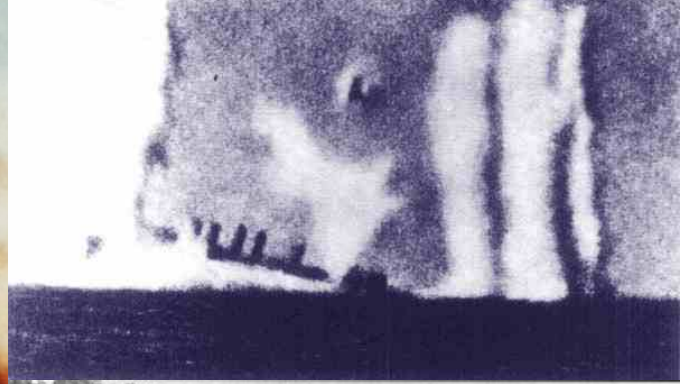
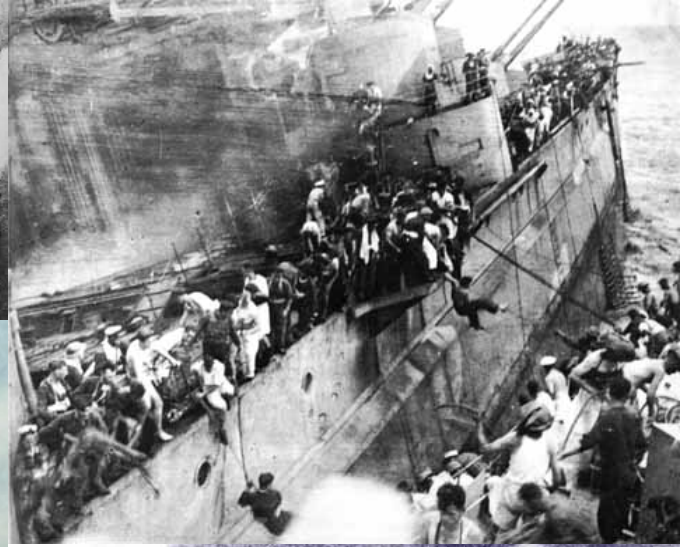
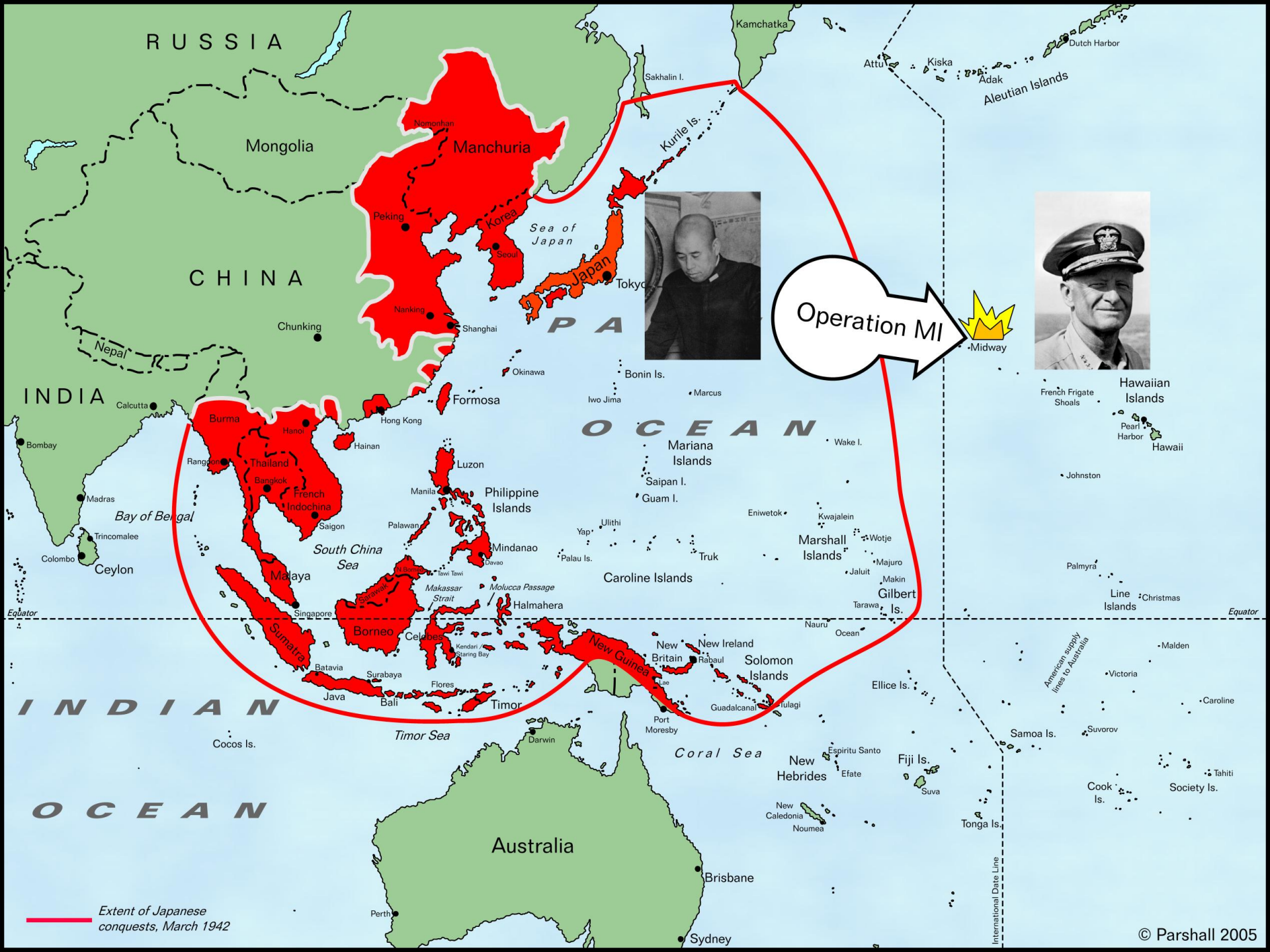


