THE NINE HEROES OF PEARL HARBOUR ATTACK

By SEI-ICHI HOHJO

THE lofty, self-sacrificing spirit, which inspired the nine heroes of the Special Attack Flotilla to launch their underwater attack on Pearl Harbour on the first day of the Pacific war as spearhead of the Japanese naval force, deserves to be immortalized for the benefit of mankind, because it has not only revealed the true character of the Japanese spirit, but has once again unbarred the soul of Japan's Bushido. Their splendid achievements, attained entirely through their unswerving devotion to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor, have perhaps no parallel in the military history of the world.

On March 6, 1942, when the heroic achievements of the Special Attack Flotilla in Pearl Harbour were announced by the Imperial Headquarters, Captain Hideo Hiraide, spokesman of the Navy, the same evening made an impressive and inspiring radio broadcast over a nation-wide hook-up, giving a graphic description of the thrilling attack made by the nine heroes. Deifying the nine heroes as the "guardian gods of Japan," Captain Hiraide said in part:
The Special Attack Flotilla, which achieved a signal success in Pearl Harbour as spearhead of the Japanese Fleet, was conceived by Commander Naogi Iwasa, leader of the Flotilla and several other naval officers. It was first thought to be humanly impossible to carry out the plan. However, Commander Iwasa and his assistants further elaborated on their original plan. For several months they went through rigorous training in order to preclude any possibility of failure in case the Special Attack Flotilla went into action. They took indescribable pains, especially since their training had to be done secretly.

When hostilities opened between Japan and the United States, the Special Attack Flotilla penetrated deep into Pearl as spearhead of the Japanese Fleet. Striking enemy warships boldly at the closest conceivable range, all the members of the flotilla calmly met their death. I am going to describe the activities of the Special Attack Flotilla, partly drawing on my imagination, and partly taking into consideration information emanating from the American side.

When the Special Attack Flotilla approached Pearl Harbour, being submerged, it found that the entrance to the harbour had been strongly guarded with anti-submarine nets and mine-fields. Fully experienced as they were, the members of the flotilla successfully broke through the obstructions, thanks to their quick but composed action. They must have smiled to each other complacently, as if they had been already successful in their task.

By and by a group of enemy battleships in trim two rows was seen through the periscopes---a sight which sent a thrill of satisfaction through all the members of the flotilla. Each special submarine of the flotilla started its attack. One submarine struck a big battleship in the centre of the row at a close range, while another discharged a torpedo at the warship next to the big battleship.

Just at that moment, Japanese aircraft active in the sky were seen through the periscopes, disclosing that bombing attacks, launched by the Japanese naval air arm, were in full swing. This inspired the members of the Special Attack Flotilla with redoubled courage and they kept up their attack to wipe out all the enemy vessels.

At that juncture, an enemy destroyer hurried toward the Special Attack Flotilla, apparently spying the latter's periscopes. Some special submarines of the flotilla instantly submerged deep to avoid the enemy destroyer's attack, having no time to ascertain the results of their assaults.

By this time, terrible confusion had been reigning in the harbour, with bombs dropped by Japanese naval aircraft, falling fast and thick, enemy anti-aircraft batteries roaring into full action, and torpedoes discharged by the Japanese special submarines and enemy destroyers criss-crossing each other. Attacks, launched by the Japanese special submarines, must have been supremely effective, but it was difficult to distinguish the results achieved by them and by the Japanese naval air arm.
Members of the Japanese Special Attack Flotilla kept submerged on the sea-bottom during the daytime. They were deeply concerned over the battle raging on the surface, but they had to wait for nightfall, though they were itching for action. They may have whiled away their time by playing with wooden toys, brought from home.

The mantle of night fell over Pearl Harbour at last. The moon began to rise, when the Special Attack Flotilla came up to surface to resume its onslaught. A special submarine of the flotilla drew near the enemy vessels in search of an enemy battleship, which had suffered comparatively little damage in the daytime attacks. Soon, an enemy battleship of the Arizona class was clearly seen in the moonlight, being

silhouetted on the background. It presented a nice target. "Fire!" was the command, given by the commander of the special submarine.

The torpedo, discharged by the members of the special submarine, who were animated with the guiding spirit of the Japanese Navy, namely, "destroy the enemy at sight," did not fail to hit the target. In an instant, Pearl Harbour was shaken with a terrific detonation and the sky overhead was scorched with a fiery column, several hundred metres high. The conning-tower of the special submarine came up to surface proudly. The calm and bold commander of the special submarine ascertained the last moment of the enemy battleship, going down, torn asunder.

