

War Skies of Shanghai

A Buzz Benson Adventure by Arch Whitehouse

Westward toward Shanghai, where smoldered a fire of war that threatened to blaze forth and enflame the whole world, a Yankee submarine cut through the waters of the Pacific. Deep in its hold was the Sea Hawk, the plane chosen to carry Billy "Buzz" Benson straight through the Japanese air zone with secret orders that would mean war or peace. But not twenty cable lengths away steamed a Japanese sub, and in its hold was another Sea Hawk—awaiting the moment when Benson should begin his mad air race to Shanghai!

"WELL, this is certainly a nice state of affairs," grinned Billy "Buzz" Benson, flying reporter of the Los Angeles Mercury, as he pocketed a Navy code book, and read the official-looking flimsy.

"Pick up Curtiss Sea Hawk plane at San Diego. Report to submarine tender U.S.S. Canopus and be transferred to the submarine S-75. Rest of orders will be given by Flag-Lieutenant Yancey S. Wilberforce of Yangtse Patrol. Warning—take great precautions against enemy agent known as the Shinto Shark!"

He grinned and continued to gather some extra clothing, gloves, helmet and underwear and stuff it in a duffle bag.

"The S-75 has been reported sunk off Santa Cruz for more than a week," he went on, mumbling to himself. "What the devil a Sea Hawk is I haven't the slightest idea, and the Yangtse Patrol sounds like we're due for a spell of this Sino-Japanese thing. But are they still falling for this Shinto Shark stuff?"

He bundled his kit together, grabbed a wad of copy paper, a few extra pencils and an automatic pistol, and went out to where his sports roadster sat gleaming at the curb. As he moved over to get behind the wheel, a copy of the Mercury rustled under his thigh. He snatched it up and glanced at the headlines, blazing out in bold-faced type. On one side he read:

**Japan's Planes Bomb Shanghai
U. S. Warship Arrives At City**

On the other corner were further details of the latest marine disaster:

No Hope Held for Missing Submarine To Quit Search

He raised his eyebrows a trifle and scanned a few more lines. Suddenly he gasped aloud. A red crayon mark had ringed in a sentence which dealt with the mysterious loss of the submarine S-75. Then alongside in the paper margin was scribbled:

*"They do not know. But the Shinto Shark knows. Stay away from Shanghai, if you would live.
The Shinto Shark."*

"Now who the devil has been playing that game?" snapped Buzz, staring at the paper again. Suddenly he realized that his mission was not as secret as he had been given to believe. He glanced up and down the street, but nothing offered any clue. A blue-coat came sauntering along and Buzz hailed him.

"See anyone messing around my car?" he asked.

"Hello, Mr. Benson," greeted the cop. "Your car? Why, sure, I noticed a black sedan stop just in front of it as I was coming along. The driver, a little Jap or Chink or something, got out, looked at your license plate and then put a white package, or a paper, maybe, in the front seat. Then he went back to his car and drove off. A black car, pretty new. Lincoln, or Pierce Arrow. Anything wrong?"

“No—that is, if that was all he did. Some guy having a game with me, I think. Left a marked copy of my own paper. Look at this!”

“BY GOLLY, Mr. Benson!” gurgled the bluecoat. “That looks bad. Ain’t that the guy they’re looking for in connection with the sab—sab—”

“Sabotage on the airship Akron?” grinned Buzz. “Yeh, that’s the bird.”

“He’s tied up with the stealing of those airplane plans up at the Loring factory in Seattle, too, and the mess at the Government Chemical Warfare Department. He’s a bad actor.”

“Well, that’s all the stuff they can fasten on him, but a lot of it is the ravings of some goofy newspaper man, I think.”

“Well, you ought to know,” answered the cop. “You’ve written a few of ‘em yerself, if I recall. But yer goin’ to report this, ain’t you?”

“I’ll tell you what, Casey,” replied Buzz. “I’ll let you get a little credit. You report it for me and give old Hank Sweeney a ring at the Mercury for me; It’ll save me a lot of trouble. I’ve got to head off to San Diego, and time’s short.”

Officer Casey watched Buzz snort away, and bemoaned his lot that he had not selected the newspaper business for his life occupation, rather than the colorless routine of pounding the heated streets of Los Angeles.

Had Billy Buzz Benson been really alert, he would have noticed that a black sedan had picked him up in the traffic of Wilshire Boulevard and followed him all the way out to the Sunkist Airport. He would have also noticed that while he stowed his car away in his own hangar, a beautifully dressed Japanese girl slid out of a glistening car and made for the passenger office of the Transcontinental and Western Air Express, purchased a ticket for San Diego and calmly took her seat in the rear of the great cabin. With her she took a blue leather overnight bag.

Benson had his Boeing scout brought out, and while it was warming up, he threw a cheery greeting up to Pal Masters in the cockpit of the big transport.

“I’ll run along with you, Pal,” yelled Buzz. “Probably pick you up over Oceanside. You need escort these days.”

THE big transport roared off down the runway and climbed for altitude. She circled the field once and then headed south. Benson came out, fingering his papers, maps and the marked copy of the Los Angeles Mercury. Charlie McGurk was fiddling with Benson’s parachute harness.

“So you’re off to China, eh?” scowled Charlie.

“Who told you I was going to China?” snapped Buzz,

“Why, it’s all over the airport.”

“Funny. I’m not certain about it myself,” said the flying reporter.

“Well, that’s how it goes. How you getting across?”

“On the S-75,” replied Buzz, quietly, “but keep it to yourself.”

“What?” gasped Charlie. “Why, that sardine can went down four days ago. They haven’t found her, have they?”

“Figure it out for yourself,” replied Buzz. “I’m supposed to be going over as a newspaper correspondent. That’s all I know, and even that is a rumor. Let’s get going. I’ll see you when—”

“And *if* you get back,” broke in Charlie. “You know, Buzz, I got a hunch that this is going to be no joyride. But I wish you luck.”

In ten minutes Benson had caught up to the big transport ship and was flying with the engine of his Boeing throttled back alongside.

The five passengers in the transport’s cabin watched the gleaming Boeing with interest and then turned back to their maps, magazines and letters. But the beautiful Japanese girl was studying the license letters of Benson’s ship. She peered at it for some time and then consulted a small leather-bound notebook taken from her handbag. Then she slid out of her seat, picked up her blue overnight bag and made her way to the lavatory.

The other passengers smiled benevolently. The poor girl evidently had been touched with a dash of air-sickness, they figured. But once in the washroom, the girl opened the bag and took out some gleaming equipment. With a practiced, hand she fitted it together, screwed a grim black cylinder on the short steel barrel and fastened a clip of ammunition into the loading block of a submachine gun. Her fingers released the small metal catch of the window and lowered it about three inches. Then, placing the muzzle outside,

she took careful aim at the Boeing with the silenced gun.

There might have been some who noticed the strange vibration that came from the washroom and trickled along the metal tube longerons, but certainly no one registered any acknowledgment. Pal Masters sensed it, and glanced at his instruments, but nothing there gave him anything to worry about. He glanced casually across at the Boeing—and almost threw his ship into a loop.

The Boeing was on fire! One wing had folded up and was spitting great strips of fabric and metal back in its slipstream. He saw Benson floundering about, trying to get out of the cockpit.

“Damn my eyes!” growled Pal, “What the devil hit him?”

Benson was climbing over his top wing which had flapped back across his cockpit. The Boeing was nosing up into a wild climb. Suddenly it fell off and started a fiendish spin. Flames trickled out from the motor cowl. A trail of greasy black smoke plumed back, and then a figure went tipping headlong out of the conglomerate mass of burning fabric, flapping metal and clanging motor.

