

OPERATIONAL DIARY 98TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) CONT'D.

22 October 1942:

No flying conducted.

23 October 1942:

Striking force of all available airplanes scheduled to attack enemy artillery positions at Guadalcanal but failed to take-off from Santos due to very poor weather conditions.

24 October 1942:

Lt McAnelly in Ap # 211 conducted an 800 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 305° - 310°. Observed new buildings on Gizo Island. No activity in Gizo Harbor. No contacts. Coverage 82%, distance 751 miles. Lt Cope in Ap # 525, Lt Mann in Ap # 534 and Lt Brewer in Ap # 437 participated in 9 airplane striking force dispatched to bomb enemy shipping in convoy. Did not make contact with target due to poor weather. Returned to base at Santos after covering 595 miles on a bearing of 328° from Santos.

25 October 1942:

Lt Gill in Ap # 211 conducted an 800 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 325° - 332°. No contacts. Coverage 82%, distance 767 miles. Lt Buie in Ap # 525, Lt Mann in Ap # 534, Lt Cope in Ap # 523 and Lt Brewer in Ap # 437 participated in a striking force dispatched to bomb enemy shipping. Each airplane carried 4-500 lb demolition bombs. Reached target and made bombing run on enemy cargo vessel at 1710 local. Bombing resulted in 2 direct hit and several near misses on cargo vessel causing same to burn fiercely. Target located at 08°17' South and 160°00' East at 1710 local.

26 October 1942:

Lt Gill in Ap # 428 and Lt Buie in Ap # 523 participated in 9 airplane striking force dispatched from Santos to bomb enemy shipping. Each airplane carried 4-500 lb demolition bombs. Target consisted of 3 battleships, 2 heavy cruisers, 2 light cruisers and 7 destroyers at 07°00' South and 164°10' East at 1430 local. Enemy vessels commenced maneuvering immediately upon being sighted. Bombing run made from altitude of 17,000 ft on enemy battleship. Near misses but no direct hits observed. Bombed at 1440 local. AA-lattice barrage-heavy-inaccurate. No other opposition. All airplanes returned safely to base at Santos.

27 October 1942:

Capt Crane in Ap # 211 conducted an 800 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 306° - 312°. Weather poor. No contacts. Coverage 100%. Met very heavy front 600 miles from Santos and failed to penetrate same. Returned to base at Santos after attempting to go around front.

Brewer and as

1. Search over

the Gulf of Mexico

to New Georgia -

Plans - Tokyo

1942

IRON (H) CONT'D.

1 800 nautical mile search from Santos
for enemy submarines reported in sector.
Average 84%, distance 628 miles.

1 800 nautical mile search from
Santos. Coverage 92%, distance 793 miles.

30 October 1942:

Lt Mann in Ap # 525 conducted an 800 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 312° - 318°. Sighted 1 enemy submarine off South coast of Ongtong Java. Machine-gunned same until it submerged which was a short time after strafing began. Damage to submarine unestimated. Contacted 2 float type B's circling low over Rakata Bay seaplane base. No action.

31 October 1942:

Lt Buie in Ap # 525 searched sector 300° - 306°, Lt Cope in Ap # 525 searched sector 306° - 312°, Lt Durbin in Ap # 215 searched sector 294° - 300°, and Lt Gill in Ap # 428 searched sector 312° - 318°. All searches 800 nautical miles from Santos. No contacts. Average coverage 70%, distance 730 miles.

