

VT-17 DURING WORLD WAR II

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Despite the major victory at the Battle of Midway, the Pacific war news during 1942 was still mostly grim – some so grim it was blacked-out of public media. We had lost four carriers and *ENTERPRISE* had been damaged again, while the Japanese still had 5 fleet and 5 light carriers, some recently commissioned. Yet the Marines somehow held Guadalcanal and Henderson Field despite the best efforts of the Japanese.

LCDR FRANK M. WHITAKER (NA 1934) learned he would command the new torpedo squadron VT-17, with 18 factory-fresh TBF-1 Avengers. No doubt he wondered if 1943 would be any different than 1942.

Ltjg Henry (Hank) C. Carby was a F4F pilot in VGS-9 (later VC-9) with Frank and left for duty in VT-17 at the same time as Frank.

The first ship needed to make a difference, *USS ESSEX (CV-9)*, was commissioned on 31 December 1942, after only 17-months of construction. That was 15-months early, so her catapults were yet unavailable for installation.

Admiral Nimitz's staff planned for the arrival of ten new fleet carriers (CVs and CVLs) during 1943. These ships began the awesome task of turning the Pacific into an American Lake. *ESSEX* arrived in Pearl Harbor on 8 June 1943. *USS YORKTOWN (CV-10)* arrived on 11 July. *USS LEXINGTON (CV-16)* arrived on 9 August. The CVLs *INDEPENDENCE*, *PRINCETON*, and *BELLEAU WOOD* also arrived during this period. American carrier strength jumped from 2 to 8 in a two month period. Perhaps the Japanese had miscalculated!

Fleet carriers are defined as those capable of speeds in excess of 30 knots. We lost four pre-war carriers in 1942. The names of these ships reappeared on new Essex Class ships, confusing both the Japanese and historians. None of these new CVs were lost, but several were damaged during the remainder of the War. One CVL (*PRINCETON*) was lost to enemy action in 1944. Over 100 escort carriers (CVE) were also built and only six were lost to enemy action in the Atlantic and Pacific.

USS INTREPID was the tenth fleet carrier expected to reach Pearl Harbor in 1943. However, she was delayed until 16 January 1944 to repair damage sustained while grounding during transit of the Panama Canal. This was the first of many such incidents for the Dry-I.

Also in 1943, the Navy began the long tedious process of developing carrier-based jet aircraft. One hybrid and three pure-jet prototypes comprised this first-generation of jet aircraft. Some went into limited production and were assigned to squadrons that included carrier operations. Maybe it was fortunate that none saw combat service. (See the section on PLANES for the story of *Early Navy Jets*.)

Editor's note: Much of what follows about the squadron's first deployment is from the Robert Olds book *HELLDIVER SQUADRON*, first published in 1944 by Dodd, Mead and Company. A rare used-book about VB-17, it also details much of Air Group Seventeen's first combat deployment aboard *USS BUNKER HILL*. Mr. Olds was among the "press corps" on that deployment. It may not be one of the "great" works of literature, but it is an impressively detailed account of one segment of World War II and Mr. Olds deserves a special "THANKS" for his efforts.

CHRONOLOGY

1943

Commander-in-Chief = Franklin Delano Roosevelt

1 January

Torpedo Squadron (VT-17) commissioned at Norfolk, **LCDR FRANK M. WHITAKER** Commanding. Later, the squadron trained at NAAS Chincoteague.

Pilot training in 1942 used a variety of obsolete aircraft, including biplanes. Operational Training Squadrons were formed and the TBF Avenger had been in the fleet for six months, so it is possible some VT-17 pilots had flown the TBF prior to reporting to the squadron. LCDR Whitaker had flown the TBD in 1938, including carrier landings aboard *Enterprise* before the War. He probably flew the TBF during his short tour with VGS-9 (VC-9) late in 1942.

CDR Michael P. "Bags" BAGDANOVITCH (NA 1928), became the first Commander of Air Group Seventeen. He previously commanded VGS-30 (F4F Wildcats) embarked in *USS SUWANNEE (AVG-27)* during operation TORCH (invasion of North Africa between

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LCDR James E. "Moe" VOSE (NA 1934) assumed command to VS-17. Moe took command of VB-8 after his skipper, LCDR Alfred B. TUCKER was lost at sea on 19 August 1942. Moe's tour was cut short by the sinking of *USS HORNET* (CV-8) on 26 October 1942,

LCDR Walter L. BLATCHFORD (NA 1933) assumed command of VB-17.

In February, both bomber squadrons received their new SB2C-1 Helldivers. On 1 July, the two squadrons were merged with Moe Vose as skipper of VB-17, while Blatchford was reassigned.

LCDR Tommy Blackburn (NA 1933) assumed command of VF-17, the second Navy Corsair squadron (VF-12 was first, but deployed with F6F Hellcats). Blackburn also served in Operation Torch, as skipper of VGF-29 in *USS SANTEE* (ACV-29).



LCDR Frank Whitaker - Skipper as Hobo One

- 5 January The first Japanese plane shot down by a VT-fuse was hit on the second salvo from *USS HELENA* (CL-50).
- 12 January US Army troops occupy Amchitka Island, far out in the Aleutian Chain. The airfield was completed and P-40s shot down marauding Japanese fighters on 18 February.
- 12 February VMF-124 introduced the F4U-1 Corsair to combat on a PBY rescue mission, flying from Guadalcanal. This squadron's second combat tour was aboard *USS ESSEX*.
- 24 February VT-17 had 13 TBF-1 aircraft assigned.
- 18 April **Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto**, the head of the Japanese Combined Fleet, was killed when the aircraft transporting him from Rabaul on an inspection tour of the Solomon Islands was shot down by USAAC P-38 fighters. His trip itinerary was learned by a MAGIC intercept.
- 28 April VT-17 had 17 TBF-1 and 1 J2F-2A (Duck) aircraft assigned. The latter aircraft was probably used for air-sea rescue while training at NAAS Chincoteague.



- 11 May US Army troops landed on Attu Island, in the Aleutian Chain. The Japanese invaders of the fog shrouded island were finally defeated on the 31st.

- 24 May *BUNKER HILL* commissioned, Captain JOHN J. BALLENTINE commanding. This ship was the fourth of the 24 ESSEX Class carriers eventually commissioned.
- 31 May VT-17 had 18 TBF-1, plus 1 J2F-2A and 1 F4F-4 (Wildcat) aircraft assigned. The latter aircraft was probably used to train gunners.
- 7 July The right wing failed on VT-17 TBF-1 (BuNo 06166) and the plane spun and crashed into the ocean East of the Daughtery community. The crew of three were killed.

There is some confusion regarding this accident. An undated newspaper obituary, describes an accident from the same period, listing the pilot as Ensign Elmore K. Hood and his crewman as Harry J. Wells. This crash occurred near the community of Horntown. Despite the differences, it is believed both sources describe the same accident.

- 13 July Air Group 17 commenced air operations aboard *USS BUNKER HILL* while steaming south. The tail hook on Ensign Newton Bikes' plane came out and he went into the barrier. The next day, Bill Krantz and G.A. (Bull) Turnbull also hit the barriers.

