

# HUNTERS IN THE SKY

Program10: "Closing The Ring"

## FINAL SCRIPT

TEASE	
A. VRACIU SOT- (O/C) "Before I could get in position to fire, (V/O) somebody blew him out of the air"	
B. NARR- America is on the offensive. The strategy: leapfrog Japanese island strongholds. Take back the Pacific sky.	
C. KOMACHI SOT- (O/C) (V/O) "War is like sports, when one is on a losing streak, one cannot win easily."	183J-14: (7:20:50) "War is like sports (_____) [coming on in great force. It's like playing baseball or some other sport.] (_____) When one is on a losing streak, one cannot win easily." (_____) Transition is in mid-word.
<u>SERIES TITLE: HUNTERS IN THE SKY (:15)</u>	

<u>EPISODE TITLE:</u> "Closing the Ring"	
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ACT I: THE SHIFTING TIDE	
A. PILOT ATTITUDES	
1. NARR- October, 1942. U.S. Marines are in control of Henderson Air Field on Guadalcanal. American planes have a vital land base in the South Pacific.	
Marine pilot Ken Walsh, Medal of Honor.	
2. WALSH SOT- (V/O) "We were able to commence the (O/C) offensive missions from Guadalcanal, clear up to Bouganville. We had the range, the combat radius of 325 nautical miles, and this was our stepping stone, our stepping stone to -- eventually the road which led us to Japan."	
3. NARR- US Army pilot John Mitchell.	

4.. MITCHELL SOT- (V/O) "It was an all out situation, (O/C) we weren't out there playing tiddley winks. We were out there to kill people, and they were out there to kill us. And we were out there to take back things from them that they had taken from us."	
B. BROKEN CODES AND FLOUNDERING JAPANESE	
1. NARR.- U.S. intelligence cracks the Japanese naval and maritime code. They learn of an imminent attack to retake Guadalcanal. U.S. pilots are alerted to the route of the Japanese fleet.	
US Navy pilot Scott McCuskey	

<p>2. McCUSKEY SOT- (V/O)</p> <p>"There was a presumption (O/C) that we had broken their code--as far as we on the ship were concerned, as far as I was concerned as a junior officer. And later I learned we actually had broken their code. And we were reading their mail."</p>	
<p>3. KOMACHI SOT- (O/C)</p> <p>"Before then we could predict where the next battle would be. We fought according to our plans and had time to make strategy. However, it was as though the Americans knew all of our movements. I felt there was no way to stop the enemy."</p>	<p>183J-11: (7:17:14) "Before then, for example, the next battle could be predicted. The Coral Sea, or somewhere else. We could predict where the next battle would be. We fought according to our plans and had time to make strategy. (7:17:25) However, it was as though the Americans knew all our movements, ( ) they came to Truk Island, they came to Saipan. Then Guam-- a week after Saipan's fall-- Guam surrendered. (7:17:31) I felt that there was no way to stop the enemy." (7:17:35)</p> <p>This on-camera bite contains the entire soundbite written above. Since we can't yet talk about the fall of Saipan, internal edits will have to be made and covered with video.</p>

<p>4. NARR.- Americans track what they call the "Tokyo Express", masses of enemy ships protected by a canopy of deadly fighters. The inevitable clash of powerful enemies creates electric suspense that crackles over the waters.</p>	
<p>5. KOMACHI SOT- (O/C)          "Before dawn our scouts flew in the shape of a big fan scattered widely and all of the fighters were ready on the carrier and waiting. (V/O) But if we were attacked while we were waiting, while we were still on the ship, it would be the same as the battle of Midway and we would all be destroyed. While we were waiting, the tension was immense."</p>	<p>182J-8: (6:13:14) Before dawn, our scouts flew in the shape of a big fan, scattered widely, and all the fighters were ready on the carrier. We waited. (6:13:27) But if we were attacked while waiting, it would be the same as the Battle of Midway. We would all be destroyed. (6:13:34) While we were waiting, the tension was immense. How tense we were--I don't know how I can describe it now." (6:13:42)</p> <p>Transition occurs in mid-word.</p>

6. NARR.- The Japanese fleet is spotted. American fighters and torpedo bombers head in for the kill.	
Vulnerable Japanese troop transports are blasted, thousands of soldiers die in the waters off Guadalcanal.	