Their cherished desire was attained at last! It may be better imagined than described what deep emotion filled the hearts of the youthful members of the special submarine to see the enemy battleship of the Arizona class meet its watery grave at their hands in the moonlit night. The sinking of the enemy battleship was clearly recognized by the Japanese Fleet far off Pearl Harbour. Simultaneous with the terrific explosion, a fiery column, shooting red-hot iron splinters high up into the sky, was seen from afar. It was December 8, 1941, (9:01 p.m., December 7, Hawaii time, or two minutes after the moonrise).

The battle was over, but the members of the Special Attack Flotilla failed to return. At 10:41 p.m., Hawaii time, one special submarine of the Special Attack Flotilla sent a wireless message, reading: "Succeeded in the attack."

This was the last wireless message received from the Special Attack Flotilla. They were all above the question of life or death, being absorbed in their intention of destroying the enemy vessels. The idea of returning alive was not in their minds. It has been ascertained that a number of special submarines of the flotilla were sunk by enemy warships, and others destroyed themselves.

The nine heroes of Pearl Harbour seemed to have been actuated by their firm conviction not only to score a victory over America and Britain, but to eliminate the Anglo-American ideology once and for all. They firmly believed that the self-centred Anglo-American ideas, which found their way into the Japanese spirit through cultural and ideological channels for many long years, must be entirely eradicated. And they translated their belief into action. In this sense, they set an
inspiring example.

The nine heroes of the Special Attack Flotilla are at once "war gods" and deities of peace and construction.

The current war of greater East Asia must be followed by lasting world peace. In that event, the "war gods" will become deities of peace, because the current destruction is not being done for destruction's sake, but for the purpose of constructing a new world order.

In going through Captain Hiraide's narrative, one is strongly impressed by the fact that all the nine members of the Special Attack Flotilla failed to return from their valiant expedition to Pearl Harbour, having sacrificed their lives for the cause of the State. It may not be so difficult to defy or embrace death amidst the din of battle, but it requires a sublime spirit, unparalleled in history, to wait calmly for an opportunity to lay down lives for the welfare of the Throne and the State, like the nine war heroes, by conceiving and elaborating a plan envisaging certain destruction. By their noble action, the heroes exposed the quintessence of the Japanese spirit which has been nurtured by the traditional faith in Bushido.

Stanley Washburn, an American war correspondent, who followed the Japanese army during the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5 made public his work Nogi in New York in February, 1913. Being a delineation of General Nogi during the Russo-Japanese war, it reflects such a correct understanding of the Japanese nation and spirit as could be hardly expected of a foreign correspondent. It says:

The foundation of modern Japan has been built by Ito, Ohyama, Nogi and a few other seniors, who have embraced an ideal, which is not sullied by selfish ambitions at all. They have been able to add the sciences and arts of modern Europe to their two national legacies, handed down from their ancestors in the remote feudal days, namely, the Spartan character of the Japanese people, fortitude and simplicity, and their ardent aspiration for national expansion. It is not an easy job to grasp the essential factors of the two different cultures and to blend them into one.

The same thing may be said of the nine war heroes of Pearl Harbour. Impelled by their stainless loyalty to the Throne, they laboured for the harmonious blending of national fortitude and simplicity with that of modern sciences. This is the reason why they, by displaying a Spartan courage and ably utilizing the modern technique of warfare, achieved glorious results for the good of the country.

The ancient book, Hagakure Kongo (Hagakure Analects), dealing with Bushido, lays stress on four things. They are: (1) never be behind anybody in observing Bushido, (2) be faithful in your service to your Lord, (3) be dutiful to your parents and (4) exercise great mercy and be of
service to others.

The current Senjin Kun (Field Service Code) emphasizes the adherence to the ideals of Bushido and soldierly spirit. It has been promulgated by General Hideki Tohjo, Premier and Minister of War. The Field Service Code in chapter one, paragraph seven, under the heading, "an outlook on life and death," says:

Through life and death runs the lofty spirit of self-sacrificing service to the State. You must rise above the question of life or death so as to proceed toward the complete discharge of your duty with undivided attention. You must rejoice over your life to be lived calmly for the eternal cause of great justice, by doing everything in your power, both physical and mental.

The nine war heroes rejoiced over their calm life and lived for the eternal cause of great justice.

The Field Service Code in respect of faith in sure victory, lays down:

One who valiantly fights with firm faith invariably emerges a victor. Faith in sure victory comes of rigorous training. You must cultivate your power so as to win a certain victory over the enemy, by improving what little time you can spare and by taxing your ingenuity. The rise of the Empire depends upon the issue of the battle. In view of the glorious history of the Army and true to its tradition of invincibility, you must win through the day.

