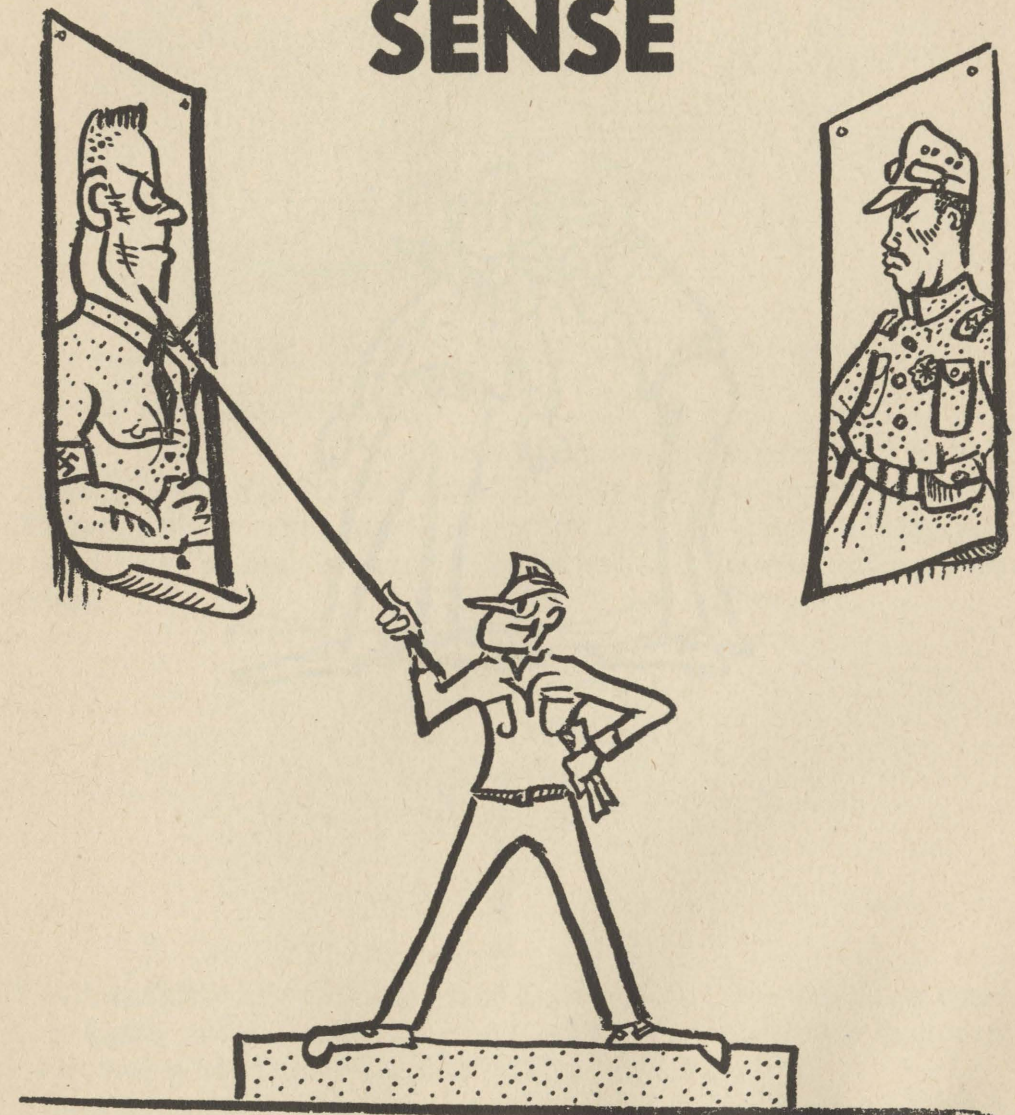


AIR INFORMATION SENSE

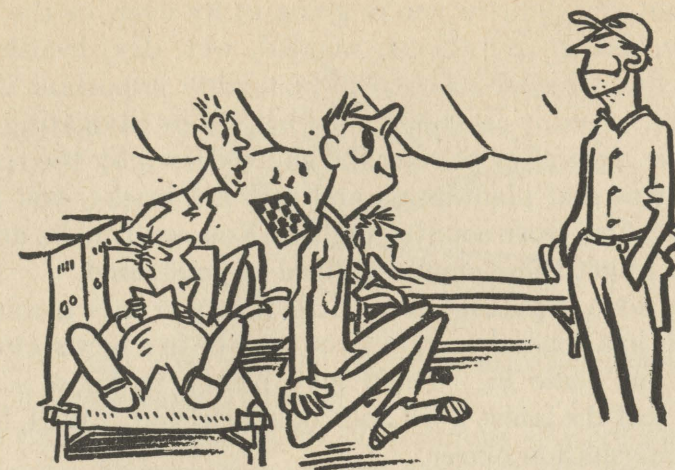
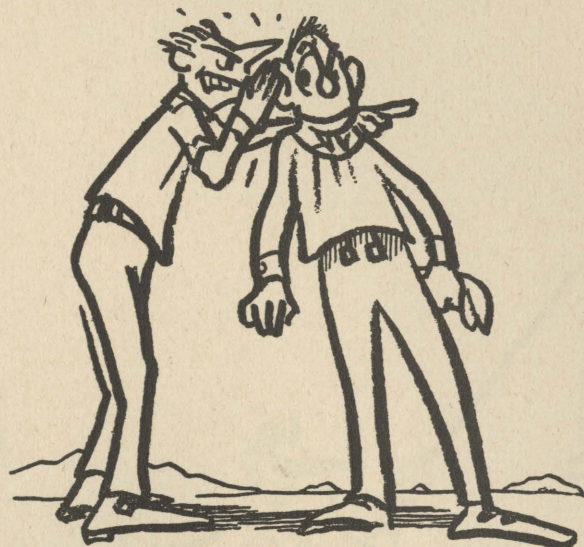


