

Long-Range Patrol From Midway Base Is Downfall of Japs

By Walter B. Clausen

Pearl Harbor, T. H., June 18.—(P)—How the U. S. navy's long-range patrol bombers discovered the Japanese fleet off Midway, a night torpedo attack against the invaders, and thrilling rescues of navy fliers from rubber lifeboats were disclosed today in new accounts of the battle.

Captain Logan Ramsey of Philadelphia, operations officer for the army, navy and marine corps land-based planes at Midway, in unfolding further details of the battle said the night torpedo attack was the first time in history the planes had been so operated.

The crew of one patrol plane, forced down by fuel shortage, were eight days at sea fighting off sharks which ripped at the rubber of their small lifeboats.

Hundreds of Jap Planes in Battle

Ramsey said the achievements of the large patrol bombers (PBL's) in discovering and attacking the enemy formed one of the greatest chapters in the newest form of naval action which he termed "aero-amphibious warfare."

He estimated that the Japanese threw several hundred aircraft into the battle. Other reports have stated most of the enemy planes were destroyed. Surrounded by heroes of the engagement, Captain Ramsey outlined the general action and each in turn filled in the details. "In general," he said, "the mission of the flying boats is to obtain information about the enemy; to go great distances from bases to penetrate areas in all kinds of weather, evaluate information and get it back to headquarters. The fortunes of the entire fleet depend frequently on the information of these young men."

He said Ensign Jewell Reid, 28, of Paducah, Ky., made the first discovery of the Japanese fleet June 3 while on routine patrol hundreds of miles from his base.

Here is Reid's story: "We had a job to do and tried to do our utmost."

Japs First Seen Morning of June 3

"Before dawn on June 3 we left Midway on a routine patrol. Hundreds of miles out in mid-morning we sighted several objects dead ahead on the horizon but they were not distinguishable at our high altitude. We closed in and made out the objects to be enemy warships. The weather was clear with very little haze and we knew we stood out well for A-A (anti-aircraft) fire. We reversed course in order to ascertain the track and speed of the enemy and to get more information to our base."

"We got a beam the main body of the enemy and proceeded in close enough to another look. Then we sent in an amplified report."

"We saw 11 ships, including two battleships and heavy cruisers and troop ships. We spent several hours in the vicinity getting all the information we could. I don't think we were seen. If we had been we would have been shot down. This was the enemy's occupation force."

"Through a few scattered clouds we got a stern of the enemy fleet to avoid any enemy air forces ahead or on the side and to observe without being seen, meanwhile sending reports to our base."

Captain Ramsey interjected: "Night Attack Is Decided by Navy"

"That night of June 3 we decided to launch a night torpedo attack by navy flying boats. It was a very hazardous mission and was placed on a volunteer basis. We wanted to hit some troop ships and give the flat-eyes a bath. This was a difficult job. It had never been done before. The distances were very great. We hesitated to do it but felt we had to hit the enemy."

Lieut. William Richards, 31, of Collingswood, N. J., executive officer to Ramsey related:

"We had four flying boats. We were all ready to go by the time the army bombers returned. We four took off together and headed for the position given as the location of the enemy."

"When we came into sight of the enemy fleet it was quite visible. It was impossible to distinguish types but we saw two columns of large ships with several smaller ships ahead and astern. They had no lights. They were heading straight for Midway."

"Once we started our night attack, each pilot was on his own. Lieut. Charles P. Hibberd, of West Springfield, Mass., and myself were at the controls of my ship."

Torpedoes Hit Mark On Big Enemy Ship

"I gave the attack signal. I had already spotted what I believed was the largest ship. It was too far away and too black to identify, but I hoped it would be a carrier. We had a long straight approach to our objective and encountered no anti-aircraft fire. They didn't even know we were coming, so we were able to get in close and let go our torpedo without opposition."

"As soon as we released our torpedo we pulled away in a sharp right turn over the stern of the target ship. My two rear lookouts reported a huge explosion and heavy black smoke on the ship we attacked. Three of our ships dropped torpedoes, two of which definitely were hits. Our hit was on a big troop ship of about 8,000 tons. A second transport was hit of about the same size."

"This was the first time such a thing ever had been done by flying boats and we were more than 500 miles out from our base."

A second flying boat was commanded by Lieut. Gaylord Probst, 20, of Los Angeles; the third by Lieut. Douglas C. Davis, 23, of St. Louis, Mo., and the fourth by Lieut. Allan Rothenberg, 23, of Washington, D. C.

There were some 40 men in this historic mission. Three of the flying boats got back to their bases. The one commanded by Lieut. Probst ran out of fuel and landed on the ocean. They floated on their rubber lifeboats for three days before they were rescued at 8:30 p. m., June 6.

Talent

Trail, June 18.—(Spl.)—Mr. and Mrs. Omer Fitzsimmons have returned to their home at Pomeroy, Wash., after three weeks stay at the home of his sister, Mrs. Jennie Hutchinsons.

Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Yancey from Palo Alto, Calif., and their son, Bob from Corvallis, are spending the week at their cottage here. Bob will return to Corvallis June 20 to attend summer school. Mr. and Mrs. Yancey will remain here until July 1.

Mr. and Mrs. O. M. Clark from Avenal, Calif., visited several days last week with his father, Burt Clark.

Mrs. Zell Prye and daughter from Eugene are visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Vinson, on Elk Creek. Mrs. Alma Mallory and Mrs. Esther Merriman returned home Friday from a week's visit in and near Bakerfield, Calif. Mrs. Mallory visited her two sons, Ray and Guy Merriman.

Mrs. Francis Ash returned home Tuesday from a week's visit with his son, Wayne and family near Redding, Calif.

Mr. and Mrs. K. E. Hutchinson and daughter, Shirley, returned to their

home at Klamath Falls Sunday after spending a week with his mother here.

Floyd Hutchinson returned Tuesday to his home at Molalla, Oregon. Mr. and Mrs. Roy Green of Central Point visited friends here Friday.

Mrs. Florence Watson and Mrs. Ella Yancey shopped in Medford Tuesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Gannaway of Medford visited at the Gus and Frank Dittworth homes Sunday and called on friends enroute home.

Abbreviated Fair Favored This Year

Salem, June 18.—(P)—The State board of Agriculture yesterday approved holding the state fair in September, but on a greatly curtailed basis.

The fair will consist of 4-H and Future Farmer exhibits, and the horse races. Eliminated

will be the night horse show, the night revue, and the main exhibits. A Victory food fair will be the main feature.

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