The nine heroes implicitly exhibited their faith in sure victory, thereby setting an example.

The spirit of laying down one's life for the sake of the State has been running in the veins of the Japanese nation since the Emperor Jimmu, the founder of the Japanese Empire, led his eastern expedition twenty-six centuries ago. It has since been enhanced and sublimated. The traditional spirit of the Japanese Navy is based upon this spirit. Inspired by this spirit and having gone through rigorous training silently for many long years, the Japanese Navy has attained its present level of efficiency and strength. In the calendar of the Japanese Navy there are no holidays or half-holidays. It has dispensed with Sundays and Saturdays, so far as training is concerned, to maintain a seven-day schedule, with Sundays and Saturdays taking the place of second Mondays and Fridays.

Following the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japan adopted the Western military and naval system and utmost efforts were made to utilize the modern sciences of the West, but spiritual training in the orthodox Japanese fashion has never been lost sight of by the armed forces of the country. This accounts for the successful building of one of the most powerful Army and Navy in the world, which could not be measured by the yardstick of Occidental materialism.

The signal victory achieved by the Japanese Navy in the Battle of the Yellow Sea during the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95 brought it to the limelight of the world, because back of such a recognition was the rigorous training which the Japanese Navy had gone through for many years
prior to the outbreak of the hostilities. Expressing his admiration for the gallantry of the Japanese Navy, the late Vice-Admiral Basil E. Cochrane had said:

The issue of the Battle of the Yellow Sea has been decided not so much by the relative superiority of warships and armaments between Japan and China as by the relative intensity of patriotism between the sailors of the two countries.

The Pearl Harbour debacle is an object lesson in the superiority of the Japanese spirit over that of the Americans and Britons, who are devotees of material civilization and sciences. The Japanese armed forces are never affected by material conditions, for they have confidence in their patriotism and spiritual training, and hence, they can accomplish what is generally believed to be impossible. During the Sino-Japanese war, the Japanese torpedo-boat flotillas carried out a most difficult exploit, when they staged a successful night attack on Weihaiwei. Up to that time, no other navy in the world had resorted to such a daring attack. It must not be forgotten that during the Russo-Japanese war, Ryojunko (Port Arthur) was blockaded by Japanese warships no less than three times and that the "blockade

squadron" became an object of national admiration. The same spirit of unswerving devotion to the Throne and the State inspired the Special Attack Flotilla in its raid on Pearl Harbour.

The spirit of sacrificing one's life for the cause of the State was further enhanced on the occasion of the Battle of the Japan Sea in May, 1905, against the Baltic Fleet of Czarist Russia, and the officers and men of the Japanese Fleet faced that memorable sea-engagement firmly convinced of victory. Prior to that historic sea-battle, the officers and men had gone through hard training for several long months. The rigorousness of their training was simply beyond description. One gunner talked about his percentage of hits on enemy ships in sleep. Thanks to their rigorous training, the officers and men of the Japanese Fleet succeeded in enhancing the standard of efficiency of their gunnery and torpedo warfare to 100 per cent. On the occasion of his triumphant return to Tokyo after annihilating the Baltic Fleet, Fleet-Admiral Togo, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet, instructed his men to the following effect:

When it is seen that one gun whose one hundred shots all hit the marks is able to meet one hundred enemy guns firing one hundred shots each, of which only one hits the mark, we sailors must seek our armed power in a metaphysical source.

When at the Washington Naval Disarmament Conference Britain and America forced Japan to accept a discriminatory ratio of 5 : 5 : 3, allowing Japan to have three ships to every five of Britain and America, the confidence of the Japanese Navy in its striking power was not shaken. Moreover, it failed to subdue the Japanese spirit which, on the contrary, was further enhanced to assist the Japanese Fleet to attain a still higher level of efficiency. America and Britain could have made no more serious miscalculation than their counting upon checking the rise of the Japanese Navy by imposing an inferior ratio on it. The Japanese Navy, without being affected by the intrusive Anglo-American action, began to increase substantially its strength and accurate hitting power.
Following the Washington Conference, Admiral Kanji Kato, then Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet, subjected his men to rigorous training, being firmly convinced that disparity in numbers could be met only by hard training. With a grim resolve to make up for the quantitative disparity, he laid stress on increasing the qualitative superiority, with the result that the entire fleet having gone through hard training silently for more than twenty years has now established its invincible position. Also a revolutionary change came over the guiding spirit of the Japanese Navy as a sequel to the Washington Conference. The spirit of laying down one's life for the sake of the State developed into a spirit of attack to destroy. This spirit of destroying the enemy at sight has now become the guiding principle of the Japanese Navy.

