

often oddly-shaped coral reef fishes, one of the most fascinating pastimes. As a matter of fact we could see them pretty well while we waded in shallow water by putting our faces close to but not below the surface. There seemed to be spotted, striped and solid patterns of almost every color, and we were amazed. When we were not doing that, we were collecting worn shells along the beach or live ones, especially cowries, from coral reefs exposed by the low tide. In the very small area of woods not occupied by people or buildings or something we hunted for lizards, finding quite a variety beside the common blue-tailed skink, but not collecting any. One of our better hunting grounds was on or in the vicinity of a pair-<sup>in</sup>nest fig tree, where, in a hollow, we also located and tussled with a large bluish crab or crayfish.

We took turns going ashore, usually half the squadron going one day, half the next, etc. When remaining aboard we spend a time sunning ourselves on the deck, as we did also at sea whenever it was warm enough, but at Ulithi it was pretty hot for any game.

Well, by the time we headed north again it had been nearly two weeks since we had flown, so

PRACTICE  
ATTACKS

we got in a couple of practice hops on the way. The first was some simulated glides on our battleships, and I took along the leading dental officer, who had never flown before, and he got a real thrill out of it. The second was something new - simulated kamikaze on our own carriers. We went out in groups and were to try to sneak in two or any way we could. The task group's combat air patrol was supposed to intercept us. Two of us came in low all the way, going up into the low ceiling just before making our attacks, and though I never discovered whether the ship's gunners had us in their sights, no fighters came anywhere near us until we were through. It was lots of fun, but it seemed as if we should have been picked up by radar in time for fighters to be directed after us even if we did have an advantage (though not against radar) in the weather.

## KYUSHU

We didn't go right back to Okinawa, but to up near Kyushu, and almost before we knew it were over Japan proper again. On one flight to Izumi airfield and another the same day, my second to Kanoya, we were after hangars and planes in revetments respectively. The flak over Kanoya was thick, and though we all came through that time, we lost Walter on another flight, "Nick" Nicholson, the fighter-bomber skipper.

and Danden. The Torpedos exec., were load ~~ed~~ on subsequent flights.

I went on two flights the next day to bomb a factory outside Kumamoto, more than halfway up the west side of Kyushu. Both times we flew right across the island going and coming back, and since we were not so high above the mountains, we had very good views of the terrain. It's practically all very rugged and, except for the fields in the few level areas along the shore and the terraces going up a little way on the slopes behind them, there's nothing but forested mountains. Most of the trees could be seen to be of broad-leaved species, but there were natural stands of pine or something of the sort here and there and quite a few plantations of the same. Reservoirs well up the streams were another characteristic of the country, and doubtless some of the little inland settlements centered around mines of some sort. One mountain we passed over turned out to be a live volcano.

On the first strike there was some heavy anti-aircraft fire, but it was rather inaccurate. Going down in the dive I could see all too clearly the gun placements just north of the factory.

KYUSHU'S  
MOUNTAIN  
SCENERY

LIVE VOLCANO

After pulling out we sped at near Tree-Top level to the rendezvous point over the bay. On the way the first three of us spotted a train. Bollinger stopped it. Richel put some more slugs in it, and, though only one of my guns was working, which put the plane in a slight slide when it fired, it had enough to blow up the boiler, as a huge cloud of steam arose. Finding at the rendezvous that my big bombs hadn't released as I had expected, I let them go or, <sup>what</sup> looked like some kind of cement plants but forgot to arm the bombs. One of the aircrewmembers, however, reported an explosion later, which made me feel better.

The plots seemed a little closer the second trip. I aimed for one of the buildings that looked untouched, but, as usual, results were undetermined. After pulling out this time I shaped a gas or oil tank, and though again only one 20 mm. fired, I could <sup>see</sup> hit from its tracer. Disappointingly, the tank didn't explode. The last flights over Kausha were pretty grim, the Air Group losing three more planes.

Our last few strikes were not tough and were uneventful. One over Okinawa aimed at knocking out an already pretty well gutted warehouse, and I'm

TRAIN

LOCOMOTIVE

HIT

OIL TANK

HIT

OKINAWA