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AIR INFORMATION SENSE



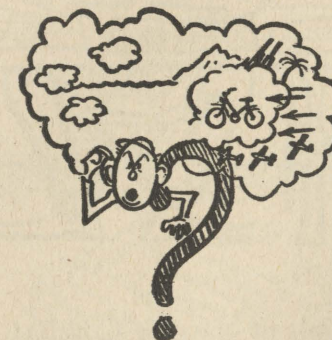
ISSUED BY TRAINING DIVISION, BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS,
UNITED STATES NAVY, JULY 1943



AIR INFORMATION SENSE

YOU'RE IN THE READY ROOM

or in the ready tent and the skipper drops in and says—
 “We’re going to fly up to Zipper Zu at 1500 today and blow up the bicycle factory.”
 It’s 1330 now and you never heard of Zipper Zu before, let alone the bicycle factory.
 There are a lot of things you want to know and that minute hand isn’t traveling
 any slower.



You’d certainly like to know where Zipper Zu is. Maybe it’s on some chart
 you have handy and then again maybe it isn’t. You might be a little curious to
 know why you’re heading up there to bomb a bicycle factory.

A little information on navigation might come in handy, especially if you are
 going to have to make a surprise attack and keep out of sight of land, or enemy
 lookouts, or whatnots, on the way up. How about the weather? Cloud coverage
 for hide-and-seek, weather freaks like williwaws that you didn’t run into back in
 Texas, or Florida, or Kansas, or at home.

And how about the country you're going to fly over, or the islands you may sight? Is it hilly, flat, mountainous, wooded, wet, dry, healthy, malarial, and where can a pilot find friends? That will be mighty important if you have to set down around there. And it can be mighty helpful in navigating too—like taking the first road to the right after passing the church down by the river. Rivers and mountains and towns and plantations and railroad tracks, you know what they did for you on your first cross-country flight! You can't make any mistakes now, so it's a good idea to get those signposts fixed in your mind.

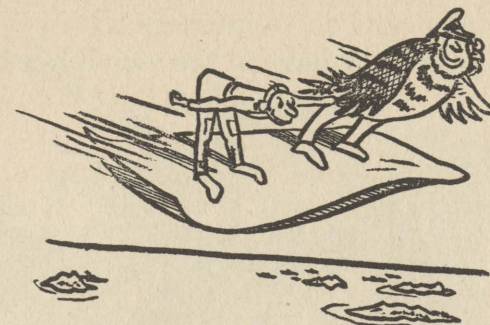
That's a lot of dope to pick up in the little time you have available. Of course, you know a lot of it in a general way, but you may be in a new sector or maybe some *later* information has come in. You'd give plenty to know someone who had worked it out and had the latest word and could help you. Well, he's right there—the Air Combat Information officer.



INFORMATION PLEASE

That's the job of the Air Combat Information officer and he's trained to do it. He's there to do that part of the work for you so you can concentrate on the job of flying and fighting.

He probably won't be a pilot himself but he'll know something about flying. He'll have studied navigation and tactics, aerology, and communications; but more important, he'll know what the enemy aircraft and ships look like, about maps and aerial photographs, and how to interpret them. He'll know his geography and what you're going to see unroll beneath you when you make that first hop to Zipper Zu, or Naples, or Berlin, or Tokyo. He'll try to make you feel at home



over enemy country and give you the probable location and kind of welcoming committees that may be waiting for you.

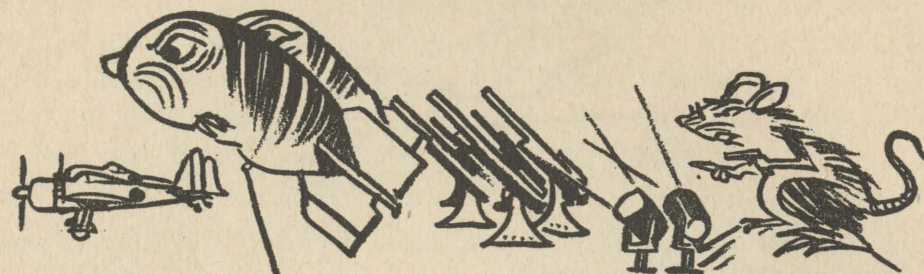
Maybe you don't like to ask a lot of questions or have someone hand you a batch of information, because you already know all the answers. Well, be sure you know ALL the answers because there's not going to be any Baedeker or encyclopedia in the cockpit with you when you're over Yokohama. Remember the old gag about Columbus? He didn't know where he was going when he started, he didn't know where he was when he got there, and he didn't know where he had been when he got back. Columbus made out all right, but nobody is going to name a day after you if you follow his example. You wouldn't take off with insufficient gas, so why take off with insufficient information if you can get what you need from the ACI officer?