1 November 1942:

Capt Lucas in Ap # 525, Lt Durbin in Ap # 534, Lt Charters in Ap # 214, Lt Brewer in Ap # 437 and Lt Gill in Ap # 428 participated in 19 airplane striking force dispatched from Santos to bomb enemy concentration of troops and supplies at Kokumbona, Guadalcanal. Each airplane carried 20-100 lb fragmentation bombs dropping same on target area from 0715-0835 local. Results of bombing as follows: Capt Lucas dropped at 0715 local, individually, 4,000 ft altitude, scoring 20 hits on target; Lt Charters dropped at 0740 local, individually, 4,000 ft altitude, scoring 20 hits on target; Lt's Brewer and Durbin dropped at 0750 local, in formation, 3,000 ft altitude, scoring 40 hits on target area, Lt Gill dropped at 0835 local, individually, 7,000 ft altitude, scoring 17 out of 20 hits on target area. All airplanes with the exception of Lt Gill carried out an extensive strafing attack on the target area after completing bombing runs assisted by 3 P-39's from Lunga Airfield. Visibility at target was excellent and no opposition received except for a few 7.7mm emplacements which were silenced early by strafing of P-39's.

2 November 1942:

Capt Crane in Ap # 211 conducted an 800 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 300° - 306°. No contacts. Weather poor. Coverage 63%, distance 621 miles. Lt Buie in Ap # 523 conducted an 800 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 306°-312°. No contacts. Coverage 70%, distance 700 miles.

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3 November 1942:

Lt Charters in Ap # 215 conducted an 800 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 336° - 342°. No contacts. Weather poor. Coverage 90%, distance full 800 miles. Lt Brewer in Ap # 523 conducted an 800 nautical mile search from Santos in Sector 308° - 312°. No contacts. Coverage 84%, distance 830 miles.

4 November 1942:

Lt Cope in Ap # 215 conducted an 800 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 306° - 312°. Sighted 2 enemy float bi-planes about 20 miles SE of Rekata Bay at 0930 local. No action. Lt Mann in Ap No 523 conducted an 800 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 300° - 306°. No contacts. Average coverage 75%, distance 750 miles.

5 November 1942:

Lt Morgan in Ap # 214 searched sector 304° - 310°, Lt Gill in Ap # 428 searched sector 310° - 316°, both searches 800 nautical miles from Santos. No contacts. Average coverage 75%, distance full 800 miles.

6 November 1942:

Lt Durbin in Ap # 523 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 304° - 310°. Enemy sightings: 2 light cruisers and 4 destroyers 07°03' South and 156°02' East, course 318°, speed 18 knots at 1000 local; 10 destroyers 07°05' South and 156°03' East, course 308°, speed 22 knots at 1002 local; 2 cargo vessels anchored in Shortland Harbor. Coverage 91%, distance 797 miles.

7 November 1942:

Capt Crane in Ap # 215 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 328° - 334°. No contacts. Coverage 85%, distance 725 miles. Lt Charters in Ap # 437 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 322° - 328°. No contacts. Coverage 75%, distance 730 miles. Capt Lucas in Ap # 215, Lt Morgan in Ap # 214, Lt Cope in Ap # 525, Lt Mann in Ap # 534 and Lt Brewer in Ap # 523 participated in 12 airplane striking force dispatched from Santos to bomb Rekata Bay seaplane base. Each airplane carried 20-100 lb fragmentation bombs. Bombing runs made from 6,500 ft altitude in formation at 0950 local. Damage to enemy installations unestimated. No opposition. Observed 3 float bi-planes on beach in good condition located between houses and point.

8 November 1942:

Lt Gill in Ap # 523 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 304° - 310°. Sighted large oil slicks in Viru Harbor. Weather very poor-constant rain squalls. No contacts. Coverage 65%, distance 850 miles.

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9 November 1942:

Lt Buie in Ap # 523 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 304°- 310°. No contacts. Coverage 77%, distance 792 miles.

10 November 1942:

Lt Brewer in Ap # 437 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 328°- 334°. No contacts. Observed nothing except usual native activity on Stewart Island.

11 November 1942:

Lt Durbin in Ap # 215 searched sector 316°- 322°, Lt Mann in Ap # 534 searched sector 322°- 328°, Lt Cope in Ap # 525 searched sector 328 - 334 . No Contacts on searches. All searches 850 nautical miles from Santos. Average coverage 70%, distance 700 miles.

