

Earl Oxford Hall
A Brief Biography
and
Wartime History
(Comprehensive Edition)



Bryan, TX
March 1, 2008

Final Comprehensive Edition
162 pages

Contents

Preface	5
Early Life	7
Enlistment and Training	10
One the Eve of World War II	15
Hawaii	17
The South Pacific	18
Conditions in the South Pacific	19
The B-17 Flying Fortress	23
The Crew of B-17 No. 41-9151	27
Combat Conditions and Scenes	28
The Final Mission, 1 February 1943	33
A-2 Mission Report, Second Element Bombing Mission	36
On the Home Front	39
They Also Served – H. T. Hall	43
They Also Served – Rosie the Riveter: Miss Olmstead	46
Bibliography	47

Appendices

Appendix 1: Maps of the South Pacific	51
Map 1: Hawaii to New Caledonia	53
Map 2: South Pacific Area	54
Map 3: New Caledonia-Plaines des Gaiacs	55
Map 4: The Solomons	56
Map 5: Bougainville	57
Map 6: New Georgia	58
Map 7: Final Mission Flight Path	59
Appendix 2: Life of Earl Hall	63
Appendix 3: Earl Hall at A&M College, 1932	64
Appendix 4: Transcript	65
Appendix 5: Portrait	66
Appendix 6: Flight Training Class	67
Appendix 7: Biography	68
Appendix 8: Family Memories	69
Appendix 9: Missing in Action – Poem	71
Appendix 10. Granite Tablet	72
Appendix 11: Granite Tablet Photograph	73
Appendix 12: Oxford Sidebar – Japan	74
Appendix 13: Talking Blues – Poem	75
Appendix 14: 11 th Bombardment Group (Heavy) Profile	76
Appendix 15: Texas A&M College, Military Services Information Project	77

Appendix 16: USAAF Missing Air Crew Report, 1943	85
Appendix 17: USAAF A-2 Periodic Report	91
Appendix 18: 42 nd Bombardment Squadron (H): Missions 18 July 1942 – 1 February 1943	97
Appendix 19: Flight Log, First Lt. Joaquin Castro	135
Appendix 20: 42 nd Bombardment Squadron, Named Targets and Bases	139
Appendix 21: The Crew	141
Appendix 22: First Lt. Joaquin Castro – Clipping	145
Appendix 23: American Aircraft in the South Pacific	147
Appendix 24: Japanese Aircraft in the South Pacific	151
Appendix 25: Japanese Ships in the South Pacific	155

Preface

This booklet started as a way to discover and document the life and last few years of the life of Earl Oxford Hall, as he fought in the Southwest Pacific in World War II. Where did he live, what was life like in the war zone, where did he fly on missions, and, at the end, where did he fight his last battle.

In the beginning, we knew the names of the crew of the B-17 Captain Hall piloted, but little else about them. We had a few letters from Earl and from the families of other crew members. The letters from the families reported details gleaned from other servicemen of the 11th Bombardment Group (Heavy) and the 42nd Bombardment Squadron (Heavy). Some seemed authoritative; some were more speculative. The conclusions drawn from them seemed to vary, and left the families with no clear answers to the events of February 1, 1943.

One morning in the fall of 2006, I received a phone call from Arnold Guerrero. He identified himself as the great-nephew of Joaquin Castro, the Co-pilot who flew with my brother, Earl. Between us, and with the help of the Air Force Historical Association, we could reconstruct much more of what went on from 1940 through February 1, 1943.

This story started as the story of one soldier. The contact with Arnold Guerrero, the stories he had, and the pictures of Joaquin Castro brought him to life as a man and soldier, with his own stories, triumphs, and dreams. Now, this begins to expand to be the story of a bomber crew, and a bit of history of the 42nd Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) of the 11th Bombardment Group, United States Army Air Force, as experienced by this group of men. It may someday include the stories of the other crew members, with the help of the descendants of their families.

Above all the booklet is a tribute to our kin, the members of “The Greatest Generation” who fought and died to keep America free.

Early Life

Earl Oxford Hall was born to Halbert Theon Hall and Alice Barbara Oxford October 25, 1913 in Coryell County, Texas, near Mosheim and Coryell City. He was a very active child. Mama and Dad put the hook near the top of the door so he couldn't unhook the door so he could run off to Mrs. Brashear's house across the road and in a pasture behind some trees.



Earl was a cute little fellow, shown here with sister Vela, probably in 1917

Earl learned to drive the Model T Ford when he was about seven. People said "There goes a car without a driver," he was so little. Dad put up a basketball goal on the front of the garage and Earl would spend hours playing there. He attended the two-room school at Tonk Creek until he was in the eighth grade. Then he transferred to Crawford.

Earl attended school at Crawford, Texas, and graduated with honors, having been valedictorian of his class. Baseball and basketball were his favorite sports, and he very good at either game. Football was not available during his high school years.

The only record we have of Earl's public school academic record is his transcript from Texas A&M College. That document notes he completed high school with the following credits:

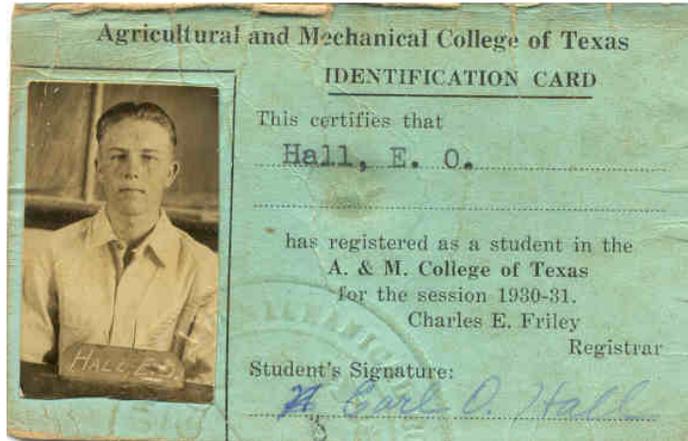
English	4 credits	Spanish	2 credits
Ancient History	1 credit	Economics	½ credit
Military History	1 credit	Algebra	2 credits
English History	1 credit	Plane Geometry	1 credit
American History	1 credit	General Science	1 credit
Civics	½ credit	Agriculture	4 credits
TOTAL	19 credits		



Earl Hall, left, as a young man, near Crawford, Texas

After completing public school in Crawford, graduating as the class Valedictorian, Earl Oxford Hall entered Texas AM College in 1930. He lived in Hart Hall, a dormitory still standing and in use on the A&M campus in 2007. The year he entered, the new college Library was opened. That library, now named the Cushing Memorial Library, has been restored so the second floor reading room is very near what it was in 1930, when Earl went there to study. Earl's brother, Weldon, ended his working career as a librarian at A&M in the Cushing Library.

Earl's freshman ID card survived the years:



At Texas A&M College, Earl majored in Electrical Engineering, and received his Bachelor of Science (EE) June 1, 1934. Upon graduation he received a commission of 2nd Lieutenant in the Reserves of the United States Army. His transcript shows that an engineer in the 1930s was very focused on his core studies. Earl had two years of English, two years of math, one year of history, one year of chemistry and one year of physics. The bulk of his curriculum was engineering and engineering drawing.



Earl Oxford Hall, probably in the late 1930s.

From 1934 until September 1, 1940, Earl was employed by the Texas Power and Light Company in Dallas, Tyler and Waco, Texas.

Enlistment and Training

On September 11, 1940, Earl enlisted in the Army Air Corps as a cadet. He received his primary training at Santa Maria, California; basic training at Mather Field, Moffett Field and Bakersfield, California, and advanced training at Stockton, California, where he received his wings April 25, 1941.

Even while training for war, dreams and plans for the future were clearly in mind. Earl noted, in the Feb. 10 letter, “I would like to serve with a bombardment squadron for about a year. That would give me a lot of transport time and fit me for airline work. That is what I hope to get someday, you know.”

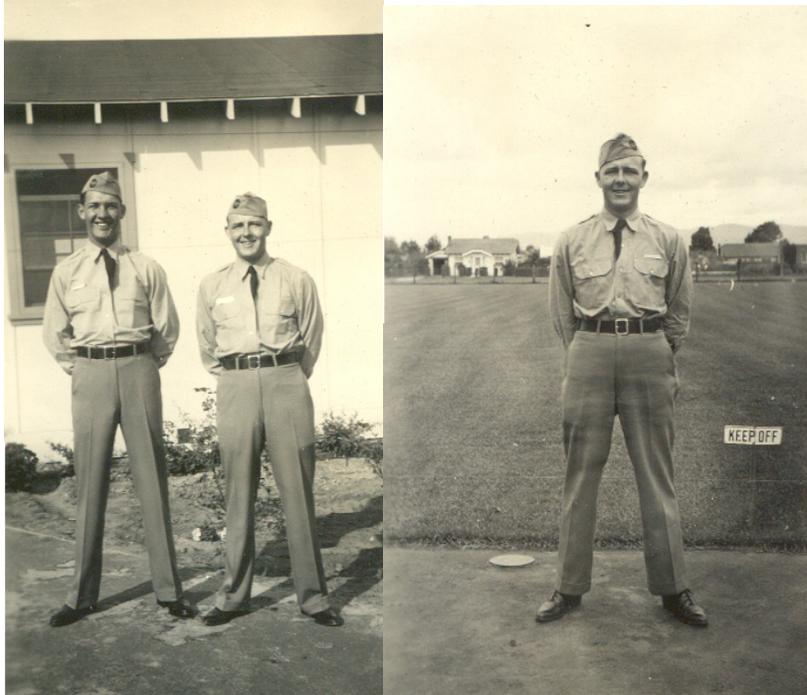
Flight Training, Mather Field, California

Earl did his flight training at Mather Field, California, in early 1941. They first trained in biplanes, then moved on to single-engine monoplanes, and finally to pre-war bombers. The biplanes were Stearman PT-17 trainers, a widely-used aircraft in the pre-war years. After initial flight training in the Stearman PT-17, student pilots moved up to the North American BT-13, a single-engine monoplane trainer.

Living conditions in at Mather Field were typically military, with frame building serving as dormitories. As shown below, beds were in a common room, with communal “facilities” at one end. They did have small chests-of-drawers rather than trunks. Metal bed frames with thin mattresses were probably not the last word in comfort.

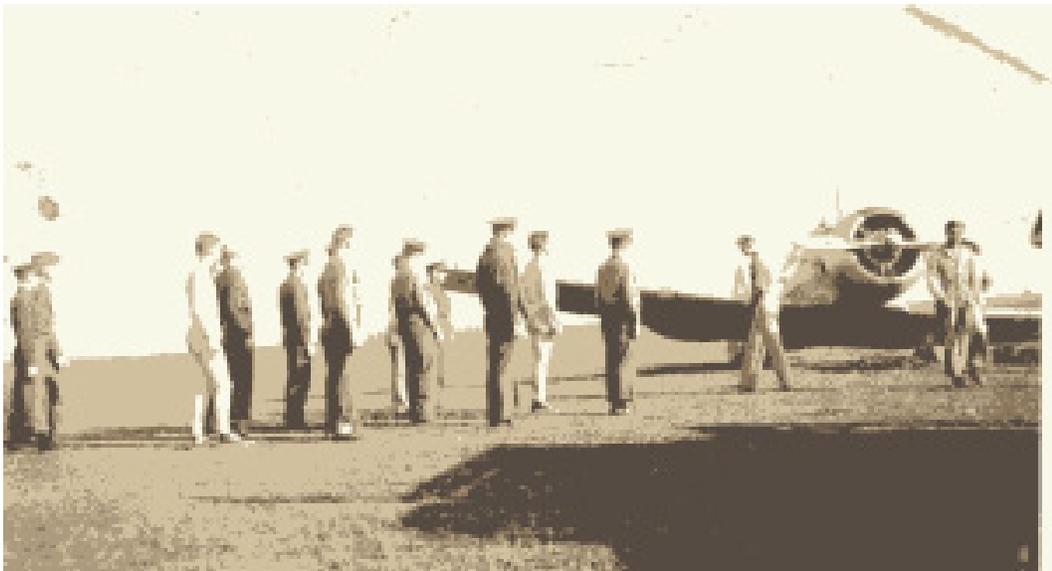


Living conditions at Mather Field were Spartan in 1941. This is one of two pictures of the barracks they lived in during flight training. Note the thick, comfortable mattresses!



Two photos of Earl in his Army Air Force uniform during training in California.

Not everything was perfect in training. In February, 1941, Earl “mudded” his plane, as shown below. The notes on the pictures note that the nose came up, and that the trainer weighed some 4000 pounds. In another photo, Earl was marking the muddy spot with flags, so no one else would get stuck on landing/



A well-stuck airplane, Earl's AT-6A Texan trainer.



Another view of the well-stuck airplane, Earl's AT-6A Texan trainer.

Flight training was in the AT-6A and BT-13 trainers. He noted: “the AT-6A is a sweet ship. It handles more smoothly than the BT-13, but doesn't seem to have quite as much “feel.” The AT-6A cruises at about 160. It has a retractable landing gear and 160 horsepower motor and those two make the difference.” If sources are correct, he did the Stearman for basic flight training, the BT-13 for intermediate training, and the AT-6A for advanced training. He also had to spend time training for instruments in a “Link Trainer.” About the Link, he noted in March that he “can't fly it worth a lick.” By mid-April, he “didn't mind it so much.”



This gives a better look at the North American BT-13, one of the trainers Earl flew in.



This photo was taken by Earl or his squadron mates during training in California, showing formation flying.



Another view of the trainers Earl and his squadron mates used for flight training.

Representing the second of the three stages of pilot training (Primary, Basic, and Advanced), the BT-13 was faster and heavier than the Primary Trainers. Training with this plane required the student pilot to demonstrate a higher skill level through the use of two-way radio communications with the ground, landing flaps, and a two-position variable pitch propeller.



The Link Trainer.

(Photograph courtesy Roger Ritter.)

Earl finished his basic flight training with 135 hours of flying time as of February 1941, including three hours of formation flying and six hours of instrument flying. He noted he had a problem with “over-controlling”: “I like to rick one around and they want everything easy and smooth.” (Letter, Feb. 10, 1941.)

After basic flight training, the class moved to Ft. Stockton, California for continued training. Conditions were better there. “Our barracks are two-story frame buildings with about thirty of us on each floor. They are quite an improvement over the tents we have been living in for the past two months.” (Letter, March 20, 1941.)

The class graduated April 26th, 1941 with 200 hours of flight training. They set sail for Hawaii on May 28th, 1941, and arrived on June 3rd. In his June 8th letter, Earl notes he will be started in a B-18 bomber, “a twin-engine job weighing about 25,000 lbs...It seems to handle somewhat like a truck.” Within a year, he expected to be assigned a pilot or co-pilot of the B17 “Flying Fortress,” and notes “It really looks like a sweet airplane.”

On the Eve of World War II

Most people today do not realize the overwhelming weakness of the United States Army Air Force in the late 1930s. In January 1939 President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked Congress to strengthen America's air power, which, the President said, was "utterly inadequate."

This overview from a web history of aircraft defines the situation with pilots:

During the 1930s Depression the number of pilots the Air Corps trained decreased until 1937 only 184 graduated from advanced pilot training. Facing a resurgent German militarism and an aggressive Japanese military in 1939, the Air Corps planned to graduate 4,500 pilots in the following two years. Lacking facilities to train such a large number of cadets, in mid-1939 the Air Corps contracted with nine of the best civilian flying schools to begin training pilots. When France fell to Germany in 1940 the Air Corps increased the number of pilots to be trained to 7,000 per year.

By December 1941 the Air Corps had contracted with 45 civilian flying schools and by 1943 the number increased to 63. In the first class at Randolph Field in 1939 only 257 pilots graduated. By the end of 1941 over 2,000 were enrolled in each class. At the end of World War II the Army Air Forces Training Command had graduated 250,000 pilots from its schools.



The pre-war B-10 bomber.

The two-engine Martin B-10 Bomber was one of the few bomber models the United States had when the war broke out, and was woefully inadequate for combat in 1941. In 1936, this was the best bomber the US had, and there were less than 200 operational. The Air Corps recognized the rapid developments in foreign air forces, and succeeded in convincing the military and congress of the necessity for better aircraft. By 1937, work was proceeding toward new planes, but few were ready for production, even by 1939. Still,

the design work and prototypes provided a basis from which design and production could start quickly. Among the prototypes were the predecessors to the P-39, the P-40, the P-38, the B-25, the B-26, and the B-17. Few were complete designs in December 1941, but the basic airframes were sound designs, and allowed for rapid re-design and production.

One of the great technological feats of the twentieth century was the speed with which the United States adapted the society and manufacturing companies to develop and produce the weapons of war, from the ubiquitous Jeep to tanks to the aerial armadas of fighters and bombers, and trained up the men needed to command the vehicles and armies.

The Air Corps of 1939 numbered 20,000 men and 2,400 planes, many of them out-of-date. By the end of 1944, the nearly autonomous AAF had almost 2.4 million personnel and 80,000 aircraft. The development of that level of force in a five year period was nothing short of amazing. Numbers are significant. Add to them the fact that aeronautical engineers and designers conceived, designed, tested and built large numbers of such planes as the B-17, the B-25 Mitchell, the P-38 Lightning, the Corsair, and the B-29 Superfortress, and the feat becomes even more amazing.

Hawaii

After flight training, Earl was stationed at Hickam Field in Hawaii. He was assigned to the 42nd Bombardment Squadron of the 11th Bomber Group, then a part of the Hawaiian Air Force, shortly renamed the Seventh Air Force. In June, 1941, he was transferred to the Headquarters Squadron of the 11th Bomber Group, and made Adjutant of the Squadron. He remained assigned to the 42nd bomber squadron for flight training. (Letter, June 28, 1941.)

In June, Earl wrote and asked “What do you think of the new war in Europe? I heard it on the radio last night. Somehow I can’t help but wonder if it will amount to much. . . It probably won’t affect us much here anyway though.” (Letter, June 23, 1941.) No one, stateside or in Hawaii, had any inkling of what was to come. There was no consideration of a broader war, or that the Japanese would attack the U. S.

In early October, Hawaii was a pretty neat duty station. Earl noted “Had to be Officer of the Day yesterday. Sure hated it too because I missed my golf game.” He noted that everything was quiet and that they did the same old things every day. Flying was a problem, though - they had only two planes for twenty-five pilots to qualify in.

Life went on in those pre-war days. On November 17th, 1941, Earl wrote his family that he and Margaret Green were going to be married between December 24th, 1941 and January 1st, 1942, as Earl wrote, “God and the Japanese navy willing.” He had booked passage for Margaret to come to Hawaii, leaving Los Angeles on December 19th by boat. On November 20th, he wrote “Everything is OK here so far. Between playing golf, flying, and getting ready to forswear my happy bachelorhood I’m pretty busy.” Both God and the Japanese navy intervened in their plans. Sometime after December 7th, Earl and Margaret Green broke up, at a time and for reasons that we do not know.

Earl was at Hickam Field, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, and, along with almost everyone else, lost his first aircraft on the ground. We know he was on base, and family tradition indicates he sustained a very minor injury in the bombing attack, but we never heard his story of the attack. Following the declaration of war, the Army Air Force flew many reconnaissance missions from Hawaii, trying to locate the Japanese battle fleets everyone was sure were coming to invade the islands.



Details of the missions flown out of Hawaii are noted in the mission log of the 42nd Bombardment Squadron, and in the flight log of Lt. Joaquin Castro, who flew Co-Pilot with Earl Hall. (Appendix Q)

On December 29, 1941, Earl received his commission as 1st Lieutenant, and was flying Co-Pilot on the “big ships” (B-17s). “They are all I told you and more.” He expected to be rated first pilot by mid-March, 1942. In January, 1942, he moved from the Headquarters Squadron back to the 42nd bomber squadron.

On April 1, 1942, he received his promotion to Captain. He was still in Hawaii. Wartime censorship regulations had been implemented, so letters from the soldiers revealed little of their wartime experience.

The South Pacific

Sources note that the 11th Bomber Group was a veteran of the Battle of Midway before reaching New Caledonia. Captain Hall remained in Hawaii until June 1, 1942, when family tradition and information notes he flew to Midway and took part in the battle there on June 3 and 4, 1942. Mission reports note that six or more crews of the 42nd Bombardment group participated in the Midway battle, but only the lead element pilots are named in the mission reports.

On July 19, 1942, Captain Hall, with his crew and several others, left for New Caledonia. The route followed is shown in a map of the South Pacific (Map 1). The planes flew from Hawaii to Christmas Island (1300 miles), Christmas Island to Canton Island (1000 miles), Canton Island to Fiji Island (1100 miles), and from Fiji to New Caledonia (1050 miles).

The 42nd bomber squadron arrived at Plaines des Gaiacs on New Caledonia on July 23rd, 1942. (Maps 2, 3) The B-17s flew many reconnaissance missions - more than half their missions were reconnaissance rather than bombing missions. There were no photographic reconnaissance units in the South Pacific, so the U. S. Navy provided reconnaissance photographers to fly in the B-17s of the Army Air Force. Locating and attacking Japanese shipping and warships was the key mission of the armed services in the early days of the Solomons campaign. Maps 4 – 7 show the area and islands where the 42nd Bombardment Squadron operated in 1942 and early 1943.

Plaines des Gaiacs was the maintenance base for the 42nd bomber squadron for missions flown from New Caledonia, Guadalcanal and Esperantu Santo. By August 18th, supplies were short, with all spare engines having been installed. Engines had to be replaced frequently due to the dusty conditions of the airstrips. In *Pacific Counterblow*, Plaines des Gaiacs is described as follows: “They found a red dust strip hacked out of a swamp. High in iron oxide, this dust sifted through the filters, honed out the cylinders, so that shortly the B-17s were fortunate to fly 6 hours with a full load of oil.” Earl notes in his

letter of September 7th that his plane got four new engines, and the guns overhauled. Descriptions of the airstrips speak of narrow dusty strips hacked out of the palms, with little clearance for takeoff and landing. In Haugland's *The AAF Against Japan*, he notes:

“Development of airfields was a major problem. Negro engineers who landed at New Caledonia's capital, Noumea, early in 1942, hauled their heavy equipment 165 miles northward over primitive mountain roads to Nepui Bay, where they were able to tap a surface pit of iron ore for a runway. The finely ground mineral made an excellent hard topping, impervious to water but so productive of highly corrosive red dust that it had to be sprinkled constantly. This airfield, Plaines des Gaiacs - better known as PDG - became the initial base for bombers raiding Guadalcanal, B-26s on local patrol and New Zealand planes on submarine searches.”

In: Haugland, Vern. *The AAF Against Japan*. New York: Harper, 1948. p. 120.

Guadalcanal was still in Japanese hands up to August 1942. On August 7, 1942, U. S. troops landed on Guadalcanal. Resistance was fierce, with the island not completely secured until February 9, 1943. Henderson Field was secured and made operational for air defense by August 17th. Throughout the fall, Henderson was under constant attack. On October 14th, the Japanese all but destroyed the field in massive bombing and naval bombardment attacks, but by late November or early December, Henderson Field was secure and adequately supplied. It became the key mission base for the heavy bombers of the Solomon Campaign.

Conditions in the South Pacific

Conditions at Henderson Field in late 1942 were primitive. A description of the Cactus Air Force posted online noted:

“Pilots were quartered in mud-floored tents in the frequently flooded coconut grove called “Mosquito Grove,” between the airstrip and the beach. The latrine was a trench, with a log for a seat, the bathtub was the Lunga River. There were only two meals a day - dehydrated potatoes, Spam, cold hash, and captured Japanese rice - and cigarettes.”

“The problem of obtaining adequate transport was closely linked with that of furnishing relief for war-weary crews. Both fighter pilots and bomber crews had been forced to carry on almost continuously, although the burden upon the five heavy bomber squadrons of the 5th and 11th Groups was more severe than upon the fighters. By November (1942) General Harmon could only describe the condition of the bomber crews as “more and more rapidly approaching the point of exhaustion.””

Rohfleisch, Kramer J. Guadalcanal and the Origins of the Thirteenth Air Force,. [Washington, DC].: United States Army, Assistant Chief, Air Staff Intelligence Historical Division, July, 194, p. 116.

Rohfleisch reports more:

“Much had been asked of these pioneer air crews. Some of them back in September [1942] had flown as many as 17 consecutive days on missions which averaged 11 to 13 hours daily; many of them had gone to bed hungry at night after flying combat missions all day. Flight surgeons recognized that they were overworked, but were forced to close their eyes to the physical condition of pilots and crewmen. The Air Surgeon of the Thirteenth Air Force estimated that out of the entire 11th Group, less than 10 flying officers could pass the standard AAF “64” physical examination. By the end of December approximately 60 bomber crews were available for the two heavy groups in the theater, of which 26 lacked navigators; while 10 were without bombardiers.”

“The AAF Commander. . . observed the squadrons of the 11th and 5th Groups, found them tired, almost too tired to carry on, but he could “give them no reasonable assurance as to how long they will have to carry the ball. To them there appears no end - just on and on till the Jap gets them.” [December 1942]

In *Fortress Against the Sun*, Salecker notes:

“By February 1943 the 11th BG was pretty well spent. Only 19 of its original 35 crews remained due to combat loss and attrition. Forced to fly long missions over great expanses of water, the men were exhausted beyond belief. Gen. Harmon had recognized the problem and had worked tirelessly to bring replacement crews and planes to the South Pacific, even stealing men headed to the Southwest Pacific. By February the pressure was relieved somewhat when the 307th BG, a B- 24 unit, arrived from Hawaii. Although Gen. Emmons in Hawaii continued to protest over the lack of heavy bombers in the Hawaiian Area, Admiral Nimitz ignored him and started the first 15 B-24s south on February 4.

With a new heavy bomb group in the area, and the 11th BG fatigued beyond effectiveness, official orders were signed on February 7 relieving the 11th BG from further duty. While new arrivals among the group were to be transferred to the 5th BG, the veteran crews were to be pulled back to Hawaii. Men with enough rotation points were to be sent home while those lacking enough points were to be retrained in B-24s. At almost the same time, on February 9, all organized enemy resistance on Guadalcanal officially ceased. Although small pockets of Japanese troops would continue to give the Americans trouble, the six-month struggle for Guadalcanal was finally over.”

These descriptions give some feeling for the harsh pressures of the South Pacific in late 1942. Other descriptions note insect problems, mold and mildew, and the constant irritation of military rations - food to survive on, but offering no pleasures of eating.

Living conditions in the Solomons and New Caledonia in 1942 and 1943 were

primitive. The pictures below give an idea of the conditions, with explanatory notes from the back of the pictures.



Earl, probably on New Caledonia. This set of pictures gives a hint of the living conditions in the Pacific in 1942-1943. All these were taken by his girlfriend Tabby Johnson, a nurse at a New Caledonia hospital.

(Photographs in this section courtesy the Halbert Theon Hall family.)



He has his mess kit in his hand. I went up to his camp and ate lunch with him-this was about October 1942. (Note by Earl's Fiancée, Tabby Johnson)



Earl washing his hands in a basin made of a potato can - no running water of any kind - it all had to be hauled. (Note by his nurse girlfriend, Tabby Johnson.)



From the back of the picture: This was my hut - we first lived in tents and then we got the natives to build these grass shacks for us. (The note and hut are belong to Earl's fiancée, Tabby Johnson.)



From the back of the picture, by his Tabby Johnson: “This was taken at my hut on his next to the last visit. The ground forces of his squadron were based on New Caledonia - he would fly to the Canal and be gone for 2 or 3 weeks flying bombing missions, then he would come back to our island for rest and to have his plane serviced. His camp was about 30 miles from our hospital.”

The B-17 Flying Fortress

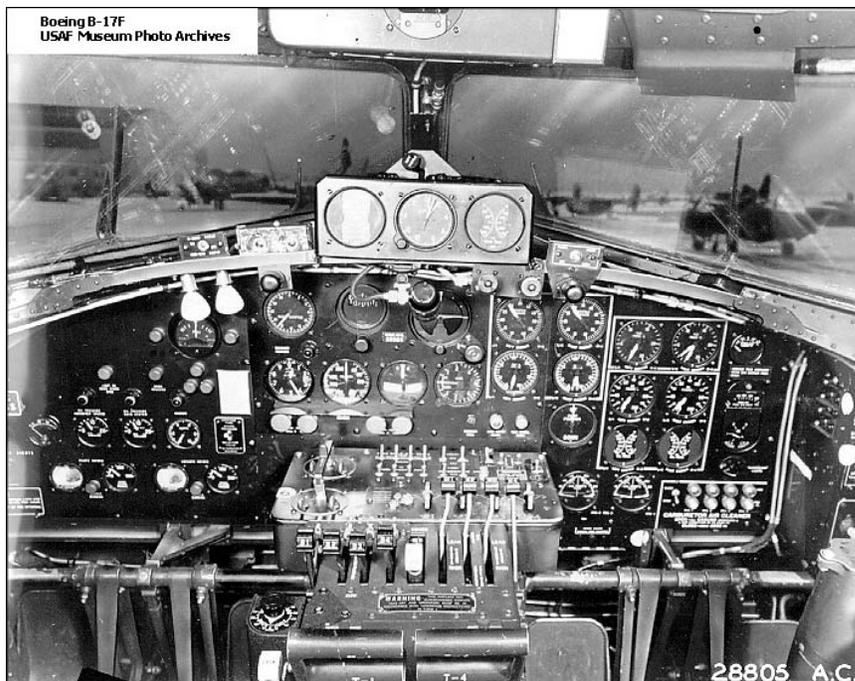
The B-17 “Flying Fortress” was Earl’s aircraft. Since it was so centrally his tool of war, a description is in order. The B-17 Bomber was a powerful and well-armed bomber, but it was designed for and served best where the Army Air Force could muster large flights of bombers, numbering in the hundreds or more. Such massive flights combined their defensive firepower for better defense against fighter attack, and could lay massive carpets of bombs on a target area to achieve enormous destructive capability. The plane and the top-secret Norton bombsight were key to victory in Europe. In the Pacific, however, the B-17 was a less effective weapon. There were few massive targets open for intensive bombing, and there were too few B-17 squadrons to mount large attacks. Typically, Pacific missions consisted of four to ten aircraft, using a “get in and get out” attack strategy. Targets were Japanese airfields or harbors with Japanese shipping anchored.



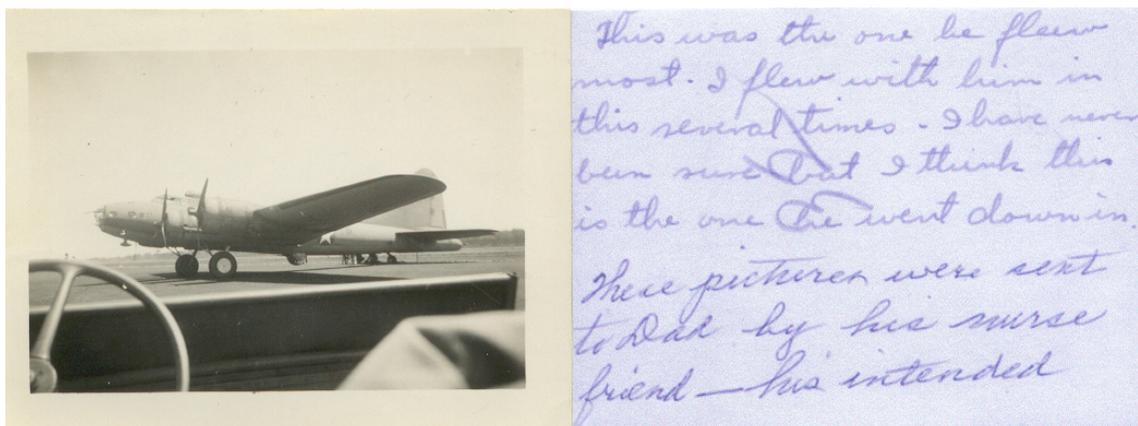
B-17E in flight - This is probably the model Earl flew off Guadalcanal. It shows the distinctive tail profile and wing configuration. Several gun positions are visible.
(Combat photographs in this section courtesy the USAF Museum Photo Archives.)



B-17E - Three plane flight over water. This is probably typical of a mission flight group. Two flights like this comprised Earl's final mission.

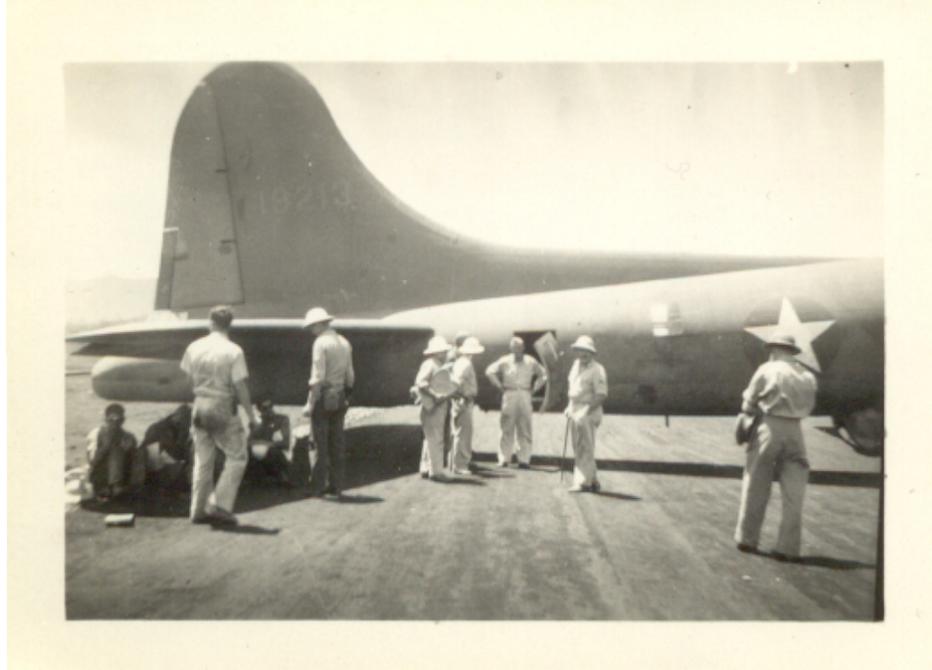


Cockpit of B-17F - an idea of what the pilot could see out the front. Flying the B-17 looks very complicated in this view.