This offensive spirit has manifested itself in various forms in the phenomenal military and naval achievements attained by the Japanese aimed forces at the initial stage of the Pacific war and it has been sublimated in the heroic raid carried out by the Special Attack Flotilla on Pearl Harbour. There is not a single Japanese who has not been stirred by reading the Imperial Headquarters' communiqué on the Special Attack Flotilla. Its nine heroes broke through the defence line strongly guarded by the enemy and penetrated deep into the naval station, where they launched daring attacks on enemy warships at the closest possible range, establishing a new record in the military history of the world. Not only that, but they remained submerged in Pearl Harbour for a long time to undertake a night attack. They gave full play to the spirit of the Japanese Navy, which dictates one not to think of death until and unless the sighted enemy is destroyed. And with the completion of their mission, they calmly shared the fate of their craft. Their sublime, self-sacrificing spirit is, indeed, awe-inspiring.

The losses sustained by the American Pacific Fleet in the Pearl Harbour disaster has facilitated Japan's prosecution of war in all parts of the Pacific area. Before the start of the Pacific war, America's strategy against Japan centred on the formidableness of her Pacific Fleet stationed at Hawaii, which was supposedly in a position to use freely the Anglo-American naval bases in the Pacific, namely, Guam, Cavite, Hongkong and Singapore. It is, therefore, no wonder that not only America, but also other members of the ABCs camp, Britain, the Netherlands East Indies, Australia and the Chiang Kai-shek regime, were shocked and grieved at the swift annihilation of the American Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbour, shattering the American strategy against Japan.

Foreign press messages at that time provided an interesting commentary upon the consternation of the Allied camp. Some reports went the length of asserting that the Pearl Harbour debacle marked an epochal turning point in the conflict between Japan and the United States. Earlier, though all naval commentators in foreign countries anticipated a possible outbreak of hostilities between Japan and the United States, they did not hesitate to declare that it would be impossible
for the Japanese Navy to storm the Hawaii naval station. Hector Charles Bywater, noted British naval commentator, said that if America and Britain could obtain the support of the Chungking regime and the Netherlands East Indies, Japan would be isolated, with the strategic situation in the Pacific developing to her extreme disadvantage. Again, Haller Abend, Far Eastern correspondent of the New York Times, who is reputed to be well-versed in Far Eastern affairs, paid little, if any, attention to the air and submarine warfare of the Japanese Navy, miserably underrating the actual striking power of the Japanese Fleet, which had been under continuous rigorous training in anticipation of a showdown. Consequently, it can be imagined that the knockout blow dealt by the Japanese Navy to Pearl Harbour must have been a bolt from the blue to America and Britain. It is undeniable that America has suffered an irretrievable loss, both material and moral, in the sinking of nine battleships, one-half of her capital ship strength overnight, notwithstanding her mendacious propaganda to the contrary.

What would have happened, had the Japanese Navy not succeeded in its surprise attack on Hawaii? The Japanese

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military and naval forces in the southwestern Pacific might have been constantly menaced in the rear and flank by enemy warships, with their activities restrained by slow progress, while the Australian and Netherlands East Indies fleets might have been more boldly active in ocean warfare. Considered in this light, the Japanese Navy cannot but be congratulated for its well-planned strategy which successfully crippled the Pacific armada of the United States in a surprisingly short raid. In this connection, it would be meaningful to note that the destruction of the Russian Baltic Fleet during the Russo-Japanese war was realized when it was sent to this part of the world after fifteen months of protracted hostilities. In the Pacific war, however, the Japanese Navy razed the main body of the American Fleet in Pearl Harbour at the outset of hostilities.

Following the setback in Hawaii, a feeling of unrest began to mount in the United States, with the result that wild rumours became the rage. The radio stations in San Francisco and Los Angeles broadcast almost nothing except about rumoured or possible enemy air-raids for several days. Entirely dismayed by the calamity, both the United States Government and the people allowed themselves to become easy victims of confusion. Even at present, the High Command of the American Navy, which ought to maintain its composure, has failed to evolve a consistent war plan, as is evidenced from the futile activities of American warships. America has not only been beaten in armed engagements, but in nerve warfare, too. To make matters worse, she has lost her supply-box in greater East Asia, owing to Japan's domination of the southwestern Pacific. For naval warfare, she can only conduct guerilla operations, but the alert Japanese warships are combing the Pacific fox America's hit-and-run units.