12 November 1942:

Lt Morgan in Ap # 523 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 304°- 310°. Photographed Viru Harbor in New Georgia Group. No contacts. Coverage 90%, distance full 850 miles. Lt Charters in Ap # 523 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 322°- 328°. Sighted 5 large and irregular oil slicks 7°27' South and 160°26' East. Observed much debris in vicinity of oil slicks. No contacts. Coverage 90%, distance 760 miles.

13 November 1942:

Lt Mann in Ap # 211 conducted an 850 mile nautical search from Santos in sector 322°- 328°. No contacts. A great deal of native activity observed on Stewart Island. (Much waving of sarongs and displaying of torsos by native females.) Observed Stewart Isle very well! Coverage 7%, distance 754 miles. Lt Gill in Ap # 156 conducted a Special Radar search of San Cristobal, Cape Henslow, Malapa Island and Guadalcanal area. No contacts except for 1 enemy submarine 10°05' South and 160°35' East at 1210 local. Submarine submerged immediately after sighting. Capt Lucas in Ap # 525, Capt Joham in Ap # 534, Lt Durbin in Ap # 215 and Lt Brewer in Ap # 214 participated in 9 airplane striking force dispatched to bomb enemy shipping. Flight rendezvoused over Santa Anna Island off SE tip of San Cristobal Isle at 0945 local. Flight then proceeded to target area and sighted enemy force approximately 800 yards off NW coast of Savo Island. Capt Joham in # 2 position, 3rd element, dropped 6-500 lb demolition bombs on battleship. Bombs were dropped through opening in clouds which closed in immediately after and as a result damage could not be estimated. Enemy force as observed by Capt. Joham consisted of 1 battleship, 1 heavy cruiser and 4 destroyers. Lt. Durbin dropped 4-500 lb demolition bombs on battleship which was stationary and from appearances had been hit by previous element. Capt Joham's element followed that of Lt. Durbin in the bombing run on same target. Lt Durbin's formations dropped a total of 12-500 lb bombs from an altitude of 14,700 ft and was credited with 3 direct hits, 6 within 50 ft and 3 within 100 ft of battleship. Capt Lucas and Lt Brewer failed to reach target area and returned

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to base at Santos. Heavy AA fire was received from enemy naval vessels all during bombing runs. Fairly accurate AA causing slight damage to B-17's. No casualties. All B-17's returned safely to base at Santos.

14 November 1942:

Capt Joham in Ap # 211 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 310°- 316°. Sighted large enemy task force consisting of 2 aircraft carriers, 2 battleships, 6 heavy cruisers, 2 light cruisers, 12 destroyers and several troop transports, 08°00' South and 158°10' East, course 130° true, speed 15 knots at 0845 local. AA from naval vessels very heavy and accurate causing some damage to B-17. As a result of this search contact the Marine Air Group at Guadalcanal was enabled to attack and demolish the entire transport portion of the fleet. General Woods, Senior Marine Aviation Officer at Guadalcanal personally congratulated Capt Joham for himself and his crew in recognition for their work in making the contact and holding it as long as was necessary. General Wood's also requested that the Squadron receive congratulations on their efficiency. While covering the enemy task force Capt Joham was attacked by 3 ME 109's, 3 land type ϕ 's and 1 float type ϕ . A running fight then ensued which lasted for about twenty-five minutes; during this attack several additional ME 109's and ϕ 's joined in the affray. The air attack resulted in 3 ME 109's and 3 land ϕ 's being destroyed. B-17 was damaged considerably by 20mm cannon hits and 7.7mm hits which made very difficult work in bringing airplane back to base and landing same. No casualties. Coverage 50%, distance full 800 miles. Lt Durbin in Ap # 060 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 316°- 322°. No contacts. Coverage 90%, distance 800 miles. Lt Morgan in Ap # 534 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 322°- 328°. Sighted 1 enemy heavy cruiser and 4 destroyers 6°50' South and 160°20' East, course 350°, speed 20 knots. Coverage 80%, distance 800 miles. Capt Lucas in Ap # 525, Lt. Charters in Ap # 523, Lt McAnelly in Ap # 124 and Lt Mann in Ap # 215 formed element of striking force dispatched from Santos to bomb enemy shipping. Target consisting of 1 aircraft carrier (burning heavily), 1 troop transport (burning heavily with lots of smoke), 1 converted aircraft carrier (burning heavily with lots of smoke and list to starboard, stationary in water), 9 destroyers, 7 troop transports at 08 15' South and 158 45' East at 1500 local. Bombing run made on troop transport by Capt Lucas' element with the following results: Capt Lucas, 1 close miss on transport-attacked by 10 ϕ 's (land type), shot 1 ϕ down with .30 cal mg in nose; Capt Lucas, Lt McAnelly and Lt Charters were in leading element. Lt McAnelly credited with 1 direct hit and rest close misses on transport, crew definitely damaged 1 ϕ ; Lt Charters credited with close misses on transport and tail gunner put 1 ϕ into flat spin (confirmed) and ball turret gunner shot down 1 ϕ (unconfirmed). Formation dropped total of 10-500 lb demolition bombs; 2 of Capt Lucas bombs failed to release. Lt Mann occupied 4th position on same element but had to return to base at Santos before reaching target area due to illness.