<p>7. MITCHELL SOT- (V/O) "I think my wing man dropped a bomb right, I think, down the smokestack. (O/C) Anyhow, that thing hit the midship and of course the ship was just loaded, I mean there must have been 1500 to 2000 Japanese on board there--reinforcements. And so when the bomb hit the ship they jumped out in the water and all like that. Well hell, we just turned around after we dropped the bomb, we just turned around and came back and opened up on them with the machine guns and they were in the water, and and the water was red, red with blood, and the sharks were having a heyday."</p>	
<p>8. NARRATOR: Yohei Hinoki. Japanese Air Force.</p>	



<p>9. HINOKI SOT- (O/C) "I thought we were completely destroyed. Oh no, everything was destroyed, now I have to destroy the enemy. (V/O) The enemy was regrouping in formation and then coming back, and I thought 'the American air force is surely tough, they really are something, look at what they are doing'. (O/C) In the instant I saw the formation, I was shot in my right leg, I found that below the knee, about 10 centimeters below, was blown off. I tied my scarf around my knee and returned to the base."</p>	<p>192J-16: (16:27:22) ["All our bases were burned. I was confused again.] (_____) I thought we were completely destroyed. 'Oh no, everything was destroyed. I have to destroy the enemy.' I chased them. (16:27:38) [...]</p> <p>(16:29:06) [They looked so small because they were far away.] (_____) They were composing a formation, then coming back. (16:29:11) I thought, 'The American Air Force is surely tough. They are something. Look what they are doing.' In the instant I saw the formation, I was shot in my right leg. I found that below the knee, about 10 cm below, was blown off. I tied my scarf around my knee and returned to the base." (16:29:33)</p>
<p>10. NARR.- As Japanese pilots grow desperate, American aces are hungry for combat.</p>	

11. MITCHELL SOT- (O/C) "And I pulled in behind him and cut loose with this cannon (V/O) and the third shot I got out that sucker must have blown into a million pieces, and of course I was just elated and I thought, 'man, this is a great game, you know, let's get some more of this thing'."	
12. NARR- The Japanese are beaten back. Bouganville is the next American target, even closer to Japan's key south Pacific strongholds.	

13. VORIS SOT- (V/O) "We started our march across the Pacific from island to island, groups of islands to the Marianas. (O/C) We're getting them, we're able--we're being able to secure islands, we're landing on them and I would say that was really the beginning of where we felt that we're on the move all the way through to Tokyo."	
14. NARR.- November, 1943. U.S. Marines hit the beach at Bougainville. Their prime objective-the tiny island's airstrip. The field is taken. Japanese pilots, once masters of the Pacific sky, are now the hunted.	
--END ACT ONE--	

ACT II: FIRE IN THE SKY	
A. JAPANESE FEAR AND LOATHING	
1. NARR.- From hard-won airfields-- from strips hacked out of the jungle-- from huge carriers-- American bombers and fighters smash Japanese bases at Truk and Rabaul.	
Takeyo Tanimizu, Japanese Air force.	

<p>2. TANIMIZU SOT- (O/C)</p> <p>"When we were transferred from the mainland to Rabaul, all of us felt that we would never come back alive. The fighter pilots, and even the men on the battle ships felt that way. We had to fly about 7 or 8 hours a day--it was really overload."</p>	<p>198J-1: (00:00:26) "When we were transferred from the mainland to Rabaul, all of us felt that we would never come back alive. Rabaul was for us -- it did not matter that we were fighter pilots or assigned to a battleship -- Rabaul was a graveyard. ( ) [...] (approx. 00:02:40) [Even for fighter pilots,] ( ) we had to fly for about seven or eight hours a day. It was really overload." (00:02:47)</p> <p>Although there are edits in the Japanese here, the bite in the show is delivered entirely on camera, and thus leaves out the second half of the statement.</p>
<p>3. NARR- Isolated, cut off from supplies, the Rabaul garrison is plagued by hunger and disease. American raids seem never to end.</p>	

