

WAR DIARY  
OF  
U.S.S. SARATOGA

Composition of Task Force 61 - VADM Fletcher

- (a) (61.1) Air Support Force - RADM Noyes
  - (61.1.1) USS SARATOGA, MINNEAPOLIS, NEW ORLEANS, FARRAGUT, WORDEN, MACDONOUGH.
  - (61.1.2) USS ENTERPRISE, NORTH CAROLINA, PORTLAND, BALCH, MAURY, GWIN, BENHAM, GRAYSON.
  - (61.1.3) USS WASP, SANFRANCISCO, SALT LAKE CITY, LANG, STERRETT, AARON WARD, STACK, FARENHOLT.
  
- (b) (62.1) Amphibious Forces - RADM Turner
  - (62.1.1) USS FULLER, AMERICAN LEGION, BELLATRIX.
  - (62.1.2) USS MCCAWLEY, BARNETT, G.F. ELLIOTT, LIBRA.
  - (62.1.3) USS H. LIGETT, ALCHIBA, FORMALHAUT, BETELGUESE.
  - (62.1.4) USS CRESCENT CITY, PRES. HAYES, PRES. ADAMS, ALHENA.
  - (62.2.1) USS NEVILLE, ZEILIN, HEYWOOD, PRES. JACKSON.
  - (62.2.2) USS CALHOUN, GREGORY, LITTLE, MCKEAN.
  - (62.3.1) USS QUINCY.
  - (62.3.2) USS VINCENNES.
  - (62.3.3) USS ASTORIA.
  - (62.3.4) USS HULL, DEWEY.
  - (62.3.5) USS ELLET, WILSON.
  - (62.4) USS SAN JUAN, MONSSEN, BUCHANAN.
  - (62.5) USS HOPKINS, TREVOR, ZANE, SOUTHARD, HOVEY.
  - (62.6) HMAS AUSTRALIA, CANBERRA, HOBART; USS CHICAGO, DESRON 4
  
- (c) (63.1) South Pacific Air Force - RADM McCain

8/4/42 Message received that an aircraft had to make a forced landing in the water and that both occupants were in a rubber boat. USS MCDONOUGH was directed to proceed to the rescue of the pilots but failed to locate them.

8/5/42 Search continued for downed pilots but results negative.

8/7/42 This date designated as "D" day for attack on Florida and Guadalcanal Islands.

SBD aircraft crashed shortly after take-off. No survivors.

Fighter aircraft crashed over the side on take-off. Pilot recovered by USS PHELPS.

Transports were reported being attacked by dive bombers.

USS SARATOGA was not attacked during the day's operations.

- 8/8/42 Attack on Florida and Guadalcanal Islands continuing.  
Presence of Japanese dive bombers suggests Japanese carrier may be operating in the area.
- 8/9/42 Task Force 61 retiring southward to fueling rendezvous.  
Air attacks resulted in the loss of USS ELLIOTT and severe damage to USS JARVIS.
- 8/10/42 Task forces directed to refuel immediately in the following order: Task Force 18, 16, and 11.
- 8/12/42 Air patrol from USS ENTERPRISE sighted enemy submarine and attacked. Two bomb drops missed but as the sub remained on the surface it was heavily strafed with machine guns. It slowly submerged with no way on. Oil observed in the water after the attack but subsequent search did not locate slick. Sub believed to have been destroyed or severely damaged.  
USS WASP sighted mine. Sunk by USS FARENHOLT.
- 8/13/42 Received radio report that Efate was being shelled by a surface vessel.
- 8/18/42 Rendezvoused with USS PLATTE for refueling.  
RADM Noyes landed on board for conference with VADM Fletcher.
- 8/20/42 Enroute to Solomon Island area for USS LONG ISLAND to fly off planes for Guadalcanal.  
Japanese cruiser and submarine sighted but not attacked by scout from USS WASP.
- 8/21/42 Task Force operating southeast of Soloman Islands, standing by to relieve our forces in case of attack.  
USS MACKINAC mistakenly taken by two planes from USS WASP as Japanese ship and subjected to brief attack. Minor damage.  
Effected rendezvous with Task Force 44 (HMAS HOBART, HMAS AUSTRALIA and three US destroyers).  
Four enemy cruisers and one destroyer sighted.
- 8/22/42 TBF plane swerved over port side on take-off and crashed. Two of four passengers were rescued by the plane guard destroyer.  
USS PORTLAND in Task Force 16 sighted torpedo passing from port to starboard.
- 8/23/42 Aircraft from USS ENTERPRISE sighted and attacked enemy sub. Oil slick appeared but pilots felt the attack was not successful.

Aircraft reported Japanese force consisting of two cruisers, three destroyers and four transports. Appears as if two Japanese forces were converging on Guadalcanal to arrive about midnight. Planes launched but failed to intercept as force had changed course.

8/24/42 Planes from USS ENTERPRISE sighted sub which submerged before planes could attack.

Launched attack group to intercept enemy task force consisting of three carriers. Enroute to attack another Japanese carrier (RYUJO) was sighted.

All remaining planes launched as many "bogies" appeared on radar and air attack anticipated.

Air attack directed at USS ENTERPRISE. Task Force 16 opened fire. Many planes could be seen diving on the ENTERPRISE which was about 10,000 yards on SARATOGA's port quarter, heading in the same direction. A terrific barrage of AA fire was being put up. Many planes were seen falling into the water. At 1715 it appeared that ENTERPRISE had been hit.

Began landing planes to refuel and rearm. One plane went over on its back upon landing and was then pushed over the side.

ENTERPRISE reported two bomb hits aft but damage apparently light. Fires under control. Some underwater damage not yet located.

SARATOGA lost 6 aircraft and destroyed 26 enemy aircraft.

Attack group made several hits on Japanese carrier force.

8/25/42 Plane from USS ENTERPRISE sighted and attacked two enemy subs, sinking one. Subs apparently 15 miles from USS SARATOGA.

USS GRAYSON believed to have sunk enemy sub.

Commenced fueling from USS SABINE. Provisioned USS PHELPS and USS DEWEY.

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