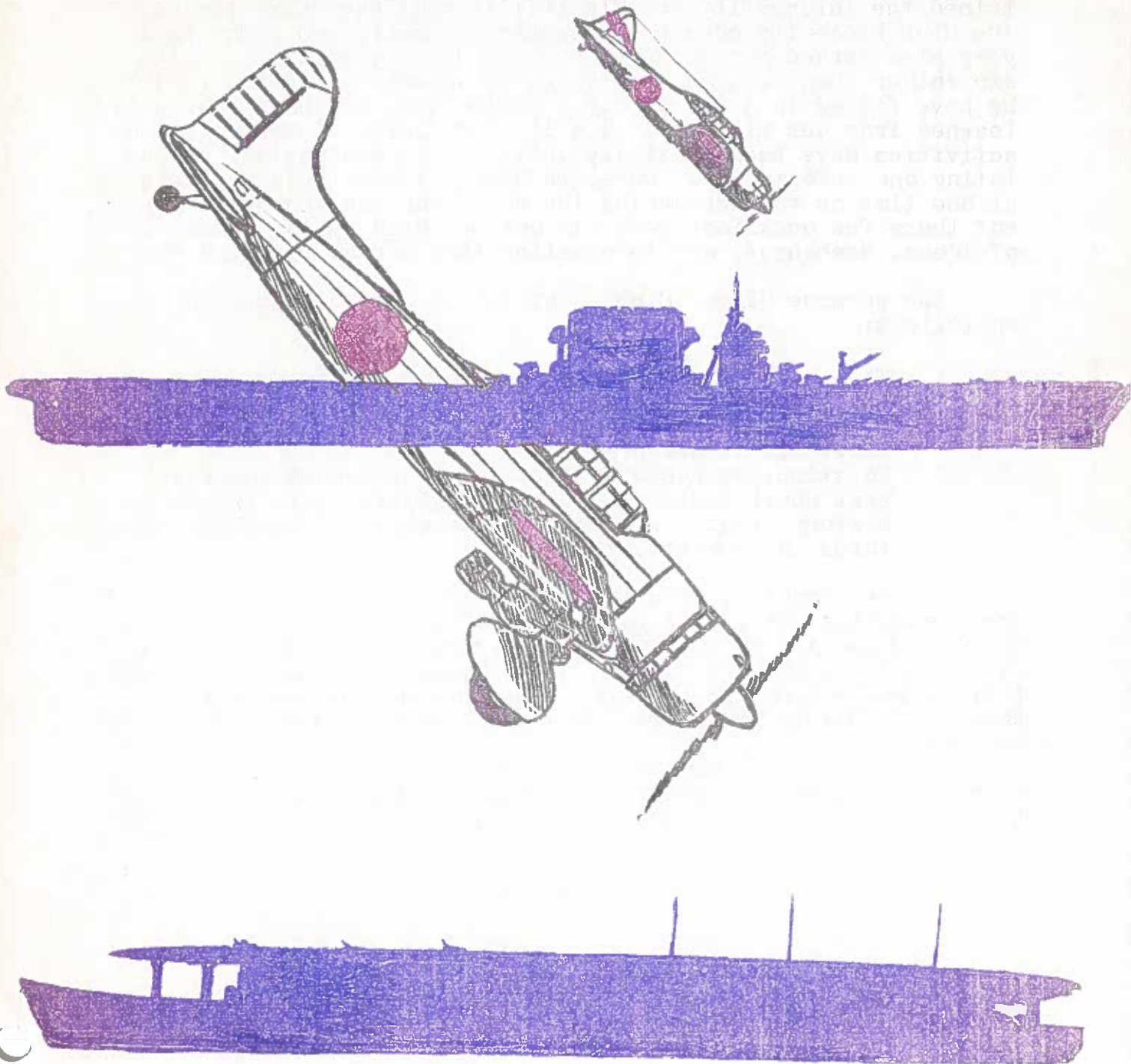


CMH Newsletter

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE COLORADO MILITARY HISTORIANS
VOL. 1, NUMBER 8

MAY 1967



DKJ.

A PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

THE PAST YEAR HAS BEEN VERY PRODUCTIVE AND ENCOURAGING IN the growth and effectiveness of our Club. New members have come forth that have made significant contributions and who have broadened the base of our collective interests considerably. We have maintained the informality and flexibility that has characterized the Club since its conception nearly two years ago. The past year also marked our group as new having a personality of its own rather than just an assemblage of separate, diverse individuals. We have failed in a few of our undertakings, but have hopefully learned from our mistakes. The limited number of meetings and activities have been amazingly interesting, productive, stimulating and informative. Sure, we have all sat through something at one time or another during the past year that has been boring, but these few occasions were far out-weighted by the abundance of ideas, exchanges, and information that normally filled the air.

The purpose of our Club as stated in our Constitution is as follows:

1. To exhibit and promote, both individually and as a club an interest in the history of warfare.
2. To provide a forum to exchange ideas, experience, and knowledge of warfare.
3. To stimulate research into areas of common interest that shall include (but not be limited to): formal history, dress, weaponry, personalities, military miniatures, and wargaming.

In the planning, preparation, and execution of club activities for the coming year, your recently-elected officers will endeavor to keep these principles uppermost in mind. Do not forget, however, that the Club is YOU!!! Our program and activities should reflect your desires and ideas. The Club must be responsive to this or we can no longer justify our existence. Let your desires be known.

Also, let's not forget that this is strictly for enjoyment. As soon as it stops being fun, it will be time to step back and take a long, hard look and to do something about it immediately.

Respectfully yours,



Austin E. Moore
President

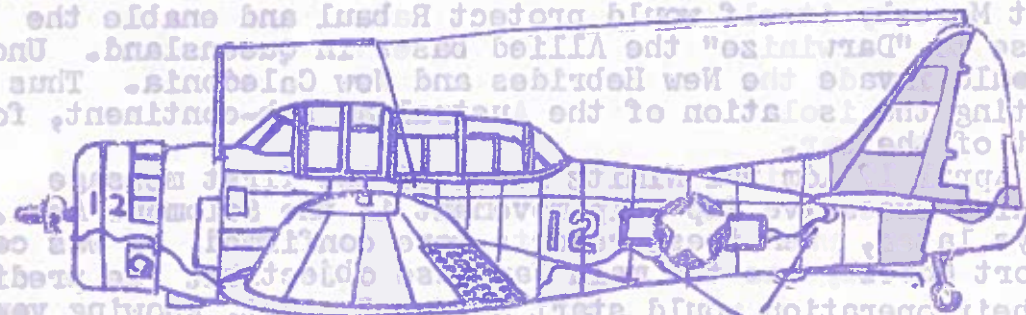
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"BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA, MAY 1-8"

by Michael P. Kuhls & Thomas E. Herman

Pearl Harbor, Singapore, Ceylon and many others were added to the ever-growing list of Japanese successes. Flushed with victory, the Japanese War Lords willingly forgot that the Allies' weakness was only momentary and that Japanese supremacy just temporary.

With their initial goals attained, three new successes were anticipated: (1) Westward against India; (2) Southward against Australia; or (3) Eastward against Hawaii. Lacking the Army's troops for one and two, a modified plan to isolate Australia was drawn up, India was placed lower on the priority list, and Yamamoto began to prepare for Midway.

To isolate Australia required the establishment of a seaplane base at Tulagi. This would act both as a flank guard for the capture of Port Moresby in New Guinea and as a forward base for supporting the future advance of the south. Next the accession of Port Moresby itself would protect Rabaul and enable the Japanese to "Darwinize" the Allied bases in Queensland. Unopposed, they would invade the New Hebrides and New Caledonia. Thus completing the isolation of the Australian sub-continent, forcing her out of the war.

