

# The History of the Twentieth Century

## Episode 458

### “The Battle of Leyte Gulf”

#### Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

The US-led invasion of the Philippine island of Leyte triggered the largest naval battle of the Second World War. By some measures, it was the largest naval battle in history.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening War Theme]

Episode 458. The Battle of Leyte Gulf.

As I told you last week, the Americans quickly won the air and land battles on Leyte, although it would take months to fully secure the island. But what about the Japanese Navy? I told you last week that what was left of the Japanese Combined Fleet was ordered to Leyte as soon as it became clear to the Japanese that the Americans intended to land there. The fleet was divided into three forces. The first one, the Northern Force, commanded by Admiral Ozawa Jisaburo, was approaching from the north. These were the fleet elements that had launched the planes that had engaged Mitscher during the American strikes on Taiwan. The fleet made a formidable sight; it included *Zuikaku*, the last remaining Japanese fleet carrier of the six that had participated in the Pearl Harbor strike, along with three light carriers, *Zuiho*, *Chitose*, and *Chiyoda*, and two First-World-War-vintage battleships, *Hyuga* and *Ise*, escorted by three light cruisers and nine destroyers.

But it was a bluff. These carriers barely had a hundred airplanes among them, the sad remnants of the air battles over Taiwan. Their mission was to make an appearance, look threatening, then withdraw to the north, and hopefully lure most of the American warships covering the invasion of Leyte into pursuing them. Especially the American carriers.

The second force, the Southern Force, would approach the Philippines from the west, from Borneo, and pass through the Philippine archipelago through the southernmost passage; that is, it would follow along the northern coast of Mindanao, then turn north and enter Leyte Gulf, where it would attack the Americans' amphibious vessels and cargo ships anchored in the gulf. This

route would be easy going most of the way, but in order to enter Leyte Gulf, it would first have to pass through the narrow Surigao Strait. Here is where they would be most vulnerable.

The third force, the Center Force obviously, was also coming in from Borneo. No carriers here either, but this fleet, commanded by Admiral Kurita Takeo, was the most powerful surface combat force in the world. It was built around the two largest battleships in the world, which also carried the largest naval guns in the world, the sister ships *Yamato* and *Musashi*, each equipped with nine 460mm guns, capable of firing one-and-a-half ton shells over a distance of 40 kilometers and no less than 120 anti-aircraft guns. Central Force would sail through the middle of the archipelago, through the San Bernardino Strait, and then south and enter Leyte Gulf.

Their orders were to arrive on October 25 and attack the assault craft and cargo ships in the gulf that were there to support the invasion force. Kurita and his staff were annoyed by their orders. The risks were serious. Their ships would have to thread their way through the maze of waterways within the Philippine Archipelago, where no doubt American submarines lurked below and American reconnaissance aircraft scanned the waters from above. They were braving almost certain discovery and attack by the Americans in an attempt to sail to the invasion site and...attack a bunch of freighters? The American soldiers were already on the island. Most of their supplies likely were by now as well, which meant that the Admiralty in Tokyo was sending His Imperial Majesty's biggest and most powerful ships to sink a bunch of troop and cargo ships that were probably already empty. To them, it made no sense, but orders were orders, and they followed their orders.

In front of the crew, the admiral put on a brave face. "I believe that Imperial Headquarters is giving us a glorious opportunity," he told them. "You must remember there are such things as miracles. What man can say there is no chance for us to turn the tide of war...?" His subordinates responded with cries of "Banzai!"

Kurita's force went to sea on the morning of October 22. When they reached the northern tip of Borneo, the Southern Force turned east. Kurita and the Central Force turned northeast. They would approach along the northern coast of the long and narrow Philippine island of Palawan.

Kurita's problems began late that night. His ships sailed the Palawan Passage, a deep and narrow waterway that runs between the island and a large area of hazardous uncharted reefs in the South China Sea, known to mariners by the simple yet foreboding name "Dangerous Ground."

But the status of the Palawan Passage as the only safe route through these waters was common knowledge, and the Americans had assigned two submarines to picket duty in the Passage, just in case a major Japanese naval force should come though. Because you never know. Just after midnight on October 23, less than a day after Kurita's ships left Borneo, the radar operator aboard the submarine USS *Darter* reported a contact at 30,000 yards, adding "contact is doubtful—probably rain cloud."

