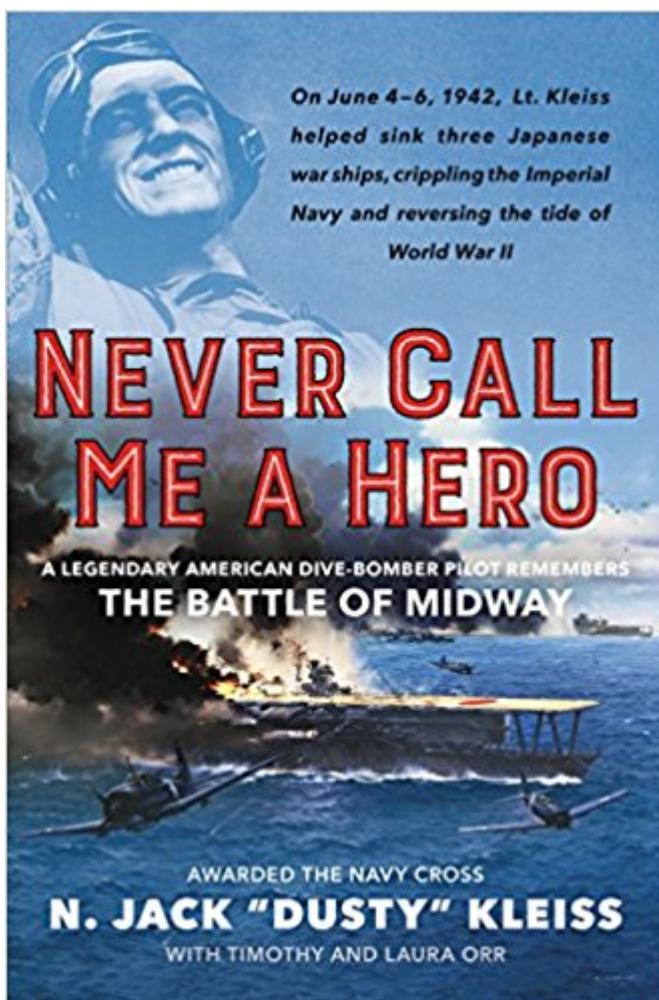


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# Never Call Me A Hero: A Legendary American Dive-Bomber Pilot Remembers The Battle Of Midway



## Synopsis

National Bestseller *An instant classic.* •Dallas Morning News *75 YEARS AGO, ONE DARING AMERICAN PILOT MAY HAVE CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY* • WHEN HE SANK *TWO JAPANESE CARRIERS* AT THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

On the morning of June 4, 1942, high above the tiny Pacific atoll of Midway, Lt. (j.g.) "Dusty" Kleiss burst out of the clouds and piloted his SBD Dauntless into a near-vertical dive aimed at the heart of Japan's Imperial Navy, which six months earlier had ruthlessly struck Pearl Harbor. The greatest naval battle in history raged around him, its outcome hanging in the balance as the U.S. desperately searched for its first major victory of the Second World War. Then, in a matter of seconds, Dusty Kleiss's daring 20,000-foot dive helped forever alter the war's trajectory. Plummeting through the air at 240 knots amid blistering anti-aircraft fire, the twenty-six-year-old pilot from USS Enterprise's elite Scouting Squadron Six fixed on an invaluable target—the aircraft carrier Kaga, one of Japan's most important capital ships. He released three bombs at the last possible instant, then desperately pulled out of his gut-wrenching 9-g dive. As his plane leveled out just above the roiling Pacific Ocean, Dusty's perfectly placed bombs struck the carrier's deck, and Kaga erupted into an inferno from which it would never recover. Arriving safely back at Enterprise, Dusty was met with heartbreak news: his best friend was missing and presumed dead along with two dozen of their fellow naval aviators. Unbowed, Dusty returned to the air that same afternoon and, remarkably, would fatally strike another enemy carrier, Hiryu. Two days later, his deadeye aim contributed to the destruction of a third Japanese warship, the cruiser Mikuma, thereby making Dusty the only pilot from either side to land hits on three different ships, all of which sank—losses that crippled the once-fearsome Japanese fleet. By battle's end, the humble young sailor from Kansas had earned his place in history—and yet he stayed silent for decades, living quietly with his children and his wife, Jean, whom he married less than a month after Midway. Now his extraordinary and long-awaited memoir, *Never Call Me a Hero*, tells the Navy Cross recipient's full story for the first time, offering an unprecedentedly intimate look at the "the decisive contest for control of the Pacific in World War II" (New York Times)•and one man's essential role in helping secure its outcome. Dusty worked on this book for years with naval historians Timothy and Laura Orr, aiming to publish *Never Call Me a Hero* for Midway's seventy-fifth anniversary in June 2017. Sadly, as the book neared completion in 2016, Dusty Kleiss passed away at age 100, one of the last surviving dive-bomber pilots to have fought at Midway. And yet the publication of *Never Call Me a Hero* is a cause for celebration: these