On April 17 Admiral Nimitz received the first message concerning excessive Jap ship movement in the Solomons Area. Two days later, when these reports were confirmed, he was convinced that Port Moresby was the main Japanese objective. He predicted that their operation would start on May 3. Yet, knowing your enemy's intentions doesn't insure victory. Only Fletcher's Yorktown and Fitch's Lexington were available; Admiral Grace would bring a cruiser force from Australia. But the total force would only be two heavy carriers, seven heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and thirteen destroyers. Unknown to Nimitz, this was far more than the Japanese expected.

The Japanese commander, Admiral Inouye, split his ships into five groups. The main strength was in Admiral Takagi's Carrier Task Force. It consisted of Admiral Hara's veteran carriers Shokaku and Zuikaku, two heavy cruisers and six destroyers. The only other strength was in Admiral Goto's Covering Force. It had four heavy cruisers, one light carrier-Shoho, and one destroyer. Two of the other groups were mainly transports and the fifth was centered about a seaplane tender.

Fitch's Lexington force joined the Yorktown force and came under Fletcher's tactical command at 0615, May 1, 250 miles West by South of Espiritu Santo. The two forces commenced refueling from the oilers Neosho and Typecanoe, with Fletcher's force leisurely fueling first. At 1300 May 2, Fletcher headed west with the Yorktown leaving Fitch orders to rejoin him at daylight on May 4.

At 0800 May 3, Admiral Shima's Tulagi Invasion Group made an unopposed landing on the beaches. The Light carrier, Shoho, in Admiral Goto's Covering Group, provided air cover for the landing. Coming from Truk, Admiral Takagi's big carriers were well north of Bougainville, in order to evade Australian-based search planes.

1900 May 3, Mac Arthur's headquarters sent a message to Fletcher reporting the invasion of Tulagi. Admiral Fletcher immediately changed his plans. The oiler Neosho and destroyer Russel were sent to rendezvous with Fitch. Fletcher was determined to strike the invasion force with the planes available from the carrier Yorktown. The poor Japanese assumed Tulagi would not be molested, so Goto's Covering Group had departed to join the Port Moresby invasion force.

0630 May 4, Yorktown commenced launching 12 TBD (Devastators) torpedo planes and 28 SBD (Dauntless) dive bombers under cover of overcast skies and rainsqualls. Fighters weren't sent with the attacking force, for the 18 fighters operational were needed to fly combat air patrol over the carrier (6 planes at a time).

The Japanese were taken completely by surprise. The dive bombers attacking first damaged a destroyer and sank two small minesweepers. The torpedo plane attack sank a minesweeper. All the planes returned safely and rearmed for a second attack.

The second strike began an hour later. The 27 SBDs damaged a patrol craft and destroyed two seaplanes. The 11 torpedo planes scored nothing and they lost one plane doing it. Four fighters were sent out to attack three other seaplanes anchored at Tulagi. Two of the Wildcats were shot down. Yorktown recovered her planes and sailed south to meet Lexington.

On the 4th the invasion and covering forces had started for Port Moresby from Rabaul and the Shortland Islands.

On May 5, Admiral Fletcher received word that the enemy was rushing preparations to drive onto Port Moresby via the Louisiade Archipelago off the eastern end of New Guinea. Having spent most of the 5th refueling, the AMERICANS changed course at 1930 to a northwest course assuming the Japanese invasion force was coming from Rabaul.

At 1900 on the same day Takagi's Carrier Support Group entered the Coral Sea. Both Forces searched in vain for each other.

The 6th of May was to be another day of hide and seek without combat. With a good idea of what the Japanese were up to, Fletcher combined the Crace group, Fitch Group and his own into one task force under his command. Fletcher set a course that would allow them to attack the Port Moresby Invasion Group by daylight of May 7. But Allied Intelligence only had fragmentary knowledge of Takagi's big carrier movement; owing to inadequate land-based air search, Fletcher didn't have any knowledge of them.

Goto's Covering Group had completed refueling from oiler Iro by 0830 May 6. At 1030 B-17s attacked, dropping twelve bombs at Shoho. However the bombs fell wide and the carrier launched Zekes which drove off the B-17s. The convoy made a quick change of course.