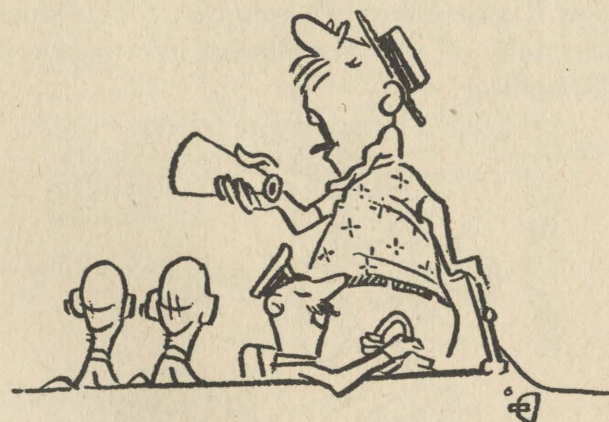
RAT EXTERMINATION

is your trade for the duration and you want to be tops in your line. But don't be too ambitious and try to get rid of all the rats yourself; leave some for the other pilots. The ACI officer has the dope on what the Germans,

or the Japs, or the Italians might do to interfere with your little jaunt to Zipper Zu—what airfields or defenses they have in the vicinity or along your right of way

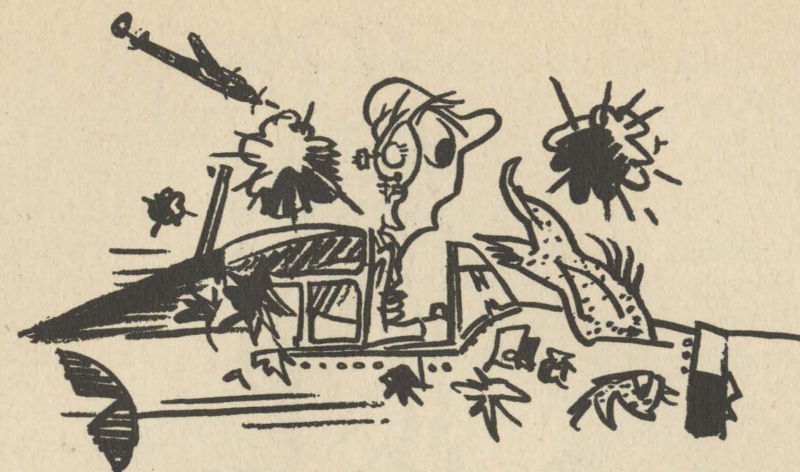


up there. You've studied recognition, but it won't hurt you to know what specific types of enemy aircraft you might run into, and where, and how many, and what you can do about it. Even the postman likes to know what dogs on his route will bite and which ones will be satisfied with barking. And how about locating that bicycle factory, the target?

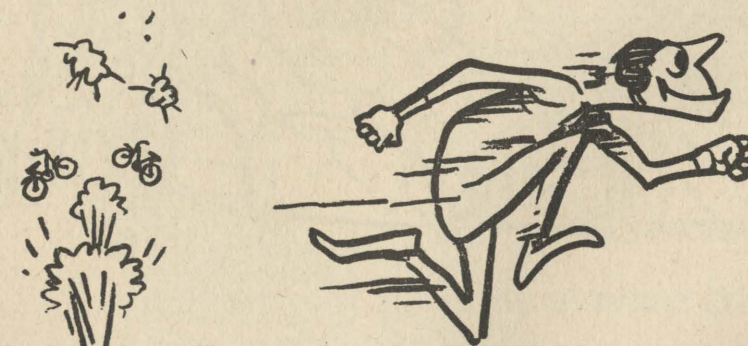


"ON OUR RIGHT WE HAVE . . ."

Yes, that man in the sightseeing bus would come in handy over dear old Zipper Zu, but the only thing he'd probably point out would be the more picturesque features. There sure are plenty of shacks down there and there's plenty of stuff flying around your ears up here, so it's not too profitable a procedure to wander around trying to figure out just which building is the bicycle factory. You might collect a curio in the form of a lacquered Jap AA shell or a hand-carved



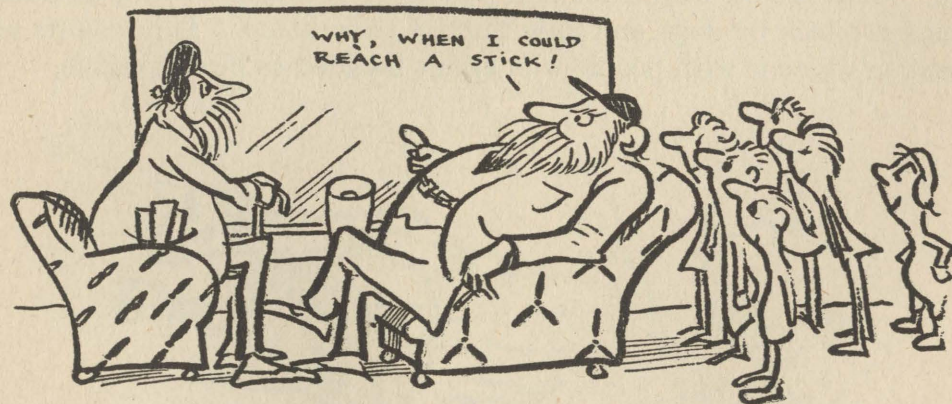
German Messerschmitt. No, you'll want to know before you start just how you can spot the target while you're coming in fast. Maybe it has a red roof; or perhaps it is the last building on the right hand side of the northern branch of the street that forms the top of a very noticeable T when viewed with another street from overhead. That would help a lot and you wouldn't have to ring doorbells, ask questions, get bitten by dogs, and miss the last train home. Time counts and you don't want to waste it with people who aren't inclined to be hospitable.



