



Figure 7-8. Section and Stinger

section to offer the element of surprise. This was one of the favorite tactics of the Flying Tigers during World War II. The Japanese, since they normally flew in three-plane divisions, could more easily be enticed into battle against a section of two. The stinger could then have his pick. Although beautiful when it works, this tactic has obvious defensive weaknesses, as the stinger is quite vulnerable. It is probably best suited as an occasional variation to standard two-plane section doctrine rather than as a steady diet. The best position for the stinger is usually high above the section on the sun side, and only slightly in trail. If he is attacked, the stinger should normally attempt to dive and drag his attackers down toward the support of the section. In a radar environment, a stinger positioned very low "in the weeds" may be able to avoid enemy detection.

Tactics are much like plays in any team sport. Each tactic has weak and strong points and can be anticipated and defeated by the opponents if the fighters "go to the well" too often with the same routine. Probably the most effective system is to employ a basic fighting unit, the two-plane section, for example, so aircrews can become highly proficient in its use. Then, depending on the number of aircraft available, the mission, and the expected opposition, these units can be combined with others in trail or stacked high or low according to environmental conditions. This technique varies the look presented to the enemy and always leaves him guessing as to whether he has everyone in sight before he attacks. Enemy pilots tend to get rather paranoid after they have attacked a leading or low element a few times.

Engaged Division Maneuvering

"DICTA BOELCKE"

1. Try to secure advantages before attacking. If possible, keep the sun behind you.
2. Always carry through an attack when you have started it.
3. Fire only at close range and only when your opponent is properly in your sights.
4. Always keep your eye on your opponent, and never let yourself be deceived by ruses.