The sub's captain, Commander David McClintock, scoffed. He was immediately certain the radar had detected a Japanese fleet on its way to disrupt the landings at Leyte. They watched the scope together for a few moments until the radar operator concurred. McClintock signaled the news to the other submarine, USS *Dace*. *Dace*'s captain signaled back, "Let's go get them."

The Japanese fleet had already passed them, so *Darter* and *Dace* spent the next five hours on the surface, running at flank speed, on a course parallel to the Japanese. By dawn, the Americans had passed the enemy fleet, submerged, and were lying in wait for it to catch up. McClintock looked through his periscope and in the gray light of dawn spotted two columns of Japanese warships. He waited until the lead ship, a heavy cruiser, came into position. It offered its broad side to the sub at a range of one thousand yards, the perfect situation for a torpedo attack. McClintock launched torpedoes from all six of his forward torpedo tubes, hoping to himself that it was the enemy's flagship.

He ordered the tubes reloaded immediately and began sizing up the next cruiser in line for the next salvo. The torpedoes sped toward their target, which was the Japanese heavy cruiser *Atago*, which was indeed Kurita's flagship. On *Atago*'s bridge, Kurita's first warning that the Americans were close came when his flagship shuddered violently...once...twice...three times...four times. *Atago*, a surviving veteran of virtually every naval battle of this war, beginning with Midway, capsized and sank in less than twenty minutes. Of the crew, 360 were killed. The other 529 survived to be rescued by two destroyers. Among the survivors was Admiral Kurita.

The captain of *Dace*, the second submarine, chose to allow the cruisers to pass and save his torpedoes for a battleship. Unfortunately for him, he misidentified a heavy cruiser as a battleship. He fired six torpedoes, then orders his sub to dive deep and "get the hell out of here."

Four of *Dace*'s six torpedoes struck the heavy cruiser *Maya*. It sank in five minutes, taking with it 336 Japanese sailors. As for the second ship targeted by USS *Darter*, it was the heavy cruiser *Takao* and was also struck by four torpedoes. *Takao* did not sink, although it was seriously damaged and Kurita ordered it to return to Borneo, escorted by two destroyers. As a side note, *Takao* was the lead ship of its class, and the two sunken cruisers were also of the *Takao*-class, the largest cruiser class in the Imperial Navy, which no doubt explains why the captain of *Dace* mistook it for a battleship. *Takao* was eventually towed to Singapore, where it was determined to be too damaged to repair. The ship spent the rest of the war docked at the naval base at Singapore, where it served as a floating anti-aircraft battery.

By 8:00 AM on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24 hours after setting sail from Brunei, Kurita had already lost three heavy cruisers, two sunk and one sent home. But the real bad news was that he was barely in Philippine waters and the enemy already knew his location and his course. His fleet would face greater dangers still before this mission ended, and he fully realized it. At noon, he received a message from fleet headquarters confirming what he already knew: the Americans had

discovered his position and course and would doubtless attack with submarines and airplanes. The message ordered him to continue with his mission as planned.

By morning of the next day, October 24, Kurita and his fleet were entering the Sibuyan Sea, the waters in the center of the archipelago. He had transferred his command to *Yamato*; now it and *Musashi* cruised in the center of a circle formed by the smaller ships.

*Yamato* and *Musashi* were sister ships, the largest battleships in the Imperial Navy and in the world. *Musashi* was, however, the newer of the two and benefitted from some improvements in the design since *Yamato* was constructed; in particular, *Musashi*'s crew quarters were more comfortable. Therefore, *Musashi* was arguably the best battleship anywhere, in or out of the Imperial Navy, and any member of its crew was happy to explain that to you, should the subject come up, so it created much surprise and a little resentment when Kurita chose *Yamato* over *Musashi* to serve as his flagship.

The Japanese knew their passage through the Sibuyan Sea would be the most dangerous leg of the journey: a passage through constricted waters in broad daylight. Sure enough, an American search plane spotted them at 8:00 that morning. Knowing an American airstrike was likely, Kurita radioed Manila and requested air cover. He did not know that Japanese air strength in the Philippines was down to less than 200. Air command in Manila could spare only a dozen fighters, none of which reached Kurita's ships.