15 November 1942:

Lt Gill in Ap # 059 conducted a Special Radar search from Santos which extended 800 miles seaward. Enemy sightings: 4 burning enemy troop transports

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Capt Lucas in Ap # 124, Lt Durbin in Ap # 534 and Lt Morgan in Ap # 215, participated in 10 airplane striking force, led by Colonel Saunders in Major Sewart's airplanes, dispatched from Guadalcanal to bomb enemy shipping. Flight formed over Lunga Point and then proceeded to Tonolei Harbor. Capt Lucas, Lt Morgan, Lt Durbin Lt Whitaker and Lt Classen formed 2nd Element of striking force. Colonel Saunders ordered Capt Lucas' flight to take target on extreme left of harbor which proved to be 4 enemy cargo vessels. Flight dropped on largest cargo vessel just SE of Kahili Airfield about 3/4 mile offshore. AA from naval vessels in harbor was very heavy and bursting about 400 ft above flight followed by heavy barrage in front of formation at correct altitude. Lt Morgan received a direct hit in the ball turret from a 20mm shell which broke the glass and damaged the interior of the turret. AA appeared to be of 3 and 5" variety lasting for approximately 4 minutes. All planes in flight dropped bombs on Capt Lucas from 12,000 ft altitude at 0840 local; results: 2 direct hits on bow and several close misses -approximately 50-75 ft from vessel-ship was burning heavily upon completion of bombing run. Each airplane carried 4-1,000 lb armor piercing bombs. Flight was attacked near Shortland Harbor by 5 float type ϕ 's, 10 land ϕ 's and attack lasted for about twenty minutes. Three land ϕ 's were definitely shot down, 1 land ϕ damaged and probably destroyed and remainder of enemy airplanes damaged to an undetermined extent. Lt Morgan credited with destroying 1 land ϕ , Capt Lucas credited with destroying 2 land ϕ 's and Lt Durbin accounted for the probable destruction of 1 land ϕ . During this mission Major Sewart and his Co-Pilot were both killed and the same crew had to make a crash landing in the ocean with Colonel Saunders bringing the airplane down safely. Colonel Saunders and the remainder of the crew made their way to an island where they remained until rescued the following day. No casualties to personnel this organization. Flight returned to Guadalcanal Airfield. Capt Lucas in Ap # 214, Lt Durbin in Ap # 534, and Lt Morgan in Ap # 215 conducted a routine flight from Guadalcanal to Santos upon completion of bombing mission.

