involved in addition to the purely military considerations, it is necessary that the complements desired for any specific operations be determined well in advance, as procurement can be a most difficult problem. It is likely that only minor readjustments can be made immediately before or during an operation.

19. Commander Mobile Force made a decision in the early stages of the action which had a most adverse effect on his chances of success. He had previously decided that it was important to search a definite sector around Midway lest American forces of danger to his command should happen to be in that sector. He had launched a search to locate such enemy forces. His search planes, if all went well, had now completed about two thirds of the outgoing search without having made a contact. At this point, without having completed the search, he decided to break the spot of his standby attack group which was armed to attack any surface craft encountered, and to rearm them for shore targets at Midway. By doing this he temporarily placed his carriers in a state of non-readiness for instant action. He was hit in this unsatisfactory condition of readiness by the American carrier planes, and three of his four carriers were heavily disabled.

Lesson:

Momentous deviations from decisions made during the planning phase of a military problem may appear to be required during the action phase because of incentives arising from the demands of the situation. If an analysis of the situation shows that such a deviation should be made, the Commander should make such a deviation without hesitancy. On the other hand, should the Commander make an undesirable departure from the plan because unjustified, he thereby increases chances of failure.

20. When the dive bombing groups departed from the ENTERPRISE and from the HORNET to attack the Mobile Force, it is possible that the flight leaders may not have been adequately instructed regarding the salient features of the problem. For it must be noted that the flight leader of the YORKTOWN was so instructed. As a result of this the HORNET flight leader turned south through an incorrect analysis of his problem and failed to find the Mobile Force. The ENTERPRISE flight leader, on the other hand, turned north through a correct analysis of his problem, as did the YORKTOWN flight leader (who had been directed to turn north). Both found the Mobile Force. Had the ENTERPRISE and YORKTOWN flight leaders decided to turn south or been ordered to do so, the result of the action might well have been disastrous.

Lesson:

The responsibility for decisions made by the flight leaders while airborne, rest squarely upon the flight leaders themselves. However, as a flight leader in his plane is alone, without the facilities of a flag plot or staff, he should be looked out for to a far greater extent than would be normal with surface ship commanders. Carrier Commanding Officers should insure that the flight leaders are fully briefed prior to launching, and, as feasible, advised in the air whenever necessary.

21. The Japanese planning for the Midway operation was not sound. Japanese forces were not adequately coordinated. This was because their initial positions were so widely separated that the American forces were able to strike certain groups, notably the Mobile Force and Crudiv 7, before the latter forces were able to concentrate with stronger forces. The factors of mutual support and concentration appear to have been disregarded for purposes of possible envelopment of American forces.

Lesson:

When a number of task forces and groups, which are to operate under the same command in widely separated areas, are to be coordinated into a common effort, it is essential that the coordination be thoroughly considered during the planning phase. Effective action is the goal of such planning.

It is also vital that all other considerations affecting the projected operation be thoroughly considered in order that adequate plans may be provided.

22. During the four days of the battle the Army Air Force flew a total of fifty-five B-17 sorties in actual high level horizontal bombing attacks against the enemy, and five similar sorties against an American submarine. The horizontal bombers dropped twenty 1000-pound, eighty-three 600-pound, two hundred and twenty-three 500-pound, and eight 300-pound bombs for a total poundage of 183,700 pounds. The total poundage dropped by the Army Air Force was therefore 183,700 pounds or 91.85 tons. No hits were made. During this time the Navy and Marine Corps, employing Midway based and carrier based planes, flew a total of two hundred and forty-eight sorties in actual dive and glide bombing attacks and fifty-one sorties in actual torpedo attacks against the enemy. This did not include the night attack by three patrol planes. The dive bombers, which were carrier based, dropped one hundred and eighteen 1000-pound, eighty-nine 500-pound, and twenty-two 100-pound bombs for a total poundage of 184,700 pounds; the glide bombers, which were Midway based, dropped thirty-seven 500-pound bombs for a total poundage of 18,500 pounds, the torpedo planes dropped seventeen torpedoes for a total poundage of 34,000 pounds. The total poundage dropped by the Navy and Marine Corps was therefore 217,200 pounds or 108.6 tons. The dive bombers made two hits on the aircraft carrier AKAGI; four hits on the aircraft carrier KAGA; three hits on the aircraft carrier SORYU; four hits on the aircraft carrier HIRYU; one crash dive and thirteen hits on the heavy cruiser MIKUMA; five hits on the heavy cruiser MOGAMI, one on the destroyer ARASHIO and one on the destroyer AGASHIO; a total of thirty-four actual hits. The glide bombers and torpedo planes made no hits. The three patrol planes made one torpedo hit on the AKEBONO MARU, an oiler.

Thus the horizontal bombers made sixty attacks, dropped 91.85 tons of bombs and made no hits; the dive and glide bombers and torpedo planes made two hundred and ninety-nine attacks, dropped 108.6 tons of bombs and torpedoes and made thirty-four hits.

Lesson:

The above results show that at the Battle of Midway the high altitude horizontal bombers were entirely ineffective against maneuvering surface ships. On the other hand, dive bombers assisted by torpedo planes were highly effective against the same targets and proved themselves vastly superior to horizontal bombers for warfare on the sea.

23. The difficulties imposed on flying operations by the weather conditions in the Aloutians were very pronounced on both sides. In the case of the

Japanese their carrier strikes were only partially effective because the majority of the planes launched were unable to reach the targets, owing to the heavy fog and low clouds encountered. On the American side the complete absence of hits by American aircraft on any of the Japanese ships of the Second Mobile Task Group, and the failure of both Army and Navy bombers to accomplish any effective results on either land or sea targets at Attu and Kiska, are strong indications of the adverse effect of thick weather on accuracy of bombing, even when planes, such as the Navy PBV's, are radar equipped.

Lesson:

The effectiveness of air operations in unfavorable weather is measured by the ability of aircraft to perform their assigned tasks rather than by their ability to take to the air and land. In poor visibility area bombing by radar can be and often is effective, but pin-point bombing by radar against small land targets is highly ineffective. Low altitude bombing by radar against maneuvering targets can be highly effective, but, should the maneuvering target be adequately equipped with an anti-aircraft battery radar controlled, the effectiveness of low level bombing may be expected to diminish considerably.

24. The difficulties which CTF 8 encountered upon his arrival in Alaska in obtaining the full and loyal support of his Army Air Force Commander CTG 8.3 are indicative of the perplexing problems which command of mixed forces will always present. CTG 8.3's opposition to CTF 8's plan was not based on pure contrariness, but instead was based on his full and considered opinion as to the functions of army land-based aircraft in the projected situation. He appears to have felt that it was his duty to present his views however forcibly, and his initial refusal to base any important units of his command in the western bases, although perhaps ill advised, was in accordance with his understanding of his responsibilities.

Lesson:

The goal of any command organization is complete unity of action. This requires complete unity of purpose throughout all echelons of command. Such unity of purpose is doubtful of attainment if a senior commander of one Service compels a subordinate commander of another Service to operate under an order which the subordinate firmly believes will create a poor or undesirable situation. It is wise, therefore, for the senior commander to endeavor to win over the subordinate commander by sound logic, as was done by CTF 8, rather than to order the subordinate commander against his violent opposition, to take action which the subordinate commander deems detrimental to his command and Service.

COMBAT APPRAISAL
of the
JAPANESE MOBILE FORCE COMMANDER
Vice Admiral CHUICHI NAGUMO

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UNCLASSIFIED

VICE ADMIRAL CHUICHI NAGUMO
Commander Mobile Force

Vice Admiral Nagumo displayed few of those complex personal characteristics, which were so essentially Japanese, and which were noticeable in the character of Rear Admiral Tadaichi Hara, who had commanded the Japanese carrier force at the Battle of the Coral Sea. As an example, he was not moved to action by that strange Japanese characteristic "face", but functioned more like an occidental in such matters.

Like Admiral Hara, he appears to have been an active, competent carrier task force commander so long as the situation remained favorable. He sought action, and closed the enemy to give battle, partially because he considered himself much stronger. As an Admiral handling peacetime operations he must have excelled. He well understood the mechanics of carrier operations, but unfortunately for Japan, he allowed these very mechanics to submerge him.

His tactical handling of his carrier force up to the time of the successful dive bombing strikes on the AKAGI, KAGA and SORYU was up to the highest Japanese standards. He had successfully avoided many attacks by all types of planes for some hours, and he nearly succeeded in avoiding any damage whatsoever. Although he allowed the four carriers of the Mobile Force to become seriously separated during the morning of June 4th, it must be remembered that it appears to have been Japanese practice to operate their carrier task forces in this fashion. The ships of the carrier task forces were allowed to operate individually in order to avoid bomb and torpedo attack. Vice Admiral Nagumo therefore did not consider that the wide dispersion of his forces which occurred under continuous air attack was inconsistent with Japanese doctrine. He thoroughly understood the value of information, and he correctly employed his battleship and cruiser based planes in contact scouting throughout June 4th.

Vice Admiral Nagumo's greatest errors were errors in judgment brought on by over confidence and by improper analysis procedures. His over confidence, and his thinking because of it, led him to make the most vital decision in the action after a perfunctory analysis. This decision was to break the spot and rearm for land targets his air striking group which he had had standing by to attack any enemy surface forces discovered by his search planes. He did this before his search planes had completed their planned search. By so doing, he placed his carriers in a state of non-readiness for instant action, and it was while in that state of non-readiness that three of them were seriously damaged.

Once Vice Admiral Nagumo found himself in this unfavorable situation, he does not appear to have acted with that understanding and dispatch expected of

a commander of competence. He became confused and issued confusing information to his superior, as well as to his own command. It is not clear whether this was due to shock resulting from the destruction of his carriers, one of which was his flagship, or whether he failed under pressure. After a time he seemed restored in ability to command, and resumed the offensive against the Striking Force which resulted in the disabling of the YORKTOWN. However, this offensive spirit did not last long, for after the HIRYU had been heavily damaged about two hours later, Vice Admiral Nagumo lost his desire for combat. He grossly exaggerated the strength of the enemy and repeatedly incorrectly advised his superior as to the large number of carriers still available to the American command indicating the desirability of retirement. He further indicated that he planned to retire during the night. He was opposed to night action.

All of this indicated a weakness in Vice Admiral Nagumo's military character; a lack of those Bushido qualities so esteemed in Japanese thinking; a lack of will to all-out victory. As with Admiral Hara at the Coral Sea, this augured well to future American success.

IMPORTANT CONTACT REPORTS SHOWN ON DIAGRAM B
5 June 1942 and before

- (1) 1215/28th PBY search plane sighted Japanese submarine.
- (2) 0455/3rd GILLIS reports radar contact on enemy planes bearing 062° (T), 24 miles from Dutch Harbor.
- (3) 0800/3rd 11th Air Force reports "Jap Carrier" in a position bearing 210° (T), distant 55 miles from Dutch Harbor. At this time the Japanese carrier task force appears to have borne 180° (T), distant 150 miles.
- (4) 0904/3rd PBY search plane (6V55) reported two Japanese cargo vessels bearing 247° (T), distant 470 miles from Midway. Presumably, these units were a portion of the Minesweeping Group.
- (5) 0925/3rd PBY search plane (8V55) reports "Main Body" bearing 261° (T), distant 700 miles from Midway.
- (6) 1130/3rd Midway search plane (7V55) reports two cargo vessels and two small vessels bearing 251°, distant 570 miles, course 080° (T).
- (7) 1422/3rd A garbled report from a PBY search plane indicated a heavy concentration of ships in a position bearing 210° (T), distant 78 miles from Dutch Harbor.

289

CONFIDENTIAL
UNCLASSIFIED

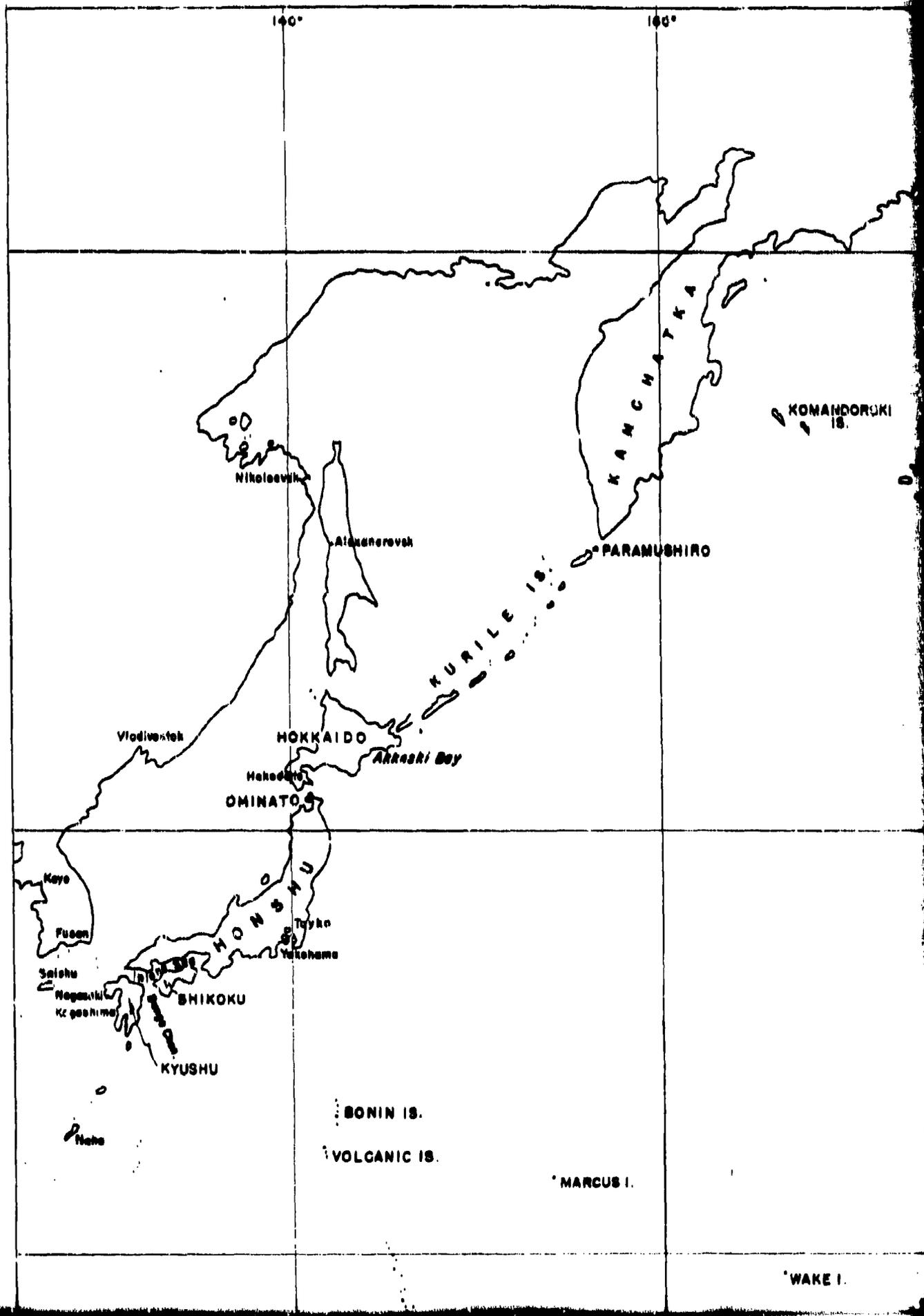
RECORD OF EVENTS SHOWN ON DIAGRAM D
4 June 1942
0000-2400

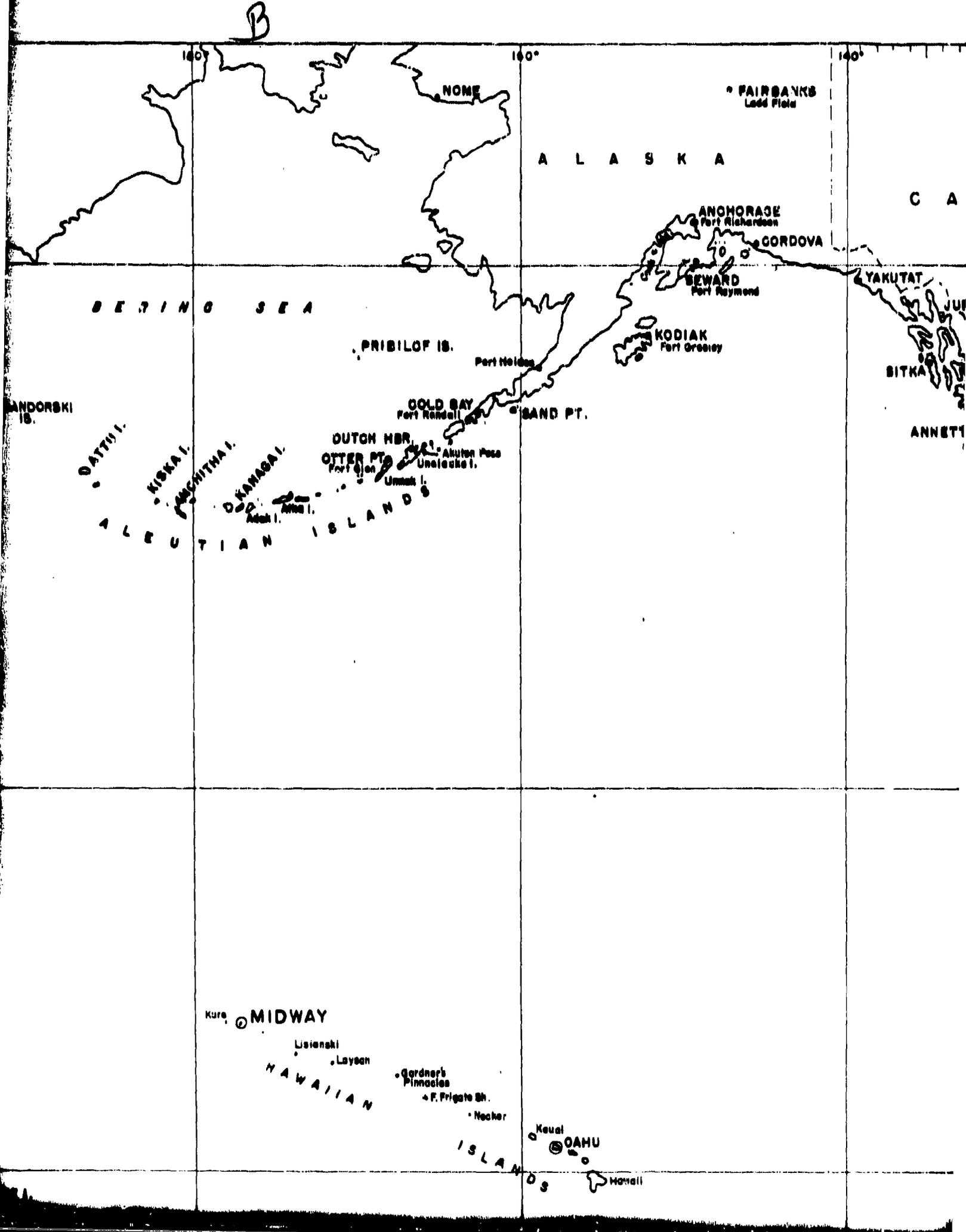
- (1) 0145 Transport Group attacked by four PEY's from Midway. ARIZONO MARU (tanker) hit by one torpedo.
- (2) 1200 Second Fleet changed course and speed to rendezvous with Mobile Force.
- (3) 1200 Main Group and Aleutian Support Group alter course to close American surface forces.
- (4) 1320 Second Fleet position.
- (5) 1340 Transport Group retired to northwestward.
- (6) 1415 JINTSU, Desdivs 18 and 19 (1 CA, 8 DD) left transports to join Second Fleet.
- (7) 1430 CHITOSE (AV) and HAYASHIO (DD) retire at 24 kts. to join Transport Group.
- (8) 1530 KAMIKAWA MARU (XAV) and Patrol Boat 38 retire at 16-17 kts. to join Transport Group.
- (9) 1715 Designated 2400 rendezvous of Second Fleet units.
- (10) 1930 CHITOSE joins Transport Group as escort.
- (11) 2340 Commander Second Fleet planned to reach this position at 0300. This information was sent to Commander Mobile Force in order that he might effect a rendezvous with Second Fleet.
- (12) 2400 Crudiv 7 (4 CA) and four destroyers en route to bombard Midway.

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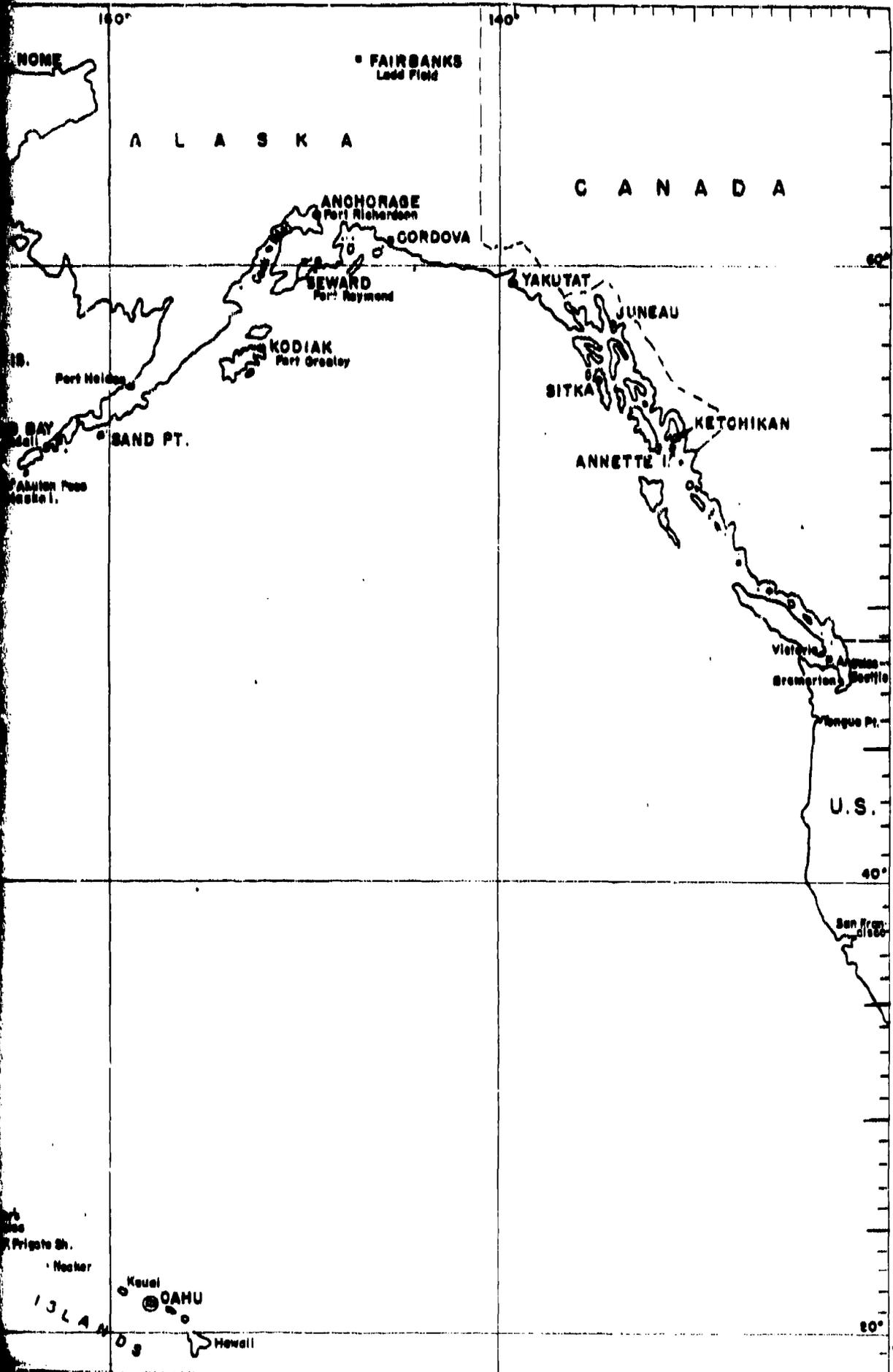
UNCLASSIFIED

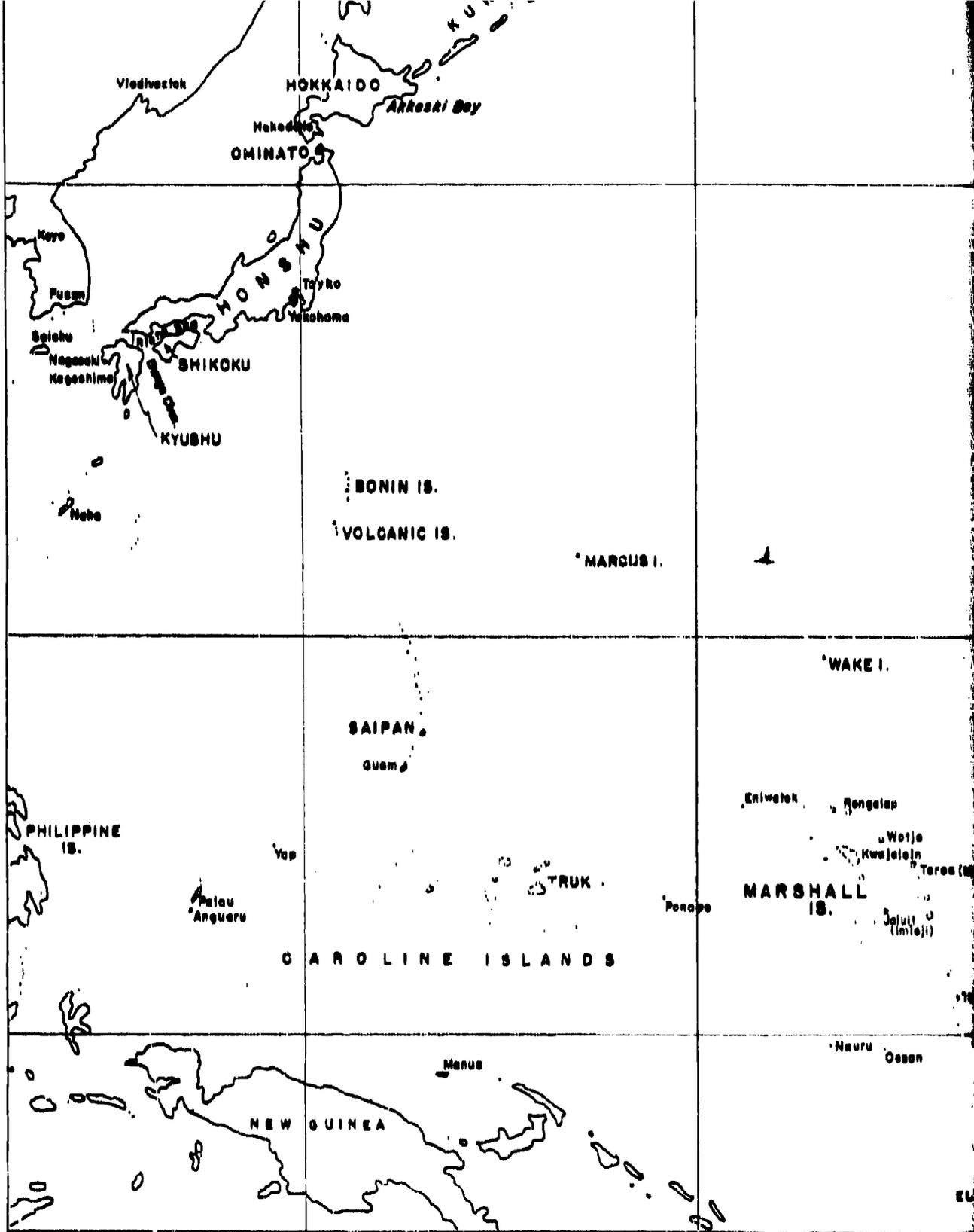
A





C





D

Kure ○ MIDWAY

Laysan

Loaysan

HAWAIIAN

Gardner's Pinnacles

P. Frigate Sh.

Necker

Kauai

○ OAHU

ISLANDS

Hawaii

KAKE I.

Johnston I.

Pangaloa

Wetj

Kwajalein

Tara (Maloelep)

Sejull (Imieji)

Terawa

Palmyra I.

Washington I.

Christmas I.

Howland I.
Baker I.

Nauru Ocean

GILBERT IS.

