

kept them in the air as much as he could; meanwhile he continuously hammered into them the importance of their jobs. It was a frantic race against time and despite the difficulties which slowed them up, he managed to whip them into a smooth operating squadron.

The "skipper," as they called Lieutenant Commander Waldron, treated them like a father and they, in turn, went "all out" for him. They used to say of him that he had apparently been flying torpedo planes while the Wright Brothers were still "batting the breeze," and when he yelled at them, "Don't sit there fat, dumb and happy! Do something!" they really moved.

*There was far too little time and the boys of Torpedo 8, flying and working under constant pressure, knew it. When the Japs hit Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Ensign William R. Evans, known to his squadron mates as "the Squire," sat down and wrote a sober letter to his parents.*



"WHAT A DAY . . . the incredulousness of it, all gives each new announcement the unreality of a fairy tale. How can they have been so mad? Though I suppose we all have known it would come some time, there was always that inner small voice whispering, 'No, we are too big, too rich, too powerful; this war is for some poor fools somewhere else; it will never touch us here.' And then this noon that world fell apart.

*" . . . The public has come to think contemptuously of Japan. And that, I fear, is a fatal mistake—today has given evidence of that. This war will be more difficult than any war this country has ever fought.*

"Once more the whole world is afire . . . in the month approaching Christmas it seems bitterly ironical to mouth again the time-worn phrases concerning *peace on earth—good will to men* with so many millions hard at work figuring out ways to reduce other millions to slavery or to death.

"Let us hope tonight that people, big people, little people, all throughout this great country, have the faith to once again sacrifice for the things which we hold essential to life and happiness. Let us defend these principles to the last drop of blood . . ."

*Morning and evening following the Jap attack on Pearl Harbor the squadron spent long hours in the ready room of the U. S. S. HORNET awaiting the word that would send them into the air against the enemy. Afternoons, Skipper Waldron crammed them with tactical knowledge. They knew that when their chance for action came it might be their only chance.*

*It was with this sober knowledge of what lay ahead that Radioman 3/c William F. Sawhill prepared a letter for his parents. A letter which, if he had returned, he would have never sent.*