A search plane from Rabaul sighted Fletcher's Task Force and correctly reported his position. Yet, Takagi didn't receive the message until the next day. Takagi knew nothing of what was going on, but Inouye in Rabaul knew the Port Moresby Invasion Group and Goto's Covering Group had been sighted. Inouye gave orders to continue as planned because he reasoned that the American carriers were 500 miles from the Louisiades, where the Invasion Force was beginning to enter. Actually the Americans were 310 miles from these islands.

That same evening Hara almost succeeded in surprising Fletcher's carriers at their most vulnerable moment, when they were refueling. He was within seventy miles of the American carriers and rapidly overhauling them when he suddenly changed course.

Lacking knowledge about the position of the Allied naval force Admiral Takagi decided to take Admiral Hara's advice and search southward to make sure carriers weren't south of him. At 0600 May 7, the search went out.

Forty-five minutes later Admiral Fletcher, whose force was 115 miles south of the Louisiade Archipelago, ordered Admiral Grace's Support Group to push ahead and attack the Port Moresby Invasion Group. Reconnaissance planes had reported this force heading for Jomard Pass in the center of the Louisiades.

Between 0730 and 0830 search planes from both sides found their opponents. At 0736 a Japanese search plane reported the oiler Neosho and destroyer Sims as a carrier and cruiser. At 0810 a land-based plane found Grace's three cruisers and three destroyers and reported them as a carrier group. And at 0815 planes from Yorktown sighted small Jap Group of one CVL, 2 CL, and 4 gunboats, reporting the force as having two carriers.

Admiral Hara accepted the evaluation completely; promptly ordered an all out attack, and closed distance. At 0810 Lieutenant Commander Kakuichi Takahashi left the carrier with an attack group of 18 Zero fighters, 36 Val dive-bombers, and 24 Kate torpedo bombers. Thirty minutes later Hara received word

of a second American carrier 280 miles NE of his position. This time it was Fletcher. Unfortunately no attack could be launched for only a minimum protective force remained aboard. At 0935

Takahashi reached the enemy's reported position. He searched long and hard but found only the Neosho and Sims. They attacked the two ships for the lack of others. The Sims went down with most of her crew. Neosho took seven hits but remained afloat. Her survivors were rescued four days later.

Inouye sent his land-based bombers to attack Grace's force. The first wave of twelve Nell bombers carried torpedoes. Five were shot down inflicting no damage. Then nineteen more Nells attacked from high level with the same effect. No sooner had the second attack ceased when the Farragut came under attack again. This time by B-26s from Australia. The Farragut was not hit.

While all this was going on, Admiral Goto's Covering Group continued on a WSW course, launching planes periodically to cover the Port Moresby Invasion Group.

After receiving his search report, Fletcher naturally believed that force to be the big carriers. At 0926 planes began taking off. By 1030, 93 planes were aloft with 47 remaining as reserve. Just then the scout planes returned, discovering that their report of two cruisers and two destroyers had been decoded incorrectly. Fletcher's massive attack had been ordered to the position of the feeble, seaplane group. Unluckily for Admiral Goto, he was much too close to that position.

Shortly after 1100, the Americans sighted the Covering Group and raced to the attack. It was staggered but effective: 3 SEDs at 1108, 10 SBDs at 1110, and finally 25 SBDs and 10 TEDs at 1125. All these planes aimed at the light carrier Shoho. No ship could survive such a concentration of air power. The Shoho was hit by eleven 1,000 lb. bombs and seven torpedoes. Abandon ship was ordered at 1131 and the carrier sank five minutes later. All but three American planes were recovered by 1338.

When Takahashi landed from his wasted mission, orders were given to rearm with bombs and torpedoes for another attack. It was late afternoon and getting dark. Tadagi was about to make a very daring decision. He was going to send his planes to attack the American carriers, knowing that the pilots would have to land at night. Only his best pilots were sent, because the situation was desperate.