PHOENIX IS.

BATTLE OF MIDWAY
THEATRE OF OPERATION

ELLICE IS.

UNION IS.

E

Bromerton Pacific

Pongue Pt.

U.S.

40°

San Fran. 1900

Necker I.
Frigate Sh.

Necker

Kauai

OAHU

ISLANDS

Molokai

Hawaii

20°

Palmyra I.

Washington I.

Christmas I.

UNCLASSIFIED

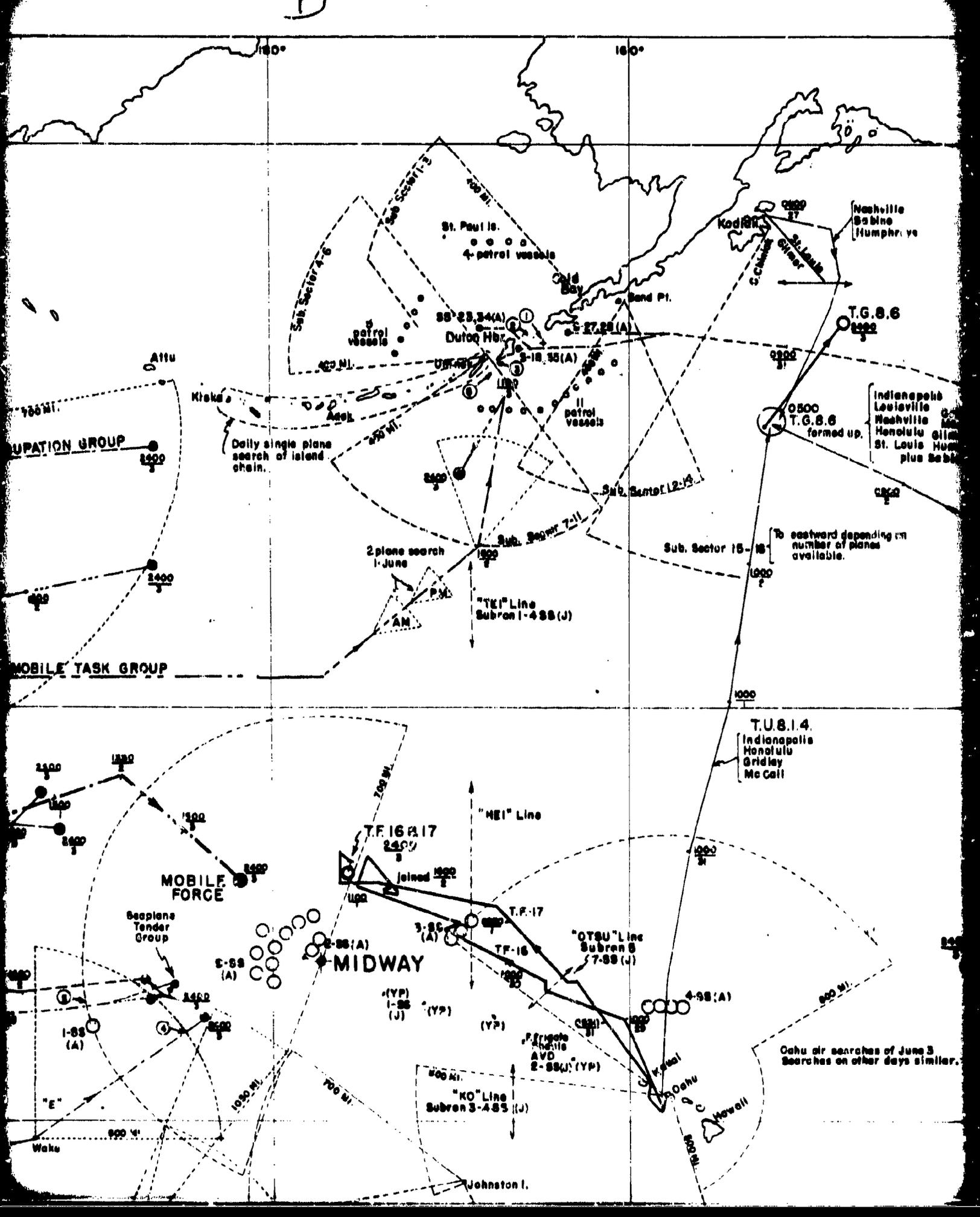
BATTLE OF MIDWAY
THEATRE OF OPERATIONS

231a

DIAGRAM A

U-252A

F



OPERATION GROUP

MOBILE TASK GROUP

MOBILE FORCE

MIDWAY

T.G. 8.6
 Indianapolis
 Louisville
 Honolulu
 St. Louis
 plus Seabird

Cebu air searches of June 3
 Searches on other days similar.

To eastward depending on
 number of planes
 available.

"TEI" Line
 Subron 1-4 SS (J)

"OTSU" Line
 Subron 6
 7-SS (J)

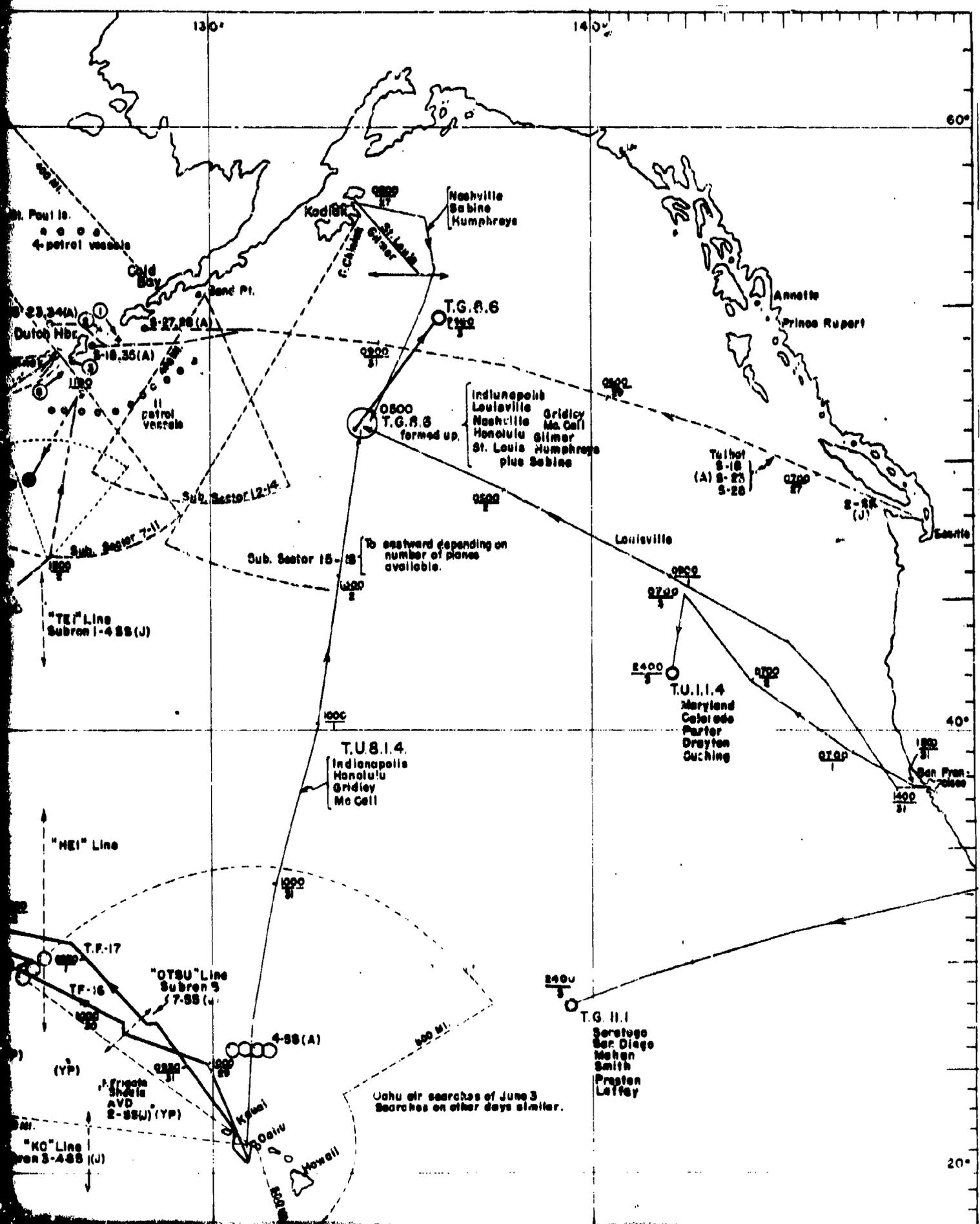
"KO" Line
 Subron 3-4 SS (J)

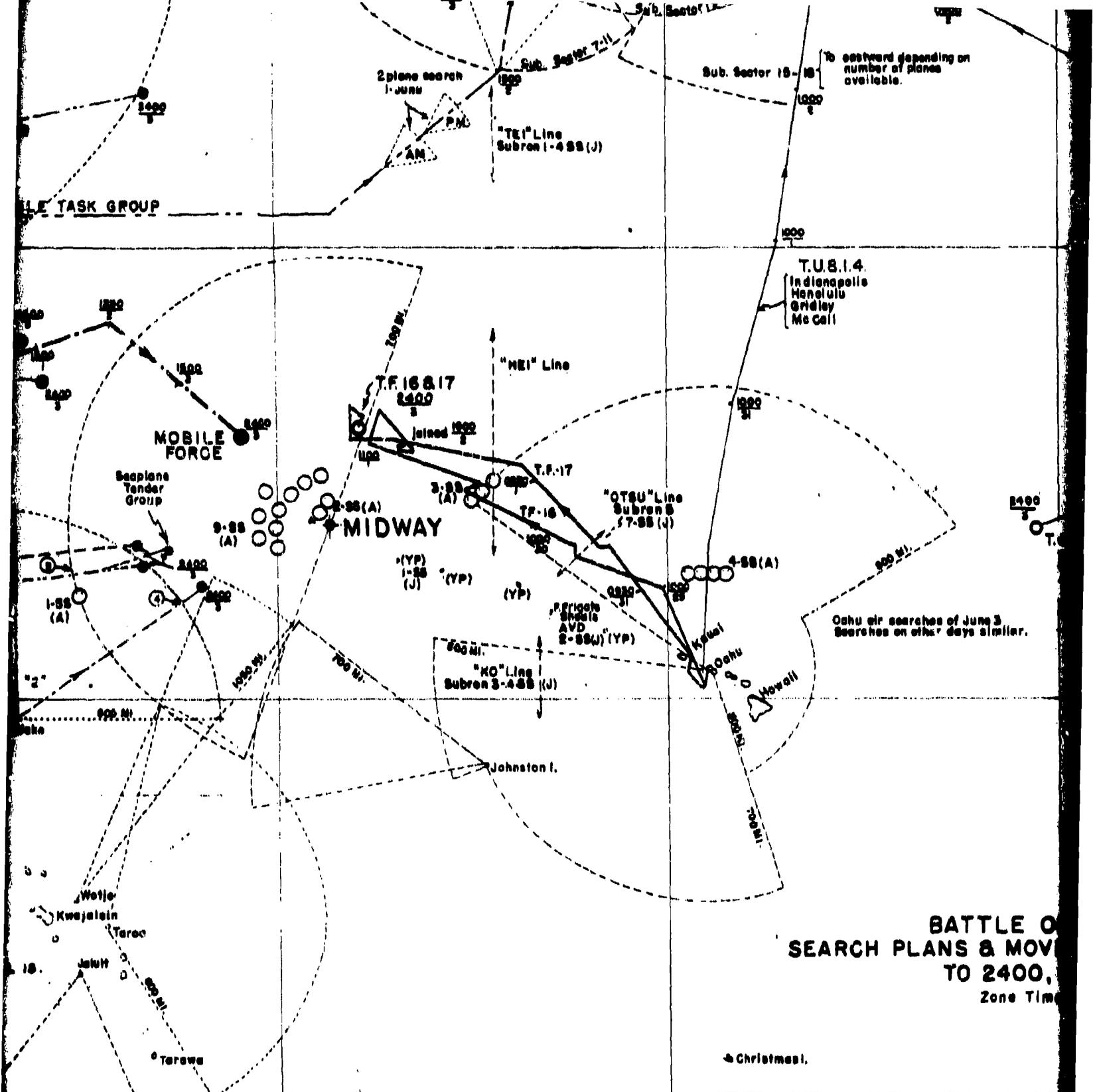
Daily single plane
 search of island
 chain.

2 plane search
 1 June

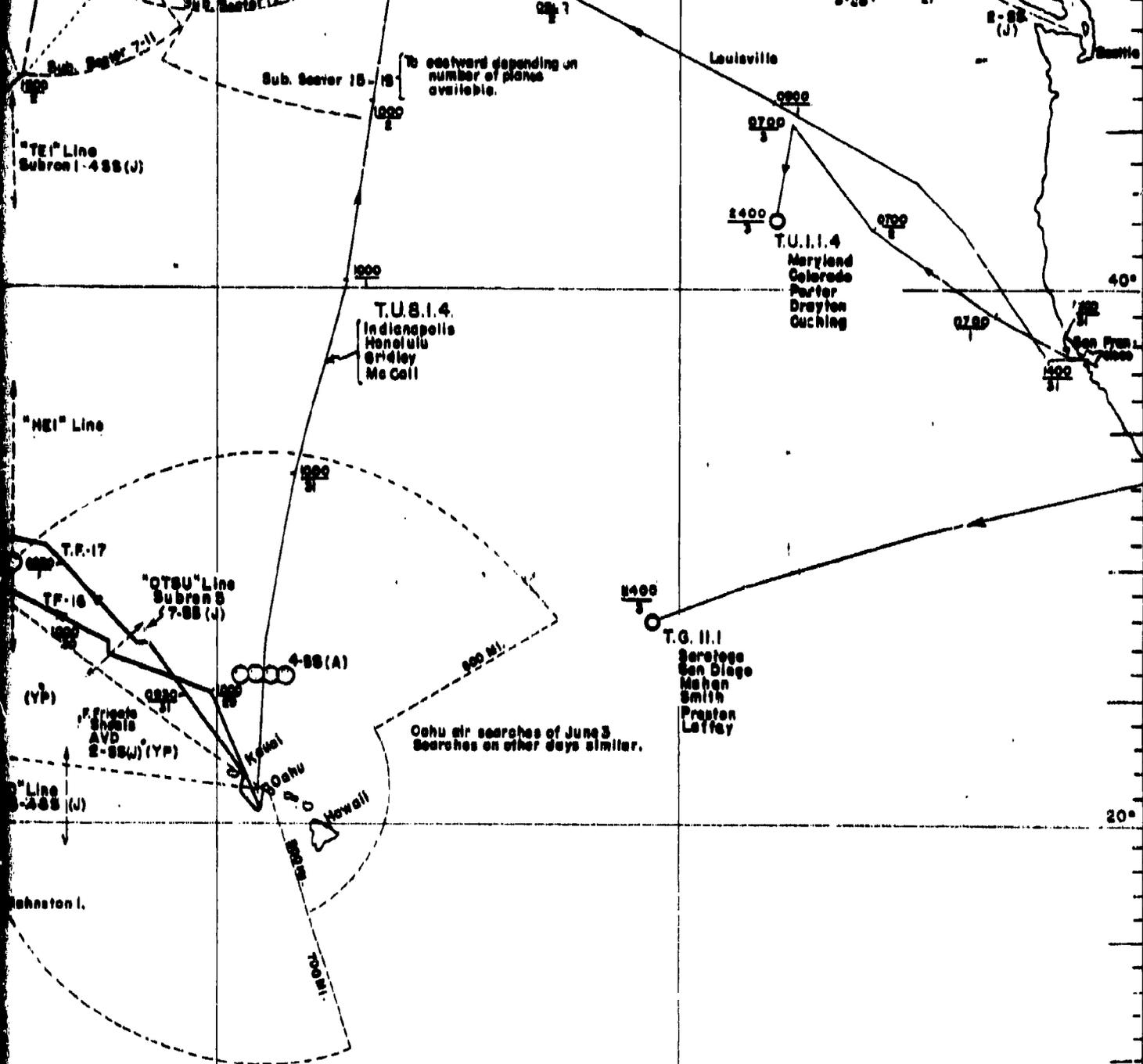
Cebu air searches of June 3
 Searches on other days similar.

C





**BATTLE OF
SEARCH PLANS & MOV
TO 2400,
Zone Time**



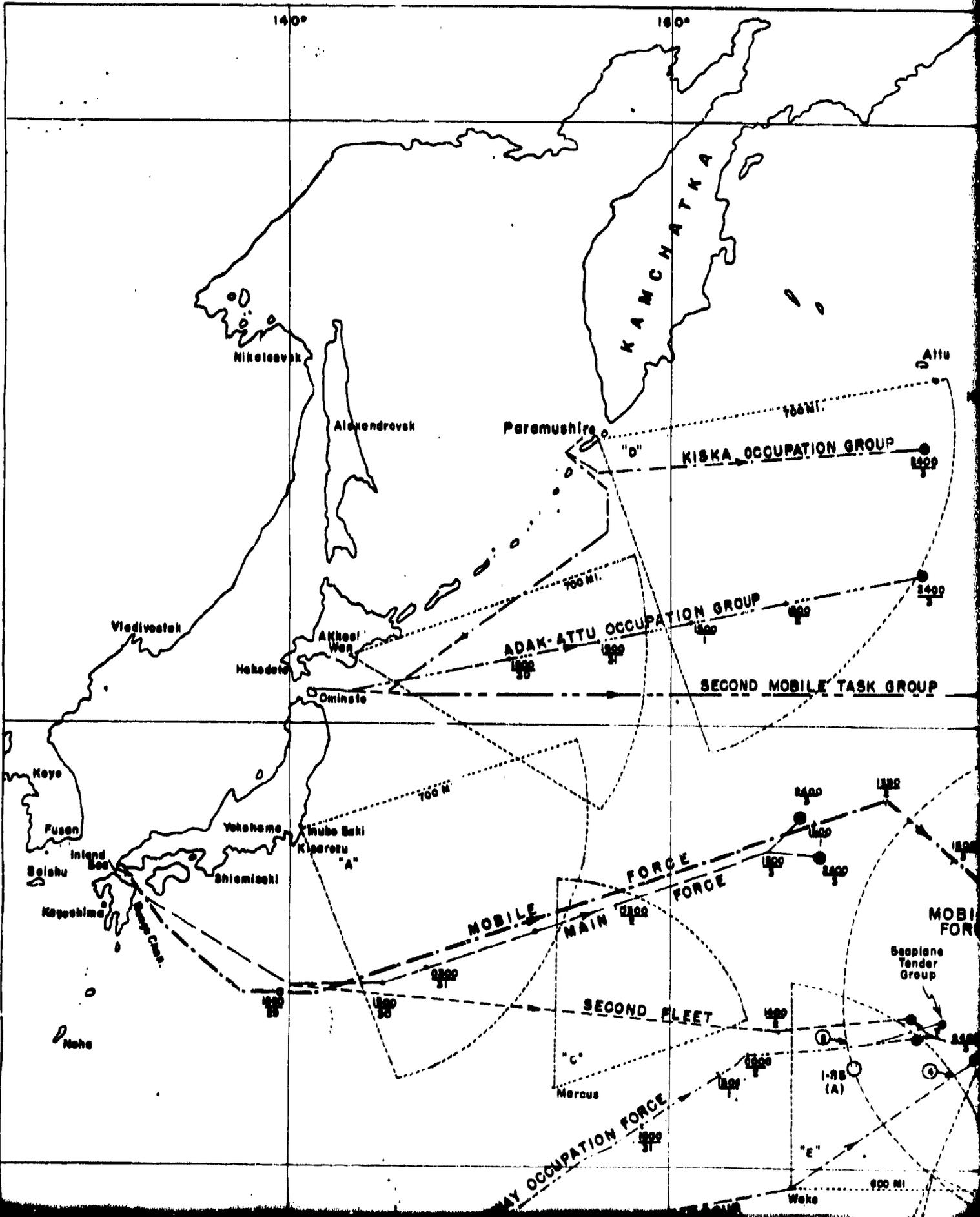
**BATTLE OF MIDWAY
SEARCH PLANS & MOVEMENT OF FORCES
TO 2400, 3 JUNE**
Zone Time +12

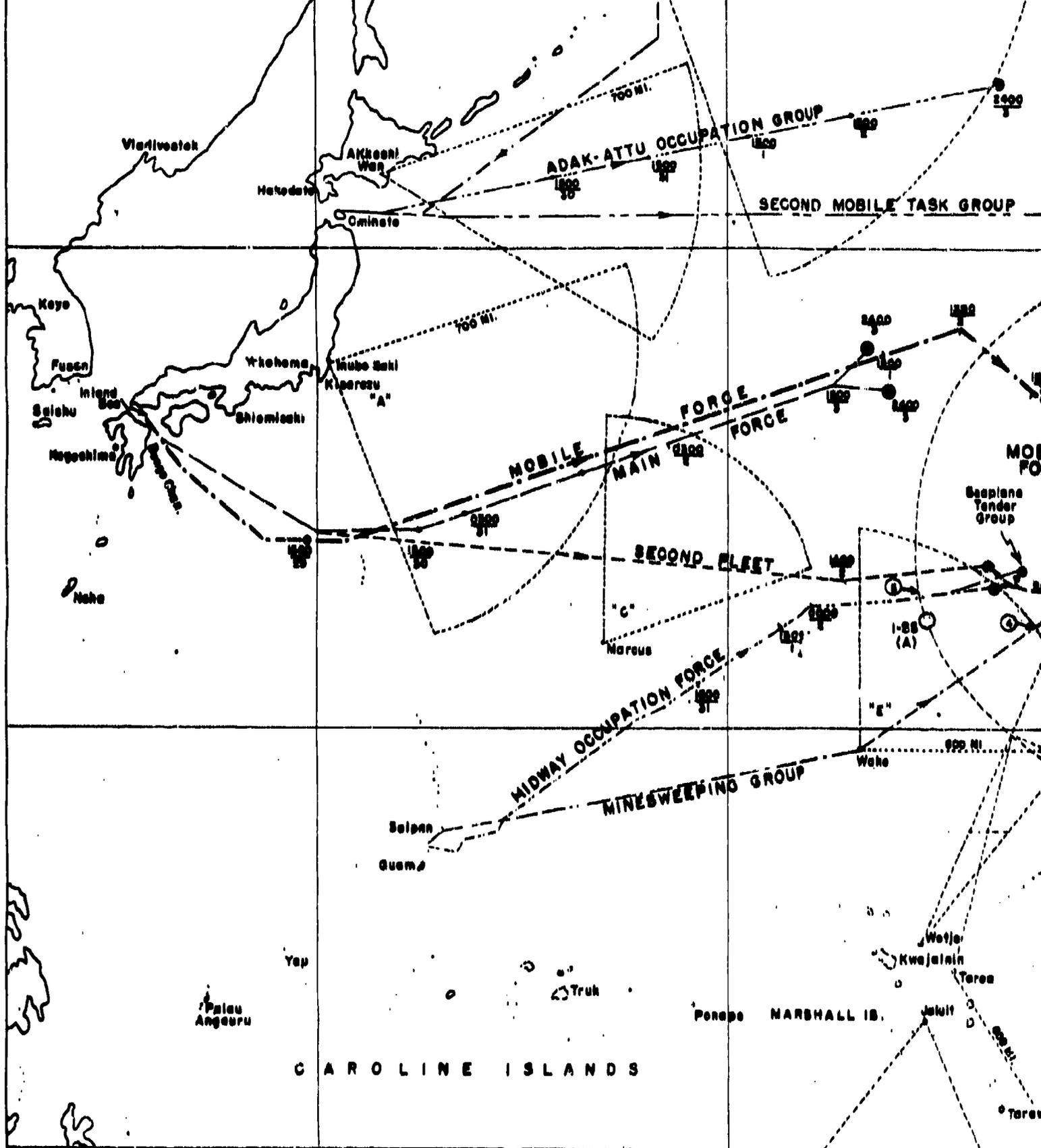
→ Christmool.

DIAGRAM B

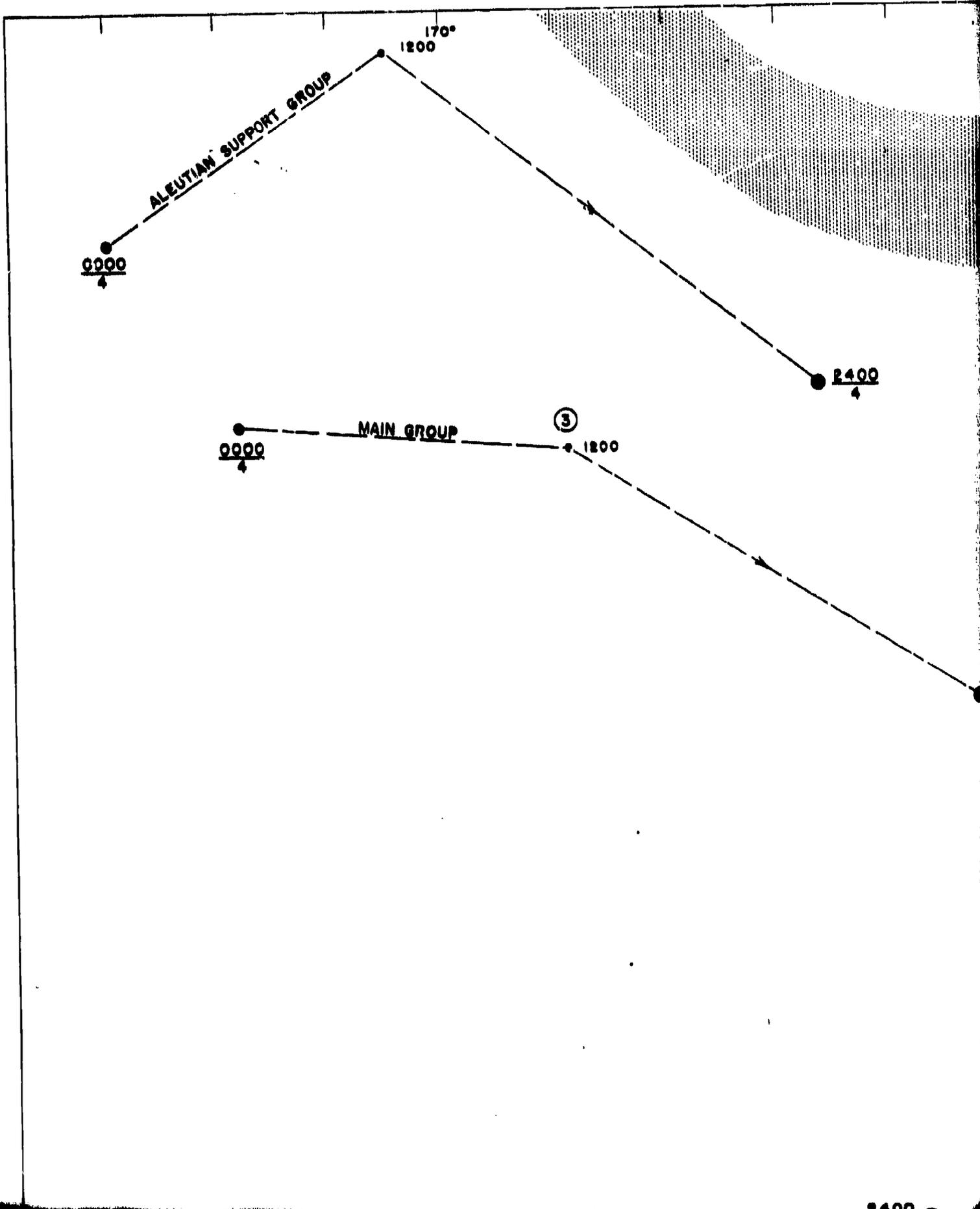
310

UNCLASSIFIED





A



B

176°

180°

Shaded area indicates area of sea overcast skies associated with the moving eastward.