Masters watched Buzz for several minutes and finally saw him land safely. The Boeing was a charred mass of twisted metal long before it struck the earth. Pal Masters turned and glanced at his co-pilot, as if for an explanation, but Jerry Barwell was equally startled.

“What the devil happened to him?” bellowed Pal.

“You got me. Looks as though she exploded,” replied Jerry.

They both turned to see what effect it had had on the passengers. The Japanese girl was returning to her seat, evidently unconscious of what was going on. She slipped her bag under her seat and resumed her placid position, looking out of the window.

“WELL, it certainly has started wildly. God knows how this will end!” Rear Admiral Cummings of the San Diego Naval Base said, after Benson had explained his delay. He had arrived a few minutes before, with the aid of a car loaned him by the owner of the country estate outside Del Mar.

“I’ve lost most of my kit, sir,” explained Buzz, “but I guess I can get what I want before I start off. What about this Sea Hawk ship?”

“Well, it’s an adaption of the old Curtiss Sea Hawk. Folding wings, amphibian landing gear, two cockpits and a Pratt & Whitney 425 Wasp motor which we use aboard the new submarines that carry a plane. You’ll have no trouble with it. You’ve flown about everything in the service, but you’re in for a hot time.”

“But I understood I was going over as a special correspondent,” broke in Buzz.

“That’s the reason you are going, but because you are an accepted newspaper man, it makes our task a little less difficult. As you probably know, we are in a ticklish situation concerning this Sino-Japanese thing, and to keep our feet clean we have to adopt particular pains to keep a real secret system of communication with our military and naval forces that are at present in China.”

“But your secret codes, admiral,” went on Buzz.

“They mean nothing just at present. Our codes have been open books to most countries for years. You know how Yardley showed up our secret code business a short time ago, particularly with reference to the Japanese situation. They know everything before we do ourselves, and naturally we are handcuffed. We hope to get our new code books to our various commanders and a secret set of plans out that will take care of any emergency that might arise within the next few weeks.”

“Then do you expect war?”

“We learned a lot during the World War, and we are taking no chances this time. The Japs are smart and have a fine navy, air service and a pretty strong army. They are particularly sound in aerial numbers, a lot stronger than the world actually knows. They would give us a smart runaround for a couple of years. Japan is prepared to take some long chances, and if we try to send an army or navy into those islands she will be able to play havoc with us for a time, owing to her overwhelming strength in submarines and seaplane carriers.”

“Whew! I hadn’t thought of it from that angle,” exclaimed Buzz.

“No. No one does, but facts and figures would make the United States worry no end if they ever got out. What you have to do is to get Flag-

Lieutenant Yancey S. Wilberforce into the Fourth U. S. Marine Area with the details of this plan and copies of the new code books.”

“But the regular navy or army planes?” inquired Buzz, unable to see the idea.

“Can’t you see that every American service plane will be watched—and particularly for the code books and new emergency plans? We are frankly worried over this devil who calls himself the Shinto Shark. We know little about him, but we do know that he is a wild Jap who hates the United States, and has done so ever since the Japanese immigration question popped up in California. He was connected with the trouble up at the Loring Aviation plant. He stole the secret of our counter-actant gas which kills the venom of poison gases as used in war, and the latest is the alleged sabotage in the building of the airship Akron. He’s a devil!”

“I have heard of him. I meant to tell you about this affair today in Los Angeles,” went on Buzz. “He left a marked copy of my own paper in the seat of my car, warning me to stay out of Shanghai and boasting that he caused the sinking of the S-75.”

For a minute Rear Admiral Cummings sat speechless. “Then—” he finally muttered, as if talking to himself, “then he does know. I wonder if we hadn’t better cross him up.”

Buzz was interested now.

“It’s a funny thing,” the admiral finally said, “that this man, the Shinto Shark, should claim credit for sinking the S-75. As a matter of fact, the submarine was not even near Santa Cruz when we gave out that report. She was lying off San Diego near the Canopies all the time. When we have cleared this thing up, we shall have to rename her and forget that there was ever such a submarine as the S-75.”

“But do you think the Japs fell for that?”

“Well, we gave ‘em all the trimmings. Divers, oil spots, grappling and plenty of headlines.”

“And so I take off tomorrow morning and pick up the submarine tender *Canopus* off San Clemente Island, and from there go aboard the S-75 for a trip to China. Is that all?” asked Buzz.

“That’s all that I can tell you just now. Your orders will be completed when you go aboard the sub. There you will meet Flag-Lieutenant Wilberforce and he will detail the rest. Then when

all those things are carried out, you will be able to do other work for us while working as a newspaper correspondent. A place will be reserved for you in the Fourth Marine area and you will be able to house your ship at the old Shanghai racetrack along with a lot of British flyers.”

“Do I keep this Sea Hawk job?” inquired Buzz.

“Yes, it’s the only one made, and it will not be marked with U.S. insignia, but licensed under your own name.”

“Whew! This thing gets wilder and wilder,” said Buzz.

“You haven’t heard anything yet,” promised the Rear Admiral. “Wait until you get to Wilberforce!”

THE next morning an unmarked Sea Hawk rolled down the concrete apron and let itself down on the pontoon. Curling away to catch a favorable drift tide, it snarled through its throaty exhaust tubes, hoisted itself up onto the step and roared away, flying due west.

For nearly an hour the converted Sea Hawk flew on, her rear pit empty except for a Fairey gun-mounting that folded away and hid itself in the camel-hump, so that it required a close inspection to realize that there was a gun aboard at all. The forward guns were hidden in the upper wing, well outside the propeller arc. To all intents and purposes the Sea Hawk was a newspaper correspondent’s ship.

Then out of the blankness below suddenly appeared the submarine tender *Canopus*, a lazy, broad-beamed cruiser converted for this work. There were no submarines in the vicinity, but a flagman soon climbed out on a flag-platform and started to flip commands and landing instructions to the oncoming Sea Hawk.

“Well, they’re apparently expecting me,” grinned Buzz. “And it’s nice to know you are flying the only ship of this type.”

He had just muttered these words to himself when from out of nowhere shot a torrent of tracer-flecked bullets. The first burst screamed smack into the rear of the fuselage and slapped the taut fabric like a gigantic cat-o’-nine-tails. The little Sea Hawk fairly recoiled under the blow.

Like a flash, Buzz flipped his ship over into a wild Immelmann and sought the source of this

new attack. With a gasp he saw that he was being dived on by a Sea Hawk exactly like his own!

“Well, I’ll be—” gargled Buzz. “I thought they had made only one like this. That damned boat’s exactly the same. Two seats, folding wings and the same landing gear. What the devil’s the game?”

He flipped over and shot across at the attacker, and saw as he put his sight on the ship that the machine had a gunner in the rear pit. As he felt for the Bowden control, he suddenly realized that the rear pit carried a girl! He released the Bowden control and swerved away.

“What the hell’s the game?” he growled. “Siccing a gal onto me!”

But whatever qualms Benson might have had concerning fighting women, the lady of the rear pit in the other ship had no such compunctions. Her gun was whipped back and forth as the other Sea Hawk leaped in and out to get a telling burst into Benson’s ship. The fabric was chewed up and great holes suddenly appeared in his wings.

Below, the watch of the *Canopus* stood to their posts and stared up at this amazing battle, unable to make head or tail out of it all.