At 1630 Lieutenant Commander Takahashi led twelve dive bombers and fifteen torpedo bombers to attack the enemy ships. The planes ran into heavy intermittent rain squalls and as they fought their way through them, the sun slipped below the horizon. Thick blanketing clouds made it impossible to find the American vessels, so Takahashi gave the order to jettison bombs and torpedoes to lighten their load and make their return flight less hazardous.

Carrier Lexington picked up bogies on the radar screen only a short time later. Up went the Wildcats to challenge the twenty-seven blips reported by the radarman. Having been in the air on two missions since early morning, Takahashi's planes didn't do so well in the ensuing dogfight. The Vals turned sharply to meet the attackers, giving the Wildcats a fight for their money. But the lumbering Kates were meat on the table even without their torpedoes. Eight Kates and one Val fell like flies.

An hour later the surviving Japanese flyers made an even more fantastic error. One exhausted pilot made out an aircraft carrier below him in the swirling dark mist. Thinking it was a friendly carrier, he dropped slowly towards her and the remaining eighteen switched on their signal and blinker lights and followed him into land. Not a single gun fired, and it looked like a perfect landing. Then the Jap pilot frantically opened his throttle and at full speed swung away from the vessel, followed by his astonished squadron. The surprised gun crews on the Yorktown opened fire but hit nothing before the planes disappeared into the darkness. Only six of the planes landed safely on their carrier, the others plunged into the sea trying to land.

The Lexington tracked the escaping Japanese planes until they began circling, as if to land, only thirty miles away. The idea of a night surface attack flashed into Fitch's mind. This bold move was vetoed by Fletcher for various reasons: the Yorktown's RADAR FAILED TO PICK-UP THE PLANES, THE THIRY MILES WAS ONLY AN ESTIMATE, AND THE DESTROYERS WERE NEEDED FOR ANTI-SUBMARINE PROTECTION AT NIGHT AND FOR ANTI-AIRCRAFT AT DAYBREAK.

Takagi's returning pilots reported the American carriers to be between forty and sixty miles away. He too contemplated a night engagement but rejected the idea for similar reasons.

Even timid Admiral Inoye ordered Goto's cruisers and Kajioka's destroyer screen to leave the transports; head towards the Louisades and make a night attack on the American force. Which one he didn't specify. By midnight he reconsidered and ordered two cruisers to Takagi's group and the remaining force to escort the now retiring transports.

The situation was critical for both sides. Both feared two big carriers. Both feared an early morning attack. Survival depended on finding the enemy first.

(to be continued nex issue)

WESTLAND HONORARY SOCIETY
Colo. Military Historians 2 May 1967 minutes

1. Minutes of the April meeting approved
2. Treasurer's report; Balance \$74.55, Receipts \$25.00, Expenses \$6.78, News Letter balance \$5.90
3. Mr. Charles Cohn approved for membership
4. Old business:
 - 4-7-67/24 Additional Secretary expenses \$6.78
 - 4-7-67/25 Constitutional Amendments - Passed
 - Art.6-Elections
 - Art.5-Quorum
 - Art.11-Budget & Amendment
5. Elections of new officers
 - President- Austin F. Moore
 - Vice President- James C. MacLachlan
 - Secretary- Thomas A. Richards
 - Treasurer- Raymond Freelove
 - Historian- Michale P. Kuhls
6. General's Corner (cowpens)
 - Bob Jones- "Military Drawings and Paintings of the Royal Collections" revued as excellent, rather reviewed.
 - Jim MacLachlan- "Culloden" great book plus Flint Musket, great shooting for all members.
 - Chuck Cohn- new kits arrived- Heller and Frog.
 - Austin Moore- Congradulations and thanks to past Officers
 - Bill Greer- Club Emblem Castings, read letter from Guidon, Boycotte Reproductions of miniatures, suggested auction.
 - Ed Meyers- New rules for 30mm war game.
 - Tom Herman- Plea for articles for newsletter.
 - Dan Jones- R. K. "Kidd" Hoper; air ace, German miniature catalog
7. Meeting Adjourned.