19 November 1942:

Lt Brewer in Ap # 156 conducted a routine flight from Santos to Guadalcanal.

20 November 1942:

Lt Brewer in Ap # 156 conducted a 450 nautical mile search from Guadalcanal in sector 310°- 316°. No contacts. Weather very poor. Coverage 70%, distance 300 miles.

21 November 1942:

Lt Brewer in Ap # 535 conducted a 450 nautical mile search from Guadalcanal in sector 310°- 316°. No contacts. Coverage 90%, distance full 450 miles. Lt Charters in Ap # 444 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 316°- 322°. Sightings: Oil slick 7°38' South and 160°50' East at 0834 local, empty life boat 7°38' South and 160°40' East at 0835 local. Unidentified submarine 8°00' South and 160°00' East, submerged immediately upon sighting.

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OPERATIONAL DIARY 98TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) CONT'D.

Several large oil slicks 9° 16' South and 161° 15' East at 1040 local. Empty life boat 8° 20' South and 160° 32' East at 1015 local. PBV on beach, half submerged, at Maramasike Estuary 09° 25' South and 161° 25' East at 1050 local. No other contacts. Weather very good to 700 miles from Santos then heavy front encountered. Coverage 90%, distance 450 miles from Guadalcanal (1,000 mi from Santos).

22 November 1942:

Lt Morgan in Ap # 523 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 310° - 316°. Sighted 4 enemy troop transports beached North of Lunga Point; two of them were still giving off heavy black smoke. No signs of activity at Shortland, Buka or Rekata Bay areas. Passe over Shortland area at 200 ft - poor weather - very low overcast in that area. Coverage 50%, distance full 850 miles. Landed at Guadalcanal for further searching.

23 November 1942:

Lt Morgan in Ap # 523 conducted a 450 nautical mile search from Guadalcanal in sector 310° - 316°. No contacts. Sighted 5 enemy float bi-planes on beach at Rekata Bay.

24 November 1942:

On the morning of November 24th Lt Gill in Ap # 428 and Lt Brewer in Ap # 437 participated in 8 airplane striking force dispatched from Guadalcanal. Mission was to search North as far as Vella LaVella for enemy shipping; if no enemy shipping was located target would be Lambeti Village located East of Kokengola Mission. No shipping was sighted. Bombing runs were made on Japanese Base of Lambeti Village from an altitude of 6,000 ft at 0800 local. Flight conducted bombing in formation dropping 56-500 lb demolition bombs on target area. Village was completely destroyed in subsequent bombing. Photographs were taken before, during and after bombing runs. No opposition. Many large fires started. In the afternoon of the same day Lt Gill in Ap # 428 participated in 2nd Element of 6 airplane striking force dispatched from Guadalcanal to bomb enemy shipping reports in convoy at 07° 48' South and 156° 00' East; enemy force as reported consisted of 1 light cruiser, 1 destroyer, 2 troop transports and 1 cargo vessel; secondary target was warehouses and supply dump located at Munda Point. Each airplane carried 8-500 lb demolition bombs. Lt Gill's flight did not locate the Naval target and therefore proceeded to the secondary target area. Bombing run was made from an altitude of 5500 ft at 1530 local. Many buildings and large wharf were destroyed. Photographs were taken of the area before and after the bombing. No opposition received.

25 November 1942:

Lt Brewer in Ap # 437 participated in 3 airplane striking force dispatched from Guadalcanal to bomb concentration of enemy shipping at Vella LaVella. Lt Gill in Ap # 428 went hunting alone. All airplanes carried 8-500 lb demolition bombs. Enemy shipping at Vella LaVella consisted of 2 destroyers and 2 cargo vessels

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proceeding on course of 350°10 miles West of Ganongga Island at 1030 local. Formation made bombing run on largest cargo vessel dropping 24-500 lb demolition bombs from an altitude of 14,000 ft at 1035 local. No hits-believed near misses caused some damage as cargo vessel straggled considerably after bombing. 2 land type made light attack during bombing run. No results. Lt Gill in Ap # 428 located same force at 1045 local and made run on straggling cargo vessel previously bombed. No hits. Believed near misses. Dropped from altitude of 10,000 ft at 1050 local. No opposition. All airplanes returned to base at Guadalcanal.