It is quite possible that America might have diverted a few battleships to the Pacific from her complement of nine battleships on the Atlantic Ocean. Supposing at least five capital ships of the Atlantic Fleet have been transferred to the

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Hawaii base, it will only mean a partial replenishment of the Pacific Fleet. But granting for argument's sake that by this reinforcement the naval ratio of 5 : 3 between the two countries, as stipulated in the Washington Treaty, has again become operative, it will be noticed that America is not in a position to challenge the efficient three ships of Japan with her five. On the other hand, the reported dispatch of part of the Atlantic Fleet to the Pacific may be dismissed as a mere simulacrum. At the same time, it is well-nigh impossible for the depleted American Fleet on the Pacific to challenge the Japanese Fleet to a decisive battle. Should it be rash enough to do so, it would fall an easy victim to Japan's counter-offensive. This is the reason why the American warships on the Pacific are zealously keeping secret their whereabouts. Colonel Knox, Secretary of the Navy, on the eve of the Pacific war complacently declared that the Japanese Navy would be finished in three months, but five months have elapsed since the beginning of the Pacific war, during which time the American warships have been wandering from one safe haven to another to avoid engagements with the Japanese Fleet.

Aside from the successes gained in the bombardment of Hawaii, the annihilation of the main body of the British Asiatic Fleet, with the sinking of the "unsinkable" battleship, Prince of Wales, and another battleship, Repulse, off Malaya has substantially added to the morale of the Japanese Navy, which has since won an uninterrupted series of victories, including the battles off Batavia and Sourabaya. The Japanese convoy service is also functioning smoothly.

Some time back a Japanese submarine, which sailed across the Pacific, fired some twenty shots at the oil producing centre in California, raising a wail of confusion throughout the United States. In some parts of the country this attack by the Japanese submarine was mistaken for an air raid, with the ridiculous result that an American flight formation was fired upon by antiaircraft batteries and one or two planes were sent spinning to the ground.

All these Japanese accomplishments have a direct bearing on the venerable exploits of the nine heroes of Pearl Harbour and, therefore, the entire Japanese nation cannot but renew their feeling of gratitude to them.

Everybody will be interested in the personalities of the nine heroes of the Special Attack Flotilla, who have now been deified as well as in their families which brought them up and the atmosphere in which their spirit of unswerving devotion to the Throne and the State was fostered.

Commander Naoji Iwasa, leader of the Special Attack Flotilla, was twenty-eight years old. He was a man of fortitude and quick decision, being possessed of a bright and broadminded character. His personality is said to have remained one of that of an old warrior. His remote ancestor is said to be a certain Iwasa, who had distinguished himself for his gallantry at the winter campaign in Osaka as a member of the army of Hideyoshi Toyotomi.

Commander Iwasa had six brothers and sisters, of whom he was the youngest. During his school days, he was so bright that he was always at the head of his class. Throughout his six years at the elementary school, he secured full marks in all his lessons except singing in which he got nine
out of a full mark of ten at the end of his second year. In drawing and manual work also he
displayed his superior talent. He did not miss a single day during his six-year attendance at the
elementary school. Even during his elementary school days, he was skilled in kendo (fencing).
While a sixth year boy, he won a championship in the fencing tournament, held under the
auspices of the Normal School at Mayebashi. He had literary taste, too. While attending the
elementary school as a sixth year boy, he composed some haiku or seventeen-syllable poems,
which included the following two:

Ima hakishi niwani ichimai konoha kana.
A dead leaf has just fallen on the garden, which I have swept.

Harewataru hatsuharuno sorani hiwano mure.
Siskins are flying in groups across the clear sky on New Year's Day.

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Brought up as he was in the enclosure of Mt.Haruna, which overlooks the Asama and Myogi
mountains, Commander Iwasa was strongly influenced by the serene mountain scenery as well as
his parents' affectionate moral training. During his middle school days at Mayebashi, his school
records were not outstanding, but they improved year after year. At the end of his first year at the
Mayebashi Middle School, he stood forty-sixth in his class of two hundred, thirtieth at the end of
second year, fortieth at the end of third year, nineteenth at the end of fourth year and eighteenth
at the end of fifth and last year. On his completion of the middle school course, he passed the
entrance examination of the Naval Academy. He was most proficient in mathematics and physics,
for which he obtained 95 and 86 respectively at the end of his fifth year at the Mayebashi Middle
School. He apparently became science-minded during his middle school days, and for that reason,
he later conceived a plan for construction of a special submarine.

Commander Iwasa became further skilled in fencing during his middle school days, with the
result that he won a championship at an inter-secondary school fencing tournament held in
Gumma Prefecture in 1932. He left the Mayebashi Middle School as a second grade fencer.

Instructor Katsuo, who taught Commander Iwasa at the Mayebashi Middle School, says: "Iwasa
was not a remarkable pupil, but he was a boy of reticence and sincerity."

