



## MONDAY—SOMEWHERE IN PACIFIC

0500—Division took off for dawn patrol. Landed 0700. No contact.

0745—Major P's division took off to act as bait on fighter sweep.

0755—Lt. S. and 4 divisions took off on sweep.

### STATEMENT BY MAJOR P.

WE WENT IN OVER target at 18,000 feet, circled once and a half before the *Zeros* started taking off. Planes were parked on both sides of the runway, *Zeros* on one side, while the planes on other side were much larger—took them to be bombers and would estimate about ten.

When the *Zeros* took off, they flew straight out over the water and formed up—climbing. At this point, we jumped 'em and made a pass down through them. I got one from overhead going straight down. As I pulled up, I saw I had one on my tail. Somebody—I don't know who it was—shot him off.

I then checked my guns and found

### MARINE CORPS REPORT

that none were working. Charged them a couple of times and got four working. I then went back into the fight and got another *Zero*, firing directly from behind him. He went down in flames.

After this, I had only one gun working, and two *Zeros* on my tail. They chased me all the way to X, and then left me.

### STATEMENT BY LT. S.

We circled target and spotted *Zeros* taking off. I counted eight. We then dove from 20,000 feet to approximately 7,000—but did not spot the *Zeros* as they had made a sharp left turn after taking off, and had gone down along the coast to rendezvous and gain altitude.

We then climbed back up to about

18,000 feet and continued circling target, calling on the radio for the Japs to come on up 'n' fight. After making about one turn of the field and being between X and Y, we spotted from 30 to 40 *Zeros* flying in no set formation, coming up from the south at our altitude. A climbing duel ensued—both flights jockeying and circling to get above and behind the other. The *Zeros* were climbing a little faster, so Major B. turned into the middle of them. We followed shortly behind him.

As we came in, three *Zeros* turned toward us. The first one that got in front of me rolled on his back, and pulled through while still out of range. The second made a determined head-on run, rolling as he came in and pulled down through in front of us. I gave him a long burst and could see my tracers going into him. He trailed smoke, but I didn't see him go in.

I then nosed over violently and pulled out of the flight and circled to gain altitude. As we reached the altitude of the fight, we (my wingman and I) spotted three *Zeros* on a parallel course. They seemed reluctant to attack. We turned into them and, rather than turn head-on-two, started a right-hand spiral down. Number three climbed above and, as I started my run on number two, I could see three roll over. I pressed home the attack on two and figured that number three couldn't get to me before my attack. At 30 degrees deflection from the rear, I opened up on him from about 200 yards, holding fire until very close. I knew I was hitting him. I then nosed over violently to get away from number three. My wingman, who was slightly behind and who had pulled up, saw number two belch smoke, go into a steep spiral dive, and finally hit the water.

I made a violent right-hand turn in the dive, leveled off, held level flight for a short time, and then started climbing. When I had climbed about 1,000 feet and still had a lot of speed, I spotted a *Zero* to my left, with his belly to me (probably number three, who turned back when he could not follow me in the extreme speed of the dive). I had 50" and 2700 rpm and had been going straight down.

I pulled up and took a long burst at his belly at 60 degrees deflection. I could see large pieces flying from his plane. He seemed to float aimlessly for a short period, smoking badly, then went into a spiral dive. I then looked around for friendly planes to form up on. As I circled, I kept glancing down at him, and finally saw him hit the water. No parachute was seen. I saw no other planes after that, so I put my nose down and then headed for home.