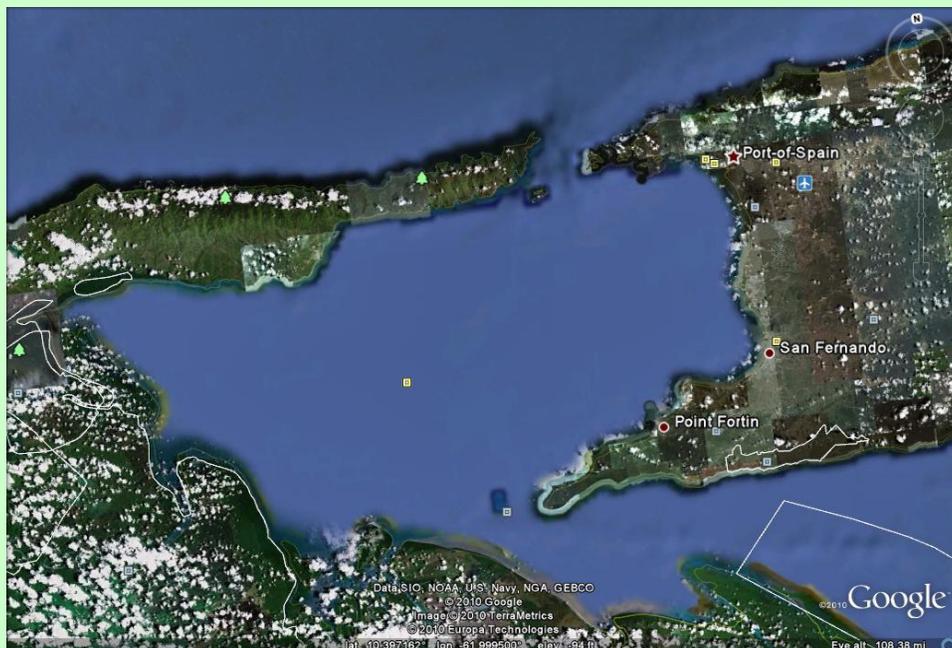


VT-17 TBF-1Cs

Lead plane has ASB radar, with Yagi antennas fitted under the wings.
T-43 and insignia on lead plane fuselage dates this picture as late-1943.
Open canopies means the air conditioning is ON.

ASB radar had a range of about 30 miles, using an A-scope (range only). The radar operator had levers to turn the Yagi antennas (similar to a TV antenna) left or right of centerline. This equipment used special-designed vacuum tubes and operated at 515 mHz. It was extremely primitive compared to today's technology, but it was a major improvement over the Mk-1 eyeball. Only a few aircraft in each squadron were equipped with ASB radar, but there was no scope in the front cockpit.

- 1 July *BUNKER HILL* and Air Group 17 began training operations in Gulf of Paria, west of Trinidad (See Google Earth photo).



The Gulf of Paria is a 3,000 square-mile inland sea off the coast of Venezuela, first visited by Christopher Columbus in 1498. The Gulf is enclosed by the island of Trinidad, which is separated on the west from Venezuela by two narrow entrances. The northern entrance is most commonly used by large vessels. During WW-II new ships used the Gulf for their shakedown cruise, which was easily protected from German submarines.

- 5 August Nearly 35,000 US and Canadian troops assault Kiska, in the Aleutians, but the Japanese had left the island in July.

22 August *USS ESSEX* (CV-9), with VF-9 (first F6F-3 Hellcat squadron), the new *USS YORKTOWN* (CV-10), and *USS INDEPENDENCE* (CVL 22), also with Hellcat squadrons, conducted strikes against Marcus Island.

9 September Italian forces surrendered unconditionally to allied forces. However, German forces still occupied much of Italian peninsula and imprisoned large numbers of Italian troops.

There were 51,000 Italian POWs held in dozens of camps across the United States. Many of these men were captured in North Africa. After Italy surrendered, these men were no longer POWs, but couldn't be sent home. Thus, most were assigned to Italian Service Units and many of these units were moved to port cities to load cargo vessels destined for combat areas. These men were paid for their work and had some freedom of movement during off-duty hours. Naturally, there were a few hard-core fascists that remained in a camp at Hereford, Texas.

10 September *BUNKER HILL* steamed for Panama and then San Diego.



USS BUNKER HILL, circa September 1943, steams for Pearl Harbor.
VF-17 Corsairs are parked starboard, with VB-17 Helldivers port.
A few VT-17 Avengers are parked near the island.

19 September *USS COWPENS* (CVL-25) arrived in Pearl Harbor.

28 September *BUNKER HILL* departed San Diego for Pearl Harbor, loaded with spare aircraft and nearly 3,000 extra personnel – they were sleeping everywhere and the cooks were happy to see them leave at Pearl Harbor.

2 October *BUNKER HILL* arrived in Pearl Harbor. Admiral Nimitz had ten carriers and planned to make life miserable for the Japanese. However, VF-17 (F4U-1A) was replaced by VF-18, LCDR SAMUEL L. SILBER commanding, flying thirty-six F6F-3s.

The swap of fighter squadrons aboard *BUNKER HILL* was mainly for logistics considerations. VF-17 had proven the Corsair's carrier capability, but all other carrier-based fighter squadrons were deploying with F6F Hellcats. VF-17 operated with distinction from shore bases in the southwest Pacific. Corsairs finally operated full-time from carriers in 1945.

12 October VF-17 departed Pearl Harbor to join other shore-based units operating in the South Pacific and arrived at Espiritu Santo Island on 25 October.

26 October *BUNKER HILL* crossed the Equator headed into South Pacific waters, with the usual "crossing the line" ceremonies abbreviated slightly for wartime conditions.

2 November VT-17 had 18 TBF-1C aircraft assigned. The -1C had two .50-caliber wing guns instead of a single .30-caliber cowl gun firing through the propeller.

5 November Task Force 38 (*SARATOGA* and *PRINCETON*), under Rear Admiral Frederick Sherman, hit **Rabaul**. Task Group 50.3 (*ESSEX*, *BUNKER HILL*, and *INDEPENDENCE*), under Rear Admiral Alfred Montgomery, arrived at Espiritu Santo in the Hebrides Islands for a three day stay.

11 November Task Force 38 and Task Group 50.3 launched strikes against **Rabaul**, New Britain. This was the first combat operations for the new SB2C-1 Helldivers, flown by VB-17. This strike was supported by shore-based Navy and Marine fighter squadrons. The TF 38 strike from the east was hampered by weather. TG 50.3 had better luck.

BUNKER HILL became known as the “Holiday Express” since many of her early air strikes occurred on holidays, beginning with November 11 – Armistice Day (at the time).

One TBF, flown by **ENSIGN ROBERT HIGLEY**, had mechanical problems after launch. The other planes left without him. A few minutes later, problems apparently resolved, Higley also headed for Rabaul, but was never seen again.