<p>4. HINOKI SOT- (O/C) "The American Air Force was attacking us. They came without stopping. Sometimes they came three times a night. They did not let us sleep at all. Because I did not have any men who could go up in the air during the nighttime, we had a very hard time."</p>	<p>192J-14: ( )</p> <p>"The American Air Force, most of the men in our unit-- ( ) [Mr. Kato's unit] ( ) -- were attacked by them. They came without interval. (16:23:49) Sometimes they came three times a night. They did not let us sleep at all. Because I did not have men who could go up in the air during the night, we had a very hard time." (16:24:03)</p> <p>None of the internal cuts shown above are reflected in the Japanese track now in the show.</p>
<p>5. NARR.- Long on courage, the Japanese pilots question the attitude and wisdom of their elitist officers. Most Japanese fighter pilots are only sergeants and must obey their superiors without question.</p>	
<p>Saburo Sakai, a leading ace, feels the beginnings of dissent.</p>	

<p>6. SAKAI SOT- (O/C) "When we were going to die, we were told we were national treasures, but once we took off our pilot uniforms, we were only non-commissioned officers, nothing more. This is a very, very bad thing in the Japanese navy."</p>	<p>186J-9 (10:18:54) "When we were going to die, we were told we were national treasures. But once we took off our pilot uniforms, we were only noncommissioned officers, nothing more. (10:19:08) This is a very, very bad thing in the Japanese navy." (10:19:12)</p> <p>This bite appears to be okay as is. No need to re-edit.</p>
<p>7. TANIMIZU SOT- (O/C) "According to a rumor, the American officers would listen to their men, even if they were only non-commissioned officers. The Japanese were quite different; staff officers only issued orders. There is a Japanese proverb-- (V/O) 'good luck does not always repeat itself'. You know the Japanese always attacked the same spots, but the enemy came from unexpected directions. We did not adopt strategies based on information gathered from the field."</p>	<p>198J-4 (00:05:00) "According to a rumor, the American officers would listen to their men, even if they were non-commissioned officers. The Japanese were quite different. Staff officers only ordered. (00:05:22) There is a Japanese proverb, 'Good luck does not always repeat itself.' [laughs] (00:05:28) You know, the Japanese always attacked the same spots. But the enemy came from unexpected directions. We did not adapt our strategies based on reasonable forecasting." (00:05:44)</p> <p>Transition comes in mid-word.</p>

<p>8. SAKAI SOT- (O/C)          "Officers never discussed with their men the battles they had just fought or strategies for the next battles. (V/O) That was ridiculous! In such a structure, the Japanese navy would not be able to fight efficiently. (O/C) Well that was the Japanese navy-- ridiculous!"</p>	<p>186J-5 (10:10:49) "Officers never discussed with their men the battles they had just fought or strategies for the next battles. (10:11:05) That was ridiculous! (10:11:07) [...] (_____) In such a structure, the Japanese Navy would not be able to fight efficiently. (10:12:02) That was the Japanese Navy: Ridiculous! (10:12:09)</p>
B. COMBAT	
<p>1. NARR.- If an isolated Rabaul was to die, it would die hard. Whatever their feelings, Japanese pilots desperately try to break the American stranglehold on their base.</p>	



2. KOMACHI SOT- (V/O) "I was reckless (O/C) when defending my own base. Being trained as a carrier pilot we were naturally more aggressive, we always attacked before being attacked. For if our carrier came under fire, that was it, that was the end. We had no time to think before engaging the enemy. I didn't care if there were 200 of them, I simply dove into the middle. I was only satisfied if I were able to break their formation."

183J-5 (7:06:59) ["Bushido ... well, I was reckless.]  
 (\_\_\_\_\_) I was reckless to defend my own base. (7:07:07) [...] ([earlier t.c. \_\_\_\_\_) I was different from one who had trained at the base, because I was trained as a pilot of an aircraft carrier. When I found the enemy--before the enemy approached a friendly base, before he could prepare for an attack--I attacked the enemy right away. (7:06:59) [...] (\_\_\_\_\_) For us pilots trained on an aircraft carrier, if a carrier was attacked, that would be the end. (\_\_\_\_\_) [So attacking in this way may have been our natural reaction as carrier pilots.] (\_\_\_\_\_) We had no time to think before attacking. (7:07:24) I did not care if the number of the enemy was 200. I just dove into the middle of them. (7:07:31) I was only satisfied when I dove into the middle of the enemy and broke its formation." (7:07:34)

The unedited on-camera bite currently in the show, although missing some of the elements of the edited bite, may be close enough in meaning to stand as is.