200
4

2400
4

See Diagrams D-1 to 4

0000
4

MOBILE FORCE

2400
4

1700

2400
4

9

0700

2400
4

Group 6 2400
1000

2400

22 DIVS 16, 8, 18

Grenadier

Bulwark

2400

2400

Lochaber

Flying Pl

2400

Tudgum

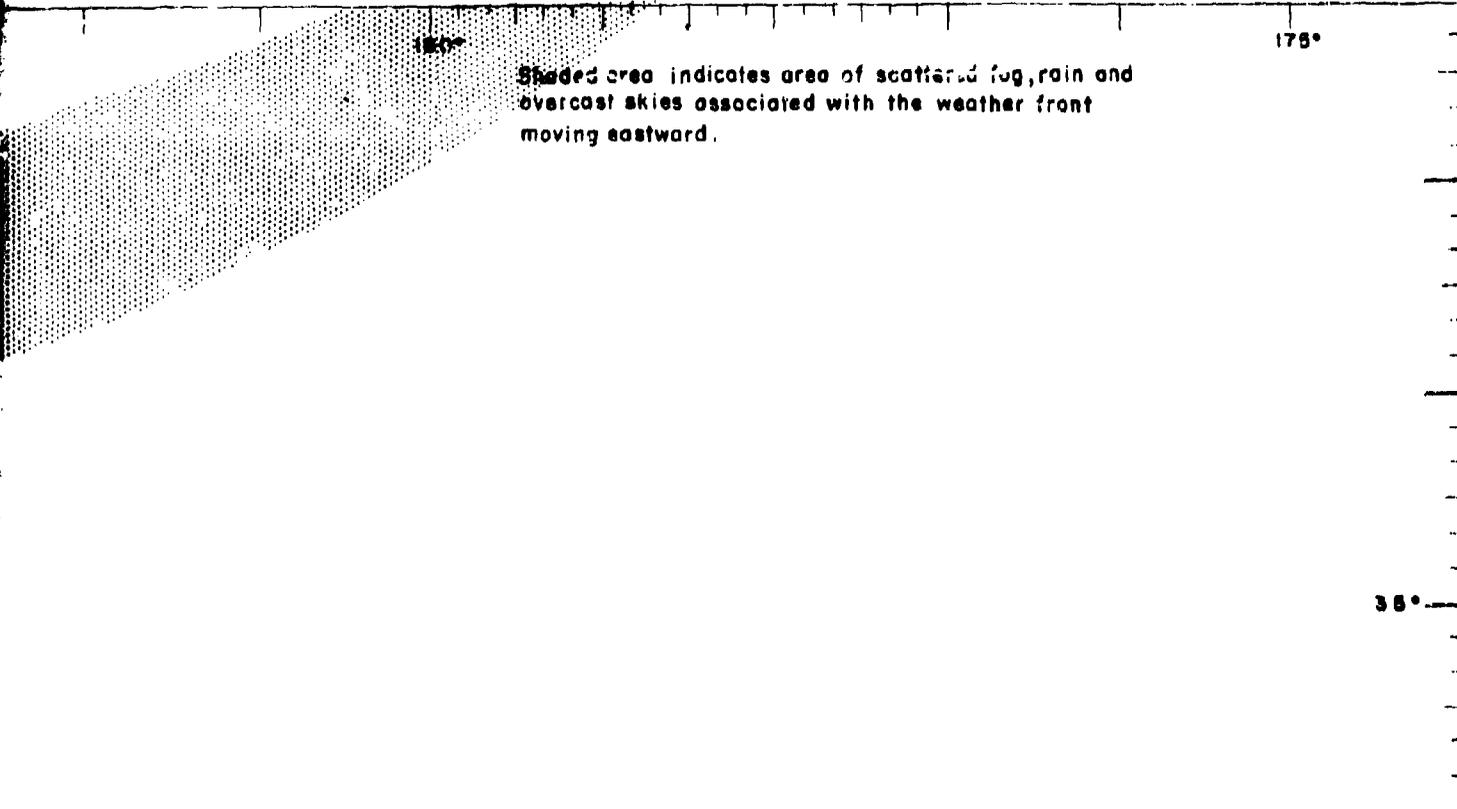
2400

2400

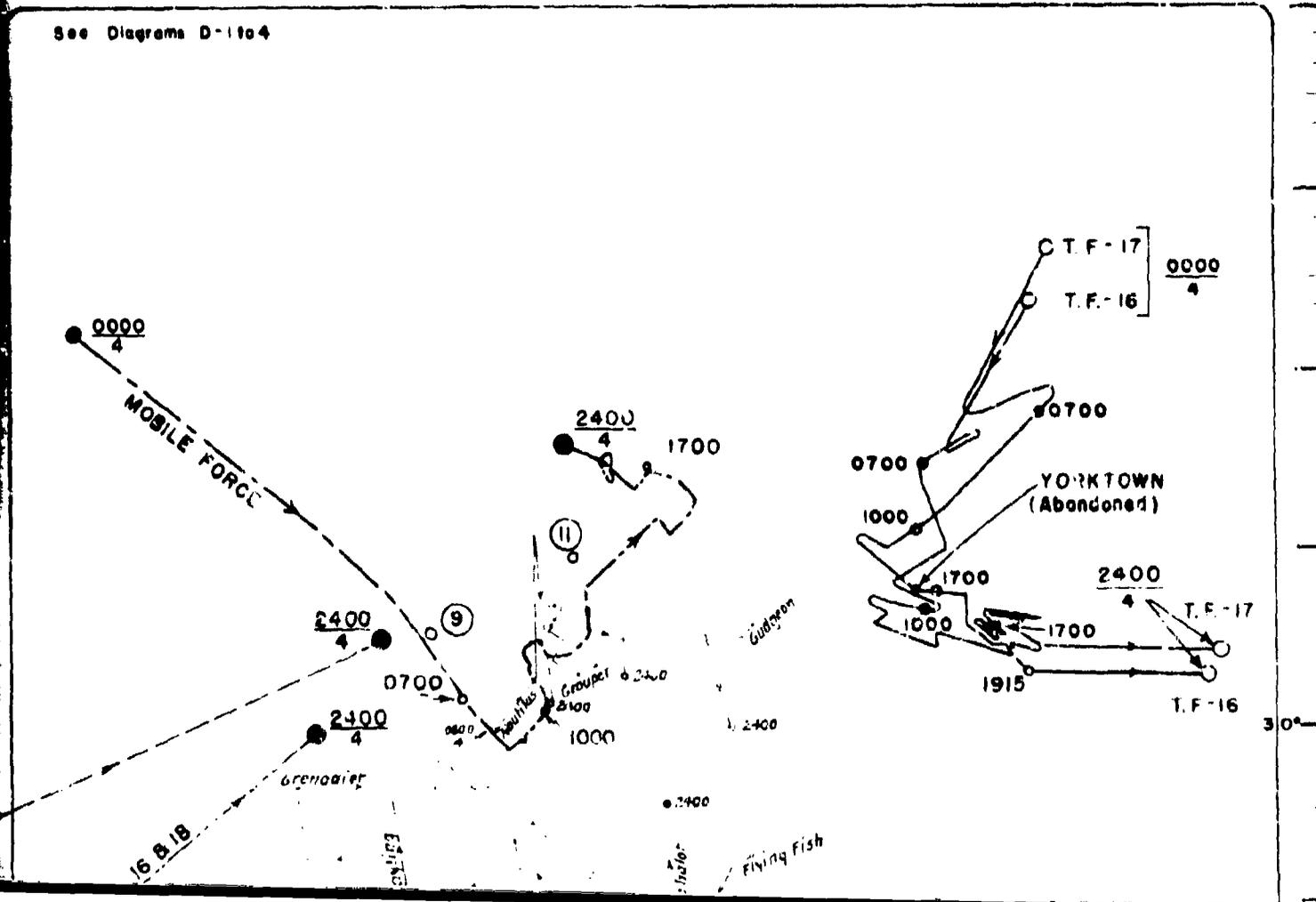
Lochaber

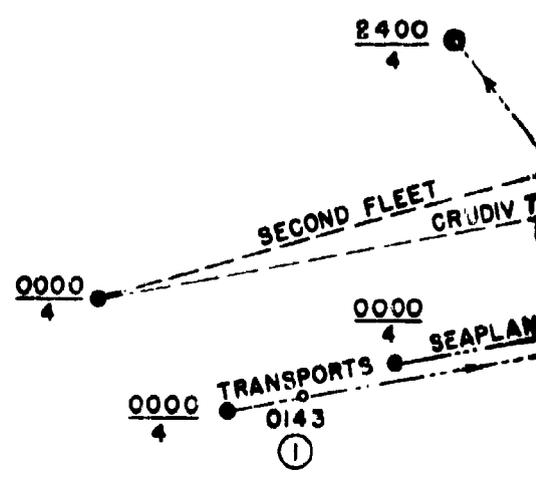
2400

C

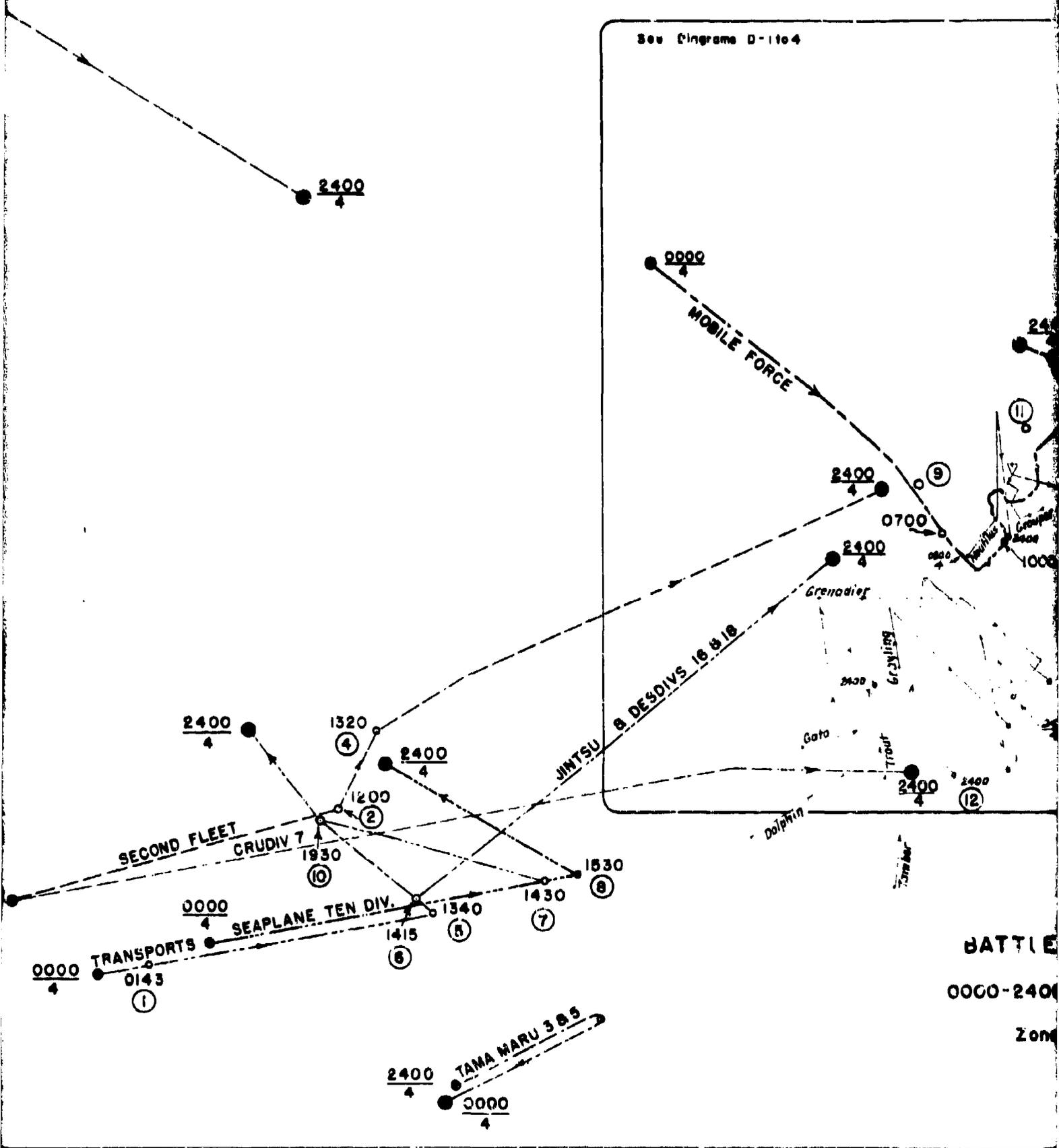


See Diagrams D-1 to 4





See Diagram D-1 to 4



BATTLE

0000-2400

Zone

A

177°

178°

179°

180°

179°

MAIN GROUP
600 miles
Bearing 293°
from MOBILE FORCE
at 0430

JAP
MOBILE
FORCE
0000

Haruna
031° - 150mi
(7)

Chikuma
054° - 300mi.

Chikuma
077° -

0354

Slowed to
20 Knots

0430

Midway Attack
Units take
departure.

0500

Plane which made
1st contact launched

CV sighted
by PBV 4V58

Tone
100° - 300mi. (4)

Akagi
181° - 300mi.

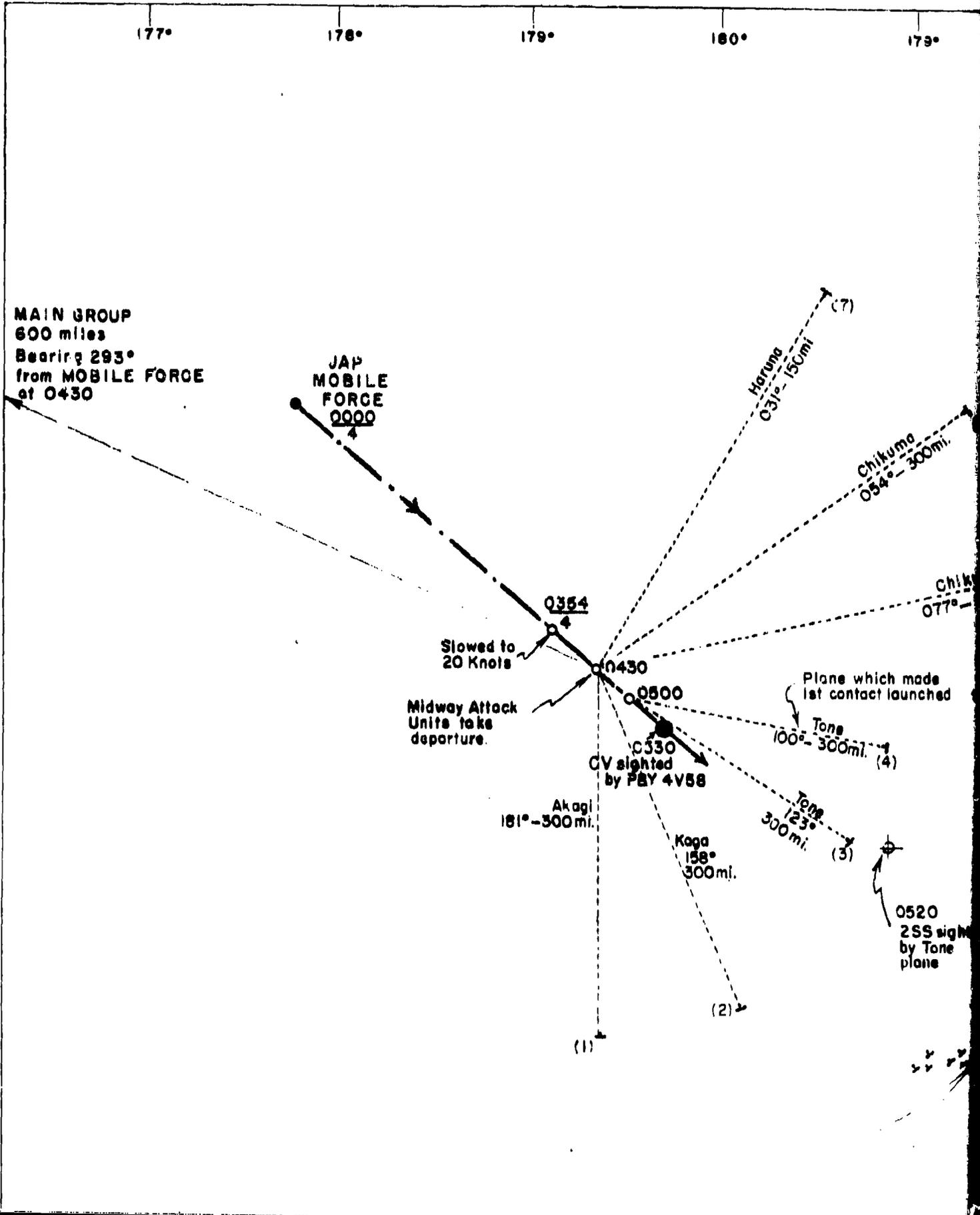
Kaga
158°
300mi.

Tone
123°
300mi. (3)

0520
2SS sight
by Tone
plane

(1)

(2)



B

179° 178° 177° 176° 175°

100 mi.

33°
32°
31°
30°
29°

Chikuma
054° - 300mi. (6)

Chikuma
077° - 300mi. (5)

0431
Yorktown
launches
search
10-VSB

TF-17 0000
4

TASK FORCE 16 0000
4

TF 17-0600

TF 16-0600

which made
contact launched last

mi. (4)

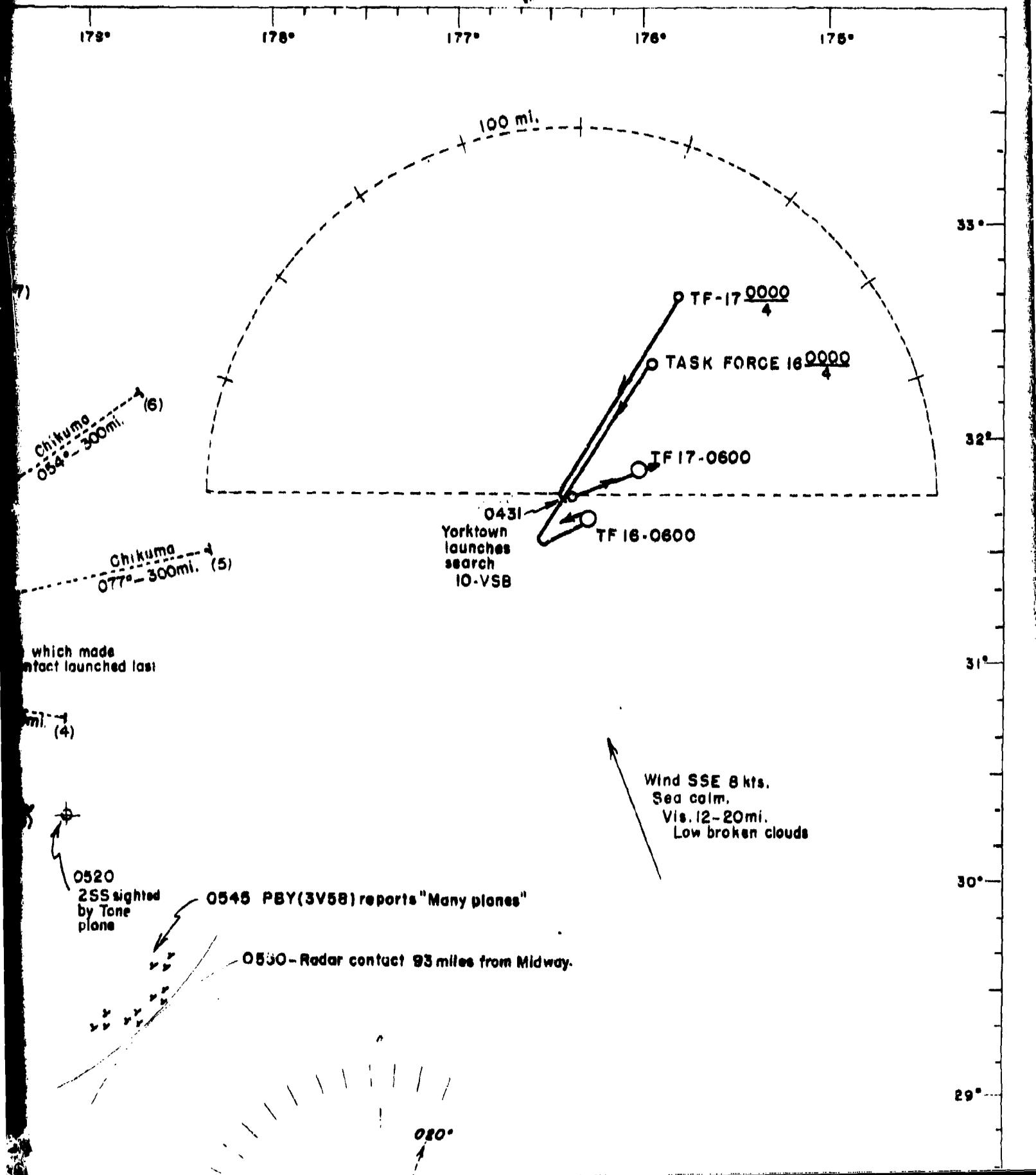
Wind SSE 8 kts.
Sea calm.
Vis. 12-20mi.
Low broken clouds

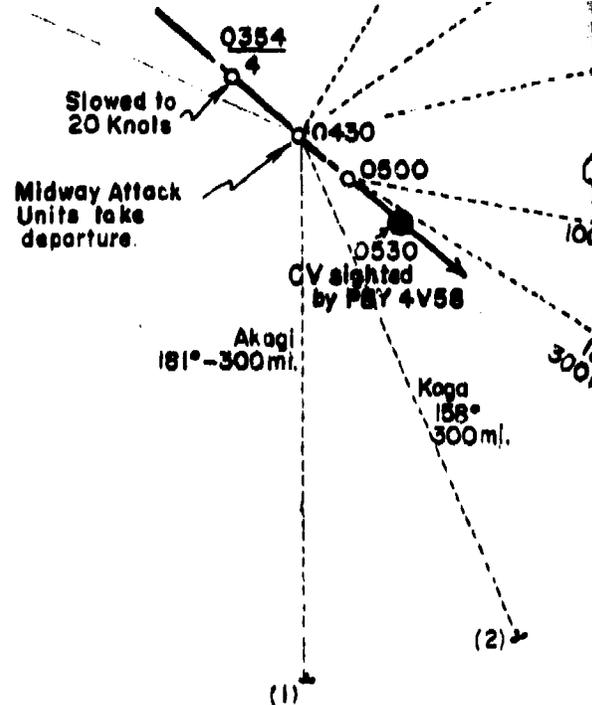
0520
2SS sighted
by Tone
plane

0545 PBV(3V58) reports "Many planes"

0550 - Radar contact 93 miles from Midway.

080°





0600
 14 B-17's ordered to attack
 TRANSPORT GROUP diverted
 to attack CARRIERS.

4 PB7's attack TRANSPORT
 GROUP at 0143.

P

Yorktown
launches
search
10-VSB

TF 16-0600

Chikuma
077° - 300mi. (5)

Plane which made
1st contact launched last.

Tone
100° - 300mi. (4)

Tone
123°
300 mi. (3)

0520
2SS sighted
by Tone
plane

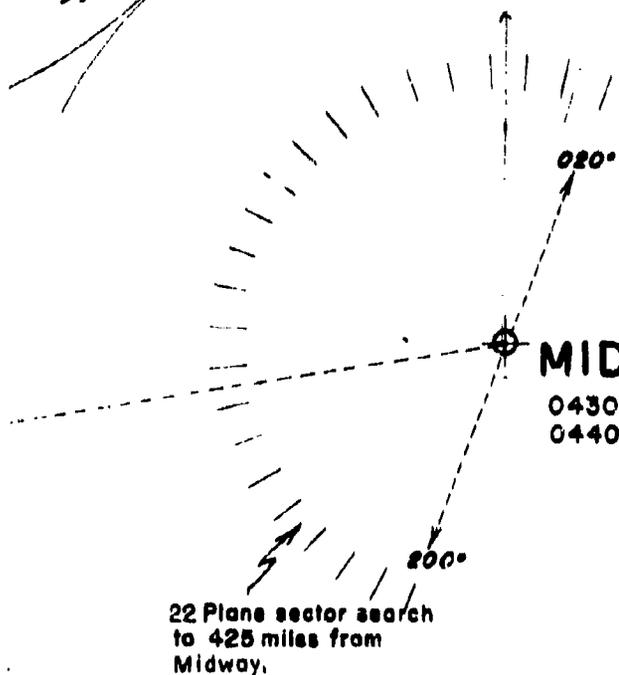
0545 PBV(3V58) reports "Many planes"

0550 Radar contact 93 miles from Midway.

Wind SSE 8 kts.
Sea calm.
Vis. 12-20mi.
Low broken clouds

0m.

(2)



MIDWAY

0430 Search plane take off.
0440 16 B-17's Take departure.

22 Plane sector search
to 425 miles from
Midway.

BATTLE OF MIDWAY

0000-0600

4 JUNE, 1942

Zone Time +12

Yorktown
launches
search
10-VSB

TF 16-0600

Wind SSE 8 kts.
Sea calm.
Vis. 12-20 mi.
Low broken clouds

BB) reports "Many planes"

contact 95 miles from Midway.

020°

MIDWAY

0430 Search plane take off.
0440 16 B-17's Take departure.

BATTLE OF MIDWAY

0000-0600
4 JUNE, 1942
Zone Time +12

DIAGRAM D-1

UNCLASSIFIED

33/ e

177°

178°

179°

180°

179°

MAIN GROUP
540 miles
Bearing 300°
from MOBILE FORCE
at 0700

MOBILE FORCE
0530

Actual position
295°-115°
40 mi.