The Battle of Midway: A New Look at a Classic Battle

Jon Parshall
Historicon 2006



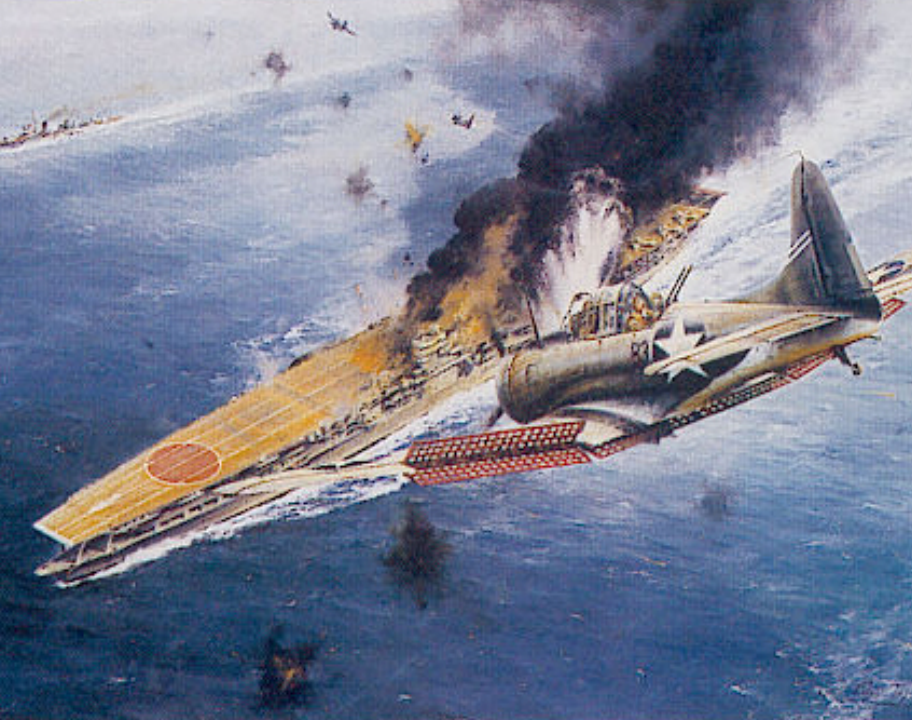


Historical Importance of Midway

- ❑ Most important battle in the Pacific War in terms of short and long-term effects
- ❑ Permanently wrecked IJN's elite carrier force
- ❑ Restored parity of forces in Pacific
- ❑ Allowed U.S. to undertake offensive actions—Guadalcanal, Solomons

Historical Mythos

- ❑ All great battles create their own mythos
- ❑ Important events create the filter through which we interpret the event as whole
- ❑ Revisions not to be undertaken lightly



The 1020 Dive-bomber Attack

- ❑ Reversed the apparent outcome of the battle in a sudden, unexpected way
- ❑ Provides perhaps the most vivid mental image of the entire battle
- ❑ Endlessly reinforced over the past 60 years
- ❑ Unfortunately, it's a false image in some respects

Understanding Deck Operations

- ❑ **Before angled flight decks, you did one thing at a time:**
 - Spotting
 - Launching
 - Recovery
- ❑ **Recovery, in particular, shuts down the flight deck completely**

The Japanese Reserve Strike Force

- “The flight deck, which moments before had been filled with a deafening din, was now silent. There were no planes, no drone of engines... But the stillness was again broken by the raucous loudspeaker as it blared out the order, ‘Prepare second attack wave!’ ...