pages are Dusty's remarkable legacy, providing a riveting eyewitness account of the Battle of Midway, and an inspiring testimony to the brave men who fought, died, and shaped history during those four extraordinary days in June, seventy-five years ago.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“A real treasure. It is hard to conceive that a better first-person book on the first six months of America's war in the Pacific will surface. An instant classic, a front-row seat on a Pacific war journey that is action-packed throughout. (STEPHEN L. MOORE, Dallas Morning News) “Never Call Me a Hero is a remarkable feat of remembrance. Dusty Kleiss's deeply personal memoir of love and war puts the reader in the cockpit of the last living dive bomber from the Battle of Midway, the courageous but costly attack that broke the back of the Japanese Navy, marking the beginning of the end of the war in the Pacific. (DONALD STRATTON and KEN GIRE, New York Times bestselling authors of All the Gallant Men: An American Sailor's Firsthand Account of Pearl Harbor) “Lieutenant Kleiss is one of history's ultimate unsung heroes. In this remarkable memoir, the decorated dive-bomber pilot tells a war story for the ages. Dusty Kleiss's name should be known to every American-adult and schoolchild alike. This book will teach you something on every page. (JAMES D. HORNFISCHER, author of The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors and The Fleet at Flood Tide) “Laced with humor, “Dusty Kleiss's memoir is an honest, riveting account of a brave pilot's life. Never Call Me a Hero is equally a vivid and unforgettable first-hand view into America's greatest victory at

sea. (DAN HAMPTON (USAF, Ret.), recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross and bestselling author of *Viper Pilot* and *Lords of the Sky*) “Inspiring. America produced men like Dusty Kleiss in their millions when they were needed, ordinary men who presented themselves when called, put on uniforms, and did extraordinary things. [Kleiss was] a great American and a hero, whether or not he fancied the honorific. (American Spectator) “Incredible. ... A standout autobiography for anyone interested in bravery, courage, and first-person accounts of military heroics during World War II. (Library Journal (starred review)) “Riveting. ... Vivid. ... In terms of hits, Kleiss emerged as the single most effective American pilot at Midway. That alone would imprint this book with importance, but the meticulous attention to detail and compelling narration make it soar. ... Personal accounts of Americans who fought in World War II have flourished in the past two decades as they pass from the scene. I cannot think of any I would recommend above this work. (World War II Magazine) “Never Call Me a Hero is a rare and precious gift from a significant warrior to his posterity. Published posthumously, Dusty Kleiss’s stirring memoir contradicts his own title: Kleiss willingly accepted the risks that defined his heroism, and changed the course of the Second World War. (BARRETT TILLMAN, author of *Enterprise: America’s Fightingest Ship* and *On Wave and Wing: The 100-Year Quest to Perfect the Aircraft Carrier*) “Without histrionics or bravado, Dusty Kleiss gives us a fascinating personal account of this seminal naval battle, and a great read as well. Never Call Me a Hero lets you feel what it was like to fight in the Pacific, and to grow up in Depression-era Middle America, too. (JONATHAN PARSHALL, co-author, *Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway*) “A riveting narrative about the Battle of Midway. ... A saga of life in the midst of a war. (Daily Press)

