

STAND BY for TORPEDO!

By Cecil Brown

CBS CORRESPONDENT

The dramatic story of the aerial torpedoing of the Repulse and the Prince of Wales by one who was there. Mr. Brown's story is something more. It proves again that one Billy Mitchell was right when he insisted the airplane would change the character of naval warfare

WE WERE looking for trouble and we were ready for it. "Looking for trouble," was the way Admiral Phillips put it when we sailed out of Singapore on that unforgettable Monday, December 8th, at dusk, for a sweep northward to intercept the convoys reinforcing the Japanese bridgeheads on the north coast of Malaya. We were looking for trouble. We found it.

It's Wednesday now, and my watch says it's 11 A. M. The Repulse and the Prince of Wales are still hunting, but they're also being hunted. Yesterday, at 5:20 P. M., during a one-hour break in the gray, rain-filled clouds, the Jap Nakajima Naka 93 spotted us. The Nakajima Naka 93 is a twin-float reconnaissance plane. The plane shadowed us constantly and we expected an attack all last night, convinced it would come, inevitably, at any moment.

I wasn't worried, particularly, for the very good reason that under me there were 32,000 tons of armor-clad ship—H.M.S. Repulse. And around me were 1,260 stanch sailormen. Half a mile ahead H.M.S. Prince of Wales steamed at 26 knots through the South China Sea, 55 miles from the Malay Coast, 150 miles north of Singapore. The beautiful ship moved with what seemed a prideful invulnerability and accentuated our sense of security.

The clouds have gone now, and the sky is a robin's-egg blue and the sun is bright yellow. Our ships move through pea-green water, white where the hulls cleave it. Ahead, the Wales' fifteen-inch guns jut from port and starboard from turrets that bulge like muscles. They seem to quiver, eagerly. A few destroyers flank us. They are pygmy ships and seem ridiculous and impertinent in such powerful company.

The crews, their battle bowlers on, are sitting beside their guns, waiting for attack alarm. Standing on the flag deck, I look down over the decks of the Repulse. The pom-poms, multiple high-altitude ack-acks, are pointed skyward. The guns seem no less eager for combat than the crews themselves.

The flag deck is a good spot from which to watch most phases of any action. Of course it has its disadvantages too. Yesterday one of the deck officers said to me, quietly, "You know, old boy, in every action there are

usually casualties on the flag deck." I said, "Thanks."

I wear a white antirash hood, something like the snow helmets the boys wear skiing. It covers the head over an ordinary steel helmet and comes down over the shoulders. It's to protect against burns from exploding shells or bombs. Jumpers cover my shorts and bush jacket. I've got a camera hanging around my neck. Wonder if I'll get a chance to use it?

At 11 A. M., to the second, the ship's communications system bellows: "Enemy aircraft approaching—Action Stations!" I see them coming, 10,000 feet high, like a lengthened star-sapphire necklace, grayish against the blue sky.

Flame tongues flash from the guns of the Wales up ahead and just as the blasts reach us the guns of the Repulse let go. I've never been so close to so many big guns before. The roar is deafening. The flash of flame from their barrel mouths is blinding.

I'm standing on the flag deck, in the lee of a funnel, eight feet from a battery of pom-poms. I'm getting my tonsils sunburned by gaping openmouthed at the planes overhead, at the bombs coming down, materializing suddenly out of nothingness and streaming toward us like ever-enlarging teardrops. There's a magnetic, hypnotic, limb-freezing fascination in that sight.

Nine Jap planes are now directly overhead. Their formation is undis-

turbed. The sky is filled with black puffs and they seem a discordant profanation of that beautiful sky. Suddenly, fifteen feet off the side of the ship, directly opposite where I'm standing, a geyser of water rises and drenches us and simultaneously we feel the crash of a bomb on the catapult deck.

All around us the water rises in white pyramids. I hear the cry, "Fire in marines' mess and hangar!" I run back to see the damage but the bomb penetrated and exploded, and only smoke is coming up. Our aircraft is knocked off its track and a red-bearded New Zealand fleet air-arm pilot is atop the crane attempting to lift the plane to drop it overside, since its gasoline constitutes a menace. As I pass the gun crews they seem extraordinarily calm, replenishing ammunition, laughing. "Let's get them all next time." I hear somebody say, "Bloody good bombing for those blokes." When I return to the flag deck I note a three-inch hole in the funnel from a bomb-splinter eighteen inches above the spot where I'd been standing.