Reported here

Recovering planes

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|------|-------------------|---|
| Midway Plane Attacks | { | 0705 | 4 B-26 (Army) | } |
| | | 0705 | 6 TBF (Navy) | |
| | { | 0755 | 16 SBDs (Marine) | } |
| | | 0810 | 14 B-17s (Army) | |
| | | 0820 | 11 SB2Us (Marine) | |
| | | | | |

NAUTILUS

0705 sights smoke
0824 attacks RB
0910 attacks CL

(7)

07

0800

08

0800

0800

0700

0738

0800

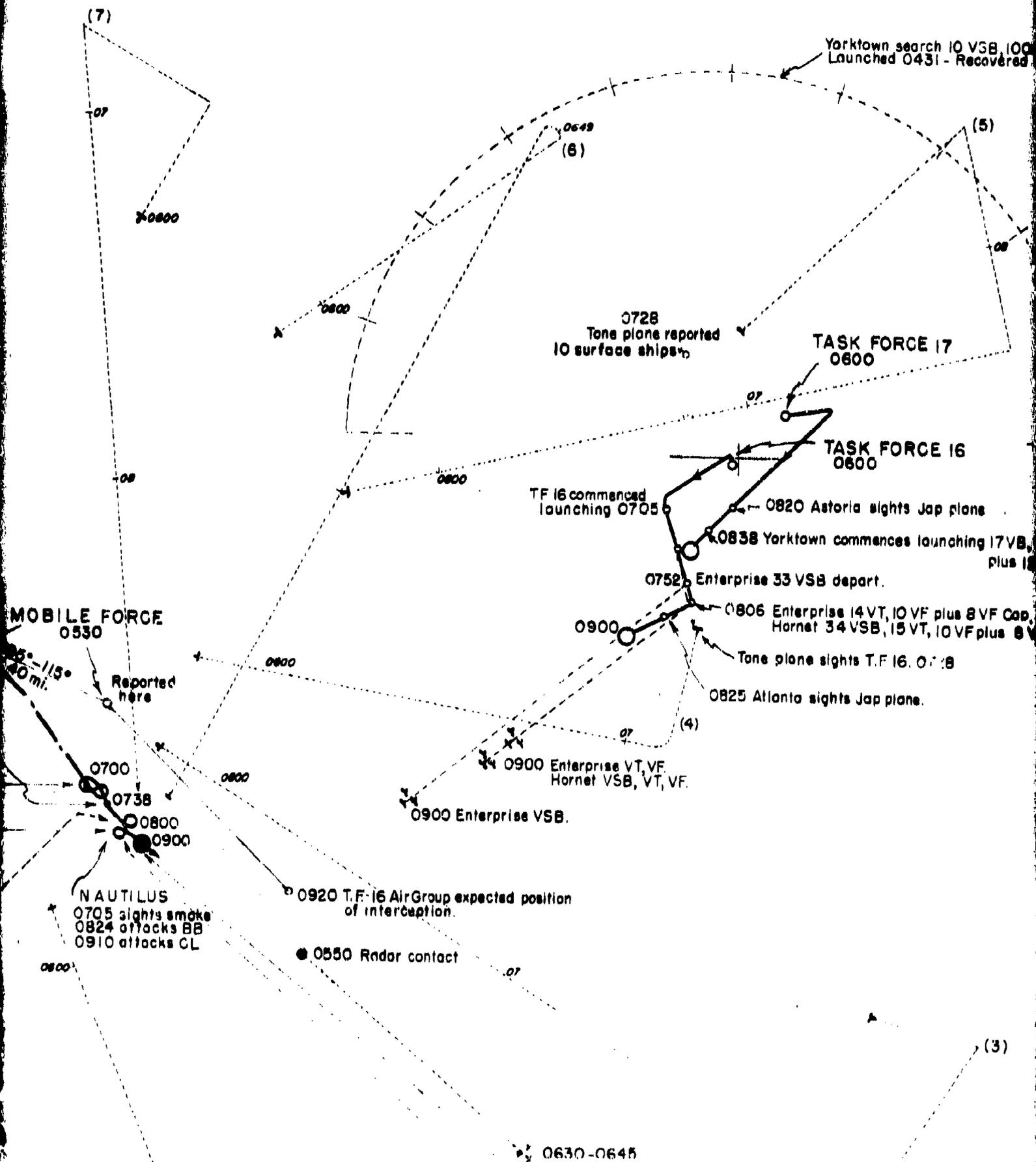
0900

0800

0800

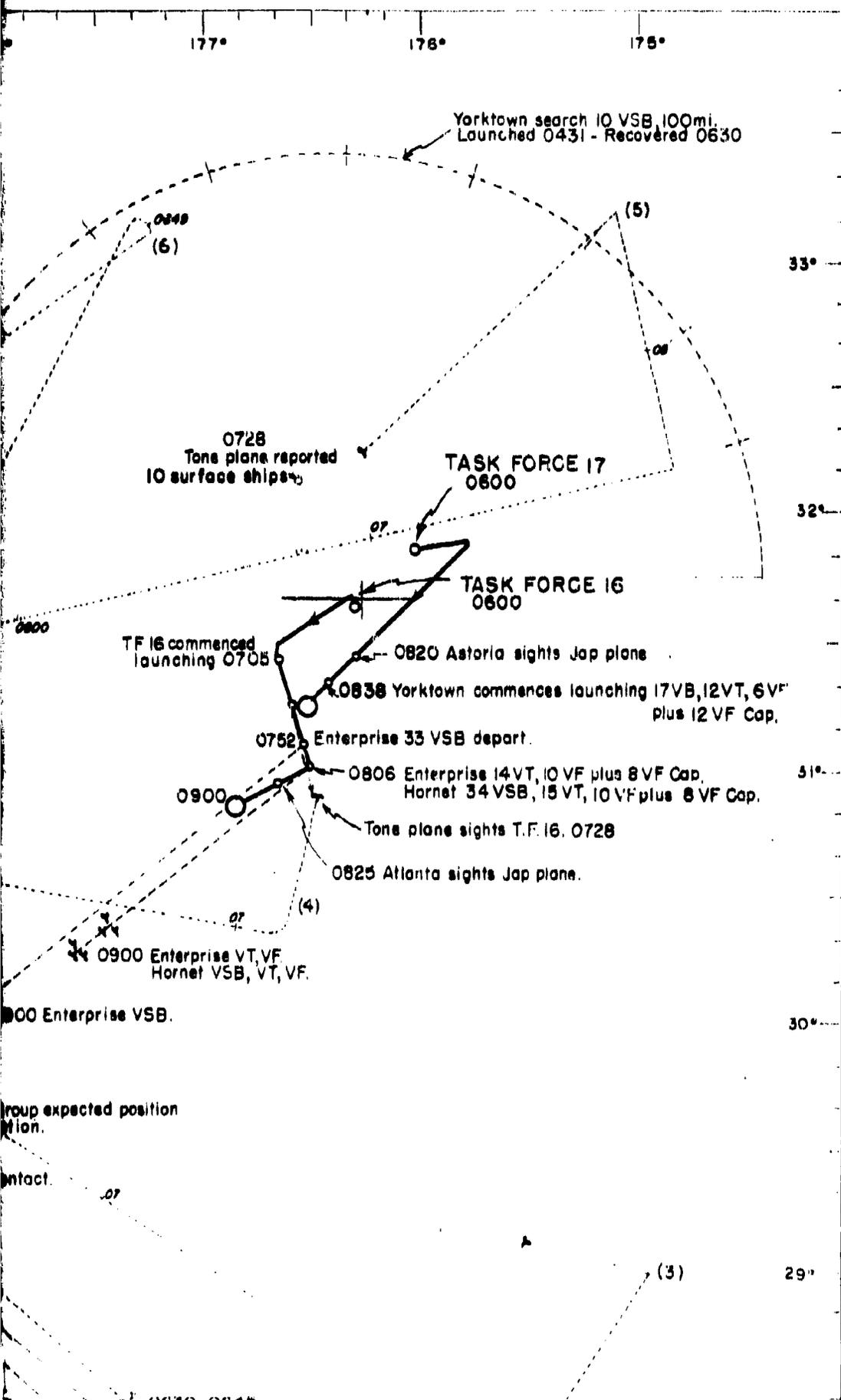
180° 179° 178° 177° 176° 175°

3



B

C



33°

32°

31°

30°

29°

30 38

Midway
Plane
Attacks

| | |
|------|-------------------|
| 0705 | 4 B-26 (Army) |
| 0705 | 6 TBF (Navy) |
| 0755 | 16 SBDs (Marine) |
| 0810 | 14 B-17s (Army) |
| 0820 | 11 SB2Us (Marine) |

MOBILE FORCE
0530

Actual position 40 mi. 295°-115°
Reported here

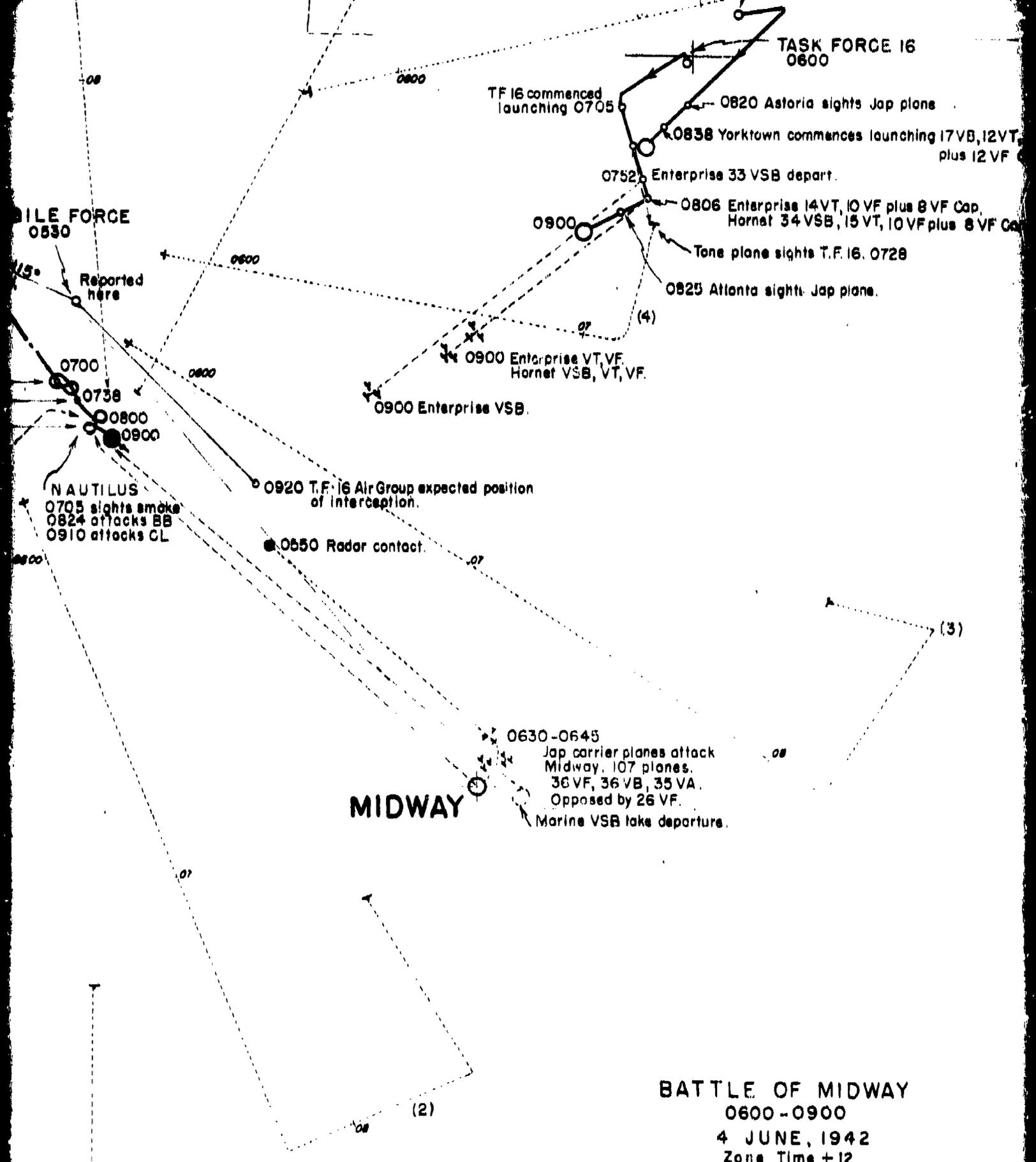
Recovering planes

NAUTILUS
0705 sights smoke
0824 attacks BB
0910 attacks CL

2nd FLEET
470 mi., -263° from Midway
at 0900.

TRANSPORT GROUP
420 mi., -260° from Midway
at 0900.

0600 14 B-17's Diverted to
attack Carriers.



TASK FORCE 16
0600

TF 16 commenced
launching 0705

0820 Astoria sights Jap plane

0838 Yorktown commences launching 17VB, 12VT,
plus 12 VF

0752 Enterprise 33 VSB depart.

0806 Enterprise 14VT, 10 VF plus 8 VF Cap,
Hornet 34 VSB, 15 VT, 10 VF plus 8 VF Cap

Tone plane sights T.F. 16. 0728

0825 Atlanta sights Jap plane.

NAUTILUS
0530

Reported
here

0700

0738

0800

0900

NAUTILUS
0705 sights smoke
0824 attacks BB
0910 attacks CL

0920 T.F. 16 Air Group expected position
of interception.

0850 Radar contact.

MIDWAY

0630-0645

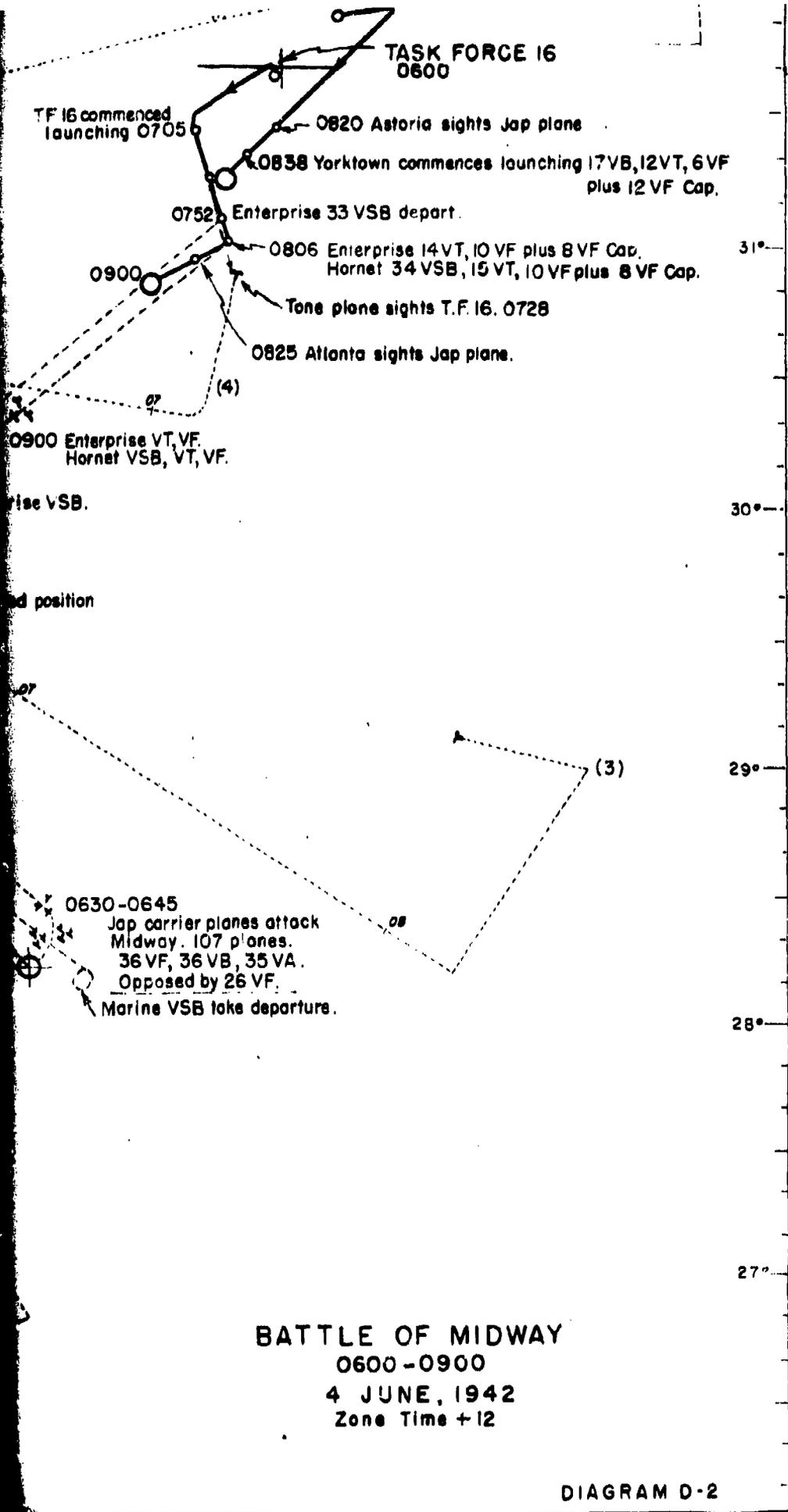
Jap carrier planes attack
Midway. 107 planes.
36 VF, 36 VB, 35 VA.
Opposed by 26 VF.
Marine VSB take departure.

BATTLE OF MIDWAY

0600 - 0900

4 JUNE, 1942

Zone Time + 12



BATTLE OF MIDWAY
0600 - 0900
4 JUNE, 1942
Zone Time +12

DIAGRAM D-2

30° 38'

201 D
Y

180°

179°

178°

MAIN GROUP
500 miles
Bearing 296° from MOBILE F.
at 1300

Dive bomb hits
1022 Kaga 4 Hits
1025 Akagi 2 "
1028 Soryu 3 "

Hiryu launches
18VB, 6VF

1300

1100

COM. MOBILE FORCE
shifted Flag to Nagara-1045

1200

1022-1028 Enterprise VSB attack

Yorktown { VT attack 1016
VSB " 1022-1028

JAP.
MOBILE FORCE
0900

Enterprise VT Attack 0940-0959

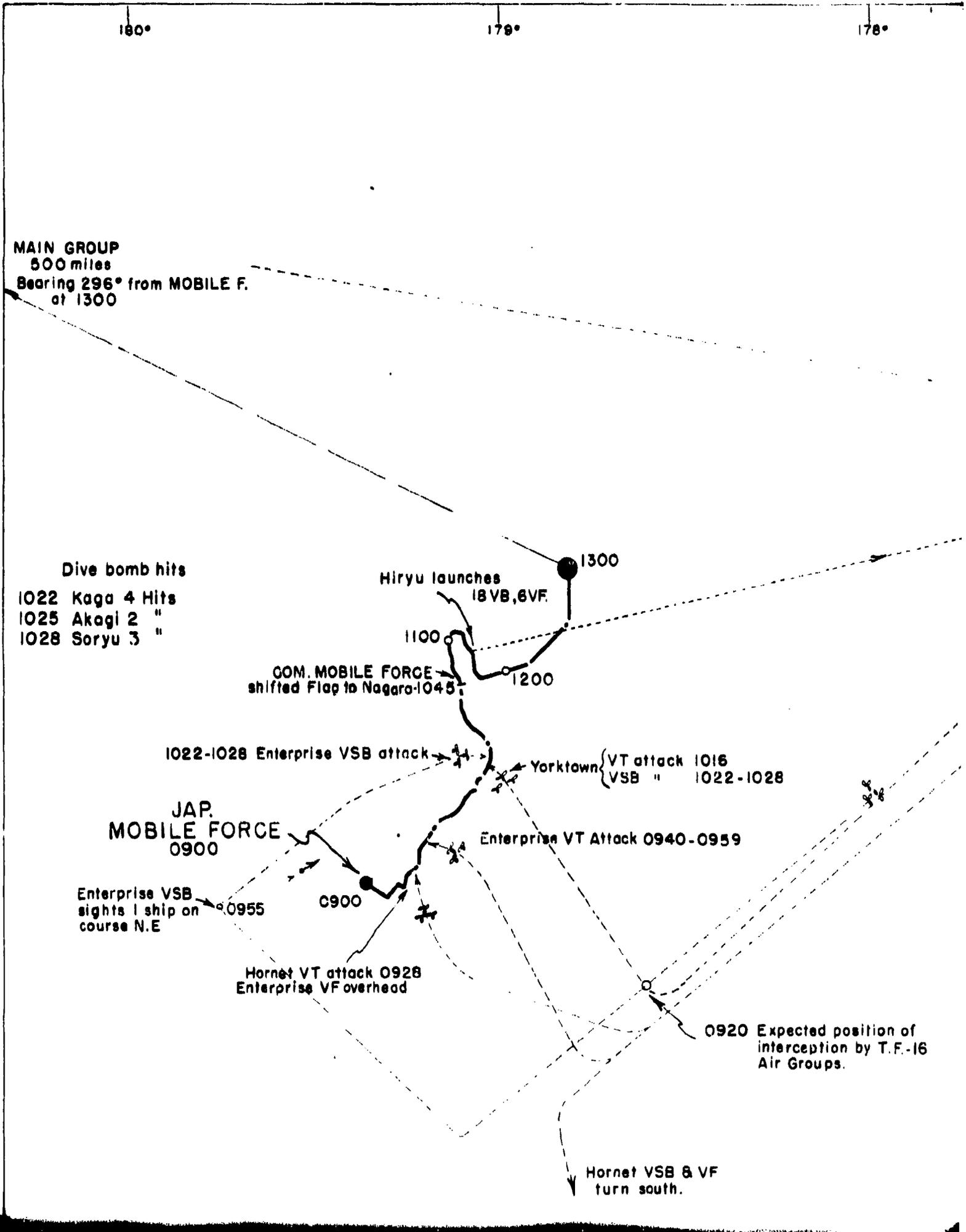
Enterprise VSB
sights 1 ship on
course N.E

0900

Hornet VT attack 0928
Enterprise VF overhead

0920 Expected position of
interception by T.F.-16
Air Groups.

Hornet VSB & VF
turn south.



B

178°

177°

1150 Yorktown launched 10 VSB
search and attack.
280°-020°
200 mi.

TASK FORCE
090

0902 Yorktown plane
17VB, 12VT,

TASK FORCE -16
0900

1133

1150

1205-15 Hiryu planes dive bomb
3 H

C.T.F.-17 Shifted Fla

1300

1100

1000

1209

1300

1100 Point "O" (Enterprise bore 076°T, dist. 44 mi.)

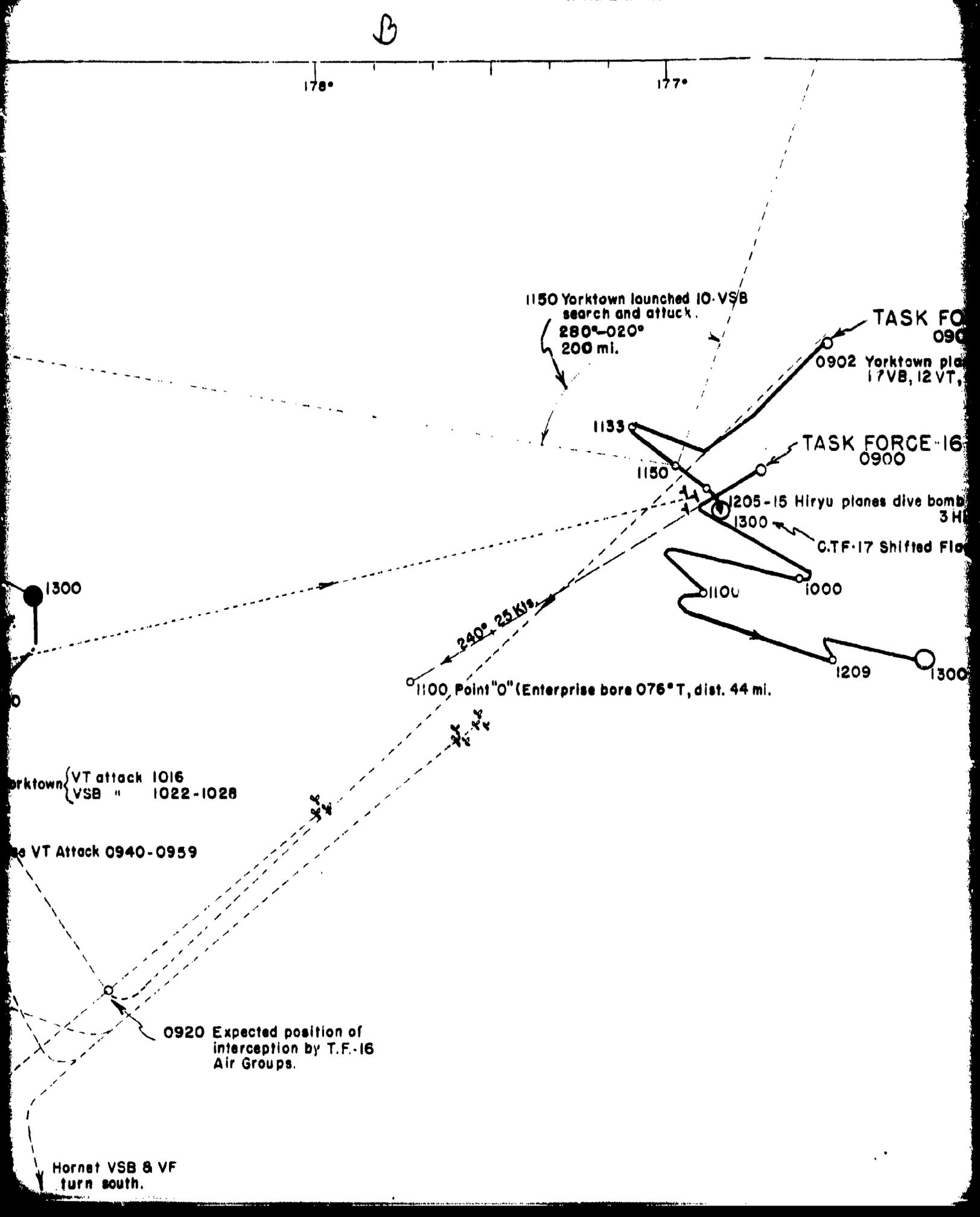
240° 25 Kts.

Yorktown (VT attack 1016
VSB " 1022-1028

VT Attack 0940-0959

0920 Expected position of
interception by T.F.-16
Air Groups.

Hornet VSB & VF
turn south.



177°

176°

1150 Yorktown launched 10 VSB
search and attack.
230°-020°
200 mi.

TASK FORCE-17
0900

0902 Yorktown planes take departure.
17VB, 12VT, 6VF.

TASK FORCE-16
0900

31°

1133

1150

1205-15 Hiryu planes dive bomb Yorktown.
3 Hits.

1300

C.T.F.-17 Shifted Flag to Astoria

1100

1000

1209

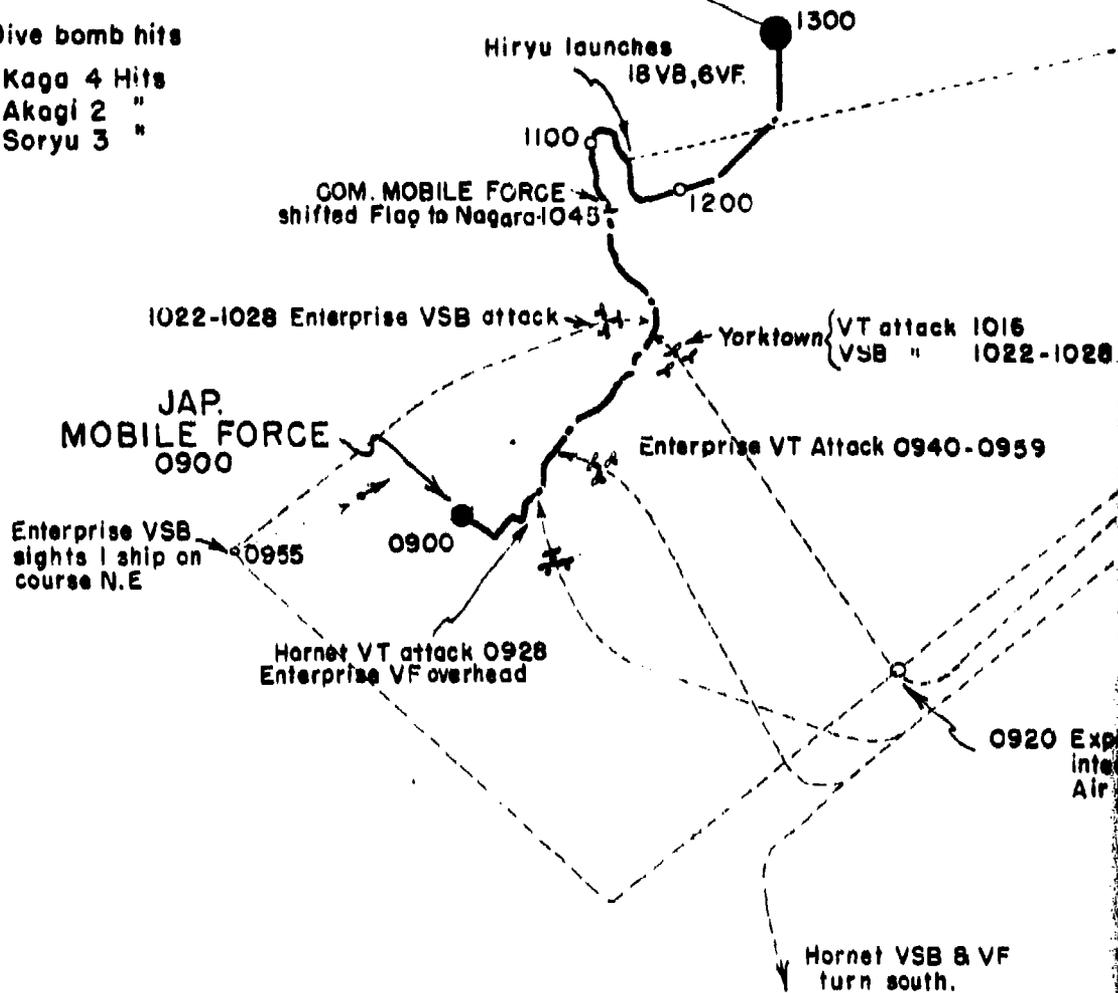
1300

25 Kts

"O" (Enterprise bore 076°T, dist. 44 mi.)