The ACI officer really didn't make Zipper Zu his home town before he joined the Navy—he probably never has been there—although you'll probably have a great deal of trouble convincing the pilots who were in the African landing that their Information officers hadn't loaded camels in Casablanca or Oran as small boys, worshiped at the local mosque, and lived on kous-kous as a steady diet.



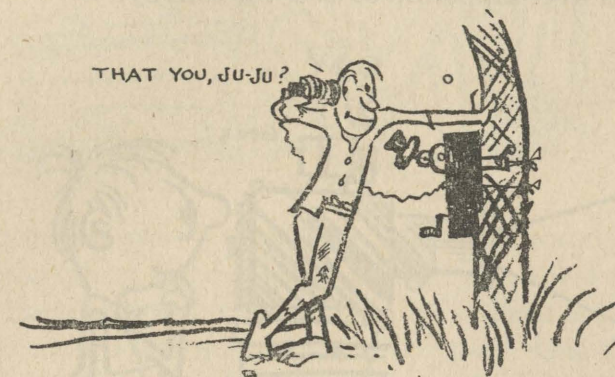
What he has had is the training, the time, and the opportunity to find out all that dope you must know while you are busy flying and fighting.



YOU'D LIKE TO SURVIVE

we assume, to accumulate long gray whiskers in later years, a bay window, blood pressure, grandchildren, and a seat in the window of the Retired Pilots' Club. On the other hand, you may be of so generous a nature that you'd like the folks back home to acquire ten thousand dollars to pay off the mortgage on the old homestead. If you prefer the former, see the Air Combat Information officer; if the latter, check with the Disbursing officer and see that your premiums are all paid up.

One of the questions you were asking yourself when the skipper mentioned your impending call on Zipper Zu was where you could find a friend in case you had to make a forced landing. The Air Information officer can tell you that and where you can get food and water as well. The menu may be limited and it is likely to have some novelties like turtle eggs, shark livers, and plantains. How to cook them may not have been covered in any domestic science course you may have encountered, but—yes, the Air Combat Information officer is now doubling as Fanny Farmer. He even may have a few good telephone numbers—there may be certain people to look up who could be of help, even in enemy territory. Possibly

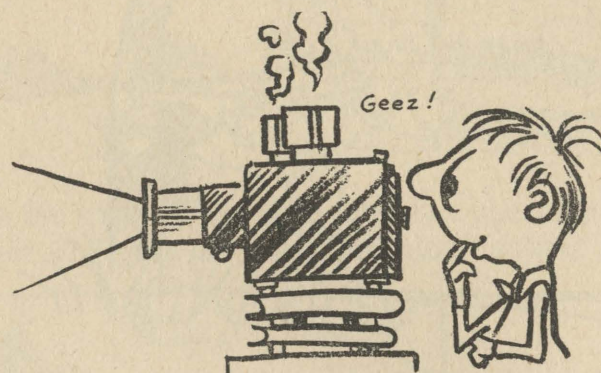


the natives only *look* cannibalistic and don't want your head for the old clubhouse after all. It's nice to know those things, even if you never have to use the knowledge. Maybe there are ways of keeping alive, of keeping going in a rubber boat, that you haven't heard about. This sort of information is called Survival Intelligence and you may be a survivor because of it.



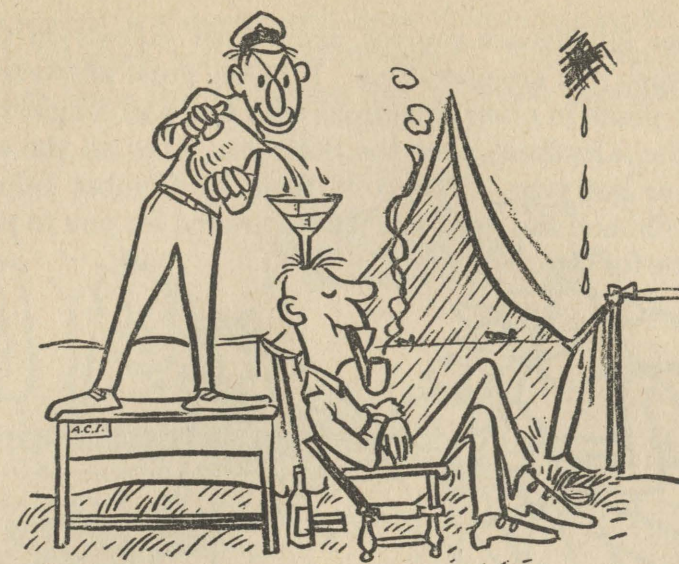
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?

That depends on where you're going and what you're planning to do. A bombing mission to Tokyo would call for somewhat different information than convoy coverage or antisubmarine patrol off our own east coast. The handiest way for the Air Combat Information officer to pass it on to you is by briefing. He briefs not only the pilots, but, where necessary, the air crews so that all hands will have a chance to ask questions and get all the dope that applies to their particular jobs and to the success of the mission. It will be BRIEFING, not a long drawn out lecture, but just those things that are going to make you not such an utter stranger over Zipper Zu or over the convoy.