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There's another crash to starboard. The Repulse is listing. Captain Tennant's cool voice is piped over the communications system: "All hands on deck. Abandon ship. God be with you!"

DRAWING BY HARDIE GRAMATKY



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My Life is a Dull Thing

By Donald Hough

ILLUSTRATED BY VERNON GRANT



The most remarkable tale of woe in the annals of the gasoline age. Moral: When you lead with your heart, prepare for disaster

AT SEVENTEEN, with eighteen just around the corner, my life so far has been lived under handicaps not shared by the average man.

I have discussed this with Dad. He thinks I am right. He says it is probably because I am different from all other people on the face of the earth.

The worth-while things that happen to other people do not happen to me. What happens to me is always the worst thing possible under the circumstances. I don't know whether it is because I am different, or my environment, or just accident.

When I bought my car, I thought it would be the beginning of a new era in my existence. I was disappointed. It did a lot to lighten my main burden, monotony and disgust with life, while it lasted, but it did not last. My car, I mean. My car is now in the ocean.

Another thing, I am engaged to marry

Geraldine Lott. Yet I do not really love Geraldine, and, in fact, the mention of love leaves me with a tender memory which I will explain later.

The night after I got my new car I took Geraldine out for a ride, to try it out. I stopped in at the filling station where Red Bastion works—he was on night shift—and purchased a gallon of gas and a pint of oil and had Red put some air into my left front tire, which was leaking. Red said the air would not last long. He was right. The tire was flat again by the time I got Geraldine home. I was not engaged to Geraldine at the time. That came later. I had known Geraldine for a great many years, and although she could not be called a No. 1 summer date, with all the people coming down to the beach from Los Angeles, movie stars and all, she was all right to try out the car and the tires.

Geraldine and I finished high school last spring, and I got her graduated practically by main strength. She was uncertain about what was going on, when it came to studies, since she was not suited to the academic life, being too lightheaded and a little too plump, and preferring to sit on the beach and listen to the phonograph. Her nature is inactive.

The next morning I went down to the

filling station for another gallon of gasoline and some more air. Red admired my car. I paid sixty-four dollars for it and Red said it was a bargain. He did not hold out much hope for the tire.

"That Geraldine, she's a mighty pretty girl," Red said. Red is new in our town.

"She's all right," I said, "but not exactly a summer date. I'm waiting for Lorraine to come down from Hollywood. Wait till you see Lorraine. I had Lorraine in mind when I bought the car. It's really for her. She's an actress."

"HOW old is she?" Red said.

I said, "Nineteen. She's not acting in many pictures yet. Last summer she stayed with her aunt and uncle at Abalone Bay. The big white house on the point. The Thomases."

"Did you have a date with her last summer?" Red asked me.

"Not quite," I said. "I talked to her a while. At the Junior Club dance."

"I'll bet she's pretty," Red said.

"Beautiful," I said. "Geraldine is nothing, when you see Lorraine. It's serious with me. Maybe with her, too."

"I see," Red said. Then he said, "Larry, there's no use trying to keep that tire full of air. The way it is, I got a car with wheels the same size as yours. A convertible job. I'm having trouble with

"Hello, Larry," she said. She looked at my car. "How do you like her?" I asked. "You mean this is your car?" she said. "This—wreck?"

my right front tire. What we might do, we might make a deal, so on date nights we would be sure of having four good tires. We could switch the wheels around so you could have four good tires on some nights, and I could have four good tires on the other nights. Nothing to worry about."

It certainly was a deal. We arranged I would have the wheels on Mondays and Wednesdays, and Red on Tuesdays and Thursdays, as a steady proposition. Then we would have alternate Fridays, and a special deal where if one of us would have a successful Friday date calling for a Saturday follow-up commitment, he would have the wheels for Saturday. But it had to be the same girl. For Sundays we would always toss up, no matter what.

The day we made the deal was Monday, my night, and I had the wheels and drove around for a while thinking I might run into Lorraine, but I could not find her. The next night Red drove over

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