A photograph of Earl's plane, and the note on the back. The top section is by a nurse, Earl's fiancée; the addition at the bottom is by Vela.

“This was the one he flew most. I flew with him in this several times. I have never been sure, but I think this is the one the went down in.” Vela’s note: “These pictures were sent to Dad by his nurse friend - his intended.” The nurse was Capt. Mary Tabitha (Tabby) Johnson.



From the back, by Tabby Johnson: “This was just before “taking off” - Earl standing in the doorway. You can see the 13 on the plane, but he always considered that good luck.” The plane number is visible in the original picture, number 19213.



From the back, written by Tabby Johnson: “I took this one day when I was with him - it’s inside the cockpit.”

During this time, Earl met and dated Capt. Mary Tabitha (Tabby) Johnson, an Army nurse based on New Caledonia, and they were engaged to be married after the war. Many of the pictures below are from the camera of Tabby Johnson (as noted in the captions), given to the Hall family when she visited them at Crawford, Texas, after the war. She corresponded with H. T. Hall for some time, offering and receiving emotional support as they dealt with their joint loss.

The Crew

Major Earl O. Hall, Pilot

ID: **0-325099**

Entered the Service From: **Texas**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

First Lieutenant Joaquin Castro, Co-Pilot

ID: **0-428914**

Entered the Service From: **Texas**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

Second Lieutenant Frank N. Stern, Jr., Navigator

ID: **0-438256**

Entered the Service From: **Illinois**

Awards: **Air Medal, Purple Heart**

Staff Sergeant James Y. Bales, Engineer

ID: **15058894**

Entered the Service From: **Indiana**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

Staff Sergeant Paul Adler, Waist Gunner

ID: **06147915**

Entered the Service From: **Massachusetts**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Purple Heart**

Staff Sergeant Francis S. Banasiak, Bombadier

ID: **11020224**

Entered the Service From: **Massachusetts**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

Staff Sergeant James C. Stephens, Jr. Radio Man

ID: **06953552**

Entered the Service From: **Colorado**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

Sergeant Martin T. Grady, Gunner

ID: **06980875**

Entered the Service From: **New York**

Awards: **Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

Sergeant Jesse N. Olmstead, Radio Man

ID: **11033041**

Entered the Service From: **Connecticut**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

Combat Conditions and Scenes

The pictures following are from the Solomons, selected to give an idea of the conditions and airfields used by the 42nd Bombardment Squadron.



(Photographs in this section courtesy the USAF Museum Photo Archives)

The thunder of four Wright Cyclone engines: Flying Fortresses take off from Henderson Field. This is certainly an image of the Henderson runway, and the takeoff pattern with one plane on tail of another during takeoff.



Boeing B-17E
USAF Museum Photo Archives

S/N 41-9211 "Typhoon McGoon II" of the 11th Bomb Group, 98th Bomb Squadron, January 1943 in New Caledonia. Note the antennas mounted above the nose Plexiglas used for radar tracking of surface

vessels. This plane was on base with Earl. The background gives a hint of the terrain, and the crew is probably typical of the attire on the ground.



Jungle camouflage. A B-17 bomber hides under camouflage netting in the jungle near Henderson Field.



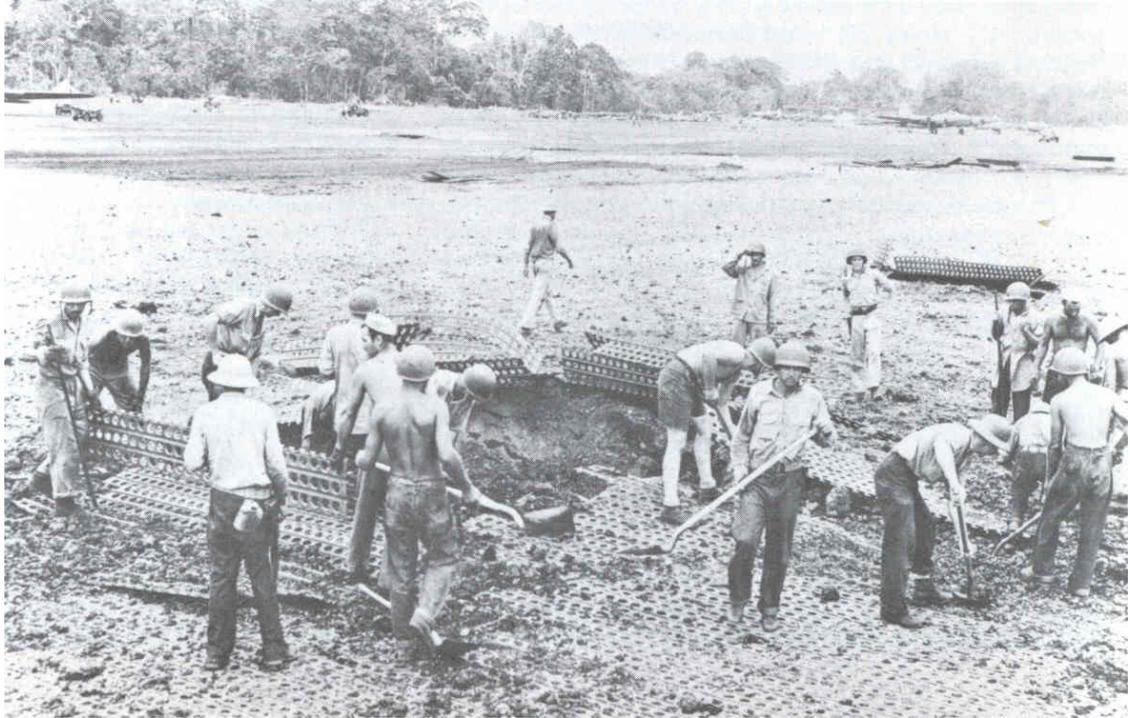
Henderson Field, ca. 1942. Palm trees and bombs, with a B-17 in the background. Primitive battle conditions were the norm in the South Pacific.



B-17s at Henderson in late 1942, before the heavy losses the 11th and 5th BG sustained. Again, the primitive conditions are apparent.



Seen from above, Henderson Field is in the center, Fighter 1 airstrip on the left, and Fighter 2 airstrip on the right. Lunga Point is at the bottom right. P-38 fighters like this one probably had not arrived before Earl's last flight.



Ground crews were called on to rebuild the airfield after every Japanese bombing attack. Note the steel mesh that was laid down on the surface to improve the usefulness of Henderson.

Earl was a part of the 42nd Bomber Squadron, 11th Bomber Group, and was part of the Guadalcanal campaign in 1942. The history of the Guadalcanal Campaign is a history of the Army and Marine landings, and the vicious jungle fighting required to secure Guadalcanal and the other Solomon islands. An idea of the Guadalcanal Campaign to capture the island can be seen in the 2001 motion picture, *The Thin Red Line*. The Army Air Force became an effective weapon in the Solomons after Guadalcanal was secured and Henderson Field made operational.

In the book *Fortress Against the Sun: The B-17 Flying Fortress in the Pacific*, by Gene E. Salecker, he notes:

“Since the 11th BG had been engaged in almost continuous combat with the Japanese since July 31, 1942 at the beginning of the Guadalcanal Campaign, the War Department finally recognized the accomplishments of the group and issued it a Presidential Unit Citation on January 23. Additionally, the 11th Bomber Group was included in the Naval Distinguished Unit Citation which was eventually presented to the 1st Marine Division for its actions in the Solomons. As Major Edmundson wrote, “To my knowledge, this is the only B-17 unit to be so honored by a sister Service.” Along with the group citations, each individual squadron was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation.”

The B-17s of the 11th Bomber Group flew missions all over the Solomons, including Ballale airdrome, Kahili Airfield on Bougainville, Rendova Island, the airfield at

Munda Point on New Georgia, and harbors and shipping as far north as Bougainville and the Shortland Islands. The major target of Rabaul on New Britain was within range, and may have been a target. In *Guadalcanal and the Origins of the Thirteenth Air Force*, the author noted: “Over the Shortlands area the B-17’s could expect both considerable flak and opposition; the fighter unit based near Buin was very aggressive.”

Two documents give accurate accounts of the activities of the 42nd Bombardment Squadron and the Hall/Castro crew. The Mission Log of the 42nd Bombardment Squadron is the official UFAAF report of missions. It is supplemented by the flight log of Lt. Joaquin Castro, which logs all the flights Lt. Castro flew on, with mission times and other details. (Appendix Q)

The Final Mission, 1 February 1943

Conditions for the United States Army Air Force in the South Pacific were poor. Many records were kept on whatever material came to hand, typed quickly and briefly, and often annotated cryptically in pencil. The challenge of determining the facts of a bombing mission over sixty years after the fact have been a challenge. In the following paragraphs, the various stories and reports that came to the family, and the various documents that were discovered illustrate the information that had to be evaluated.

Earl's last mission was flown on February 1st, 1943. He flew out of Henderson Field that day. Family tradition and some limited correspondence with Army Air Force men who were on Guadalcanal identifies the target area as the airfield at Munda Point on New Georgia. A contemporary write-up (Appendix BBB, "Short Biography"), notes "His last bombing mission was a Jap base on Rendova Island, February 1, 1943, from which place he never returned." Rendova Island is across a narrow waterway from Munda Point. Rendova and Munda Point are approximately 200 miles from Henderson Field. The Bougainville/Shortland area is roughly 300 miles from Henderson. The bomber flight paths would most likely not been direct flights over other islands, but a circular route southwest of the island chain. If so, the distances would have more likely been 300 miles to Rendova, and some 500 miles to Bougainville. The family tradition, and the recollections of the servicemen on Guadalcanal turn out to be mistaken.

Gene E. Salecker, in *Fortress Against the Sun*, reports on Earl's last mission as follows:

"On February 1, nine B-17s set out to bomb enemy around Bougainville. Breaking into two elements, the first element, consisting of five planes from the 72nd BS, set fire to a large cargo ship with two or three direct hits and several near misses. Following close behind, the second element, made up of one plane from the 72nd BS and three from the 42nd BS/ 11th BG, flew through heavy anti-aircraft fire to bomb another supply vessel. Midway through the bomb run B-17E (41-9122, *Eager Beavers*), piloted by Capt. Frank L. Houx (42nd BS), was hit in the bomb bay by an anti-aircraft shell and disintegrated in midair.

After scoring two hits on the enemy ship, the three remaining planes turned back towards Henderson Field but were intercepted by some 20 Zeros. In the ensuing air battle, B-17E (41-2442, *Yokohama Express*), flown by Capt. Harold P. Hensley, was attacked repeatedly and seriously damaged, necessitating a water landing. Capt. Hensley and his crew were never seen again. The two remaining planes, flown by Capt. Earl O. Hall, CO of the 42nd BS, and a Capt. Thomas, continued to fight off the persistent attackers, shooting down four planes before Capt. Hall's B-17E (41-9151) was shot out of the sky.

All by himself now, Capt. Thomas continued to try and fend off the attackers. The Zeros chased the Flying Fortress for almost 200 miles, seriously

wounding the radio operator and bombardier, and knocking out the tail guns, and the ball turret and top turret guns. Two engines were damaged, one main tire was flattened, and all of the ammunition for the nose and radio compartment guns was expended but the B-17 would not go down. After three more Zeros were shot down, the Japanese finally gave up and Capt. Thomas was able to make a successful crash landing on Guadalcanal. Having had a total of only four planes assigned to the 42nd BS, the loss of all four planes and three entire crews effectively eliminated the 42nd BS from any further operations in the South Pacific.”

This report is somewhat correct, but seems in error in some details, as we will see in the A-2 Intelligence Report, the most definitive report available.

Salecker identifies Earl’s B-17 as a “B-17E” number 41-9151. The one photo the Hall family has that shows a plane number shows number 19213 on the rudder assembly. Bomber crews frequently used whatever aircraft was operationally ready for their missions.

One additional report of the final mission appeared in *Grey Geese Calling: Pacific Air War History of the 11th Bombardment Group (H) 1940-1945*. (11th Bombardment Group Association, 1981.) That book also notes Earl’s promotion to Commanding Officer of the 42nd bomber squadron:

“Another change of commanding officer took place in January. Captain E. O. Hall succeeded Major Manierre at the helm of the organization.”

Following that note is the description of Earl’s final mission:

February was a fateful month for the Squadron. At the beginning of the month the strength was four planes and crews, but this total was suddenly reduced to one - in the following manner: Three planes left base to pull a strike against Bougainville, far to the north. These planes were piloted by Capt. Hall, Capt. Harold P. Hensley and Capt. Frank L. Houx. Although no official word from any of them ever came through, reports from natives of the islands near the target eventually brought out the story. According to these natives, Capt. Houx’ plane was hit in the bomb bay by flak, causing the plane to disintegrate in the air. Shortly thereafter the two remaining planes were jumped by a large number of enemy fighters, and Capt. Hensley’s plane was hit, necessitating a water landing. The Japs kept boring in on the Forts and shot both of them down. No survivors were seen to get out of the wreckage.

This anecdotal report is somewhat correct, but varies in several details from the more complete A-2 Intelligence Report quoted below.

The “USAAF Chronology” on the World Wide Web for February 1st, 1943, reports the following: (<http://paul.rutgers.edu/~mcgrew/wwii/usaf/>)

SOUTH PACIFIC THEATER OF OPERATIONS (Thirteenth Air Force) In the Solomons, P-28s, P-39s and P-40s, along with Navy and Marine aircraft, attack 4 destroyers of the Tokyo Express north of Vangunu Island; . . . B-17s attack shipping in the Shortland-Bougainville area, claiming 3 direct hits on cargo vessels.

The Army Air Force Missing Air Crew Report documents for Earl's crew notes the target as "Munda" but provides little information of value. A following document notes the target as "Shortland Harbor Area," and a report to one of the families again notes "Munda Point" as the target. Copies of the Missing Air Crew Reports are in the Appendix.

A-2 Mission Report - Second Element Bombing Mission 1 February 1943

The A-2 Report of the United States Army Air Force Intelligence Unit for 1 February 1943 contains "Appendix E. Complete report of Second Element – Bombing Mission 1 February 1943." The appendix is the most complete and accurate extant report, based on interviews with the pilots and crew of Capt. Thomas's plane.

The report contains the following description, somewhat abridged here:

"The nine ship formation, composed of two elements, the first a five ship Vee, and the second a four ship Vee, took off from GUADALCANAL shortly after 0630 love for a bombing mission on enemy shipping in the SHORTLAND – BUIN area.

Upon arrival at the target area the first element took up a bombing run on the transport to the right of the course of the formation. The second element started a bombing run on the left-hand transport, with bomb-bay doors open, but just before reaching the point of dropping the bombs made a right turn and laid a course directly toward the warships lying directly offshore from BOUGAINVILLE ISLAND.

Despite the anti-aircraft, bombs were released, and the ball-turret gunner on Captain THOMAS's ship observed three hits on a transport.

The first element turned away to the left, after its run, and the second element turned away to the right. The pursuit escort of four P-38's and six P-40's stayed with the first element of five ships.

Over EAST POINT, on BOUGAINVILLE ISLAND, the four ship formation was attacked by 20 -30 type 2 Zero fighters, and the formation leader, Captain HALL, started towards WEST CAPE, CHOISEUL ISLAND, losing altitude.

Near CAPE ALEXANDER, Captain HOUX was seen falling behind, and was never seen again.

The remaining three planes, which had by now dropped down to an altitude of between a thousand and fifteen hundred feet, tried to take advantage of cloud protection, but the sky at this altitude was no more than 1/20th covered with small cumulous clouds, and offered practically no protection. It proved almost a hinderence, in as much as Captain HALL was making violent turns to right and left to take advantage of each cloud, which necessitated, on the part of Captain THOMAS, putting one foot on the rudder bar to obtain enough leverage to make the turns and stay in the formation.

Captain THOMAS crossed over to the left, making a three ship echelon.

A few minutes later, on emerging from one of the larger clouds, Captain HALL's ship was not in the formation, and was nowhere in sight. This left Capt. THOMAS flying on Captain HENSLEY's wing.

All during this time, the large number of the Zero fighters were pressing their attacks, enabling them to come in from as many as four directions at once, making fire control very difficult.

Off RINGANA, on CHOISEUL ISLAND, Captain HENSLEY's plane was observed to be on fire, flames coming out of the radio compartment, perhaps the result of hits by incendiaries in the radio tank. His plane hit the water, exploded, and was burning when last observed. Two of the Zeros broke off and circled the wreckage.

This left Captain THOMAS's plane alone to keep up a running fight from RINGANA Point to the middle of SANTA ISABEL ISLAND, a distance of 210 statute miles, at which point the Zeros finally gave up the attack.

The ship and crew had sustained a continuous attack of over fifty minutes, and was the only ship of the four in the element to return.

Four Zeros were observed by a coast watcher on CHOISEUL, to have been shot down while the four ships of the B-17 formation were still together."

This is the most accurate and complete information thus far located, and defined the action area very clearly. Based on this report, B-17 41-9151, piloted by Captain Hall, was most likely shot down east of Choiseul Island, between the north end of the island and Ringana, on Choiseul Island. No islands are east of Choiseul, where water depths range from 1,500 to 6,000 feet. Unless the plane was able to reach Choiseul Island, it is unlikely to ever be located. The mission flight path and probable crash site as described in the A-2 Periodic Report is shown on Map 7. The Pacific Wrecks website does not show any known aircraft on northeast Choiseul Island.

Earl was only 6 days from the date his bomber group would have been relieved and sent back to Hawaii, although the survivors did not embark for Hawaii until late March. His (and our) personal tragedy in timing was mirrored throughout the war by thousands of soldiers and their families.

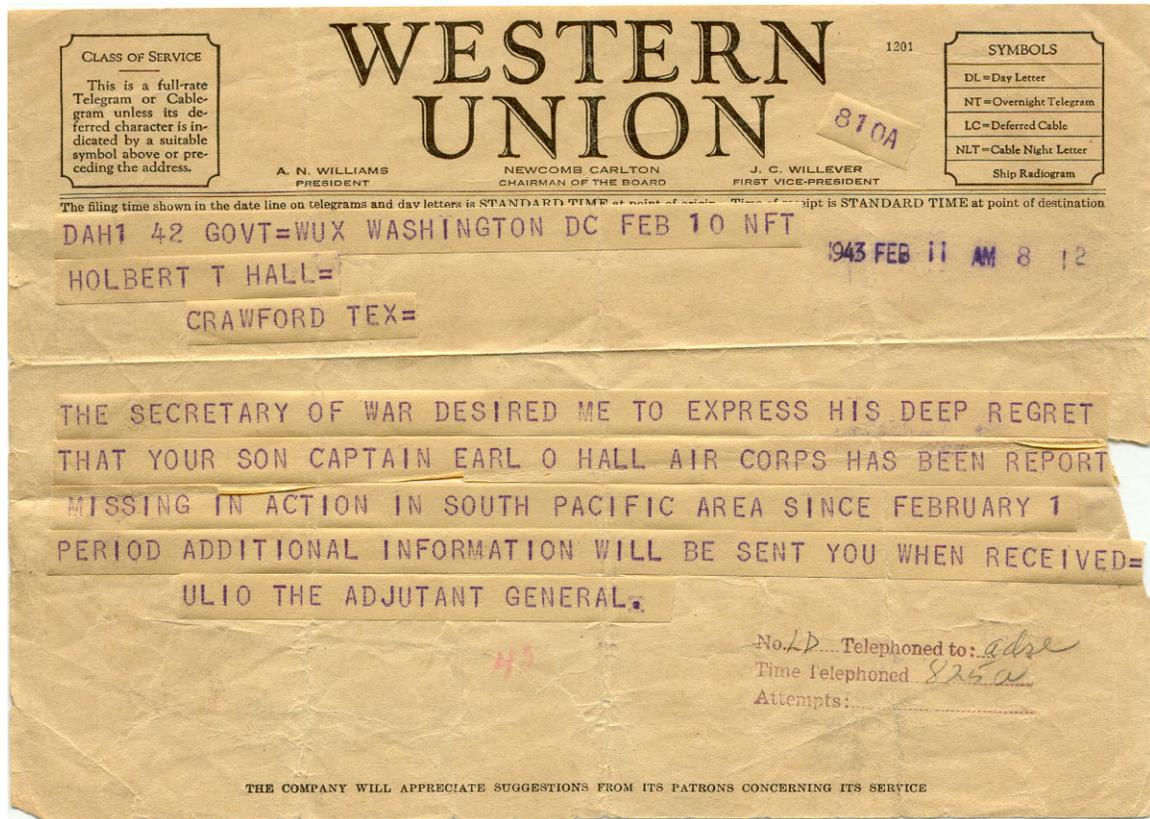
The family history write-up details the commendations Earl received for his service:

Captain Hall was decorated five times by Major General Harmon. He received the Silver Star for shooting down a four-motored Japanese flying boat near Gizo Island on August 26, 1942. On May 19, 1943, the following medals were presented to his father, Halbert Theon Hall, at the Bluebonnet Ordnance Plant in McGregor, Texas. He was awarded the Air Medal for destruction of an enemy tanker near Tonolei on December 10, 1942, the Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of

a Silver Star for protecting a disabled plane in a formation of six that were being attacked by sixteen Zeros on December 16, 1942, and the D. F. C. and Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of Air Metal for outstanding achievements while participating in sixty or more operational flights from December 7, 1941, to January 1, 1943.

On the Home Front

On February 12, 1943, the dreaded telegram came to the Hall family in Crawford:



The story of war casualties never ends with the death of a soldier, especially when the notification to the family is that their loved one is “Missing in Action.” The hope that the “Missing in Action” report is an error, that the soldier is alive somewhere, is very resilient, surviving even when the time for hope is long past. This is underscored in the story of Earl Hall, since his family had been notified once before that he was “Missing in Action.” The first notification was an error on the part of the Army, but it did cause anguish and heartbreak among the family for a time. It also made hope more powerful, having lived through one mistake, the family was reluctant to lose hope too soon.

After notification of the “Missing in Action” status of Earl and his crew, the families, in Texas, Indiana, Illinois, New York, and the other home states, started an active correspondence to find out more about what had happened. They wrote to each other, offering hope, prayers, and encouragement. Their connection transcended geography, religion, or ethnic group. They were families in pain - they knew none of those barriers mattered - they wrote to each other and tried to help. They wrote to the War Department, seeking any hint of hope, or any detail of what had happened that fateful day. They wrote squadron mates for any scrap of information. Those efforts turned up anecdotal information, mostly based on memory, and open to question. The families dreamed and prayed for a miraculous return. Vestiges of hope persisted for many years.

In September 1944, Mary Olmstead wrote that her daughter had met a member of the ground crew of the 42nd BG. He told her that “the last they saw of Capt. Hall’s plane, it was seen gliding over the water near the New Hebrides Islands with its engines cut.” This anecdotal report is questionable, since neither of the probable mission destinations would result in the aircraft being so far south of Guadalcanal.

In a later letter, Mary Olmstead reported that her son, Jesse, kept diaries, and noted that they had been bombing “Munda” since December 14th, 1942. On January 28th, he noted they were to go to Guadalcanal the next day on a ten day mission. She also notes that “We do know that our boys were intercepted before they reached their objective, so of course they still had their full load of bombs on when they settled on the water which makes it very bad, as of course that made their plane that much heavier.”

The diary entries of Jesse Olmstead are the only narrative first-hand information we have from Earl or his crew members. Mary Olmstead copied a few in her letters:

Dec. 16th, Took off at 7.00A.M. Lead ship again of a 6 ship element. Dropped our bombs on Munda point and got jumped by Zeros. We lost one plane and Stevens got hit in the right shoulder. Landed at Guadel Canal, loaded and took off and bombed Munda point again.

Dec. 17th, Took off from Guadel Canal at 6.15 A. M. with 8 - 500 lb bombs. Five ships with a P-38 escort and some Grummans. Bombed Munda in New Georgia and landed at 9.30 A. M.

(In a side note, Mary Olmstead mentions that Jesse had his little finger shot off on December 16th, but “didn’t think anything of that, he was so mad at the Japs for smashing his radio.”

A “USAAF Chronology” on the World Wide Web (<http://paul.rutgers.edu/~mcgrew/wwii/usaf/>) for December 16th, 1942, reports the following action in the South Pacific:

SOUTH PACIFIC THEATRE OF OPERATIONS (Army Air Forces in the South Pacific Area) In the Solomons, B17s of the 5th Bombardment Group (Heavy) attack the Airstrip at Munda, New Georgia Island. They are met by 16 Zekes; the B-17s claim four Zekes with the loss of one B-17.

Note the agreement with the diary of Jesse Olmstead above.

On January 19th, Jesse wrote home that Capt. Hall was taking over as C. O. today, and that “Now maybe things will be a little better around here. I sure hope he keeps flying with us, though.” Lt. George Staples of Sherman, Captain Hall’s former navigator, extolled the flyer in a newspaper report, “as fine a soldier and by far the best pilot I have

ever known,” and noted the Captain Hall had once landed a B-17 after three motors caught on fire 150 feet above the ground.

On September 14, 1944, Lt. C. A. Oakley wrote details of Earl’s last mission from Air Force sources, noting they “departed from Guadalcanal on a bombardment mission to Munda on February 1, 1943,” and that “the circumstances surrounding its disappearance are unknown.” Lt. Oakley was apparently using the same data that was later put in the MARC report

In May, 1945, Frederick Bales, brother of one of the crew members, wrote with another version of the final mission and other note:

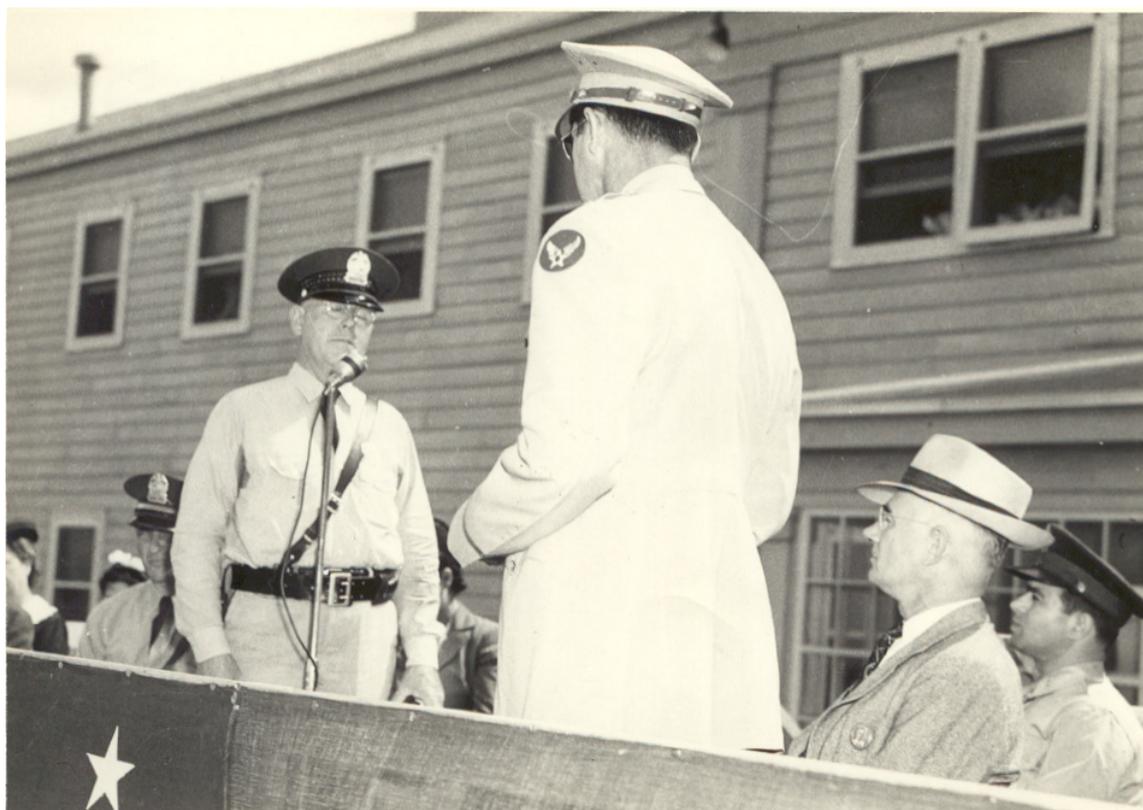
“Donica was told that the wing or flight of the 42nd to which your son and my brother were attached was regarded as the crack bombing outfit at that base. They were all veterans of many mission and some particularly hot battles. Thus, it was this flight which was picked for a specific mission in the Shortland Islands. They apparently ran into a Jap trap - a great flock of Zeros, at about 18000 feet.”

These anecdotal stories offered the families of the crew bits of information, not always accurate, but the best that could be done in the midst of an ongoing war. Some stories gave the families a bit of pride and comfort to grasp, and the tiniest glimmer of hope for their kin. That hope flickered on for years, against all odds. H. T. Hall did not give up until the late 1940s, and Earl’s sister, Edna Beth, recounted that for years she scanned crowds on the streets of Texas cities, hoping to find her lost brother.

They Also Served.

Earl's father, Halbert Theon Hall, was 54 years old when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Like many men, he asked if he could serve in the armed forces, and, like all the older men, was told no. He didn't accept that he had no role to play, so he became a guard at the Bluebonnet Ordnance Plant in McGregor, Texas, where he served throughout the war. He and the family always considered that this service freed one able-bodied soldier from guard duty and allowed one more soldier to go overseas to fight for freedom.

The clippings following report on the awards ceremony where H. T. Hall received the medals awarded to Earl Oxford Hall. The ceremony was May 20, 1943.



Halbert Theon Hall responded to the presentation of the medals with these comments, as recorded in his typed draft:

“I thank you, General Smith and Mr. Sanderson
My boy would be proud of the felling you have expressed.
If it is God's will that he had been taken we have the consolation of
knowing that he went like a real American and a true Texan.
I feel that I am only the temporary custodian of these medal and that he
will come back to wear them.
Thank you again.”

H. T. Hall Honored

For Son's Bravery

Medals Awarded Capt. Hall Presented Bluebonnet Guard



H. T. HALL

H. T. Hall, member of Bluebonnet Guard Department, was accorded a distinguished honor last Wednesday when he was presented with two medals awarded his son, Captain Earl O. Hall, Army Air Corps, listed as missing in action. Brigadier General Luther Smith, Commanding General of the 33rd Flying Training Wing, made the presentation in an impressive ceremony held in front of our Administration Building before hundreds of Mr. Hall's fellow employees and friends.

The BAAF Band assembled before the stand and furnished appropriate pre-service music. Two Guard shifts marched in to the accompaniment of martial music

and took stations facing the platform. The official party then emerged from the Administration Building and took places on the stage.

L. R. Sanderson, General Manager of Bluebonnet, spoke briefly in explaining the occasion. Lieutenant Doyle Armstrong, General Smith's Aide, then read the official orders and General Smith presented the medals to Mr. Hall. Mr. Hall thanked the officials for their kindness and said his boy would be proud of the sentiments they had expressed.

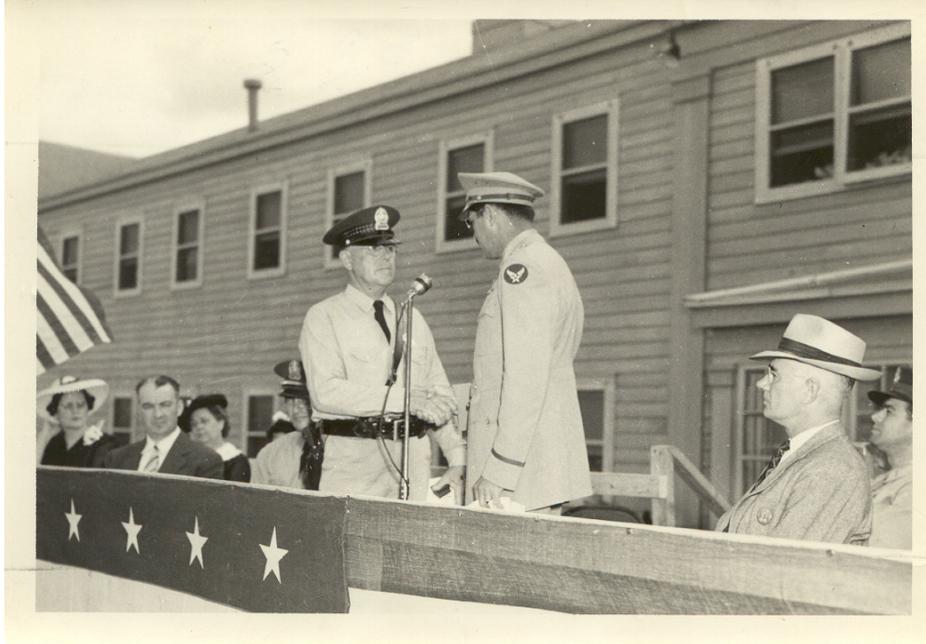
The brevity, sincerity and solemnity of the proceedings made them extremely impressive.