Then suddenly the mystery Sea Hawk lanced in like a winged torpedo and plastered another burst smack at the amazed Benson, who was still under the queer spell of watching the girl rake his ship from prop to rudder. The ship shot over him, its amphibian gear just skimming across Benson’s top plane. Buzz ducked instinctively and then whirled over and went after him.

The fight soon went to the wild-flying Benson. The pilot of the other ship was no match for the flying reporter, and the next few minutes saw the wildest game of cat-and-mouse ever played.

“I can’t hit that jane, and I hope she has a parachute,” thought Buzz, heeling over and going after the rival ship again. “I’ll pop that pilot off and make her leap. The boys can pick her up and we’ll probably find out what all this is about.”

“*Brat-a-tat-tat-tat!*” went his guns.

The stream of lead went pounding into the control surfaces of the other Sea Hawk. She nosed down like a falling arrow and headed for the water at 300 miles an hour. Benson curled around in easy spirals and watched.

Before he could figure out what the other pilot was about to do, a white, bubbling boil appeared

directly below them. The diving Sea Hawk leveled off quickly, flattened out and dropped gently on the water not many yards away.

“Hello! A sub!” said Buzz. “Well, maybe the old S-75 has popped up just in time to grab these birds.”

A GRIM, greenish something carved a foam-flecked path out of the ocean and wobbled to an even keel on the surface of the water. Like lightning, the downed Sea Hawk taxied across to it, and before Benson realized that the submarine was not the S-75, or any other United States navy ship, the amphibian had run its pontoon up onto a double-runner guideway that glistened across the forward deck of the submarine, and was being drawn up and into a glowering open hangar. The wings of the Sea Hawk flipped back, and before Benson could get his ship into a dive, the big water-tight doors had closed and the sub was blowing air for another dip beneath the turgid rollers.

“Why, that’s a Jap fish!” bellowed Benson to himself as the last part of the conning tower began to slide away. “Whatever is after me this time is certainly getting plenty of backing from somewhere. The number of that sub was 1-77. Must be a new one. Didn’t know they had any of these seaplane carriers. But it just goes to show that old Rear-Admiral Cummings was right. We don’t know the half of it.”

Benson plopped his ship down alongside the *Canopus*, his face clouded with disgust. A boom was swung over and a tackle lowered so that his ship could be lifted aboard until he was ready to go aboard the S-75.

A tall, lean-faced young officer leaned over the rail while the men brought the Sea Hawk aboard. The plane was placed forward and Benson slid over the combing.

“I’m Flag-Lieutenant Wilberforce,” said the young officer, coming up and extending his hand. “I suppose you are Benson.”

“That’s me, lieutenant,” grinned Buzz, “and I certainly made a bum of myself, letting him get away like that, didn’t I?”

“Well, it was hard to figure out from here. What sub was that?”

“Marked 1-77,” answered Buzz. “A seaplane carrier of the latest type, all right.”

“Seaplane carrier 1-77?” echoed Wilberforce. “Why, they have no such ship listed under the London Naval treaty. That’s a queer one.”

“They busted a lot of treaties in that splurge,” went on Benson. “There was a girl in that back seat, and she used that gun like a veteran.”

“A girl!” gasped Wilberforce. “That’s a pip, too. You were shot down from that transport ship yesterday morning, weren’t you? We got a wire from San Diego an hour ago. They found a part of a sub-machine gun in the lavatory, and as far as they can check up only one person went in there after the ship left Los Angeles, and that was a Japanese girl, listed on the passenger list as Miss Taki Woeng-Sung.”

“Well, what does that mean?” grinned Buzz.

“Come into the gun-room. We can talk better there,” said Wilberforce. “I don’t believe anyone anymore.”

Buzz reported to the skipper of the *Canopus* and then took his papers to the officers’ gun-room with the flag-lieutenant. Orders had been given for the hurried repair of the Sea Hawk, and they settled down for a talk.

“So the Shinto Shark has been trying to get his teeth into you?” grinned Wilberforce, opening up the conversation.

“His teeth, lieutenant?” asked Buzz. “As far as I’m concerned, it looks as if the Shark is a lady-fish.”

Wilberforce allowed his brows to wrinkle. “Come to think of it, there is a possibility that the Shinto Shark might be a woman, but there are too many other angles. This jane, whoever she is, is only one of the Shark’s tools. He’s too smart to show himself like that.”

“I’ll bet you a good drink, lieutenant,” snapped Buzz, “that one of those two people in that other Sea Hawk was the Shinto Shark! They wouldn’t take a chance on anyone else bringing that outlaw sub across the Pacific, to get him. And by the way, I was told that my Sea Hawk was the only one that has been made like this. It’s a special job for seaplane-sub work. How is it that this egg has one exactly like it?”

“You’ve got me, Benson,” answered Wilberforce. “It just goes to show what we are up against. This thing has only been planned for a week. We snatched that Sea Hawk of yours up from the factory. They had built it as an

experiment, hoping to sell a hundred or so to the government. As far as we knew, it was the only one they had.”

“Well, it makes it all the tougher,” agreed Buzz. “But I suppose we’ll have to go through with it now. What’s the idea?”

“Here it is,” said the flag-lieutenant, in a low voice. “Tomorrow we pick up the S-75 and go aboard. Sea Hawk and everything. Nine days later we’ll be off a small island north of the mouth of the Yangtze Kiang River, or about one hundred miles, airline, from Shanghai. From there we hop off and sneak into the Fourth Marine area which is just south of the Chinese 19th Route Army headquarters.”

“Ow!” winced Buzz.

“That’s just it. We have to take a chance through both Japanese and Chinese air zones. We might be chopped off by either side, but that’s the chance we have to take. We have to get these secret emergency orders, with the maps, codes and everything, right into the hands of Colonel Hooker of the Fourth Marines and Colonel Gasser, commanding the 31st Infantry Regiment. If we fail, and something slips in Shanghai, those Japs will clean that handful of Yanks out in twenty minutes.”

“I can see that they’re in a tough spot without organization,” agreed Buzz. “But why can’t we hide somewhere south of Shanghai? We could go in from that side then and duck flying through the lines.”

“Can’t do it. They are watching that end of the zone like cats. You see, they figure all our naval strength will come up from Guam and the Philippines. That’s another reason for this submarine business. They figure the S-75 out of business, and won’t attempt to check her position.”

“It’s a pretty smart move, all right,” nodded Buzz, “but I hope this Shark guy is fooled. Somehow, I don’t believe he is.”

THE next ten days were a nightmare of glaring headlines that sent America war-crazy. Newsboys screeched their extras and enterprising news dealers brought out the old bulletin boards that had lain idle since the stirring days of 1917-18. Pacifist groups rallied about their standards and hired convention halls to stop the carnage that was

going on in the Chapei district. More U. S. troops were dispatched to the Pacific under the guise of participation in the annual Blue and Red war maneuvers.

A few gunboats steamed up the Wangpoo River and watched the smoldering fire that threatened any minute to belch out and envelop the whole world. A Japanese bomber was shot down in the Chenju district and the Chinese carved out the hearts of the dead airmen. A thousand American aviators offered their services to form a Chinese Foreign Legion, to emulate the glorious deeds of the Lafayette Escadrille. Japanese warships squatted in the bend of the Wangpoo River and hurled shells on the Woosung forts. Wild uprisings occurred in the various international settlements.

