

Mission

by Ben Dobrow

The low drone of the twin Hamilton standard props resonated through the pilot's ears as his squadron of P38J's flew low over the Philippine Islands. Static crackled over the radio. "Bogies at three o'clock!" the port wingman asserted. The pilot looked out the canopy windscreen to his right just in time to see five KI 43 "Oscars" roaring up, with their 20mm nose cannons cranking out a deadly hail of fire. The starboard



wingman's P38 got a pattern ripped into it by the Japanese lead before it burst into flames and plunged down toward the jungle below.

As the Oscars passed over the pilot felt his plane shudder as seven 20mm rounds pumped into his own right wing. He looked out the canopy to assess the damage. There was a small fire burning off a pocket of fuel in his wing. He knew that if it spread, he would be a goner for sure. He pushed forward on the joystick and dove twenty-five hundred feet before the fire went out. He jettisoned both of the drop tanks and pulled up hard to the left. He saw an Oscar flying away from him and lined it up in his sights. He briefly pressed down on the trigger and felt the vibration of the

four .50 caliber guns mounted in the nose shoot a stream of tracers at the Japanese plane. He watched the Japanese plane absorb all of the rounds. Then all of a sudden there was a flash of fire, and the Oscar exploded into a flying fireball. It quickly broke up into four or five smaller pieces and crashed into the forest. His first kill. As he was thinking about the ground crew mechanic painting a red circle on the side of his plane to represent the kill, another Oscar loomed up behind him.

The Japanese pilot flying it cursed the American for shooting down his brother. He pressed the trigger. The bullets ripped through the Oscar's wing and then up through the cockpit, frying the instruments and hitting the pilot of the Oscar in the leg. He lined his plane up again with the American's, determined to have revenge before he dies. He was completely oblivious to the fire raging around him as he pre-

Mall People

by Zara Day

The mall is a haven for people of all ages, shapes, sizes, and personalities. One encounters people on opposite ends of the spectrum, from the heavy old man in the department store, to the skinny girl throwing up her greasy, overcooked pizza in the dirty porcelain toilet, to the group of adolescent white boys free-styling and thinking they're "the shit." There're "Goths" and punk-rockers and "posers" and skaters all doing their own things, be it shopping or laughing or making fun of the heavy old man in the department store. Little girls wear princess tiaras that their baby-sitters snuck out of Hot Topic without paying, and little boys jump up and down making the same baby-sitters miserable.

Without the mall, where would these people go? From the pathetic to the deranged, everyone goes to the mall at least once in his or her life. Next time you're at the mall, try looking out for these people. Watch the skinny girl excuse herself from her table full of friends or the old man look away embarrassedly when a group of teenagers starts laughing as they pass by. Watch the skinny white-boys rap their hearts out only to be completely and publicly humiliated by the laughs from the group of real "gangstas" standing in the food-court. Watch the guy working at Hot Topic turn the other way because the girl who stole the tiara was hot, just the kind of girl he's always been into but never had the guts to ask out. Watch the agitated mothers feed the boys their Ritalin and yell angrily about the Coke they just spilled on the floor. Just watch.