When Commander Iwasa was still a sub-lieutenant, his former teacher, Koike, proposed to find a
wife for him, whereupon he replied: "I have never thought of marrying, which is awfully
embarrassing to me. My real mind and my actual circumstances do not permit me to think of my
future partner."

This episode indicates that Commander Iwasa, as a sub-lieutenant, had already made a great
resolve.

On his enrollment in the Naval Academy, he further advanced in fencing, becoming a fourth
grade fencer. He was also a good athlete, skillful in riding and other departments of athletics. He
was fond of drinking, but was not a heavy drinker
With a few cups of sake, he used to become hilarious and would recite classical Chinese poems or sing old Japanese songs. Sometimes in company with his close friends, he would enjoy chats lasting through the night.

As a naval officer, Commander Iwasa enjoyed full confidence of his men, being always at their head in carrying out all important duties. He had a keen sense of responsibility. Some time ago, when he was assigned to an important work, he became feverish, suffering from diarrhea. The surgeon as well as his senior officers advised him to take rest, but such was his high sense of responsibility that he carried out his mission, by abstaining from all foods. This showed his strength of spiritual fortitude.

The members of the Special Attack Flotilla, on their departure for Hawaii, proceeded to their senior officers, and, after giving their names, each said emphatically: "I am now going."

On ordinary occasions of leave-taking, it is customary to say: "I am going and will be back."

But the heroes of the Special Attack Flotilla each said only:

"I am now going." They took leave of their senior officers, being fully aware that there would no chance for them to return from their expedition. Such a mental attitude of the members of the Special Attack Flotilla may have been guided and moulded by Commander Iwasa, their leader.

Enthusiastically seen off by their comrades, the nine heroes retained their self-composure. A young officer of the Flotilla was cheerful enough to say: "With tiffins, bottles of cider and chocolate bars provided, I feel as if I am going on a picnic." Such a calmness could not be expected of an ordinary person.

On the eve of his departure for his expedition to Hawaii, Commander Iwasa wrote a letter to a certain naval captain. Everybody will be strongly impressed by its contents, which reveal a full manifestation of the traditional spirit of the Japanese Navy, as absorbed by the commander as well as his modesty and devotion to his cherished cause. The letter reads in part:

The situation is growing tenser. The Empire is now faced with a

most critical moment. There is no other alternative left to Japan but to have recourse to the last resort for maintaining her national existence and also for finding a way out of difficulty for the sake of the Yamato race. At this juncture, it is my highest honour to be entrusted with a mission to take a first step toward breaking the deadlock.

I pledge myself to discharge my mission successfully. Now is the time to return your valued guidance with my own life. Should I fail in my task, nobody is to blame but myself?? Sincere
thanks for your guidance extended to me, while I am alive, and wish you further successes and good fortune in arms.

Another letter, sent by Commander Iwasa to Shichimatsu Koike, his comrade in fencing at his native town, reads in part:

It is easy to die, but difficult to live. Still more difficult it is to endeavour to live in the face of death. The time has come for me to strive to live to accomplish a most difficult, death-defying undertaking.

Awakened from slumber by your mental voice, I will accomplish this most difficult task. This is the way to be taken by a member of the Yamato race and a naval officer.

Lieutenant-Commander Masaharu Yokoyama, another member of the Special Attack Flotilla, was twenty-four years of age. He was born of a large family in Kagoshima in southern Kyushu. He had five brothers and five sisters. His former teacher at the elementary school describes him in this way:

Masaharu Yokoyama was a gentle boy. I never saw him losing his temper. He was reticent, studying his lessons in silence all the time. But he was not weak, as often the case with bright boys. He was always at the head of his class for his learning and perseverance. He won every endurance test, never giving it up, as done by many boys. He finished the elementary school course at the top of his class from beginning to end.

His perseverance was heightened when he lost his father while he was a nine-year old boy. He did not deviate from his reticence, when he entered the Second Middle School of Kagoshima, after leaving the elementary school. He is said to have been most attached to his mother than any of his brothers or sisters. Before leaving for his death-defying expedition to Hawaii, he used to say that he was sorry that he was lacking in his filial piety to his mother. While still in his fourth year at the Second Middle School of Kagoshima, he succeeded in passing the en-

trance examination for the Naval Academy. His attachment to the sea, which had developed in his childhood, may have induced him to apply for admission to the Naval Academy. Toward the end of 1941, when he returned home to bid his folks eternal farewell, he smiled instead of replying to questions on naval affairs or his personal affairs. He repeatedly asked his elder brother, Shiro, to take good care of their mother. In October, 1937, when his eldest brother Shoichiro was killed in action at Lotrienchen, shortly after the outbreak of hostilities between Japan and China, Lieutenant-Commander Yokoyama wrote a pathetic letter to his mother, expressing his strong attachment to her, as well as his unswerving devotion Throne and the State. The letter reads in part:

I fully sympathize with you in the death of Shoichiro, my eldest brother, on the battle-field. It is, however, not only the satisfaction of but also the honour of their family that they should die on battlefields. I am sure that my dear departed father must be pleased at the news of my eldest
brother, Shoichiro, fighting gallantly to death.