For valor in action, Captain Hall had been awarded the Silver Star (air medal) and the Oak Leaf Cluster. The former decoration was given for unusual bravery in destroying a Jap four-motored flying boat and beating off enemy fighter planes. The latter for the probable sinking of a Jap tanker.

These engagements were but two of many in which Captain Hall was engaged as commander of the 42nd Bombardment Squadron stationed in New Caledonia. This unit played an important part in our success in taking Guadalcanal. It was from an assignment in this area that Captain Hall failed to return several months ago.

Captain Hall was raised at Crawford, just a short distance from this Ordnance plant. His mother was Alice Oxford of Turnersville, Texas. He spent much time at his sister's home which was located on the acreage which is now a part of this reservation. He was an ex-student of Texas A. & M. College and a member of the Officer's Reserve Corps. He was commissioned in the Air Corps in April, 1941. He was at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, when the Japs made their sneak attack and participated in the gallant Battle of Midway.

Mr. Hall, the father, is confident that his son will return and that he is either a prisoner of war or safe on one of the numerous islands dotting that area.



Bluebonnet Ordinance Plant. H. T. Hall accepting awards. “Gen. Luther Smith, Commanding the Thirty-third army flying wing, is shown presenting to H. T. Hall, Father of Capt. Earl O. Hall of Crawford, the silver star medal with oak leaf cluster awarded Capt. Hall, army air corps, for bravery in action. The captain is now listed as missing in action in the south pacific area. His father is a guard at Bluebonnet Ordinance Plant in McGregor, where the ceremony took place Wednesday. Captain Hall is an A. and M. college honor graduate in 1934.” Edna Hall at left, unidentified man, Vela Homan in back, beside Edna Beth Hall.

They Also Served: Rosie the Riveter

Anyone who reads much about World War II has heard of “Rosie the Riveter,” the cover girl for how the women of America took up the jobs left by the men in uniform.

Mary Olmstead, in her letter of December 8, 1944, describes her daughter, sister of one of Earl’s crew members, and a real-life “Rosie:”

“Mr. Hall my baby she is 21 yrs. old works in a defense factory, she works nights from 7 P. M. until 5 A. M. six nights a week. She works in Chance-Vought Air Craft Plant making “Cosairs” they are a plane the Navy uses on their carriers as their wings fold up. She rivets, she rivets the main beam, and put out seven beams a night, she is pretty tired when she gets in each morning. She is such a little might only weighs 97 lbs. She is studying Pharmacy but gave it up to work for Uncle Sam.”

Bibliography

This brief listing notes sources of special interest to the families of this air crew, but are only a small sample of the books and articles written about the war in the South Pacific. A more comprehensive bibliography appears on the author's web site.

Grey Geese Calling: Pacific Air War History of the 11th Bombardment Group (H), 1940-1945. Seffner, FL: 11th Bombardment Group (H) Association, c1981. 492 p.

Haugland, Vern. *The AAF Against Japan.* New York: Harper, 1948. 515 p.

Pacific Counterblow: The 11th Bombardment Group and the 67th Fighter Squadron in the Battle for Guadalcanal: An Interim Report. Washington, D. C.: Headquarters, Army Air Forces, [1945?]. 56 p.

Salecker, Gene Eric. *Fortress Against the Sun: The B-17 Flying Fortress in the Pacific.* Conshohocken, PA: Combined Publishing, 2001. 464 p. (See p. 321)

Guadalcanal and the Origins of the Thirteenth Air Force, prepared by the Assistant Chief, Air Staff Intelligence Historical Division. s.l.: United States Army, July, 1945.

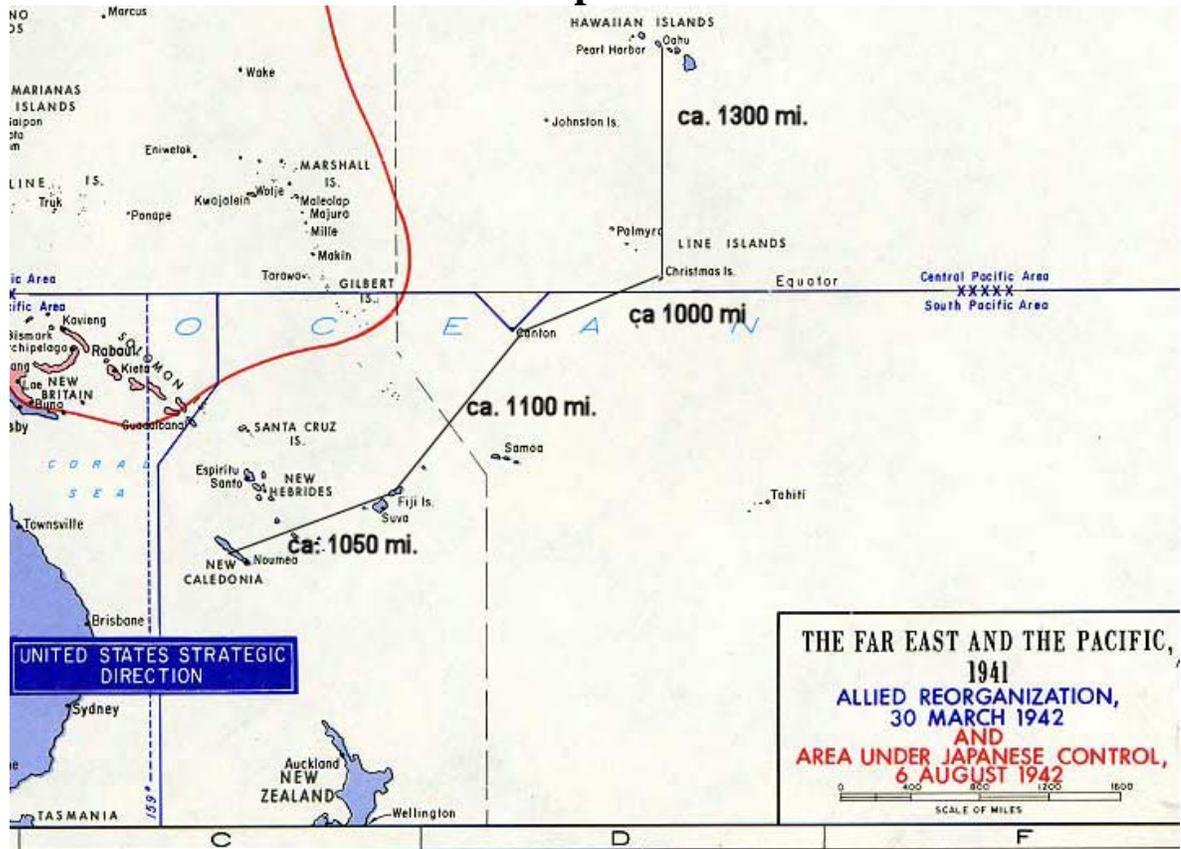
Rohfleisch, Kramer J. *Guadalcanal and the Origins of the Thirteenth Air Force,*. [Washington, DC].: United States Army, Assistant Chief, Air Staff Intelligence Historical Division, July, 1945, p. 167. 280 p.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

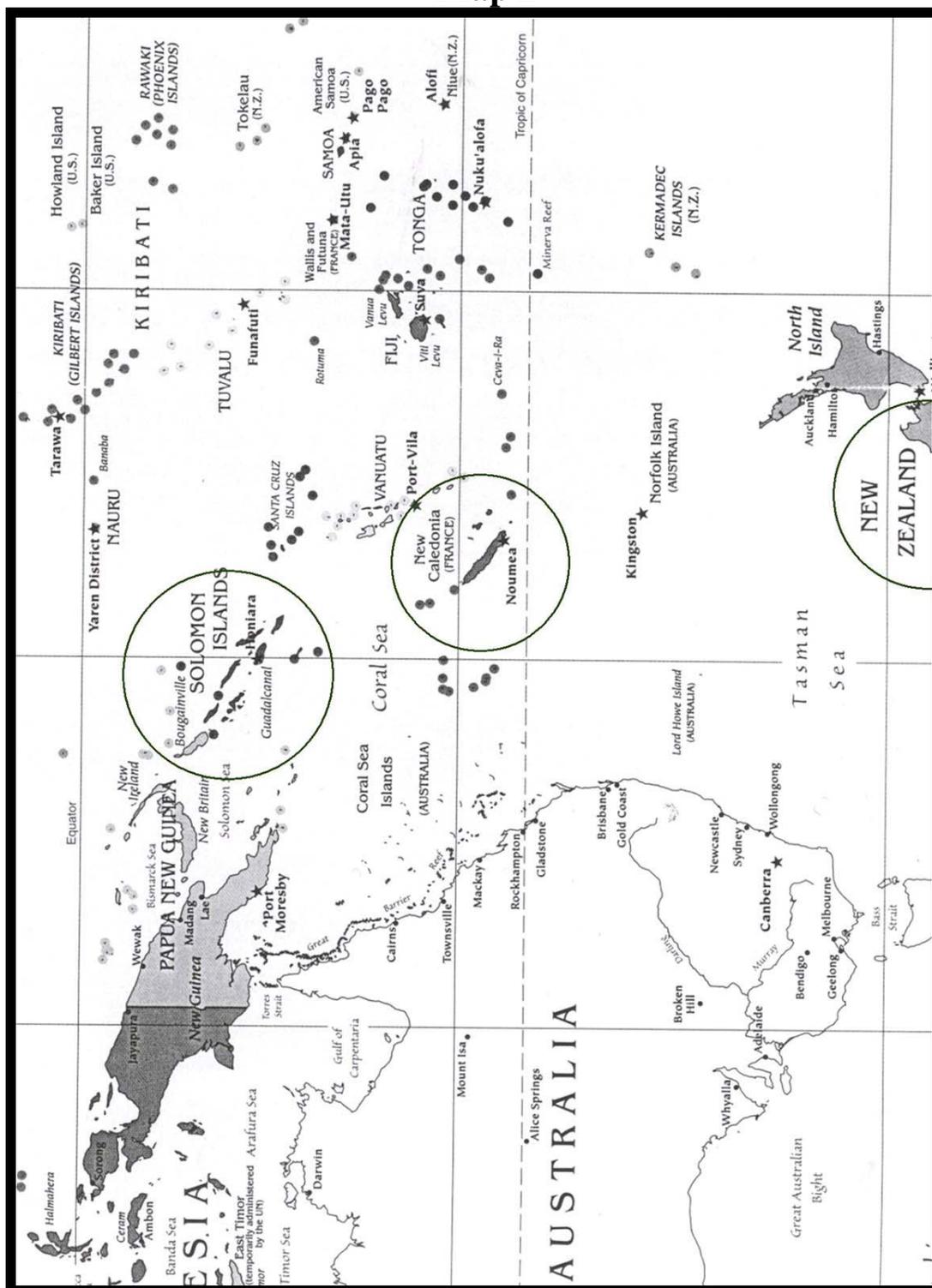
Maps of the South Pacific Area

Map 1



The transfer from Hawaii to the South Pacific was a challenge in its own right. As shown on this map, the flights were long, mostly over open water, with crews who did not have extensive experience as either pilots or navigators. The four flights were long. Hawaii to Christmas Island was nine hours; Christmas Island to Canton was six and one-half hours; Canton to Fiji was seven hours thirty-five minutes, and Fiji to New Caledonia was six and one-half hours.

Map 2



The South Pacific, showing the relationships of the various islands.

The Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, and New Zealand are circled for ease of location. Australia is obvious. Earl was sent to New Zealand with his crew for R and R from time to time. From Earl's base on New Caledonia to Henderson Field was about 1,000 miles.

South Pacific Area

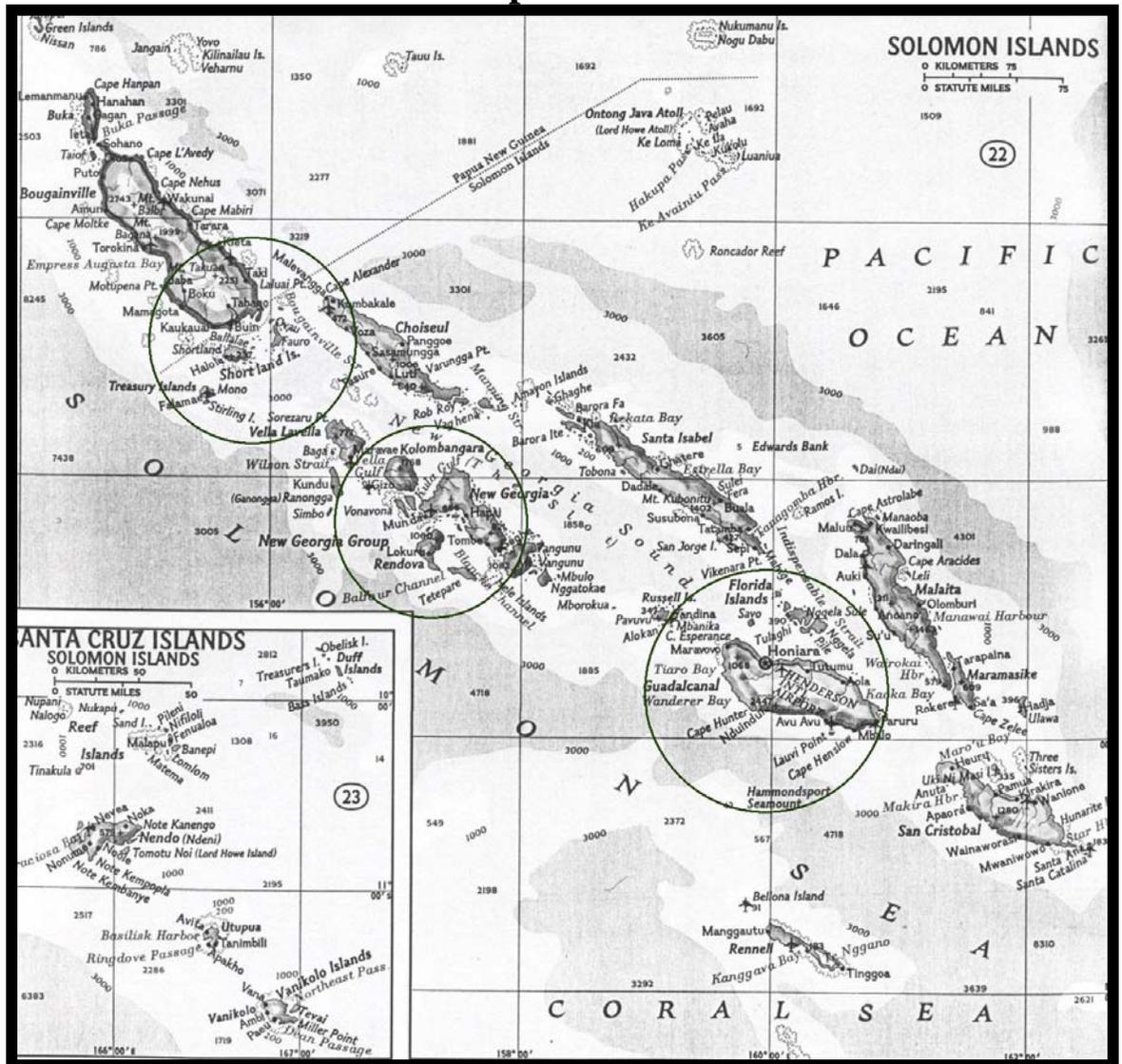
Map 3



Plaines des Gaiacs airfield location, New Caledonia, South Pacific

Plaines des Gaiacs (better known as P. D.G.) was a very large Army Air Force base on New Caledonia, on Nepoui Bay on the west shore 130 miles from Noumea. The maintenance crews for the 42nd bomber squadron were stationed there. Planes flew one to three week bombing missions, then returned to Plaines des Gaiacs for maintenance and servicing. Also in the area, within a 30 mile range, was the 109th Field Hospital (sometimes called the 9th Field Hospital), the unit Mary Tabitha Johnson served with. I have found little information about either the Plaines des Gaiacs base, or the 109th Field Hospital and its location.

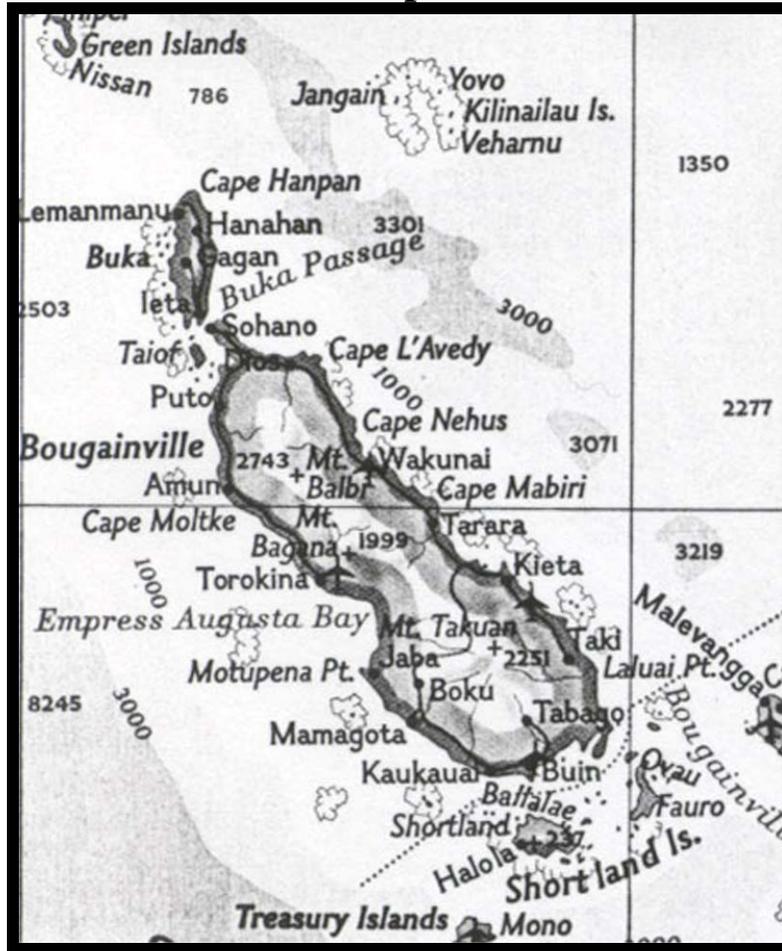
Map 4



The Solomon Islands-South Pacific

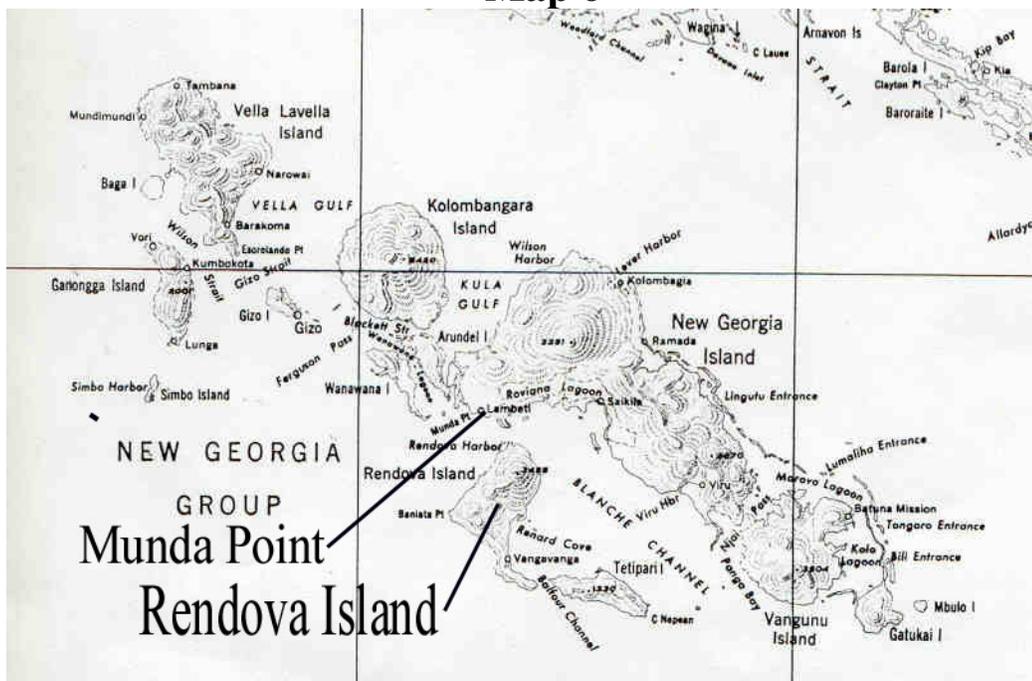
This map shows the Solomon Islands and the relationships between the possible targets identified for the February 1st mission. Those possible targets are: Munda Point on New Georgia Island; Rendova Island, just across the strait from Munda Point; Bougainville; and the Shortland Islands, just off the south tip of Bougainville (Identified with circles, as is Henderson Field on Guadalcanal.) The definitive mission report confirms Shortland Harbor on Shortland Island as the target.

Map 5



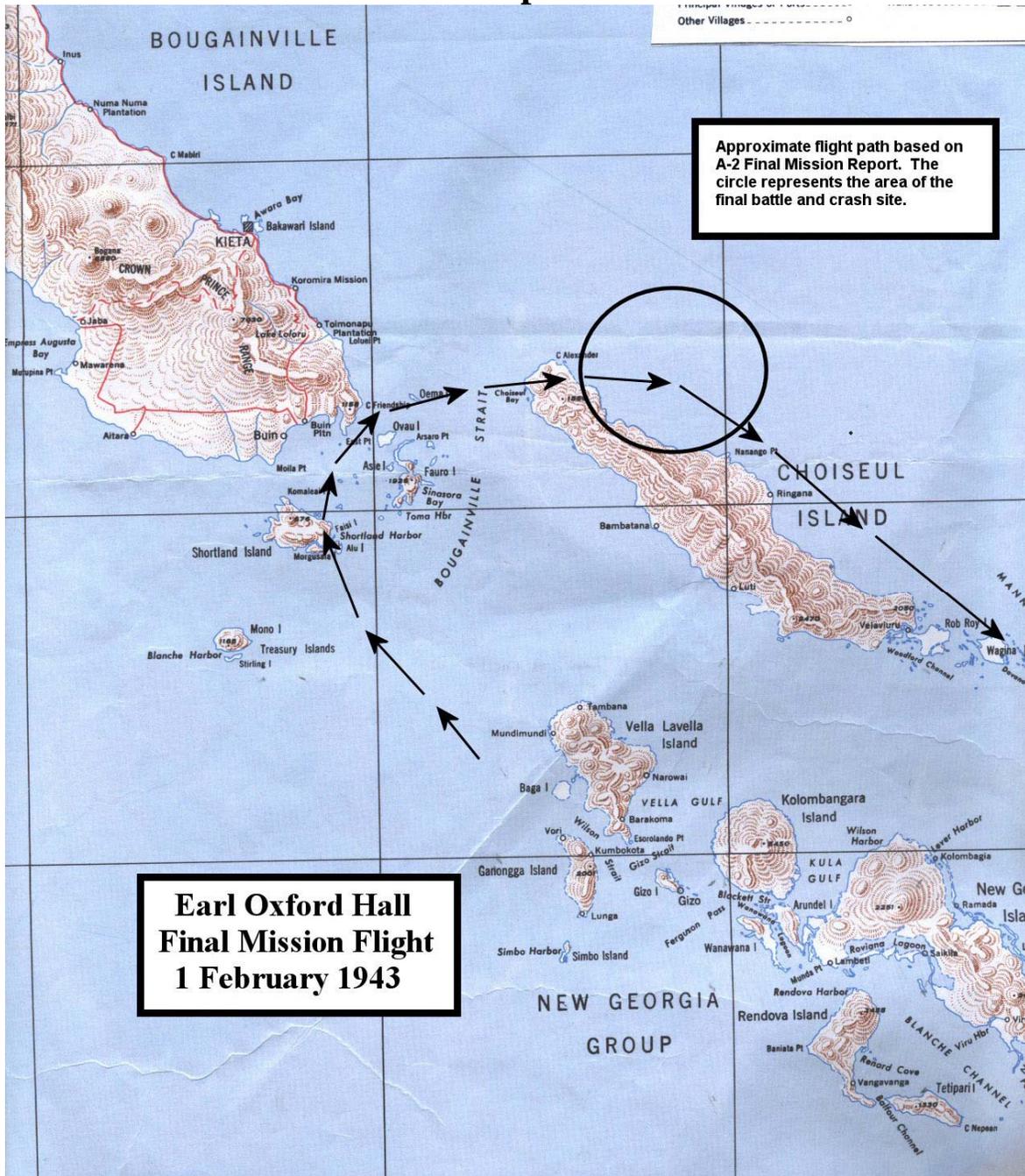
Bougainville Island and the Shortland Islands . Shipping was a primary target, and the tip of Bougainville was a regular target area for the 42nd Boming Group. This shows how close Bougainville and the Shortland Islands are, so the separate reports naming these as the target are understandable.

Map 6



The New Georgia Island Group was a frequent target area for the 42nd bomber squadron. They bombed Munda Point airdrome regularly, and no doubt bombed the fortifications on Rendova Island. Both Munda Point and Rendova Island were invaded and captured in 1943. At least one book details the trek across New Georgia to attack and capture Munda Point. Some accounts place Earl's last mission in the Munda Point area; others place the mission target as the Shortland Islands area on the southern tip of Bougainville.

Map 7



1 February 1943 mission track, derived from the A-2 Intelligence Report, Appendix E. From that report, we know the target was Shortland Harbor, and that the second flight element of four planes turned right, flew near East Point of Bougainville, and set a course for West Cape, Choiseul Island, and on down the island toward Ringana. The circle encompasses the most likely area where the Hall/Castro plane was shot down

Appendices

The following appendices contain various items of interest to the history of the war in the South Pacific, the 42nd Bombardment Squadron, and to families of the crew. They include photographs, contemporary family documents, newspaper reports, and related items. Of particular note is Appendix 17, the A-2 Periodic Report compiled by Air Force Intelligence, with details of the final mission of the crew of aircraft 41-9151, and Appendix 18, 42nd Bombardment Squadron (H) Missions: 18 July 1942 – 1 February 1943, followed by The Flight Log of First Lieutenant Joaquin Castro.

Appendix 2

The Life of Earl Hall

By Vela Hall Evans

Earl Oxford Hall was born to Halbert Theon Hall and Alice Barbara Oxford October 25, 1913 in Coryell County, Texas, near Mosheim and Coryell City. He was a very active child. Mama and Dad put the hook near the top of the door so he couldn't unhook the door so he could run off to Mrs. Brashear's house across the road and in a pasture behind some trees.

Earl learned to drive the Model T Ford when he was about seven. People said "There goes a car without a driver," he was so little. Dad put up a basketball goal on the front of the garage and Earl would spend hours playing there. He attended the two-room school at Tonk Creek until he was in the eighth grade. Then he transferred to Crawford where he graduated a valedictorian of his class in 1930.

Earl made a good hand on the farm, helping to do whatever was needed. When Earl was still little, he would help in the fields. Grain harvesting was with a "Binder" pulled by a six-mule team. Earl would ride the lead mule and guide the team pulling the binder through the fields.

He chose to go to Texas A&M the next fall. Dad and the rest of the family moved him to A&M, but after that when he came home and went back, he did what was called "thumbing it." He never seemed to have much trouble catching a ride. He went to A&M four years and was in the Corps of Cadets. When he got his Senior boots and wore them home, Dad would get up out of bed at night when Earl came in from a date and pull those boots off of him.

One summer, he was at Camp Bullis at San Antonio for training while he was still at A&M.

After his days at A&M were over, with a degree in Electrical Engineering, he went to work for Texas Power and Light in Dallas, then transferred to Waco. Just before he was 27 years old (27 was the age limit for volunteering for the service), he volunteered for the Army Air Force.

He trained in California. He came home for a week after training, before he was sent to Hawaii. He was at Hickam Field in Hawaii when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Later, he was stationed on the island of New Caledonia, but flew all over the South Pacific. He was commander of his squadron, got several medals and promotions.

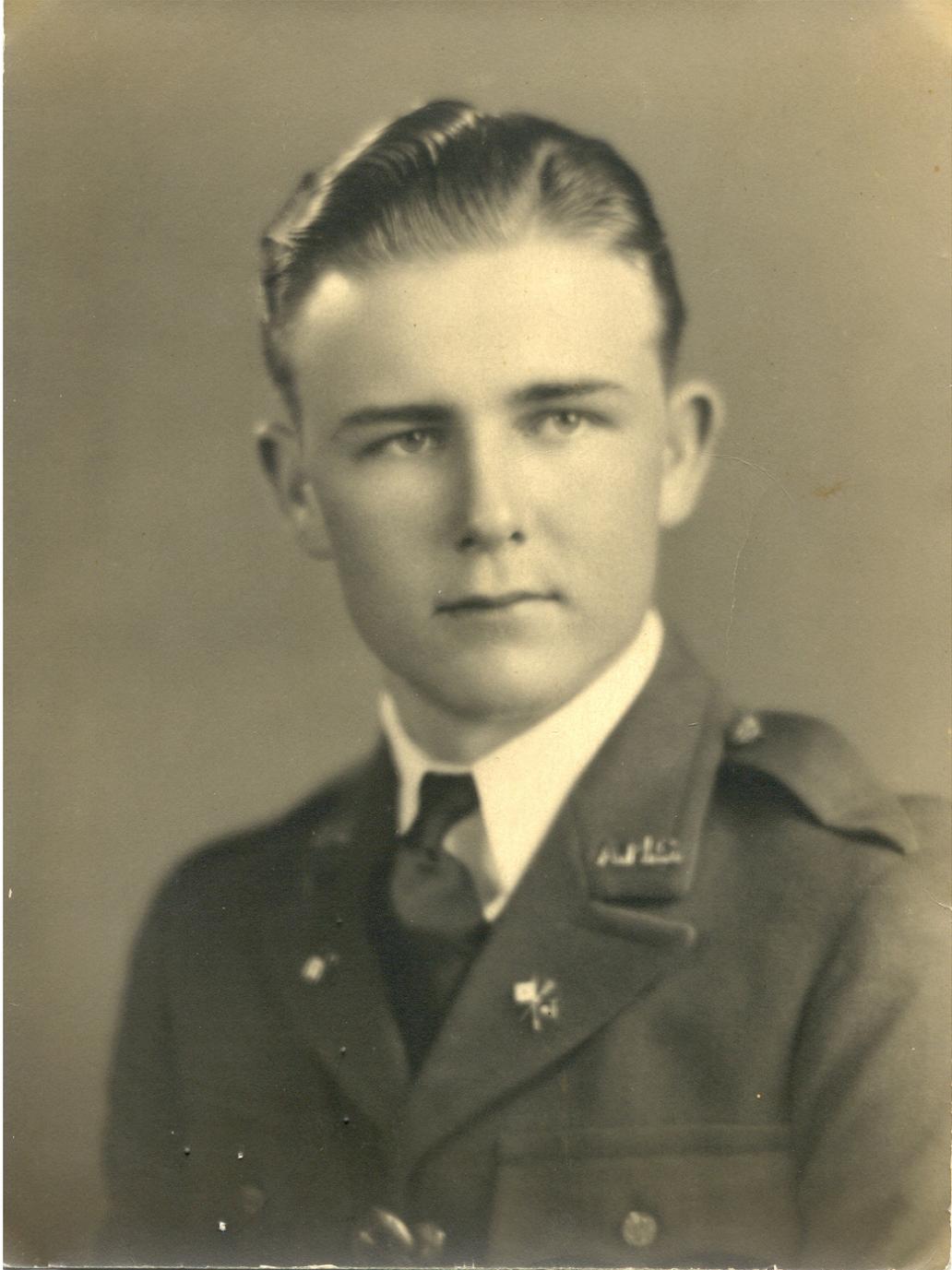
He was piloting the lead plane of his flight that was on a mission when he was killed. Some of the planes were not shot down, and returned to base, but his was shot down and none of the bodies were ever recovered.

He had earned the rank of Major just before his final flight, but had not flown to the headquarters to receive the medal and Maple Leaves.

Dad was working at the Bluebonnet Shell Loading Plant at McGregor and there was a service at the plant in memory of Earl, and honoring Dad, too.

Earl's body was never recovered, but Dad had a gray granite stone put up next to Earl's mother's grave in Gatesville cemetery. The stone has Earl's name and the names of all his crew members, their rank, and their home town. Another monument in the Philippines bears Earl's name.

Appendix 3



Earl at Texas A&M College, 1932.

Appendix 5



Studio portrait of Earl, taken in Hawaii, probably in 1941.

Appendix 6



**Flight training graduating class, California.
Earl is at the left end, second row up, circled in ink.**

Appendix 7

Short Biography of Earl Oxford Hall - Date and Author unknown

Captain Earl Oxford Hall (0-325099)

Earl Oxford Hall was born October 26,, 1913, near Coryell City, Coryell County, Texas. His father Halbert Theon Hall, resides at Crawford Texas* His mother, the former Miss Alice S. Oxford of Turnersville, Texas, passed away when Earl was fourteen years of age. Shortly before his mother's death, Earl united with the Methodist Church and was a very active Christian.