Two American missionary headquarters were shelled, and tongue-in-the-cheek apologies were made. Several British warships appeared suddenly from nowhere and steamed into the mouth of the Yangtze River—and waited. American marines patrolled the streets of Shanghai, silent and alert. British and American planes slipped quietly into the old Chinese racetrack and went through systematic ground duties.

The tang of war was in the air. The pungent odor of burned cordite smote the nostrils, making old war horses prick up their ears and stride out with an almost forgotten marching step. More threats were made, more towns bombed and shelled, more troops dispatched, and still it raged on—an unofficial war.

But during it all, a Yankee submarine raced westward, submerged by day and riding the surface at night, followed by a nonchalant old submarine-tender.

And not twenty cable-lengths away—just out of range of prying submarine oscillators—steamed the Japanese I-77, following the wake of the undersea ship that was supposed to be at the bottom of the ocean.

At last the *Canopus* steamed into the Yangtze River and dropped anchor. Ten miles north, in the shadow of an island off Cape Conway, lay the S-75. Down in the oil-filmed dungeon that had been their nautical prison for nearly ten days, Benson and Wilberforce proceeded to prepare themselves for the mad race into Shanghai. The motor of the

Sea Hawk up front was checked and her fuel tanks filled.

The hidden guns were loaded and the secret plans and code books secreted about Wilberforce's person. At least Benson assumed that he did.

At midnight the S-75 blew her tanks and rose to the surface. Silently the great doors of the water-tight hangar glided open and the Sea Hawk was slipped down the greasy cradle-way into the water. Benson whirled the inertia starter and kicked the engine over. The *Wasp* opened up hoarsely and finally smoothed down to an even bellow of power. With a final glance at Wilberforce, Benson gave his ship the gun and raced away into the night.

In ten minutes they were screaming along at 5,000 over Tsung-ming Island and nosing down for the mouth of the Wangpoo River.

"There's the Jap seaplane carrier *Hosho* down there," said the flag-lieutenant to Benson. "That baby has thirty ships aboard, all of them faster than this. Back there is the *Akagi*, a 26,000-tonner. She's got fifty war jobs beneath decks. Ten twenty-millimeter guns, four twelve millimeter guns and twelve 12 M.M. anti-aircraft guns. What she could do to us!"

"I hope that Shark guy isn't aboard," replied Buzz, staring down at the war-torn city,

JAPANESE artillery was belching away at Chapei from the open fields west of the Hongkew native section. A temporary landing flare streaked across the Jap landing ground at Hongkew, and something told Benson that all was not well.

Suddenly as they approached Chingwan, after following the railroad south from Woosung, a glaring sword-blade of light slashed across the sky and caught them full in its glare.

"Damn!" snapped Buzz. "They've got searchlights!"

"Sure. What do you think this is—a musical comedy war?" growled Wilberforce through his tube.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

"Go on! Nose down for the river and cut back from there!" yelled Wilberforce.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Three ear-splitting crashes splashed a yellow yolk of fire across the sky. The

Sea Hawk faltered against the wall of concussion that was hurled against it.

Bang! Bang! Bang! The guns from the Japanese aircraft carriers were pelting away like madness itself. But the gunnery was excellent. A curtain of shell splinters, tipped with snarling flame, was thrown up and cut them off. Benson cut back over the city and tried to break through. This was anti-aircraft gunnery of 1932, not 1917, to which he had been accustomed.

Again the range was changed, and another creeping barrage of aerial opposition flamed out.

“Dive! Dive!” screamed Wilberforce. “For God’s sake get out of this!”

Benson dived for nearly two thousand feet—and came out smack in the middle of a formation of Jap fighters.

One glance and he knew it was all up. They were the latest Mitsubishi fighters with 300-horsepower Mitsubishi-Hispano engines. He recalled in that mad minute of stark realization that they could do 185 at 20,000 feet. At this height they should be doing 200 with ease.

“Get that gun out and go to it,” yelled Benson. “We’re in for it now. Let’s go!”

He could sense the rattle of the Fairey gun-mounting being drawn out from its cover.

“I’m going to try and get through. You take care of these guys if they get on our tails.” bellowed Benson through his Gosport.

The Mitsubishi fighters cut over and nosed at them. The glare of the added searchlight beams blinded Benson for a minute, and before he could get his guns ready for firing, he had charged into the lot of them.

Brat-at-a-tat-tat-tat-tat! went Wilberforce’s gun in the rear pit. The leading Mitsubishi folded up in a garish tangle of struts, wire and elevators. There was a hollow puff and the tumbling ship went into flames that vied with the yellow glare of the fingering beams from below.

“Wow!” gagged Buzz. “That’s done it. We’re in the war for keeps now.”

Then a metallic hail caught them full broadside. The remaining Mitsubishis opened up with their twin guns. The Sea Hawk floundered and trembled. Wilberforce’s gun answered the fire and smashed the front out of a Jap scout so that it lost its prop blades and ripped the motor out of the

bearers. She went down with her nose torn off—a regular glider.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Another Mitsubishi cut over and gave the Sea Hawk a torrential baptism of lead. A strut went out with a scream and the wing tip sagged. Buzz charged over and fought for position to get a shot at them, while the flag-lieutenant in the rear kept up a hail of fire that drew wild designs in the sky.

Bang! Bang! Bang! The anti-aircraft fire from below slashed out in front of him again and he had to slide out. Another Mitsubishi came into the fight and thrashed them with spinning lead. Benson finally got his nose on a floundering scout and let drive.

His wing-guns flicked out their serpent like tongues of flame and spat a burst or two into the wallowing Mitsubishi. She recoiled under the charge and fell off—smack into another that was coming along a few points off her wing tip.

“There’s a break,” grinned Buzz. “That guy was coming up to protect old Waddler’s tail and gets it in the face himself. I hope he’s silked for a long drop.”

The two Jap ships, locked in a death embrace, fell away, strewing the sky with struts, wings, fabric and propeller blades.

“That’s four of them, Buzz!” yelled Wilberforce. “Let’s beat it! There are only two of them left and they’re losing heart.”

“O.K.!” replied Benson, leaning over to pick up his bearings. They were well over the Japanese area east of Chapei. With a whirl he threw the Sea Hawk over to race into the Fourth Marine area about ten miles further to the southwest when out of nowhere came a flight of single-seaters, bearing the scarlet disk of the Japanese army,

“Holy mackerel!” gasped Buzz. “Kawanishi II’s this time. They’ve only got 625-horsepower B.M.W. engines. What a life!”

BENSON was right. The Sea Hawk had managed to best the Mitsubishi ships, through a break, but to try and fight these babies—eight of them—was quite another thing.

He nosed down, turning to the right and beat it. It was like a tugboat running away from Gar Wood.

The Kawanishi ships were on them like a flight of eagles. The first burst from Wilberforce’s gun

stopped the leader, but the rest of them ganged up and shot the Sea Hawk to ribbons.

The *Wasp*, choked and gasped. Benson's goggles went into splinters and sailed away in the slipstream. A chunk of metal caught Wilberforce smack in the mouth and dropped him cold in the bottom of the cockpit.

There was nothing to do but switch off and dive for the lighted airdrome below. The Kawanishi ships flocked in like vultures and apparently sensed that the unmarked ship was riding in to surrender. Benson slid her in between a group of ground tractors that had been leveling the field off. The floodlights streamed out and bathed them in light. The Sea Hawk rumbled along on hex amphibian gear and ripped the bottom out of the pontoon.

"Quick! Come on, Wilberforce. Let's beat it. Perhaps we can get away!"