Executive council meeting May 8 1967 minutes

1. Called to order by President
2. Summary of past year by president
3. Review of officers duties
4. Outline of coming activities- programs, hobby shoes, etc.
5. Discussion of officers duties
6. Discussions of officers duties
7. Discussions of budget
8. Discussions of meetings
9. Next meeting schuled May 31st
10. Adjourned

Members Present; A. Moore, J. MacLachlan, T. Richards, R. Freelove
M. Kuhls, R. Moore, D. Jones.

"WESTLAND HOBBY SHOW"

The Westland Shopping Center on West Colfax Avenue is sponsoring a Hobby Show in June and our Club has accepted an invitation to participate.

The Show is scheduled for June 15th and 16th, Thursday and Friday, from 12 noon to 9 P.M., and on Saturday, June 17th from 10 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.

We must man the booth on a continuous basis for these three days. The booth is 10 feet wide and is furnished with a 8 ft. by 2½ ft. table. Hobbists from all fields and the entire Denver area are expected to participate.

The booth may be used as a hobby workshop as well as for the display of finished crafts. Even though the show is not designed for the sale of finished products, there is no restriction, through private conversations, to arrange for the sale of items on display at the close of the Show.

Details of our booth are still being worked out. If you want to participate in this event, contact Austin Moore, 794-6096 or Dan Jones 429-7942.

This looks like a real opportunity to gain some free publicity and exposure to potential new members.

MEMBER PROFILE

Jim C. MacLachlan

One of the most interesting and well-versed members of our Club is Jim MacLachlan. This gentleman is a Detroiter by birth and a Scotsman by heritage and choice. He possesses a PhD degree in Geology, specializing in mineralogy and petrology, having attended universities at Wayne State in Indiana and Princeton in New Jersey.

Now 44 years old, Jim's education was interrupted by a four-year tour in the Army during World War II. Jim saw service in England, France and Germany. He was assigned duties with the Air Corps and Military Government detachments.

Jim came to Colorado in 1952. After working for the Government and Phillips Petroleum for 10 years, he started his own consulting service. Recently, he has also been teaching classes at Metro State College and expects to expand his teaching activities this fall when he accepts the position of Assistant Professor of Geology at Metro State.

His prime interests lie in two fields. He is a gun collector and concentrates on firearms and artillery from their beginnings through the periods of American Civil War. An authority of some note, he has been consulted on the preparation of several

articles and publications pertaining to these subjects. Jim's handiwork is also in evidence to anyone who has seen some of the models he has prepared. His collection includes a one-quarter scale Napoleon cannon built from the ground up and complete in every detail that really works!!!

Jim's interest in American History primarily revolves around the War of 1812, and more specifically the Naval considerations of this conflict.

He feels that the Club has varied his interests considerably and broadened his knowledge of his specialities. Jim is our new Vice-President and is looking forward to the coming year of Club activities.

BOOK REPORTS

KASSERINE by Martin Blumenson
written by MICHAEL P. KUHL

In the autumn of 1942, the Allies invaded French North Africa with the intention of securing the French possessions and trapping the Axis forces in Libya. Morocco and Algeria fell according to schedule but the Germans had reacted too fast and Tunisia remained Axis.

When the Allies finally decided to capture Tunisia, they stumbled in with absolutely no command structure and even less to command. The French had a corps of two WWI divisions; the British had a corps-sized army; and the Americans had only the reinforced 1st Armoured Division which they called the II U.S. Corps. No one was really in command and each commander went his merry way, giving only limited support to his neighbor. This force faced the equivalent of three German infantry divisions, a few Italian divisions and the 10th Panzer Div. The 15th, 21st, and 90th divisions of the Afrika Korps were close at hand.

These blunders gave the Axis leaders a chance to regain the initiative in the entire theater. A lightning-like thrust might send the allies scurrying back to Casablanca. Not even Rommel could reach a decision. The Germans won tactical victory after tactical victory but their strategic direction was muddled. At last when the chance arose to knock the Allies out in one stroke the Germans found that Monty had finally arrived and was knocking at the back door.

