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BATTLE OF THE BISMARCK SEA.

The greatest victory in the history of air-sea warfare focused the world's attention on the Bismarck Sea. Word was flashed that a Japanese armada was heading towards New Guinea. Warning had been coming in of huge enemy ship concentrations at Rabaul. Up to sixty ships had been observed there and bombed by Allied airmen. The convoy began moving in on Lae and Salamaua during a tropical storm. It lifted and the invasion fleet was spotted. The allied air command snapped into action.

In Operations Room, well-laid plans for a co-ordinated attack were brought into play. The first moves (in what was to prove the biggest aerial show in the Pacific) were chalked up. The word "scramble" sent Australian and American crews racing to their planes. More than 130 aircraft taking part in a wholesale massacre of a Jap convoy. Kittyhawks, Cobras, Lightnings, Bostons, Beauforts, Petrels, Liberators, Beaufighters. Every available plane is sent up. Not a single enemy transport or warship survived the great allied onslaught.

Beaufighters. It is from one of these that the cameraman takes his vivid pictures.

A Lockheed Lightning. Over the coastline and up into the blue where the U.S.A.F. and R.A.A.F. is massing for battle.

The Bismarck Sea stretches below. The first wave of bombers is already catching the enemy fire. Successive formations are sent in at a low level and the harvest is in full swing.

Columns of smoke sprout up, as one after the other the Jap vessels are written off. Cannon fire sprays every deck and superstructure with devastating effect.

Already more than half of the invasion fleet is accounted for. Although it's a two day job to sink the lot, the shark infested sea is already filling with burning hulks, bodies and floating wreckage. 22 enemy ships, their crews and 15,000 Jap soldiers perish in this holocaust from the air.

"We have achieved a victory of such completeness as to assume the proportions of a major disaster to the enemy". General MacArthur was able to pen these words when his jubilant American and Australian fliers did that to Admiral Tojo and flew back to complete their reports.

Fighter pilots also had a day out. They had shot the Zeros out of the sky. They came back with victory rolls for breakfast. It's been a great day for the Yanks and Aussies. 55 Jap planes destroyed, as many more heavily damaged and the whole convoy of 22 ships annihilated. Chalk that up.

There's another thing that mustn't be overlooked. Comradeship between the Aussies and the Americans which is best described by themselves.

"It was a cracker show from beginning to end. When it comes to a scrap we Aussies don't want any better coppers than you Yanks. We're tickled to death to know that you are right behind us.

Oh! Yeah! Blackjack. With you boy, not behind.

Well all kidding aside. The results obtained cannot be attributed to any one individual, or group of individuals. It was more like the smooth play on a football field. Every man knew his job and every man did his part. The co-ordination between the R.A.A.F. and the American Air Forces was really perfect".

The co-operative spirit. The battle of the Bismarck Sea has its counterpart in North Africa. Great Air Forces fighting side by side in a blood brotherhood that nothing in the future can ever dissolve.