But Wilberforce was out cold. Benson knew he had to get the man away somehow and he struggled to yank him out of the cockpit. After all, the flag-lieutenant had the all-important papers and code books.

Before he could get the navy man clear, something crashed against Benson and sent him sprawling. He arose and glared into a glinting ring of bayonets, held at the "on-guard" by a squad of slant-eyed Japs. They chanted something, and instinctively Buzz knew it was hands-up or the equivalent.

He raised his arms, and one of the Japs stepped behind him, flicked up a short stubby arm and with a dexterous movement hurled Buzz over his shoulder to the feet of the Jap soldiers. That was all Benson remembered until he came to, later on, in a hangar office.

He was sprawled back on a crate, evidently a motor box. Across the room, relaxed in a chair, lay Wilberforce, his face a gory mask of dried blood and dirt.

"Take it—take it—easy. Buzz," he gargled. "They'll rip your liver out. Bad actors!"

Buzz stared about, his eyes gradually finding their focus. The jolt from a toss by an experienced jiu jitsu artist takes the gravy out of one. At last the wobbly scene began to settle itself and the flying reporter saw that they were in a room, surrounded by anxious-eyed Japs. A little bowlegged devil, in Jap uniform and wearing a

Red Cross armband, was bustling about with some small bottles and pads of gauze. Evidently he had been called in to fix them up and bring them around.

STANDING before them were several serious-faced officers. They talked in low tones and stared back and forth at their prisoners. As Benson opened his eyes, one of them stepped forward, and the ring of guards jiggled their bayoneted rifles.

"I am Colonel Takeuchi of the 9th Aviation Regiment," he said. "You are Americans?"

"Manipulate the noodle. Buzz," growled Wilberforce.

The Japs turned and looked puzzled at this dash of slang-language. Buzz manipulated.

"I am an American newspaper correspondent," opened Buzz.

"Flying an unmarked ship, carrying machine guns?" hissed the Japanese colonel. He repeated Buzz's explanation to his colleagues.

"It was the only one I could get, and I had to get here fast," went on Buzz. "You can check up on me with the United States consul."

"But your companion is an American naval officer. You flew from some American naval ship. Which one?"

"Noodle! Noodle! Noodle!" cackled Wilberforce.

Buzz thought again, while the puzzled Japs stared at the flag-lieutenant.

"I came in on a Dollar Line ship, and to make better speed, had my plane put overboard 300 miles out and attempted to fly in. I brought this gentleman with me, as he was in a hurry, too. I intended to use the plane for covering the various fronts. It was built especially for me, and there was no time to put on the necessary markings. We intended to do so as soon as we arrived at the Fourth U.S. Marine area. Your ships attacked us, and it was a case of life or death. We tried to fight our way out, intending to make an official explanation in the morning."

"But the machine guns!" fenced the Japanese colonel.

"They were on when the ship was turned over to me. There was no time to remove them. They were to be taken off when we landed."

“There was no time to remove the guns or paint on your insignia while you were crossing the Pacific?” inquired Colonel Takeuchi. “You see, your story does not hold water. There is but one channel open for us. You have destroyed several of His Imperial Majesty’s planes and killed Japanese airmen. There will be a court-martial, and the result is plainly evident.”

“Can’t we get in touch with the U.S. consul?” snapped Buzz.

“You are not Americans, as far as we know. No insignia. Flying under no colors at all. There is no necessity for annoying your honorable consul with such matters. He would do nothing. He has enough worries now.”

“Well, what are you going to do with us?”

At this point a Japanese dispatch rider came in and saluted. He handed an envelope to Colonel Takeuchi, and stepped back. The Jap officer opened the envelope and took out the thin sheet of paper. Benson watched Wilberforce as it was being read. Wilberforce turned and slipped Buzz a glance of resignation. They both knew that this spelled fate in red letters.

Colonel Takeuchi almost gagged as he tried to explain the contents in the broken-platter sounding language of the Land of the Rising Sun. Both Benson and Wilberforce caught the word “Shinto” in the clatter of vocal castanets.

“Sounds like Mutt and Jeff have fallen into the dentistry of the Shark,” said Wilberforce.

“Well, watch little Jeff slip out,” replied Buzz.

“WE HAVE received orders for you,” broke in Colonel Takeuchi, having settled the matter with his *aide-de-camp*. “You are both to be removed at once to Port Arthur. We believe our friend here, Meester Wilberforce, has some interesting information to give us. Perhaps we can come to some happy understanding. You have some papers with you, Meester Wilberforce?”

“Yeh—cigarette papers,” rasped the naval man. “Got any Bull on you?”

“He’s got plenty,” said Buzz. “Watch out for him. I’m slipping a hawser in a minute.”

“You do not understand,” said Takeuchi in his oily manner. “You have some secret papers of importance. We would like to see them.”

“You’ve got the wrong guy, I guess,” grinned Wilberforce through his mask of gore. “The

American commanders already have them. A Y.M.C.A. man took them in this afternoon.”

“We shall see,” nodded Takeuchi gravely. “Perhaps the iron glove or the boot will help you to make up your mind.”

“We’ll raise hell about this!” screamed Wilberforce. “You can’t stick my fist in a red-hot glove. I demand that you put my case before the U.S. authorities at once!”

The guards rushed forward and ringed the enraged flag-lieutenant in with glistening steel. He felt a bayonet against his gullet and fell back.

“Keep your chin up,” muttered Buzz. “I’m pulling a canter in a minute.”

The Japs looked at Benson, still puzzled. They couldn’t figure his lingo at all.

“You gentlemen will be removed to a Japanese naval vessel at once. Port Arthur is about 600 miles away. You will be far away from points where you might do further damage, and there will be plenty of time for you to consider whether you will give up the papers you are carrying—somewhere about your person.”

Benson stared at Wilberforce again. So they had searched him, and had not found the codes and plans. Where the devil had he put them?

Together they were marched out of the hangar office, between two files of Jap guards. They turned and headed into the darkness, passing the fronts of three more canvas hangars. Several ships stood outside with Jap mechanics pouring gasoline into their tanks from small, red one-gallon cans.

“How you pulling the Houdini?” asked Wilberforce, as they marched along.

“Never mind. Keep your chin up, and if they get you away, don’t give up until the finish. I’ll get you out somehow.”

His words were cut off by the sudden glare of a ground lamp that threw a blanket of white light across the uneven field from a searchlight lorry. Then out of the sky above came a short-winged two-seater that flashed into the glare and landed not thirty yards away from them.

“See that?” whispered Buzz. “It’s the other Sea Hawk!”

THEY were just approaching a Mitsubishi-Hanriot training ship that stood out on the newly packed tarmac. As quick as lightning, Buzz

slipped his hand into his coat pocket and drew out a match. It was a sturdy, wooden match, and, unseen, he flicked his nail across the sulphur tip and tossed it between two of the guards. It fell into the cockpit of the trainer, with a trail of white smoke and a glow that increased as it went.

Almost instantly there was a glare of flame from the interior of the trainer. The ship, sodden with oil and gasoline that had been poured in under war conditions, belched out with a mushrooming puff.

For an instant the guard halted without a command. Then, amid a clatter of rifles and a crackling of Japanese orders, they all rushed up to douse the flames. Benson ducked back and slid under the sweep of a gleaming bayonet. Two Japs leaped on Wilberforce and he went down. Buzz flipped his foot out and caught a spindle-legged guard smack in the shin and he went to his knees. Buzz grabbed his rifle, swung it around his head and felt the welcome thud of a skull against the butt. In an instant the tarmac was in an uproar. Buzz got clear and ducked under the wing of the burning plane. One of the guards tried to follow him, but Benson rammed his bayonet full into his throat. The man went down in a welter of gore, struggling and clutching at his gullet.