Earl received his scholastic training at Crawford,, Texas,, and graduated with honors, having been valedictorian of his class. Baseball and basketball were his favorite sports, and he very good at either game. Football was not available during his high school -training. In September, 1930, Earl enrolled in Texas A & M College at College Station, Texas, where he graduated in 1934, again with honors. Upon graduation he received a commission of 2nd Lieutenant in the Reserves of the United States Army.

From 1934 until September 1, 1940, Earl was employed by the Texas Power and Light Company in Dallas, Tyler, and Waco, Texas.

On September 11, 1940, Earl enlisted in the Army Air Corps as a cadet. He received his primary training at Santa Maria, California; basic training at Moffett Field and Bakersfield, California, and advanced training at Stockton, California, where he received his wings April 25, 1941.

Following a short visit home after was he had received his wings, Lt. Hall was sent to Hawaii and was stationed at Hickam Field. He was still there on December 7, 1941, at the time of the Jap attack there. Although he escaped serious injury, his plane, a B-18, was destroyed early in the fight. He was then assigned to a Flying Fortress, which he flew from December 7, 1941, until February 1, 1943.

April 1, 1942, he received his promotion to Captain. He was in charge of the 42nd Bombardment Squadron.

Captain Hall remained in Hawaii until June 1, 1942, when he flew to Midway and took part in the battle there on June 3 and 4, 1942. On July 19, 1942, Captain Hall, with his crew and several others, flew to New Caledonia. He went from there on to New Hebrides Islands, the Solomon Islands and then to the New Georgia Islands. His last bombing mission was a Jap base on Rendova Island, February 1, 1943, from which place he never returned.

Captain Hall was decorated five times by Major General Harmon. He received the Silver Star for shooting down a four-motored Japanese flying boat near Gizo Island on August 26, 1942. On May 19, 1943, the following medals were presented to his father, Halbert Theon Hall, at the Bluebonnet Ordnance Plant in McGregor, Texas. He was awarded the Air Medal for destruction of an enemy tanker near Tonolei on December 10, 1942, the Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of a Silver Star for protecting a disabled plane in a formation of six that were being attacked by sixteen Zeros on December 16, 1942, and the D. F. C. and Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of Air Metal for outstanding achievements while participating in sixty or more operational flights from December 7, 1941, to January 10, 1943.

Appendix 8

Earl Oxford Hall - Family Memories -2003

Ray Anderson

Earl loved fruit salad. He always went back for seconds of fruit salad.

I remember Earl and Margaret at the farm, with Earl trying to teach Margaret to ride a bike.

Earl worked to pay for A&M, and he paid for it all. He picked cotton to earn money, and was a good hand. He picked very fast.

I remember him resting on the sidewalk, laying down reading a book, laughing out loud at what he was reading.

When I was in school, I was chosen by Mrs. Canady to distribute sugar ration books. She said Earl was the only one to graduate from Crawford as an all-round student, and I was picked because I was kin to him.

I was a senior in high school when Theon came to the house with the telegram. Theon and Tilman hugged and cried.

Sarah Abel

I must have been about four years old when I first remember that Mama, Henry and I visited Uncle Theon, Aunt Alice, Earl and Vela. We made a trip to Turnersville to visit our Grandfather Oxford. He lived alone, as our Grandmother had died. Earl and Vela told Henry and I that the wash stand in the hall contained candy in the drawer, but we were not to ask. We were not disappointed as our grandfather gave us a share of stick candy. Earl had a bat and ball, probably the first I had ever seen. We played with them in the yard.

Earl was probably about 13, but I thought he was grown. I always looked up to him, so to speak. He was my idol. He would carry me on his shoulders - holding my legs and me on his head.

I remember Earl loved to read and had a lot of Zane Grey books. He would laugh out loud a lot while reading his books and also comics. Faintly, I recall his owning a banjo and harmonica. They also owned a kaleidoscope to view scenes on postcards.

In 1929, we moved to Crawford from Flat, Texas, and Mama started teaching in the school. Earl was a senior in high school. He played basketball very well. He was Valedictorian of his class.

We were in a program at the school, in a skit depicting a family traveling. Earl, Jesse Wallace, Jack Barnard and I were the family. The car consisted of chairs arranged on stage as seats in the car. Of course, the kids misbehaved and pulled a lot of capers. The good

thing coming out of it was we got to go to a picnic in Cameron Park in Waco with all the ones in the program. Jack Barnard and I rode with Earl and Halon Bunyard. That night we passed near the Waco Airport and saw the beacon light on top. Jack asked what made it turn. They assured us there was a man on top turning it.

When I was eleven years old I joined the church under the tabernacle at Crawford, at a Methodist revival. Earl was the only relative present that night. He was there with a girl friend. Mama had to be home with our grandmother. Anyway, I was pleased at Earl's presence.

After Earl graduated from high school and went to A&M, we went with Uncle Theon and Miss Edna to Parade Day. I was so proud to see Earl in his uniform and shiny boots leading his company. Out in front - GREAT!

When he graduated from college and was seeking employment, he spent a summer in Crawford at a temporary job. He stayed with us some and came to lunch at our house. He gave me the job of shining his shoes. He gave me a nickel. That bought a lot of penny candy. Anyway, I'm sure his shoes didn't compare with the shine he was used to on his senior boots.

He worked for Texas Power and Light in Waco at the time I graduated from high school. He gave me a gold cross necklace for a graduation present. I still have it, treasure and wear it.

Appendix 9

MISSING IN ACTION

When the last gun stands in silence,
And the last war flag is furled,
When sky ships fly the paths of peace
In a sweeter, cleaner world;

When history's page is finished
And the score is paid at last,
When gallant deeds of courage
Are part of a glorious past;
We will still be looking for him-
The lad who went out in the fight-
Waiting to feel his hand again
And to hear his step in the night.

They say he is "missing in action",
This lad we loved so well;
Our boy who became a hero
In the heart of battle's hell.

But waiting, and ever praying
We shall go with our heads held high
As we look toward the days before us
With a hope that will not die.

For though he has followed the pathway
Our valiant dead have trod,
We know he is marching in triumph
On the golden streets of God!

His task has been gloriously finished;
He gave all that he had to give;
And our hearts lift high to remember
He died that we might live.

Some day when we meet over Jordan
We will stand together at last
And know that the battle is ended
And the tears and the partings are past!

*In memory of Capt. Earl O. Hall, who gave His life in the
South Pacific in World War II (written by Maude Rhoads, a
cousin)*

Appendix 10

MEMORIAL CEREMONIES DEDICATE GRANITE TABLET TO HERO DEAD

At a plot made sacred in the Gatesville Cemetery last week by the placing of a memorial tablet in honor of Major Earl Oxford Hall, hero flier who went down to an unknown grave in the Southwest Pacific, an impressive service was held at 3 Sunday afternoon.

The inscription on the granite monument also honors the crew lost with Major Hall, the pilot, when the ship was missing in action, February 1, 1943. The list reads: Major Earl Oxford Hall, pilot; First Lt. J. Castro, Texas, Co-pilot; Second Lt. F. N. Stern, Jr., Illinois, Navigator; S-Sgt. J. W. Wales, Indiana, Engineer; T-Sgt. Paul Adler, Massachusetts, W. Gunner; S-Sgt. F. S. Banasiak, Massachusetts, Bombardier; S-Sgt. J. C. Stephens, Jr., Colorado, R. Man, Sgt. J. N. Olmstead, Connecticut, R. Man.; Sgt. M. T. Grady, New York, Gunner.

Lending indescribable beauty to the scene at the hour of the service were the profusion of flowers in floral emblems, tributes to the young hero from sections of this country. Hymns were sung and fitting the occasion were the addresses by the Rev. Plez Todd of Crawford, and the Rev. Arthur Loper of Waco. A large group of Gatesville friends and others from a distance were in attendance, coming to honor the dead and to be with the father H. T. Hall, of the brave lad and his sisters, Mrs. W. R. Alexander of Roscoe,

Texas, and Miss Edna Beth Hall and the young brother, Weldon Hall of Crawford, also the uncle, Dr. T. M. Hall and wife of this city.

The life story of Earl Oxford Hall is that he was born October 25, 1913, near Gatesville, to H. T. Hall and Mrs. Alice Oxford Hall. The mother was lost to him through death when he was a child. He received his public schooling in Crawford where he graduated as valedictorian of his class.

Graduated from A & M in 1934 as an electrical engineer, and worked for Texas Power and Light Co., for the next six years prior to joining the air force in 1940, was at Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941 when the Japs made the sneak attack. In July of 1942 he flew to the Southwest Pacific and flew many missions and was awarded several medals. On the fatal day he flew away from Henderson Field, Guadalcanal and probably went down in the ocean Southwest of New Georgia Island.

Earl Oxford was converted and united with the Methodist Church when he was fourteen years of age, and was faithful in Christian duty and loyal to his vows to the end of his life.

The bereaved family and mourning friends will keep in their hearts this closing tribute written on the tablet, "How sleep the brave who sink to rest; By all their country's wishes bless'd".

OLD NEWSPAPER

McGregor Mirror (?), 1946.

Appendix 11



Memorial Stone at the Gatesville, Texas Cemetery,
intersection of Highways 36 and 84.

Appendix 12

Oxford Sidebar - World War II

There are always sidebars to history that go unnoticed and unreported. This clipping shows a sidebar that was reported, and is an interesting bit of family connection. The Oxfords were related to Earl through his mother. The effects of war touch many people many ways. This family had to leave Japan, and in the last paragraph, had to worry about the safety of their niece, Elizabeth Oxford Plowman, who had been in the Philippines, with no word from her since February 1942.

Lived Among Japanese

Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Oxford, former missionaries to Japan and their son, Wayne, 18, who plans to enter the Army as an interpreter.

—Star-Telegram Photo.



Some Japs Still Grateful for U. S. Aid in Quake

Twenty years ago Wednesday, American strings were loosened and American pity was touched when earthquakes rocked Japan and thousands died amid tumbling buildings and the flames that swept flimsy homes.

"There still are thousands among the masses of Japan who are grateful for the millions of dollars, immense quantities of food, clothing and medical supplies Americans poured into Japan for relief," says J. S. Oxford, 2220 Lincoln, returned missionary-teacher who was living in Kobe at the time.

But that does not mean, Oxford warned, that America can delay now or temper its preparations for a knockout blow that will crush the military regime in control of the Nipponese.

Japan is three times as strong

today as it was two years ago, Oxford believes, and he bases that judgment upon observation of Japanese life and character during the 30 years he served as principal of the Palmore Institute in Kobe, an English school for native students.

As he sees the situation, the only hope for lasting peace with Japan will be to rebuild the country on the foundations of Christianity laid by missionaries, which he believes are deeply rooted although temporarily trodden underfoot by the ruthless measures of the war lords.

Japan will be difficult to defeat, he cautioned, because its people have been inured to natural hardships and have shown determination in rebuilding after repeated

(TURN TO PAGE 4, COLUMN 6).

Some Japs Still Grateful for U. S. Aid in Quake

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

earthquakes, tidal waves and fires have devastated their islands.

Oxford was living in Kobe and escaped the effects of the greatest earthquake of modern times which rocked Tokio, Yokohama, Nagoya and hundreds of nearby villages on Sept. 1, 1923. The earth tremors, fire and tidal waves killed 99,000 persons and left 103,000 injured. Again, in 1938, disastrous floods from the mountains above Kobe washed trees and stones within a block of the Oxford home, killed 10,000 persons and destroyed many buildings.

Many Japanese acquaintances with whom Oxford talked before he left the country in March, 1941, were bitterly opposed to fighting the United States. They believed, he said, that war would mean "the total defeat of Japan," and business interests especially were unanimously opposed to the conflict. Japanese firms had enjoyed their greatest prosperity during the American depression, when they flooded the world with cheap goods.

Mrs. Oxford and their son, Wayne, now 18, returned to America in 1940. Wayne, born in Los Angeles, taken to Japan at six months old and a veteran of eight Pacific crossings, is now awaiting a call by the Army intelligence service to enter a refresher course in the Japanese language at the University of Michigan.

His parents will leave in October for San Jose, Costa Rica, where Oxford will teach in the Pan-American Institute. The elder Oxford was graduated in 1904 from Daniel Baker College in Brownwood and was director of the college's commercial department for three years before entering Vanderbilt University. After completing his studies there, he taught for a time in Santiago, Chile, but returned to Fort Worth in 1910 and was married. He and his bride went to Japan the same year.

The Oxfords are worried over the fate of Oxford's niece, Elizabeth Oxford Plowman, who was in the Philippines when the last word was received from her in February, 1942. She had served as Oxford's secretary in Japan and moved to the Philippines after her marriage to an engineer from Houston.

Appendix 13

Men of the 11th Bomber Group wrote millions of words in letters dispatched from the Solomons. They might all be summed up in a verse written by an 11th bard whose name has been lost in the whirlpool of time. It was recited in a thousand tents and sung, to the tune of "Casey Jones," in a thousand war weary B-17s by men on endless missions.

Talking Blues

Back on Oahu in '42
Eager beavers, me and you.
Guadalcanal - '43
Reluctant dragons, you and me.

Espiritu Santo, Fiji and all.
We're behind it - the big 8-ball.
Lizards, flies, mosquitoes, too,
Corned beef hash and G.I. stew.

Eight hundred miles out to sea,
Started to sweat that No. 3;
That goes out, we come down,
Nothing but ocean all around.

Here I sit, tear in my eye,
Tired of living, too young to die,
Going to Auckland pretty soon,
Get me a woman - howl at the moon.

Striking force out to sea,
Sighted transport - him or me?
We made our run, AA got rough,
On the way home, Zeroes got tough.

Pilots can fly, gunners can gun,
Bombardiers busy during the run.
Navigator's got a gun - he shoots too.
Damn co-pilot's got nothing to do.

Up at Buka the other day
Fifteen Zeroes came out to play
Down in the turret, both guns jammed
Started to see that promised land.

Six months of action,
Where's my relief?
Sweating each mission
May end in grief
Waiting for a ship that never comes in,
Waiting for a chance to go and sin.

If I get back no more I'll roam.
I'll see my woman and stay at home.
Don't give a damn what you people do.
But, boy, my flying days are through!

Appendix 14

The United States Army Air Forces Web Page

Note: Most of this data is from the Office of Air Force History's [Air Force Combat Units of World War II](#) by Maurer Maurer, first published in 1961. There will be errors and omissions, please submit corrections with source through the [Group updates page](#).

Group	Group Type	Motto
11th	Bombardment (Heavy)	<i>Progressio Sine Timore Aut Praejudicio - Progress without Fear or Prejudice</i>

Squadrons

Sqdn	Code	Type	Dates	Comment
14th		Bombardment	1940-1941	
26th		Bombardment	1940-1948	
42nd		Bombardment	1940-1948	
98th		Bombardment	1941-1948	
431st		Bombardment	1942-1946	

Aircraft

Type	Name	Manufacturer
B-17	Flying Fortress	Boeing
B-24	Liberator	Consolidated

History

Constituted as 11th Observation Group in 1933. Redesignated 11th Bombardment Group (Medium) in 1938. Activated in Hawaii on 1 Feb 1940. Redesignated 11th Bombardment Group (Heavy) in Nov 1940. Assigned to Seventh AF in Feb 1942. Trained with B-18's; received B-17's for operations. Flew patrol and search missions off Hawaii after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Moved to the New Hebrides in Jul 1942. Became part of Thirteenth AF. Struck airfields, supply dumps, ships, docks, troop positions, and other objectives in the South Pacific, Jul-Nov 1942, and received a DUC for those operations. Continued operations, attacking Japanese airfields, installations, and shipping in the Solomons, until late in Mar 1943. Returned to Hawaii, reassigned to Seventh AF, and trained with B-24's. Resumed combat in Nov 1943 and participated in the Allied offensive through the Gilberts, Marshalls, and Marianas, while operating from Funafuti, Tarawa, and Kwajalein. Moved to Guam in Oct 1944 and attacked shipping and airfields in the Volcano and Bonin Islands. Moved to Okinawa in Jul 1945 to take part in the final phases of the air offensive against Japan, bombing railways, airfields, and harbor facilities on Kyushu and striking airfields in China. After the war, flew reconnaissance and surveillance missions to China and ferried liberated prisoners of war from Okinawa to Luzon. Remained in the theater as part of Far East Air Forces but had no personnel assigned after mid-Dec 1945 when the group was transferred to the Philippines. Redesignated 11th Bombardment Group (Very Heavy) in Apr 1946. Transferred to Guam in May 1946, remanned, and equipped with B-29's. Terminated training and operations in Oct 1946. Inactivated on Guam on 20 Oct 1948.

Redesignated 11th Bombardment Group (Heavy). Activated in the US on 1 Dec 1948. Assigned to Strategic Air Command. Equipped with B-36 aircraft. Inactivated on 16 Jun 1952.

Campaigns

China Offensive, Air Offensive, Japan, Western Pacific, Ryukyus, Guadalcanal, Northern Solomons, Central Pacific, Eastern Mandates,

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation: South Pacific, 31 Jul-30 Nov Distinguished Unit Citation: South Pacific, 31 Jul-30 Nov 1942

Insignia

Shield: Azure (Air Force blue), on a bend or (Air Force yellow), three grey geese volant proper (in their natural colors). Crest: On a wreath or and azure a grey goose proper with wings displayed and inverted. (Approved 11 Jun 1941.)

Appendix 15

Texas A&M College - Military Service Information Project

After WWII, and following the declaration of death of all missing troops in 1946, Texas A&M College undertook a project to confirm the service of all Texas A&M students in the war. The following pages are the record Texas A&M created regarding Earl Oxford Hall. The letters from H. T. Hall had never been seen by the family.

1934

^{Major}
~~CAPT.~~ EARL O. HALL B.S. E.E. Attended '30-'34
McGregor, Texas

Officially declared dead on January 11, 1946, after having been reported missing in action since February 1, 1943. Entered Air Forces in Sept., 1940, and received his wings and commission at Stockton Field, Calif., in April, 1941. Was then sent to Hickam Field, Hawaii, and remained there until June, 1942, when he left to take part in the Battle of Midway. Participated in numerous missions and had received many decoration, among them the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Survived by father, H. T. Hall, Crawford, Texas; two sisters, Mrs. W. R. Alexander, Roscoe, Texas, and Miss Edna Hall, Crawford; and one brother, Weldon Hall, Crawford.

Info. from attached letter from father 3-13-46.

*Following information from father Feb. 1951:
Father - Hallert T. Hall, Box 285, Crawford, Texas.
Was not married.*

Major Earl A. Hall AT

Crawford, Texas.
April 13, 1946

EE-BS.
30-34

Mr. E.E. McQuillen,
College Station, Tex.

Had him "MIA"

AW

Dear Mr. McQuillen;

Your letter came to day and I very much regret to tell you that the story you heard is true, as you know Earl was reported missing on Feb. 1st 43, then on Jan. 11th this year was officially declared gone.

I will gladly give you any information you want about him he was a very dear boy to us and was so fond of the college, he was willing to give his all for the freedom of our nation, and his name will always be a sweet memory to all of us who loved him and mourn his untimely going.

I will give you the information as I understand you want it, if I give a longer story than you want then strike some out, or if you want more please ask for it.

Earl went into the Army Air Force Sept. 11th 40, trained in Calif. received his wings and commission April 25th 41, at Stockton field Calif.

After a short visit home he was sent to Hickam field Hawaii, was there Dec. 7th at the time of the sneak attack.

He remained at Hickam field until June 1st. then flew to Midway and took part in that battle June 4th, 42.

Dec. 29th 41 he was promoted to 1st Leut. April 1st 42 to Captain, on July 19th he and several others flew flying fortress's to New Caladonia near Austrillia, stayed there a short time then to the new Herberdes Islands, the last of Nov. he arrived at Guadalcanal, from these places he received many medals for gallantry, in these attacks his plane was shot up some and on one occassion two planes that were accompanying were badly shot up and one made a crash landing but the crew was rescued, it was the protection of these planes that got for him the D.F.C.

Earl's survivors are myself two sisters Mrs. W.K. Alexander Roscoe, Texas. and Miss Edna Beth Hall Crawford, Texas. one brother Weldon Hall Crawford, Tex. and one niece little Elizabeth Alice Alexander of Roscoe.

He was Promoted to Maj. in late 42 and given command of the 42nd, bombardment Squadron however was reported missing as Capt. but in all communications the War Dept. refer to him as Major.

Mr. McQuillen Earl had a policy that was connected with the exstudents of A. & M. in some way, it cost him more than 100.00 per year, besides ins. it was building up some kind of fund for benefit of exstudents or an asset to him, I do not know which, he may have dropped this policy after he went in service but it would have some value if could be found

employment
Policy?

If you can give me any Information as to what co, or cos.
write a simular insurance I would thank you very much.

I thank you very much for your interest in Earl and the-we
work you are doing and again I say if you want other informat-
ation I can supply I will gladly do so.

Sincerely Yours,

H. G. Hall.

Death

Crawford, Texas.

July 28/ 1946.

Mr. E. E. McQuillan,
College Station, Texas.

Dear Mr. McQuillen;

Yesterday I received a letter from Mrs. Vela Homan in which she enclosed a letter from you, asking for information about ^{Maj. Earl D. Hall} Earl, and stating that you had written me at McGregor, it surely did not reach me for I have tried to give every one what information they have ask for about him, I am very sorry that I have over looked this or failed to receive the request which ever it might be.

I have a letter from you written April 16 telling me about the Easter program, we heard it and enjoyed it very much and thank you so much for letting us know about it.

As I said before I will gladly give any information desired, will state here that the Official of death was Jan. 11th of this year, I will gladly write you the story of his life if you desire it, beginning in boy hood days ; entrance to A. & M. ; entrance Armed forces ; or the beginning of the end; Feb. 1st 1943.

Thanking you so much for your interest in the memory and honor you extend to the boy so dear to us,

I am sincerely,

H.T.Hall.

H.T.Hall

Received letter from Mr. Hall dated 4-13-46 which gave information in detail of death.

Capt. Earl O. Hall '34
Missing May 19, 1943.
B.S. - E.S.

Staff Special to The News.

McGREGOR, Texas, May 19.—"I accept them only as the temporary custodian; I feel sure my son will come back."

This was the response made Wednesday afternoon by H. T. Hall at a ceremony at Bluebonnet Ordnance Plant, when Brig. Gen. Luther Smith, Commanding General of the 33d Flying Training Wing, headquarters at Blackland Army Airfield, presented to him the Silver Star and Oak Leaf Cluster, awarded to his son, Capt. Earl O. Hall, reported missing in action several months ago.

Besides Captain Hall's father, member of the guard division at the Bluebonnet plant, his step-mother, two of his sisters, Mrs. Vela Alexander Roscoe, and Miss Edna Beth Hall, Waco, and his fiancée, Miss Margaret Green, Waco, and his aunt, Mrs. Veda Homan, Crawford, were in the family group on the platform.

General Smith eulogized Captain Hall as a soldier who had exemplified all the traditions of the United

States Air Force in carrying out the orders given him.

General Manager L. R. Sanderson of the National Gypsum Company, operator of the Bluebonnet plant, stated the object of the gathering, while Major Edgar A. Haine, commanding officer of the Bluebonnet plant, read the official orders awarding the decorations to Captain Hall. Two battalions of the Bluebonnet guards formed a guard of honor, and the Blackland Army Airfield band furnished martial music.

Born at Coryell City, Captain Hall was a former student of A. & M. College, reserve officer in the Signal Corps. He joined the air corps and was commissioned a bomber pilot April 25, 1941, at Stockton, Calif.

Sent to New Caledonia.

Captain Hall was stationed at Pearl Harbor when the Jap sneak attack was made Dec. 7, 1941, his plane being among those destroyed on the ground. He was in the battle of Midway and later assigned to New Caledonia, where he was given command of the 42d Bomber Squadron.

The Silver Star was bestowed on him for an engagement on Aug. 26, 1942, when he and his crew shot down a four-motored Jap flying boat. Attacked by a Zero, they pursued it for fifty miles, but it got away. In the encounter, Captain Hall's plane was badly shot up.

The Oak Leaf cluster was awarded to Captain Hall for scoring two near misses and a possible hit on a Jap tanker on Dec. 10.

Shortly thereafter Captain Hall and three other bombing planes were given another assignment. Only one came back, Captain Hall being among the missing.

Special to The Star-Telegram

M'GREGOR, June 10.—Capt. Earl Oxford Hall didn't mention fighting in letters to his father, H. T. Hall of Crawford, but the Central Texas pilot, commander of a heavy bombardment squadron, saw more than his share of action before he failed to return from a South Pacific bombing mission on Feb. 1. His three medals—the Silver Star, the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star and the Air Medal—proved that.

Enlisting in the Army Air Forces Sept. 11, 1940, Captain Hall received his silver wings and gold bars on April 25, 1941, at Stockton Field, Cal. He was transferred to Hickam Field, Hawaii after a short visit home, and was in Hawaii when the Japs attack Pearl Harbor. His Flying Fortress was destroyed on the ground.

He was promoted to first lieutenant Dec. 29, 1941, and to captain April 1, 1942. Two months later he participated in the Battle of Midway as a reconnaissance pilot. On July 19 he flew to New Caledonia in the South Pacific. From a base there he took part in numerous bombing missions.

Plane Astounds Natives.

In a letter to his father, Captain Hall told how a native chief approached his Fortress, the first plane he had seen, and unsuccessfully attempted to find feathers on its wings. For two cigarettes the natives would climb trees and throw down coconuts until you told them to stop, he wrote.

The Crawford flier received the Silver Star from Lt. Gen. Millard F. Harmon for "gallantry in action on Aug. 26, 1942, in the Solomon Islands area."

The citation accompanying the medal states:

"Captain Hall, as pilot of a heavy bombardment airplane, proceeding on a search mission, sighted a Japanese four-engine flying boat about 50 miles northwest of Gizo Island. The enemy craft turned away, but was overtaken and engaged for approximately 45 minutes, finally being shot down by Captain Hall and his crew."

"Immediately following this action, his airplane was attacked by an enemy fighter, which made one pass, secured two hits on the left wing, and then pursued out of range for about 50 miles before turning away."

Fought Off 16 Zeros.

On Dec. 16, 1942, a month after he had assumed command of his squadron, Captain Hall was awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star. Sixteen Zeros attacked his formation of Flying Fortresses and seriously damaged two of them. Without regard for his own safety, Captain Hall remained behind to protect the damaged planes while the other bombers proceeded to their objective.

General Harmon awarded the Air Medal, "for meritorious achievement while participating in an air mission to bomb enemy objectives," to the McLennan County pilot on Dec. 22.

"Captain Hall, as leader of a heavy bombardment flight, succeeded in scoring several near misses and a possible hit on an enemy

ar
lay
um-
eld
ran
the
Mrs.
the
and
title
no
on
Tex-
have
here
Capt.
and
sillo,
the
stly
was
al-
one
olo-
own
un-
ed-
ing
a
ood
pan
ave
was
the
P).
y the
firms
but
mod-
order
ential
icates
it on
r's
The
get
local
new

Ba
Ar
Et
Mr
lin
-
oa
V
I
C
A
T
c
c
sc
tic
tor
Pz
Wc
Gr
For

mod- he had assumed command of his
order squadron, Captain Hall was award-
ed the Oak Leaf Cluster to the
ential Silver Star. Sixteen Zeros attacked
icates his formation of Flying Fortresses
it on and seriously damaged two of them.
irer's Without regard for his own safety,
The Captain Hall remained behind to
get protect the damaged planes while
local the other bombers proceeded to
new their objective.

General Harmon awarded the
Air Medal, "for meritorious
achievement while participating in
an air mission to bomb enemy ob-
jectives," to the McLennan County
pilot on Dec. 22.

"Captain Hall, as leader of a
heavy bombardment flight, succeed-
ed in scoring several near misses
and a possible hit on an enemy
tanker near Tonolei Harbor, Solo-
mon Islands, although heavy anti-
aircraft fire was encountered," this
citation said.

On Feb. 1 Captain Hall was re-
ported missing in action. A flight of
four planes participated in a mis-
sion from which only one returned.
His father has received no other
word from the War Department,
but believes the missing flier is a
prisoner or is safe on some South
Pacific island.

Extolled by Navigator.

Captain Hall had not personally
received his Air Medal or Oak Leaf
Cluster to the Silver Star, and
they were presented to his father
by Brig. Gen. Luther Smith, com-
manding general of the 33rd Flying
Training Wing, in an impressive
ceremony at the Bluebonnet Ord-
nance Plant here, where Hall is a
guard.

Lt. George Staples of Sherman,
Captain Hall's former navigator,
extolled the missing flier, "as fine
a soldier and by far the best pilot
I have ever known." Captain Hall
once landed a B-17 after three
motors caught fire 150 feet above
the ground.

Earl Hall was born in Coryell
City on Oct. 25, 1913. His mother
was the former Alice Oxford of
Turnersville. He graduated from
Crawford High School as valedic-
torian of his class in 1930 and
entered Texas A. & M. College,
from which he received a degree
in electrical engineering in 1934.
A first lieutenant in the Signal
Corps reserve, Captain Hall was
employed by the Texas Power and
Light Company before he joined
the Army Air Forces.

Not Nazi Escaper but

①:
suga:
free.

Try

Select i
ripe. R
pulp u
tender
skins).
weigh.
add sug.
of r

Appendix 16

Missing Air Crew Reports 1943

The Missing Air Crew Reports were the on-the-spot record of missing air crew missions. As you will see, the reports do not agree in significant details. There were a few other Army Air Force documents that described missions; thus far, only secondary descriptions of their content has been located.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
 (REPORTING HEADQUARTERS)
 MISSING AIR CREW REPORT

IMPORTANT: This report will be compiled in triplicate by each Army Air Forces Organization within 48 hours of the time an aircraft is officially reported missing.

- ORGANIZATION: Location Esprito Santo; Command or Air Force 13th AAF; Group 11th Bomb (H); Squadron 42nd Bomb (H); Detachment _____
- SPECIFY: Point of Departure Guadalcanal; Course Not available; Intended Destination Munda and return; Type of Mission Strike
- WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED: _____
- GIVE: (a) Date 2-1-43; Time _____; and Location Munda Point of last known whereabouts of missing aircraft.
 (b) Specify whether () Last Sighted; () Last Contacted by Radio; () Forced Down; () Seen to Crash; or (X) Information not available.
- AIRCRAFT WAS LOST, OR IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LOST, AS A RESULT OF: (Check only one) () Enemy aircraft; () Enemy Anti-Aircraft; () Other Circumstances as Follows Cause unknown
- AIRCRAFT: Type, Model and Series B-17; A.A.F. Serial Number 41-9151
- ENGINES: Type, Model and Series _____; A.A.F. Serial Number (a) _____
 (b) Information; (c) not available; (d) _____
- INSTALLED WEAPONS (Furnish below Make, Type and Serial Number)
 (a) _____; (b) _____; (c) _____; (d) _____
 (e) Information; (f) not; (g) available; (h) _____
- THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW WERE REPORTED AS: (a) Battle Casualty (X) _____
 or (b) Non-Battle Casualty _____
- NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 9; Passengers None; Total 9
 (Starting with pilot, furnish the following particulars: If more than 10 persons were aboard aircraft, list similar particulars on separate sheet and attach original to this form.)

Status

Crew Position	Name in Full (Last Name First)	Rank	Serial Number
1. Pilot	Hall, Earl O.	Captain	O-325099
2. Co Pilot	Castro, Joaquin	1st. Lt.	O-428914
3. Navigator	Stern, Frank N., Jr.	2nd. Lt.	O-438256
4. Bombardier	Bales, James W.	S/Sgt	15058894
5. Engineer	Adler, Paul	T/Sgt	6147915
6. Ass't. Engineer	Bonasiak, Francis S.	S/Sgt	11020224
7. Radio Operator	Stephens, James C., Jr.	S/Sgt	6953552
8. Ass't. Radio	Olmstead, James N.	Sgt	11033041
9. Aerial Gunner	Grady, Martin T.	Sgt	6980875

- IDENTIFY BELOW THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE LAST KNOWLEDGE OF AIRCRAFT, AND CHECK APPROPRIATE COLUMN TO INDICATE BASIS FOR SAME: Check Only One Column

Name in Full (Last Name First)	Rank	Serial Number	Contacted				Saw	
			By Radio	Last Sighted	Saw Crash	Saw Forced Landing		
1. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	
2. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	
3. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	

- IF PERSONNEL ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SURVIVED, ANSWER YES TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS: (a) Parachutes were used _____; (b) Persons were seen walking away from scene of crash _____; or (c) Any other reason (Specify) _____
- ATTACH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, MAP, CHART, OR SKETCH, SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION WHERE AIRCRAFT WAS LAST SEEN.
- ATTACH EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTION OF CRASH, FORCED LANDING, OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING TO MISSING AIRCRAFT.
- ATTACH A DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTENT OF SEARCH, IF ANY, AND GIVE NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER OF OFFICER IN CHARGE HERE Routine searches made. Extent of searches not known as records are not available. Commanding Officer was Major Frank J. Puerta, O-401051
 Date of Report 7-20-44

Serial 2

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
 (Signature of Preparing Officer)
 JESSE E. STAY
 Captain, Air Corps,
 Commanding.

2586

A TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

CONFIDENTIAL

Galloway H. Clary
GALLOWAY H. CLARY,
1st Lt. Air Corps.

HEADQUARTERS 11TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO # 708

4 February 1943

SUBJECT: Personnel Missing In Action.