30°

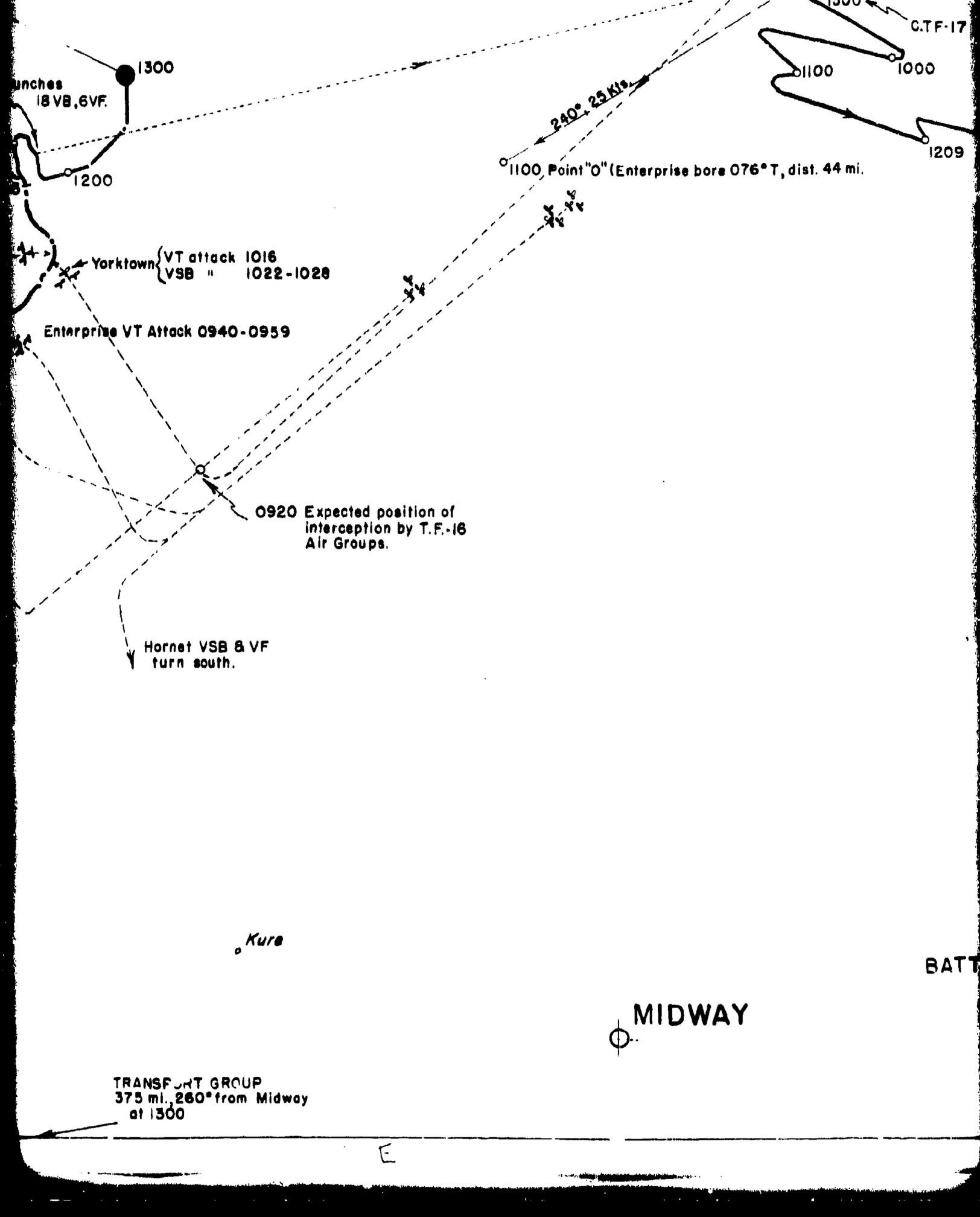
Dive bomb hits
1022 Kaga 4 Hits
1025 Akagi 2 "
1028 Soryu 3 "



2nd. FLEET
390 mi., 272° from Midway
at 1300

Kure

TRANSPORT GROUP
375 mi., 260° from Midway
at 1300



1300
Enterprise 18 VB, 6 VF.

1200

Yorktown { VT attack 1016
VSB " 1022-1028

Enterprise VT Attack 0940-0959

1100 Point "O" (Enterprise bore 076° T, dist. 44 mi.)

240° 25 Kts.

G.T.F.-17

1100

1000

1209

0920 Expected position of interception by T.F.-16 Air Groups.

Hornet VSB & VF turn south.

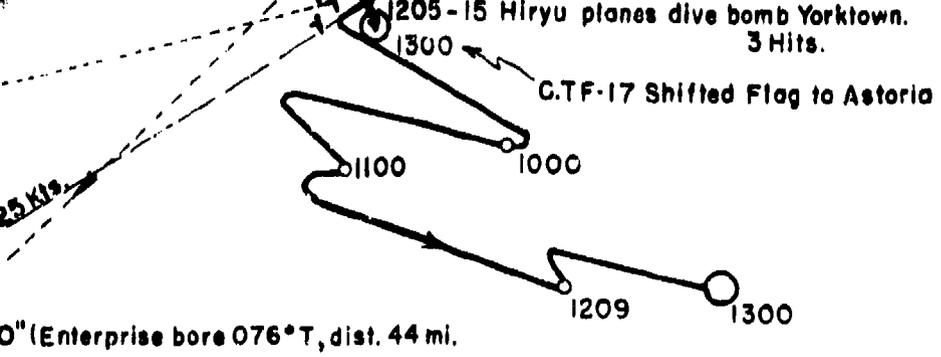
Kure

MIDWAY

BATT

TRANSFORT GROUP
375 mi. 260° from Midway
at 1300

E



30°

29°

BATTLE OF MIDWAY
0900-1300
4 JUNE, 1942
Zone Time +12

MIDWAY

DIAGRAM D-3

231 g

F

A

179°

178°

177°

Haruna 3 Search planes depart 1300
340°-040°, 180 miles

MAIN GROUP
282°-330 mi.

2400

1705 Hiryu dive bombed
4 Hits

030°-150 Mi. Chikuma 4 plane (3)

Tone plane (2)

1400

Tone plane (1)

Sub. sighted

TASK FORCE

1300

Hiryu launches
10-VT, 6-VT.

1331

1300

1441

180

JAP
MOBILE FORCE

1445
Yorktown Search sights
Mobile Force here.
Reports position here
(1-CV, 2 BB, 3 CA, 4 DD)

1441 Yorktown torpedoed 2 Hits.
Abandon ship at 1514.

1715 TF-17 left Yorktown

1818 Hughes ordered to return
to Yorktown.

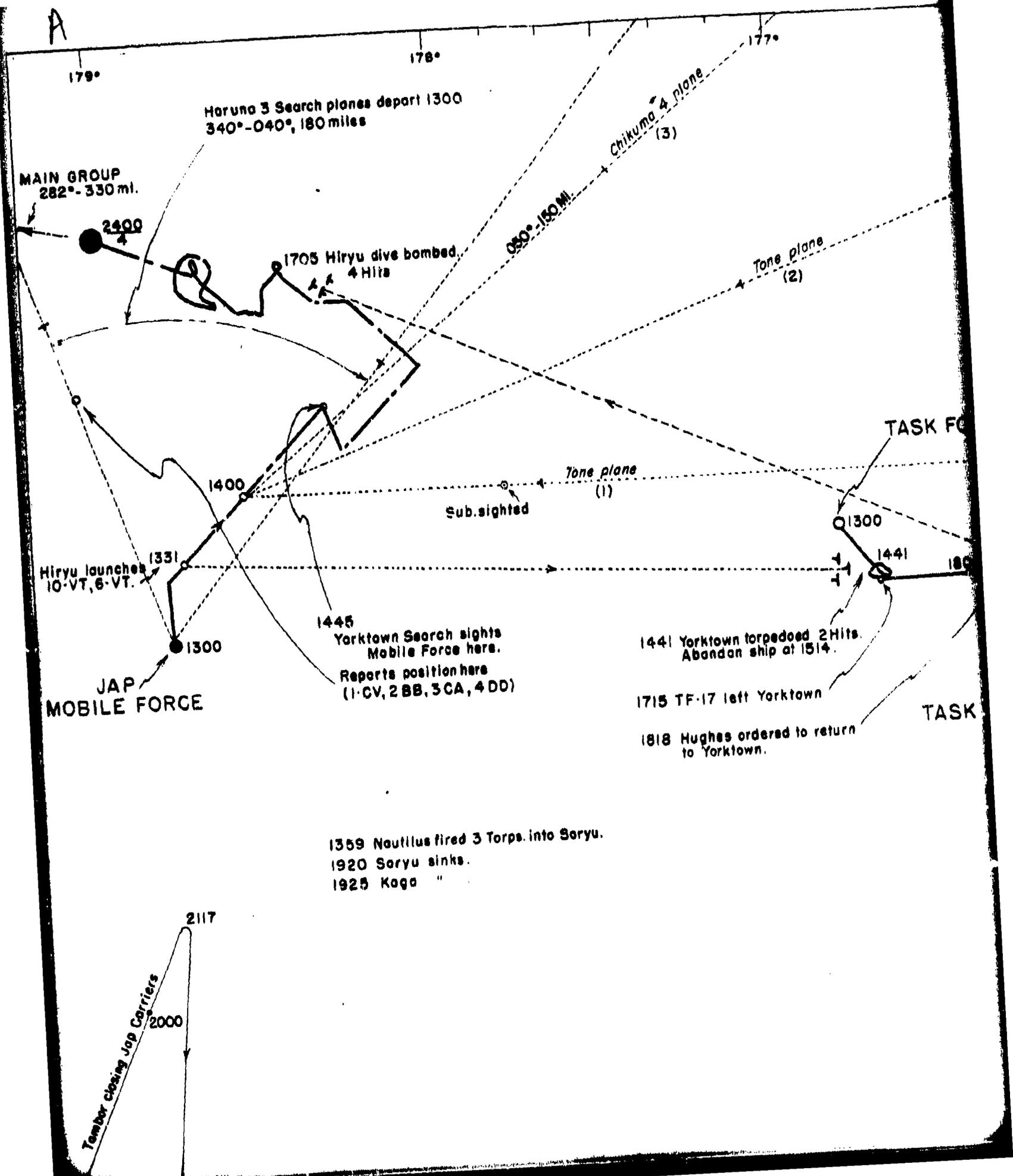
TASK

1359 Nautilus fired 3 Torps. into Soryu.
1920 Soryu sinks.
1925 Kaga "

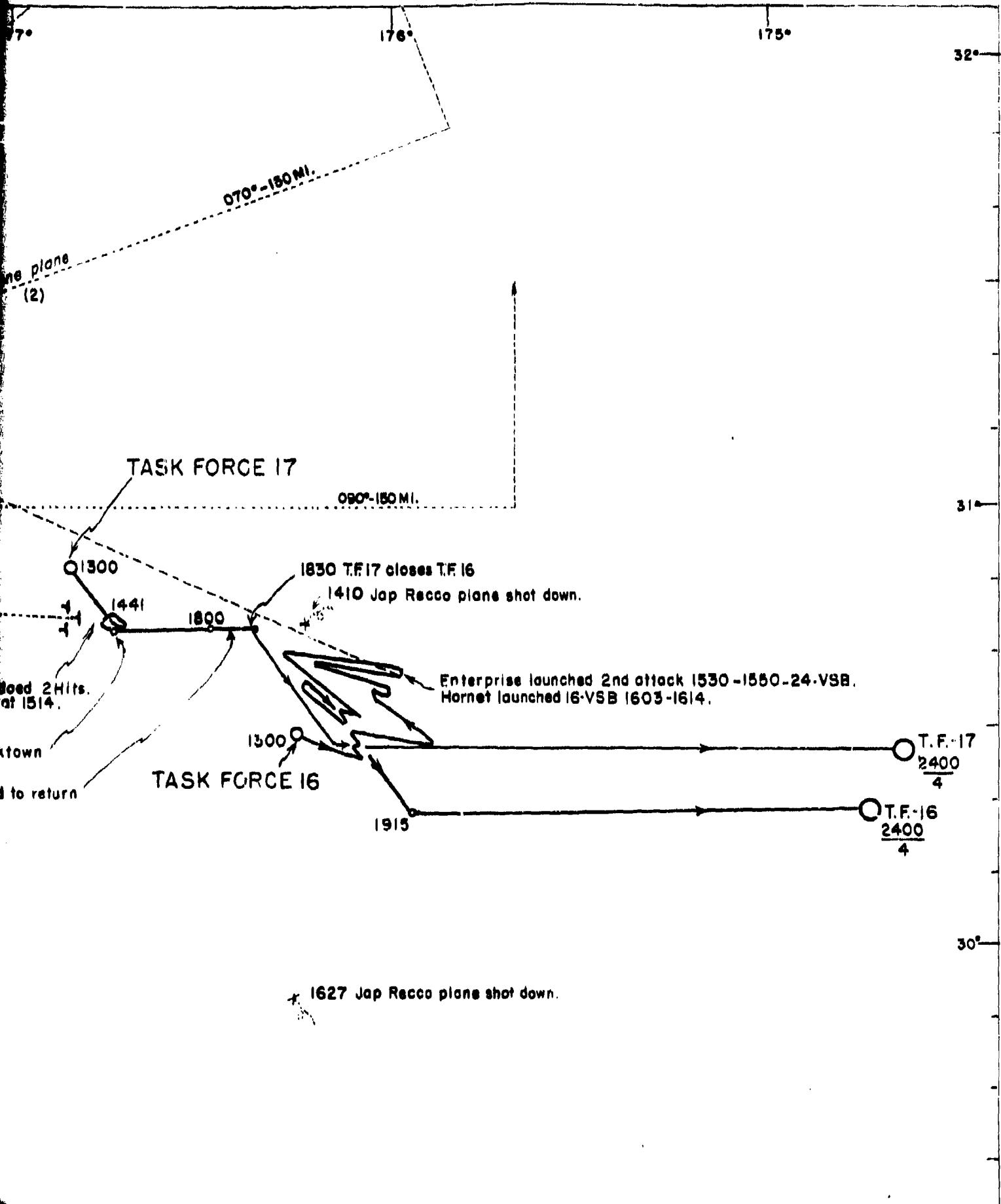
2117

2000

Tambor closing Jap Carriers



2



Sub. sighted

Hiryu launches
10-VT, 6-VT.

1331

1300

JAP
MOBILE FORCE

1445

Yorktown Search sights
Mobile Force here.
Reports position here
(1-CV, 2 BB, 3 CA, 4 DD)

1441 Yorktown for
Abandon ship

1715 TF-17 left

1818 Hughes order
to Yorktown

1359 Nautilus fired 3 Torps. into Soryu.
1920 Soryu sinks.
1925 Kaga "

2117

Tambor closing Jap Carriers

2000

2400 Tambor enroute to station.
250°-260°, 100 miles from Midway.

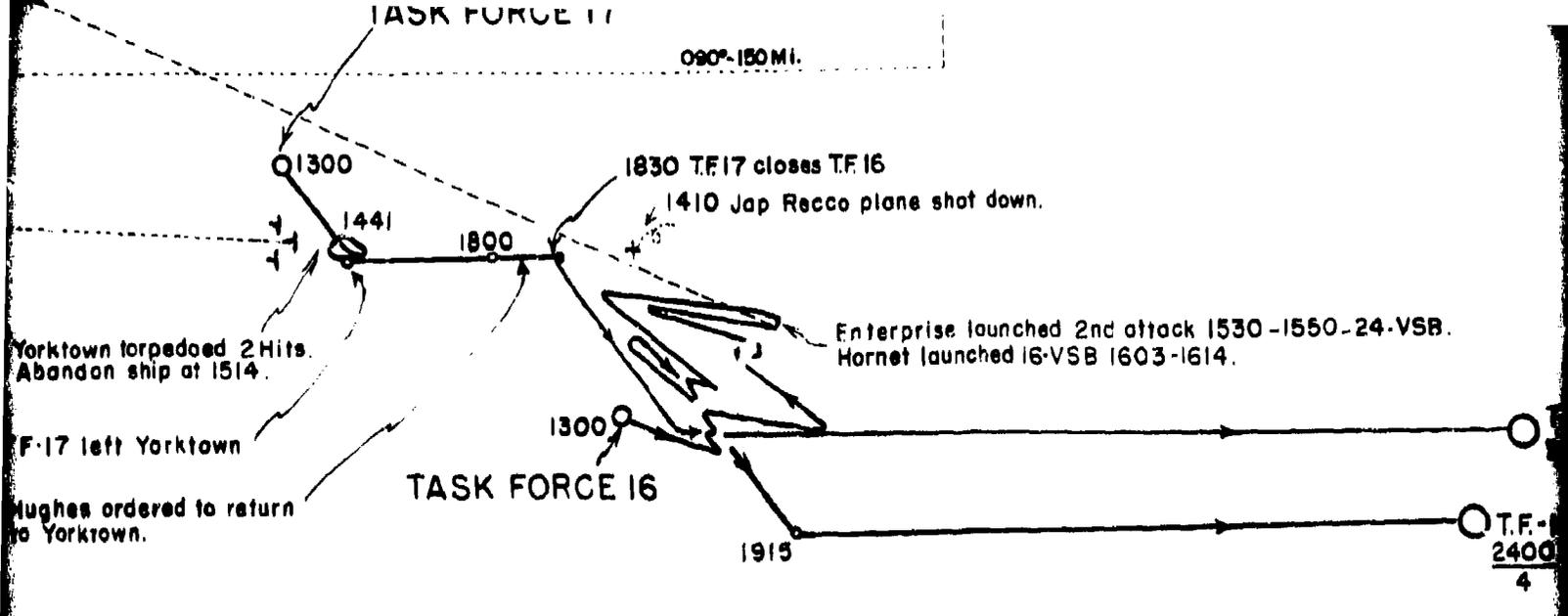
Kure

2400
JAP CRUDIV 7 130 miles, 271°
from Midway.

2400-1.168
in vicinity of Midway



MIDWAY



BATTLE OF MIDWAY

1300-2400

4 JUNE, 1942

Zone Time +12

MIDWAY

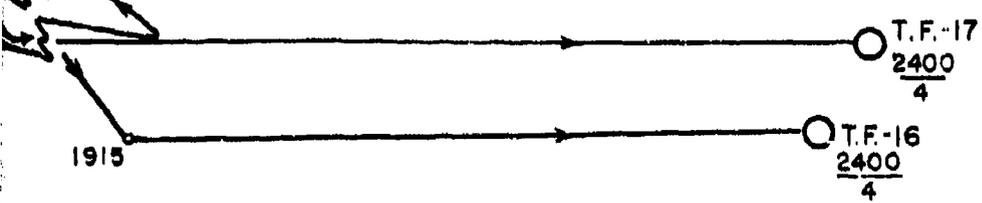
DIAGRAM D

090°-150 Mi.

31°

T.F.17 closes T.F.16
410 Jap Recco plane shot down.

Enterprise launched 2nd attack 1530-1550-24-VSB.
Hornet launched 16-VSB 1603-1614.



30°

27 Jap Recco plane shot down.

29°

BATTLE OF MIDWAY
1300-2400
4 JUNE, 1942
Zone Time +12

DIAGRAM D-4

532 h

RECORD OF EVENTS SHOWN ON DIAGRAM E
5 June 1942

- (1) Commander Second Fleet planned to pass through this position at 0300, June 5th, with the night attack force while searching to the east.
- (2) 0010
(about) Commander Mobile Force turned south to participate in the expected night action.
- (3) 0015 CinC Combined Fleet directed a rendezvous of the fleet at 0900 in this position. This cancelled the night attack arrangements.
- (4) 0044 Task Force 16 makes surface radar contact and turns to east.
- (5) 0100
(about) Second Fleet and Desron 2 alter course to 305° (T) to proceed to the Combined Fleet 0900 rendezvous position.
- (6) 0111 Mobile Force alters course to northwestward to proceed to the Combined Fleet 0900 rendezvous.
- (7) 0130 Japanese Submarine I-168 shells Midway.
- (9) 0215 TAMBOR sights Crudiv 7 and accompanying destroyers and makes flash contact report. MOGAMI collides with MIKUMA when squadron makes emergency turn to the left. Crudiv 7 commences to retire to the west.
- (9) 0400
(about) KUMANO, SUZUYA, and two destroyers increase speed and alter course to join with the Combined Fleet.
- (10) 0420 Task Force 16 receives information of TAMBOR contact report and alters course to close on Midway.
- (11) 0510 Japanese claim the HIRYU was scuttled in this position. Later information from a Japanese search plane made them doubt this.
- (12) 0630 Midway patrol plane 2V55 sighted MOGAMI and MIKUMA trailing oil, and reported them to be two battleships in this position.
- (13) 0700 Midway patrol plane 4V58 sighted and reported two cruisers (KUMANO and SUZUYA) in this location on course 310° (T), speed 20 knots.
- (14) and
(15) Two Midway patrol planes 6V55 and 7V55 reported contacts with Japanese ships at 0719, 0735, and 0800 in these positions. One of these planes reported a burning carrier screened by cruisers and destroyers, with two battleships well ahead on course 310° (T), speed 20 knots. This must have been the Mobile Force with the burning carrier HIRYU.

UNCLASSIFIED

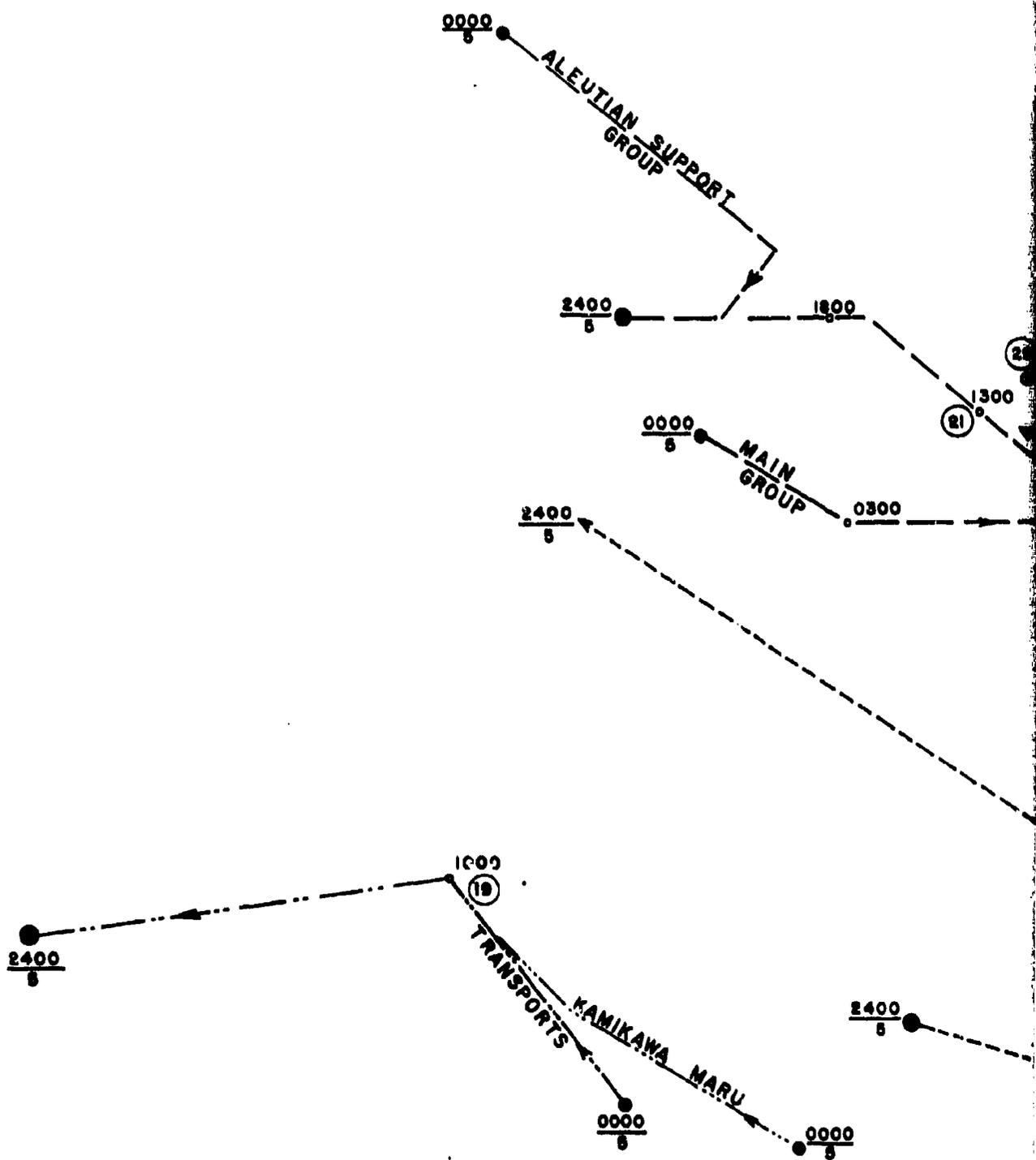
- (16) 0805 Twelve VB of Marine Air Group 22 commence dive bombing attack out of the sun on MOGAMI and MIKUMA. One plane dove into the after turret of the MIKUMA, causing large fires.
- (17) 0830 Eight B-17's make horizontal bombing attack on MOGAMI and MIKUMA immediately following dive bombing attack. The Japanese do not see them until after bombs are dropped.
- (18) 0815 Position of Main Force. Main Force and Occupation Force rendezvoused here and steamed on course 310°, speed about 12 knots. Desron 2 joined from astern at 1155. Remnants of Mobile Force joined from astern at about 1300.
- (19) 1000 Rendezvous position of Transport Group and KAMIKAWA MARU.
- (20) 1036 DD PHELPS reported submarine contact. Task Force 16 made emergency turn to the right.
- (21) 1300 Mobile Force joined Main Force.
- (22) 1308 Tug VIREO commences towing YORKTOWN on course 100° (T), destination Pearl Harbor.
- (23) 1500 Task Force 16 commenced launching, search and attack. Group objective--one burning CV, two BB, three CA, and four DD reported at 0800 to be in position marked (24) on diagram.
- (24) One burning CV, two BB, three CA, and four DD reported in Lat. 32° N., Long. 179°-32' W. at 0800 on course 310°, speed 12 knots.
- (25) 1530 Sixteen ENTERPRISE search planes depart ahead of attack group on a scouting line about 30 miles long to search for objective described in note (23).
- (26) 1636 Seven B-17's while returning from search for the burning CV, two BB, three CA, and four DD's came upon the destroyer TANIKAZE and attacked, dropping fifty-six 500-pound bombs.
- (27) 1830 ENTERPRISE and HORNET air attack groups attack single Japanese destroyer in this position. (TANIKAZE)
- (28) 1845 Midway patrol plane 2V58 reported being attacked by Japanese fighting planes bearing 313° (T), distant 350 miles from Midway. This report was later corrected to scouting planes instead of fighters.
- (29) 1846 Five B-17's searching for the Mobile Force came upon the destroyer TANIKAZE and attacked, dropping twenty-three bombs.

