

CONFIDENTIAL

Subject: BATTLE OF MIDWAY, MAG-22

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power house at about 0640, cutting off all lights and silencing the Group radio. Auxiliary power was soon turned on at the radio station and the C.P.

Bombing ceased at about 0604 but several Zero Fighters stayed over the field strafing occasionally, and raising "Ferry Hell" in general. During this period two of our fighters attempted to land. One landed without suffering further damage, the other attempted to get on a Zero Fighter, also circling the field, and was shot down by a Second Zero Fighter. Observers were amazed at the acceleration of this Zero Fighter. The F2A was apparently using full throttle but the Zero closed the range like the F2A was standing still. All enemy aircraft departed EASTERN ISLAND about 0715 and a message was broadcast "Fighters land, refuel by division, 5th division first." No answer was received although the message was broadcast repeatedly, so a message "All fighters land and reservice" was broadcast several times. A pitifully few fighters returned in answer to this message, and it was strongly suspected that there were no more to land.

Immediate assessment of damages showed that several enlisted VF and VS had been killed by bombs. Four VME-221 ordnance men working in a VF rearming pit were killed when a 500# bomb hit the exact center of the pit, exploding, and also exploding 8-100# bombs in the ready locker. One additional VF enlisted was killed during the bombing of the power-house. VMSB lost one man when a bomb struck near the VMSB engineering tent.

First reports showed casualties to aviators and gunners as listed in the attached squadron lists, plus Captain Blain and Corporal McFeely for VMSB-241 and Captain Merrill for VME-221. These people were rescued later in the battle. Merrill, within a few minutes of his parachute landing in the lagoon, and Blain and McFeely at about 1000 June 8th.

VME-221 reported 1 F2A and 1 F4F in combat condition, and one more flyable but wheels would not retract. VMSB-241 reported 3 SB2U's and 8 SB2U's in commission.

Damage To The Enemy

By VME-221: Surviving pilots claimed from one to two airplanes each, mostly dive bombers or level bombers, with a small proportion, 3 or 4, Zero Fighters. The grand total was approximately 20 enemy airplanes. What losses the missing ones inflicted is not known, yet surviving pilots cannot reconcile the small number of bombs dropped with the number of enemy bombers in sight when the initial contact was made. These pilots state that there must have been at least three 27 plane formations in sight at one time at the scene of conflict. These were exclusive of the swarms of Zero Fighters which must have been operating between 20,000 and 30,000 feet. It is a growing opinion that the Japs lost 40 to 50 aircraft by VME-221 action alone.

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