

Corsairs and Hellcats Destroy Jap Planes at Better Than 5-to-1 Ratio

The Navy's two new fighter planes—the Vought *Corsair* and the Grumman *Hellcat*—are compiling fine records in the Pacific, the Navy Department announced last week.

The "Terrible Twins," as they have been dubbed by the Fleet's aviators, in 1943 destroyed 884 enemy warplanes, at a loss of 170, thereby improving the five-to-one ratio which Navy and Marine Corps flyers have maintained since the beginning of the war.

Making its debut in February, 1943, the Pratt and Whitney powered *Corsair*, completed the year with a record of 584 Jap planes shot down or blasted to bits on the ground. Only 108 *Corsairs* were lost, with a large number of their pilots being rescued.

The *Hellcat* made its bow during the carrier task force raid on Marcus Island, Sept. 1, 1943, but did not meet any substantial enemy aerial opposition until the Wake Island raid a month later. From then until the year-end, the *Hellcat*—also Pratt and Whitney-powered—put 300 enemy craft out of the fight. Only 62 *Hellcats* were lost, and many of the pilots rescued.

The item of enemy planes destroyed provides only part of the record achieved, for in almost every action of the current Pacific offensive, one or the other, or both of these six-gun, 400-mile-an-hour fighters viciously strafed the Jap island objectives—Marcus, Wake, Nauru, Tarawa, the Marshalls, Bougainville.

This strafing devastated a variety of installations—barracks, fuel and supply dumps, troop concentrations, radio stations, troop and supply barges.

The *Corsair* and *Hellcat* have divided the fighter burden, the *Hellcats* operating from carriers with Navy pilots at the controls, and the *Corsairs* from land bases with, in most instances, Marine flyers as pilots. Both, however, can operate from either ship or land bases.

Scores of published reports on *Hellcat* and *Corsair* accomplishments give conclusive evidence that these two planes are the answer to the vaunted Jap Zero.

Both planes mount six .50 caliber machine guns, and are capable of top speeds above 400 miles an hour, ceilings over 35,000 feet, and range of over 1,500 miles.

OFFENSIVE

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available, particularly planes and ships, for a major effort against the Japanese. The decline of the U-Boat menace and the virtual elimination of the Axis navies in Europe have made possible a great concentration of naval strength in the Pacific. And the use of this strength is in line with President Roosevelt's policy of hitting the enemy "everywhere at once."

The rapid conquest of the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshalls was also a brilliant justification for the campaign of attrition which we have waged in the Pacific for a year and a half. Neither the Solomons nor New Guinea is of tremendous importance in itself. Yet these islands have served as battlefields on which the Japanese have been forced to expend valuable material of war.

The Marshalls campaign silenced the dire prophecies of a tedious "island-by-island" strategy in the Pacific. In one bold stroke our forces moved more than five hundred miles from newly-won positions in the Gilbert Islands. Important Jap positions at Wotje and Jaluit were by-passed in favor of the dominating Kwajalein Atoll. The garrisons on these lesser islands are now under siege by sea and air. It is also debatable whether Wake Island, now an important base in the Jap air-supply system, can hold out against pressure that can be brought to bear upon it from Kwajalein.

The general public always exaggerated the significance of Japan's "thousands of unsinkable aircraft carriers" as their island bases were known. Japanese resources never permitted the defense of all their islands. If Japanese strategists attempt to defend the maximum number of islands they will be preparing only the piecemeal defeat of the Imperial forces. This policy would scatter the defenders and make a concentration of the attackers even more effective. Not every island is important, either for the enemy or for us. The criterion of an island's value is its usefulness as an air base. We are conquering islands only that our air power may be brought nearer the heart of Japan's empire.

To these strategic conclusions

The Wolf

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by Sansone

(In Hawaii)



"Look at the guitar—only three strings!"

may be added some observations on tactics. The loss of fewer than three hundred men in the Marshalls makes it clear that amphibious attacks are not necessarily bloody. New methods of combining naval shelling with aerial bombardment have smashed even the most skillfully designed gun emplacements.

To the naval theorists of an older school the use of battleships to silence shore batteries is a modern anachronism. Moreover, battleships have been operating within sight of shore in "narrow waters" and within range of "shore-based aircraft: a harrowing situation for a ship according to some military commentators!

Our amphibious operations in the Marshalls have again tested the carrier-warship team. In these task forces the utility of escort carriers (CVE'S) has been proved, and the mutual support that air and sea power afford one another has been amply demonstrated. Planes from the CVE'S have enabled a successful defense to be combined with terrific offensive power. Carrier operations in 1942 it will be recalled had the latter without the former. Finally it may be remarked that the absence of a naval defense force in the Marshalls offers some proof for the belief that the main Japanese fleet will not dispute the command of the sea.

SURVEY

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provide commanding officers with complete data on enlisted men when they are being assigned so that the latter may be used most effectively, and to facilitate a checkup on those already in permanent complements to determine whether they are placed where they can do the best possible job for the Navy.

Willard B. Stay, CY, USN (Ret.), a veteran of 29 years of naval service, was in charge of the classification specialists here who included Harry A. Coker, Sp(C)2c, William M. Farrell, Sp(C)2c, Ralph R. Harberts, Sp(C)3c, William C. McCamant, Sp(C)3c, and Gordon Hayslip, Sp(C)2c, all USNR.

Violin Concert Monday

Benno Rabinof, noted violinist, will present a concert in Memorial Hall next Monday starting at 2030. Included on his program will be "Rondo in G Major" by Mozart, "Ave Maria" by Schubert, "Caprice No. 24" by Paganini, and Wieniawski's "Concerto No. 2 in D Minor." The concert is presented under the auspices of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, national honorary music fraternity, to replenish the scholarship fund.