TO : Commanding General, Headquarters Thirteenth Air Force, APO #708

1. The following named officers and enlisted men of this organization were reported Missing in Action by radio to the Commanding General, USAFISPA, APO #502, 4 February 1943:

a. Plane Number 41-9151, Missing in the Shortland Harbor Area, Solomon Islands, 1 February 1943:

42ND BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)

Captain EARL O. HALL, O-325099, Pilot. Notify H. T. Hall, Father, Crawford, Texas. Single. Monthly rate of pay \$351.00. In line of duty on flying status.

First Lieutenant JOAQUIN CASTRO, O-428914, Co-Pilot. Notify Crispin Castro, Father, 207 West 7th St., Mission, Texas. Single. Monthly rate of pay \$296.00. In line of duty and on flying status.

Second Lieutenant FRANK N. STERN, JR., O-490250, Navigator. Notify Frank N. Stern Sr., Father, Shoreland Hotel, Chicago, Illinois. Single. Monthly rate of pay \$268.50. In line of duty and on Flying Status.

Technical Sergeant PAUL ADLER, 6147915, Aerial Engineer. Notify Matilda M. Adler, Wife, 3359 Monsarrat Ave., Honolulu, T. H. Married. Monthly rate of pay \$251.25. In line of duty and on Flying Status.

Staff Sergeant JAMES W. BALES, 15058894, Aerial Bombardier. Notify Fred W. Bales, Brother, Crawfordsville, Ind. Single. Monthly rate of pay \$172.80. In line of duty and on Flying Status.

Staff Sergeant FRANCIS S. BANASIAK, 11020224, Asst Aerial Engineer. Notify Jean Gaughan, Sister, 130 East Dwight Street, Holyoke, Mass. Single. Monthly rate of pay \$172.80. In line of duty and on Flying Status.

Staff Sergeant JAMES C. STEPHENS, JR., 6953552, Aerial Radio Operator. Notify James C. Stephens, Sr., P. O. Box 336, Racina, Colo. Single. Monthly rate of pay \$180.00. In line of duty and on Flying Status.

Sergeant JESSE N. OLNSTEAD, 11033041, Asst Aerial Radio Operator. Notify Mary Olmstead, Mother, Norwalk, Connecticut. Single. Monthly rate of pay \$140.40. In line of duty and on Flying Status.

SERGEANT MARTIN T. GRADY, 6980875, Aerial Gunner. Notify Patrick Grady, Father, 529 West 51st St., NYC. Single. Monthly rate of pay \$147.42. In line of duty and on Flying Status.

For the Group Commander:

Encl #1

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ - CARL W. MUMM,
Major, Air Corps,
Personnel Officer

CONFIDENTIAL

704 1st Ind. (AGE-6)
HEADQUARTERS SEVENTH AIR FORCE, APO # 953, 12 June 1944.

TO: Commanding General, VII Bomber Command, AAF, APO # 953.

1. For information on which to base reply.
2. If any reports concerning this case are available, request this headquarters be furnished true copies of same.

By command of Brigadier General DOUGLASS:

Walter Grabsky
WALTER GRABSKY,
Captain, A.G.D.,
Assistant Adjutant General.

704 2nd Ind. GF-1
HEADQUARTERS VII BOMBER COMMAND (REAR ECHILON), APO # 953, 15 June 1944.

TO: Commanding Officer, 42nd Bombardment Squadron (H), APO # 964.

For compliance with preceding indorsement and report through this headquarters with the least practicable delay.

By command of Brigadier General LANDON:

Ross D. Thompson
ROSS D. THOMPSON,
Captain, Air Corps,
Actg Adjutant General.

704 3rd Ind. HPR/jhk
42D BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H), APO 959, 18 June 1944.

TO: Commanding General, VII Bomber Command, APO 953.

1. S/Sgt James C. Stephens, Jr., 6953552, was 1st radio operator on a heavy bomber crew which was shot down by intercepting enemy aircraft off Munda Point in a bombing mission from Guadalcanal, 1 February 1943. Following is a roster of the crew of which S/Sgt Stephens was a member.

Capt EARL O HALL O-325099 Pilot
1st Lt JOAQUIN CASTRO O-428914 Co-Pilot
2d Lt FRANK E STEPHEN JR O-436256 Navigator
S/Sgt James Y Bales 15058894 Bombardier

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

22864

Captain Earl O. Hall

Mr. Holbert T. Hall, (Father)
Crawford, Texas.

1st Lt. Joaquin Castro

Mr. Crispin Castro, (Father)
527 West Seventh Street,
Mission, Texas.

2nd Lt. Frank H. Stern, Jr.

Mr. Frank H. Stern, Sr., (Father)
Aberland Hotel,
1454 South Shore Drive,
Chicago, Illinois.

S/Sgt. James W. Dalee

Mr. Fred W. Dalee, (Brother)
Crawfordsville, Indiana.

T/Sgt. Paul Adler

Mr. Alfred A. Adler, (Father)
16 Forest Street,
Cambridge 40, Massachusetts.

S/Sgt. Francis S. Bannasik

Mrs. Jean Gaughan, (Sister)
150 East Dwight Street,
Holyoke, Massachusetts.

S/Sgt. James C. Stephens, Jr.

Mr. James C. Stephens, Sr., (Father)
Post Office Box 336,
Pecunia, Colorado.

Sgt. Jesse W. Olmstead

Mrs. Mary E. Olmstead, (Mother)
E. F. D. #1,
Newtown Avenue,
Norwalk, Connecticut.

Sgt. Martin T. Grady

Mr. Patrick E. Grady, (Father)
533 West 51st Street,
New York City, New York.

Appendix 17

JOINT HEADQUARTERS 5th and 11th BOMBARDMENT GROUPS (H) FORWARD ECHELON, CACTUS

A-2 Periodic Report 21 January 1943 – 28 February 1943

Complete report of Second Element – Bombing Mission 1 February 1943.

The nine ship formation, composed of two elements, the first a five ship Vee, and the second a four ship Vee, took off from GUADALCANAL shortly after 0630 for a bombing mission on enemy shipping in the SHORTLAND – BUIN area.

The pre-arranged plan was to bomb the transports in the SHORTLAND Harbor area, because it was known that a large force of destroyers and cruisers was just off the BUIN –KAHILI coast line. The first element was to take the transport to the right, and the second element the transport to the left.

Upon arrival at the target area the first element took up a bombing run on the transport to the right of the course of the formation. The second element started a bombing run on the left-hand transport, with bomb-bay doors open, but just before reaching the point of dropping the bombs made a right turn and laid a course directly toward the warships lying directly offshore from BOUGAINVILLE ISLAND.

At this time the warships, as well as the shore batteries opened up with anti-aircraft fire, the intensity of which was illustrated by the statement of the formation leader of the first element that the second element could not be seen because of the thickness of the box barrage that the anti-aircraft batteries were throwing up.

Despite the anti-aircraft, bombs were released, and the ball-turret gunner on Captain THOMAS's ship observed three hits on a transport.

The first element turned away to the left, after its run, and the second element turned away to the right, instead of staying with the first element, as previously planned. The pursuit escort of four P-38's and six P-40's stayed with the first element of five ships.

Over EAST POINT, on BOUGAINVILLE ISLAND, the four ship formation was attacked by 20 -30 type 2 Zero fighters, and the formation leader, Captain HALL, started towards WEST CAPE, CHOISEUL ISLAND, losing altitude.

Near CAPE ALEXANDER, Captain HOUX was seen falling behind, and was never seen again.

The remaining three planes, which had by now dropped down to an altitude of between a thousand and fifteen hundred feet, tried to take advantage of cloud protection, but the sky at this altitude was no more than 1/20th covered with small cumulous clouds, and offered practically no protection. It proved almost a hinderence, in as much as Captain HALL was making violent turns to right and left to take advantage of each cloud, which necessitated, on the part of Captain

THOMAS, putting one foot on the rudder bar to obtain enough leverage to make the turns and stay in the formation.

Captain THOMAS crossed over to the left, making a three ship echelon.

A few minutes later, on emerging from one of the larger clouds, Captain HALL's ship was not in the formation, and was nowhere in sight. This left Capt. THOMAS flying on Captain HENSLEY's wing.

All during this time, the large number of the Zero fighters were pressing their attacks, enabling them to come in from as many as four directions at once, making fire control very difficult.

Off RINGANA, on CHOISEUL ISLAND, Captain HENSLEY's plane was observed to be on fire, flames coming out of the radio compartment, perhaps the result of hits by incendiaries in the radio tank. His plane hit the water, exploded, and was burning when last observed. Two of the Zeros broke off and circled the wreckage.

This left Captain THOMAS's plane alone to keep up a running fight from RINGANA Point to the middle of SANTA ISABEL ISLAND, a distance of 210 statute miles, at which point the Zeros finally gave up the attack.

The bombardier, Lieut. HOWAT, firing one of the nose guns, was hit in the leg, but when an attack was called off as coming in at his position he dragged himself back to his gun to fire the nine rounds of ammunition he had left, accounting for the Zero, and receiving hits himself in his shoulder, elbow and hand.

The radio operator, Corporal P. J. MURPHY, manning one of the waist guns, was badly hit in the leg, but lay down on his back and kept passing up ammunition to the gunners until he was hit again in the same leg, resulting in a compound fracture of the left femur.

The tail gunner, Sgt. B.J.CULLINABE, had a stoppage on one of his guns, and then had the remaining gun stopped by a burst of fire coming from a Zero fighter which entered his side window, narrowly escaping his head, and causing minor abrasions from flying glass. He kept to his post for twenty minutes, pointing the useless guns at attacking Zeros, so as not to give away the vulnerability of his station. When Corporal MURPHY received his second hit, Sgt. CULLINABE came back and took over the second waist gun.

The ball-turret gunner, Sgt. T.L. WOLFE, had one gun jam, and immediately afterwards received a burst through the ball-turret that put the hydraulic control and the entire lower turret out of commission. He then left the ball-turret, after receiving wounds from the bursting shells in his hands, went forward, and manned the radio guns, until he ran out of ammunition.

Major W. H. McCARROLL, flight surgeon for the 44th fighter squadron, was also on the flight, and despite the heavy fire going on, made his way around the airplane, giving medical aid to Lieut. HOWAT in nose position, and putting a traction splint on Corporal MURPHY in waist position.

With the tail and ball-turret out of commission, and the nose and radio guns out of ammunition, the only defensive measures left to the pilot were turns into the attacking airplanes, and full throttle operation to try to out-run them.

About 1/3rd of the zeros were fighting with belly tanks still attached, which meant they were prepared to follow for some distance.

Handling the airplane was made more difficult by the fact that all of the trim tab control wires had been shot off, and the only way the nose could be kept down for level flight was by placing both knees or a foot on the steering column. Number one and number two engines had already been hit, and were dangerously close to complete failure.

The co-pilot, Lieut. INMAN, as hit by flying glass when shells struck the glass three inches behind the pilot's head.

After leaving the Zeros at SANTA ISABEL ISLAND, these two engines had to be favored, but Captain THOMAS didn't try to feather either one, despite the drag, for fear that a third might give out.

Over HENDERSON FIELD, GUADALCANAL, number one engine was smoking badly, and the propeller on number two engine had run away.

Landing was made on one flat tire, which was found to contain four or five Japanese shells, but the ship did not go off the runway. At the expense of burning out the other tire.

The ship and crew had sustained a continuous attack of over fifty minutes, and was the only ship of the four in the element to return.

Four Zeros were observed by a coast watcher on CHOISEUL, to have been shot down while the four ships of the B-17 formation were still together.

During the time Captain THOMAS's ship was sustaining the attack alone, his crew accounted for three zeros and saw them crash into the water. Lieut. HOWAT is credited for the first, Sgt. WOLFE for the second, and Cpl. G. W. Ward, the other waist gunner, for the third.

CORCORAN THOM Jr.
1st Lt. Air Corps
S-2 Officer, CACTUS

**The 42nd Bombardment Squadron (Heavy)
Eleventh Bombardment Group
Seventh and Thirteenth Air Force
United States Army Air Force
1941 – January 1943**

Historical Documents

The history of the 42nd Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) was recorded in raw form in two surviving documents. The official mission list maintained by the headquarters of the group is housed at the United States Air Force Historical Association collection at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. The original exists only in microfilm and digital form. The typed portions are generally legible, but the hand-written notes, often regarding medal recommendations, are illegible or difficult to read. This transcript of the original covers only the period up to February 1st, 1943. The full document continues for the duration of World War II.

Another record of the activities of part of the 42nd Bombardment Squadron is the flight log of Lieutenant Joaquin Castro, a co-pilot in the 42nd, and is a unique original hand-written document in the possession of the family of Lieutenant Castro. It is provided here with their permission. This transcript was completed by Arnold Guerrero from the original. He notes that some portions are illegible, and that most spellings are retained as written in the war theater.

The two documents complement each other well, with Lieutenant Castro providing some information about the missions he was involved in that is not in the headquarters log. The official missions list covers all missions of the squadron through February 1, 1943.

The final document is a list of bases and targets associated with the Hall/Castro crew.

Appendix 18
42nd Bombardment Squadron (H) Missions:
18 July 1942 – 1 February 1943.

42nd Bombardment Squadron (H), 11th Bombardment Group (H), 7th Air Force
(1941-January 1943); 13th Air Force (January 1943 -)

Air Force Historical Association, IRIS No. 44028.
Mission Reports, 18 July 1942 – 10 August 1943.

[Note: transcriptions are as accurate as possible, preserving spelling and spacing generally as in the document. The reproduction of the original document is very difficult to read, and most of the hand-written notes are illegible, and so noted.]

18 July 1942

The following ships took off from Xahuku, Oahu at 0800, and landed at Christmas Island at 1700.

1st Flite:

Ship #221, Capt. Manierre

[in pencil: 42 Bomb Sq]

Ship #071 Capt. Richards

Ship # 420, Capt. Norton

2nd Flite:

Ship #218, Capt. Messerschmitt

Ship #443, Capt. Puerta

Ship # 151, Capt. Wuertelo

3rd Flite:

Ship #155, Capt. Stone

Ship #213 Capt. Hall

Ship #442, Capt. Eberenz

19 July 1942

The following ships took off from Christmas Island at 10300 and landed at Canton Island at 1630.

1st Flite:

Ship #221, Capt. Manierre

Ship #071 Capt. Richards,

Ship # 420, Capt. Norton.

The following ships took off from Christmas Island at [illegible] and landed at Canton Island at 1645.

2nd Flite:

Ship #218, Capt. Messerschmitt

Ship #443, Capt. Puerta
Ship # 151, Capt. Wuertelo.

3rd Flite:

Ship #155, Capt. Stone
Ship #213 Capt. Hall
Ship #442, Capt. Eberenz.

The above three ships took off from Christmas Island at 1110 and landed at Canton Island at 1745

20 July 1942

The following ships took off from Canton Island at 0645 and landed at Nandi, Fiji at 1415:

1st Flite: :

Ship #221, Capt. Manierre
Ship #071 Capt. Richards,
Ship # 420, Capt. Norton.

The following ships took off from Canton Island at 0700 and landed at Nandi, Fiji at 1430.

2nd Flite:

Ship #218, Capt. Messerschmitt
Ship #443, Capt. Puerta
Ship # 151, Capt. Wuertelo

The following ships took off from Canton Island at 0715 and landed at Nandi, Fiji at 1445:

3rd Flite:

Ship #155, Capt. Stone
Ship #213 Capt. Hall
Ship #442, Capt. Eberenz.

(The International Date Line was crossed on the way from Canton Island to Nandi, Fiji.)

22 July 1942

The following ships took off from Nandi, Fiji at 0800 and landed at Plaines des Gaiacs, New Caledonia at 1345.

1st Flite: :

Ship #221, Capt. Manierre
Ship #071 Capt. Richards,
Ship # 420, Capt. Norton.

The following ships took off from Nandi, Fiji at 0820 and landed at Plaines des Gaiacs, New Caledonia at 1415.

2nd Flite:

Ship #218, Capt. Messerschmitt
Ship #443, Capt. Puerta
Ship # 151, Capt. Wuertelo.

The following three ships took off from Nandi, Fiji at 0830 and landed at Plaines des Gaiacs, New Caledonia at 1430.

3rd Flite:

Ship #155, Capt. Stone

Ship #213 Capt. Hall

Ship #442, Capt. Eberenz.

23 July 1942

NO MISSIONS THIS DATE.

24 July 1942

The following five ships all went on dawn patrol: T.O. 0600:

Ship #155, Capt. Stone

Ship #213, Capt. Hall

Ship #321, Major Manierre

Ship # 216, Capt. Messerschmitt.

SEARCH:

Ship #420, Lieut. Norton, Out 660 mi. Cont: None 324-334.5

Ship #071, Capt. Richards, Out 700 mi. Cont: None. 355-345.

25 July 1942

The following five ships all went on dawn patrol: T.O. [illegible]

Ship #155, Capt. Stone

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta

Ship #213, Capt. Hall

Ship #321, Major Manierre

Ship # 216, Capt. Messerschmitt.

26 July 1942

The following five ships all went on dawn patrol: T. O. 0600:

Ship #221, Major Manierre

Ship #071, Capt. Richards

Ship #420, Lieut, Norton

Ship #161, Capt. Wuertele

Ship #165, Capt. Stone

Ship #213, Capt. Hall

Ship #442, Lieut. Eberenz

SEARCH

Ship #445, Lieut. Puerta Out 650 Mi. Cont: Two enemy fighters (float type) on water south tip of Indispensable reef. No action 3245. – 334.5.

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt Out 700 Mi. Cont: None 334.5 - 345

27 July 1942

The following five ships all went on dawn patrol: T.O. 0600:

Ship #221, Major Manierre

Ship #071, Capt. Richards

Ship #420, Lieut, Norton
Ship #161, Capt. Wuertele
Ship #165, Capt. Stone
Ship #213, Capt. Hall
Ship #442, Lieut. Eberenz.
NO MISSIONS THIS DATE.

28 July 1942

The following five ships all went on dawn patrol this date:

Ship #221, Major Manierre
Ship #071, Capt. Richards
Ship #420, Lieut, Norton
Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt
Ship #161, Capt. Wuertesl
Ship #445, Lieut. Puerta
Ship #165, Capt. Stone.

SEARCH

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Out 600 mi. Cont: none. 334.5-345
Ship #442, Lieut. Eberenz Out 600 mi. Cont: None. 324.5-334.5

29 July 1942

The following four ships went out on dawn patrol: T. O. 0600

Ship # 445, Lieut. Puerta
Ship #216, Lieut. Sorensen
Ship #161, Capt. Wuertele
Ship #071, Capt. Richards.

NO TACTICAL MISSIONS THIS DATE.

30 July 1942

Ship #442, Lieut. Eberenz Swing Compass: Took off at 0700 landed 0830
Ship #216, Lieut. Sprawls Swing Compass: Took off 0700 landed 0850

SEARCH

Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele Out 600 Mi. Cont: None 334.5 -345
Ship # 156, Capt. Stone Out 900 Mi. Cont: None 324-334

31 July 1942

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt, Ferry Mission to Efate. T.O. 0955 landed 1100.
Ship #213, Capt. Hall to Efate.

SEARCH

Ship #071, Capt. Richards. Out 600 mi. Cont: None. 324-334.5
Ship #420, Lieut. Norton Out 500 mi. Cont: None. 334.5-345
Ship # 526m Col. Saunders, Major Manierre Co-Pilot: Took off from Efate Island at 0615, leading flight of eight and element of two planes. Photographed south and east coast of Guadalcanal Island. Bombed Lunga Airfield. Bomb hits not observed, no AA or pursuit

interceptions, Landed Efate Island at 1530.

1 August 1942

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Special photo mission (no pictures, bad weather.)

Ship #442, Lieut. Eberenz, local test hop.

2 August 1942 [*illegible pencil notation*]

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt. Took off from Efate Island leading three plane element. Landed and gassed up at Espiritu Santo Island. Took off from Santo Island at 0930. Bombed area from Planters' House to Lunga Pt. – Stores and quarters. Landed Santo Island at 1730. All the bombs dropped in the target area. Moderate AA fire. Attacked by three pursuits. Fine hit in airplane – 14 holes. Shot down two Zero type enemy fighters. Pilot received slight wound on forehead as the result of a penetrate shell jacket. Co-Pilot struck in left thigh by armor-piercing shell. He was hospitalized upon landing. 1st Engineer E. C. Davis, received a grasing shot on right ankle.

Ship #445, Lieut. Puerta. Took off from Efate Island at 0648 n three plane element. Landed and gassed up at Santo I. Took off from Santo at 0930. Bombed constructors houses and installations on Lunga Pt. Landed at Santo I at 1730. All bombs dropped in target area. Moderate AA, Attacked by two Zero type airplanes from out of the sun. Three others did not attack. No damage done.

Ship #071, Capt. Richards. Took off from Efate I. in three plane element. Landed at Santo I. and gassed up. T. O. from Santos I. at 0930 and bombed constructors Barracks and Soldiers barracks. Landed at Santo I. at 1730. All bombs dropped in the target area. Moderate AA. Enemy pursuit in air but no interception made.

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. A ferry mission to PdG.

3 August 1942

Ship #071, Capt. Richards

Ship #621, Major Manierre

Both the above ships went out on an Interception and Identification mission. Took off at 1100 and landed 1300.

Ship #221, Major Manierre, Ferry Mission, Poppy to Roses. Took off 0700-landed 1030. Ship #155 cracked up on runway at Roses.

NO TACTICAL MISSIONS.

4 August 1942

Ship #071, Capt. Richards. Took off from Santos I. at 0630 leading two plane formation. Bombed individually shore installations at Lunga Pt. Moderate AA, no pursuit interception. All Bombs dropped in target area. Landed Efate I. at 1530.

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta. Took off from Santo I. at 0630, 2nd plane in two plane formation. Bombed individually, dropped on Lunga Pt. Airfield. Could not observe first 7 bombs because of clouds. On the 2nd run the next seven bombs were observed to cross the runway at a 30 degree angle. Attacked by a single Zero type enemy fighter – same shot down. No damage to our plane. Moderate AA.

5 August 1942

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta. Took off from Efate I. Bombed Kukum anti-aircraft installations and storage dump. Landed Efate I. Bombs observed to fall on runway. Large fire observed started in dump area. Moderate AA fire. 5" hole made in left wing. Attacked by 5 enemy pursuit, using individual head-on attack method. No damage done.

Ship 420, Lieut. Norton

Ship 221, Major Manierre

Ship 442, Lieut. Eberenz

The above three ships all went to Koumao on this date.

6 August 1942

Ship #221, Capt. Stone. Took off from Santo I. leading two plane formation. Bombed AA installations on Lunga Pt. Could not determine hits through haze. Released 7 bombs on runway and the next four on AA installations. Made a crash water landing off N. coast of Santo Island at 1815 with approximately 30 gal. of gas in tanks on landing. Plane sank in approximately 45 sec. Inboard engine cut out and props feathered on landing. Broke it two parts in aft radio compartment. No casualties. 10 men using one raft. Minor cuts and bruises to all men. Paddled one mi. to Island (Shark Bay) and it took two hours to row. Navy scout bomber sighted crew at 0930, 7 August 1942. Did not pull IFF damaging switches. POP and all other confidential and secret material went down with the plane.

Ship #442, Lieut. Eberenz. Took off from Santo I. at 1000. Bombed Lunga Pt. Dropped bombs in train across target quite a large fire started in trees. Light AA, no pursuit interception. Landed Santo I.

NO TACTICAL MISSIONS.

7 August 1942

Ship #420, Lieut. Norton. From Buttons to Roses [illegible] – 1115.

Ship #442, Capt. Eberenz. From Buttons to Roses 1030-1140.

NO TACTICAL MISSIONS.

8 August 1942

Ship #442, Capt. Eberenz, From Efate to Plaines des Gaiacs.

NO TACTICAL MISSIONS.

9 August 1942

SEARCH

Ship #420, Lieut. Norton. Out 600 mi. Cont: None.

Ship #216, Capt. Puerta. Out 600 mi. Cont: None.

Ship #071, Capt. Richards. Out 600 mi. Cont: None.

10 August 1942

SEARCH

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Out 700 mi. Cont.: None.

Ship #442, Capt. Eberenz. Out 700 mi. Cont: None.

Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele. Out 700 mi. Cont: None.

11 August 1942

SEARCH

Ship #420, Lieut. Norton Out 800 mi. Cont: None.

12 August 1942

SEARCH

Ship #420, Lieut. Norton, Out 700 mi. Cont: None. 312-313.
Ship #442, Capt. Eberenz, Out 800 mi. Cont: None. 306-312.
Ship #216, Major Maniarre, Buttons to Roses 0760-0900.
Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Buttons to Roses, 0750 – 0900.
Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Roses to Buttons, 1015 – 1140.
Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Buttons to Roses, 1200 – 1316.

13 August 1942

NO MISSIONS THIS DATE.

14 August 1942

Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele, Roses to Buttons 0800-0915.
Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele, Buttons-Roses-PdG.
Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Roses to Buttons, 1515 – 1620.
Ship #071, Capt. Richards Roses to Buttons 1515-1630.

15 August 1942

SEARCH

Ship #213, Captain Hall. Out 700 mi. Cont.: None.
Ship #071, Captain Richards Out 700 Mi. Cont: None.
Ship #151, Captain Wuertele Nandi to Buttons.
Ship # 420, Lieut. Norton Buttons-Roses-PdG.
Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele Swing Compass.

16 August 1942

SEARCH

Ship #216, Capt. Wuertele Out 650 mi. Cont: None 312-316.
Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Swing compass.

17 August 1942

SEARCH

Ship # 151, Capt. Messerschmitt Out 750 mi. Cont: None. 312-318.
Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Buttons–Nandi.

18 August 1942

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Bombed enemy shipping at Gizo. No hits observed, the weather was very bad. No damage to own ship.

19 August 1942

Ship #156, Capt. Wuertele, searched. Out 500 mi. Cont: None. Sector 294-300.
Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt. Buttons to Roses.

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Buttons to Roses to PdG.

20 August 1942

SEARCH

Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele Out 700 mi. Cont: 4 DB, 5 surface craft, all enemy. No action of any kind.

Ship #442, Capt. Eberenz. Button to Roses. 0830-095.

Ship #442, Capt. Eberenz. Roses to Buttons. 1300-1315.

21 August 1942

Ship #214, Major Manierre. Out 700 mi. Cont: 1 small launch, 2 DD's. No action taken. 306-312.

Ship #420, Lieut. Norton Roses to Buttons

Ship #442, Capt. Eberenz Roses to Buttons

Ship #442, Capt. Eberenz Buttons to Roses to PdG

22 August 1942

Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele Out 650 mi. Cont: 15 Hut Village on peak of mountain. Pictures taken. No Action 306-312. Landed at Cactus 1035.

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Ferry mission to Cactus, 0730 – 1200.

23 August 1942

Ship #213, Major Manierre and Capt. Hall. Leading the first flight the mission being to attack carriers and force to N. R. about 650 miles. Took off at 1430. Sighted enemy force at 0530 consisting of one carrier, 2 destroyers, and 2 cruisers. Attacked from 12,000'. Made two runs dropping 2 bombs each run. Near misses between carrier and cruisers on the first run. Second run was reported by the crew members to have direct hits on carrier. Several explosions, pictures however did not show evidence. Attacked by 5-7 Zeros, shot down one, possibly two. Returned to base after dark in bad weather. Lieut. [unther] was killed when eh crashed into some palms on landing.

Ship # 151, Capt. Wuertle. Broke formation believing we were off course, consequently, did not find target and turned back to base with full load of bombs.

24 August 1942

SEARCH

Ship # 420, Lieut. Norton Out 600 mi. Cont: Attacked enemy DD in [Gizo] Harbor. Three 500#. No hits, the bombs failed to release [illegible]first two runs. Attacked once by fighter off Lengo. No damage.

25 August 1942

SEARCH [illegible pencil notation]

Ship #425, Capt. Hall Out 750 mi. Cont.: Engaged 4 engine flying boat 50 mi. NW Gizo Island. Elevators shot away and boat believed destroyed. Was circling what appeared to be wreckage when engaged by one Zero. No visible damage to Zero. Two holes shot in own ship. No injuries. [Pencil note: *Pilot Silver Star. Recommended and*

received Air Medal.]

26 August 1942

SEARCH

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt	Out 700 mi. Cont: None.
Ship #420, Lieut. Norton	Out 500 mi. Cont: Noen.
Ship #442, Capt. Wuertele	Buttons to Roses 0935-1035
Ship #071, Capt. Richards	Roses to Buttons 0910-1030
Ship #071, Capt. Richards	Buttons to Roses 1205-1310
Ship #071, Capt. Richards	Roses to Buttons 1535-1700

27 August 1942

SEARCH

Ship #145, Capt. Eberenz	Out 600 mi. Con: None.
Ship #071, Capt. Richards	P-400 mission.

28 August 1942

SEARCH

Ship #420, Lieut. Norton. Out 700 mi. Cont: Own task force of 24 ships. Three empty life boats drifting about two miles apart attempted to sink by gunfire and was unsuccessful.

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Out 700 mi. Cont: Sub sighted off Cape Nahahua, San Cristobal. Weather prevented bombing or strafing.

Ship #071, Capt. Richards. Out 700 mi. Cont: None. Lightning struck nose gun and broke off trailing antenna.

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt. Out Cont: One plane between Renound Island and Gizo I. Was a float type, seen ahead but he stayed about one half mile away, disappeared in about 3 min.

Ship #442, Capt. Wuertele. Roses to Buttons. 100 1218.

Ship # 442, Capt. Wuertele. Buttons to Roses. 1430 1640.

29 August 1942

#442, Capt Wuertele. Roses to Buttons 0715 0835

Ship # 442, Capt. Wuertele, Buttons to Roses 0910 1030

Ship # 442, Capt. Wuertele, Roses to Buttons 1100 1210

Ship # 442, Capt. Wuertele, Buttons to Roses 1300 1430

NO TACTICAL MISSIONS TODAY.

30 August 1942

SEARCH

Ship #215, Capt. Messerschmitt. Our 730 mi. Cont: None.

Ship #218, Capt. Richards. Out 860 mi. Cont: Bombed enemy task force, near miss or hit on battleship or heavy cruiser. Dropped four 500#.

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland. Rose to Buttons.

31 August 1942

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland, Buttons to Roses 0745 0900
Ship #420, Capt. Hall Buttons to PdG
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland Roses to Buttons 1035 1130
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland Buttons to Roses 1207 1330
NO TACTICAL MISSIONS TODAY.

1 September 1942

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland, Rose to Buttons to Roses 1035 1525
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland, Buttons to Roses 1620 1736
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland, Roses to Buttons 0215 0920
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland, Buttons to Roses 1130 1220
Ship #151, Capt. Eberenz, Photo mission over the Field.
NO TACTICAL MISSING THIS DATE.

2 September 1942

SEARCH

Ship #216, Capt. Hensley Out 765 mi. Cont: None 312 318
Ship #151, Capt. Eberenz Out 810 mi. Cont: Enemy Tanker directly hit at 1035.
Last seen sinking and burning. Dropped four 55#. Fire encircled bow when hit. Light AA.
No injuries to plane or personnel.
Ship #071, Capt. Richards Out 800 mi. Cont: None Seen building being built at
Gizo Island.
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland Roses to Buttons.

3 September 1942

Ship # 442, Capt. Hyland Buttons to Roses. 0900 1015
NOT TACTICAL MISSIONS THIS DATE.

4 September 1942

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland. Roses to Buttons
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland. Button to Roses.

5 September 1942

SEARCH

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt. Out 700 mi. Cont: None 306 312
Ship #213, Lieut. Norton. Out 600 mi. Cont: 3 enemy destroyers dropped four
500#, but no hits. AA very heavy and poor. No damage to plane.
Ship #071, Capt. Richards. Out 825 mi. Cont: 3 enemy destroyers or cruisers.
Dropped four 500#. No hits, near misses. Light AA before and after run.
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland Roses to Buttons 0720 0835
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland Buttons to Roses 1010 1130
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland Roses to Buttons 1400 1500
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland Buttons to Roses 1605 1735

6 September 1942

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland Roses to Buttons 0935 1045

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland Buttons to Roses 1315 1420
Ship #071, Capt. Richards Buttons to cactus escort some P-400's
Ship #213, Lieut. Norton Buttons to Cactus " " "

7 September 1942

SEARCH

Ship #071, Lieut. Norton. Out 860 mi. Cont: Four engine flying boat. #1 engine caught fire from 7.7 hit in oil tank, were forced to abandon attack at 0840. No apparent damage inflicted on the enemy. Seven enemy landing barges and one torpedo boat on the beach, Straffed (Reykata Bay) for twenty min. no damage observed. [hole punch] 7.7 in the tail.

Ship #071, Capt. Richards Out for a test hop.
Ship #071, Capt. Richards. Buttons to Cactus.

8 September 1942

SEARCH

Ship #071, Capt. Richards. Went out on search mission and failed to return. Later reported shot down by Jap four engine Flying Boat. Sector 306 312. T. O. from Buttons at 0300.

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland Roses to Buttons.
Ship #442, Buttons to Roses

9 September 1942

SEARCH

Ship # 216, Capt. Eberenz. Out 750 mi. Cont: enemy 5 dd's, 2 AK. Landed Cactus to escort SBD's to reported enemy task force. T. O. on an air raid warning and returned to base. Straffed six land barges, results not observed. No damage to plane or crew.

Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele. Out 600 mi. Cont: Enemy task force 1 HB 8DD's. Dropped four 500#. No hits. Heavy AA. No damage to own plane or crew.