It was 0500 when the crimson sun rose over the horizon. The flight deck was again filled with planes ready to attack in the event an enemy task force appeared.”

—Mitsuo Fuchida

Arming / Rearming

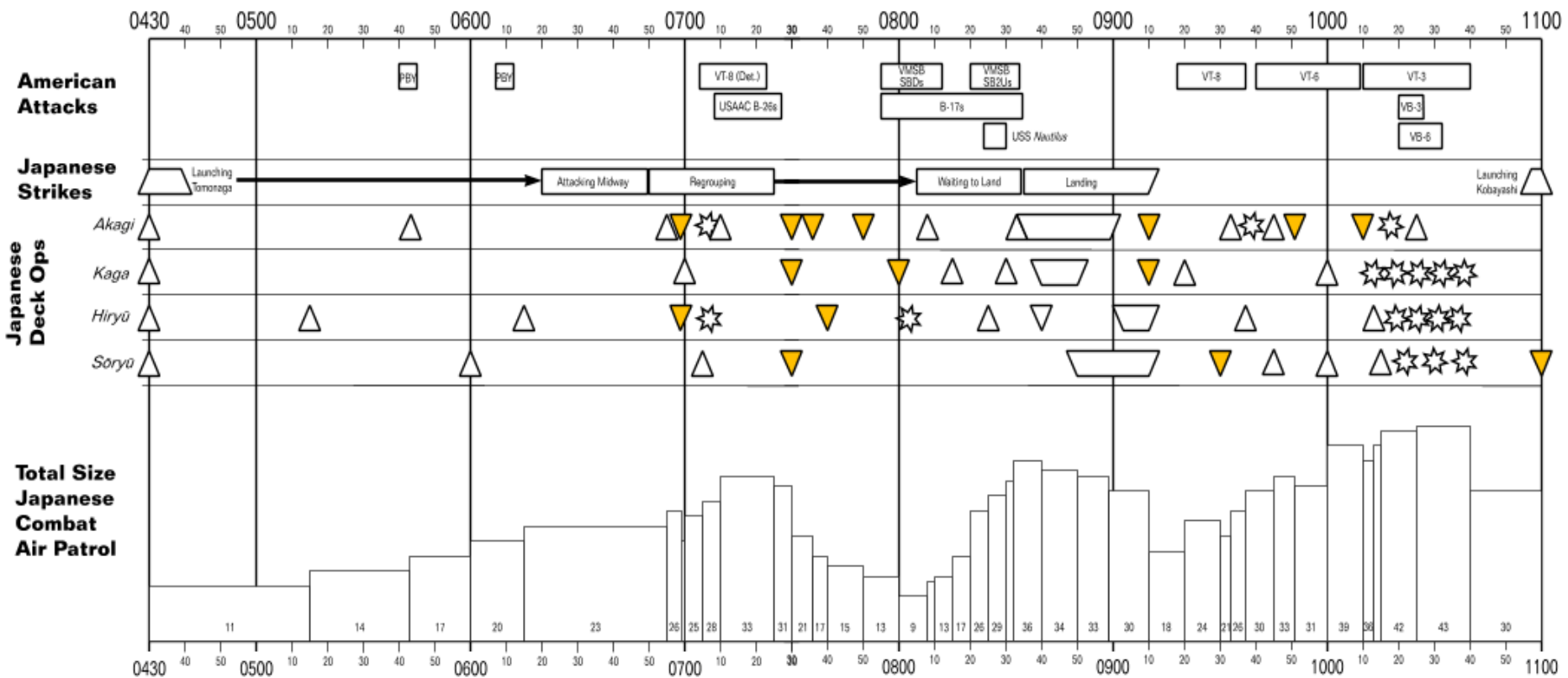
- 0715: “Consequently, at 0715... he ordered the planes of the second wave, which had been armed for an attack on enemy ships, to prepare instead for another strike on Midway. This mean that the torpedo-laden level bombers on *Akagi* and *Kaga* had to be de-armed and reloaded with bombs. The ones already on the flight deck were taken down to the hangar one after another, and the re-arming began.”