I am also in naval service. In emergency, I will render as distinguished a service to the State as my eldest brother and meet him in Yasukuni Shrine, Japan's Pantheon. I think that you will become a typical mother in a country engaged in war, when you rejoice over sacrificing your two sons for the sake of the State. Please take heart pray for my success in arms!

Lieutenant-Commander Shighemi Furuno was twenty-five of age. He was born of a family, whose ancestor was a famous loyalist. While attending the Naval Academy, he became second-grade judo expert as well as a champion amateur wrestler. He was a typical naval officer, possessed of fortitude, quick decision and humane feeling. His school record was satisfactory, having finished the middle school course third of his class. On leaving the middle school, he sat for the entrance examinations of the Naval Academy and the Military Cadets School, in both of which he was successful. He was advised by his seniors to enter the Naval Academy. He had six brothers and sisters. His family was a very strict one, his father being formerly a middle school president. When he

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grew up, he faithfully obeyed his father. While attending the Naval Academy, he took to smoking, only when permitted by his father to do so. Every time when he was advised by his friends or relatives to marry, he used to say: " I may die at any moment for the sake of the State."

There is an episode, shedding light on the strictness of his father. In the autumn of last year, when he paid his last visit to his home town, he was dressed in a lounge suit. Whereupon his father took him severely to task, saying; "You are a naval officer. As such, you have a uniform to wear. Why do you put on such a lounge suit ?"

Lieutenant-Commander Furuno replied with a smile:

?Next time when I return home, I shall be in a white casket.? 

This shows that he was firmly determined to offer his life for the cause of the State as early as last autumn.

Lieutenant Akira Hiro-o, one of the nine heroes of the Special Attack Flotilla, was twenty-two years of age. He was born of a samurai family belonging to the former Nabeshima clan in Kyushu. His family was an old one, held in high esteem by the local people. His father, mother and elder brother were all educationists. His family education was responsible for his lofty personality. 

Especially great was the influence exercised by his mother in shaping his character. His mother was very strict in bringing up her children. While teaching at school, she reared sons. Nursing was done exclusively at home and so her children were not allowed to be brought to her school even a single time. She took every possible occasion to impress the necessity for respecting the family name upon her children.
Lieutenant Hiro-o, who was blessed with a sturdy constitution with a rather dark complexion, did not miss even a single day during his eleven-year attendance at the elementary and middle schools. He was a man of few words, fortitude and sincerity. He would yield to none. Possessed of a strong sense of justice, he often wept with indignation over sanctions meted out by upper class boys against his class-mates without any justification, while attending the middle school. He was not possessed of superior intellect, nor was there any touch of genius in him. In a word, he was a strenuous worker. In a note left by him, he said:

Man's merit lies in taking the right path and making endeavours in the right direction. It does not matter much whether man has clear brain or not. Strive, and all things within the range of human possibilities will be accomplished. Otherwise, the cause for failure must be sought in lack of proper exertion. This is one aspect of my guiding principle in life.

Special Sub-Lieutenant Shighenori Yokoyama was twenty-six years old, born of a tenant-farmer's family of nine in a mountain village. One spring morning, when he was admitted into an elementary school, his mother presented him with a pair of straw-sandals, which she had made herself. He was thrilled with joy at her present. He often told his comrades that he had never experienced such a full-hearted joy again in life.

When he was eighteen years old, he was admitted to the Blue-jackets' Corps at Kure, having passed the examination with full marks. In May, 1937, when he was graduated from the Torpedo School, he was awarded a prize for his proficiency. He was promoted to the rank of Third Class Warrant Officer within four years of his enlistment. He asked his mother to share his joy over his promotion, adding: "If there is anything which I can boast, that is, that I have become a non-commissioned officer in four years of my enlistment with the Bluejackets' Corps."

His quick promotion testifies to his excellent record. In May, last year, when he returned home, he told his parents: "My friend, who joined the Blue-jackets' Corps with me, carried out self-immolation on mid-air in Central China. I will offer my life to the State from the bottom of the sea. I will not be behind anybody in rendering service to the State. Please set your mind at rest " This became his last farewell to his parents.