Ship #213, Lieut. Norton. Out 800 mi. Cont: Burning flying boat on reef, believed to be PBY. Attacked enemy flying boat, did not destroy but made many hits. Damage to own plane: 20 MM in tail and each wing. 7.7 through ball turret, pilot cabin, two hits in #2 engine, 6 others through fuselage. PFS Burns wounded in the leg by 7.7 through ball turret.

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland. Roses to Buttons 0810 0925

10 September 1942

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland. Buttons to Roses to Hickam 0810
Ship #213, Lieut. Norton. Cactus to Buttons -630 0940
Ship #213, Lieut. Norton Buttons to Roses. 1515 1625
NO TACTICAL MISSIONS THIS DATE.

11 September 1942

SEARCH

Ship #151, Capt. Eberenz. Out 600 mi. from Cactus. Cont: Straffed installations on Gizo. Encountered small caliber and 20 MM from shore. No damage to plane or crew.

Ship #

12 September 1942

SEARCH

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt. Out 500 mi. Cont: two transports, 2 DD. 210 mi. out of Cactus. No aa or any action taken.

Ship #420, Capt. Hall Out 800 mi. Cont: None.

Ship #211, Capt. Steedman. Out 500 mi. Cont: Attacked 5 bi-planes 2 float type with inline engines at Gizo Island. Knocked down 2. Noted two white buildings at beach, a dock and scattered buildings in the woods. No injuries to own plane or crew.

Ship #420, Capt. Hall. Roses to Buttons.

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt. Buttons to Cactus.

13 September 1942

SEARCH

Ship #216, Capt. Stone Out 750 mi. Cont: none.

Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele. Out 600 mi. Cont: Nose gun would not work. Shot down one float bi-plane. Three enemy float bi-planes on water and we strafed them. Tail gunner was wounded (Sgt. Bowrie) by MG fire from enemy plane. Guns in both turrets jammed. Own ship: 7.7 in fuselage and in the wing.

Ship #420, Lieut. Norton and Ship # 213, Capt. Hall both part of the striking force that took off at 1300. Flew for five hours without contact with the enemy. Returned to base at 1800.

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Rose to Buttons. 0530 0635

14 September 1942

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt Ship #213, Lieut. Norton, and Ship #420, Capt. Eberenz were all on one hour alert. These three ships all took off from Buttons at 1300 in search of the enemy who had previously been reported. Flew for approximately six hours without a contact. Returned to Buttons.

15 September 1942

SEARCH

Ship #216, Capt Wuertele. Out 790 mi. Cont: Bombed Reykata Bay. [illegible] hits on buildings, two guns positions silenced. Bombed from [illegible] and made two runs. Two twin engine [illegible] bombers in the [illegible]

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Out 800 mi. Cont: Enemy task force of [illegible] cruisers, 1DD, and 1SS, 15 miles N of Molombangari. Bombed Reykata Bay and started a number of fires. Made three runs. No AA.

Ship #211, Capt. Eberenz Buttons to Cactus.

Ship #426, Capt. Wuertele Up for compass swing

Ship #426, Major Manierre, Ship #211, Capt. Eberenz, Ship #420, Lieut. Norton all on striking took off at 0800 and returned to base at 0900. No contacts made.

16 September 1942

SEARCH

Ship #528, Major Manierre. Out 600 mi. Cont: PBY beached. It appeared to have been shot up badly and the left wing was down in the water. The rest of the plane was above the shallow water. A general swing was made of the islands and shoals below and above Ndeni. On most of the Islands huts and villages were noticed and black natives were observed. There was a group of uncharted islands about 30 miles South of Ndeni.

Ship #211, Capt. Eberenz. Cactus to Roses 0620 103b

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta Roses to Buttons 1505 1630

17 September 1942

SEARCH

Ship #216, Capt. Hensley. Out 500 mi. Cont: 10 enemy flying boats in Gizo Harbor, 3 light cruisers or destroyers, 1 heavy cruiser, aircraft tender, 2 cargo ship, and various other ships dispersed under heavy weather at Blackett Strait. Three fighters came out of the harbor, did not attack. Bombed tender. The hits not observed, pictures taken. AA moderate.

Ship #213, Capt. Eberenz. Out 800 mi. Cont: Bombed Gizo. Dropped one bomb on shore in houses at Harbor all the others went in the water. Pictures taken, AA light. One twin engine float type and one single pontoon zero encountered in air. Machine gun fire was exchanged but did not attack closely and fled into clouds when pursued. No hits on won plane.

Ship #420, Lieut. Norton. Out 800 mi. Cont: dropped seven 300# at construction about Reykata Bay. No direct hits and no apparent damage. No AA observed.

Ship #426, Capt. Wuertele. Out 800 mi. Cont: None

Ship # 214, Capt. Puerta Out 750 mi. Cont: None

18 September 1942

Ship #426, Major Manierre

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta. Both these ships went out for a compass swing.

The following ships were all on striking but did not T.O.:

Ship #216, Capt Messerschmitt

Ship #426, Major Manierre

Ship #151, Capt. Stone

Ship #213, Capt. Hall

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta

19 September 1942

SEARCH

Ship #445, Capt. Stone Out 800 mi. Cont: Noen 334 339

Ship #426, Major Manierre Out 600 mi. Cont: None 329 334

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Out 750 mi. Cont: None. 324 329

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt Out 720 mi. Cont: None 318 324

Ship #523, Capt. Hensley Out 720 mi. Cont: Bombed Reykata, saw no planes in condition to fly, took pictures. No damage noticed. Two wrecked planes on beach. No damage to own plane although there was light AA.

Ship #420, Lieut. Norton stood by on 1 hour alert all the day.

20 September 1942

The following ships were all on striking but did not T.O.:

Ship #426, Major Manierre

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt

Ship #213, Capt. Hall

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta

Ship #420, Lieut. Norton Buttons to Cactus 1305 1700

21 September 1942

SEARCH

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta Out 755 mi. Cont: None

Ship #426, Capt. Wuertele Out 800 mi. Cont: None

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Out 700 mi. Cont: Bombed Reykata Bay, no opposition, and very little if any damage done. No AA.

Ship #420, Lieut. Norton. Out 799 mi. Cont: Bombed Reykata Bay, no hits made. AA, 7.7, and 20mm very heavy. No damage to own plane. Pictures taken.

Ship #216, Capt. Sorensen. Out 750 mi. Cont: Bombed Gizo Harbor installation with 8 100# Demo. and 2 Incend. Bombs. Hazy over the target, and no AA observed. First 5 bombs were released in train and observed to fall close to nearest buildings on runway. Pictures taken, not damage to own ship.

22 September 1942

The following ships were all on striking but they did not T. O.:

Ship #445, Capt. Wuertele

Ship #213, Capt. Stone

Ship #426, Major Manierre

Ship #420, Lieut. Norton

23 September 1942

SEARCH

Ship #426, Major Manierre Out 800 mi. Cont: None

Ship #445, Capt. Hensley Out 750 mi. Cont: None

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Buttons to Tontouta for repairs.

24 September 1942

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt Out 800 mi. Cont: None

Ship #426, Major Manierre Buttons to Roses 1320 1530

Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele Buttons to Roses 1320 1530

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta Buttons to Roses 1320 1530

The above three ships all left this date for nande and a three day rest period. [*illegible pencil notation.*]

Ship #420, Lieut Norton On this date Lieut. Norton and crew were reported as missing in action. They were never heard from. [In pencil: "*They were shot down by zeros {illegible.}*"]

25 September 1942

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt Buttons to Fantan 0750 1250
This ship and crew was to stay at Nandi for a three days rest period.

26 September 1942

NO MISSIONS. ALL CREWS AT NANDI FOR REST.

27 September 1942

NO MISSIONS. ALL CREWS AT NANDI FOR REST.

28 September 1942

ALL CREWS CALLED IN FROM SOUVA TO GO ON SPECIAL ALERT AT
NANDI

29 September 1942

SEARCH

Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele Out 800 mi. Cont: None 351 357
Ship #426, Lieut. Andrews Out 750 mi. Cont: None 345 351
Ship #216, Capt. Hensley Out 750 mi. Cont: None 357 003
Ship # 445, Capt. Puerta Out 800 mi. Cont: None 003 009

30 September 1942

NO MISSIONS THIS DATE.

1 October 1942

SEARCH

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt Out 800 mi. Cont: None 351 357
Ship #426, Major Manierre Out 800 mi. Cont: None 003 009
Ship #151, Capt. Stone Out 800 mi. Cont: None 357 003
Ship #445, Lieut. Andrews Stand by for Search.

2 October 1942

The following ships were all on striking 15 min. alert but did not take off:

Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele
Ship #425, Capt. Puerta
Ship #216, Capt. Hensley

3 October 1942

Ship #151, Capt Wuertle
Ship #425, Capt. Puerta
Ship #216, Capt. Hensley

The above three ships all went out on a special photographic mission from Nandi.

4 October 1942

ALL MISSIONS CANCELLED DUE TO BAD WEATHER.

5 October 1942

Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele Fantan to Roses
Ship #426, Major Manierre Fantan to Roses
Ship #445, Capt. Puerta Fantan to Roses
Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt Fantan to Roses

All ships landed at Buttons 1300.

6 October 1942

Ship #426, Capt. Stone Buttons to Cactus
Ship #445, Lieut. Andrews Buttons to Cactus
Ship #213, Capt. Hall. PdG to Roses to Buttons.

7 October 1942

Ship #425, Capt. Stone Out 800 Mi. from Cactus Cont: None 302 312
Ship #445, Lieut. Andrews Out 450 Mi. from Cactus Cont: None 312 322
Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt Buttons to Roses for repairs.

8 October 1942

SEARCH

Ship #426, Major Manierre Out 950 Mi. Cont: None
Ship 213, Capt. Hall. Out 825 mi. Cont: Enemy fighters, 5 DD's, 1 heavy cruiser. Dropped aerial bombs and made overhead passes almost head on. One fighter knocked down. AA very light. Damage to own ship: holes in left wing, aileron, elevator and navig. glass, deep cut in #2 prop. Heavy cruiser appeared to be on fire, a lot of black smoke.

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta Out 600 Mi. Cont: None
Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele Out 450 Mi. Cont: None
All the above ships landed at Cactus after the mission.

9 October 1942

Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele Out 450 Mi. from Cactus. Cont: None
Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Out 450 mi. from Cactus. Cont: None.

10 October 1942

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta Buttons to Cactus
Ship #128, Major Manierre Buttons to Cactus

11 October 1942

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta Out 500 miles from Cactus Cont: None Landed at Cactus 305 315
Ship #151, Lieut. Andrews on one hour alert until 1300. No T. O.

12 October 1942

SEARCH

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta Out 500 Mi. from Cactus Cont: None Landed at Cactus 305 315
Ship #535, Capt. Hall. Out 800 mi. Cont: None.
Ship #151, Capt Wuertele Buttons to Cactus
Ship #426, Capt. Hensley Cactus to Buttons

13 October 1942

Ship #151, Major Manierre Buttons to Cactus
Ship #426, Capt. Stone Buttons to Cactus Upon arriving at Cactus it was found that the place was undergoing an air raid, circled the field for over an hour before landing.

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta Cactus to Buttons
Ship #445, Lieut. Andrews Buttons to PdG 1400 1745

14 October 1942

Ship #151, Major Manierre Cactus to Buttons
Ship #426, Capt. Stone Cactus to Buttons
Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt Roses to Buttons
Ship #426, Capt. Hall on 15 min alert took off at 1500 and flew about 575 miles in search of a Jap task force. No contacts made. Returned to base at 2240.

15 October 1942

SEARCH

Ship #216, Captain Messerschmitt Out 800 Mi. Cont: None
Ship #426, Major Manierre
Ship #445, Capt. Puerta
Ship #216, Capt. Stone

The above three ships all took off at 0745. The mission being to bomb enemy ships at Kukum. Arrived at the target area at 1145 and there were four enemy transports one of which was burning, about [illegible] cruisers, 5-7 destroyers. Went in at 10,000' indicated air speed 180 indicated. No bombs dropped by Major Manierre and Capt. Puerta on first run due to solenoid trouble. Capt. Stone dropped four bombs on an individual run. The first run was made on two transports close together. The second run was made on a single transport by Major Manierre and Capt. Puerta, 5 bombs dropped by each. Close miss by Major Manierre, possible hit by Capt. Puerta in formation. Enemy aircraft about 12 Zeros attacked during both runs on target. Pictures were taken of one shot down by Major Manierres crew. Enemy AA was very heavy and concentrated, all planes returned safely to the Base, although many bullet holes and pieces of equipment were effected so as to render them useless.

RESULTS: Possible hits on transport, three to four Zeros shot down.
CASUALTIES: M/Sgt. K. Lawton shot by 7.7 which came through bombadiers window, glancing off bombsight stabilizer and hit him in the mouth. He was immediately hospitalized on landing. Landed at 0345.

16 October 1942

SEARCH

Ship #216, Capt. Hall. Out 800 mi. Cont: None.
Ship #213, Capt. Puerta, Took off at 1300 and bombed Kukumgonga. All the bombs hit the target. Observed two Zeros crash into the sea. Zeros set fire to sea tender McFarllane. #1 engine went out, returned to Cactus on three engines.
Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele Took off from Buttons at 1300 for Cactus. Landed base at 2200.
Ship #426, Capt. Hensley Buttons to Cactus 0447 0834 Went out in the

afternoon looking for Jap task force, could not make contact;

17 October 1942

Ship #425, Major Manierre
Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt Both these ships were on striking and they did not take off.
Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt Swing compass 1600 1700

CORRECTION 17 Oct. 1942 [separate sheet inserted.]

Major Manierre in Ship #4426, leading six ship formation. Bombed shore installations and troop concentrations, west of Point Cruz in Kukumbanga area. No A A and not pursuit interception. Returned to Base, encountered bad weather there, and finally landed in heavy rain. All six ships returned safely in spite of the bad weather.

18 October 1942

SEARCH

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt Out 750 Mi. Cont: None
Ship #445, Lieut. Andrews PdG to Roses to Buttons
Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele Buttons to Cactus (Ferry Gasoline)

19 October 1942

Ship #216, Capt. Puerta Out 800 Mi. Cont: Was one white man on Ontony Java, signaled with flags, dropped him food.
Ship #426, Lieut. Andrews Buttons to Cactus
Ship #151, Capt. Wuertele

20 October 1942

SEARCH

Ship #444, Capt. Stone Out 700 Mi. Cont: Seen one 25 Ft. sail boat with white cross on the top of the cabin. No action. Could not identify the boat.
The following ships were all on striking but did not T.O.:
Ship #426, Major Manierre
Ship #151, Capt. Hall
Ship #431, Capt. Hensley
Ship #445, Capt. Puerta

21 October 1942

Ship #216, Lieut. Sorensen Buttons to Roses 0915 1030
Ship #126, Lieut. Hensley Spare search ship
Ship #442, Lieut. Hyland Roses to Buttons from Hickam
Ship #425, Major Manierre
Ship #444, Capt. Hall
Ship #451, Andrews
Ship #445, Capt. Wuertele The above four ships were all on one hour alert and did not take off.

22 October 1942

Ship #442, Liut. Hyland Swing compass over field 0815 0940
The following ships were on one hour alert but did not take off:
Ship #444, Capt. Stone
Ship #443, Capt. Puerta
Ship #426, Lieut. Andrews
Ship #431, Lieut. Hensley

23 October 1942

Ship #151, Lieut. Hensley Buttons to Roses for repairs
Ship #060, Lieut. Hensley Roses to Buttons
The following ships were on one hour alert and did not take off:
#436, Major Manierre
#445, Capt. Wuertele
#444, Lieut. Hyland
#431, Capt. Hall
#403, Lieut. Thomas

24 October 1942

SEARCH

Ship #445, Lieut. Andrews Out 800 Mi. Cont: None
Ship #409, Lieut. Hyland Out 725 Mi. Cont: None
Ship #313, Capt. Hall. one hour slow time on plane.
The following three ships were all on striking and took off at 0545:
Ship #426, Major Manierre
Ship #403, Capt. Puerta

Ship #444, Capt. Stone The target was and Enemy Carrier Task Force approaching Cactus from the NE. The striking group could not find the task force and all planes returned to the base. [pencil addition] *Went out 600 miles, then weather got bad in frontal area.*

25 October 1942

SEARCH

Ship 444, Capt. Hall. Out 800 mi. Cont: 1 CA, 3 DD, 3 Zeros land base came in at once from rear and above. Climbed into the clouds. No damage done to plane or personnel.

Ship #431, Lieut. Hensley Out 750 Mi. Cont: 1 single engine plane, 1HB, 3DD, and two cargo ships. One four engine flying boat shot down by crew. AA very heavy mostly broadsides. No damage to own plane or crew.

Ship #445, Capt. Wuertele Out 800 Mi. Cont: 5 DD's, AA very light. No damage. [pencil notation] *Capt. Wuertele shot down [illegible] by. . .*

Ship #4426, Lieut. Andrews

Ship #403, Lieut. Hyland

Both these ships members of the striking group took off at 1045 After searching without contacting the enemy at any time the planes all returned to their base.

26 October 1942

SEARCH

Ship #223, Capt. Puerta Out 785 Mi. Cont: Sighted one float type monoplane but it did not attack. Fired upon by ground installations at Ronnel Island, no damage to plane.

Ship #444, Lieut. Sprawls Out 800 Mi. Cont: One float type monoplane 3000 yards away, did not attack

Ship #403, Lieut. Levy Out 720 Mi. Cont: Sighted 4 – 6 Zeros N.W. of Reykata Bay. Flew low over Reykata Bay. Enemy 20mm AA made hits in rudder control cables, radio compartment, navigators compartment and right wing. T/Sgt. Shepherd (Nav) wounded badly in left shoulder and upper left arm. Sgt. Berdon Radio Oper. wounded badly in the leg. Sgt. Berdon operated the radio all the way back to the base, after being propped up to the set. He later had his leg amputated above the knee at the Cut 1 Hosp.

Ship #431, Lieut. Hensley Escorted fighters to Cactus

Ship #213, Capt. Hall

Ship #534, Capt. Conradi Both these ships members of the striking group took off at 1015: a six plane formation dropped 24 500# from 20,000'. Bombs all fell beyond the BB, real close misses. No damage observed, No aa or fighters. All ships returned to base safely.

27 October 1942

NO MISSIONS TODAY.

28 October 1942

SEARCH

Ship #442, Lieut. Hyland Out 650 mi. Cont: None 318-324

Ship #216, Lieut. Sorensen Roses to Buttons 1250 1410

29 October 1942

SEARCH

Ship #523, Capt. Levy Out 800 Mi. Cont: None

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta Buttons to Roses 2330 1800

30 October 1942

SEARCH

Ship #403, Capt. Conradi Out 545 Mi. Cont: None

31 October 1942

SEARCH

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt Out 700 Mi. Cont: None

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Out 750 mi. Cont: None.

1 November 1942

SEARCH

Ship #431, Capt. Hensley Out 500 Mi. Cont: None

Ship #444, Capt. Sprawls Out 500 Mi. Cont: None

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Buttons to PdG. 1405 1730

The following ships all went out on a bombing mission this date:

Ship #216, Capt. Puerta Took off from Buttons at 0403 and was over the target at 0745 (Kukambonga). Bombed alone from 7500', and all the bombs dropped in the target area. No AA or fighter interception.

Ship #215, Capt. Sorensen Target: (Kukambonga [illegible] River) All the bombs released in 100' intervals All hit in target area. AA none.

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland Over the target at 0830 at 5000'. All the bombs dropped in and on the left of the target area. No AA.

Ship #2426, Capt. Levy Over the target area at 0840 at 4000 feet. Six of the bombs dropped in the beach the rest in the water.

All the ships returned to base unharmed.

2 November 1942

SEARCH

Ship #451, Capt. Conradi Out 750 Mi. Cont: 17 DD's, and 4 CL, very light AA, no damage. Landed at Cactus.

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Tontouta to Buttons.

The following ships were on striking and did not T. O.:

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland

Ship #216, Capt. Sprawls

Ship #421, Capt. Levy

The following combat crew left for Auckland, N.Z. this date:

Major Manierre, Capt. Messerschmitt, Capt. Hensley, plus Capt. Sorensen minus crew.

3 November 1942

SEARCH

Ship #431, Capt. Conradi Out 800 Mi. from Cactus Cont: None Returned to Buttons

The following ships were on striking but did not take off.

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta

Ship #213, Capt. Hall

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland

Ship #216, Capt. Sprawls

Ship #2426, Capt. Levy

4 November 1942

SEARCH

Ship #451, Lieut. Woodruff Out 700 Mi. Cont: None

The following ships were all on striking and did not take off:

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland

Ship #216, Capt. Sprawls

Ship #2426, Capt. Levy

The following crews left for Auckland, N. Z. on this date: Capt. Hall and Capt. Steedman.

5 November 1942

SEARCH

Ship #213, Capt. Sprawls Out 800 Mi. Cont: None 310-316
Ship #4426, Lieut. Thomas Out 800 Mi. Cont: None 316-322
The following ships were all on striking and they did not take off:
Ship #403, Capt. Puerta
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland
Ship #2426, Capt. Levy
Ship #216, Capt. Conradi

6 November 1942

SEARCH

Ship #426, Lieut. Harp Out 750 Mi. Cont: one wrecked sampan S. W. of Wainakai Bay.
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland Out 800 Mi. Cont: 3 AK, 3DD, Offshore at Cactus. The AKs were evidently unloading. Saw what looked like a double row of tents in one cove of 1000 ships bay.

7 November 1942

SEARCH

Ship #442, Capt. Conradi Out 780 Mi. Cont: 11DD, very light AA, no damage.
Ship #4426, Capt. Puerta Escort P-39's to Cactus
Ship #128, Capt. Levy Escort P-39's to Cactus remain over night.
The following ships were on striking and did not take off:
Ship #216, Capt. Sprawls
Ship #431, Lieut. Woodruff

8 November 1942

Ship #4425, Capt. Puerta Cactus to Buttons
Ship #128, Capt. Levy Cactus to Buttons
The following ships were on striking and did not take off:
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland
Ship #215, Capt. Sprawls
Ship #403, Capt. Conradi
Ship #4426, Lieut. Thomas

9 November 1942

SEARCH

Ship #403, Lieut Thomas Out 800 Mi. Cont: None
The following ships were on striking and did not take off:
Ship #44, Capt. Puerta
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland
Ship #216, Capt. Sprawls

Ship #431, Conradi

10 November 1942

SEARCH

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland Out 785 Mi. Cont: None

Ship #216, Capt. Sprawls Out 800 Mi. Cont: None

Ship #426, Lieut. Harp Out 776 Mi. Cont: Eight washed up planes on the

Beach at Reykata Bay, none apparently serviceable.

11 November 1942

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta Swing compass

The following ships were on striking but did not take off:

Ship #403, Capt. Puerta

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland

Ship #2426, Capt. Levy

Ship #216, Lieut. Woodruff

Ship #213, Capt. Conradi

12 November 1942

SEARCH

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta Out 750 Mi. Cont: 2BB, 1SL, 6DD. Intense AA, No damage. Five Zeros attacked B-17 at 1000'. The lower turret was out, tail gun went out, and the top turret would not fire long bursts. One Zero shot down cracked up in the water, one damaged maybe more. Damage to #445 two 20MM hits in the wing, few 7.7.

Ship #213, Capt. Conradi Out 770 Mi. Cont: None

Ship #426, Capt. Levy Out 800 Mi. Cont: None

The following ships were on striking and did not take off:

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland

Ship #218, Capt. Sprawls

Ship #431 To Roses for repairs

13 November 1942

SEARCH

Ship #?11, Lieut. Harp Out 720 Mi. Cont: Sighted large Jap Task Force, two small boats burning. AA very light, no damage.

Ship #060, Lieut. Thomas Out 800 Mi. Cont: 4CL, 8DD, 12AM location ??4 MI, NW cactus. Light AA. BB observed at 1050 great clouds of slate gray smoke, 5DD, circling around it. DD's fired at plane ?pen flashing of identification. AA from getting close and I could not stay around. Two miles off shore of Lunga 2DD, on fire, 1 ship sinking (unidentified).

Ship #445, Capt. Puerta Buttons to Roses 1340 1445

Ship #403, Capt. Puerta Roses to Buttons 1540 1645

Ship #216, Capt. Sprawls on striking took off at 0545. Target: Japanese Naval Force moving in on Cactus. Searched in flight led by Capt. Lucas and could not find target. Ran into front and then returned to base.

14 November 1942

SEARCH

Ship #128, Capt. Hyland Out 700 Mi. Cont: Large slick looked rather recent, lots of debris, and about 60 men of raft and observed men getting aboard, definely white men.

Ship #442, Capt. Levy on striking and took off: Closed Diamond in flight led by Major Stewart. Target: Large Jap transport. Dropped 4-500 lb. bombs at 17000' and all were near misses, no other bombing observed. Sighted a 20 ships convoy, [illegible] of the ships were burning and was badly damaged. 10-12 Zeros were around us during the bombing, rear gunner saw one Zero fall (this was not collaborated.)

Ship #213, Capt. Conradi was #2 position in flight led by Major Ridings. The target was the same and we dropped 4-500 lb bombs. Bombs not observed, no AA, and no interception by fighters.

Ship #403, Capt. Puerta Dropped 4-500 lb. bombs on the same target, and did not see any direct hits. The AA was very light and poor. One Zero was shot down.

Ship #216, Capt. Sprawls. Dropped 4-500 lb. bombs on the same target. All the bombs were very close and may have caused some damage. No AA or fighter interception.

15 November 1942

SEARCH

Ship #444, Lieut. Harp Out 775 Mi. Cont: None (Used 431st crew)

Ship #415, Lieut. Thomas Out 800 Mi. Cont: Approximately 50 men in water 35 miles off Cactus, they waved from a yellow raft. Three enemy destroyers burning, abandoned, 3 enemy cruisers. No AA.

Ship #2428, Capt. Levy Out 800 Mi. Cont: 4DD, 4CL, and three small vessels. 12-15 float Zeros at Reykata Seaplane Base. Four of five of them took off but did not have a chance to attack as the B-17 flew into the clouds.

The following three ships were all on striking and T. O.:

Ship #213, Capt. Conradi

Ship #216, Capt. Puerta both these ships loaded with 4-500 lb. bombs searched in vain for target (Transport ship). All ships appeared fully destroyed and so returned to base with bombs. No troops or supplies evident along shore of Cactus.

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland Sighted Task Force and all ships were burning with the exception of one. Dropped 4-500 lb. bombs on the one ship but no direct hits made. Sighted life raft with men on it about 30 miles SW of San Cristobal. No AA or damage to own plane.

16 November 1942

SEARCH

Ship #213, Capt. Sowers Out 800 Mi. Cont: Two burning enemy vessels, three life boats drifting empty 5-15 miles from Cactus.

The following ships were on striking and did not take off:

Ship #442, Capt. Ryland

Ship #216, Capt. Sprawls

The following combat personnel returned from a rest in N.Z.: Major Manierre, Capt. Messerschmitt, Capt. Hensley, Capt. Sorensen.

17 November 1942

Ship #213, Major Manierre Buttons to Cactus
Ship #216, Capt. Sprawls Buttons to Cactus
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland Buttons to Cactus

SEARCH

Ship #409, Capt. Hensley Out 800 Mi. Cont: None
Ship #2426, Capt. Messerschmitt Out 800 Mi. Cont: None
Ship #535, Lieut. Thomas Out 800 Mi. Cont: None
Ship #060, Capt. Puerta Out 800 Mi. Cont: None. Landed on Cactus 1220
for repairs, took off immediately after.
Ship #222, Capt. Sorensen Out 800 Mi. Cont: None

18 November 1942. STRIKING FORCE TOOK OFF

Ship #216, Capt. Sprawls arrived over Buin area at 0830. Made first bomb run and no bombs dropped as leaders bombs hung. The target was a large AK and it was stationary. Dropped 4-1000 lb. bombs at 13,000'. All the bombs were dropped on the lead plane in formation (Maj. Sewart), Although order received Bombadier had no time to sight for range. Navigator was the only member to observe the bombing and he through drift meter. One near miss and two further away, one bomb unseen. Other bombing observed:

2-3 near misses on same ship

2-3 near misses on another ship. No burning ships observed upon leaving the target. The aa was very heavy during the bombing runs. Zeros shot down by Bombadier and Upper turrett. Damage to B-17: Gash in fuselage by a 20mm. This shell wounded Corp. Ciammars [?] left waist gunner who courageously stayed at his post until the attack was over. Four 7.7 shells in the BB door.

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland. Over the target at 0810 and dropped 4-1000 lb. bombs on the leader. Possibly one direct hit on the bow of one ship. Small amount of smoke was coming out form the ship. AA from the land was very poor and light, but the AA from the ships was very heavy and accurate. Zeros attacked us upon leaving the target and one of them was shot down.

Ship #213, Major Manierre Attacked enemy shipping at Tonelei Harbor and made one run. Leader couldn't drop and made a second run on an enemy cargo ship and as leader could not drop the flight dropped on Major Manierre's Bombadier S/Sgt. Noble. Each plane dropped 4-1000 lb. bombs except lead ship. Bombs scored several hits and many near misses The ship was reported to be sunk by Lt. Chambers who arrived shortly after we left. The AA was extremely heavy. As we left the target area we were attacked by about 15-20 Zeros. They made direct frontal and side attacks. Several Zeros were shot down by the flight. The lead ships Pilot and Co-Pilot (Lt. Lee and Major Sewart) [pencil addition: *were killed in action by Zero 7.7mm.*] Col. Saunders took over and as two engines were out he made a water landing near Inga Island. The rest of the flight circled until he landed safely. Co. Saunders and remainder of the crew were picked up later. RESULTS: the cargo vessel sunk. 4-5 Zeros destroyed one B-17 shot down with Pilot and Co-Pilot killed by 7.7.

[pencil notation: *Recommend {illegible} Medal.*]

[The notebook sheet(s) containing the mission reports for 19 November 1942 through the first part of the report for 28 November 1942 are missing from the original copy in the Air Force Historical Association files. Lieut. Joaquin Castro's personal flight logs note between 2 November 1942 and 28 November 1942 note "Gone to New Zealand for a rest."]

28 November 1942

Crew got two hits on two Zeros. On the Major's ship T/Sgt. Brewster, Cpl. Stephanik and Caviness together, and Lt. Lewis knocked down Zeros. #216 was damaged with 20mm through one of the main spars. Some pictures taken. Ship #643 returned on three engines. All personnel returned without injury. Ship #403, Capt. Hall searched out 750 mi. Cont: None.

29 November 1942

Ship #216, Capt. Messerschmitt Cactus to Buttons for repairs.
Ship #643, Capt. Sorensen Cactus to Buttons for repairs.

SEARCH

Ship #134, Capt. Levy Out 800 Mi. Cont: None

30 November 1942

SEARCH

Ship #403, Capt. Steedman Out 750 Mi. Cont: None

The following ships were on striking from Cactus and did not take off:

Ship #444, Major Manierre

Ship #213, Capt. Hensley

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland

Ship #525, Capt. Sprawls

Ship #535, Capt. Conradi

CORRECTION 30 November 1942. [separate sheet inserted]

Captain searching out of Cactus. Photographed Buka Passage, Kieta Harbor, Kilului Airport, Tonolieu and Shortland Harbor. Contacted 24 enemy vessels in Shortland Harbor. Intercepted by 6 Zeros at Choisiel Island, had a running fight for about 20 minutes. Four aerial bombs were dropped on us, and we knocked down two fighters which crashed into Choisiel Island.

1 December 1942

SEARCH

Ship #403, Capt. Steedman Went out 450 miles from Cactus and didn't make any contacts.

The following ships were on striking from Cactus and did not take off:

Ship #444, Major Manierre
Ship #213, Capt. Hensley
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland
Ship #525, Capt. Sprawls
Ship #535, Capt. Conradi

2 December 1942

The following ships were on alert from Cactus all T. O. at 1300
Ship #444, Major Manierre for Buttons.
Ship #213, Capt. Hensley
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland
Ship #525, Capt. Sprawls
Ship #535, Capt. Conradi

3 December 1942

SEARCH

Ship #431, Capt. Hall. Out 500 mi. Cont: None.
Ship #213, Capt. Hensley Out 500 Mi. From Cactus returned to Buttons. Cont:
None
Ship #403, Capt. Sorensen on striking. No. T. O.
Ship #215, Capt. Levy Out 750 Miles Cont: None

4 December 1942

SEARCH

Ship # 415, Capt. Sorensen Out 800 Mi. Cont: None
Ship #403, Capt. Sorensen Out 800 Mi. Cont: None
Ship #213, Capt. Messerschmitt Buttons to Nandi and then on to Hickam Field for
repairs.

The following ships were on striking and did not take off:

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland
Ship #445, Capt. Sprawls
Ship #431, Capt. Conradi

5 December 1942

SEARCH

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland Out 800 Mi. Cont: None
The following ships were all on striking and did not take off:
Ship #213, Captain Hall
Ship #431, Capt. Hensley
Ship #444, Major Manierre
Ship #445, Capt. Sprawls
Ship #403, Capt. Levy

6 December 1942

Ship #403, Capt. Steedman Buttons to Cactus T. O. at 1300
The following ships were all on striking and did not take off:

Ship #444, Major Manierre
Ship #445, Capt. Sorensen
Ship #431, Capt. Sprawls
Ship #213, Capt. Hall
Ship #442, Capt. Hensley

7 December 1942

SEARCH

Ship #426, Capt. Sprawls Out 500 Mi. Cont: None 292-298
Ship #445, Lieut. Harp Out 800 Mi. Cont: None 298-304
Ship #403, Capt. Steedman at Cactus did not fly.