UNCLASSIFIED
CONFIDENTIAL

A

170°

175°

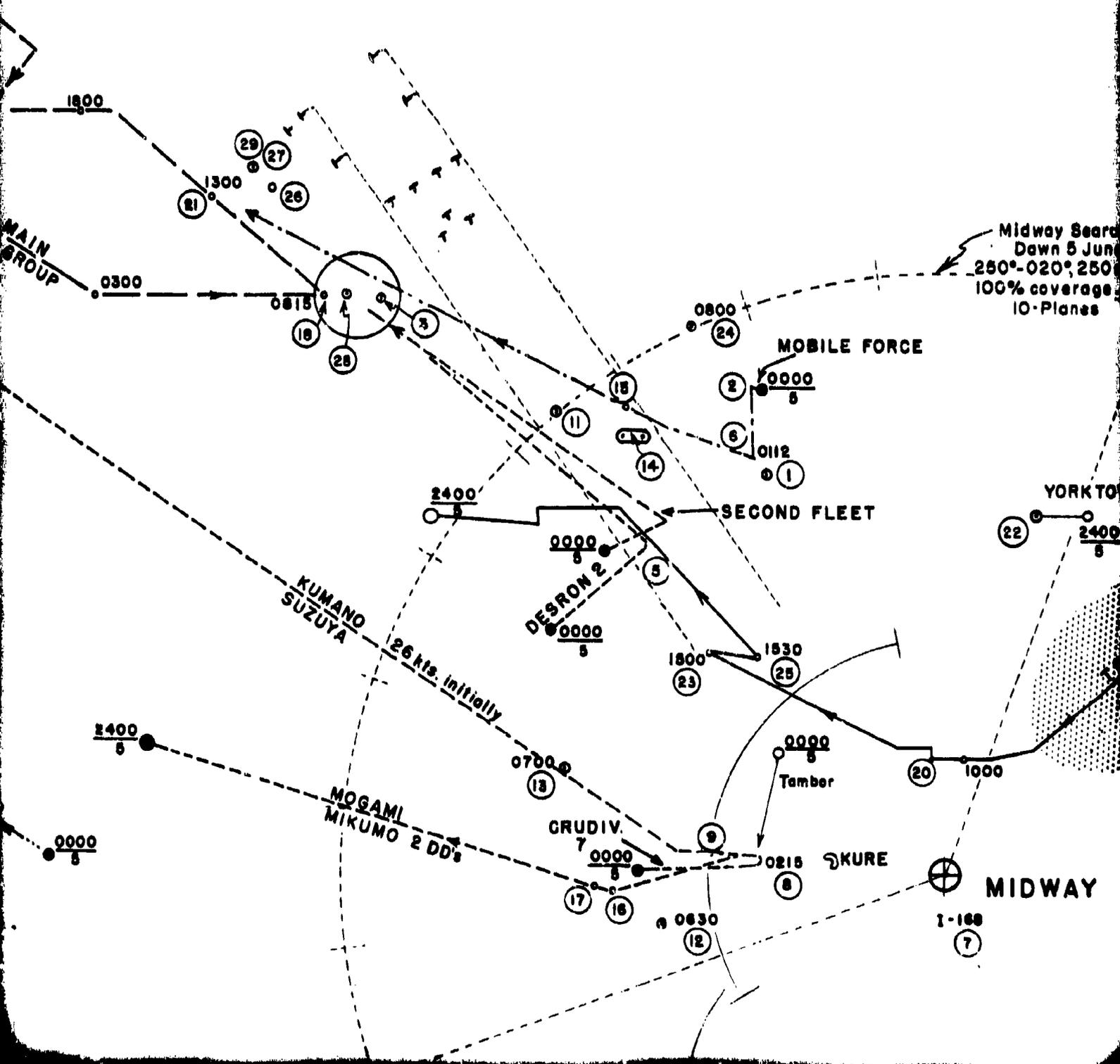


B

75°

180°

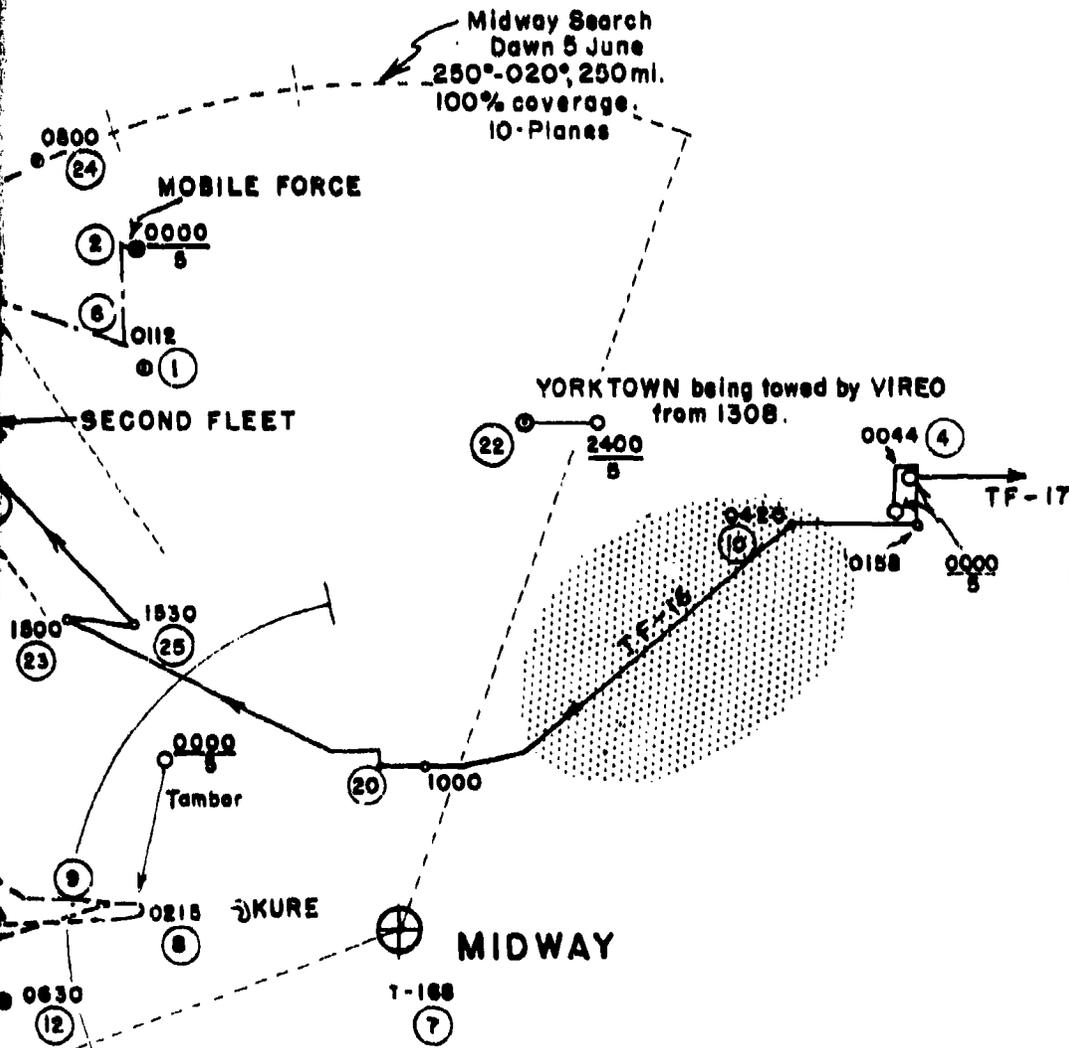
Shaded area indicates a reef and consequent reduced visibility in morning hours.



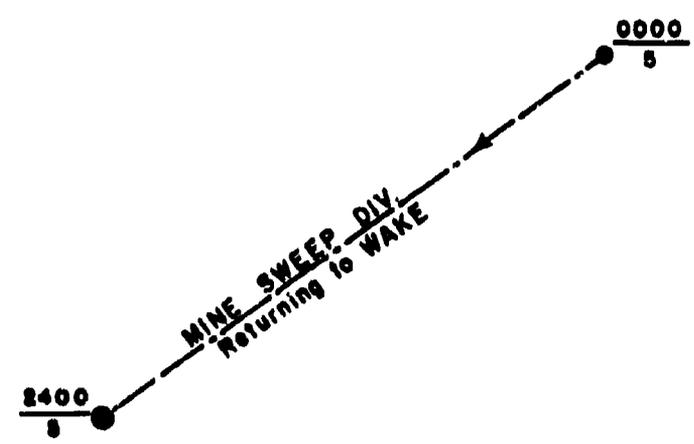
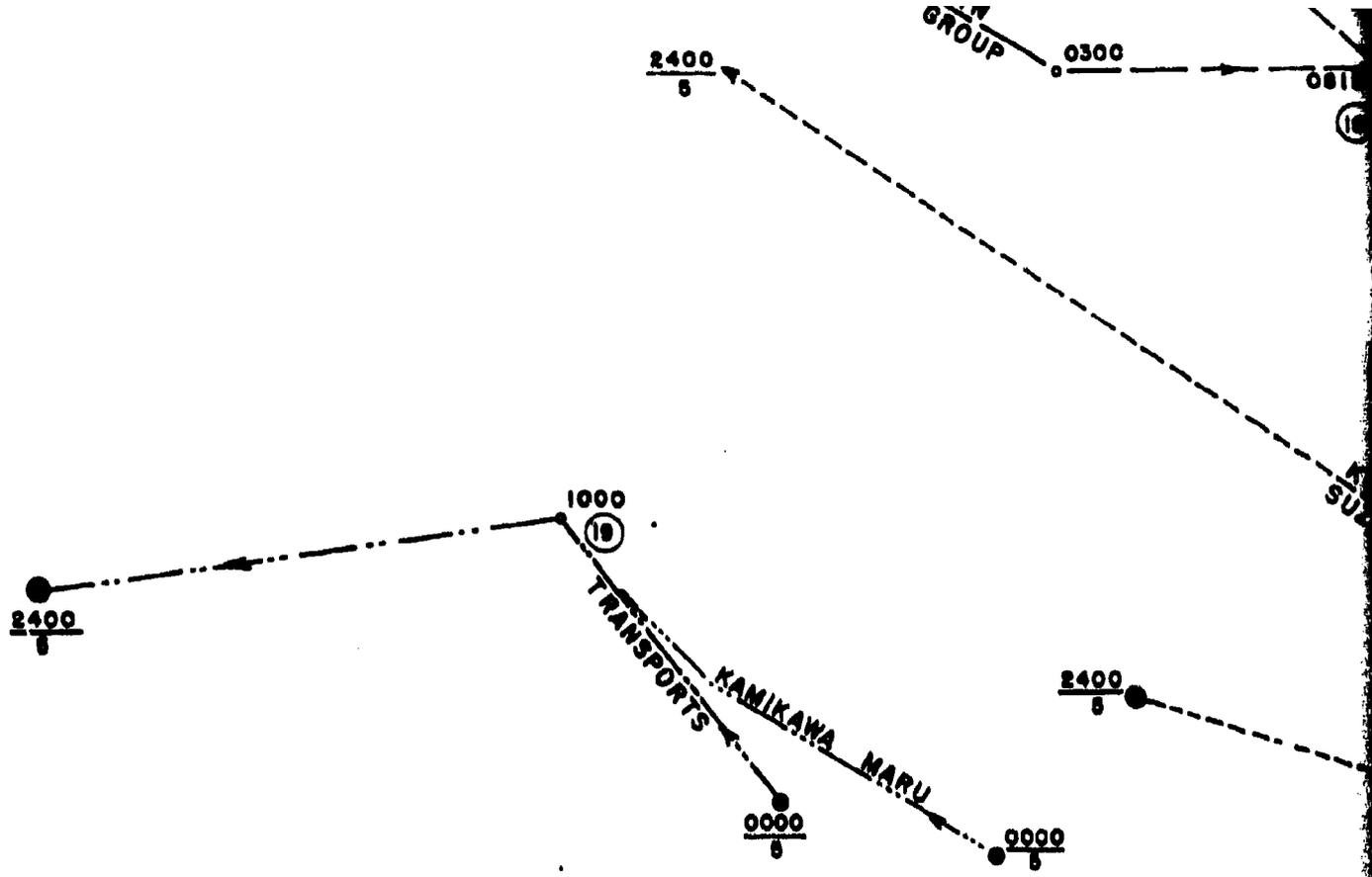
175°

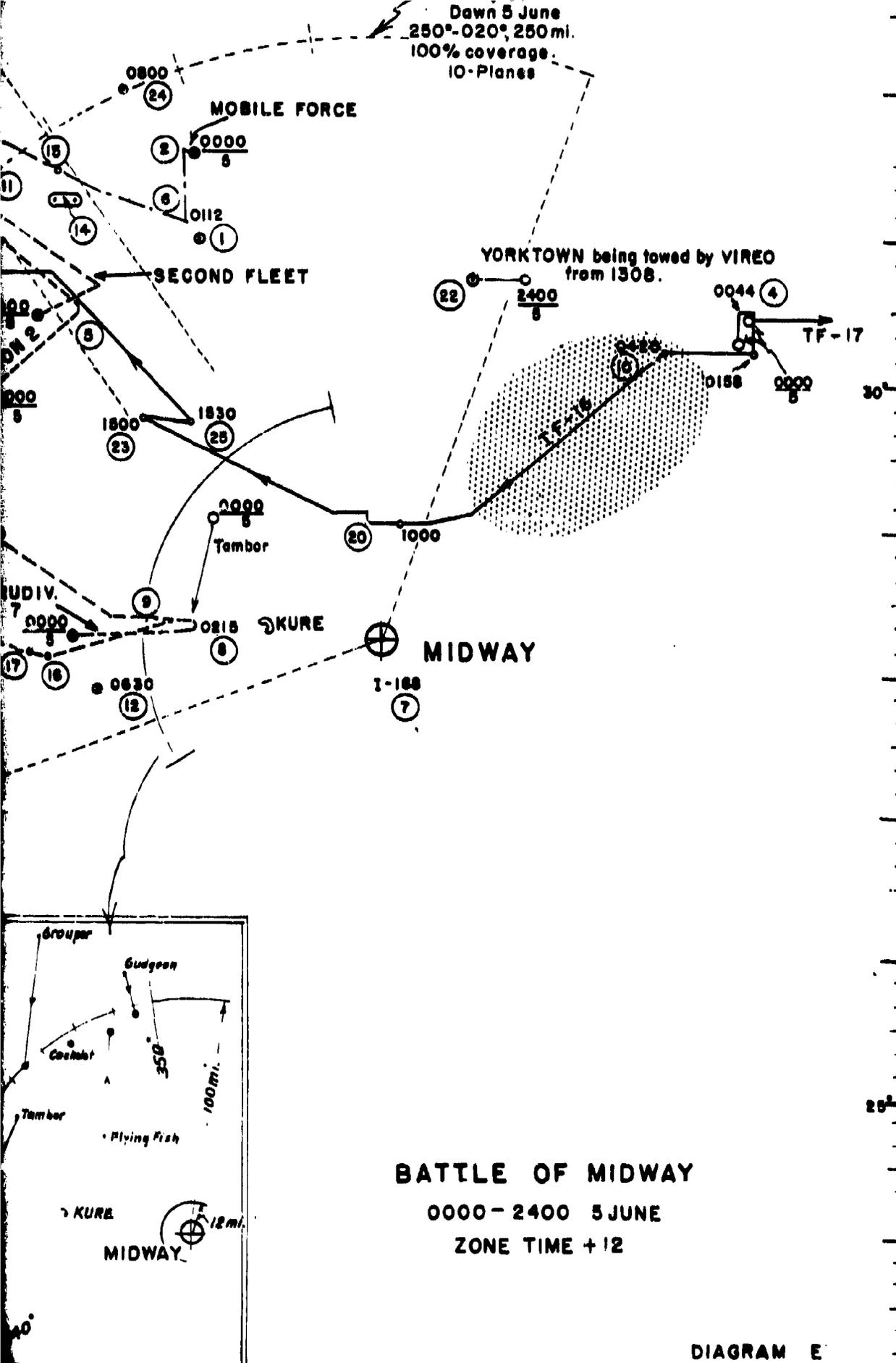
Shaded area indicates a region of instability showers and consequent reduced visibility during early morning hours.

35°



30°





234a

67

A

165°

163°

Combined Fleet Supply point
Initial Location.

MAIN
FORCE

ALEUTIANS LATE SUPPORT GROUP

TRANSPORT GROUP

Supply
Rendezvous
afternoon 7 June

600 mi. from WA

2400

2000

1750

2400

2400

1900

1845
Rendezvous

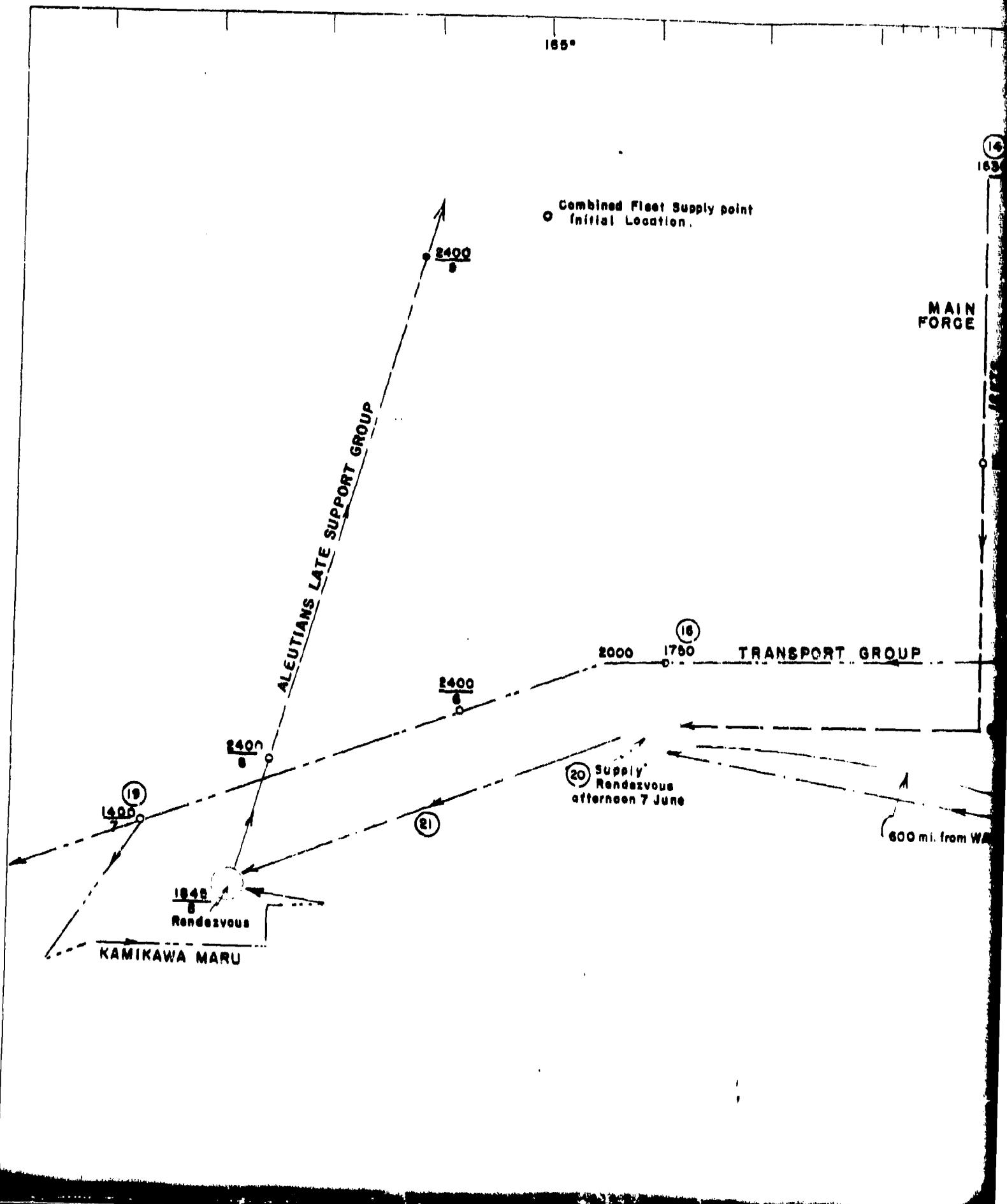
KAMIKAWA MARU

21

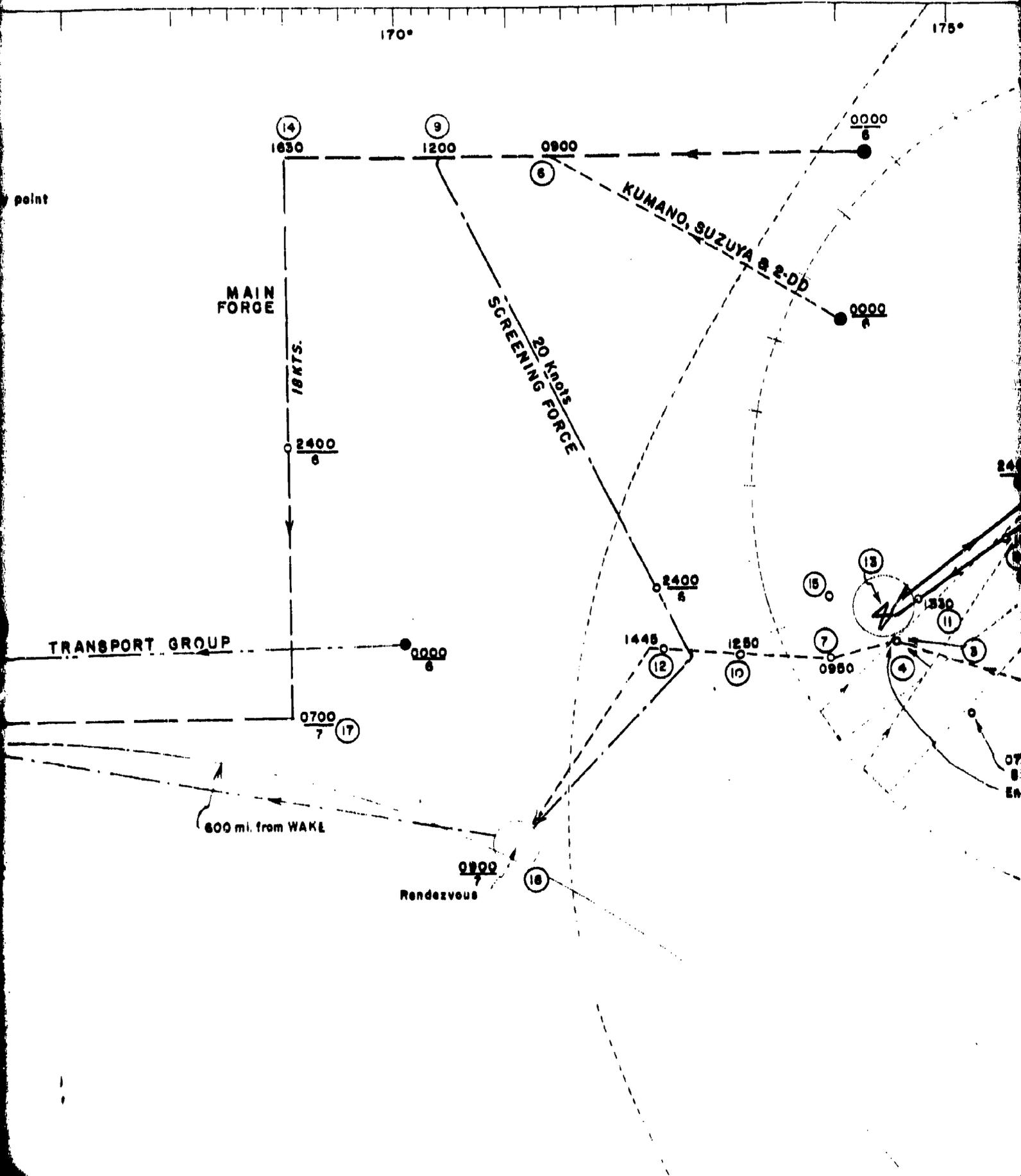
19

20

16



B



170°

175°

point

MAIN FORCE

18KTS.

2400
6

TRANSPORT GROUP

0000
6

0700
7 (17)

600 mi. from WAKE

0700

Rendezvous

(18)

0900

(8)

1200

(9)

(14)

1630

KUMANO, SUZUYA & 2-DD

0000

(5)

0000

(6)

SCREENING FORCE
20 KNOTS

2400
6

1445

(12)

1250

(10)

0950

(7)

(13)

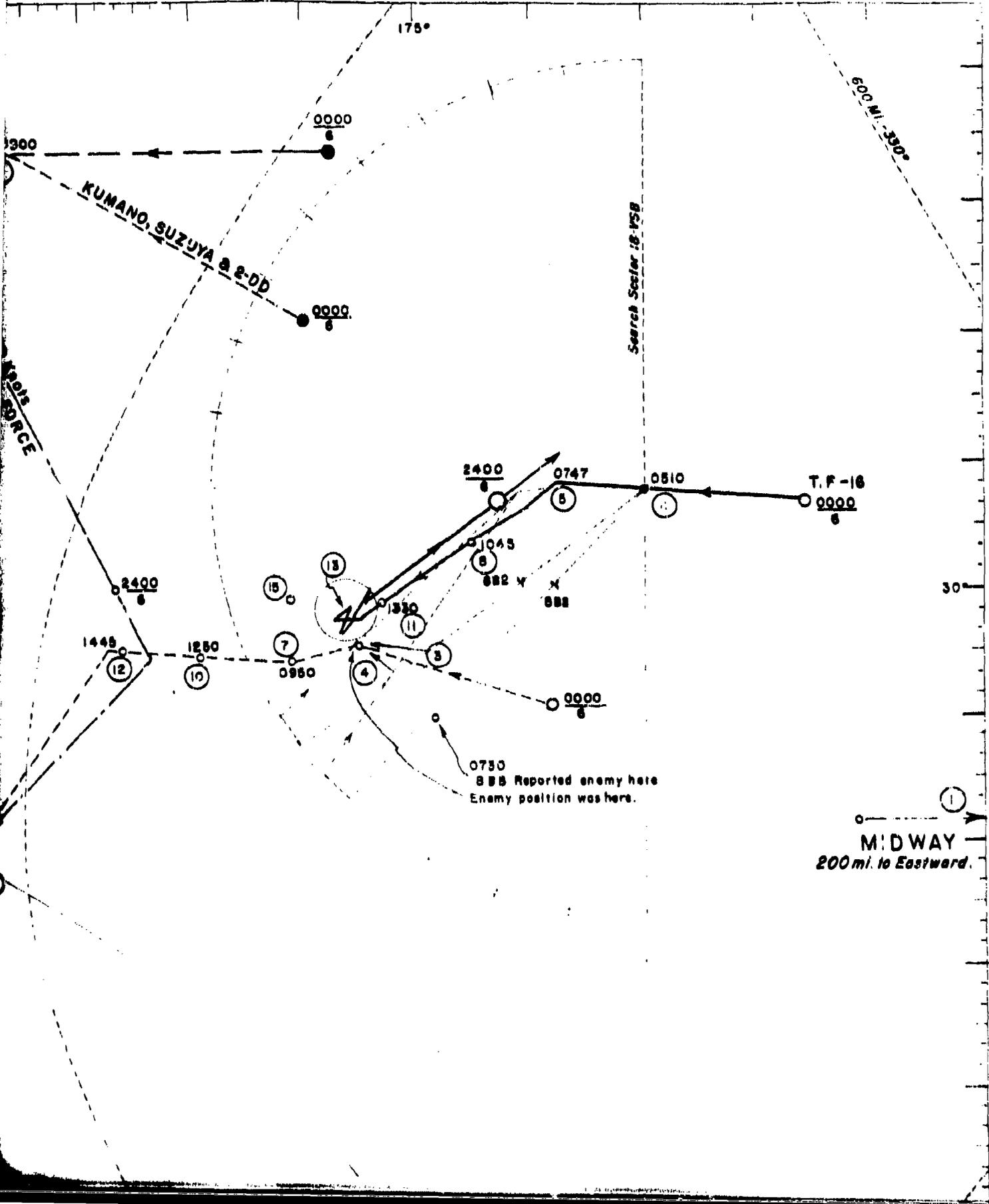
(11)

(3)

(4)