VF-17 (F4U-1s) and VF-33 (F6F-3s) departed their shore-base at 0400 (local time) and arrived over the Task Group before dawn. VF-17 downed a Japanese snoopers before the carrier-based strike launched shortly after dawn. VF-17 and VF-33 protected the carriers while all available carrier aircraft were launched and departed for Rabaul, about 190-miles northeast.

VMF-212 and VMF-221 Corsairs arrived overhead at 0800, allowing VF-17 and VF-33 to recover aboard the three carriers at 0830. After a hot shower and a breakfast of steak and real eggs, the two Navy squadrons launched at 1030 as the two Marine squadrons headed for home.

The carrier strike group returned from Rabaul and began recovery before noon. The three carriers refueled and rearmed their fighters for the expected Japanese retaliation. The Japanese strike group arrived shortly after 1300. Already on their way home, VF-17 and VF-33 returned to join in the fight. The few that slipped through the fighters ran into a wall of flack, much of which carried the new proximity fuses. The Japanese inflicted no damage to the Task Group and there was plenty of parking for the few Japanese aircraft that returned to Rabaul.

VT-17 lost two aircraft and LTJG HANK CARBY brought his Avenger home with 207 holes. LT. WILLIAM F. “Red” KRANTZ was the pilot of one missing Avenger. Overall the mission was successful, but, none of the squadron’s torpedoes detonated.

After the Battle of the Solomon Sea, the Japanese moved their major ships to Truk Lagoon while Rabaul became a backwater base that was by-passed as the Pacific War moved further northward.

- 18 November Operation Galvanic. Task Group 50.3, including *BUNKER HILL*, launched strikes against **Tarawa Atoll** in the Gilbert Islands and supported the landings two days later. It took three days for the Marines to secure Betio Island by killing most of the 4,700 fanatical Imperial Marines that were dug-in around the island.
- 20 November Sixteen Japanese torpedo planes found Task Group 50.3 recovering aircraft some 30 miles west of Tarawa. Nine broke through the fighters and attacked the three carriers. Three went after *ESSEX* and *BUNKER HILL* and were shot down. The other six attacked *INDEPENDENCE*, which shot down five, but took one Japanese aerial torpedo and left the war zone for repairs. She again commenced combat operations on 6 September 1944.
- 24 November A Japanese submarine (I-175) torpedoed the escort carrier *LISCOMB BAY* in the pre-dawn darkness near Makin Island, which sank with the loss of 644 crew. The I-175 was sunk during February 1944 near Kwajalein.
- 4 December A sunset attack by 15 Japanese “Betty” torpedo bombers hit the stern of the new *LEXINGTON*. With damaged steering, the crew devised a hand-operated steering system and she steamed for temporary repairs at Pearl Harbor and then entered the Bremerton Ship Yard on 22 December. She again commenced combat operations on 18 March 1944.
- 8 December Air Group 17 conducted air strikes against **Nauru**, 400 miles south of the Gilberts. VT-17 laid strings of 100-lb bombs along the airfields. As the Task Force departed the area, A VT-17 pilot, who shall remain nameless, returned from an anti-sub patrol and dropped a message on deck stating that he had spotted a populated island 160 miles east of Nauru.
- It was plotted as Ocean Island. The next morning the ready room teletype came to life and stated “**SPECIAL NOTE: ALL ISLANDS IN THIS AREA HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY DISCOVERED.**”
- BUNKER HILL* then headed for Espiritu Santo and the Air Group flew ashore for two weeks of rest and a little beer, but they were short-changed on the rest part
- 18 December Air Group 17 unexpectedly moved back aboard *BUNKER HILL* and the ship headed for New Ireland.

- 25 December Task Group 37.2 (*BUNKER HILL* and *MONTEREY*) launched strikes against **Kavieng**, New Ireland. Defective torpedoes forced VT-17 to use skip-bombing on two strikes with success. However, six TBFs were damaged and another made a water landing. The XO, Grady Owens, landed with a dead radioman and Lt. S. G. Sullivan's radioman was wounded.
- LTJG HANK CARBY went down 40 miles from Kavieng, but two men were seen in a raft. Later, the rescue ship couldn't find them and they were listed as MIA.
- GQ sounded as the pilots settled down for a turkey dinner. Japanese aircraft were inbound and most were eliminated by the Combat Air Patrol. The ship slipped away after dark, but by then the turkey was cold.
- 27 December A tanker appeared on the horizon with everyone wondering why? Later, the word was out – back to Kavieng, but no details of when.
- Late December Word was received that Red Krantz and his crew were safe. Red had gone down in Buka Passage during the Rabaul strike. Five months later, it was learned that Red and his crew had drifted for 12-days in their life-raft before coming ashore on New Britain. They walked northward, dodging Japanese patrols, past Rabaul to the north coast. Finally, they were spotted and rescued.
- December 31 At 2200 the Task Group turned northward and increased speed.

1944 **Commander-in-Chief = Franklin Delano Roosevelt**

- January 1 VB-17 and VT-17 launched pre-dawn search planes and one of the bomber pilots spotted two cruisers and two destroyers entering Kavieng harbor. Back aboard *BUNKER HILL*, a strike group of 82 aircraft began launching. VT-17 put a working torpedo into each cruiser along with six hits by the bombers.
- Torpedo defense was sounded in the afternoon, but a recess permitted all hands to enjoy a New Year's dinner. After dark, the ships slipped away from the Japanese search planes.
- January 3 After a rumor of returning to Espiritu Santo, the Task Force was headed northwest. An Army reconnaissance plane had spotted three cruisers, a tug, and cargo ships headed for Kavieng.
- January 4 Early morning scout planes spotted the ships entering Kavieng harbor and again the ship launched a strike group. The after-action photos were less impressive than pilot reports – the cruisers were really destroyers. After evading the usual Japanese search planes, the Task Force finally headed for Espiritu Santo and 12-days of rest and rain.
- 8 January CDR ROLAND H. "Brute" DALE (NA 1932) relieved CDR M. P. Bagdanovich as CAG 17, who was headed for NAS Miami to guide training operations.
- January *BUNKER HILL* got underway for Funafuti in the Ellice Islands, south of the Gilberts, and then headed for **Kwajalein Atoll**, in the Marshall Islands.
- 25 January Departed Nouema, New Caledonia.
- 29 January Operation Flintlock. Air Group 17 launched strikes against **Kwajalein Atoll**, Marshall Islands. LTJG "ABE" O'SULLIVAN and LTJG "BONES" PEARSON, with their six crewmen were lost on strikes over the Marshall Islands.
- 30 January Task Force 58.3 (*BUNKER HILL*, *MONTEREY*, and *COWPENS*), under Rear Admiral Fredrick Sherman, began air strikes against **Engebi Island** on Eniwetok Atoll.
- 31 January One of the objectives of Flintlock was to capture Majuro Atoll, 225 nm SE of Kwajalein as a fleet anchorage. There were only four Japanese on the island when the Marines went ashore.
- 2 February VT-17 Commanding Officer, LCDR WHITAKER, was killed in a mid-air collision over Engebi Island. His wingman, LTJG ED STACK, was also killed along with their six crewmen. The Washington columnist RAYMOND CLAPPER, riding in Whitaker's aircraft, was also killed.