Across the field Benson tore, heading for the Sea Hawk that had just landed. The prop still twinkled in the blaze of the landing light and the glare from the crackling trainer.

He saw two shadows slip away from the ship. He fired twice while running, but the figures dodged into a broad shadow cast across the field by the mystery Sea Hawk.

"Come on, Wilberforce!" bellowed Buzz, taking his place beneath the cockpit of the ship.

But Wilberforce was nowhere to be seen. Buzz instinctively knew that the Japs had grabbed him at once. There was nothing to be done about it. He leaped into the Sea Hawk and gave her the gun.

"Well, we'll have to get him out some other way," stormed Buzz, yanking the two-seater over the Jap hangars and heading back to the mouth of the Yangtze. "They'll probably rush him up to Port Arthur at once. But how?"

He climbed away for altitude and studied the strange ship. As far as he could recall, the ship was exactly the same as the other Sea Hawk

except that it did not carry the metal plate usually placed in the cockpit by the manufacturer.

"Somebody got a copy of that crate, bought up enough spare parts from various branches of the company, and with a little work placed in the two cockpits and assembled it themselves. No one but a crafty Jap would think of that. They don't miss a trick."

Less than an hour later, Benson was circling the long black shadow that lay off Cape Conway, firing two Very lights for a signal. The long, sleek submarine below blew her tanks and came to the surface—just long enough to allow Benson to drop down and run his ship into the water-tight hangar. Then they submerged again and moved away to the north.

"IT'S A damned shame," growled Skipper Jimmy O'Dowd of the S-75. "They'll give Wilberforce the works, all right. We've got to get him out of that joint."

"But has he the papers on him?" asked Buzz. "He said something about an American Y.M.C.A. man getting them in."

"That was hooey. He has the dope all right. It's written with secret invisible ink in his white undershirt. The old gag, but it usually works. You don't suppose he'd be carrying papers around with him, do you?"

"I don't know what to think any more," said Buzz. "I've seen and heard so much funny business so far, I'm completely up a tree. I wonder who this Shinto Shark is."

"Well, if he's a Shinto, you can expect anything of him," went on O'Dowd. "I've been in the Orient long enough to get a few of their trick ideas. It's the primitive religion of Japan, you know. They have no moral codes at all."

"Sound like tough eggs," agreed Buzz. "But what I'm interested in is this guy who calls himself the Shinto Shark, and what his aims are."

"We'll never know until we get him," growled O'Dowd.

"But first we must get old Wilberforce," snapped Buzz. "What do you think they'll do?"

"Well, here's how it's all running to my mind," said O'Dowd. "We got a message from the *Canopus* a little while ago, saying that the Jap submarine 1-77 took aboard a Nakijima-Breguet seaplane a short time after you made your

getaway from the Hongkew field. There were two men in the seaplane, and one certainly appeared to be injured—well, helpless.”

“Cripes!” gasped Buzz. “I’ll bet the Shark has taken Wilberforce aboard the 1-77 and they are going to take him up to Port Arthur in that pig-boat!”

“You’re not so dumb, are you?” grinned O’Dowd. “But what can we do about it?”

“Pull a lever, ring a few bells and let’s go!” answered Buzz. “We can catch them, can’t we?”

“But you can’t go barging about the Pacific that way without sailing orders,” protested the pig-boat commander. “What do you think this is? The Air Service?”

“To hell with the orders! We’re going after them,” bellowed Buzz. “If you get fired from this oil can, I’ll get you a couple of battleships all for yourself. Leave it to me—I can talk my way into anything!”

“I gotta hunch you’re talking me into some agate type in the service gazette now,” growled O’Dowd. “You know—‘Dismissed for the good of the Service’ or something.”

“You’re wasting time! Let’s go.”

“Wait. I’ve got to send a message to the *Canopus* and tip her off. We’ll try and get through with the sub-oscillators.”

So, while Jerry O’Dowd had one of his gobs signal the *Canopus*, Buzz went up a hatchway and went to work priming his new Sea Hawk for anything that might turn up. For one thing, he planted a quartet of twenty-pound fragmentation bombs in the wing racks and filled the gas tanks for plenty of action.

IT WAS nearly dawn before the S-75 got under way. The commander of the *Canopus* was advised of the plan, and he in turn got in touch with Admiral Taylor, commander-in-chief of the Asiatic fleet aboard the U.S.S. Houston. At once the seriousness of the situation was apparent, for if the slip-up had gotten out, war would have been unavoidable. As it was, the only course open was to get Wilberforce back safely without the world’s knowing what had happened. At the same time it was more than imperative that the American flag-lieutenant be saved, and with him the secret emergency plans of the Americans.

Once these were in the possession of the Japanese the American forces would not be safe. The invading Japs would be able to attack and have a fine excuse to lay before the other Powers later. If they didn’t attack, they still held something of an unseen sword over the United States troops, who would be left stranded without the safety of a prearranged plan for getting out or defending themselves.

The orders were:

“Save Wilberforce, if humanly possible—but destroy any chance of secret emergency plans falling into the hands of the Japanese. Sink 1-77 if necessary.”

It was evident that the U.S. Naval commanders had decided to use the supposedly sunk S-75 to the limit. If in the final desperate effort the 1-77 had to be sunk, there would have been no evidence that any American ship had had anything to do with it. Everyone—even the S-75—could be accounted for.

Then began the race of the undersea boats.

The 1-77 had a start of well over two hours, which considering her best surface speed would give them a lead of about fifty miles. At that rate she would reach Port Arthur by midnight or a few hours later depending on the weather. The S-75 had a surface speed of about 27 knots an hour which was a bit better than that of the Japanese craft. It would be a great race.

Aboard the Japanese 1-77, which was speeding north through the Yellow Sea and heading for the Shantung Promontory, lay the much-battered flag-lieutenant Wilberforce. He was trussed up to the metal uprights of a folding steel bunk in the compartment, his arms high and wide above his head and his feet uncomfortably wide apart. He was suffering the tortures of the damned.

His chin, which had suffered a wicked wound in the fight against the eight Kawanishi IIs, itched and burned as the flesh tried to knit itself. His feet were numb and his muscles trembled and throbbed. At times he took his weight on his wrists, but the strain almost pulled his arms out of their sockets. He cursed and raved at two men who sat at a small, steel folding table, not four feet away.

They were strange men, both Japanese, but inconsistent to the general description of the men of Nippon. The first was a broad-shouldered naval officer, whose saffron complexion alone marked him as a Jap. His face, while filmed with the oil vapor so evident in all submarines, had well-defined features. His eyes were not marked with the Mongol fold to any great extent, and only the slightest of a slant was noticeable. He spoke with the intonation of the European, although he used the Japanese tongue,

THE other man was an even greater human puzzle—tall, ungainly and yet catlike in every movement. He had a strange, oblong face, piercing eyes, also unhampered to any great extent by slant, and he spoke in short, jerky sentences, while he threw suspicious glances left and right. Something told Wilberforce that this man was a Manchu, or at least of Manchu extraction. He was dressed in flying kit.

A few more words were passed, and an oil-filmed seaman clumped in across the metal floor and handed the naval officer a message.

“You are ready, Meester Wilberforce?” then inquired the man in flying kit. “We have but little time to waste on you. We must have those plans and code books.”