OT
EA

C



1300

175°

600 MI. - 330°

KUMANO, SUZUYA & 2-00

Search Sector 18-158

MOBIL FORCE

2400

0747

0510

T.F-16

2400

1045

882 Y

882

30°

1445

1250

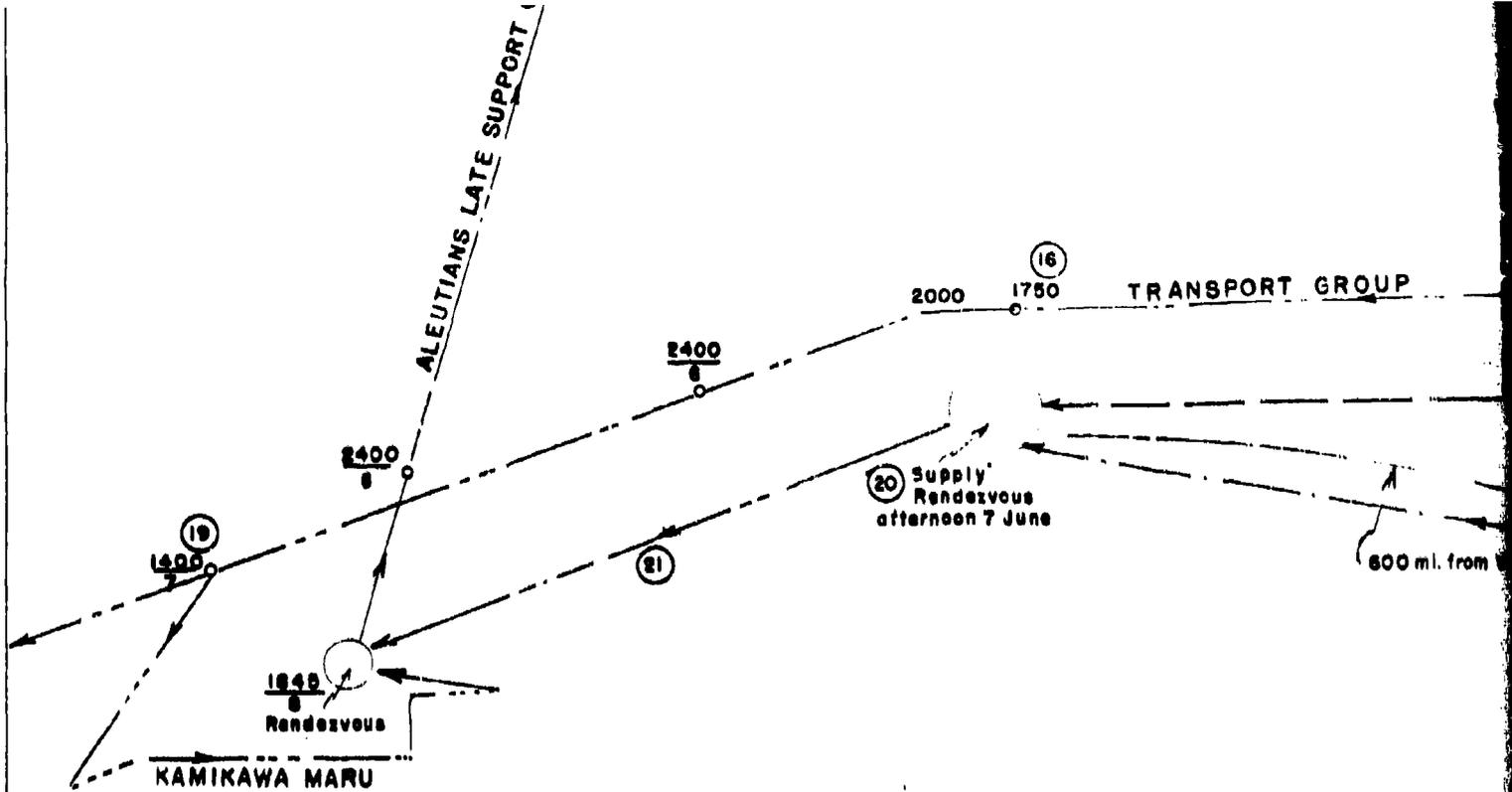
0950

1330

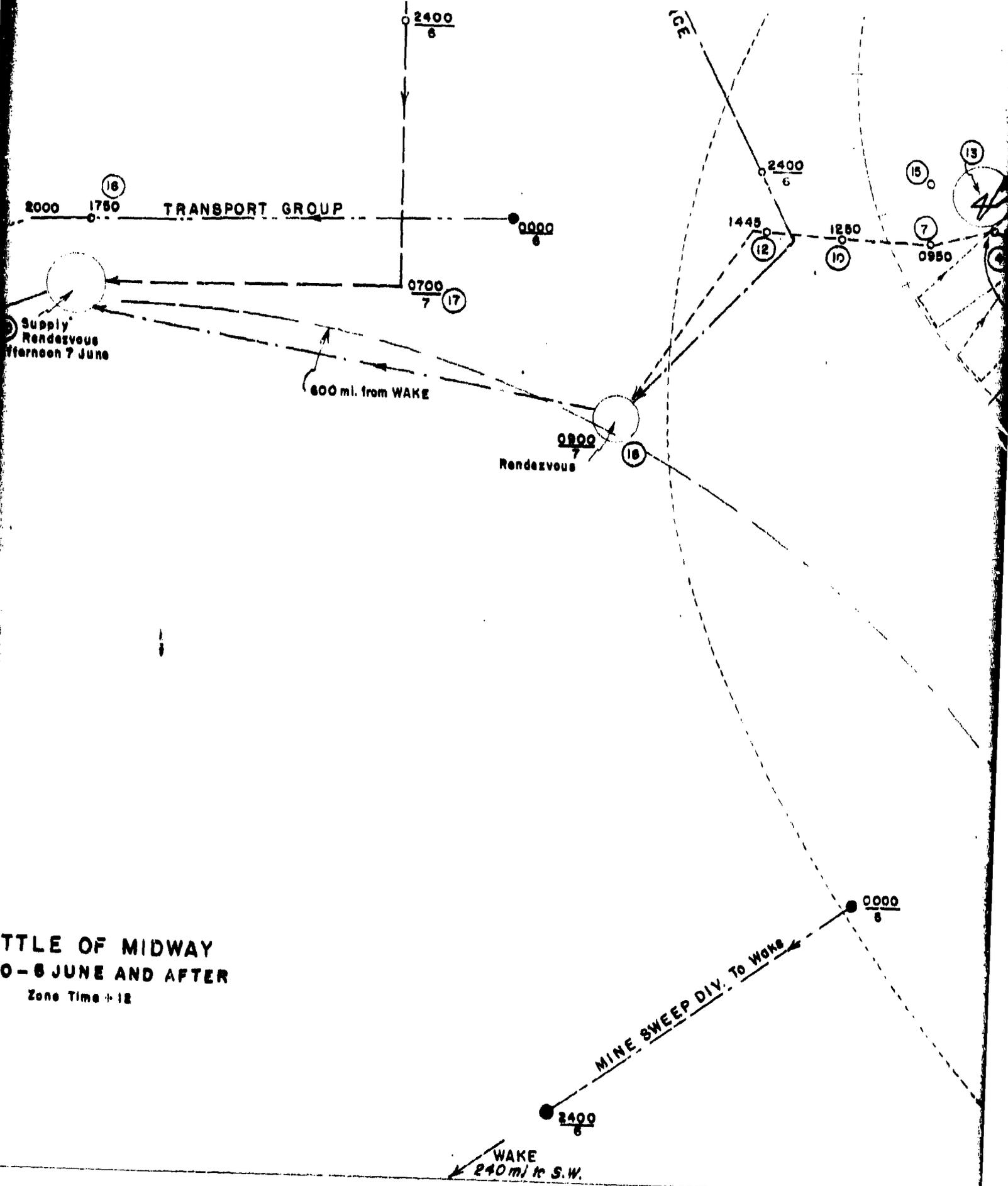
0000

0750
882 Reported enemy here
Enemy position was here.

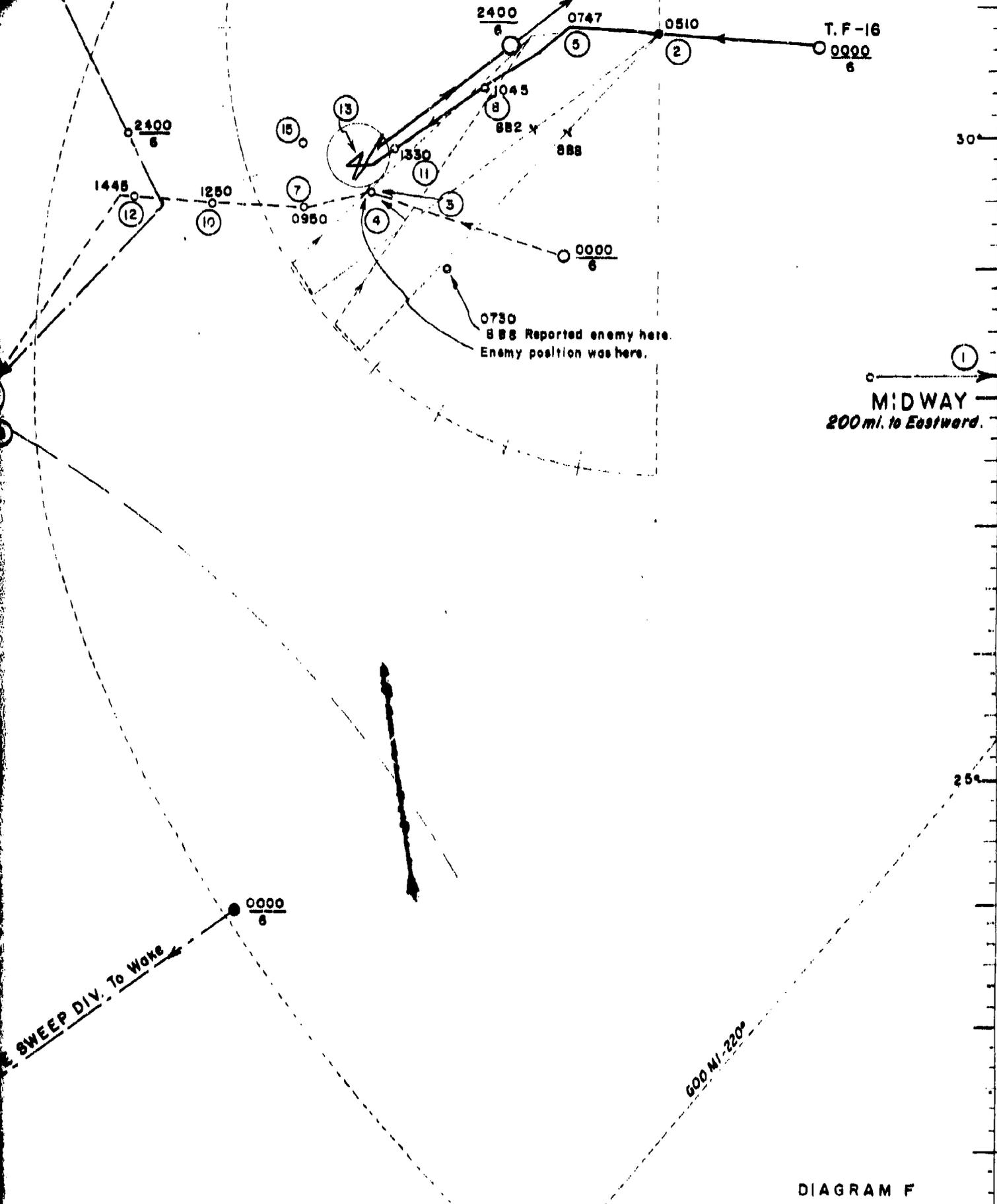
MIDWAY
200 mi. to Eastward.



BATTLE OF MIDWAY
0000 - 6 JUNE AND AFTER
Zone Time + 12



BATTLE OF MIDWAY
 00-8 JUNE AND AFTER
 Zone Time +12



234 *h*

f

RECORD OF EVENTS SHOWN ON DIAGRAM F
6 June and after (1942)

- (1) 0433/6 Midway patrol planes took off to search sector 220-330° (T) for 600 miles, designated coverage 100%.
- (2) 0500 Task Force 16 launched eighteen VSB including three HORNET aircraft to search sector 180°-360° to the west, distant 200 miles. Search departed at 0510.
- (3) 0848 Search plane S-B-2 reported one CV and five DD in Lat. 29°-33' N., Long. 174°-30' E., course 270. On landing, the pilot corrected this report to one BB, one CA, three DD.
- (4) 0730 Search plane S-B-8 reported two CA, two DD in Lat. 28°-55' N., Long. 175°-10' E (Position appears to be in error by about 52 miles) on course 215° (T), speed 15 knots. Both contact reports are of the same group of ships.
- (5) 0757 HORNET attack group of twenty-six VSB and eight VF were launched.
- (6) 0900 KUMANO, SUZUYA, and two escorting destroyers join CinC Combined Fleet.
- (7) 0950 HORNET attack group commenced attack on two CA's and two DD's bearing 235° (T), distant 142 miles from 0815 position of HORNET.
- (8) 1045 ENTERPRISE attack group of thirty-one VSB, three VT and twelve VF were launched with instructions to search to westward of the ships attacked by the HORNET air group and attack a second group of ships thought to be there.
- (9) 1200 Screening Force comprised of seven cruisers and eight destroyers proceed at 20 knots to aid the MOGAMI Group.
- (10) 1250 After searching ahead of the two CA's and two DD's for thirty miles under excellent visibility conditions with no further sightings, the ENTERPRISE air group returned and attacked those ships.
- (11) 1330 HORNET attack group of twenty-four VSB were launched for the final attack of the day.
- (12) 1445 HORNET attack group commenced attack on the two CA and two DD.
- (13) 1553 Task Force 16 launched a photographic flight of two VSB to photograph the attacked ships. These aircraft were recovered at 1907.
- (14) 1630 CinC Combined Fleet turned south with Main Force and Second Fleet.

- (15) 1640 Six B-17's attacked ship on surface in about this position believed to be a cruiser, and reported that it sank in 15 seconds. This was the submarine GRAYLING which crash dived and avoided damage.
- (16) 1750/8 Commander Seaplane Groups breaks Transport Group into three units, according to their top speed capability, and directs them to make maximum speed to westward.
- (17) 0700/7 CinC Combined Fleet alters course to west toward fueling rendezvous.
- (18) 0900 Screening Force joins MOGAMI and two destroyers ARASHIO and ASASHIO. MIKUMA sank at an undisclosed time during the preceding night.
- (19) 1400 KAMIKAWA MARU and patrol boat escort depart to rendezvous with Aleutians Late Support Group for duty with Northern Force.
- (20) Rendezvous of Combined Fleet and its detachment, the Screening Force, with the Supply Group occurred in about Lat. 29° N., Long. 166° E. during afternoon of June 7th.
- (21) CinC Combined Fleet detached Aleutians Late Support Group to rendezvous with KAMIKAWA MARU and thereafter to proceed to the Aleutians Area to join Northern Force.

RECORD OF EVENTS SHOWN ON
Diagram G

- (1) 0050/3 2nd Mobile Task Group launched first air strike against Dutch Harbor at 0050, June 3rd, from a position bearing about 186° (T), distant 165 miles therefrom.
- (2) 0337/3 GILLIS made contact with large body of aircraft bearing 052°, distant 24.4 mi. from Dutch Harbor.
- (3) 0345/3 A portion of the air strike consisting of fourteen horizontal bombers and three fighters commenced attacks on facilities and seaplanes at Dutch Harbor. The attack group departed from the objective area about 0415.
- (4) 0500/3 A PBX search plane came upon the 2nd Mobile Task Group and was shot down by defending fighters. Three of the survivors were later recovered by the cruiser TAKAC.
- (5) 0910/3 Two seaplanes from cruiser TAKAC, a portion of the second air strike group en route to bomb destroyers anchored in Nakushin Bay, encounter Army P-40's near Otter Point. One seaplane was shot down in combat, the other returned to its task group. Other aircraft in this group, which became separated due to weather, also encountered defending fighters at Otter Point. None of the aircraft reached their objective in Nakushin Bay.
- (6) 0450/4 PBX search plane reported making contact with an aircraft carrier and two destroyers in Lat. 50°-07' N., Long. 171°-14' W. on reported course 150° (T). The pilot made an attempt to bomb the carrier, but retired under anti-aircraft fire which shot out an engine.
- (7) 0900/4 Two PBX's armed with torpedoes sight on an enemy carrier, two heavy cruisers, and three destroyers which they reported to be bearing 215° (T), distance 165 miles from Dutch Harbor. During the ensuing two hours these planes made amplifying reports and sent MC's for radio direction finder bearings. Finally, on being recalled at 1115, one of the planes attempted unsuccessfully to deliver a torpedo attack. Anti-aircraft fire heavily damaged the plane, putting one engine out of commission.
- (8) 1400/4 2nd Mobile Task Group launched another air strike against Dutch Harbor consisting of eleven dive bombers, six horizontal bombers and fifteen fighters. The attack commenced at 1355. A portion of the Dutch Harbor strike group while returning were attacked at about 1715 by American defending fighters over Otter Point while observing the airfield there. The carrier RYUNO reports one fighter lost, two fighter and four bombers damaged for the entire attack. The carrier JUNYO reported two fighters and two bombers shot down and a third bomber lost operationally.

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- (9) 1100-1840/4 Several attacks were launched by Army Air Force aircraft against the Japanese Second Mobile Task Group on June 4th. A B-26, one of five based at Fort Randall, attacked with a torpedo at about 1100, dropping it so near a carrier that it hit the water beyond the target. A second B-25 attacked unsuccessfully about the same time. Two B-17's attacked at unspecified times during the afternoon, one of which was shot down by the cruiser TAKAO. Three B-26's from Fort Glenn attacked a cruiser about 1840, dropping two torpedoes. Neither torpedo hit.
- (10) 1800/4 Commander Adak-Attu Occupation Group in compliance with CinC Combined Fleet directive to postpone attack on the Aleutians altered course to the southwest. At 1845 he received orders to proceed with previous plans. He then commenced his run-in to Adak.
- (11) 0730/8 Commander Northern Force cancelled the Occupation of Adak. Commander Adak-Attu Occupation Force altered course to 270° and shortly thereafter commenced his approach to Attu.
- (12) 0129/7 Commander Adak-Attu Occupation Group dispatched to CinC Combined Fleet the report "success in sudden attack and landing."
- (13) 0315/7 Commander Attu Occupation Group despatched to CinC Combined Fleet the report "success in sudden attack and landing."
- (14) 0530/8 TG 8.6 (INDIANAPOLIS, NASHVILLE, LOUISVILLE, HONOLULU, ST. LOUIS, MCCALL, GILMER, GRIDLEY, HUMPHREYS, and SABINE) commenced fueling preparatory to proceeding to Point Blow, Lat. 48° N., Long. 172° W. for rendezvous with the destroyers (TG 8.4). CTF 8 was in the INDIANAPOLIS.
- (15) 0245/10 Commander Destroyer Squadron One in the cruiser ABUKUMA accompanied by two destroyers conducted reconnaissance of Amchitka to locate suitable areas for airfield construction. After about three hours the group departed on sighting an aircraft believed to be an American search plane.
- (16) 2100/10 The destroyers CASE, BROCKS and TALBOT sortied Makushin Bay for rendezvous with remainder of TG 8.4 less DENT and WATERS (REID, SANDS, KANE, KING) off Dutch Harbor and movement to Point Blow to await CTF 8 with TG 8.6.
- (17) 0204/11 The destroyer HUMPHREYS departed TG 8.6 to join TG 8.4 and direct them to proceed to Point Afirm, Lat. 45° N., Long. 172°. The HUMPHREYS was unable to locate the destroyers of TG 8.4. She rejoined TG 8.6 during the early morning of June 14th.

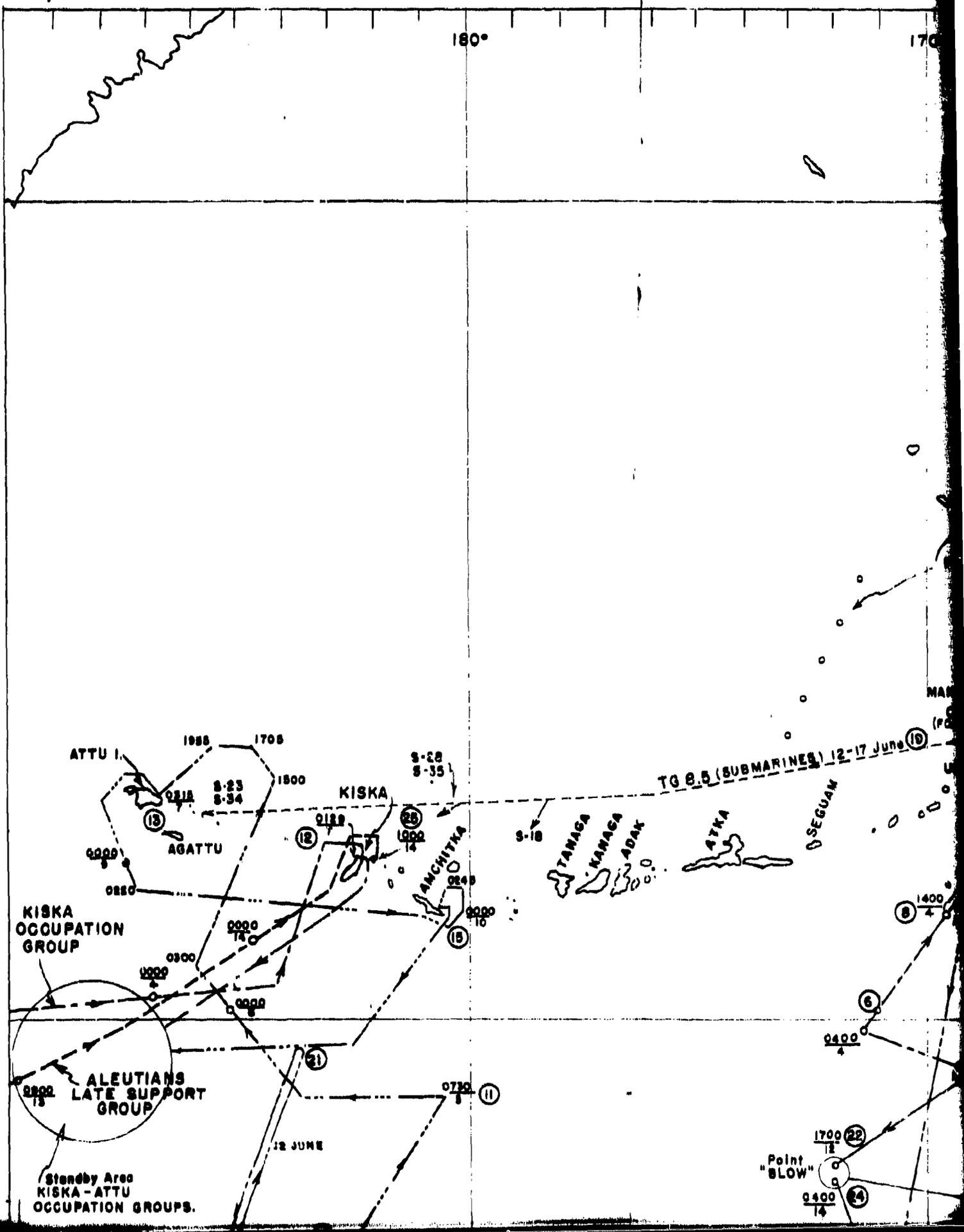
- (18) 0300/11 Commencing about 0300 June 11th, the submarine S-18, 23, 27, 28, 34 and 35 on patrol stations near Dutch Harbor returned to Dutch Harbor and fueled for movement to western Aleutians.
- (19) 1834/11 Commencing at 1834 June 11th and during the ensuing 30 hours, the submarines S-18, 23, 27, 28, 34 and 35 (TG 8.5) depart Dutch Harbor independently for patrol stations off Attu and Kiska, arriving on stations during 15-17 June.
- (20) 0310/12 The destroyer MCCALL left TG 8.6 to join TG 8.4 at Point Blow and to direct their rendezvous with TG 8.6 at Lat. 43° N., Long. 170° W. The MCCALL also encountered the HUMPHREYS, and provided that ship with the new rendezvous position.
- (21) 0000-
2400/12 The Second Mobile Task Group proceeded north on June 12th from the standby area to a position about 180 miles south of Kiska for the purpose of providing fighter interception of aircraft attacking Kiska. Poor weather conditions prevented launching operations. The Task Group retired to the standby area.
- (22) 1700/12 The destroyers comprising TG 8.4 arrive at Point Blow and steam in vicinity awaiting arrival of TG 8.6.
- (23) /13 The carrier ZUIHO and four escorting destroyers joined the Second Mobile Task Group about June 13th, and operated as a part of the task group. The two battleships KONGO and HIEI may have been with these ships.
- (24) 0440/14 TG 8.4 plus MCCALL depart Point Blow for Lat. 43° N., Long. 170° W.
- (25) 1000/14 Aleutians Late Support Group arrives off Kiska.
- (26) 0410/15 TG 8.4 joins TG 8.6. On completing rendezvous, the formation altered course to the eastward and retired.

CONFIDENTIAL
UNCLASSIFIED

A

180°

170



KISKA OCCUPATION GROUP

ALEUTIANS LATE SUPPORT GROUP

Standby Area
KISKA-ATTU
OCCUPATION GROUPS.

TG 8.5 (SUBMARINES) 12-17 June 19

12 JUNE

Point "BLOW"

B

170°

160°

Patrol Vessels

COLD BAY
(FORT HANDALL)

SAND POINT

UNIMAK

DUTCH H&R.

MAKUSHIN BAY

OTTER PT.
(FORT GLENN)

UMNAK

UNALASKA

TG 8.5 (SUBMARINES) 12-17 June

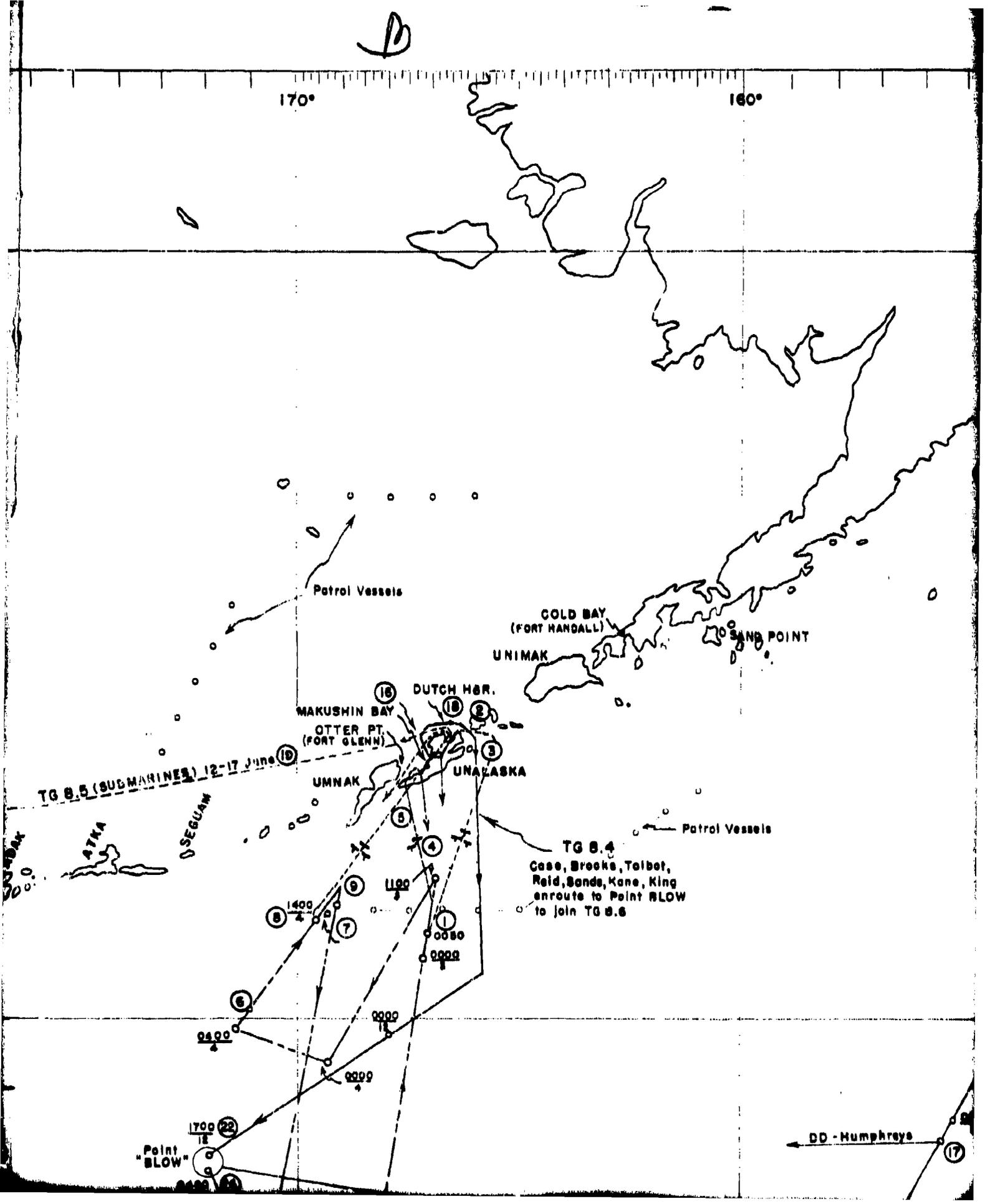
Patrol Vessels

TG 8.4

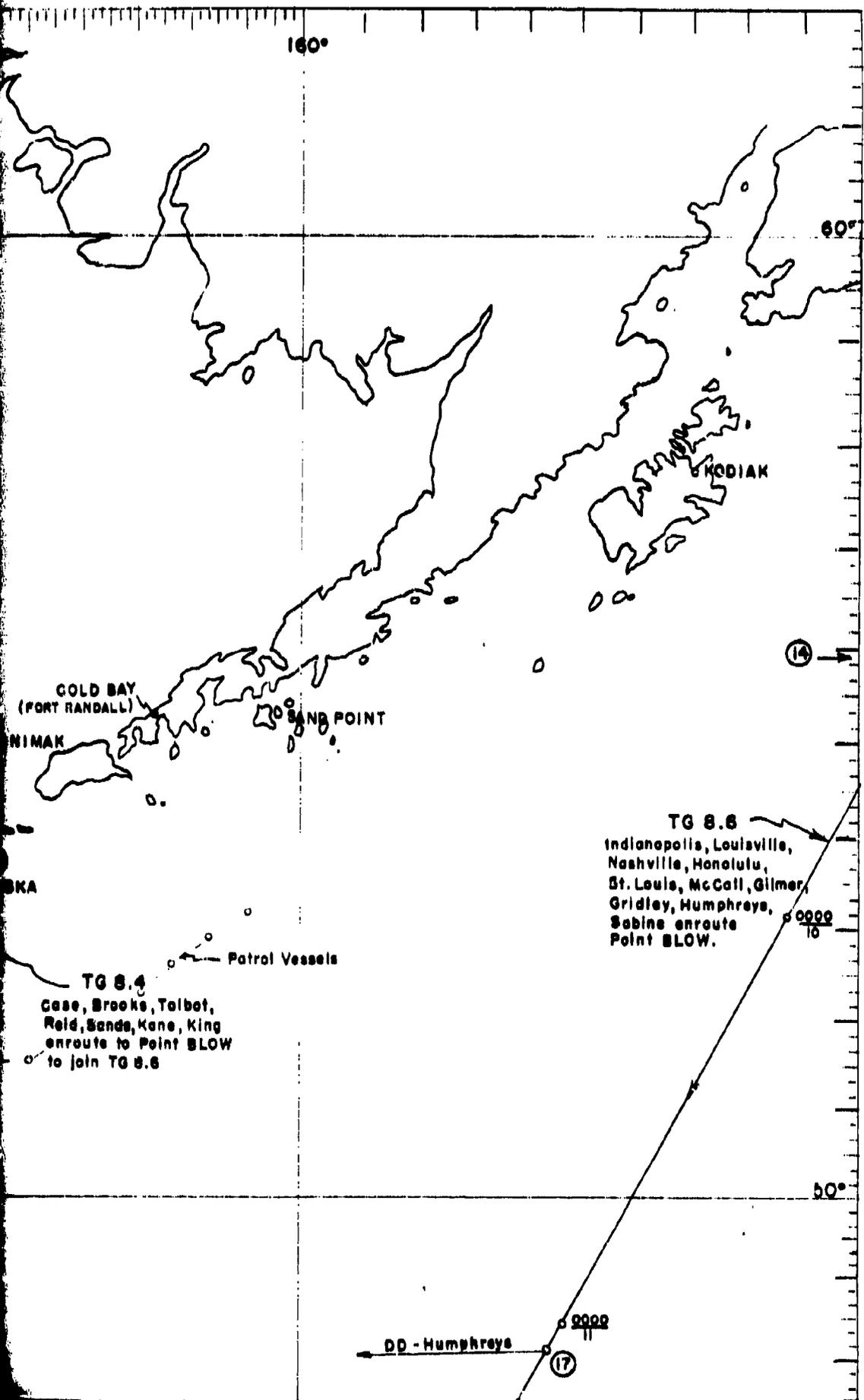
Case, Brooks, Tolbot,
Reid, Sands, Kane, King
enroute to Point BLOW
to join TG 8.6