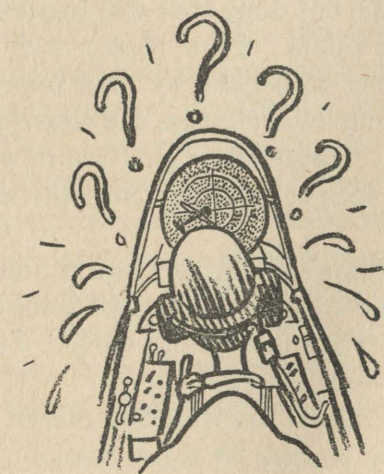


You remember the old magic lantern days—they're here again. You'll probably find the ready room or the intelligence room or tent fitted out with a projector and a screen. You'll see maps thrown on the screen with the salient features of the area and of the target clearly brought out. Photographs, too, if there are any available of Zipper Zu. You won't have to depend just on what the Air Combat Information officer tells you, he'll be able to show you on the maps and photographs how you can spot the bicycle factory. Right now, *not* when you're in the air, is the time to ask any questions and don't hesitate to ask them. Nobody is going to think you're a dope if you ask for the dope. Why are you bombing the factory? Is there any alternative target indicated in case the weather won't let you make your attack on the original one indicated? What are the best landmarks? If you don't understand, say so, and the ACI officer will do his best to make it clear. You wouldn't fly through overcast if you could get unlimited visibility. Well, these briefings are intended to get rid of any mental clouds.

Of course, it won't all come in a single briefing. A lot of information will be given you from time to time when there isn't much flying going on, when the weather has closed in and you're all set to shoot the breeze. Stuff that you can stow away



in your mind for future reference, something that might come in handy in a pinch. Maybe you know everything there is about recognition, but recognition is one subject which it never hurts to brush up on and the ACI officer is there to help you out. After all the Nips get new types and we get new types. One thing, brother, you'd better know—which is which when the sights come on!



IT CUTS BOTH WAYS . . .

this matter of information. You may wonder where the ACI officer gets all this dope that he hands out to you. Some comes from what he learned in the Air Combat Information school, some from books and classified mate-

rial, some from other intelligence sources, some from experts on the territory or the conditions in which you are operating. But, the great proportion of it is from YOU or from other pilots in other squadrons who flew and fought over Zipper Zu, over Africa, over the Aleutians, over the Solomons, over all the seven seas, last week, last month, or last year. They told their Air Combat Information officer what they saw and did and the word was passed around for you to profit by. How about doing the same for the other pilots?



Remember that most of the hot dope that was handed you in operational training came from active combat pilots. Now that you've seen combat service, the Navy and the other lads expect to benefit by your experience. The Air Combat Information officer is the medium of exchange, the clearing house through which the lessons learned are passed on. Remember, you are now an important observer—what you've seen or haven't seen all adds up into the sum total of combat information.

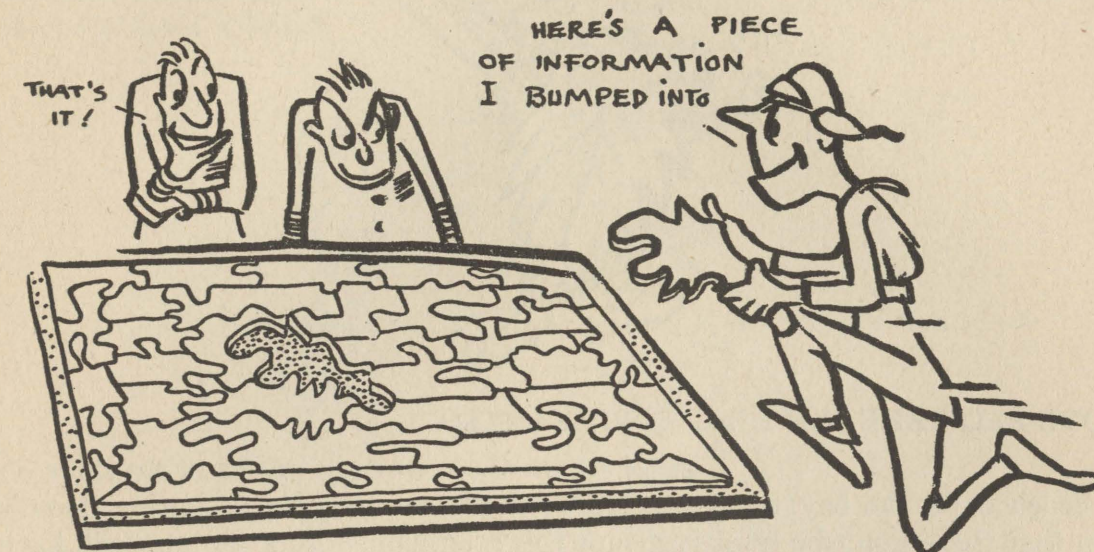
Take this booklet for example. It represents the advice of many combat pilots and Air Combat Information officers from all fields of naval air activity. It's put in this form so you can get it quickly and early. It isn't one man's work, it's the combined experience of several hundred.

At the briefing the Air Combat Information officer will tell you what to look out for. He may also ask you to look for a few things. How about lending him a hand and doing just that?

“ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR WATSON”

is what Sherlock Holmes would say about the sort of observations you are supposed to make. Nobody's going to ask you to look at a

stranger and say in the best Sherlockian vein: “Ha, I observe that you are a compositor, a lodge member, a widower with three children, all legitimate, and, by your breath, devoted to whiskey, onions, and tobacco.” No, all the Air Combat Intelligence officer wants are a few facts that can be fitted together to make the big

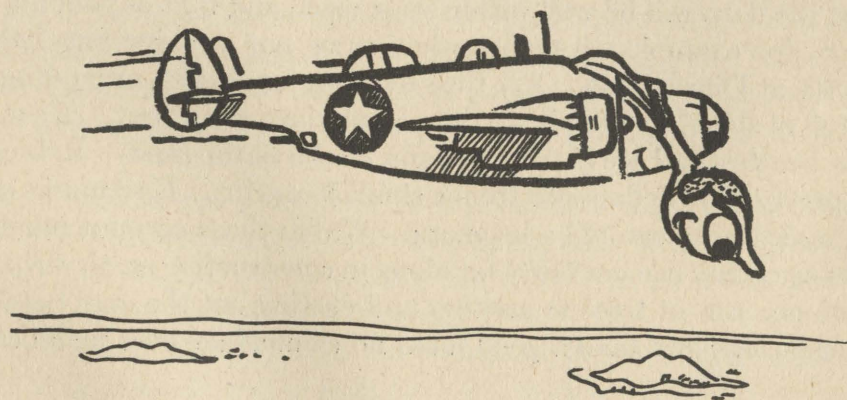


picture that the Admiral must have to plan the operation. He'll tell you what he needs and the data will be well within your reach and that of your air crew. He may ask you, for example, to report whether or not you see any indications of enemy activity at Dipsey Doo. Are they building an airport, or landing guns, or is the harbor full of ships? Often it won't be as obvious as all that. He may ask you to watch the beaches and see if there are any tracks in the sand. Robinson Crusoe made some pretty good deductions from a single footprint. Keel marks on the shore that end in tank tracks can tell a lot more. Watch those coconut plantations too. An enterprising enemy can get fairly far along in constructing an air strip by stretching nets from one row of trees to another and cutting out the ones between. But, if you are suspicious and take a good look, no camouflage ever made can fool you for long.



ABOVE ALL, TAKE NOTHING FOR GRANTED

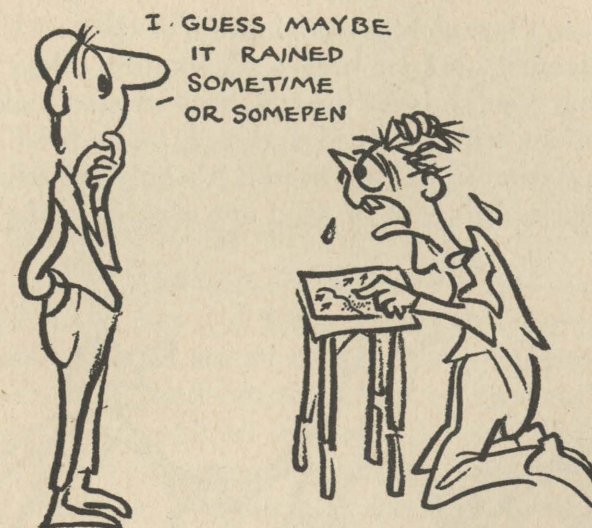
Just because there were no tracks or no ships on the beach or in the bay when you searched this morning or yesterday doesn't mean that there won't be tracks or ships this afternoon. Your air crew will have been briefed as well as you, in most cases, but don't leave it all to them. Make that swivel neck of yours prehensile, too, and stick it out of the cockpit to have a look.



YOU CAN ALWAYS DISCUSS THE WEATHER

with the Air Combat Information officer to your mutual profit, provided you have brought him back a few observations to be passed

on to Aerology. If you haven't, the best thing to do is to hope that he has a pet bunion which will tell him when it's going to rain. There's a classic story in literature about the inebriate who opened the closet door instead of the front door and reported that the weather was "hellish dark and smells of cheese." That's what your weather report will sound like to the aerologist if you don't include some accurate weather observations—he'll be in the dark and—he'll be able to smell the cheese without a doubt.



DON'T GET PARALYSIS OF THE NECK

when you're out on one of these trips. Keep the old swivel working and one eye cocked for Nips or Nazis. Nobody expects you to make meticulous observations in a danger area, at the expense of being shot down.

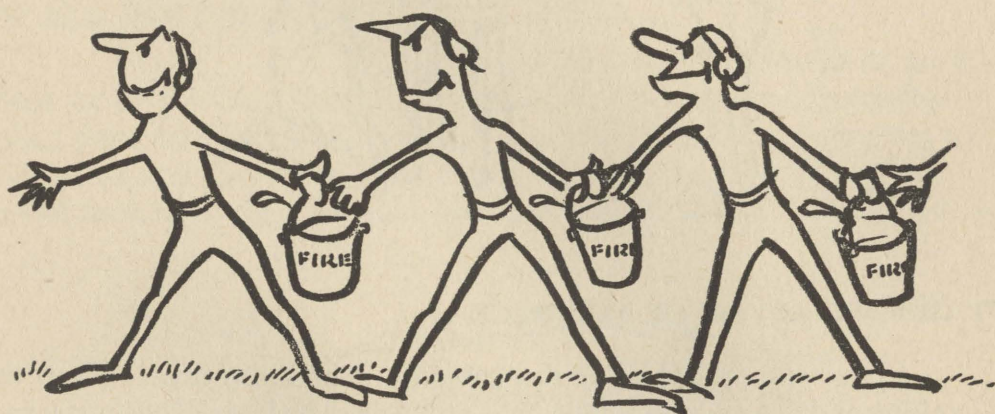
The happy medium is up to you. Do everything you can to add to the information available, but don't attempt the impossible. The Air Combat Information officer recognizes that it is frequently impracticable for a pilot to bring back information.