The following ships were all on striking and did not take off:

Ship #431, Capt. Hensley
Ship #213, Capt. Hall
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland
Ship #444, Capt. Levy

8 December 1942

SEARCH

Ship #445, Capt. Levy Out 800 Mi. Cont: None 298-304

Ship #403, Capt. Steedman Out from cactus searched 425 miles. Cont: 5 enemy vessels and no action. Returned to Cactus.

The following ships were all on striking and did not take off:

Ship #426, Capt. Sorensen
Ship #442, Capt. Hyland
Ship #444, Capt. Hall
Ship #431, Capt. Hensley

9 December 1942

SEARCH

Ship #445, Major Manierre Out 800 Mi. Cont: None Rear turret knocked off plane when parking it in the bunker.

Ship #403, Capt. Steedman Searched 310 miles out of Cactus Cont: 24 enemy vessels. #2 engine out and #4 on fire returned to Cactus.

The following ships were all on striking and took off at 0445:

Ship #442, Capt. Hyland. Bombed Munda Pt. Airport with 20-100 lb. bombs. All the bombs landed in the target area. Fairly accurate AA about 4" stuff, but no hits. Landed Buttons 1615.

Ship #126, Capt. Sorensen. Bombed Munda Pt. Airport with 20-100 lb. bombs. All bombs landed in the target area. AA very close. No damage to own ship. Landed Buttons Because of engine trouble.

Ship #444, Capt. Hall and Ship #431, Capt Hensley. Dropped all the bombs on Munda Pt. Airport in formation. All the bombs hit on the runway. 3" AA altitude was fine but the deflection was off. Landed at Cactus (both ships).

10 December 1942

Ship #403, Capt. Steedman at Cactus. Did not fly.

Ship #442, Capt. Sprawls Buttons to Cactus

Ship #444, Capt. Hall. Ship #431, Capt. Hensley: Capt. Hall leading five ship formation, Capt. Hensley in #2 position. Bombed large tanker with 4-1000 lb. bombs each, in Tenolei Harbor. Had escort of 4 P-38's. Scored one direct hit on the stern and several near misses. Heavy AA, altitude good but the deflection slightly off. Five enemy fighters one of which made attack and damaged an engine on #4 ship in the formation (Capt. Thomas). Fighter that made the attack was shot down by P-38 as he cleared the bomber formation. Lt. Whiteley of this Squadron flew as Co-pilot with Capt. Darby in ship #059, in #3 position.

11 December 1942

Ship #128, Capt. Levy Returned to base because of bad weather had already searched 450 Mi. Cont: None.

Ship #403, Capt. Steedman at Cactus did not fly.

Capt. Hall in Ship #444, and Capt. Hensley Ship #431 went out from Cactus on the following bombing missions: Capt. Hall in #2 position and Capt. Hensley in #3 position with Capt. Sullivan leading bombed Munda Pt. Airfield with 20-100 lb. bombs each, form 18,000'. Hits not observed because of clouds just past bomb release line. Believe all bombs hit on land which would necessitate their reaching the target. No AA or fighter interception.

Ship #442, Capt. Sprawls at Cactus did not take off.

12 December 1942

Ship #403, Capt. Steedman Cactus to Buttons.

SEARCH

Ship #415, Capt. Hyland Out 770 Mi. Cont: None 292 304

Ship #425, Lieut. Thomas Out 800 Mi. Cont: 1 enemy destroyer, heavy AA, but no damage done.

Ship #442, Capt. Sprawls. Searched from Cactus to Buka. Cont: one unidentified ship (transport) no action.

The following ships were on striking and did not take off:

Ship #232, Capt. Sorensen

Ship #425, Capt. Levy

13 December 1942

SEARCH

Ship #425, Capt. Conradi Out 775 Mi. Cont: None

Ship #444, Capt. Hyland (with houx and crew) Out 700 miles Cont: None

Ship #442, Capt. Sprawls search out of Cactus to Shortland and Tonelei. Cont: 27 enemy ships, 3 hugh flying boats on the water. Very light AA, no damage. On the return to Buttons at 19,000' ice started forming on the wings making the ships hard to handle. Landed Buttons.

The following ships were on alert but did not take off:

Ship #213, Capt. Hall

Ship #403, Capt. Sorensen

14 December 1942

Ship #403, Capt. Sorensen Buttons to Cactus

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Bombing mission. Loaded with 10-100 lb. bombed Munda Pt. airfield. Dropped all bombs to the right of the runway at about a 20 degree angle. Lost formation due to bad weather and made the bombing run alone. Landed Cactus to refuel and returned to Buttons.

Ship #403, Capt. Hensley. Bombing mission. Loaded with 10-100 lb. bombs and dropped all bombs on Munda Pt. Airfield. All the bombs dropped in the target area. A 3" AA shell went through the right horizontal stabilizer but did not explode. No injuries to plane or crew members. Returned to Buttons.

Ship #214, Capt. Hyland. Bombing mission. Loaded with 10-100 lb. bombs bombed Munda Pt. Airfield. All the bombs dropped in the target area. AA was very heavy but did not make any hits. Landed Buttons.

Ship #126, Capt. Levy. Bombing mission. Loaded with 10-100 lb. bombs bombed Munda Pt. Airfield. All the bombs dropped in the target area. AA heavy, not hits on ship. Returned to Buttons.

15 December 1942

Ship #442, Capt. Sorensen. Spare search ship at Cactus.
NO TACTICAL MISSIONS THIS DATE.

16 December 1942

SEARCH

Ship #442, Capt. Sorensen. Searched from Cactus, T. O. 0230: Flak over Choisenl Island, Bougainville (Shortland, Kieta, and Buin) Reykata Bay and One Thousand Ships Bay. No contact made.

The following ships took off from Buttons 0700 for Bombing:

Ship # 487, Capt. Levy

Ship #631, Capt Hyland

Ship #123, Capt. Hensley

Ship #213, Capt. Hall

Ship #403, Capt. Steedman

Ship #415, Lieut. Thomas

Target: Munda Pt. airfield. On the way to the airfield Capt. Steadman lost the formation and the five remaining planes went on without him. A total of 99 100 lb. bombs were drooped by the five ships. All bombs hit in the middle of the target. Attacked by 12 Zeros on the way out after dropping the bombs. Damage to own planes and personnel: #122, Prop control cable shot up. #415, Lt. Thomas lost #4 engine and #213, Capt. Hall got a 20 mm. hit in the left wing and 7.7 in bomb bay oxygen system. Sgt. Stevenson Capt. Halls crew was hit in the left shoulder by a 7.7 and continued to operate the radio. Ship #321 Capt. Hyland, was shot down. Right after the Captain made a water landing a message was sent to Buttons requesting a PBY for rescue, reply to which was "amplify." (BIG HELP). At this point Sgt. Steadman rejoined the formation and the ships all returned to Cactus. Capt. Hensleys crew claims 3 Zeros this mission.

16 December 1942. 2nd mission.

Ship #487, Capt. Hall
Ship #437, Capt. Brewer
Ship #214, Capt. Charters

Ship #403, Capt. Steedman. All ships reloaded with 20-100 lb. bombs and took off (1600) to bomb supply dump and bivouac area to NE of runway at Munda Pt. Clouds interfered with bombing runs but bombs believed dropped in target area. Had fighter escort of 8-P38's. No aerial opposition and very little AA. Landed Cactus.

17 December 1942

Ship #213, Capt. Hyland. Returned from Cactus. Several members of this crew along with Sgt. Stephens from Capt. Halls crew were sent to hospital for treatment. Following is the account of Capt. Hylands water landing: Ship #521, Capt. Hyland. Took off from Buttons at 0645. Six planes of which I was #3 of the first element led by Capt. Hall. Arrived over target at 1158 and sighted Zeros who did not attack until we had dropped our bombs. All our bombs hit in the target area. Then after turning the formation into the enemies attack we were flying straight for a second. A Zero leveled off ahead of us and come straight for me, firing as he came. He hit my #1 and #2 eng. #1 engine began to wind up about 3000 RPM and #2 was hit in the oil tanks. I couldn't feather either of the engines. On subsequent attacks our ball turret was hit in three places & a whole line of hits appeared in the nose. I decided to prepare to bail out as ship was vibrating terribly.

Capt. Hylands Water Landing Cont. [on new page]

However this soon ceased and we continued our decent with Capt. Hensley covering us. The vibrations started again and we began to lose control and so we landed in the water. The ship stayed afloat for about one minute and 15 seconds. We all paddled to the nearest shoreline and awaited rescue. A PBY picked us up at 1713 and we landed at Cactus at 1845. Minor cuts and bruises to all members of the crew. No serious injuries.

17 December 1942 Cont'd.

Ship #403, Capt. Steedman Took off at 0600.
Ship #487, Capt. Hall
Ship #214, Capt. Levy
Ship #122, Capt. Hensley
Ship #437, Capt. Brewer

Ship #060, Capt. Kinney Loaded with 8-500 lb. bombs the six ships went after the runway at Munda Pt. 1st. Flight dropped their bombs to the left of the runway. The 2nd flight dropped four bombs on the runway and the remainder on to the left of the runway. Capt. Brewers bombs failed to release and his bombsight was out and he then came up and got on Capt. Halls wing. Three more runs were made and on the final run all the bombs were dropped. No aerial opposition and little AA. Landed Cactus at 0930.

18 December 1942

SEARCH

Ship #217, Capt. Sprawls Out 600 Mi. Cont: None
Ship #431, Capt. Conradi Out 775 Mi. Cont: None

The following ships all took off on a bombing mission:

Ship #487, Capt. Hall

Ship #122, Capt. Hensley

Ship #403, Capt. Steedman

Ship #814, Capt. Charters

Ship #437, Capt. Levy. All ships loaded with 20-100 lb. bombs. Took off from Cactus at 0530. Capt. Charters lost prop governor at 0900 and returned to Cactus. Went after supply dump and bivouac area. The weather on the way to the target was rotten, and finally managed to get above and around it. At the target the weather was good. A total of 80 bombs was dropped in the target area covering it thoroughly. Subsequent reports from Coast Watcher reported main supply dump hit, ammunition dump hit, and camp ground of 500 men. Had fighter escort of 8-P38s but lost contact with them prior to the bombing. No aerial opposition and very little AA. All ships returned safely to Cactus.

18 December 1942 NIGHT MISSION

Ship #122, Capt. Hensley. Took off from Cactus at 2300. Target: Kahili Airfield. Over target at 0100 and dropped 8-100 lb. bombs, dropping at the end of the runway. At 0216 dropped 3-100 lb. bombs on s. end of the runway, no hits observed. At 0315 dropped 3-100 lb. bombs across the center of the field. At 0345 dropped 5-100 lb. bombs on the beach area at end of runway. Left the target at 0355. Very little AA, and on aerial opposition. Returned to Cactus.

19 December 1942

The following all returned from Cactus this date:

Ship #487, Capt. Hall

Ship #132, Capt. Hensley

Ship #415, Lieut. Thomas.

Ship #214, Capt. Levy did not return from Cactus. Flew a night mission. T. O. at 1100 & bombed Munda Pt. Over target at 1230, dropped 20-100# and 2 cases beer bottles. All in target area. Left 0415.

20 December 1942

Ship #213, Capt. Sprawls Test hop to Roses.

Ship #242, Capt. Sorensen Test hop to Roses.

Ship #214, Capt. Levy No mission.

21 December 1942

SEARCH

Ship #442, Capt. Sorensen. Out 800 Mi. Cont: Saw oil slick and a couple of boats, seen some Australians in a small boat near Ongtona, Java. Landed Buttons 1630.

Ship #2426, Capt. Steedan. Buttons to Cactus.

Ship #431, Capt. Conradi Buttons to Cactus.

Lt. Houx and crew flew to Cactus as passengers and will pick up a ship on arrival.

Capt. Levy and crew returned from Cactus in Ship #211 as passengers.

22 December 1942

Ship #2426, Capt. Steedman. Took off from Cactus at 0930, the target being Munda Pt. Airfield. Dropped 20-100 lb. bombs on Navigators ETA. Made 7 runs and were over target for two hours. Landed at Cactus.

Lt. Houx at Cactus, no mission.

23 December 1942

SEARCH

Ship #436, Major Manierre Out 800 Mi. Cont: None

Ship #122, Capt. Hensley Out 800 Mi. Cont: None

Ship # 227, Capt. Hall. Out 800 mi. Cont.: None.

Ship #444, Capt. Sprawls Buttons to Cactus.

Ship #2426, Capt. Steedman. Took off from Cactus at 1015 flying formation. Dropped 20-100 lb. bombs on Munda Pt. Airfield. Bombs all very far from target, AA very heavy. Landed at Cactus 1415.

Shp # , Lt. Houx. Bombed Munda Pt. Airfield with 20-100 lb. bombs. All bombs hit in the target area. No AA, or damage to plane, landed at Cactus.

24 December 1942

SEARCH

Ship #442, Capt. Sorensen Out 800 Mi. Cont: None

Ship #403, Capt. Levy Out 725 Mi. Cont: One Mitsubishi 96 shot at him and made a few Hits. Not damage to own ship.

Ship #2426, Capt. Steedman Cactus to Buttons.

Lt. Houx at Cactus, no mission.

25 December 1942

Ship #416, Lt. Houx. Bombed Kahili with 4-1000 lb Bombs. One hit on the taxi strip, and one of the left of the runway. No damage to own plane or crew. Returned to Buttons.

Ship #444, Capt. Sprawls. Searched out of Cactus and from 24,000' photographed Buka Airfield and Passage, Kaieta Airfield, and the shoreline of Bogenville. Let down to 15,000' and photographed Reykata Bay and returned to Base.

26 December 1942

Ship #428, Lt. Thomas Buttons to Cactus

Ship #444, Capt. Sprawls Cactus to Buttons

Ship #442, Capt. Hall, searched. Out 800 miles. Cont: None.

Ship #415, Capt Hensley, searched. Out 800 miles, Cont: None.

Ship #431, Capt. Conradi. Buttons to Cactus.

27 December 1942

Ship #145, Capt. Sorensen, searched. Out 750 Mi. Cont: None

28 December 1942

The following named combat crews left for Port Moresby this date:

Major Manierre

Ship #122, Capt. Puerta
Ship #413, Capt. Hall
Ship #643, Capt. Hensley
Ship #437, Capt. Sorensen
Ship #415, Capt. Steedman.

Lt. O. D. Thomas in Ship #428 was reported as having not returned from a search mission. It is believed that he was attacked by Zeros and possibly shot down.

[The notebook sheet(s) containing the mission reports for 29 December 1942 through the first part of the report for 8 January 1943 are missing from the original copy in the Air Force Historical Association files.]

8 January 1943. Cont'd.

Damage to own plane: #4 engine was shot out 2 sq. feet of skin shot away from right wing by 20 mm fire. Two Zeros were shot down by crew members. Landed Cactus.

9 January 1943

Ship #128, Capt. Puerta Cactus to Buttons

10 January 1943

NO MISSIONS TODAY

11 January 1943

Ship #413, Capt. Sorensen Buttons to Cactus

12 January 1943

Ship #442, Capt. Hall. Search. Out 800 mi. Cont: None

Ship #413, Capt. Sorensen. Searched out of Cactus. Flew over the northern part of Bouganville and back down over San Isabel Island, and Reykata Bay. No Contacts made.

13 January 1943

Ship #442, Capt. Hensley Searched out 800 Mi. Cont: None

Ship #413, Capt. Sorensen. Searched out of Cactus. Flew over the left side of Bouganville, Shortland and Tonolei Harbors and back over Russell Islands. Contacts: 16 enemy vessels, and numerous flying boats. No interception or AA of any description.

14 January 1943

Ship #442, Capt. Steedman. Out 400 Mi. Cont: None

Ship #413, Capt. Sorensen. Flew over the Japanese lines at Guadalcanal and

dropped about 6 tons of supplies to American troops. Made three different trips and on each was fired upon by Japanese troops from the ground. No damage to plane or personnel. Landed Cactus.

15 January 1943

Ship #213, Capt. Puerta Out 800 Mi. Cont: None
Ship #413, Capt. Sorensen Cactus to Buttons

16 January 1943

Ship #213, Capt. Hall. Searched. Out 800 mi. Cont: None.

17 January 1943

NO MISSIONS TODAY

18 January 1943

Ship #213, Capt. Hensley Searched Out 800 Mi. Cont: None

19 January 1943

Ship #442, Capt. Puerta Buttons to Cactus

20 January 1943

Ship #442, Capt. Puerta search out of Cactus. Took pictures of Wickam and Viru Harbors. Seen 10 vessels in the Tonolei, Buin, and Shortland area. Float Zeros taking off from Shortland as we left on three engines. No AA at all.

Ship #413, Capt. Steedman Buttons to Cactus
Ship #211, Capt. Sowers Searched Out 800 Mi. Cont: None

21 January 1943

Ship #442, Capt. Puerta search out of Cactus. Lost engine over Buka. Contacted 4 AK's, 1DD, 50 miles out of Tonolei. No AA, or interception.

Ship #213, Capt. Steedman. Search out of Cactus. Encountered five ship and one fighter, all enemy. No action.

22 January 1943

Ship # 442, Capt. Puerta search out of Cactus. Searched Shortland area. Shot at by four Zeros, no hits or injuries. 1 DD off Shortland, two Cargo Ships, 1DD and 1 PT 20 miles off Shortland. Took pictures of Munda and was fired upon by AA, no hits. Returned to Cactus

Ship #156, Capt. Sorensen Searched 800 Mi. Cont: None

23 January 1943

Ship #442, Capt. Puerta Cactus to Buttons – Ship #215, Capt. Steedman bombed Munda Pt. All bombs in target area. No AA.

24 January 1943

Ship #520, Capt. Hall Searched Out 800 mi. Cont: Own task Force.

Ship #457, Capt. Hensley Searched Out 800 Mi. Cont: Own task Force.

Ship #213, Capt. Steedman. Bombed Munda Pt. singularly, all bombs dropped in the target area. No AA or intercepttion. Returned to Cactus

25 January 1943

NO TACTICAL MISSIONS THIS DATE.

26 January 1943

Ship #213, Capt. Steedman. Took off from Cactus on a striking mission and returned to Base because of weather conditions.

27 January 1943

Ship #415, Capt. Hall

Ship #156, Capt. Hensley

Ship #054, Capt. Sowers. The above three ships all went out on a Special Search Mission. The mission being to try to locate Ship #403 which was forced down at sea. No contacts or planes sighted by any of the above.

28 January 1943

NO TACTICAL MISSIONS THIS DATE.

29 January 1943

Ship #151, Capt. Hall. Buttons to Cactus

Ship #415, Capt. Sowers Buttons to Cactus

Ship #442, Capt. Hensley Special Search for Ship #403 . No planes sighted.

Ship #054, Capt. Houx. Search Out 800 Mi. Cont: None

30 January 1943

Ship #213, Capt. Steedman Cactus to Buttons

Ship #442, Capt. Hensley Buttons to Cactus

31 January 1943

Ship #122, Capt. Houx Buttons to Cactus

1 February 1943

The following three crews went on a bombing mission and failed to return. Captain's Hall, Hensley, Houx.

Captain Sowers and crew flew a photo mission over Rekata Bay.

2 February 1943

Captain Sowers and Crew flew a photo mission over Rekata Bay.

3 February 1943

Captain Sowers and Crew flew a photo mission over Rekata Bay and Russell Island.

4 February 1943

Captain Sowers and Crew took off from Cactus at 0200 with 20-100 lb. bombs. The bombs were dropped on Kahili Airfield. No AA, but a great many searchlights. Hits not observed.

5 February 1943

NO MISSIONS TODAY

6 February 1943

Captain Sowers and Crew flew an 800 mile search out of Cactus. Sectors 04° to 013°. No Contacts made.

7 February 1943

Captain Sowers and Crew returned to Buttons.

Undated sheet: This marks the end of activities for the original nine crews that left Oahu, Hawaii on 18 July 1942. On the [illegible date-hole punched] th of February 1943 orders were received relieving all combat personnel of this organization from assigned. FINIS. [Other AAF documents note this order as dated 7 February 1943.]

FLYING OFFICERS

Commanding Officer:

Major Manierre, Ernest R. 0-23367

(Captains)

Eberenz, Richard J. 0386381
Hall, Earl O. 0325099
Messerschmitt, Kermit D. 0-330690
Puerta, Frank D. 0-401051
Richards, Robert H. 0-305202
Stone, Rolle E. Jr. 0-383747
Wuertele, Carl N. 0-388901

(1st Lieutenants)

Alley, Bert A. 0-430072
Castro, Joaquin. 0-428914
Eminger, Leo M. 0-388557

Gaskell, Robert C.	0-436864
Hensley, Harold P.	0-413623
Hyland, Donald M.	0-413597
McGhee, Robert H.	0-439441
Norton, Charles E.	0-416333
Sage, Hubert P.	0-426962
Sprawls, Philip C.	0-416915
Soensen, Glenn W.	0-416908
Sowers, Louis M.	0-4146910
Toler, Richard G.	0-416929

May 20, 1943 marked the beginning operations for the 42nd after replacements were made for the original men who went down under July 18, 1942 and ceased operations February 7, 1943.

[END TRANSCRIPT. MISSION RECORDS CONTINUE IN THE DOCUMENT]

Appendix 19

The Flight Log of First Lieutenant Joaquin Castro

42nd Bombardment Squadron (Heavy)

United States Army Air Force

*(The original handwritten log was difficult to read; spellings were retained as written in most casts.
Transcribed by Arnold Guerrero)*

			May 1942	
DATE	Type of Pla	Mission	Time	Remarks
On Captain Hall's Crew				
5/10/1942	B-17D	Search1	15:00	Search Mission out of Hawaii-back again
5/12/1942	B-17D	P.Bombing	3:45	Practice Bombing Hawaii
5/12/1942	B-17D	Local	1:15	Practice Night landings
5/14/1942	B-17E	Formation	4:00	Formation and Bombing Kawai #1
5/17/1942	B-17D	Bombing	4:00	Bombing at Kawai
5/17/1942	B-17D	Training	3:30	With Ebereg to Hilo and back
5/18/1942	"	Interception2	4:00	Squadron Interception Problem
5/19/1942	"	Local	2:00	Practice Night landings-Oahu
5/20/1942	"	Local	2:00	Radio Range Orientation problem
5/24/1942	"	Search3	11:00	Search, contacted DD and SS. (F)
5/28/1942	"	Search4	12:00	Search out of Hickam- no contacts
5/29/1942	"	Local	2:05	Dawn Patrol around Oahu
5/30/1942	"	Local	2:00	Compass Swing
5/31/1942	"	Local	2:00	Dawn Patrol to Kawai and back
June				
6/2/1942	B-17E	Local	2:00	Dawn Patrol around Oahu
6/2/1942	"	Local	0:40	Moved- Hickam to Kuoloa- Change of Station
6/6/1942	"	Search5	11:15	Search Mission- Out of Hawaii
6/7/1942	"	Local	0:20	Hickam to Kuoloa
6/9/1942	"	Local	1:45	Compass Swing
6/13/1942	"	Formation6	8:00	Oahu to Midway
6/14/1942	"	Search6	7:47	Search for Enemy out of Midway
6/15/1942	"	Local	1:15	Compass Swing
6/16/1942	"	Search7	8:45	Search- Midway
6/18/1942	"	Search8	8:30	" "
6/19/1942	"	Local	1:30	Compass Swing
6/20/1942	"	Search9	8:30	Search- Midway for Enemy
6/22/1942	"	Search10	8:30	" " " "
6/24/1942	"	Search11	9:00	" " " "
6/25/1942	"	Search12	8:00	Search for Survivals at sea out of Midway
6/26/1942	"	Formation13	10:00	Formation Flight from Midway to Hawaii
6/30/1942	"	P. Bombing	1:30	Practice Bombing Mission

				July	
7/1/1942	B-17E		Bombing	3:00	Practice Bombing
7/3/1942	"		Gunnery	1:20	Gunnery practice- formation
7/5/1942	"		Search14	4:30	Search Mission - Kuoloa
7/12/1942	"		Local	1:30	Compass Swing
7/14/1942	"		Local	0:45	Hickam to Kahutu
7/14/1942	"		Local	0:40	Kahuto to Kuoloa
7/15/1942	"		Local	0:30	Kuoloa to Hickam
7/15/1942	"		Local	0:30	Hickam to Kahutu
7/16/1942	"		Local	0:30	Kahutu to Hickam
4/16/1942	"		Local	0:30	Hickam to Kahutu
7/17/1942	"		Local	1:00	Kahutu to Hickam and back
7/18/1942	"		X-C	9:00	Kahuto, Hawaii to Christmas Island
7/19/1942	"		X-C	6:30	Christmas Island to Canton
7/20/1942	"		X-C	7:35	Canton to Noudi, Fiji Islands
7/22/1942	"		X-C	6:30	Fiji Islands to New Caledonia
7/24/1942	"		Local	2:00	Dawn Patrol at New Caledonia
7/26/1942	"		Local	2:30	Dawn Patrol at New Caledonia
7/28/1942	"		Search1	8:40	Search out of N.C.- no contacts
7/31/1942	"		X-C	2:35	Dawn Patrol at New Caledonia to Efate
Total flying time including school, training, B18 and B17 time					
	up to July 1, 1942 =				535:20:00
	Flying time for July=				60:05:00
	To be carried forward now				595:25:00
				August	
8/1/1942	B-17E		Fotogroup2	9:55	Foto Mission over Molaita-Solomons Is.
8/2/1942	"		X-C	2:50	Efate to New Caledonia
8/3/1942	"		Observation3	6:20	Observation of our Fleet
8/4/1942	"		Search4	10:20	Search out of New Caledonia
8/6/1942	"		Search5	10:55	Search -N.C. Lost again- 3 times now, engine trouble
8/10/1942	"		Search6	9:00	Searched out of New Caledonia
8/11/1942	"		formation	2:10	From New. Cal. To Efate
8/12/1942	"		X-C	1:32	Efate to Espiritu Santo
8/12/1942	"		X-C	1:20	Santo to Efate
8/13/1942	"		Cargo	1:06	Cargo from Efate to Santo
8/13/1942	"		X-C	1:20	Santo to Efate
8/14/1942	"		Cargo	1:16	Efate to Santo
8/15/1942	"		Search7	9:30	Search Mission out of Santo into Solomons
8/17/1942	"		Patrol	3:00	Santos- off shore Patro
8/18/1942	"		Bombing8	8:30	Bombing of Gizo, New Georgia Is.
8/19/1942	"		X-C	3:45	Santo to New Cal.
8/21/1942	"		Escort	2:35	Escorted P-400's from N.C. to Efate
8/21/1942	"		Escort	1:30	" " " Efate to Santos

8/22/1942	"		Escort9	9:00	" " " Santos to Guadalcanal
8/25/1942	"		Bombing10	13:30	Bombed ships at Gizo harbor with Narten
8/26/1942	"		Search11	12:40	Search- Contacted Enemy 4-engine flying boat- shot some down - attached by zeros
8/28/1942	"		Search12	11:00	Search out of Santo
8/31/1942	"		X-C	3:00	Santo to New Caledonia
September					
9/10/1942	B17-E		Test Hop	2:13	Test Hoped #420- Johnny come for a ride
9/11/1942	"		C-X	2:20	New Caledonia to Efate
9/11/1942	"		C-X	1:00	Efate to Santos
9/12/1942	"		Search13	12:30	Search- Santos- Very bad weather, no contacts
9/13/1942	"		Bombing14	7:00	Looking for Jap Task Force- no contacts
9/15/1942	"		Search15	12:00	Search- Santos
9/19/1942	"		Bombing16	11:15	Bombed Rukata Bay- no hits observed
9/21/1942	"		Bombing17	10:15	Bombed Rukata Bay- Fires started
9/24/1942	"		C-X	3:25	Santos to New Caledonia
October					
10/6/1942	"		C-X	4:25	New Caledonia to Santos
10/8/1942	"		Search18	11:00	Search-Santos-cotacted Jap Task Force, attached by 2 Zero fighters, shot down one, landed at Guadalcanal, stayed there overnight
10/9/1942	"		X-C-Search19	4:30	Guadalcanal to Santos
10/12/1942	"		Search20	12:15	Search-Santos-sighted life raft- Rescued
10/14/1942	"		Bombing21	8:00	Stiking against Jap Task force- darkness
10/18/1942	"		Search22	12:00	Search- Santos
10/24/1942	"		Local	1:45	Test Hop #213 over Santos
10/25/1942	"		Search23	13:00	Search- Santos contacted 1BB, 3DD Japs, attacked by Zeros, good clouds.
November					
11/1/1942	B17E		Cargo	3:10	Santos to New Caledonia
11/2/1942	"		Cargo	3:00	N.C. to Santos with footlockers and Officer's mess equipment
Gone to New Zealand for a rest					
11/25/1942	"		Search24	12:00	Search out of Santos
11/28/1942	"		Search25	12:15	" " " " (887:25) according to operations
December					
12/3/1942	B17E		Search26	12:15	Search out of Santos
12/9/1942	"		Bombing27	8:00	Bombed Munda Air Field (100#)
12/10/1942	"		Bombing28	5:50	Bombed Shortland- Tanker (1000#)

12/11/1942	"	Bombing29	5:15	Bombed Munda Air Field (100#)	
12/14/1942	"	Bombing30	12:35	Bombed Munda Air Field (100#)	
12/16/1942	"	Bombing31	7:40	Bombed Munda Air Field (100#) Hyland shot down	
12/16/1942	"	Bombing32	3:00	Bombed Munda Air Field (100#)	
12/17/1942	"	Bombing33	3:35	Bombed Munda Air Field (100#)	
12/18/1942	"	Bombing34	3:50	Bombed Munda Air Field (100#)	
12/19/1942	"	C-X	5:00	Return to Santos	
12/23/1942	"	Search35	11:20	Searched Santos-sighted empty life boat and dibris	
12/26/1942	"	Search36	11:15	Searched Santos- no contacts	
12/28/1942	"	C-X	4:40	Santos to Guadalcanal	
12/29/1942	"	C-X	5:45	Guadualcanal to Port Moresby- Night Mission	
			January		
1/1/1943	B17E	Bombing	4:30	Bombing out of Port Moresby, Bad weather	
1/4/1943	"	Bombing	6:45	Bombing Rabual out of P.M., bad weather	
1/5/1943	"	C-X	5:30	Return to Guadalcanal	
1/6/1943	"	Bombing37	4:50	Bombed Shortland Harbor	
1/12/1943	"	Search	11:00	Searched out of Santos- no contacts	
1/14/1943	"	Compass Swi	1:45	Swing Compass on #213- Stern	
1/16/1943	"	Search	10:40	Search- Santos- Pelton	
1/24/1943	"	Search	11:30	Search- Santos- Carper	
1/27/1943	"	Search	9:15	Search for lost crew- G.T.	

Appendix 20
42nd Bombardment Squadron.
Named Targets and Bases
as listed in
the Headquarters and
Castro Mission Lists

* *Hall/Castro Mission or base*

Auckland, N.Z. *

Blackett Strait

Buttons (slang for Espiritu Santo Island)

Cactus (slang for Henderson Field, Guadalcanal)

Canton Island *

Cape Nahahua, San Cristobal *

Christmas Island *

Efate Island (Roses) *

Espiritu Santo Airfield (Buttons) *

Fantan (slang for Fiji)

Fiji Island (Fantan)

Gizo Airfield, Gizo Island *

Gizo Harbor

Guadalcanal Island *

Hickam Field, Hawaii *

Indispensable reef

Kahili Airfield

Koumao

Kukambonga [illegible] River

Kukum Harbor

Kukumgonga (Variously: Kakanbona; Kokambona, Kukum; Guadacanal)

Lengo (Channel?)

Lunga Airfield (later Henderson Field), Guadalcanal

Lunga Point, Guadalcanal

Midway Island *

Molombangari *

Munda Pt. Airport *

Nandi, Fiji *

Ndeni.

Ongtona, Java

Ontony Java,

Plaines des Gaiacs, New Caledonia (PdG) (Poppy) *

Point Cruz in Kukumbanga

Poppy (slang for PdG)
Port Moresby, New Guinea *
Rabaul Harbor, New Guinea *
Rekata Bay (Reykata Bay) *
Renound Island
Ronnell Island,
Roses (slang for Efate Island)
Russell Islands
San Isabel Island
Shark Bay Island
SOUVA
Tontouta *
Viru Harbor, New Georgia
Wainakai Bay (sp.), New Zealand (Wairakai Bay)
Wickam Harbor, New Georgia
Xahuku, Oahu *

Sites associated with Bougainville Island or Choiseul Island:

Bougainville
Buin, Bougainville
Buka Airfield
Buka Passage,
Choiseul Island, or Choisiel Island (Choiseul Bay)
Kaieta Airfield (west coast of Bougainville)
Kieta Harbor,
Kilului Airport,
One Thousand Ships Bay
Rekata Bay or Reykata Bay
Shortland Harbor
Shortland Island
Tenolei Harbor (Tonelei Harbor) * or Tonolieu (of Kahili Airfield, Bougainville)

Appendix 21

The Crew

B-17 Flying Fortress crews in the South Pacific spent most of their time together. They flew missions, stayed close together during off-hours so they could react quickly during alerts, and went to secure areas for rest and relaxation together. This booklet is about the Pilot of one B-17 crew. Of the others, we know little. This section is a start toward discovering who the rest of the crew were, and a bit about them.

