

Ensign J. B. Hoag, a photo ~~recovery~~ pilot of VF 82, was the principal of our most weird crash landing. He was jumped by enemy fighters over Kyushu, his wingsman shot down, and his own Hellcat badly damaged. He made it back, and had to land without the use of his flaps. His hook failed to catch and arresting wire, and he ~~skidded~~ sailed through two barriers, his F6F breaking up as he screeched through. The Hellcat's engine stayed aboard, but Hoag and the rest of his plane slid over the side. He was rescued uninjured by a destroyer. Lieut. R.F. Klingerman, a night fighter pilot of VF 82, hung up an most outstanding record on the night of 13 April when he was sectored out ~~times~~ after four different Jap snopper planes. He located each of them and shot them all down!

Throughout this period ~~of~~ the Japs continued to step up their Kamikaze raids on our lines over Okinawa, and upon our shipping lying off the beach. There Kamikaze raids made several "field days" for our Corsair and Hellcat pilots. On 6 April, Bennington fighters got 31 planes enroute to Okinawa without losing a single plane. A week later, the squadron shot down 34 Japs in one day, one of our pilots being downed in the process. (He was picked up later by a rescuer plane).

6 April 1945 was another one of the Bennington's luck days. At 1300 our radars picked up a number of Bogies approaching our Group about 75 miles distant. Visibility was good except for some nasty low-flying clouds. A fighter ~~strike~~ strike had returned and a number of Hellcats were in the landing circle. Very casually almost leisurely, another fighter dropped out of the clouds astern and dove in for our fantail in a fast, turning power glide. At a range of about 500 yards he speared our flight deck with a burst from his 50s. At the same instant some 20mm slugs caught him inside his engine cooling, followed by several 40mm hits, and he fell off and hit the water only fifty feet from our screws and rudder, exploding as he hit. His carburetor bounced up intact on the flight deck aft. Bennington casualties were incidental; several men standing on the fantail ~~and~~ dove for cover,