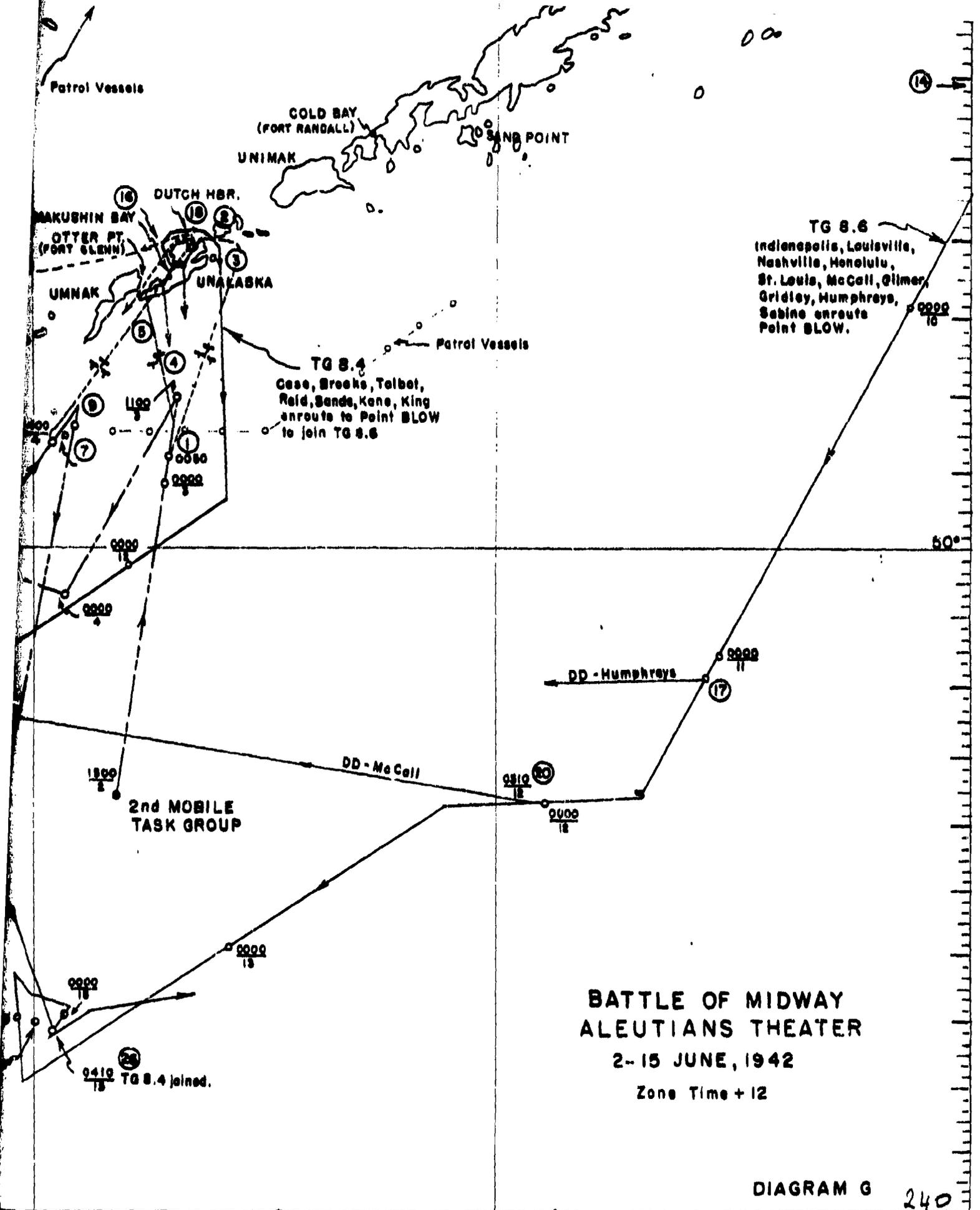
Point
"BLOW"

DD - Humphreys

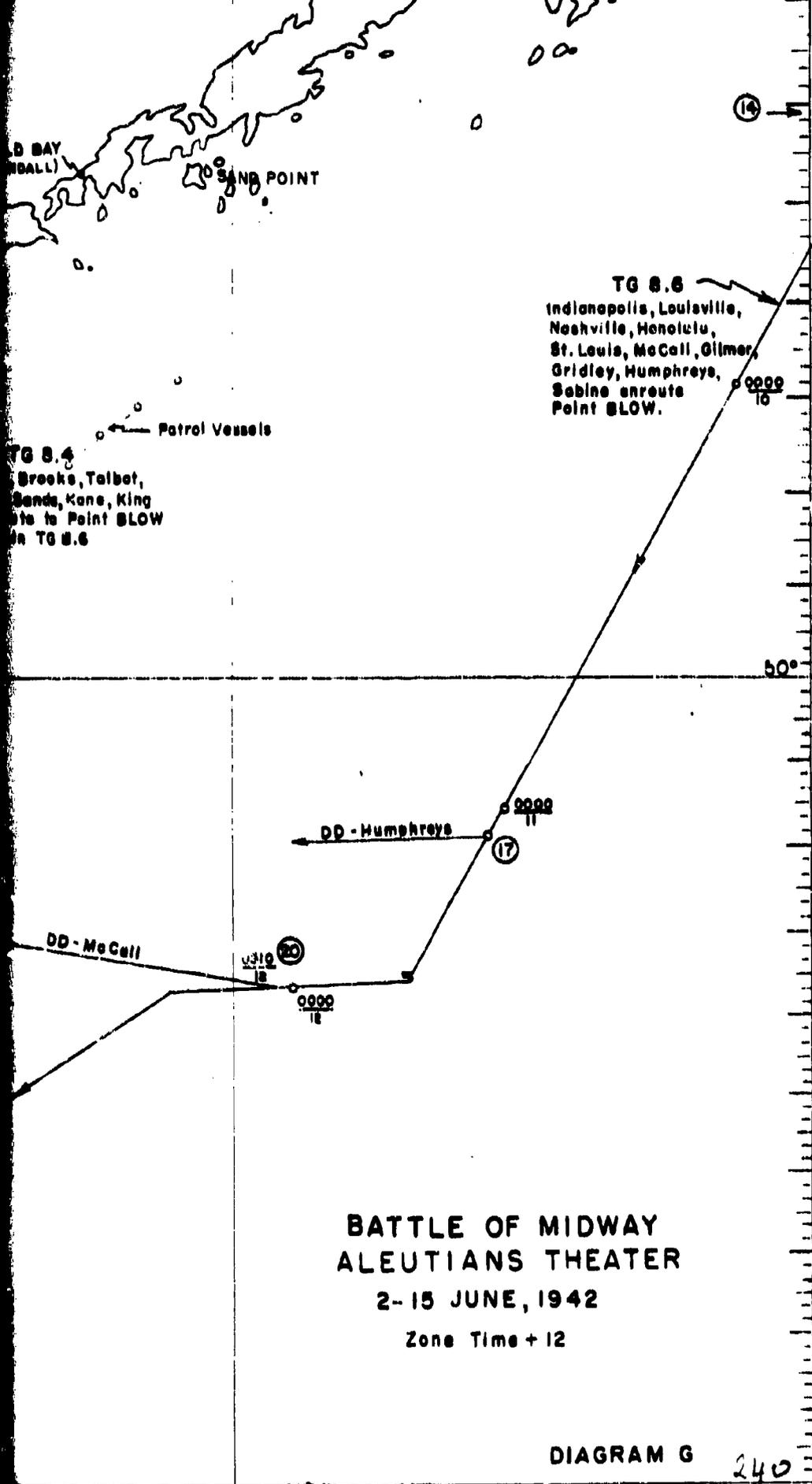


C





**BATTLE OF MIDWAY
ALEUTIANS THEATER
2-15 JUNE, 1942
Zone Time + 12**



240

F

(61)

APPENDIX I

Organization of Japanese Combined Fleet for Midway, Aleutians
Operations, May-June 1942

TASK ORGANIZATION

COMBINED FLEET

Adm. YAMAMOTO, Isoroku

(A) Mobile Force (1st Air Fleet)

V.Adm. HAGUMO, Chuichi

(1) Air Attack Group

Cardiv 1 (AKAGI, KAGA) 2 CV
Cardiv 2 (SORYU, HIRYU) 2 CV

(2) Supporting Group

R. Adm. HARA, Tadaichi

Crudiv 8 (TONE, CHIKUMA) 2 CA
Batdiv 3, 2nd Sec. (HARUNA, KIRISHIMA) 2 BB

(3) Screening Group

R. Adm. OSUGI, Morikazu

Desron 10 (F)(NAGARA) 1 CL
Desdiv 10 (KAZAGUMO, YUGUMO, MAKIGUMO, AKIGUMO) 4 DD
Desdiv 17 (OSOKAZE, URAKAZE, HAMAKAZE, TANIKAZE) 4 DD
Desdiv 4 (NOWAKI, ARASHI, HAGIKAZE, MAIKAZE) 4 DD

(4) Supply Group

NICHIRO MARU, KYOEI MARU, 2 AO
HOKO MARU 1 AF

(B) Main Force

Adm. YAMAMOTO, Isoroku

(1) Main Group

Adm. YAMAMOTO, Isoroku

Batdiv 1 (YAMATO, MUTSU, NAGATO) 3 BB

(2) Aleutians Support Group

V. Adm. TAKASU, Shiro

Batdiv 2 (ISO, HYUGA, FUSO, YAMASHIRO) 4 BB
ZUIHO 1 CVL
Crudiv 9 (KITAGAMI, OI) 2 CL
Desron 3 (F)(SENDAI) 1 CL
Desdiv 11 (FUBUKI, SHIRAYUKI, HATSUYUKI) 3 DD
Desdiv 12 (SHIRAKUMO, SHINONOME, USUGUMO, NURAKUMO) 4 DD
Desdiv 19 (ISONAMI, SHIKINAMI, AYANAMI, URANAMI) 4 DD
Desdiv 20 (AMAGIRI, ASAGIRI, YUGIRI, SAGIRI) 4 DD

(3) Supply Group

SACRAMENTO MARU 1 AF
NARUTO MARU, TOEI MARU, TORA MARU 3 AO

NOTE: Several commanders such as Cinc Combined Fleet, Commander Submarine Force and Commander Base Air Force, commanded forces in addition to those listed herein. Those additional forces are not included since they did not participate in the Battle of Midway.

- (C) Occupation Force (2nd Fleet) V. Adm. KONDO, Nobutaki
- (1) 2nd Fleet Group V. Adm. KONDO, Nobutaki
- | | |
|--|---------|
| Batdiv 3, 1st Sec. (KONGO, HIEI) | 3 BB |
| Crudiv 4, 1st Sec. (ATAGO, CHOKAI) | 2 CA |
| Crudiv 5 (HAGURO, MYOKO) | 2 CA |
| Desron 4 (F)(YURI) | 1 CL |
| Desdiv 2 (YUDACHI, MURASAME, HARUSAME, SAMIDARE) | 4 DD |
| Desdiv 9 (ASAGUMO, MINEGUMO, NATSUGUMO) | 3 DD |
| 3 supply ships | 3 AO-AF |
- (2) Transport Group R. Adm. TANAKA, Raizo
- (a) Transports
- | | |
|---|---------------|
| HANKAI MARU, ZENYO MARU, BRAZIL MARU, | |
| ARGENTINA MARU, AZUMA MARU, KIRISHIMA MARU, | |
| KANO MARU, #2 TOA MARU, AKEBONO MARU, HOKURIKU MARU | 10 AP, AK, AO |
| GOSIU MARU, KEIYO MARU | 2 APV |
| SEICHO | 1 XOL |
- (b) Close Screen R. Adm. TANAKA, Raizo
- | | |
|--|------|
| Desron 2 (F)(JINTSU) | 1 CL |
| Desdiv 15 (KUROSHIO, OYASHIO, NATSUSHIO) | 3 DD |
| Desdiv 16 (HATSUKAZE, YUKIKAZE, AMATSUKAZE, | |
| TOKITSUKAZE) | 4 DD |
| Desdiv 18 (KASUMI, ARARE, KAGIRO, SHIRANUKI) | 4 DD |
| 3 Patrol Boats | 3 PC |
- (3) Close Support Group R. Adm. KURITA, Kene
- | | |
|---|------|
| Crudiv 7 (KUMANO, SUZUYA, MOGAMI, MIKUMO) | 4 CA |
| Desdiv 8 (ARASHIO, ASASHIO, OSHIO, NICHISHIO) | 4 DD |
- (4) Seaplane Tender Group R. Adm. FUJITA, Ruitaro
- | | |
|--|------|
| Seaplane Tender Div. 11 (CHITOSE, KAMIKAWA MARU) | 2 AV |
| HAYASHIO | 1 DD |
| Patrol Boat #36 | 1 PC |
- (5) Minesweeper Group
- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| Minesweep Div 16 (TAMA MARU 3, 6 | |
| SHOWA MARU 7, 8 | |
| MEIYO MARU | |
| YAMAFUKU MARU) | 6 YMS |
| Submarine chasers 4-6 | 3 SC |
- (D) Northern Force (5th Fleet) V. Adm. HOSOKAYA, Shigejiro
- | | | |
|-----------|------------------------|------|
| NACHI (F) | Capt. KIYOTA, Takahiko | 1 CA |
| escorts | | 2 DD |

UNCLASSIFIED

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| (1) <u>Second Mobile Task Group</u> | R. Adm. TSUNODA, Kakuji |
| Crudiv 4 (RYUJO, JUNYO) | 1 CV, 1 CVL |
| Crudiv 4, 2nd Sec. (TAKAO, MAYA) | 2 CA |
| Desdiv 7 (USHIO, OBORO, AKEBONO) | 3 DD |
| TSIYO MARU | 1 AO |
| (2) <u>Adak-Attu Occupation Group</u> | R. Adm. OMORI, Sentaro |
| Desron 1 (F)(ABUKUMA) | 1 CA |
| Desdiv 21 (WAKABE, HATSUSHIM), NENOHI, HATSUHARA) | 4 DD |
| KIMIKAWA MARU | 1 XAV |
| SHICKAZE | 1 DD |
| KINUGASA MARU, (1 Army Battalion) | 1 AP |
| KOGONE MARU | 1 DM |
| (3) <u>KISKA Occupation Group</u> | Capt. OHNO, Takeji * |
| Crudiv 21 (KISO, TAMA) | 2 CL |
| Crudiv 22 (ASAKA MARU, AWATA MARU) | 2 XCL |
| Desdiv 27 | 3 DD |
| Desdiv 8 | 2 DD |
| HAKUSAN MARU, KUMAGAWA MARU (MAIZURU Special Landing Force) | 2 AP |
| Subchaser Div. 13 | 7-8 SC |
| KAIKO MARU, SHUMKOTSU MARU, HAKUHO MARU | 3 FG |
| (E) <u>Submarine Force</u> | V. Adm. KOMATSU, Teruhisa |
| (1) <u>Midway Submarine Group</u> | |
| Subron 3 (I-155, 159, 171, 174, 175) | 5 SS |
| Subron 5 (I-156, 157, 158, 159, 164, 165, 166) | 7 SS |
| Subdiv 13 (I-121, 122, 123) | 3 SS |
| (2) <u>Aleutians Submarine Group</u> | |
| Subron 1 (I-9, 15, 17, 19, 25, 26) | 6 SS |
| (F) <u>Base Air Force</u> | V. Adm. TSUKAHARA, Nishiso |
| (1) <u>4th Air Attack Force</u> | V. Adm. GOTO, Eiji |
| (a) 1st Force (CHITOSE Air Group) | 37 VF |
| | 42 VPB |
| (b) 2nd Force (FIRST Air Group) | 21 VF |
| | 30 VPB |
| (c) 3rd Force (FOURTEENTH Air Group) | 16 VP |
| (d) Special Duty Units | |
| KAMOI | 1 CVS |
| GOSHU MARU (with Transport Group) | 1 APV |
| PARAN MARU | 1 AK |
| TACHIKAZE | 1 DD |

APPENDIX II

Organization of United States Forces for Midway - Aleutian
Operations, May-June, 1942

TASK ORGANIZATION

(A) Carrier Striking Force

(1) TF 16

(a) Carrier Group

ENTERPRISE

CVG 6

HORNET

CVG 8

R. Adm. FLETCHER, Frank J.

R. Adm. SPRUANCE, Raymond A.

Capt. MURRAY, George D.

1 CV

27 F4F, 38 SBD, 14 TED

1 CV

27 F4F, 37 SBD, 15 TED

(b) Cruiser Group

NEW ORLEANS, MINNEAPOLIS, VINCENNES,

NORTHAMPTON, PENSACOLA

ATLANTA

R. Adm. KINKAID, Thomas C.

5 CA

1 CLAA

(c) Destroyer Group

PHELPS, WORDEN, MONAGHAN

ALYWIN, BALCH, CONYNGHAM

BENHAM, ELLET, MAURY

Capt. EARLY, Alexander R.

9 DD

(2) TF 17

(a) Carrier Group

YORKTOWN

VF-3

VB-3

VT-3

VS-5

R. Adm. FLETCHER, Frank J.

Capt. BUCKMASTER, Elliot

1 CV

25 F4F

18 SBD

18 SBD

13 TBD

(b) Cruiser Group

ASTORIA, PORTLAND

R. Adm. SMITH, William

2 CA

(c) Destroyer Screen

HAMMANN, HUGHES, MORRIS

ANDERSON, RUSSELL, GWIN*

6 DD

(3) TF 11**

(a) Carrier Group

SARATOGA

1 CV

(b) Cruiser Group

CHESTER

SAN DIEGO

1 CA

1 CLAA

(c) Destroyer Screen

MAHAN, SMITH, PRESTON, LAFFEY

4 DD

*Joined YORKTOWN, 5 June, 1942.

**TF 11 did not arrive from the mainland in time to participate in the action off Midway.

(B) North Pacific Force

R. Adm. THEOBALD, Robert A.

- (1) Air Search Group
PatWing FOUR
BonRon 36 (Army)

Capt. GEHRES, L.E.

20 PBV
3 VSO
2 B-17
2 LB-30
2 AVD
1 AVP

WILLIAMSON, GILLIS
CASCO

- (2) Surface Search Group
CHARLESTON
ORIOLE
5 Coast Guard Vessels
14 District Patrol Vessels

1 AG
1 AM
6 YP
14 YP

- (3) Air Striking Group*
Pursuit Sqds. 11, 18, 54 (Army)

50 P-40
25 P-38
12 B-36
5 B-17
14 B-26
12 P4F
30 YP
15 Recco.

BomRons 36, 77 (Army)

BomGroup 28 (Army)
FightRon VGS 12
Canadian FightRon
Canadian ReccoRon

- (4) Destroyer Striking Group
CASE, REID,
BROOKS, SANDS, KANE, DENT,
HUMPHREYS, KING, WATERS

2 DD
7 ODD

- (5) Submarine Group
Subdiv 41 (SS-18, 23, 27, 28, 34, 36)

6 SS

- (6) Main Body
INDIANAPOLIS, LOUISVILLE
NASHVILLE, ST. LOUIS, HONOLULU,
GRIDLEY, MC CALL,
GILMER, TALBOT

2 GA
3 CL
2 DD
2 ODD

- (7) Tankers
SABINE

1 AO

(C) TF 1

V. Adm. FINE, William S.

- (1) Carrier Group
LOVE ISLAND

1 CVE
12 F4F 6 SUC

*Exact composition of this group varied. Reinforcements arrived daily before and during the action.

UNCLASSIFIED

- (2) Main Body
 PENNSYLVANIA, MARYLAND, COLORADO, IDAHO,
 TENNESSEE, NEW MEXICO, MISSISSIPPI 7 BB
- (3) Destroyer Screen*
 CRAVEN, DUNLAP, FANNING, AARON WARD,
 CUSHING, PORTER, DRAYTON, DALE 8 DD
- (D) Submarine Force (TF 7) R. Adm. ENGLISH, Robert H.
- (1) Midway Patrol (TG 7.1)
 DOLPHIN, GATO, GRENADIER, TAMBOR,
 TROUT, GRAYLING, NAUTILUS, GROUPEE
 GUDGEON, CUTTLEFISH, FLYING FISH, CACHALOT 12 SS
- (2) Support Patrol (TG 7.2)
 MARWAL, PLUNGER, TRIGGER 3 SS
- (3) Oahu Patrol (TG 7.3)
 TARPON, PIKE, FINBACK, GROWLER 4 SS
- (E) Hawaiian Sea Frontier R. Adm. BAGLEY, David W.
- (1) Midway Local Defenses** Capt. SIMARD, C.T.
- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| MAC 22 | |
| VMSB 221 | 21 F2A, 7 P4F |
| VMSB 241*** | 19 SBD, 17 SB2U |
| Marine 5th Defense Batt. | |
| 2nd Raider Bat. Detachment | |
| Patrol Craft (PT's 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 42). Also 4 YP's. | 11 PT, 4 YP |
| Patrol Wing Reinforcements | 30 PBV |
| Hawaiian Air Force Reinforcements | 17 B-17 |
| | 4 B-26 |
| VI-8 Detachment | 6 TBF |

*DALE, CRAVEN, DUNLAP, FANNING and AARON WARD were initially assigned by CINCPAC to TF 11. They joined TF 7, however, on June 1st. In their place the SMITH, PRESTON and MAHAN were provided, and sailed on June 1st with SARATOGA, SAN DIEGO and LAFFEY for Pearl Harbor.

**The air strength on Midway varied from day to day. Reinforcements were dispatched from Oahu as required to maintain the air strength on Midway at a maximum.

***This squadron had only 29 pilots. One pilot was loaned by VMSB 221 making 30 pilots available.

APPENDIX III

Summary of Japanese Damage

Midway Area

June 4th

2 aircraft carriers - KAGI and SORYU sunk.
2 aircraft carriers - AKAGI and HIRYU heavily damaged.
1 tanker - AKEBONO MARU damaged.

aircraft: 48 carrier type* shot down
186 carrier type lost aboard carriers
or making water landing

**334 total carrier aircraft lost

June 5th

2 aircraft carriers - AKAGI and HIRYU***sunk.
1 heavy cruiser - MIKUMA damaged.

June 6th

1 heavy cruiser - MIKUMA sunk.
1 heavy cruiser - MOGAMI damaged.
2 destroyers - ARASHIO and ASASHIO damaged.

***Total losses - Personnel - 2500 men

Aleutians Area

June 3rd

Aircraft - 3

June 4th

Aircraft - 3

June 5-14

No report

*Japanese report 48 of own aircraft shot down in aerial combat or by enemy anti-aircraft. Many more Japanese aircraft are reported making "emergency water landings". Some landings of this type were due to inability to land on damaged or burning carrier decks; others to damage incurred in aerial combat. Translation of WDC 160985-B, records of AKAGI, KAGA, SORYU and HIRYU lists these losses.

**Japanese report total aircraft lost Midway operations 258 planes of all types. This is assumed to include plane losses of MIKUMA, MOGAMI, CHITOSE, KAMIKAWA MARU, ZUIHO and planes from battleships and other cruisers. No report of these losses is available. See USSBS Questionnaire #14.

***The heavily damaged carriers AKAGI and HIRYU were torpedoed by own destroyers early on June 5th because of impossibility of salvage.

****USSBS Questionnaire #14.

Summary of U.S. Damage

Midway Area

| | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| June 4th | | | |
| 1 aircraft carrier | - | YORKTOWN damaged | |
| Aircraft: | | | 126 lost |
| Army Midway based 2, Navy carrier 69 and Midway based 7 | | | |
| Total 96; Marine Corps Midway based 28. | | | |
| June 5th | | | |
| Aircraft: | | | 5 lost |
| Army Midway based 2; Navy carrier based 2; Marine Corps Midway based 1. | | | |
| June 6th | | | |
| 1 destroyer | - | HANDMANN sunk | |
| 1 aircraft carrier | - | YORKTOWN damaged | |
| Aircraft carrier based | | | 1 lost |
| June 7th | | | |
| 1 aircraft carrier | - | YORKTOWN* sunk | |
| | | | |
| | **Total aircraft lost Midway area | | 132 lost |
| | ***Total personnel lost | | 307 (about) |

Aleutians Area

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|----|
| June 3rd | | | |
| Aircraft, Army, land based | | | 1 |
| June 4th | | | |
| Aircraft, Army, land based | | | 5 |
| June 3-7th | | | |
| Aircraft, Navy, land based | | | 9 |
| June 7-14th | | | |
| Aircraft, Navy and Army, land based | | | 5 |
| | ****Total aircraft lost | | 20 |
| | *****Total personnel lost | | 7 |

*YORKTOWN sank on June 7th from damages inflicted by submarine on June 6th.

**CINCPAC reports total aircraft lost Midway area as 148 Army, Navy and Marine Corps planes. This is broken down into Army, Midway based 4, Navy carrier and Midway based 114; Navy cruiser based 1; Marine Corps, Midway based 29. The difference of 16 planes between CINCPAC's analysis and this analysis is presumed to be largely due to planes stricken from the Navy records as being uneconomical to overhaul.

***Action Report CINCPAC, Battle of Midway, Serial O1849 dated June 28th, 1942, p.1.

****A firm statement of aircraft losses during the Aleutians Phase of the Battle of Midway cannot be made in detail from the records available to the Naval War College.

*****Personnel losses Aleutians not available.