LCDR GORDON (Grady) N. OWENS became acting commanding officer of VT-17.



Photo of Engebí Island, located at the north-end of Eniwetak Atoll. This Japanese fighter strip was probably the target for LCDR Whitaker's flight. The Marines captured this island in just six hours on 18 February 1944. The runway was later improved to 3,950-feet.

Later that afternoon, word was received that Hank Carby and his gunner, C. A. Morken had been found. They came ashore after drifting in their life-raft for 27-days, some 390-miles from where they ditched. They survived another two-weeks on a small island. After rescue, they had been taken to a seaplane tender.

7 February Word was received that Hank Carby and his gunner were sent home. However, the Army transport plane crashed in the Russell Islands and they were again listed as MIA.

12 February Task Force 58.3, with VT-17, departed Kwajalein Atoll for Truk.

Truk (now Chuuk) is 800 miles north of Rabaul and 2200 miles from both Tokyo and Pearl Harbor, with the Gilbert Islands about 1300 miles to the east. The coral reef contains over a hundred volcanic islands, some over 1000-feet high. Three main anchorages were protected by two airfields with a third under construction, plus two seaplane bases.

16/17 February Six carriers, including *BUNKER HILL* with Air Group 17 launched strikes against **Truk**, Caroline Islands. Flight operations began with a pre-dawn fighter sweep, but VF-18 drew high cover and saw little action. Staggered strikes from the six ships were about an hour apart all day.

Later in the day, a large 500-foot merchantman of about 10,000 tons was spotted riding at anchor. As dive-bombers rolled in, a fan of Avengers were releasing their torpedoes. After the war, it was determined that this ship was the armed transport *Fajihama Maru* that had been damaged in the Marshalls and sent to Truk for repairs. She was sunk with a single torpedo.

On the fifth strike, late in the afternoon, VT-17 put torpedoes into two more cargo ships southeast of the Eten shore.

During the night, Japanese bombers come looking for the carriers. A bomb caused moderate damage to *INTREPID* and she was headed east for repairs on her own power.

The next morning was another pre-dawn fighter sweep. There were no enemy planes in the air, but lots of AAA.

After sunrise, bombers and torpedo planes circled the lagoon to size up the situation. Six Avengers attacked a 12,000-ton oiler without seeing any hits. VT-17's Paul Dixon and Darold Davis had better luck. Dixon's torpedo hit amidships, while Davis' plowed through exploding debris.

Avengers slipped two mechanical fish into cargo ships anchored west of Dublon. Further north, a Japanese destroyer was **entering** the lagoon and being strafed by Hellcats. VT-17's CO Grady Owen arrived with five Avengers that spread out leaving the destroyer no escape. Lt. Delmar A. Shatz's torpedo blew her completely in two. After the War, it was determined that this destroyer had rescued the crew of another ship sunk outside the lagoon.



Dublon Harbor, circa 17 February 1944

About noon, all aircraft were recalled. When the last aircraft recovered, *BUNKER HILL* headed east. That night, Tokyo Rose announced one attacking wave of Helldivers had been wiped out. In reality, the task force had sunk or damaged 40 Japanese ships. Of these, VB-17 and VT-17 were credited with 22, including a light cruiser and destroyer sunk, a light carrier probably sunk, another cruiser damaged, and eighteen merchant ships sunk or damaged. The cost was one Helldiver and one Avenger lost with seven airmen killed or missing.

VT-17 sank Japanese light cruiser *Naka* and a destroyer 35 miles west of Truk. This time, the squadron got 18 hits out of 37 torpedoes dropped. LTJG NEWT BIRKES and his two crewmen were shot down during a torpedo run. Radioman BILL GERRITY was also killed.

19 February Japanese night snoopers hovered about the task force. A couple snoopers were shot down, but it was nearly daylight before the ship secured from General Quarters. That evening at supper, the Air Officer, CDR Kit Carson, broke the news to the pilots – the Marinas Islands were next.

Only 1400 miles from Tokyo, very little was known about the northern islands, Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Japan seized these islands from Germany during WW-I. The United States had obtained Guam and the northern islands after the Spanish American War, but a boundary-fixing error left the northern islands up for grabs.

21 February A bogie was spotted a few miles from the task force, but lost in the clouds. Combat Air Patrols spent the rest of the day spotting, chasing, and shooting down bogies. That evening, Torpedo Defense was sounded at 2100, but secured a few minutes after the pilots and aircrew assembled in their Ready Rooms. Most went back to their rooms for some badly needed shut-eye. Fifteen minutes later Torpedo Defense sounded again. General Quarters sounded just after mid-night. The guns of the fleet brought down fourteen Japanese Bettys and gun crews were still at their stations at dawn.

22 February Another holiday and another strike for Air Group 17. This time the Air Group would hit Tinian Island. Before dawn, four F6F-3N night fighters were prepared to launch and sweep over Tinian. The launch was delayed by persistent bogies and the quartet arrived in broad daylight to be greeted by a “target rich” environment.

Meantime, VF-18 launched and flew northwest towards Tinian, but ran into heavy clouds. After climbing over the clouds, they couldn’t find Tinian and headed south. The bombers and torpedo planes ran into the same clouds, but managed to find the island.

The bombers attacked a cargo vessel three miles south of the harbor, accompanied by two escort ships. The cargo ship was burning before two Avengers dropped a couple of 500-lb bombs. The ship had started to turn over as they pulled away from their runs. A Helldiver put a bomb into the center of an escort while a TBF added a 500-lb bomb. The escort was observed to disintegrate, leaving only debris and a splotch of burning oil. An Avenger planted a bomb on the second escort, followed by four strafing Hellcats. There was an explosion and the third ship disappeared.

The fighters and torpedo planes then headed north, looking for an airfield under low clouds. Despite advance warning, Bettys, Zekes, Sallys, and Vals were lined up neatly wing-tip to wing-tip. Several were torched before it was time to head home.

The second launch found the airfield obscured by clouds, but Avengers and Hellcats teamed-up to torch a sugar factory near Tinian Town.

Shortly after noon, a flight of Hellcats appeared out of the southwest and entered the ship’s landing pattern. It was the missing fighters from the first launch. Instead of strafing Tinian,

they had popped out of the clouds near Guam. The old golf course on Orote Point was now a sizable airfield and there were nearly a dozen unflyable Japanese aircraft when the Hellcats finally headed back to the ship.

The third strike launched and found better visibility over Tinian. Planes were still packed on the field. The Helldivers went in strafing and dropping delayed-action bombs. Avengers followed dropping 100-lb bombs and incendiaries into the parked Bettys, followed by the fighters. When they left, sixty-five of the eighty or so aircraft were definitely destroyed.

The ship was headed east as the third strike recovered. The Next day, Captain Jeter announced their destinations – Majuro lagoon and then Pearl Harbor.

4 March After a short stay at the new fleet anchorage in Majuro, *BUNKER HILL* arrived in Pearl Harbor. Air Group 17 flew ashore and the ship moored at Ford Island later that day. Air Group 17 said their goodbyes and moved across the island to *ESSEX* which departed two days later for NAS Alameda.