On the other hand, if you've kept a bright lookout and seen nothing, don't forget to report that you *have* seen nothing. Negative information can be just as important as positive information. The fact that there is no sign of enemy activity in a certain area may be a piece that fits into the picture puzzle of what he is doing.

BUT NOW YOU'VE BEEN TO ZIPPER ZU

and blasted our old friend the bicycle factory. Maybe you've had a fight on the way or on the way back. You're tired and you've been under a tough strain. It seems an imposition to have to sit down and answer questions, but you haven't done all your job until you pass through interrogation. Other men were just as tired and strained, but did their best to pass on the dope so you got up to and back from Zipper Zu. How about helping the other fellow yourself?

Interrogation doesn't mean cross-examination of the sort Uncle Silas got when Abigail, the blonde riveter, sued for breach of promise. The Information officer knows pretty well what you've been through and tries to make every allowance. No unnecessary questions will be asked and he'll be as brief as possible, but he must get certain information from you, even if it's only negative, in order that the commanding officer can make plans or send out another plane for a search of the area.



REMEMBER, YOU'VE GOT TO HELP THE OTHER FELLOW. THE DAYS OF THE LONE WOLF FLYER ARE DEAD AND GONE. YOU'RE ONE OF A TEAM AND YOU MUST PLAY FOR THE TEAM.

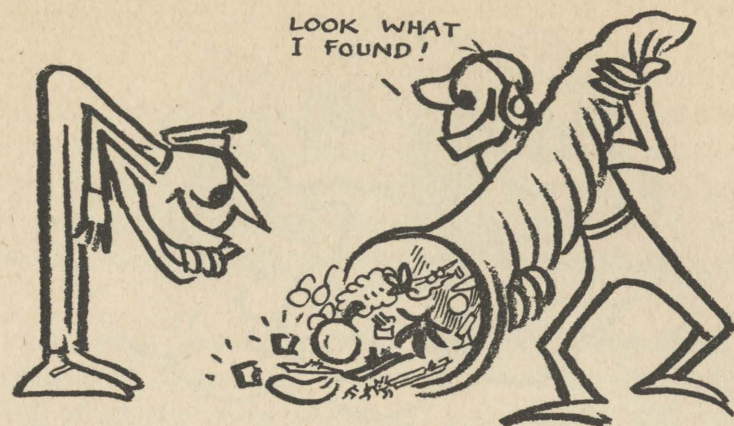
As a matter of fact, you are helping yourself as well, for tomorrow's operations may well be planned on the basis of the information you brought back today. If you're selected to go back over the target, the dope you handed out may save you a meeting with a couple of Nazi fighter squadrons having an aerial *biertrinkend und sangerfest* on your line of approach.



WHERE WERE YOU ON THE MORNING OF . . . ?

And what did you see? That sounds simple to answer, but after a fight it's not so easy. A lot happened in a short time and no two men see it exactly the same way, or see all of it. Pilots and air crews each present the story from their own angle and often the stories conflict. That's why the Air Combat Information officer wants all the dope, so he can piece the picture together. Weather, ship and aircraft sightings, the details of an engagement, enemy tactics, both offensive and defensive, comments on our own methods, enemy equipment, signs of enemy activity . . . information along any of these lines is more than welcome. Interrogation is informal and you can say what you think. Don't pass it off as a necessary irritation, welcome it. It may save your life some day.

Interrogation has another angle, a labor-saving one. After every combat a lot of reports must be made up by you. The dope you gave the Air Combat Information officer while the facts were still fresh in your mind is a great deal of help in preparing them. Ask him to let you see the completed interrogation form that he made up when he questioned you. He'll be glad to lend you a hand. Of course, if you *like* to write reports you may prefer to do it yourself. . . .

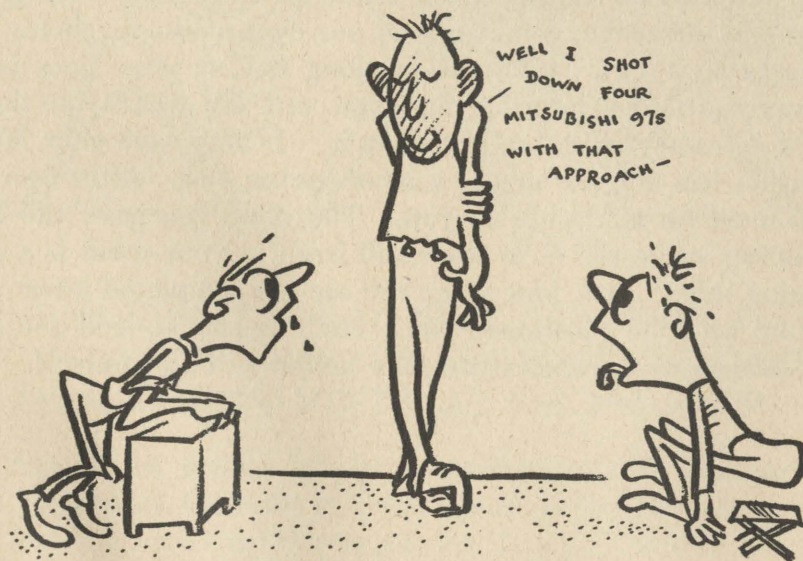


DON'T KEEP SECRETS

at least from the Air Information officer. Maybe old trappers and perfume manufacturers keep the formula of their wolf bait secret, but if your own pet method of attack produces results it is worth sharing with all allied pilots. If you have a good idea don't let false modesty prevent you from passing it along.