Special Sub-Lieutenant Naokichi Sasaki, another member of the Special Attack Flotilla, was thirty years of age. He lost his mother while an infant. His father too died soon after. Before long, his home too was sold to a buyer. He and his brothers were trained at the hard school of adversity. He finished the elementary school course at the top of his class, from the first to the last year. At the age of twenty, he joined the Blue-jackets? Corps at Kure. After completing the courses at the Torpedo School and the Submarine School, he took part in the blockade of the China coast, following the outbreak of the China affair. In autumn of last year when he visited his native
village, he paid homage to his ancestral tombs and bade farewell to the village folks.

Chief Warrant Officer Sadamu Kamita, of the Special Attack Flotilla was twenty-seven years old. A letter sent by him to his parents on the eve of his departure to Hawaii reads:

Anything may happen anywhere at any time, as the situation is so tense. But please don't be flurried. Sailor as I am, I have offered my life to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor. For the sake of the country, I am determined and prepared to lay down my life. Your affectionate son, Sadamu, will never be disloyal to His Majesty, nor undutiful to his parents. Please set your minds at rest.

This was his last note, addressed to his parents.

In 1934, he joined the Blue-jackets' Corps at Kure. He completed the courses at the Submarine School and the Torpedo School. He was a man of action and few words. Although he was convinced that the projected raid on Pearl Harbour would give him no chance to return safely, he calmly studied calligraphy with assiduity. This calm attitude of his reflected the serenity of an ancient warrior, who did not forget to pay attention to his mental training in the face of death. Indeed, he was an incarnation of Bushido. His attainment of the highest level of moral training as manifested in Bushido apparently was facilitated by his parents' affectionate training in a peaceful mountain-covered environment.

Chief Warrant Officer Yoshio Katayama, another hero of the Special Attack Flotilla, was twenty-five years of age. He

joined the Blue-jackets' Corps at Kure in 1936 and finished the course at the Submarine School. He was a skilled fencer, being possessed of a bright and broad-minded disposition. He had four brothers. When he completed the elementary school course, he served as a shop-assistant for a while. Later on, he joined the Navy. In joining the expedition to Hawaii, he wrote a farewell letter to his parents. Full of his strong attachment to his parents and his devotion to the cause of the State, the letter reads:

Dear Father and Mother,

I am writing in full remembrance of your affection for me in the past twenty-four years. The clear sky in advanced autumn appears to bless my expedition. Your affectionate son, Yoshio, is going to lay down his life for the sake of the country, sharing the fate of his craft.

I am in high spirit. I will do my duty as a sailor. Man is mortal. Blessed is Yoshio, who can die in a place worthy of his death. I must thank you, father and mother, for bringing me up so healthy and so strong as to enable me to undertake the new assignment. When you, father and mother, receive an official dispatch, reporting Yoshio's death, please praise his filial duty, which he has performed only once in his past twenty-four years. Services to be rendered by me will not be probably made public, but please don't lose your heart. The secrets of the Japanese Navy are
more important than a man's death. Dear father and mother, please take care of your health in the hot and cold days so as to attain longevity. It is my prayer offered to you both from my sea grave.

Chief Officer Kiyoshi Inagaki was twenty-one years of age. He spent his boyhood in a peaceful village ensconced in mountains, taking care of his younger brothers or helping his parents cultivate rice. He joined the Blue-jackets? Corps in 1934 and completed the course at the Torpedo School. His personality is fully reflected in his letter sent to his parents on the eve of his departure for Hawaii. It reads:

Dear Father and Mother,

As parents of a naval service-man, I believe that you are prepared for emergency. The international situation is changing rapidly, so anything may happen at any time. But please don't be shocked. I beg that you will be prepared for the worst possible eventuality so as not to become a laughing-stock.

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I will enhance the family reputation abroad, by giving full play to my activity through my abilities and determination which I have so strenously acquired.

I will become a guardian deity of the country, even if I may die at sea, as my ill luck in arms would have it. There will be no higher honour to the family. Pray take care of things when I am gone. You may miss your children, who have all gone far away. Please pardon me for having given you lots of trouble for so many years. Please take best care of yourselves. I pray that you may live long for the sake of my brothers and sisters.

These short sketches of the nine war heroes not only expose potent qualities and deep concern for the welfare of the nation, but magnify the Japanese people's traditional loyalty to the Emperor and devotion to duty, surmounting the barrier of physical limitations and material disadvantages. These nine "human bullets" have sacrificed their physical existence for a great cause and their accomplishments have added a new chapter to the brilliant record of the manifestation of the Japanese spirit, the soul of which is Bushido --- the unrivalled asset of the Japanese nation.