26 November 1942:

Lt Gill in Ap # 428 and Lt Brewer in Ap # 437 participated in 5 airplane striking force dispatched from Guadalcanal to bomb enemy fuel dump at Rekata Bay seaplane base. Target area defined as along edge of palm grove near small buildings on beach at Rekata Bay approximately 4,000 ft from end of peninsula. Bombing run made at 1600 local from altitude of 10,000 ft. No opposition. Results unknown. Observed several large fires in target area after bombing with very heavy black smoke rising. Each airplane carried and dropped 8-500 lb demolition bombs.

27 November 1942:

Lt Gill in Ap # 428 and Lt Brewer in Ap # 437 conducted a routine flight from Guadalcanal to Santos.

28 November 1942:

No flying conducted.

29 November 1942:

No flying conducted.

30 November 1942:

Capt Brewer in Ap # 211 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 292° - 298°. No contacts. 80%, distance 800 miles. Capt Gill in Ap # 431 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 298° - 304°. No contacts. Incomplete search due to engine trouble. Coverage 50%, distance 600 miles.

1 December 1942:

Capt Charters in Ap # 214 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 292° - 298°. Friendly sightings: 1 heavy cruiser and 2 destroyers 15°00' South and 166°10' East, course 120°, speed 15 knots; 1 troop transport and 1 destroyer 15°40' South and 166°20' East, course 75°, speed 15 knots. Weather very good. Coverage 60%, distance 800 miles.

2 December 1942:

Capt Gill in Ap # 215 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 322° - 328°. Sighted 3 oil slicks over a distance of 40 miles, 1 slick appeared to be recent and was about 1,000 yds in length, other 2 slicks about 500 yds in length and spread out. Direction of slicks 130° true and about 15 miles apart. Weather better than average. No contacts. Coverage 100%, distance 500 miles.

OPERATIONAL DIARY 98TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) CONT'D.

11 December 1942:

Capt Crane in Ap # 211 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 292° - 298°. No contacts. Coverage 80%, distance 700 miles. Capt Durbin in Ap # 215 conducted a routine flight from Santos to Guadalcanal. Capt Charters in Ap # 487 conducted a routine flight from Guadalcanal to Santos.

12 December 1942:

Capt Durbin in Ap # 215 conducted a 450 nautical mile search from Guadalcanal in sector 304° - 310°. No contacts. Coverage 80%, distance full 450 miles. Major Lucas in Ap # 211, Capt Joham in Ap # 213, Capt Cope in Ap # 525, Capt Buie in Ap # 521, Capt Gill in Ap # 428 and Lt Morgan in Ap # 535 took off from Santos to participate in bombing missions at Guadalcanal. Each airplane loaded with 20-100 lb fragmentation bombs conducted bombing missions on runway under construction both in the morning and afternoon of December 12th. Dropped from altitude of 12,000 ft in the morning and 9,000 ft in the afternoon. All hits in target area. Several AA batteries located all around target area. AA-heavy-inaccurate! Flight escorted by 5 P-38's on both missions. No air opposition.

13 December 1942:

Capt Durbin in Ap # 215 conducted a 450 nautical mile search from Guadalcanal in sector 310° - 316°. Sighted 1 land type ϕ taking off from Buka Airfield and observed 1 parked in revetment near runway. No action. Sighted number of unidentified vessels in Buka Passage. Major Lucas in Ap # 211, Capt Joham in Ap # 213, Capt Cope in Ap # 525, Capt Buie in Ap # 521, Capt Gill in Ap # 428 and Lt Morgan in Ap # 535 conducted a bombing mission at new runway under construction at Munda Point. Each airplane carried 20-100 lb fragmentation bombs. Bombing run conducted from an altitude of 10,000 ft. AA-heavy-inaccurate. All hits on target area. No air opposition. All airplanes returned to base at Guadalcanal without incident.