The other 180 planes, all that remained of Japanese air power in the islands, were striking at the Third Fleet, the main US carrier force, which lay northeast of Leyte. Almost all of the Japanese planes were lost after doing little damage, except for one dive bomber that managed to land a bomb on the deck of the light carrier USS *Princeton*, just as a half dozen fully armed and fueled torpedo bombers were preparing for takeoff. The Japanese bomb set off a chain reaction of explosions, and *Princeton* had to be abandoned and scuttled.

Shortly afterward, Admiral Halsey, the Third Fleet commander, received word of Kurita's fleet approaching via the Sibuyan Sea. Halsey, never one to duck a fight, ordered air strikes. At 10:30, the first of these carrier air strikes reached Kurita's fleet. *Musashi* was hit by a bomb and a torpedo, but the ship plowed ahead, seemingly unperturbed. It takes more than that to stop the largest battleship in the world. At noon, a second strike came in. *Musashi* took three more torpedo hits, still without slowing down. Kurita radioed Manila a second time, pleading for air cover.

At 1:30, a third and larger American strike force arrived. *Musashi* took four more bomb hits and one more torpedo hit. This was getting to be too much for even the largest battleship in the world. *Musashi* began to slow and fall behind the rest of the fleet. Kurita was forced to slow his other ships so *Musashi* could keep up. He sent another message requesting air cover.

Another American strike arrived. Three torpedoes hit *Musashi* on the port side, while a bomb hit the command bridge, killing everyone inside. Then four more torpedo strikes. By the time the Americans were done, *Musashi* had taken 17 bombs and 19 torpedoes. The ship's Executive Officer assumed command, as the captain was wounded. He sent a message to *Yamato* via signal flags, as *Musashi* had lost electric power. The ship could not make more than six knots and was listing. Kurita ordered *Musashi* to return to base along with another damaged ship, a cruiser, escorted by two destroyers.

Center Force was now down one battleship, four heavy cruisers, and four destroyers. The rest of the fleet continued forward, but as they reached the mouth of the San Bernadino Strait, Kurita lost his nerve. It was only 4:00 in the afternoon. His pleas for air cover had gone unanswered. His ships would be passing through the narrow strait in daylight, where there would be no room for evasive maneuvers against enemy air attacks that were certain to come. He ordered his fleet to reverse course and return to base. But 75 minutes later, and noting there were no more American air strikes, Kurita changed his mind again and ordered his fleet to turn around again and proceed through the strait, as the delay meant it would be night before they reached it.

Aboard *Musashi*, meanwhile, the situation continued to deteriorate. At 7:15 PM, with the ship listing 15 degrees, its commander ordered the crew to prepare to abandon ship. Kurita ordered *Musashi* to run itself aground, but the ship was not capable of even that. Fifteen minutes later, the list reached 30 degrees, so steep that equipment began sliding across the deck, and the order to abandon ship was issued. About a thousand of the ship's crew died; almost 1,400 were rescued.

[music: Zimmerman, "Anchors Aweigh."]

Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet, in the Philippine Sea, had spotted Center Force and Southern Force and had been striking Center Force all day. Ironically, they had not detected Northern Force, the decoy force, the force that was supposed to distract them from the other two. Northern Force's commander, Admiral Ozawa, overall commander of Combined Fleet, decided he needed to make himself more obvious.

Northern Force had just over a hundred planes among its four carriers. He decided the best use of them would be to distract the US Third Fleet. He launched 76 planes, which attacked the Third Fleet, doing little damage, then retired to airfields on the ground on Luzon, safe from the American counterattack.

But the American counterattack never came. Halsey and his officers believed the attacking planes were land-based, and I'm sure the fact that they flew off toward Manila after the attack reinforced that thinking. Ozawa must have been frustrated, but decided that if the Americans wouldn't chase airplanes, they would certainly chase battleships. He detached a force of seven ships, ordered them to sail toward Third Fleet until the Americans gave chase, then turn about

and head north. He radioed Kurita to tell him he would lead the Americans on a wild goose chase while Kurita slipped through the risky San Bernardino Strait unobserved.