Fleet carriers remained in the Pacific for the duration of the War, or until damaged or requiring a major refit. Minor repairs or modifications were accomplished at some forward bases (Repair Ships) or at Pearl Harbor. Air Groups, however, were rotated at regular intervals.

USS ESSEX had two flight deck catapults installed, along with other improvements during her 1944 refit.

10 March At Alameda, Air Group 17 received awards from Vice Admiral D. W. Bagley and then departed on 30-days leave – some to new duty stations. A few days later, *ESSEX* entered Hunter's Point shipyard for a refit.



VT-17 squadron patch, 1944 -1949

2 May **LCDR WILLIAM M. ROMBERGER** assumed command of VT-17 and began training operations at NAS Alameda. (See **PEOPLE and EVENTS – A TBM AIR CREWMAN** for another point-of-view of the air war in the Pacific.)

16 May VT-17 had 3 TBM-1 aircraft assigned.

25 May LT. David H. Robinson was killed from a training accident in San Francisco Bay

6 June VT-17 had 19 TBM-1 aircraft assigned and shifted training operations to NAAS Monterey.

15 June Marines stormed the beaches of Saipan and the island was secured on 9 July. This was followed by the invasion of Tinian, secured in just nine days, although one Japanese soldier held out until 1953.

18 July Hidaki Tojo was forced to resign as Japan's Prime Minister after the loss of Saipan.

21 July Troops went ashore on Guam and the island was secured on 10 August.

1 August VT-17 shifted training operations to NAF Vernalis (east of Modesto).

24 October During the battle of Leyte Gulf, *USS PRINCETON* (CVL 23), was hit by an enemy 500-lb bomb in the morning and was finally sunk by friendly torpedoes late in the afternoon. She served only 19-months, but her fighter squadron shot down 34 enemy aircraft on her last day.



B-29 landing at Saipan, circa 1944

- 14 November VT-17 departed Alameda aboard *USS HOLLANDIA* (CVE-97) bound for Pearl Harbor.
- 28 November VT-17 had 18 TBM-1C aircraft assigned and began training operations at Hilo, Hawaii.
- 16 December VT-17 boarded *USS NASSAU* (CVE-16) for Guam.

Seven more CVs were commissioned during 1944, of which three had already joined the Pacific fleet, for a total of 20 fast carriers. CONUS shipyards commissioned 33 more CVEs.

1945

Commander-in-Chief = Franklin Delano Roosevelt

- January CVG-17 was based at Guam for a brief period. There was a big change in the Air Group that included a reduction in the number of VT and VB aircraft and a major increase in the number of VF aircraft. Someone was taking the *kamikaze* threat very seriously. Large numbers of Helldivers were beached while their pilots joined fighter squadrons.

This second combat deployment of Air Group 17 was still lead by CDR Dale, with three squadrons plus a night fighter detachment operating F6F-5Ns. VT-17 was to receive fifteen new TBM-3 (1900 HP engines) to replace their TBM-1C Avengers (1700 HP engines). The reduced number of torpedo planes (from 18) made room for four additional fighters.

VB-17, commanded by LCDR R. M. Ware, had only fifteen SB2C-3 Helldivers (also with 1900 HP engines), but these were gradually replaced with newer SB2C-4/4E. The -4E had APS-4 radar – a major improvement. The reduced number of bombers (from 36) made room for 32 additional F6F-5 fighters, which also had bomb racks and rocket rails.

- 2 January VF-17 was back with Air Group Seventeen, but flying Hellcats. Commanded by LCDR Marshall Beebee, the squadron had all new pilots. The squadron was officially split to form bomber/fighter squadron, VBF-17, commanded by LCDR Hugh W. Nicholson. The two fighter squadrons shared a pool of over 60 Hellcats and flew the same missions.
- Late January VT-17 boarded *USS KASAAN BAY* (CVE-69) bound for the fleet anchorage at Ulithi, Caroline Islands, and then sortied to *USS HORNET* (CV-12), relieving VT-11. The TBM-3 began replacing TBF/TBM-1C aircraft at this time.

VT-11 later became VA-115 and is now VFA-115. This squadron was originally commissioned on 10 October 1942, but was shore-based before ordered to *Hornet* in mid-1944.

- 10 February Task Force 58 departed Ulithi lagoon with 16 fast carriers. *HORNET*, commanded by Captain A. K. Doyle, was assigned to TG-58.1, under Rear Admiral J. J. (Jocko) Clark, along with *WASP*, *BENNINGTON*, and *BELLAU WOOD*. Each Task Group was assigned targets in different sectors of Honshu Island.
- 16 February VT-17 attacked Hachijo Shima, 70 miles south of Yokosuka. Hamamatsu airfield, southeast of Nagoya, became the target for VT-17's Avengers later that day.
- 19 February Marines landed on Iwo Jima. Carrier aircraft continued to pound Honshu targets. VT-17 attacked Chichi Jima, 150 miles north of Iwo Jima.

Chichi Jima was a communication station and had a small harbor that supported Iwo Jima. During the previous summer, several flight crews from other squadrons were shot down near this island. Some of these POWs were killed and cannibalized by the Japanese Officers at this base. One Avenger, flown by George H. W. Bush, was damaged, but he ditched some distance away and was then rescued by a submarine.

Those Japanese officers were tried for war-crime and hanged 24 September 1947. Read *FLYBOYS* by James Bradley, author of *Flags of Our Fathers*.



Iwo Jima airfield on 26 May 1945, looking southwest towards Mt. Suribachi. The Army Air Force wanted Iwo Jima and the Marines paid the heavy price in blood.

- 23 February Task Force 58 headed back to Japan after supporting the Iwo Jima landings. Bad weather forced the air strikes to move south.
- 1 March Task Force 58 made a strike on Okinawa. VT-17 sank two Japanese merchant ships near Miyako Island, 160 miles southwest of Okinawa.
- 10 March CDR Roland H. "Brute" DALE was relieved as Commander Air Group Seventeen. LCDR Marshall BEEBEE (CO VF-17) and LCDR Robert Ware (CO VB-17) were acting CAGs until 13 May.

Marshall Beebee later served as CVG-5 aboard USS ESSEX during the Korean War and Commanding Officer USS BON HOMME RICHARD (1961).

Robert Ware later served as Commanding Officer USS SURIBACHI (1959/1960).