BY FATALLY STRIKING THREE JAPANESE WARSHIPS DURING “THE DECISIVE CONTEST FOR CONTROL OF THE PACIFIC IN WORLD WAR II (NEW YORK TIMES), ONE DARING PILOT MAY HAVE CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY. NOW THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY’S LAST SURVIVING DIVE-BOMBER PILOT DELIVERS A GRIPPING AND UNFORGETTABLE EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT OF AMERICA’S GREATEST NAVAL VICTORY. On the morning of June 4, 1942, high above the tiny Pacific atoll of Midway, Lt. (j.g.) Dusty Kleiss burst out of the clouds and piloted his SBD Dauntless into a near-vertical dive aimed at the heart of Japan’s Imperial Navy, which six months earlier had ruthlessly struck Pearl Harbor. The greatest naval battle in history raged around him, its outcome hanging in the balance as the U.S. desperately searched for its first major victory of the

Second World War. Then, in a matter of seconds, Dusty Kleiss's daring 20,000-foot dive helped forever alter the war's trajectory. Plummeting through the air at 240 knots amid blistering anti-aircraft fire, the twenty-six-year-old pilot from USS Enterprise's elite Scouting Squadron Six fixed on an invaluable target—the aircraft carrier Kaga, one of Japan's most important capital ships. He released three bombs at the last possible instant, then desperately pulled out of his gut-wrenching 9-g dive. As his plane leveled out just above the roiling Pacific Ocean, Dusty's perfectly placed bombs struck the carrier's deck, and Kaga erupted into an inferno from which it would never recover. Arriving safely back at Enterprise, Dusty was met with heartbreakng news: his best friend was missing and presumed dead along with two dozen of their fellow naval aviators. Unbowed, Dusty returned to the air that same afternoon and, remarkably, would fatally strike another enemy carrier, *Hiryu*. Two days later, his deadeye aim contributed to the destruction of a third Japanese warship, the cruiser *Mikuma*, thereby making Dusty the only pilot from either side to land hits on three different ships, all of which sank. Losses that crippled the once-fearsome Japanese fleet. By battle's end, the humble young sailor from Kansas had earned his place in history—and yet he stayed silent for decades, living quietly with his children and his wife, Jean, whom he married less than a month after Midway. Now his extraordinary and long-awaited memoir, *Never Call Me a Hero*, tells the Navy Cross recipient's full story for the first time, offering an unprecedentedly intimate look at the "decisive contest for control of the Pacific in World War II" (New York Times) and one man's essential role in helping secure its outcome. Dusty worked on this book for years with naval historians Timothy and Laura Orr, aiming to publish *Never Call Me a Hero* for Midway's seventy-fifth anniversary in June 2017. Sadly, as the book neared completion in 2016, Dusty Kleiss passed away at age 100, the last surviving dive-bomber pilot to have fought at Midway. And yet the publication of *Never Call Me a Hero* is a cause for celebration: these pages are Dusty's remarkable legacy, providing a riveting eyewitness account of the Battle of Midway, and an inspiring testimony to the brave men who fought, died, and shaped history during those four extraordinary days in June, seventy-five years ago.

It's a real treat to be able to hear from one of America's greatest Naval Aviators what the crucial Battle of Midway was like from his perspective. Few battles have been as decisive as Midway. Japanese offensive ambitions were blunted six months after Pearl Harbor by a relatively few brave aviators. May we always remember the likes of Clarence McClusky, Dick Best and Dusty Kleiss.

It was highly recommended in Costco monthly magazine. It was enjoyable to read and we were blessed to have people like Jack Kleiss to serve our country .