The force Ozawa sent to bait the Americans was led by two First World War-era battleships, *Ise* and *Hyuga*. When the Imperial Navy started losing its carriers, it experimented with converting these old battleships into kinda, sorta aircraft carriers. Their rear turrets were removed and replaced with flight decks and catapults and storage space sufficient for about twenty airplanes. The catapults allowed for the aircraft to be launched despite the small flight decks, but no provision was made to recover the planes. That meant that any planes these ships might send into the air would have to set down somewhere else. That's why I say they were kinda, sorta aircraft carriers. I don't know that you can call them carriers if they couldn't recover their own planes.

That little problem was moot anyway, because *Ise* and *Hyuga* weren't carrying any aircraft.

This time the deception worked, as the small force steamed south, it was spotted by American reconnaissance aircraft, which then spotted the rest of the fleet. Admiral Halsey heard the report of multiple carriers and judged Ozawa's force to be the main Japanese attack force. He was aware of at least the possibility that Kurita's fleet would pass through the San Bernardino Strait, but concluded those ships had already been so heavily damaged they would probably turn around and not even attempt to come any closer, but this carrier force included every carrier the Japanese still had. If they were sunk, the US Navy need never again fear Japanese naval air attacks.

At that moment, Halsey's fleet consisted of three carrier groups. A fourth was called back from a resupply trip, but was many hours away. Two of the three carrier group commanders had reservations about Halsey's order. One of them contacted one of Halsey's staff officers to point out that the navigation lights at the San Bernardino Strait, which the Japanese usually kept dark, had been switched on tonight, a clear sign that Kurita's fleet was still coming. The staff officer dismissed the objection with a curt "Yes, we have that information."

The other commander sent Halsey a message warning of the possibility that Ozawa's carrier force was a decoy, meant to lure them away from the Strait. He was exactly right, as it happened, but the only reply he got was, "Roger."

Admiral Mitscher, the remaining task force commander, interpreted Halsey's orders to mean Halsey was assuming command and went to bed. His staff officer, Commodore Arleigh Burke, soon woke him up with a report that Kurita's force appeared to be headed for the strait. Perhaps Mitscher should discuss this with Halsey. Mitscher asked if Halsey had received the report. Burke said yes. Mitscher told him, "If he wants my advice, he'll ask for it," and went back to sleep.

Now I should say, in Halsey's defense, that there were also units of the Seventh Fleet at Leyte. There were no fleet carriers, but this force consisted of the ships that had bombarded the landing

site: six battleships and lots of escort carriers, cruisers, and destroyers. Owing to a miscommunication, the commander of this force, Admiral Thomas Kinkaid, believed Halsey had left behind a task group to deal with Kurita in the San Bernadino Strait. Kinkaid took most of his own force south, to intercept the Japanese Southern Force, coming north through the Surigao Strait. He left behind his escort carriers to provide air cover over the Leyte beachhead, but he didn't leave behind any surface ships heavier than destroyers to protect those carriers against Japanese surface ships.

Early the following morning, on October 25, the Japanese Southern Force entered the narrow Surigao Strait from the south at 2:00. This force consisted of two battleships, one heavy cruiser, and four destroyers. It was a trap. Kinkaid's task groups were tracking them on radar and were ready for them with a force led by six battleships. By the way, five of these six battleships were among those damaged or sunk at Pearl Harbor.

The Japanese Southern Force suffered a devastating defeat in a battle that is notable for being the last battleship vs. battleship encounter in naval history. Only one Japanese ship, a destroyer, survived.

But even as the Battle of the Surigao Strait was raging in the early morning darkness, Admiral Kurita, aboard his flagship *Yamato*, was passing through the San Bernardino Strait unnoticed.

The San Bernadino Strait is narrower than the Surigao Strait, narrow enough that the Japanese ships had to pass through it single file. Kurita spent every moment expecting an American attack. When his ships emerged unscathed at the eastern end of the strait, he looked for an ambush.

Nothing happened.

Per his orders, Kurita turned south, toward Leyte Gulf. Soon his force spotted what appeared to be American carriers. Kurita ordered an attack.

What the Japanese had found was the portion of Seventh Fleet left behind when the bulk of them left for the Surigao Strait: three small task units, as they were called, consisting of a total of 16 US escort carriers accompanied by escorts of destroyers. This was the force Kinkaid left behind to provide air cover over Leyte while he and his battleships went to Surigao Strait.