- 17 March VT-17 had 4 TBM-1C and 10 TBM-3 aircraft assigned.
- 18 March United States and British fleets arrived off Okinawa (Operation Iceberg) with 1,457 ships, and the 24 fast carriers began air assaults.
- 19 March Air Group 17 attacked the Japanese Navy Base at Kure, SE of Hiroshima on the Inland Sea. VT-17 scored 14 bomb hits on eight ships. Three aircraft were damaged. LTJG TALMADGE WESTMORELAND and his crew, AOM3 HAROLD W. WEST and radioman ROBERT H. WILLIAMS were listed as missing.
- For actions at Kure Bay, the Navy Cross was awarded to LCDR W. M. ROMBERGER, Lt. H. E. CLARK, Ltjg T. J. COGHLON, Ltjg H. W. FOOTE, Ltjg H. C. JOHNSON, Ltjg A. C. TRAXLER, and Ensign J. BAHL. Ltjg J. A. TEW was awarded the Silver Star for his part in this attack.
- 24 March VT-17 participated in a strike on eight enemy ships in the East China Sea. One aircraft was forced to ditch enroute and ENS WILLIAM E. HOOTEN's aircraft was shot down during the strike. His crewmen, Radioman RICHARD GERE and AMM3 ROBERT A WARREN were also lost.
- 26 March General Harry Schmidt USMC declared the Iwo Jima operation complete and turned the battered Island over to the Army, who would continue mopping-up. The airfield had already saved 65 B-29s from a watery-landing.



HORNET steaming near Okinawa, March 27, 1945

- 1 April Troops landed on Okinawa for a ground battle that finally ended after 82 days of hard fighting.
- 6 April Fighters shot down a kamikaze aircraft near *HORNET*. To everyone's surprise, a parachute blossomed from the burning aircraft. The pilot was picked-up wearing a silk scarf and floating in a bright red life-raft. Later, the Japanese POW boasted that 11 April would bring another big kamikaze attack. Torpedo and dive bombers were degassed and stowed in the hangar bays while the CAP was increased so even fewer of the 185 kamikaze got through to spread their misery.
- 7 April A total of 387 planes attacked a Japanese surface fleet headed for Okinawa, led by the battleship *YAMATO*. VT-17 was in the first wave and scored four torpedo hits on the battleship and sank a destroyer, with the loss of two aircraft. The battleship capsized and sank at 1417 (local time), 150 miles SW of Nagasaki. Four Japanese destroyers returned to Sasebo with only 280 *YAMATO* survivors.

ENSIGN LEE O'BRIEN's aircraft was shot down during a torpedo run on *YAMATO*. His crewmen, JACOB E. RICKERSON and JAMES L. OPEIM were also lost.

For their *YAMATO* actions, the Navy Cross was awarded to LT. T. C. DURKIN, LT. S. G. SULLIVAN, Ltjg J. F. MONAHAN, and Ensign W. F. Nickel. The silver star was awarded to Lt. H. E. CLARK, Ltjg T. J. COGLAN, and Ensign R. S. HANLAN.

In December 1956, Henry E. Clark became commanding officer of VA-155.

- 12 April President Roosevelt died of a cerebral hemorrhage at Warm Springs, Georgia.

In 1945, the 65-year old Roosevelt was suffering from a litany of medical problems, besides his paralysis. Some of these problems were from chain-smoking. Others were from stress, including high blood pressure.

Harry S Truman was sworn in as President.

Truman had served in the Missouri National Guard from 1905 to 1911. He rejoined in 1917, was commissioned and served in France as an Artillery Battery Commander (captain).

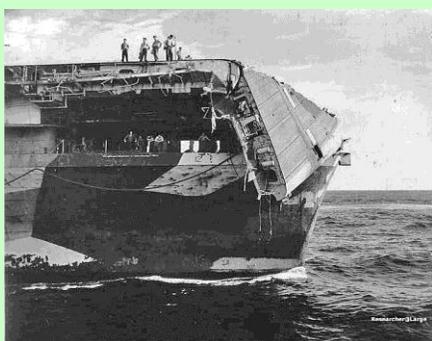
- 27 April The 62-year old Benito Mussolini and his mistress, Clara Petacci, were captured and executed by Italian partisans near the village of Giulino di Mezzegra as his entourage tried to escape into Switzerland. Two days later, the bodies were trucked south to Milan and later hung upside down from meat-hooks from the roof of an ESSO gas station.
- 30 April The 56-year old Adolf Hitler and his bride (Eva Braun) of two days committed suicide to avoid capture by Soviet Forces. Aides burned their bodies outside Hitler's bunker in Berlin.
- 8 May Victory in Europe (VE) Day. Some countries observe a different date depending on when the surrender documents were signed for each country.
- 13 May VT-17 planes flew into Kadena airfield on Okinawa, loaded badly needed troop supplies, and then para-dropped them to front-line units, by-passing the mud-clogged roads from the beaches.

During *USS Midway's* 1963 visit to Okinawa, some Air Wing Two officers, including a few VA-25 pilots, were thrown out of the USAF's Kadena O'Club for wearing short-sleeve whites, not considered a "Class A" uniform by the USAF. Military Police were called to restore order. How times change!

The squadron's Executive Officer, LCDR THOMAS C. DURKIN, in TBM-3 (BuNo 23542) was shot down during a strike. His crewmen ARM1 THOMAS J. TINDALL and AOM2 CECIL W. STEWART were also lost.

CDR Edmond G. KONRAD assumed command of Air Group Seventeen.

- 27 May Admiral Halsey relieved Admiral Spruance and Task Force 58 became Task Force 38.
- 1 June Fleet Weather Central at Guam reported a tropical storm forming north of the Palau Islands. Early on the 3rd, search planes reported the storm 360-miles east of Manila, moving north. This was the last report until the evening of the 4th, when the USS *ANCON* reported a radar position on the storm.
- 4 June At 0100, Admiral Halsey received the *ANCON* report. However, when plotted against the last Weather Central position, the storm's course and speed (026° at 26 knots) did not seem credible (but was). At this point, the force was steering 110°, which would have taken the force well out of danger. However, at 0130, Halsey ordered a course change to 300°, intending to pass ahead of the storm and into the 'safe' western semi-circle. Heavy seas forced subsequent course changes that took the ships near the eye of the storm.
- 5 June Thirty-six ships were damaged when a typhoon hit the Task Force off Okinawa. Two others were damaged by Kamikazes. At 0630, the cruiser *PITTSBURGH* lost 104-feet of her bow that floated away. Later that day, the tug *MUNSEE* sent the following message: "Have sighted the suburb of Pittsburgh and taking it in tow." The force lost 76 aircraft and 16 required major overhaul.



(Left) Flight deck damage suffered by *HORNET* after 5 June 1945 typhoon also weakened deck where men are standing. *BENNINGTON* had similar damage.
(Right) VT-17's Tare 129 (TBM-3) up close and too personal with Fox 50 (F6F-5).

HORNET had 25' of the flight deck carried away and another 25' damaged and too weak to support aircraft. The catapults were also inoperable. As the seas moderated after the typhoon, the ship began deck launching aircraft over the bow, but a *SHANGRI-LA* F4U crashed on takeoff. The cause was determined to be a large drop in wind velocity caused by the damaged bow sections. Later, *HORNET* launched flights over the stern while backing-down at 18 knots.

- 6 June VT-17 participated in SAR efforts the following day by launching over the stern. *HORNET* and *BENNINGTON*, both with damaged flight decks, then departed for the fleet anchorage at San Pedro Bay, P.I. *HORNET*, with Air Group 17, departed for CONUS on 19 June.
- 29 June CDR Edmond G Konrad was relieved as Commander Air Group Seventeen.
- 2 July The Okinawa campaign was declared over, but mopping up continued until the Japanese surrender in September, while small numbers conducted guerrilla warfare until 1947.
- 7 July *HORNET* arrived at Hunters Point shipyard. VT-17 was stationed at NAS Alameda and later at NAAS Fallon, Nevada.



NAAS Fallon, circa 1944

- 16 July The United States tested a nuclear device at Alamogordo, New Mexico.
- 26 July The cruiser USS INDIANAPOLIS delivered critical parts to Tinian for the first atomic bomb to be dropped on Japan.
- 30 July INDIANAPOLIS was sunk by a Japanese submarine in the Philippine Sea. About 900 survivors were cast adrift. Four days later, only 316 survivors were rescued.
- 6 August The B-29 Enola Gay loaded “Little Boy” and departed North Field at Tinian Island. At 0915, the bomb was released and burst over the Hiroshima parade ground where members of the Japanese Second Army was doing calisthenics. The plane returned to Tinian at 1458.



Hiroshima shortly after 6 August 1945

- 9 August Before sunrise, the Japanese government learned the Soviets had declared war on Japan.
- A second B-29 loaded “Fat Man” and dropped on the secondary target Nagasaki at 1101.

The atomic bomb code-named Little Boy was a gun-type weapon dropped on Hiroshima, yielding about 15-kilotons TNT equivalent. The atomic bomb code-named Fat Man was an implosion-type weapon dropped on Nagasaki, yielding about 21-kilotons TNT equivalent. Recent vintage nuclear weapons use this latter operating principle, along with a fusion process for much higher yields (500 KT to 9 MT).



Little Boy



Fat Man

- 10 August At 0700, the Japanese government sent a message to the Allied governments accepting the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, “. . . provided the prerogatives of the Emperor as a sovereign ruler were not prejudiced.” However, some Japanese military officers insisted on fighting on.
- 13/14 August On the night of the 13th, seven B-29s dropped 5-million leaflets over Tokyo containing the full text of the Japanese acceptance agreement and the United States’ reply. This was the first that Japanese civilians heard of the pending surrender. On the morning of the 14th, the Emperor discussed the surrender terms with his military government. That afternoon, Radio Tokyo flashed the Emperor’s decision to accept the surrender terms.
- A group of conspirators approached General Mori, head of the Imperial Guards Division, to demand he order his troops to disobey the surrender order. He refused and was assassinated. General Shin’ichi Tanaka heard of the plot and prudently took personal command of the Imperial Guards, and countermanded their forged orders to seal off the palace. There were several other assassination attempts, but the insurrection was defeated.
- 15 August The conspirators and several other senior officers committed Hara-kiri, including General Tanaka who had defeated their plans. At noon, Emperor Hirohito spoke to the Japanese people. He reviewed the course of the war and announced that he had accepted the Allies

terms, and ended with: "We charge you, Our loyal subjects, to carry out faithfully Our will." Few people realized how close the conspirators came to continuing the war.

Air strikes were suspended, but flights over Japan continued.

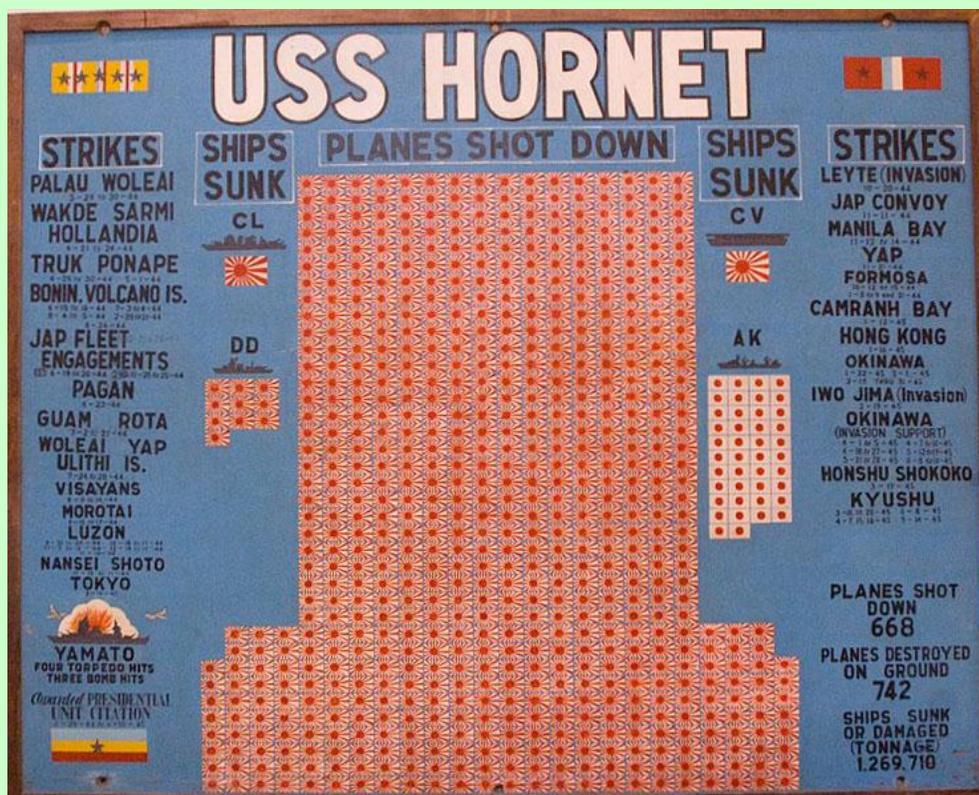
This was a different General Tanaka than the one who worked so hard to resupply Japanese troops on Guadalcanal during 1942.

- 18 August LCDR WILLIAM M. ROMBERGER was relieved as Commanding Officer. Lt. Arnold C. Traxler became acting CO for three days. LCDR William N. Janes became acting commanding officer on 21 August. The squadron reformed while at NAS Alameda. The squadron moved to NAAS Fallon during September.
- 2 September Japanese surrender ceremonies are held aboard USS *MISSOURI* (BB-63) in Tokyo Bay. Formations of 450 aircraft roar over Tokyo Bay.



Americans celebrated VJ-day like it was the happiest day of their lives. However, we must never forget that 3,325,370 men and women served in the Navy during that War. A total of 65,173 Navy, USMC, and USCG personnel never came home and another 80,259 came home wounded.

- 8 September Hidaki Tojo, Japan's Prime Minister for most of the war, attempted suicide in his home as American MPs arrived to arrest him for war crimes. He survived and was later convicted of war crimes and hanged 12 November 1948.
 - October Operation Magic Carpet brought troops back home from overseas. Eight ESSEX-Class aircraft carriers, including *BUNKER HILL* and *HORNET*, were modified with troop bunks on the hanger deck. These ships shuttled across the Pacific Ocean sans aircraft.
- CDR William F. BRINGLE assumed command of Air Group Seventeen. CDR Bringle was previously the CO of VFO-1



The WW-II score from efforts of CVG-2, CVG-11, and CVG-17

- 11 October LCDR Rubin H. Konig (NA 1938) assumed command of VT-17 and LCDR Janes became Executive Officer. LCDR Konig had flown with VT-3 embarked in *ENTERPRISE* during the latter half of 1942.