(?) DOESN'T MEAN (.)

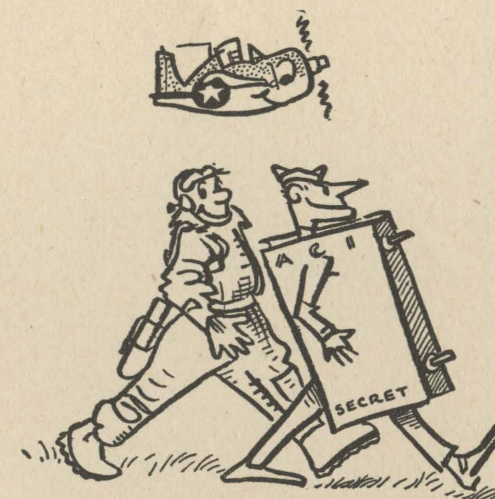
in other words, because you've been interrogated, don't conclude that you've passed out all the dope. Some new angles may occur to you later

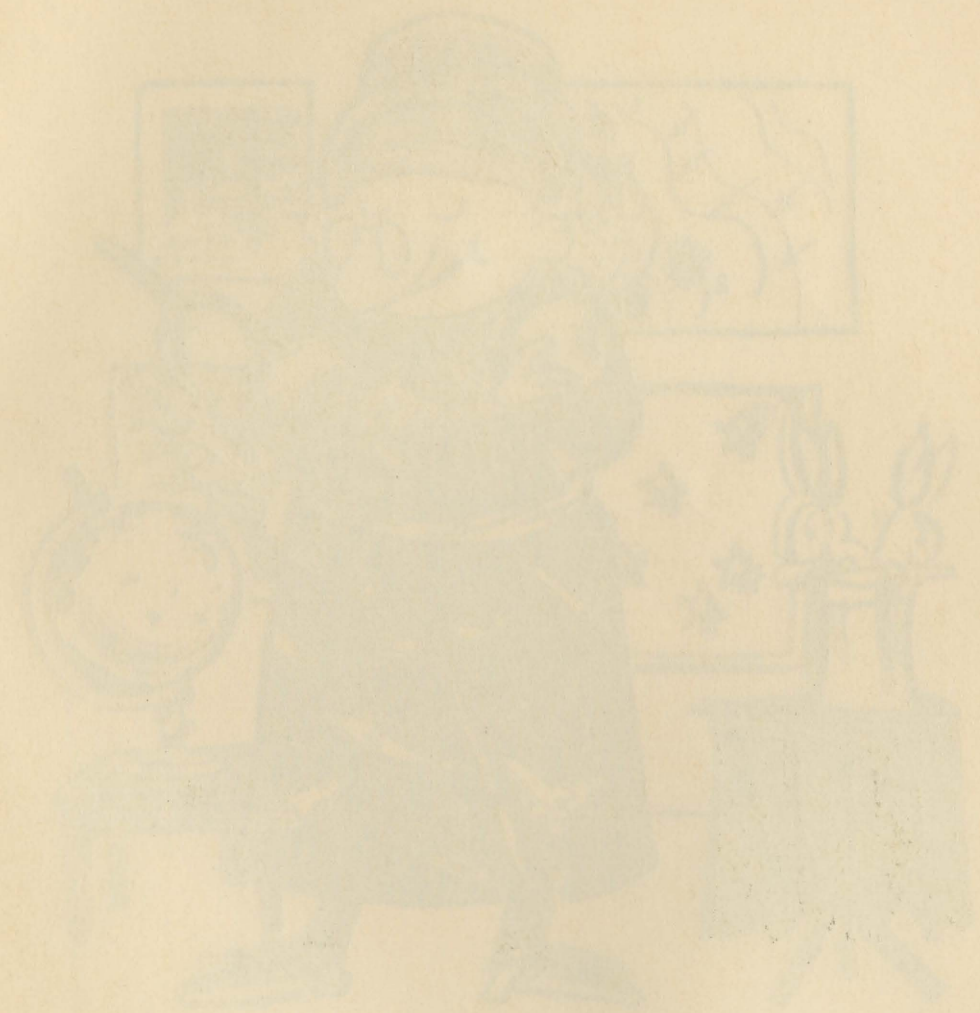


while shooting the breeze in the wardroom. If they do, be sure to pass it on to the Air Combat Information officer.

"HIYA PAL!"

that's you and the Air Combat Information officer. He's there to help you and there because veteran pilots asked for his sort of officer to help them. Get the word now, don't wait for experience, possibly bitter experience, to teach you. He's a doctor of information. Lend him a hand. Maybe you'll live a lot longer if you do.





AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN



ASK, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN !