



TORPEDO 8 - The Story Of Swede Larsen's Bomber Squadron [Illustrated Edition]

Ira Wolfert

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The epic story of the death and rebirth of the famous Torpedo Squadron 8, destroyed at the Battle of Midway and rose again to become a crack outfit under the leadership of “Swede” Larsen.

“THE JAPS WIPED OUT THE UNITED STATES NAVY Torpedo Squadron 8 in a few minutes at the Battle of Midway. The minutes were hot and rough. The squadron was like a raw egg thrown into an electric fan, and only three men came out of the action alive. One of these is no longer fit for combat duty. His nerves are gone. They became unstrung in those few minutes, and in the ten months since then he has not been able to get them working again normally, although he has been out on the line trying his best, refusing painfully to give up.

So, when Torpedo 8 was wiped out on Thursday morning, June 4, 1942, in about the time it takes to stamp out a pile of ants, it looked to those of us on the outside as if torpedo bombing were about to become a lost art.

But the Navy did not agree. Nor did Torpedo 8 agree. The Navy seemed to know without asking that Torpedo 8 would not feel this way, for, without being asked, Torpedo 8 was thrown directly from Midway into the Battle for the Solomons — a series of engagements into which the Japs put about five times the naval strength they used at Midway, and much more naval strength than they used against the Malay Peninsula and Java.

Torpedo 8 went into the battle with two veterans of Midway, plus remnants of the old squadron who had not got into the action there, and plus ‘replacements,’ as they are called. They did not, as the Japs do, blame their dead for having died. They wanted revenge for them. Up to Midway, the slogan of the squadron had been ‘Attack.’ On June 12, eight days after the holocaust at Midway, the squadron commander in an official squadron memorandum changed the slogan to: ‘Attack— and Vengeance!’”-Introduction.

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