For the Allies the blame rests mainly on General Anderson, Ferdendall, commander of the II U.S. Corps, and General Anderson, commander of the 1st British Army. Their inept orders cost the U.S. many fine troops, who had done quite well considering that it was their first battle. Never again would the Allied command be so pitiful.

On the German side General Arnim and Kesselring deserve much of the credit for the loss but the final blame must rest on Rommel. He might have saved the entire situation with a single bold decision. Perhaps he had not fully recovered from the stomach disorder which had sent him home only weeks before. Perhaps he was becoming disillusioned.

This book is a masterful treatment of the Tunisia Campaign. Martin Blumenson is a very noted author and has added another good book to his many others.

During the last month contact has been made with another historical club-The Civil War Round Table. No official contact has been made at this time. Anyone interested contact the secretary, Tom Richards.

Information has been received concerning the Custer re-enactment. It is held every year on the 23, 24, and 25 of June. The "battle" is held three times daily. Admission is adults \$2.00 and children \$1.00. Get your reservations now, hundreds were turned away last year. Interested tourists contact the historian, Michael Kuhls.

Donations to the club library this month:

Tin Cans by Theodore Roscoe (paper, 435 pgs.)

Pig Boats by Theodore Roscoe (paper, 445 pgs.)

Formally in the possession of member Thomas Herman

A Short History of the American Revolution

by John Hyde Preston (paper, 490 pgs.)

Decisive Battles of the Civil War by Lt. Col. Joseph B. Mitchell (paper, 209 pgs.)

Formally in the possession of Treasurer Ray Freelove.

Thirty Seconds over Tokyo by Capt. Ted W. Lawson (hard, 213 pgs.)

The Fighting American by F. vanWyck Mason (hard, 747 pgs.)

The Cruel Sea by Nicholas Monsarrat (hard, 509 pgs., novel)

Formally in the possession of Historian Michael Kuhls.

"... Greek fire, a hellish discovery credited to Callinicus of Heliopolis in A.D. 668. A highly inflammable mixture, probably of sulphur, naphtha, and nitre. Greek fire was almost impossible to extinguish, and so successful when first used against the Saracens in A.D. 673, that the Greeks contrived to keep it a secret weapon for several centuries. And Greek fire burned underwater." *

* MOST DANGEROUS SEA by Arnold S. Lott U. S. Naval Institute, Annapolis, Maryland. #959. Menasha, Wis. page 4.

CMH NEWSLETTER

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Art Work: Dan Jones.