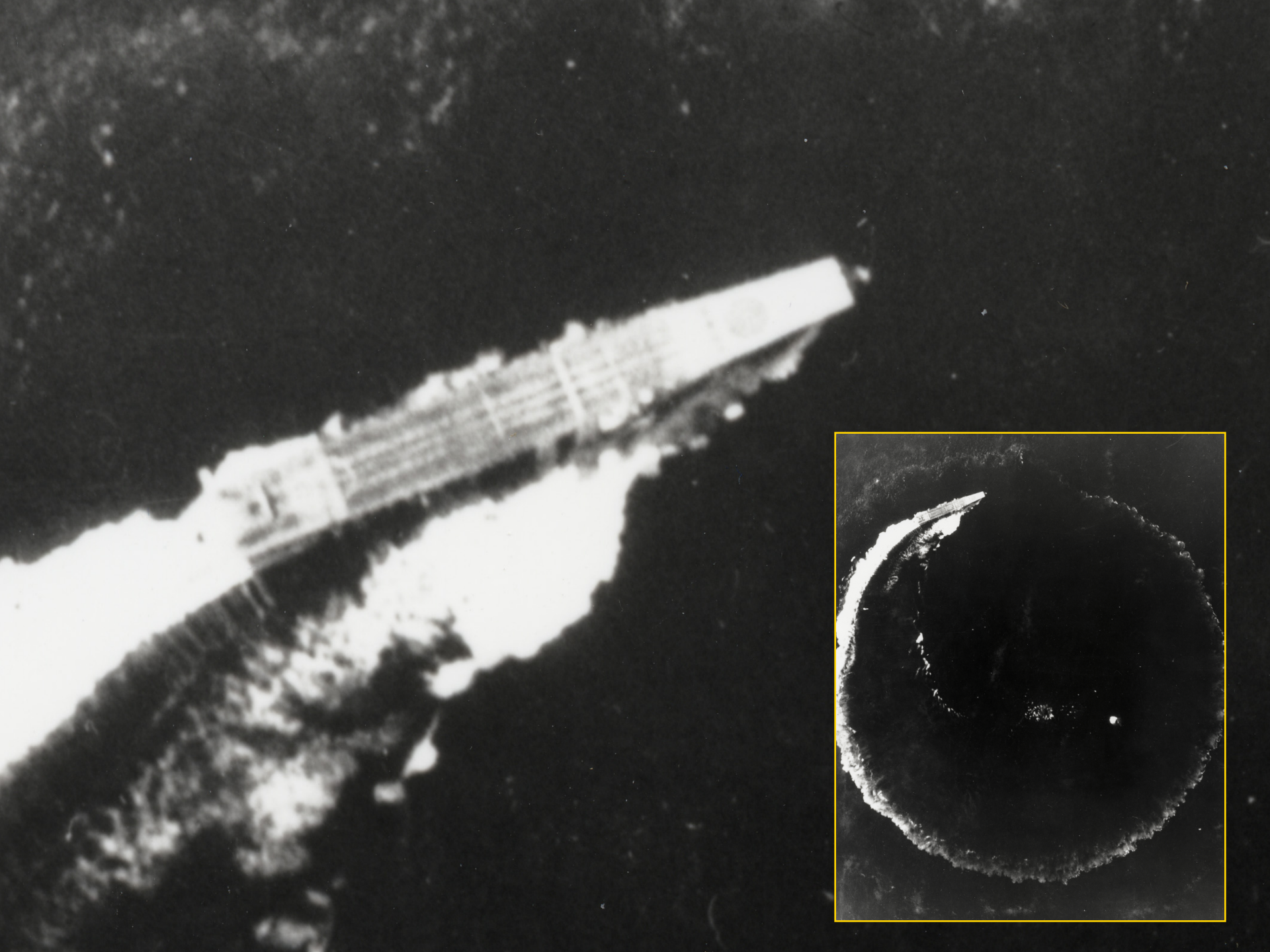
—Mitsuo Fuchida

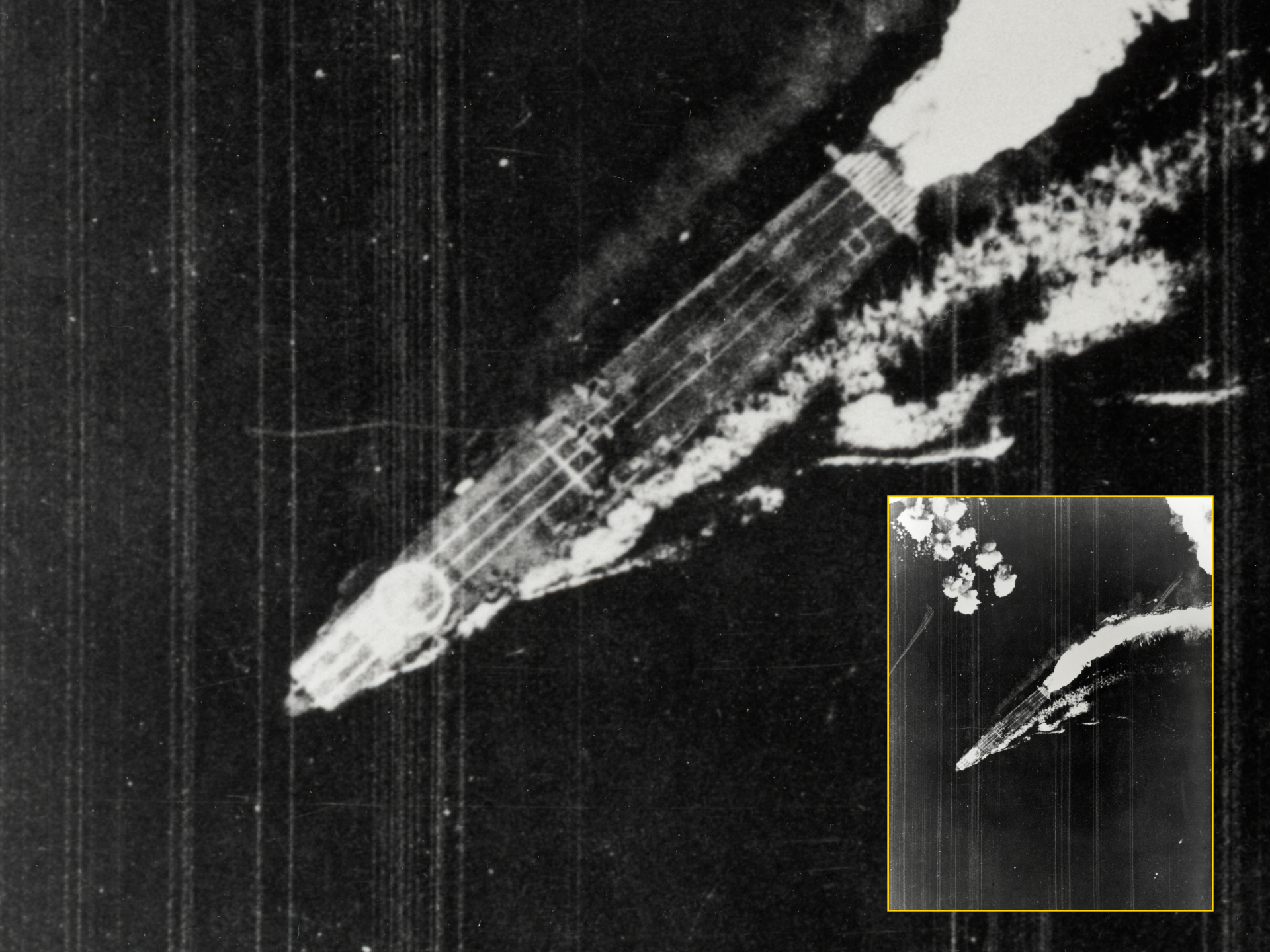
And Re-arming

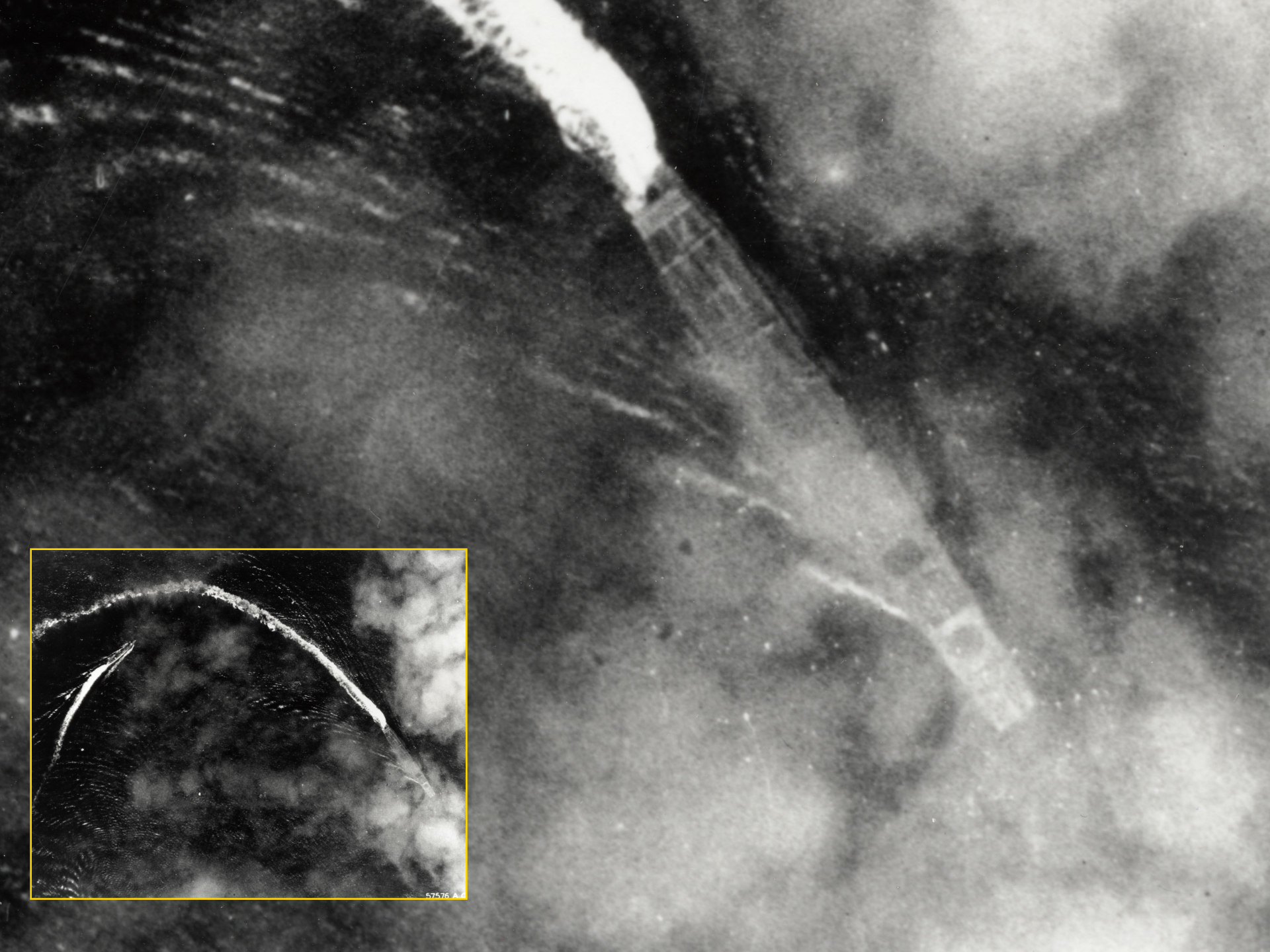
- “By his decision, taken shortly after 0830, to recover the Midway strike force before doing anything else, Admiral Nagumo virtually committed himself to the second, more cautious plan of action. On board *Akagi*, when the order was given to clear the deck for recovery, the weary maintenance crews began once more to lower the torpedo bombers to the hangar deck. There, the orders now were to switch back from bombs to torpedoes.”

—Mitsuo Fuchida









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Intermediate Conclusion

- ❑ Fuchida's rendition of flight deck operations doesn't appear to jibe with either common sense, the operational records, or the photographic record
- ❑ In fact, it is our strong belief that the reserve strike force was probably never spotted at all
 - Arming operations for torpedo planes typically occurred in the hangar
 - Aviator accounts (Abe Zenji) indicate that strikes were held in hangars until needed

Fuchida's Rendition of 1020 Attack

- “Preparations for a counter-strike against the enemy had continued on board our four carriers throughout the enemy torpedo attacks. One after another, planes were hoisted from the hangar and quickly arranged on the flight deck... At 1020 Admiral Nagumo gave the order to launch when ready. On *Akagi*'s flight deck all planes were in position with engines warming up. The big ship began turning into the wind. Within five minutes all her planes would be launched.

Five minutes! Who would have dreamed that the tide of battle would shift completely in that interval of time?

... At 1024 the order was to start launching came from the bridge by voice tube. The Air Officer flapped a white flag, and the first Zero fighter gathered speed and whizzed off the deck. At that instant a lookout screamed ‘Hell-divers!’ I looked up to see three black enemy planes plummeting towards our ship.”