On June 4, 1942, American dive bomber pilots sank four Japanese carriers during the Battle of Midway. This battle proved to be the turning point of the war in the Pacific. In his book "Never Call Me A Hero", dive bomber pilot N. Jack "Dusty" Kleiss gives a first-hand account of that monumental battle. Kleiss was a member of Scouting 6, based on the USS Enterprise. On the morning of June 4th, Kleiss and his squadron mates took off in search of the Japanese fleet. Upon sighting the enemy, Kleiss nudged his SBD Dauntless dive bomber over. He planted his bombs squarely on the deck of the Japanese carrier Kaga. In less than five minutes, three of Japan's carriers were ablaze and sinking. Only the Hiryu survived this initial attack. Later the same day, Kleiss was back in the air. As he had earlier, Kleiss planted his bombs on the deck of Hiryu, rolling the flight deck up like a taco. But Kleiss wasn't finished. Two days later, he again took to the skies, landing his bombs on the Japanese cruiser Mikuma. Kleiss became the only pilot to successfully hit three enemy ships at Midway. He survived the battle, but many of his squadron mates did not. As a result of this battle, the Americans seized the initiative in the Pacific, never again relinquishing the offensive. Although he prefers not to be called one, Dusty Kleiss was a hero. He planted bombs squarely on three enemy ships while escaping unscathed. After the battle, Kleiss returned to the United States, married his sweetheart, and became a trainer for future dive bomber pilots. This fine book is the testimonial of one of the most recognizable figures of the Pacific war. Kleiss describes his early love for flying, his cruises on the USS Vincennes, and his eventual tours aboard the USS Enterprise. He participated in the early strikes in the Marshall and Gilbert islands shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and he received the Navy Cross for his actions. Kleiss led by example and did his duty to the fullest. "Never Call Me A Hero" is a wonderful memoir written by one of the United States Navy's most famous pilots. Highly recommended.

Dusty Kleiss was the last living SBD dive bomber pilot who flew and fought the Battle of Midway. He was one of only 4 pilots who flew missions on each day of the battle. The ONLY one to achieve bomb strike results on two Japanese Carriers and a cruiser in two days. Awarded the Navy Cross, he went on to an accomplished career as a US Navy officer and into civilian life as an educator and a few other jobs, as so many from his generation were wont to do....they just could not sit and be idle or retired and be comfortable. Also, as his veteran peers, he seldom spoke of the events he

participated in until almost the end of his lifetime. Like so many other, he realized there was soon to be no one left to get the facts on record, so he made it a bucket list goal to produce a written record that told of the men he knew and fought beside and so many of those who did not survive speak for themselves. A naval "Band of Brothers" if you will. This book is receiving nothing but 4-Oh, superlative remarks and reviews from lots of big time, professional historians and writers. I can add nothing more than that in praise of the book. Would it make an outstanding mini-series ? Perhaps, but I think it stands best as a written record that some screen writer won't "translate" or take artistic license with! This book is the real deal, written by the guy who was there and did not expect to someday be writing about it.

Norman Jack "Dusty" Kleiss and his co-authors give us a deeply personal addition to naval aviation history of early World War 2 that serves as a wonderful complement to the body of works that include Craig Symonds "Battle of Midway" and Parshall/Tully's "Shattered Sword"

An inspiring first person account by a very modest but heroic dive bomber pilot who scored big at Midway, contributing hugely to that momentum changing victory. As the nephew of a 26 year old Dauntless and Helldiver driver who won his DFC by making a hit on a Japanese carrier but was lost in action and so never knew me but left me his name, this memoir has resonated deeply. His detailed descriptions of exactly what happens when a dive bomber rolls into an attack dive are so real that you feel you are in the cockpit. He makes a very good argument that the historians who cite luck as a major factor in securing victory are misguided; that hard training, experience, and good judgement by those leading the attacking navy pilots are what made the difference in winning the battle. Despite disorganized implementation of a too complicated attack plan, scandalously faulty torpedoes, insufficient fuel for many to make it back safely, the grim determination and competence of the pilots and their willingness to sacrifice themselves if necessary won the day for the US Navy in a resounding and war changing victory. When you add the tale of a great love story that is skillfully interwoven through the book and demonstrates Dusty's perseverance, you have a book that is emotionally moving and satisfying. I have read many accounts of carrier aviation in the Pacific War due to my family history and this is the best so far.

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