“Go to hell!” responded Wilberforce. “You’ve used everything on me but a stomach pump, and haven’t found anything. It should be pretty evident that I am not carrying whatever it is you want. There’ll be hell to pay about this, unless I’m quickly released.”

“Oh, no! You are wrong, Meester Wilberforce. You are already dead,” grinned the man in the leather coat. “You went down on the submarine S-75, did you not?”

At this sally, both Japanese grinned broadly.

Wilberforce knew this was the truth. There was no escape, whether he handed over the secret plans, or not. They would finish him off, no matter what happened. His only chance was that Benson would keep his word and get him out. From where Wilberforce stood—or hung—the chance appeared to be pretty slim.

“You’ll never get anything out of me!” raged Wilberforce, in a frenzy of desperation. Then he almost bit his tongue out for uttering that remark. The two Japs leaped at it.

“Ah—so! You do have the information somewhere, eh?” snapped the man in the leather coat. Then he turned and explained the importance of the statement to the naval officer across the table. The other Jap almost leaped out of his sea boots.

Wilberforce wanted to scream. He struggled and raged, the cruel cords biting into his bruised flesh deeper and deeper.

“Well, well, well!” taunted the man in the leather coat. “So the Shinto Shark has won out at last, eh?”

Wilberforce halted his struggles, and stared across at the tall Jap. His eyes widened, and his lower jaw dropped.

“You—you—the Shinto Shark?” he gasped. The bonds bit in again as he tried to break away.

“Yes, I’m the Shinto Shark. Meet him in the flesh. True gold fears no fire. I might as well tell you my story. You will never be able to repeat it.”

He nodded to the naval officer, who responded by leaving the compartment.

“I am a Mongol,” he opened, “a descendant of the great Kublai Khan, My great forefather made the mistake of falling in love with the daughter of the Emperor—his own niece—but a marriage was allowed, and then they were both banished to a small estate on the extreme eastern border of Mongolia. From that day on we have been the true rulers of Manchuria. Today, I, the Shinto Shark, whose family name is Hasar Khan, make my first great bid to regain Manchuria for my people.”

“But you’re Chinese, by right. Why ally yourself with the Japs?” growled Wilberforce.

“That is true, but we cannot gain what we would by fair means. We must use the white man’s method and try foul. This submarine is in the hands of Karin Husek, a Fishskin Tartar, who is supposed to be a loyal son of Nippon. Who but the sages are free from faults? We are using it to gain our own ends. Japan and China will fight one another to the death, and Manchuria, the pride of Asia and the pacemaker of the new commercial world, will return to the rule of the Hasar Khans.”

“THEN your idea is to actually start a war and clean up when the rest are knocked out, eh?” growled Wilberforce.

“Exactly. And America will help us!” chuckled the big Manchu across his gigantic teeth. Wilberforce wanted to smash him to the floor.

“But why pick on America?” parried the Yankee naval man.

“Bah! America! That is my battle!” raged the Shinto Shark. “Americans—I hate you all. I’ll live to see the day when the great white continent will be swarmed over by my Mongols, my Fishskins and my Tartars. We shall plant a new civilization there, and I shall enforce the *Kojiki* of the Shinto religion. Even my Mongols, my Fishskins and my Tartars shall accept it. It is the only religion for the race that shall someday rule the world. It was swallowed in the ninth century by Buddhism, but a strong emetic in the form of national political feeling brought Shintoism to light again.”

The Shinto Shark gazed in rapture at the oily metal ceiling and repeated a chanting litany to *Izanagi*, the ancestral god of his people.

“But I still can’t figure your scrap with the United States,” fenced Wilberforce again. “There’s nothing in Shintoism that would warrant your actions toward my country.”

“You do not know!” screamed the Shinto Shark. “You do not know! But do not forget that ancestor worship is a great law of Shintoism. I am carrying out my pledge to my honorable mother who was disgraced by an American officer during the Boxer Rebellion when we were visiting Peking in 1900.”

“Yes—yes,” snapped Wilberforce. “I know of that case. It has been one of the great example cases of the U.S. Navy. The officer was court-martialed and sentenced to death. My country did all possible to provide justice in the matter. It was unfortunate.”

“Unfortunate!” screamed the Shinto Shark, leaping to his feet and crashing his open hand into Wilberforce’s face. “Those are honeyed, deceiving words—arsenic soaked in honey! Bah! The name of my honorable mother was dragged across the face of the globe! No firing squad could blast away the disgrace of that, could it?”

Wilberforce spat out two teeth and held his tongue. It was evident that there was no arguing with this mad-man. The Shinto Shark strode up and down the confined companionway, mumbling in a singsing manner, while the American captive

strained and struggled to ease his position. He wondered how much longer he could hold out.

The hours passed slowly as the 1-77 ploughed through the Yellow Sea. At intervals the fuming Shinto Shark came in, prodded Wilberforce out of his state of semi-consciousness and demanded to know where he had secreted the plans and codes. But the gallant American refused to answer.

BY HIGH noon the Jap submarine 1-77 was off Shantung and hissing through the narrow neck of water that separated the projecting point of China from Korea. Not thirty miles behind charged the American S-75, her Diesels pounding out every ounce of horsepower. Two men joined by an unseen bond of friendship, forged in the crucible of an unofficial war, pondered the same situation.

One tramped up and down the gun-room of the S-75, begging for information and checking their position against the naval charts that hung behind glass. The other, suspended from the tubular supports of a metal submarine cabin bed, was undergoing the tortures of a medieval dungeon. His fate lay in the next few miles. Would Benson make it?

The Jap submarine came to the surface to charge her batteries again. They were running low, having been submerged for many hours during the past week. They were nearing Port Arthur now, and could take more chances on the surface.

From where he hung, still suspended from the bunk supports, Wilberforce could hear the drone of the Diesels and the generators. Whenever anyone opened the narrow, ovaloid door, he could see the control room, and the Japanese submarine officers leaning over the chart boards and peering into the periscope.

Finally the main hatch was opened, and small groups of the crew were allowed to go on top and get a little fresh air. A sudden relaxation fell about the whole ship. But it all meant nothing to Wilberforce—he was too far gone by now. His legs no longer had any semblance of life in them. When he moved with the rolling of the boat, a tantalizing sensation shot through his shoulders and caused him to moan.

The man known as the Shinto Shark came in and looked at him closely. He was afraid that

Wilberforce would pass out before they could gain the information they so desired. He slapped the man's face gently and saw him open his eyes.

"Are you ready to give in?" he growled, "or do we have to take you all the way and put on the boot or the iron glove?"

The reply was an effort, but it was to the point.

"Go—go—to hell!" muttered Wilberforce.

The face of the Shinto Shark screwed up into a cruel grimace. He started to hurl another blow, but his own fears—fears for the life of the man he intended to murder—held him back. He mouthed a bitter Manchu curse.

The door of the compartment crashed open. The little broad-shouldered Jap officer tore into the berth. He squealed something and pointed upwards. Wilberforce felt a strange trickle of life steal up his spine.

"Up above!" screamed the Jap officer. "The ship flies above us. It will attack. We must submerge."

"Damnation of a hundred devils!" screamed the Shinto Shark, darting for the door.

Before he could pass through, a terrific explosion belched out on the surface plates above. The Shinto Shark went headlong out of the open door and crawled toward the ladder that led up through the conning tower. The little Fishskin spun around, the front of his forehead a gaping, gory wound. He pitched headlong across the small metal chamber and died in a choking convulsion at the feet of Wilberforce.

Benson had caught up!