You'll recall what I said earlier about escort carriers. Often known as "baby carriers," they carried around two dozen planes each, and they were much slower than surface warships, like the approaching Japanese, so running away was not a possibility.

Unable to escape, the Americans chose to engage the Japanese, knowing it was likely suicide. Three American destroyers charged the Japanese and fired their torpedoes, forcing the Japanese to go out of formation as they made evasive maneuvers. All three of the American destroyers were sunk.

The escort carriers launched all their planes, around 450 in all, which sounds like a lot, but most of them were armed with nothing more than machine guns or depth charges, as they were meant for anti-submarine and anti-aircraft missions, not attacks on surface ships.

Despite the long odds, the American warplanes succeeded in damaging three Japanese cruisers. Kurita ordered them to retire. The size and ferocity of the American attack convinced him that he had encountered the main American carrier force. He ordered his disarrayed ships to pull back and regroup. The Americans sent urgent messages to Admiral Halsey and his fleet carriers that were currently pursuing the decoy Northern Force, but Halsey was convinced the carriers he had found represented the main enemy force and it had to be his highest priority.

Farther south, the Americans aboard the ships in the escort carrier group watched in disbelief as the huge Japanese battleship and its escorts began to withdraw. Had they actually forced a Japanese retreat?

An hour later, general quarters sounded again. Nine Japanese Zeroes were approaching, so low over the water that they'd evaded radar. As they approached the escort carriers, they climbed high into the sky, then began steep descents, machine guns blazing. The Americans expected the planes to rake their carriers with machine gun fire, then pull away.

They didn't. The pilots deliberately crashed their planes into the decks of the baby carriers. Each plane had a bomb attached to it that exploded on impact. This was a suicide attack. One of the carriers hit, USS *St. Lo*, named after the battle in Normandy that took place just three months earlier, sank, making *St. Lo* the first ship to be sunk by what the survivors called a "devil diver." We know them by the Japanese name: *kamikaze*.

Meanwhile, Admiral Kurita spent the next two hours reorganizing his scattered ships and bringing them back into formation. He was down from 32 ships to 15, but these 15 were still a formidable force. On the other hand, most of the sailors aboard these ships hadn't slept in three days and were hardly at their best. You could say the same for their commander. Kurita contemplated his orders. His next move was supposed to be into Leyte Gulf. But for what? To sink some cargo ships?

Meanwhile, Halsey and the Third Fleet pursued the decoy Northern Force all night long. At dawn, the carriers launched air strikes. Stripped of their own planes, the Japanese carriers were defenseless. The Americans sent waves of attack planes against Ozawa's fleet all day long. They sank two of the light carriers, *Zuiho* and *Chitose*, and seriously damaged a third, as well as sinking *Zuikaku*, the last surviving carrier from the Pearl Harbor strike.

Ironically, this engagement with the decoy fleet took place off the northern coast of Luzon, near what is called Cape Engaño. *Engaño* is Spanish for *deception*.

Meanwhile, at Pearl Harbor, Admiral Nimitz was notified of the situation with the escort carriers and was also wondering why Halsey wasn't responding to their pleas for help. He sent Halsey a message asking for a report.

Halsey received Nimitz's message requesting a report, including his fleet's location. Appended to the message were three nonsense words. This was standard practice for US Navy cryptographers, to make the messages more difficult to decrypt. These words were supposed to be disregarded by the recipient, but as luck would have it, the three words the cryptographer chose that day were THE WORLD WONDERS, and Halsey's code officer neglected to drop these words from the decrypted message as he was supposed to. So Halsey got a message asking for his position plus the added remark, "the world wonders."

Halsey interpreted this as a snide criticism of his failure to answer the escort carriers' calls. He went into a rage, throwing his cap to the deck. His chief of staff calmed him down and shortly before noon, Halsey ordered one of his three carrier groups to turn around and head south toward Kurita. But it was a futile gesture. They were too far away to reach the escort carriers in time.

Admiral Kurita, once again contemplating the futility of attacking empty cargo ships and the danger of more attacks by what he believed to be American carrier planes, decided a few cargo ships weren't worth the price of his own fleet getting sunk by Halsey's carriers. He did not know that the decoy Northern Force had successfully drawn Halsey hundreds of miles away. Apparently, no one in Ozawa's command had thought to pass on that information. The cargo ships in Leyte Gulf were virtually undefended. But Kurita didn't know that, either. He ordered his ships to retire, back through the San Bernardino Strait, and back to Borneo.