3. NARR.- George Chandler's P-38 lightning is tracked by a zero coming in for the kill.	
4. CHANDLER SOT- (O/C) "Here came a zero down. He'd seen this crippled P-38 and he was coming down to finish me off (V/O) he made a big wide swing out and turned to come back in and he wasn't watching his tail and a Marine pilot just exploded him in a big ball of flame. He went by with a victory roll going back up into the fight. (O/C) God he looked good to me--he looked so good to me!"	
C. TRUK ISLAND	

<p>1. NARR.- Like Rabaul, Truk island was once considered impregnable. Now, bypassed by American leapfrogging strategy, the mighty fortress is demolished from the air.</p>	
<p>2. KOMACHI SOT- (O/C)          "Truk island was a base for the Japanese allied forces. While we were in Rabaul, we gossiped where the American would attack next. Rabaul was the front, so we thought the Americans would attack somewhere near there. However, our base in Truk island was attacked unexpectedly."</p>	<p>183J-10: (7:16:01) ["Then there was Truk Island--the closest in the Pacific.]          ( ) Truk Island was a base for the Japanese Allied Forces.          (7:16:10) While we were in Rabaul, we gossiped about where the Americans would attack next. Rabaul was the front, so we thought the Americans would attack somewhere near Rabaul.          (7:16:20) However, our base in Truk Island was attacked unexpectedly." (7:16:23)          Japanese voice clipped at end.</p>
<p>3. NARR.-US Navy ace Alexander Vraciu flies his Hellcat fighter into a melee over Truk.</p>	

4. VRACIU SOT- (V/O) "I took a look back over my shoulder and good thing I did (O/C) because there were 4,5,6 zeros already starting to come in our direction. I could even see the fire from their guns at the time."	
5. NARR-. Vraciu gets three kills, goes for his fourth.	
6. VRACIU SOT- (O/C) "I played a cat and mouse game with him. (V/O) He was ducking in and out of a cloud, I'd try to make a run on him and he'd duck back into a cloud so I thought well OK, I'll get up-sun on him, which I did, I went up sunny side of him and he never knew what hit him."	

<p>7. KOMACHI SOT- (O/C)</p> <p>"Even if we escaped into the clouds, bullets still followed us. Surely they could not see us, but still the bullets were coming. We did not understand why we were being hit. Very good pilots lost their lives one after another, from the middle of the war on. I regret their deaths, however, we were no match against the enemy anymore at that time."</p>	<p>183J-15 (7:21:34) ["For example, in attack strategy, the Americans strategy was formation attack and so on. Their strategy was improving.]</p> <p>( ) Even if we escaped into the clouds, bullets still followed us. They surely could not see us, but still the bullets were coming. We did not understand why we were hit.</p> <p>( ) [...]</p> <p>(~7:22:45 )</p> <p>Very good pilots lost their lives one after another, from the middle of the war on. I regret their deaths. However, we were no match against the enemy anymore at that time."</p> <p>(7:22:54)</p> <p>On-camera soundbite does not cut to second half of the statement.</p>
<p>8. NARR.- With the Japanese fighter force beaten, American bombers are free to destroy Truk's menace. Like Rabaul, the base is left to crumble under the weight of starvation and disease.</p>	

9. McCUSKEY SOT- (O/C) "We could concentrate maybe 1500 aircraft at any place we chose, and they--it was impossible for the Japanese on their perimeter of defenses to concentrate a defense to oppose this."	
10. NARR.-U.S. power gathers for the assault on Japan's remaining outposts in the Central Pacific...Tarawa, Tinian, Rota, Saipan, Guam. It will be a climactic clash of titans.	
---END ACT TWO--	

ACT III: SETTING THE DART	
A. SAIPAN ISLAND	
1. NARR.-The next American target-- Saipan, in the Marianas chain. The island is within striking range of the Japanese homeland.	
2. KOMACHI SOT- (O/C) "Saipan was attacked. The Americans landed on that island. At the time, we were stationed at Truk. When we heard the Americans landed in Saipan we became very alarmed. Saipan was within range of a raid on Tokyo."	182J-15: (6:21:29) "Saipan Island was attacked. The Americans landed on the island. At that time, we were stationed at Truk Island. (_____) [...] (6:21:50) When we heard that the Americans landed in Saipan, we became very worried. (6:21:55) Saipan was within range of Tokyo." (_____)
3. NARR.- The Japanese mount a furious defense . On the ground, Marines take awful punishment. US bombers and fighters slash at Saipan's defenders.	
4. VORIS SOT- (O/C) "It was Sunday afternoon. So where is everyone Sunday afternoon? They're at the old club.	