5 November The new Skipper was promoted to Commander (O-5).

31 December Had the war continued past 1945, the Pacific fleet would have entered the New Year with seven more CVs and two CVBs for a total of 27 fast carriers (CVB, CV, and CVL). These numbers do not include *FRANKLIN* and *BUNKER HILL*, which were badly damaged off Okinawa. These two ships were repaired, but their bent and twisted hulls never returned from mothballs. Besides the four CVs lost in 1942, we also lost one CVL and six CVEs to enemy action during the war. The Japanese lost 24 carriers of all sizes.

Epilog: For those who lived through WW-II, everything in their lives was referenced to the **WAR**. The War took us out of the Great Depression and put us on the road toward prosperity. The GI Bill changed the United States in ways that are impossible to tabulate. Unfortunately, the peace didn't last and tiny drops of oil still bubble up in Pearl Harbor as if trying to forcefully remind younger generations of what happened that terrible day in 1941.



2004 aerial view of Pearl Harbor with a steak of oil from the *USS ARIZONA* Memorial.
USS MISSOURI (museum) is moored southwest of *ARIZONA*.
USS STENNIS and *USS TARAWA* are moored near bottom of photo.

AIR GROUP 17 WORLD WAR II AWARDS

Air Group 17 received its first Presidential Unit citation while aboard *BUNKER HILL* for actions between 11 November 1943 and 23 February 1944 at Rabaul, Nauru, Kavieng, Marshalls, Truk, and Marianas.

Air Group 17 received a second Presidential Unit citation while aboard *HORNET* for actions between 16 February 1945 and 10 July 1945 against the main islands of Japan, Bonins, and Ryukyus.

VT-17 received the Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Service Medal for:

- Rabaul strike, 11 November 1943.
- Gilbert Islands Operation, 19 November to 8 December 1943.
- Bismark-Archipelago Operation, Kavieng strikes, 25 December 1943, 1 January 1944, and 4 January 1944.
- Assault and Occupation of Iwo Jima from 15 February to 4 March 1945.
- Fifth Fleet raids against Honshu and Nansei Shoto on 15-16 February, 25 February, and on 1 March 1945.
- Fifth and Third Fleet raids in Support of Okinawa Gunto Operation 17 March –11 June 1945.

TORPEDO-17 PERSONNEL

***BUNKER HILL* Deployment (partial list of officers)**

LCDR Frank M. Whitaker (Killed)

LT. Gordon N. Owens, X.O.

Ens. Robert H. Higley (MIA)

Lt. Paul F. Dickson

Lt. James C. Wilson

Ens. William E. Ditch

Ens Darold W. Davis

Lt. John A. Martin

Ltjg B. F. Berry

Ltjg Guy M. Brown

Lt. Richard Paland

Lt. William F. Krantz

Lt. John C. Jenkins

Ltjg Raymond M. Roland

LT. E. H. Lieder

Ltjg Steven G. Sullivan

Ltjg Delmar A. Schatz

Ltjg Newton Birkes (MIA)

Ltjg Edward Stack (Killed)

Ltjg Henry C. Carby (MIA)

Ltjg Arthur (Abe) P. O'Sullivan

Ltjg John K. Pearson (KIA)

Ltjg David H. Robertson

Ens. Edward A. Newell

Ltjg James A. Kridel
Ltjg Ernest Weber
Ltjg Lindsey Morgan

Ens. Elmore K. Hood (KIT)
Ltjg G. A. (Bull) Turnbull
Replacement pilots not listed

HORNET Deployment (complete list of officers)

LCDR William M. Romberger CO	Ltjg Walter D. Nieslen
Lt. Thomas C. Durkin (MIA)	Ltjg Kenneth B. C. McCubbins
Lt. Charles D. Livengood	Ltjg Hugh C. Johnson
Lt. James A. Tew	Ltjg Ralph V. Johnson
Lt. Henry E. Clark	Ltjg Jules J. Bundgus
*Lt. John A. Martin	Ltjg James F. Monaghan
*Lt. Raymond M. Roland, Jr.	Ltjg John E. Strickland
*Lt. Steven G. Sullivan	Ltjg T. Westmooreland (MIA)
*Lt. David H. Robertson (KIT)	Ens. Joseph Behl
Lt. Richard C. Reed	Ens. Harry D. Jones
Lt. John E. Murphy	Ens. Walter F. Nickel
Ltjg Arnold C. Traxler	Ens. Harold J. Rogers
Ltjg Harlan W. Foote	Ens. Robert S. Hanlon
Ltjg Francis M. Smith	Ens. Frederick B. Tschudin
Ltjg Thomas J. Coghlan	Ens. William A. Hooton (MIA)
Ltjg Ivan R. Beisel	Ens. Leo O'Brien (MIA)
Ltjg John S. Cooke	* Turn-around Officers

HORNET Deployment (complete list of enlisted)

ARM2c(T) Raymond N. Akers	AOM1c(T) Norman C. Jensen
AOM2c(T) Budd N. Barklay	S1c Robert J. Jones
ACMM(AA)(T) Vern K. Bell	AOM3c Frank W. Keener
ARM1c(T) James H. Berryhill	AOM1c(T) Theodore (n) Keffer
AMM1c Paul M. Bobbitt	ACEM(AA)(T) Walter B. Kellette
AOM1c Paul (n) Brauch	ARM1c(T) Robert "E." Klunder
AMM1c Philip S. Brezovsky	AMM2c(T) Victor (n) Manning
ARM3c Herman R. Canada	ACMM(T) Walter (n) Mazur
AMM2c(T) LeRoy C. Chase	AMM2c Carl W. McFarland
ARM3c(Y) Frank (n) Ciminski	AOM2c(T) Jack T. Meyer
S1c William (n) Colombini	S1c William B. Mullis
ARM3c William E. Colp	ARM3c Glenn L. Nelson
ARM3c Pete (n) Constantine	ARM1c(T) James N. Nicholson
ARM2c(T) Fred R. Croop	AOM1c(T) Ted J. Niedzwick
AOM1c(T) Donald R. Feurt	ARM1c(Y) Frank G. Parker
Y1c(T) James J. Field	ARM2c(T) Paul G. Podolak
AMM1c(T) Fred J. Fitzgerald	ARM1c(T) Joseph H. Redmon
AOM1c Ray D. Forbes	ARM Robert E. Reiger
ARM2c(T) Robert A. Frieze	ARM3c Donald W. Robson
AOM1c Ernest P. Fuchs	ARM2c Roy O. Roelfson
AOM1c(T) Philip W. George	ACEM(PA) Randall C. Roush
AOM1c(T) Jack L. Geyer	AM1c Joseph G. Sartory
ART1c George C. Hand	AMM2c(T) Fredrick P. Schnell
ARM3c Helge KL. Helgeson	AOM2c(T) Walter m. Sennett
ACOM(AA)(T) Ivan J. Herzing	ARM3c Frank (n) Shuttleworth
AMM3c Bruce M. Hilbert	ARM2c(T) Paul E. Simons

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