The Americans lost 11 warships in all, the most significant loss being the light carrier USS *Princeton*. About 3,000 American and Allied sailors and aircrew were killed. The Imperial Navy lost 26 warships, the most important losses being the super-battleship *Musashi*, the carrier *Zuikaku*, and the three light carriers. Around 12,000 Japanese sailors and aircrew were killed. In the days that followed, the Japanese suffered further losses of their retreating warships to Allied air attacks.

These engagements are collectively known as the Battle of Leyte Gulf, even though no combat took place in Leyte Gulf. The Battle of Leyte Gulf was the largest naval battle of the war, arguably the largest naval battle in history. A full quarter of the total losses suffered by the Imperial Japanese Navy since Pearl Harbor took place during the Battle of Leyte Gulf. The sacrifice of some of Japan's best remaining warships and their crews was in vain.

But even had they survived, they wouldn't have made much difference. Likewise, most of the damaged ships that survived the battle would never be repaired, and for the same reason. That reason being: what was the point? The remaining intact ships of the Imperial Japanese Navy, scattered, short on fuel, lacking air cover, and vulnerable to Allied air attack, would never again

pose a threat to their enemies. For the rest of the war in the Pacific, the seas will belong to the Allies.

Admiral Halsey's decision to pursue the Japanese Northern Force, the decoy force, has been the subject of criticism and debate. His decision should be judged in the context of what happened at The Battle of the Philippine Sea, where Admiral Spruance drew criticism for *not* pursuing the Japanese fleet more aggressively and allowing them to escape. Halsey was aware of that criticism and it may well have influenced his own decision. After the war, Halsey was quoted as saying he wished he had been at the Battle of the Philippine Sea and Spruance had been at the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

We'll have to stop here for today. I thank you for listening, and I'd like to thank John and Ezra for their kind donations, and thank you to Roger for becoming a patron of the podcast. Donors and patrons like John, Ezra, and Roger help cover the costs of making this show, which in turn keeps the podcast available free for everyone always, so my thanks to them and to all of you who have pitched in and helped out. If you'd like to become a patron or make a donation, you are most welcome; just visit the website, [historyofthetwentiethcentury.com](http://historyofthetwentiethcentury.com) and click on the PayPal or Patreon buttons.

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Next week is a bye week for the podcast, but I hope you'll join me in two weeks' time, here on *The History of the Twentieth Century*, where it's back to the Western Front, where the Allies are still looking for a way past the Siegfried Line, while the Germans are preparing a surprise offensive. Autumn Mist, in two weeks' time, here, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. The Japanese word *kamikaze* is usually translated into English as *divine wind*. It refers to typhoons that disrupted two attempts by the Mongol Emperor Kublai Khan to invade Japan in 1274 and in 1281.

In 1944, when the Japanese began training pilots to crash Zeroes laden with bombs into Allied ships, the formal military name for these units was "special attack units." The Japanese press picked up on the idea of calling them kamikaze units, and after the war that informal usage spread to the Allied countries.

Please note that Zeroes were fighter planes, not bombers, and what was special about the special attack units was that their missions were intended to be suicide attacks from the beginning. Previous to the Battle of Leyte Gulf, there were numerous instances of Japanese pilots deliberately choosing to crash damaged planes into enemy ships, but these were spur-of-the-

moment decisions made by pilots of damaged planes, many of whom may have calculated that they were likely to die anyway and chose to go down fighting, so to speak.

Kamikaze units, by contrast, were made up of pilots selected and trained for suicide missions and sent on their attacks with orders to sacrifice themselves for the sake of a bomb strike on an enemy ship. The first true kamikaze attacks were at Leyte Gulf on October 25, 1944, as I described earlier in this episode.

You may be wondering about last week's episode, in which I described an attack on HMAS *Australia* just six days earlier, in which a Japanese dive bomber crashed into the ship. This attack does not meet the strictest definition of a kamikaze attack, in the sense that it does not appear that pilot was under orders to make a suicide attack. Still, the Royal Australian Navy has its own way of looking at the matter, and I don't want to argue with them. I have a lot of listeners in Australia, you know.

[music: Closing War Theme]