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BONNIE BRAE

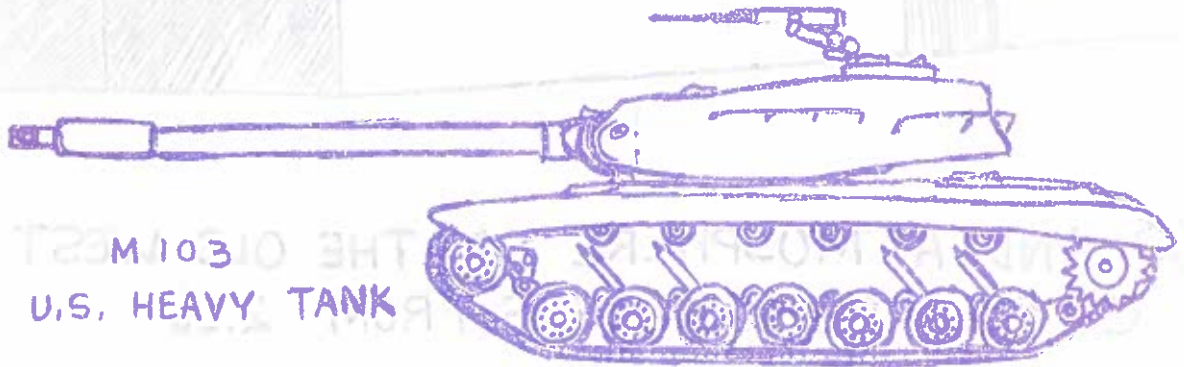
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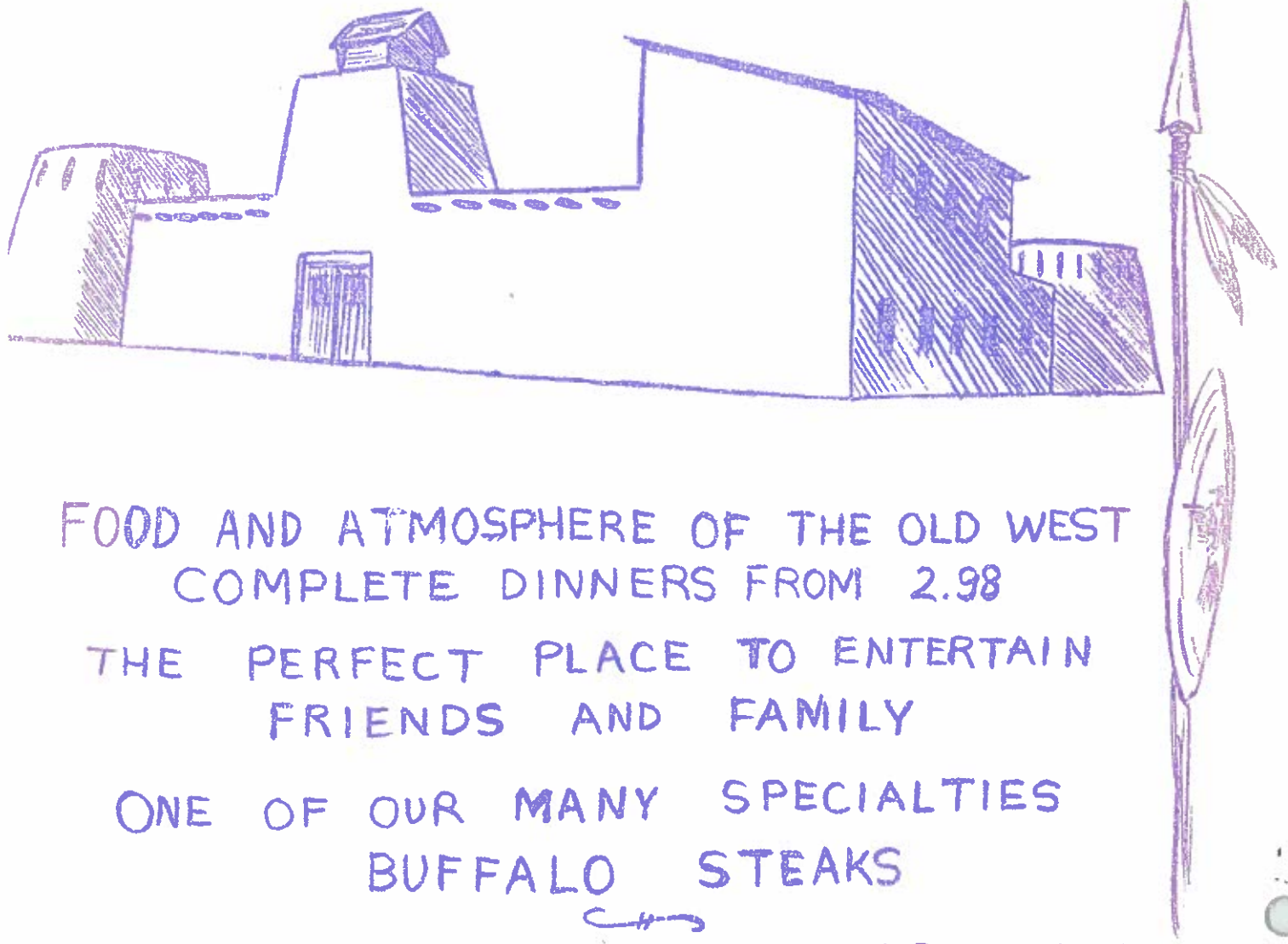


1967

NEWSLETTER

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MEETINGS ... FIRST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH ... 6:30 PM.