14 December 1942:

Capt Durbin in Ap # 215 conducted a 450 nautical mile search from Guadalcanal in sector 304° - 310°. Enemy sightings: 7 cargo vessels, 1 destroyer and 1 auxiliary vessel in Buin area; 2 4-engined seaplanes on water in Shortland Harbor. New enemy airfield on Ballale Island practically completed, bunkers visible. Major Lucas in Ap # 211, Capt Joham in Ap # 213, Capt Cope in Ap # 525, Capt Buie in Ap # 521, Capt Gill in Ap # 428, and Lt Morgan in Ap # 535 conducted a routine flight from Guadalcanal to Santos.

15 December 1942:

No flying conducted.

16 December 1942:

Capt Cope in Ap # 525 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 316° - 322°. No contacts. Coverage 100%, distance full 850 miles.

OPERATIONAL DIARY 98TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) CONT'D.

Capt Buie in Ap # 145 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in Sector 322°- 328°. No contacts. Coverage 90%, distance 800 miles. Lt McAnelly in Ap # 211 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in Sector 292°- 298°. Friendly contacts: 1 troop transport and 1 destroyer 14°45' South and 167°00' East, course 180°, speed 10 knots at 0507 local; 1 light cruiser and 1 cargo vessel 12°50' South and 162°25' East, course 160°, speed 15 knots at 1245 local. Coverage 95%, distance 760 miles. Lt Morgan in Ap # 524 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in Sector 298°- 304°. Friendly contacts: 3 destroyers, 1 cargo vessel and 1 transport 12°05' South and 160°50' East, course 210°, speed 12 knots at 0740 local; 3 destroyers and 2 cargo vessels 12°25' South and 160°55' East, course 155°, speed 10 knots at 0745 local; 5 destroyers, 1 cargo vessel, 1 troop transport and 1 airplane tender 11°45' South and 160°45' East, course 30° (Maneuvering, anti-submarine tactics) speed 12 knots at 1125 local; 1 destroyer and 1 tender 12°30' South and 162°05' East, course 180°, speed 15 knots at 1217 local. Observed 4 well tanned men and large square piece of cloth near a camp on SE end of lake on Rennell Island. Observed flashes from village on West side of lake; flashes not readable; man running about with piece of cloth on stick. Coverage 85%, distance 700 miles. Capt. Brewer in Ap # 437 and Capt Charters in Ap # 214 proceeded to Guadalcanal from Santos to conduct bombing missions from that base. Target area for 1st bombing mission on morning of Dec 16th was designated as runways and revetments at Kahili Airfield. Each airplane carried out mission but Capt Charters failed to reach target area due to navigation difficulties. Capt. Brewer made bombing run on target area and laid stick of 20-100 fragmentation bombs in revetments to right of runway starting numerous fires among parked enemy airplanes and supplies. No AA until after bombs were dropped and then it was heavy-firly accurate-from 3 positions along beach. 4 airplanes participated in this bombing mission. In the afternoon of the same day Capt. Brewer and Capt Charters participated in a 4 airplane striking force dispatched from Guadalcanal to bomb bivouac area and ration dump North of Lambeti wharf area at Munda Point. 8 P-38's escorted the flight. Each airplane carried 20-100 lb fragmentation bombs. Flight laid bombs all through ration dump. Good job-photos taken! Numerous tents and buildings in target blown up by direct hits. Only 3 bursts of AA received which were completely ineffective. No air opposition. All airplanes returned safely to base at Guadalcanal.