Earl O. Hall, Pilot

ID: **0-325099**

Entered the Service From: **Texas**

Rank: **Major**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

***** Joaquin Castro, Co-Pilot**

ID: **0-428914**

Entered the Service From: **Texas**

Rank: **First Lieutenant**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**



Joaquin Castro entered the service, leaving his job at the law firm of Strickland, Ewers and Wilkins in Mission Texas. He was a student in the Mission schools, completing Mission High School, where he was active in football, baseball, basketball and track. He completed work at Edinburgh Junior College before beginning his career. Castro trained at Luke Field, Arizona, where he was commissioned in November, 1941. Lt. Castro was stationed at Hickam Field in Hawaii on December 7, 1941. Lt. Castro was gathering material for his first post-war goal, a

book to be titled “Living On and Under the Wing.”

Frank N. Stern, Jr., Navigator

ID: 0-438256

Entered the Service From: **Illinois**

Rank: **Second Lieutenant**

Awards: **Air Medal, Purple Heart**

The navigator directs the flight from departure to destination and return. He must know the exact position of the airplane at all times with the aid of pilotage, dead reckoning, radio navigation, or celestial navigation. In order to fulfill his duties as navigator, he also has to be familiar with instrument calibration, pre-flight planning, and flight debriefing. The navigator operates and services one of the machine guns located near his station.

James Y. Bales, Engineer

ID: 15058894

Entered the Service From: **Indiana**

Rank: **Staff Sergeant**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

The engineer is supposed to know more about the airplane than any other member of the crew. He works closely together with the pilot and co-pilot, checking engine operation, fuel consumption, and the operation of all equipment. He also works with the bombardier and radio operator helping them in their tasks. The engineer also operates the top turret, and thus, acts as one of the gunners of B-17.

Paul Adler, Waist Gunner

ID: 06147915

Entered the Service From: **Massachusetts**

Rank: **Staff Sergeant**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Purple Heart**



Paul Adler, Waist Gunner

Waist gunners are characterized as “flexible gunners” as opposed to “turret gunners.”. They have to be familiar with the coverage area of all gun positions. They have to be experts in aircraft identification, and must also know how to maintain and operate the guns in various conditions.

Francis S. Banasiak, Bombardier

ID: 11020224

Entered the Service From: **Massachusetts**

Rank: **Staff Sergeant**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

The bombardier is responsible for accurate and effective bombing. He is in absolute command of the plane during the bombing run. He actually may control the plane through the bomb sight while making his way to the correct release point. As preparatory tasks, the bombardier studies the current target and corresponding weather conditions before take-off, and arms the bombs when the plane is over enemy territory. The bombardier also operates the machine guns located on the nose of the B-17.

James C. Stephens, Jr. Radio Man

ID: 06953552

Entered the Service From: **Colorado**

Rank: **Staff Sergeant**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster**



Jim Stephens

(Used by permission of the Stephens family.)

The radio operator is responsible for all the radio equipment of B-17. His duties include position reports, assisting the navigator, keeping the liaison and command sets properly tuned and in good operating order, and last but not least, maintaining a log. Apart from his radio operating, he acts as a gunner, and usually also as a flight photographer.

Martin T. Grady, Gunner

ID: **06980875**

Entered the Service From: **New York**

Rank: **Sergeant**

Awards: **Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

The gunners belong to one of two distinct categories: turret gunners and flexible gunners. They have to be familiar with the coverage area of all gun positions. They have to be experts in aircraft identification, and must also know how to maintain and operate the guns in various conditions. The designated gunner posts are right and left waist gunners, ball turret gunner and tail gunner. Other gunner posts include nose turret gunner, cheek guns, top turret gunner, and radio room gunner.

Jesse N. Olmstead, Radio Man

ID: 11033041

Entered the Service From: **Connecticut**

Rank: **Sergeant**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**



This clipping from the Portsmouth, N. H. Herald is the only information found on Sgt. J. W. Olmstead.

The radio operator is responsible for all the radio equipment of B-17. His duties include position reports, assisting the navigator, keeping the liaison and command sets properly tuned and in good operating order, and last but not least, maintaining a log. Apart from his radio operating, he acts as a gunner, and usually also as a flight photographer.

Unidentified Crew Member



This photograph is thought to be a member of the crew. The headset seems to indicate a radio operator. It may be Frank Banasiak or possibly Jesse Olmstead.

Appendix 22

Clipping from a newspaper, describing First Lt. Joaquin Castro's experiences.

MISSION, May 4.—Missing in action since Feb. 1, First Lt. Joaquin Castro, Army Air Forces Flying Fortress pilot in the South Pacific, may never get to write the book, "Living On and Under the Wing," which he planned for his first after-the-war task.

He was stationed at Hickam Field when the war started. Once he was adrift in a rubber raft for four days without food and water. He was awarded the Air Medal with the Oak Leaf Cluster.

His father, Crispin Castro, Latin American carpenter, will receive the decorations.

The Oak Leaf Cluster was awarded to Lieutenant Castro for combat action which took place over the Solomon Islands on Aug. 16, and for another action in the same area on Dec. 16, it was revealed to the young officer's parents in a letter from Maj. Gen. J. A. Ulio, adjutant general of the Army.

"As first pilot of a heavy bombardment plane, sent on a search mission Aug. 16, 1942, Lieutenant Castro participated in an attack on a Japanese four-engine flying boat which was sighted and engaged in battle at a point about 50 miles northwest of Gizo Island," an official report said.

"After the first firing, the enemy craft turned away but was overtaken and again engaged for approximately 45 minutes, finally being shot down by Lieutenant Castro and other members of his crew. Immediately after this ac-



LIEUTENANT CASTRO.

pay his tuition. He was active in football, baseball, basket ball and track in high school and college.

Signs Urge Lifts for Service Men

MONAHANS, May 3. — Signs reading "Give a Soldier a Lift" have been placed at two service man "pick-up" stations on Highway 80 here, according to Russell Ackley, Monahans Lions Club publicity chairman.

The club, sponsored by the erection of the stations at the suggestion of the public relations office at the Rattlesnake Bomber Base, Pyote, and joins the Army in requesting co-operation from soldier and civilian alike in the effort to discourage the dangerous practice of stringing out along the highway to seek rides.

being shot down by Lieutenant Castro and other members of his crew. Immediately after this action, their airplane was attacked by an enemy fighter which made one pass, secured two hits on the left wing, and then pursued, out of gun range, for approximately 50 miles before turning away."

Letters which Lieutenant Castro wrote at frequent intervals to his former employer, J. F. Ewers of Mission, revealed many interesting sidelights of his combat experiences and of the philosophy of life which he had developed.

In November, 1942, he wrote that he was getting all the fun he had expected and that he had a sneaking suspicion that he had only started.

One letter described his experiences and his thoughts during the four days when he and eight other members of a bomber crew were adrift in rubber life rafts "somewhere off Oahu" after their instruments had miscalculated and their plane was forced down, out of fuel.

"For a while there, I was figuring out that it was going to be very interesting finding out all those questions that bother most men as to what lies just beyond in that other world when you step out of this one," he said. "I was sort of looking forward to it . . . one thing that was bothering me most was the question of food. Would I have to worry about food over there?"

Lieutenant Castro, 25, was commissioned in November, 1941, at Luke Field, Ariz.

Before he received the appointment for aviation training he was employed in the law firm of Strickland, Ewers & Wilkins of Mission, working in the office where he first served as janitor while working his way through Mission High School and Edinburg Junior College. He drove the bus operated for junior college students between Mission and Edinburg to

discourage the dangerous practice of stringing out along the highway to seek rides.

2,000 Reservists Will Be 'Screened' at Maxey

DALLAS, May 4 (P).—Two thousand enlisted reservists from colleges in five States in the 8th Service Command will be "screened" at Camp Maxey, Texas, beginning Saturday to determine which Army specialized training unit they shall be sent to, Command Headquarters announced Tuesday.

Selection of the reservists for further training will provide an uninterrupted flow of professionally and technically trained men to fill the growing needs of the Army, the announcement said.

TEST PETROLEUM JELLY THIS WAY
 Press Moroline between thumb and finger. Spread slowly apart. Long fibres prove Moroline's high quality. For minor cuts, burns, bruises. 5c, triplex size, 10c.

KIDNEYS MUST REMOVE EXCESS ACIDS

Help 15 Miles of Kidney Tubes Flush Out Poisonous Waste

If you have an excess of acids in your blood, your 15 miles of kidney tubes may be overworked. These tiny filters and tubes are working day and night to help Nature rid your system of excess acids and poisonous waste.

When disorder of kidney function permits poisonous matter to remain in your blood, it may cause nagging backache, rheumatic pains, leg pains, loss of pep and energy, getting up nights, swelling, puffiness under the eyes, headaches and dizziness. Frequent or scanty passages with smarting and burning sometimes shows there is something wrong with your kidneys or bladder.

Kidneys may need help the same as bowels, so ask your druggist for Doan's Pills, used successfully by millions for over 40 years. They give happy relief and will help the 15 miles of kidney tubes flush out poisonous waste from your blood. Get Doan's Pills.

Appendix 23

American Aircraft in the South Pacific

The United States Army and Navy used a variety of aircraft in the early days of World War II. This selection of aircraft features the planes most closely associated with the 42nd Bombardment Squadron.

The B-17 Flying Fortress

The B-17 “Flying Fortress” was the primary heavy bomber in the early years of WWII in the South Pacific. Since it was so centrally the tool of war of the 42nd Bombardment Squadron, a description is in order.

The B-17 Bomber was a powerful and well-armed bomber, but it was designed for and served best where the Army Air Force could muster large flights of bombers, numbering in the hundreds or more. Such massive flights combined their defensive firepower for better defense against fighter attack, and could lay massive carpets of bombs on a target area to achieve enormous destructive capability. The plane and the top-secret Norton bombsight were key to victory in Europe. In the Pacific, however, the B-17 was a less effective weapon. There were few massive targets open for intensive bombing, and there were too few B-17 squadrons to mount large attacks. Typically, Pacific missions consisted of four to six aircraft, using a “get in and get out” attack strategy. Targets were Japanese airfields or harbors with Japanese shipping anchored.



B-17E in flight - This is the model Earl flew off Guadalcanal.

(Photographs courtesy the USAF Museum Photo Archives)



B-17E - Three plane flight over water. This is typical of a mission flight group. Two flights like this comprised Earl's final mission.

The PBY

The PBY was everyone's friend in the South Pacific. It was the primary rescue vehicle for air force crews who went down during missions, and was used heavily for reconnaissance missions seeking Japanese shipping and task forces. Being slow, sluggish, and poorly armed, it was generally not considered a combat aircraft, but excelled at its primary missions.

The amphibious aircraft could land and take off from land or water.



PBY-6A

The P-400 Airacobra



During much of its fighting in the Pacific and on the Eastern Front the P-400 Airacobra was consistently outnumbered and had to counter an aggressive foe on the offensive. Under those conditions a good ground-attack plane was vital, and once the ability of the Airacobra in this role were realized, it performed admirably.

In the Southwest Pacific in the early days, the AAF desperately needed a fast-climbing interceptor to tackle Japanese bombing raids. The P-400 simply could not fulfill this role, but the AAF also needed a ground-attack aircraft to help cope with the Japanese invasions. In this role the P-39 was perfect, for its only major limitation — a significant one — was its range. Even external tanks added little to its 120-gallon internal fuel capacity.

P-38 Lightning



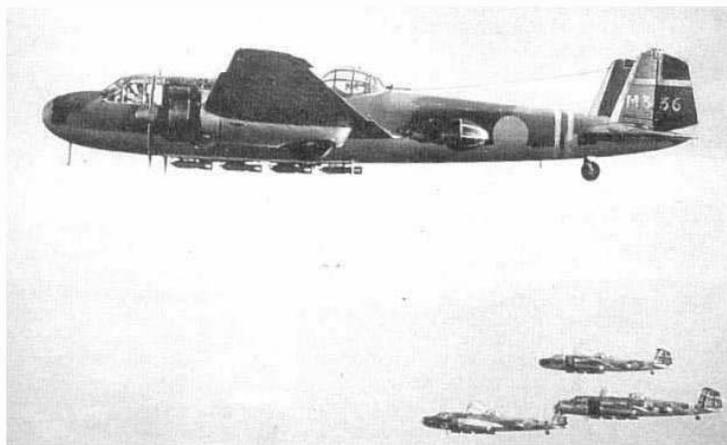
The Lightning proved ideally suited for the Pacific theater, as it combined excellent performance with very long range required for operations over wide reaches of ocean. While the P-38 could not outmaneuver the Zero and most other Japanese fighters, its speed and climb gave American pilots the option of choosing to fight or run, and its focused firepower was even more deadly to lightly-armored Japanese warplanes than to the Germans. Propellers rotating in opposite directions offset torque making it a very stable gun platform. With one 20mm cannon and four 0.50-in machine guns all packed into the nose the gunfire was both accurate and devastating. Jiro Horikoshi, who headed the design team that build the Zero, wrote: "The peculiar sound of the P-38's twin engines became both familiar and hated by the Japanese all across the South Pacific."

Appendix 24

Japanese Aircraft in the South Pacific

The Japanese air force had a number of aircraft in service in the Pacific from 1941 to 1943. Among them are the planes pictured below, chosen because they were mentioned in the mission reports of the 42nd Bombardment Squadron flight logs, in the logs and reports of Lieutenant Joaquin Castro, or are know to have been active when the 42nd Squadron was on Guadalcanal.

The Mitsubishi G3M or Mitsubishi 96, called “Nell” by the Allied forces in the South Pacific, was a frequent visitor to Henderson Field on Guadalcanal, often flying night missions to bomb the runways – and deprive the flight crews of much-needed sleep.



Mitsubishi G3M or 96 “Nell”

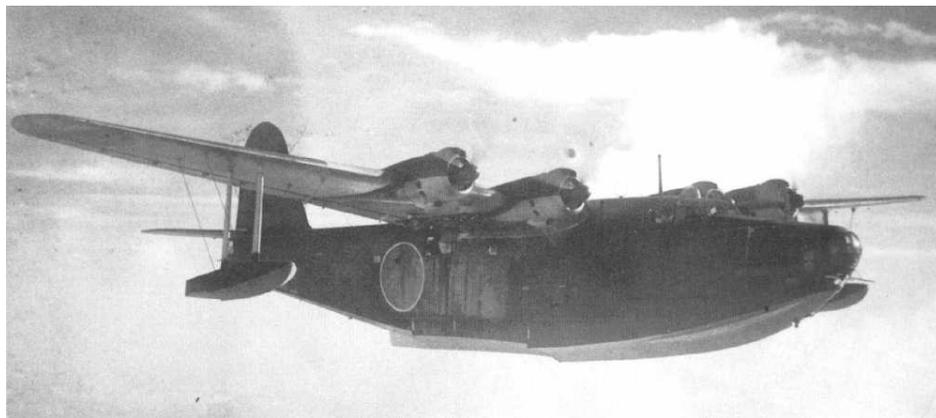
Flying Boats

One of the often mentioned aircraft of the South Pacific war was the “four-engine flying boat,” mentioned in the squadron flight logs, in a newspaper clipping about Joaquin Castro, and in other mission reports and stories. It was common for the B-17s to encounter one of these flying boats during missions, and common for them to trade gunfire. Several documented reports credit the B-17 with shooting down a flying boat, as is told in the Castro clipping, and in the squadron log book. The “Mavis” was in service at the beginning of the war, first put in service in 1938. Over 200 were produced. It is likely that this plane was involved with several of the combat incidents.



Kawanishi H6K Type 97 “Mavis”

The “Emily” followed, first put into service in March 1942. A total of 175 were produced. Some of the battle incidents may have been with the Emily. The heavy armament of five 20 mm cannon and five 7.7 mm machine guns made this a formidable enemy in an air battle.



Kawanishi H8K Type 2 “Emily”

The “Zero”

The Zero was Japan’s most effective fighter plane, and the one most involved with the American B-17 bombers in the South Pacific. This photo features a flight of Zero fighters over the Solomon Islands in 1943, exactly the sight the crew of a B-17 would have seen in the air war. This is the plane that attacked the Hall/Castro crew near Shortland Island on 1 February 1943.



Zero Fighters over the Solomons, 1943

The feared “Zero” fighter also was made in a floatplane version, allowing it to see service even in the absence of airfields under Japanese control.



Mitsubishi A6M2-N Floatplane version of the “Zero,” code named “Rufe.”

Seaplanes

Battle logs mention unidentified seaplanes and float bi-planes. They would have been similar to the aircraft shown below, but the exact planes noted in the logs were not identified. The Mitsubishi F1M "Pete" was a reconnaissance aircraft, widely used through 1944.



Aichi E13A "Jake" Seaplane



Mitsubishi F1M "Pete" Seaplane

Appendix 25

JAPANESE SHIPS OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC OBSERVATION AND BOMBING TARGETS OF 42ND BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON

Mission Logs of the 42nd Bombardment Squadron do not refer to specific Japanese ships targeted in the various missions, but do mention a variety of ships observed in search missions, or attacked in bombing missions. Designations are in military shorthand, including DD, BB, CC. We can infer that DD is a destroyer, CC perhaps a cruiser, and so on.

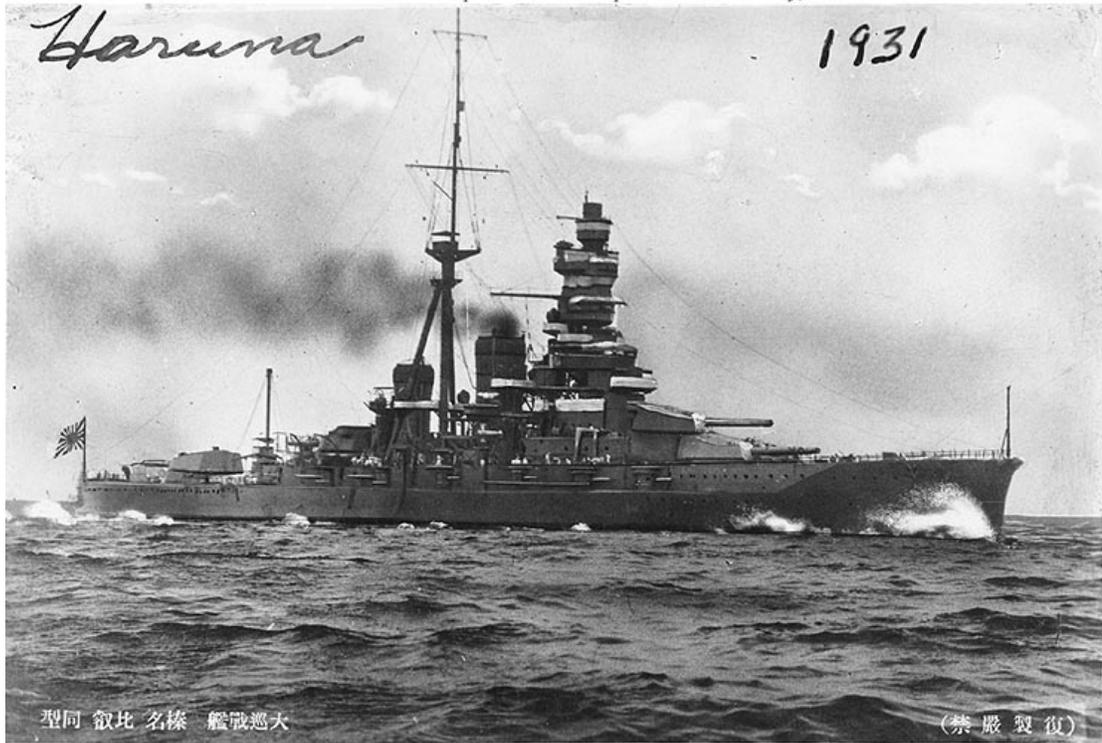
The ships illustrated below are the types they observed or bombed, although not necessarily the exact vessels. They will give you an idea of what the bomber crews were looking for, or were attacking. In some of the pictures, the aerial view is what the bombardier or observers would have actually seen in combat.



Photo # NH 73059 Japanese aircraft carrier Akagi in Summer of 1941
(Photographs in this section courtesy the United States Naval Historical Center.)

The Akagi was one of the ships active in the South Pacific, and was very likely one the 42nd crews searched for and perhaps observed.

Photo # NH 88378 Japanese battleship Haruna underway, 1931



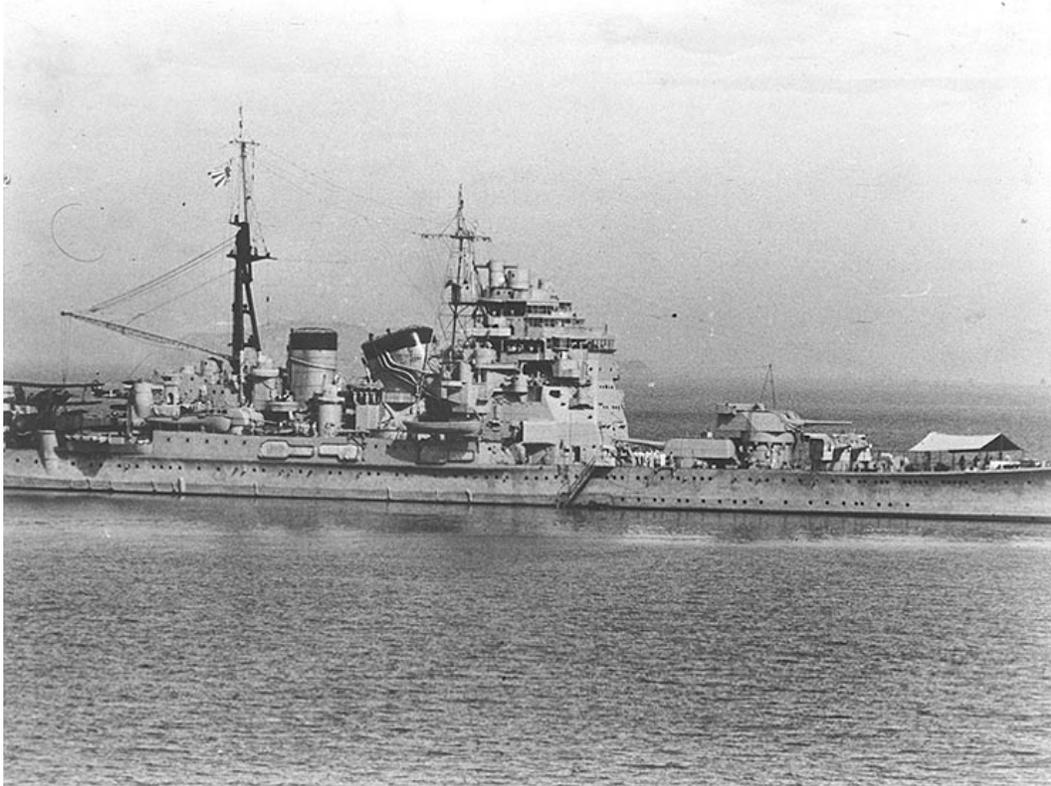
Japanese battleship Haruna

Photo # NH 97727 Japanese cruiser Aoba soon after completion



Japanese Cruiser Aoba

Photo # NH 82080 Japanese heavy cruiser Chokai in about 1938



Japanese Heavy Cruiser Chokai

Photo # NH 75491 (cropped) Japanese destroyer Akatsuki in the Yangtse, 1937



Japanese Destroyer Akatsuki

Photo # NH 42098 Japanese freighter Kinai Maru off Cristobal, Panama Canal Zone, October 1937



Japanese Freighter Kinai Maru. Many of the bombing missions of the 42nd Bombardment Squadron were to attack freighters like this one.

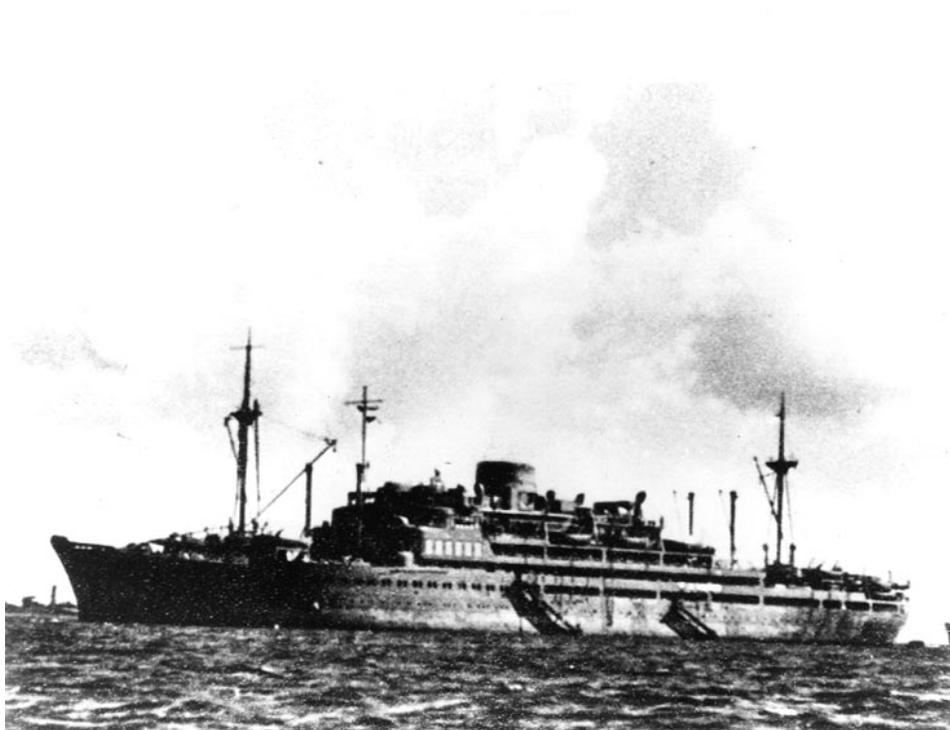


Photo # USMC 515537 Argentina Maru or Brazil Maru, circa May-June 1942

Japanese Troop Transport Ship

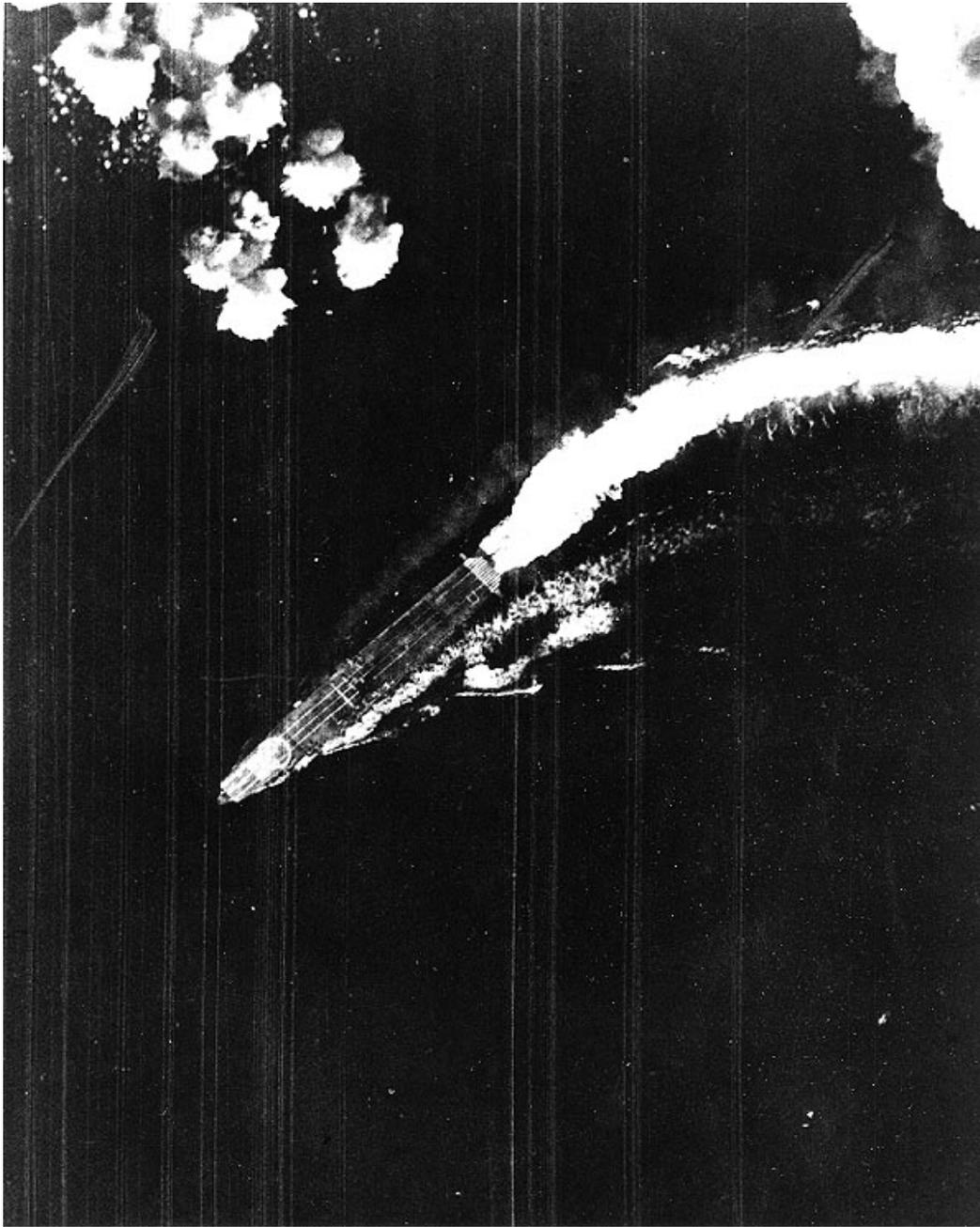


Photo # USAF 75712 AC Hiryu under B-17 attack at Midway

This photo is a mission photograph of a B-17 bombing attack on the Cruiser Hiryu at the Battle of Midway, and shows exactly what the B-17 crew would have seen. It clearly shows one of the difficulties the B-17 faced in trying to bomb moving ships. Here, the bombs were approximately on target had the ship not turned. Due to the normal operational bombing altitude of the B-17, Japanese ships almost always had the time to take evasive action, causing the bombs to miss.

These two photographs are other aerial views of Japanese ships as the B-17 crews would have seen them from altitude.

Photo # 80-G-30614 Japanese heavy cruiser Chikuma during the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands

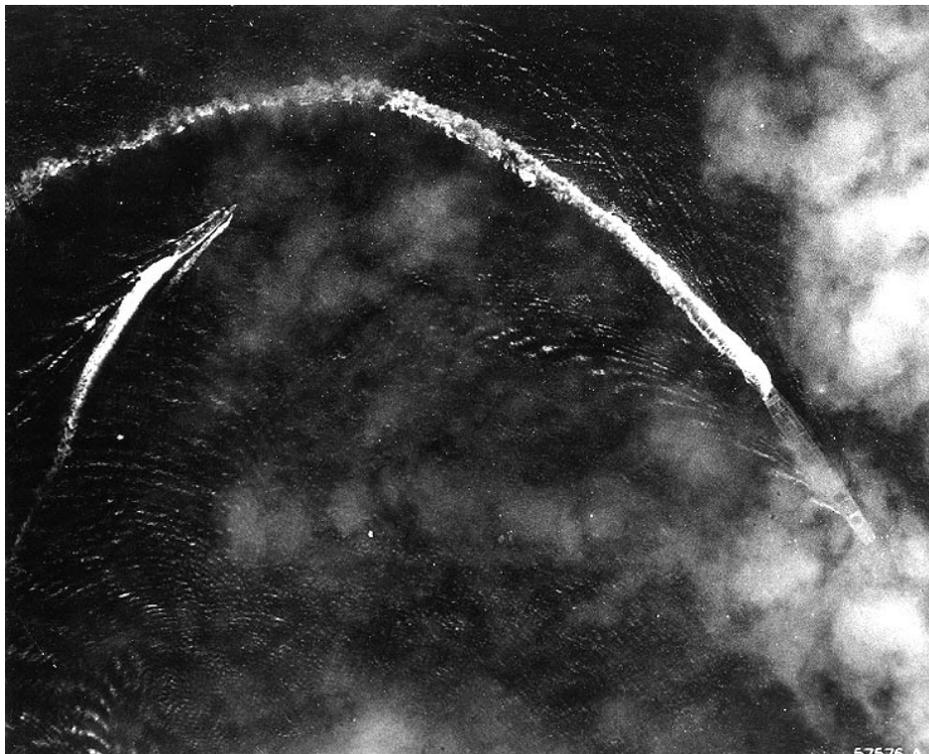


Photo # USAF 57576 Akagi under B-17 attack during Battle of Midway

Mission reports frequently mention both flying boats and seaplanes in their reports. Although not mentioned specifically, such planes were always in the vicinity of ships known as Seaplane Tenders.

These examples are not definitive, but give the reader a good idea of the various kinds of ships the 42nd Squadron searched for, and the view and difficulty of bombing moving ships in the Pacific. I should note that the B-17 crews did considerably better when they could catch the ships stationary in port.

This brief biography was compiled in 2002-2007 from the available family materials, published reports, and War Department letters available. Recollections from family members were included where available.

It is a tribute to a man I never knew, and to the family who grieved for him, and to all those men and women who served in World War II. They were indeed “The Greatest Generation.”

Any errors of inclusion or omission are the responsibility of the compiler.

**Halbert Weldon Hall
February 29, 2008**