B. MARIANAS TURKEY SHOOT	
1. NARR.- JUNE 19,1944. One of the most decisive air battles of the war will seal the fate of the Japanese in the South Pacific. It will come to be known as the Marianas Turkey shoot.	
2. VRACIU SOT- (V/O) "We were in perfect position (O/C) for 'em, you know 2-3,000 feet opposite direction--fighter pilots dream. (V/O) You dream of these things only once in a lifetime. All the training that you have, but you don't generally have something quite like this."	



3. WALSH SOT- (O/C) "Whoever had the altitude advantage, dictated the terms of the battle. And very seldom was it a matter of endurance. (V/O) These were short lived--short lived battles. They'd go on for 30 seconds, sometimes a minute or two."	
4. NARR.- Vraciu blasts 5 planes out of the sky.	
5. VRACIU SOT- (O/C) "I went after the sixth one, and caught him just as he was starting to head on down (V/O) I must have hit his bomb because he exploded in a violent, I flew right through the pieces of that one. (O/C) I looked around, there were no more planes in the air, nothing but Hellcats."	

<p>6. McCUSKEY SOT- (O/C)          "The Mariana Turkey shoot was--that was, that was it--(V/O) that was when we took the heart out of 'em. We fought the last trained pilots in the turkey shoot in the Marianas. (O/C) I think that was their last big show."</p>	
<p>C. THE WRITING ON THE WALL</p>	
<p>1. NARR.- That day, American pilots will tally more than 400 kills. Saipan falls. A month later, US Marines retake Guam.</p>	
<p>2. HINOKI SOT- (V/O)          "When the Americans attacked, (O/C) they attacked without interval. Well, I think this is due in part to, how do I call it--'the American spirit of settlers in the frontier'. I admired this very much."</p>	<p>192J-19: (_____) "When they attacked, they attacked without an interval. (16:30:40) Well, I think this was because--how can I say it? -- the American spirit of settlers in the frontier. I admired it." (_____)</p>

3. NARR.- An American armada, task force 58, gathers to deliver a killing blow. Aboard the carriers, more than 1,000 planes.	
4. VORIS SOT- (V/O) "Our task force was so big, that if you were up at 10 or 12,000 feet over the force it stretched from horizon to horizon. (O/C) We had four task groups, and each task group was a minimum of four carriers, usually 1 to 2 battle ships, 2 to 4 cruisers, maybe 12 to 18 destroyers in each group. So you've got 4 groups sailing together and it is a spectacle you'll never see again."	
(STEICHEN STILLS MODULE HERE APP. 1:30)	

<p>5. NARR.- America's fighters and bombers are in range of the Japanese home islands. It is only a matter of time.</p>	
<p>6. FUJITA SOT- (O/C)          "When I looked down the islands, the sea looked so beautiful. I asked myself 'what is a human being--what am I?' I thought about the answer. Human beings are like worms. Worms were fighting each other down on the earth. It seemed to be so ridiculous. At that time the value of my life seemed very small. I started to feel that I did not mind dying."</p>	<p>179J-4: (3:06:59) "When I looked down at the islands, the sea looked so beautiful. I asked myself, 'What is a human being? What am I?' I thought about the answer. Human beings are like worms. Worms were fighting against each other down on the earth. It seemed to be ridiculous. (3:07:41) [...] (3:07:54) At that time, my life--the value of my life--seemed very small. I started to feel that I did not mind dying." (3:08:08)</p> <p>This soundbite on tape cuts out at about 3:07:40.</p>
<p>7. NARR.- American strike forces head for the Philippines, Iwo Jima, Okinawa. The fire that began at Pearl Harbor will soon rage through the skies over Japan.</p>	
<p>---END ACT THREE---</p>	