17 December 1942:

Capt Brewer in Ap # 437 participated in a 5 airplane striking force dispatched from Guadalcanal to bomb the runway and revetments at Munda airfield. Each airplane carried 8-500 lb demolition bombs and dropped on target from an altitude of 14,000 ft at 0800 local. Results: 1 direct hit on runway and 7 hits in revetments to right of runway. Capt. Brewer made 3 bombing runs-1 in formation and 2 individual. Flight was escorted by 4 P-38's and 4 F4F's. AA-light-very inaccurate! No air opposition.

18 December 1942:

Capt Crane in Ap # 124 conducted a 450 nautical mile search from Guadalcanal in sector 304°- 310°. Sighted 1 enemy light cruiser and 1 destroyer 6°30' South and 154°40' East, course 310°, speed 15 knots. Observed 1 2-engined bomber at 1,000 ft altitude over Shortland Harbor, no action. Sighted 5 land type #1's in formation over Ganongga Island, no action. Coverage 95%, distance full 450 miles.

OPERATIONAL DIARY 98TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) CONT'D.

19 December 1942:

Capt Crane in Ap # 124 conducted a 450 nautical mile search from Guadalcanal in sector 304°- 310°. Sightings: 3 enemy single-engined airplanes, type unknown, 8°00' South and 158°10' East, course 300°, speed undetermined, no action, at 1020 local; 2 friendly destroyers and 2 sea-going tugs 11°50' South and 163°00' East, course 75°, speed 10 knots at 1230 local. Coverage 100%, distance full 450 miles. Capt Cope in Ap # 431 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 322°- 328°. No contacts. Coverage 95%, distance 800 miles. Capt Durbin in Ap # 215 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 298°- 304°. Friendly contacts: 1 heavy cruiser, 3 light cruisers and 5 destroyers 15°05' South and 162°55' East, course 310°, speed 15 knots at 0710 local; 1 heavy cruiser, 3 light cruisers and 5 destroyers 12°10' South and 161°50' East, course 120°, speed 10 knots at 1325 local; Lt Morgan in Ap # 444 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in Sector 316°- 322°. No contacts. Coverage 80%, distance 800 miles. Capt Brewer in Ap # 437 conducted a bombing mission from Guadalcanal. Purpose: To harass enemy at Munda Airfield. Take-off from Guadalcanal at 2355 local-18 December; arrived over target area at 0050 local 19th December-remained over target area until 0445. Dropped 2-100 lb fragmentation bombs every ten or fifteen minutes from 9,000 ft altitude. Dropped 3 flares during bombing. Released all bombs by 0530 local. All bombs fell in target area. No opposition. No AA. B-17 picked up in searchlight once at end of runway. Returned to base at Guadalcanal and then conducted routine flight to Santos. Capt Charters in Ap # 214 took off from Guadalcanal at 2235 on December 18th to conduct bombing at Kahili Airfield. Arrived at target area at 0045 and remained in area until 0250 dropping 2-20 lb fragmentation bombs every ten or fifteen minutes. Also dropped 2 basketfuls of empty beer bottles 2 or three at a time all during bombing to provide additional harassing effect. Capt Charters reported that he and crew had regular picnic! Searchlights went on at each end of runway and remained on until after 1st beer bottles were thrown out-after dropping the 1st of the beer bottles both searchlights went out and remained out during the rest of period that the airplane was in the area. Also dropped 3 flares. Bombed from 9,000 ft. Both airplanes carried 20-100 lb fragmentation bombs each. Capt Charters returned to Guadalcanal landing there at 0515 local and then proceeded to Santos after servicing.

20 December 1942:

Capt Johan in Ap # 128 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 322°- 328°. No contacts. Coverage 95%, distance 800 miles.

21 December 1942:

No flying conducted.

22 December 1942:

Capt Brewer in Ap # 525 conducted an 850 nautical mile search from Santos in sector 292°- 298°. Sighted friendly convoy of 1 heavy cruiser, 1 light cruiser and 4 destroyers 14°55' South and 165°50' East, course 115°, speed 15 knots. Coverage 60%, distance 675 miles.