Spotting A Strike

- ❑ **Requisite operations**
 - Moving planes to flight deck (sequentially)
 - Enclosed hangars necessitate engine warmup on flight deck
 - Arming (dive-bombers only)
- ❑ **Total time required:**
 - 30 minutes bare minimum
 - 45 minutes normally
- ❑ **Flight deck shut down while spotting**

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Fun with Kōdōchōshos!

- ❑ **Compiled records of air activities aboard aviation vessels**
- ❑ **Contain details regarding:**
 - Aircraft organization
 - Flying Personnel
 - Ordnance
 - Weather conditions
 - Takeoff/Landing Times

飛行機隊戦闘行動調書

甲 表

総合評點

所 轄	赤 城	實施年月日	昭和19年 6月 5日	基地又ハ 母艦所在	母艦 赤 城	任 務	ミッドウェイ作戦
指 揮 官	大尉 千早 猛 高 (カ) 大尉 白根 斐 夫 (フ)	天 候	曇 風力 8 本	全上 發進時刻	0128	職 團 種 別	ミッドウェイ (イスタン島) 攻撃
		參加機種 及 ビ 機 數	f6 x 18 fc x 19	全上 歸着時刻	0510		

空 戰	交 戰 種 類	敵 機 數		功 效	kg	800 x	時 刻	記 事
	全 上 戰 果	敵グラマン戦闘機11機内23機 陸軍B17-X1機銃臺大破 地上銃臺			爆	500"	0128 0125	
雷 爆 撃 撃	攻 撃 目 標			功 效	250"	0315	敵戰鬥機来襲	
	全 上 戰 果	イスタン島飛行場施設爆撃 三ヶ所=大火災 地上銃臺			60"	0340	イスタン飛行場施設爆撃 (艦爆隊) (三ヶ所=大火災ロケット)	
被 害	自 爆	機	戰 死 者 名	兵 器	30"	0425	集合帰途=就	
	行 方 不 明	"	行 方 不 明 者 "		彈	25 x 18 PFA (16機用)	0320	艦隊機隊 敵グラマン戦闘機1機+交戦機1機 イスタン島地上銃臺
	大 破	"	重 傷 者 "		機	以上重量計 (T)	0340	艦爆 艦隊機帰艦
	不 時 着	"	輕 傷 者 "		銃	20 x 550	0510	索敵機(攻撃機)1機 艦隊=被害なし
被 弾	"	其ノ他ノ事故	彈	7.7" x 3050	0530			
波 功				魚				

Ship

Date

Aircraft Type and Number

Ordnance Expended

Chronology of Operations

飛行機隊戦闘行動調書

任務	中隊	小隊	機番號	機種	所轄	赤城	實施年月日	19-6-5	<input type="checkbox"/> 總指揮官	<input type="checkbox"/> 中隊長	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 小隊長	<input type="checkbox"/> 機長	
					操縦員	偵察員	電信員	借替員 不着時刻	消耗兵器	被害	効果	記事	
上 空 二 道 街 隊	一 直				田中克規			0128 0359	20 X 220				
					大原慶司				27 X 1600				
					佐野信平					20 X 220			
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飛行機隊 戦闘行動調書

任務	中隊	小隊	機番號	機種	所 轄	赤 城	實施年月日		<input type="checkbox"/> 總指揮官	<input type="checkbox"/> 中隊長	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 小隊長	<input type="checkbox"/> 機長	
					操縱員	偵察員	電信員	搭整員	消耗兵器	被 害	効 果	記 事	
上	七				-r 佐野 繁平		0632	0800	20 X 220 29 X 1500	20 X 220 29 X 2100 20 X 220	行方不明	小隊2(内1機同搭) 小隊2 協同戦1(不搭)	
					大尉 白根 豊夫								0651
					-r 菊池 哲策								
					-r 木村 博雄								
A8	0945	1700	7:15	Lt.	Ibusuki	Masanobu	sōren32	OK	Forced landing, fuel exhaustion, 1700, rescued by?				
A8	0945	1100	1:15	PO2c	Iishi	Seiji	sōren50		Recovered by Hiryū				
A8	0945	1100	1:15	Sea1c	Ishida	Masashi	sōren55		Recovered by Hiryū				
A9	1025	1100	0:35	PO1c	Kimura	Koreo	kol		Recovered by Hiryū				
直	一〇直				-r 石田 正志		0725	0800	20 X 220 29 X 1500	20 X 220 29 X 2100 20 X 220	大攻1(協同)		
					-r 木村 博雄								
					-r 小川 博雄								
					-r 宇野 龍雄								
					-r 石田 正志								
					-r 大塚 茂高								
					-r 菊池 哲生								
-r 井石 清次													
三直					大尉 白根 豊夫		1330	1600 (不搭)					