A SLANTING spearhead of light gleamed through the shattered plates above, and all chances of submerging were blasted away. The engines of the 1-77 wheezed to a halt, and the submarine wallowed into a stop. On top, the feet of running men could be heard as they scrambled about the anti-aircraft guns that were being cranked up out of their watertight beds. Ammunition was broken out, and the 4-inch guns clattered into action.

"The winged dog!" bawled the Shinto Shark. "He has taken off from the S-75 and has caught us himself. The spawn of lizards will be up with us in half an hour. Dog of a dog!"

The anti-aircraft guns belched out at the screaming, diving falcon that was tearing down at

them again. Another pair of bombs was released. An inferno of hostile fire smashed up at him, but his first bomb ripped out the stern section and took away the rudder and elevating fins. The second missed, but the concussion buckled the stern plates badly,

"Hi! Hi!" screamed the Shinto. "Get out Nakijima! Get out the seaplane!"

And while the enemy gunners kept up a rattling fire, the hangar of the Jap submarine was opened up, and as the Nakijima-Breguet's motor was started, she was slipped over the side and dropped gently on the surging rollers.

With anxious expressions the Jap seamen watched the Shinto Shark climb aboard the seaplane. Somehow they felt that this man was leaving them to a watery grave. They glanced back and waited for the orders from their commander, but he was nowhere in sight. A junior officer attempted to take over the command, but he was not equal to the task. No one obeyed his orders.

Above, Benson saw what was happening, and realized at once that his first dive had prevented the submarine from slipping beneath the surface of the water again. Then, when a man in flying clothing clambered out of the conning tower and made for the seaplane hangar, he realized that he had at last caught up with the Shinto Shark!

"Damn him!" fumed the flying reporter. "He's beating it and leaving the crew to their fate. He won't fight me!"

He saw the Shinto Shark fling out a threatening fist, and then point contemptuously at the conning tower. He caught the horrible grimace on the man's face, and knew that Wilberforce was trapped inside.

With another oath, he nosed down and raked the submarine from stem to stern, and bowled seamen off like ninepins. One gun crew collapsed about the circular metal base of their gun. Others were battered to the flat catwalk of the sub's top-side, and went rolling over into the greasy water that lapped up at the floundering undersea vessel.

The Nakijima seaplane was screaming away as Benson pulled out of this dive, and he had no chance to get in a burst. He yanked his new Sea Hawk out gently, swung over, fought for height and sought the Japanese ship-board fighter.

The Shinto Shark had cut over and was roaring back toward the floundering submarine. Then, as Benson watched, he nosed his Nakijima sea-plane down and deliberately released two small bombs flush at the wallowing ship. For an instant Buzz could not figure this, but as the two projectiles exploded with a belch of flame, he realized that for some reason or another the Shinto Shark was sacrificing the submarine and what was left of the crew.

“The dirty hound!” bellowed Benson, who had been doing exactly the same, a few seconds before. But this was different. With another yelp of rage he nosed the Sea Hawk down and plunged full at the Japanese seaplane. A scream of Browning fire packed itself into the grim, pontooned job and she wobbled under the fusillade. Over she went on one wing tip, and floundered for her balance. Benson saw that the rest of the Japanese seamen were trying to man a small folding boat and get away. With a final charge he put his guns full on the Nakijima ship and let her have a full packet.

WITH a wail of strained wires splintered struts and a fractured wing, the Shinto Shark’s plane fell away and crashed, smack on top of the open conning tower. There was a flurry of splinters, chunks of metals and the last flurry of a whirling prop, and a telltale puff of white smoke billowed out from beneath the wreckage.

Like a flash, Benson shot his ship down, fishtailed like a madman and pancaked the Sea Hawk on the water not ten feet from the side of the ship. Switching off his engine, he grabbed an automatic from the cockpit holster, rammed it in his pocket and dived over the side.

“I’m coming, Wilberforce!” he yelled as he took the last stroke that brought him up to the side of the submarine.

With a struggle he managed to scramble up the greasy side of the 1-77 by grasping a length of radio cable that had been cut down by the machine-gun fire.

Another ten seconds, and he was charging along the catwalk and climbing up to the conning-tower platform. What caught his eye there almost made him scream with madness. The crashed Nakijima had blocked the entrance, and the battered gasoline tank was pouring a flaming

cascade of blinding liquid down into the interior of the submarine.

“My God!” husked Benson, “if Wilberforce is down there, he’ll be roasted alive!”

For a minute he stood helpless. Then with a superhuman effort he ripped a part of the broken Nakijima away and directed the torrent of flaming liquid away from the opening so that it poured all over the curved deck.

“I’ll try it, by cripes!” he raged, “I’ll try it!”

And pulling his goggles back down over his eyes, and binding up the exposed part of his face with a woolen scarf from around his neck, he fought his way up under the wreckage and dropped down into the circular conning tower.

At last his feet dropped on the metal plates of the control room. He was half-blind, and part of his coat was burning. He flicked at the flames with his gloved hands and staggered on. Suddenly he stopped.

“Benson! Benson! Benson!” someone was screaming.

At last Buzz was able to distinguish the direction. He turned and charged through the swirling, black smoke that rolled all through the chamber. He took three steps and went through the narrow doorway, tripping over the high step and rolling across the floor, until he came up against the body of the Jap commander.

“Here! Up here! Quick, for God’s sake, Benson!” Wilberforce was screeching.

Finally the sound of the voice became plainer and the flying reporter arose, tottered across the floor again and finally came up against the trussed-up naval man. With a muffled roar of joy, Benson grabbed him.

“No! No!” screeched Wilberforce. “My hands and legs. They’re tied up. Cut me down!”

AT LAST it all dawned on Benson. Ripping off his glove, he drew out his automatic and, placing the muzzle near the taut cords, pulled the trigger. The report of the gun crashed back and forth across the metal compartment. But after three discharges, Wilberforce’s hands came free and he dropped like a dead man. With a snort of rage Buzz held him up like a sack of flour and carefully blasted the leg cords away.

Step by step they advanced, choking and spitting. Then at last they found the metal ladder with its rungs and hand-rail and began the climb.

Finally they reached the top of the conning tower, where the remains of the Nakijima ship was flaming away its last glorious display of fire. And in the cockpit, roasted to a crisp, lay the Shinto Shark,

Benson found the clamp that released the side door of the conning-tower. Ramming it open with his shoulder, he charged through, came out on the open platform and dropped—with Wilberforce—safe at last.

For several minutes they lay there and gasped for breath. Then, ripping off what was left of the burned scarf and his goggles. Buzz went to work to get Wilberforce clear of the submarine. What remained of the crew was out there, two hundred yards away, bobbing about safely in a folding lifeboat.

“We’ll take care of them when the *Canopus* comes up,” gurgled Buzz to himself. “Meanwhile I’m ducking out to get back to the S-75,”

They went skidding over the curved sides of the submarine and dropped into the water again. Wilberforce screamed as the salt brine licked at his wounds, but Buzz yanked him over on his back and started to swim toward the Sea Hawk, which was bobbing about not far away. In fifteen minutes they had clambered aboard.

The Sea Hawk screamed in triumph and leaped away, pointing her glistening nose for the S-75, that was wallowing along not ten miles away. That night the worry-tortured commanders of the American forces in China heard a strange story as a Secret Service man ran Flag-Lieutenant Wilberforce’s white undershirt through a secret developing bath that brought out the new codes and details.

“But I’m still wondering who that girl was,” said Buzz seriously.

He was to find out later!