CAP Watch #

Pilot Name & Rank

0725 (1025)

Takeoff



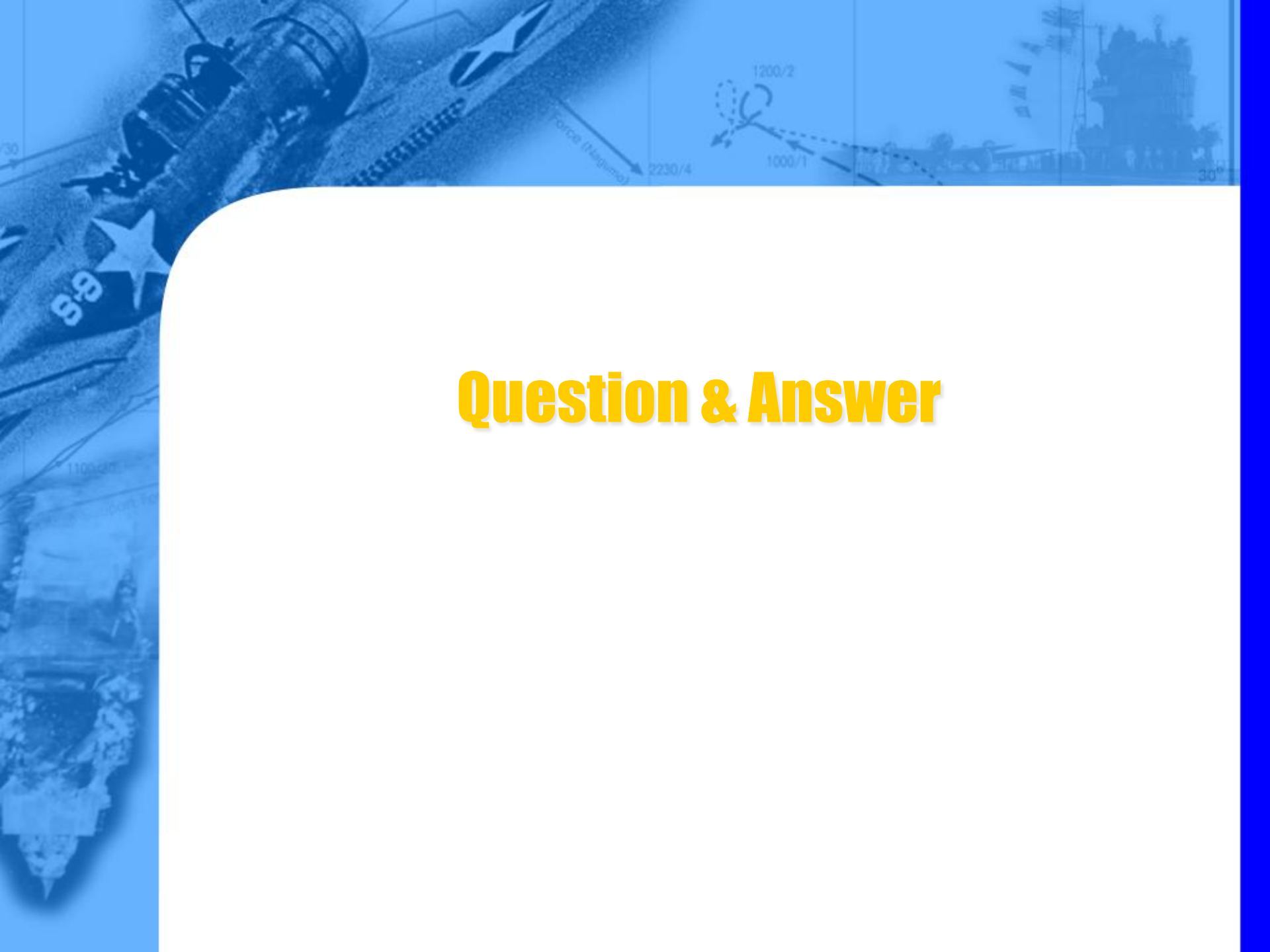
The Meaning of Sacrifice

American Torpedo Squadron Attacks

- ❑ Occurred between 0920 and 1035

In Summary

- ❑ New interpretations often require new look at old /neglected primary sources
- ❑ In a certain sense, *Shattered Sword* is a return to the original source matter, which had never been properly interpreted
- ❑ Much remains to be done on this important battle, and indeed on Pacific War history in general



Question & Answer