

March 27, 2017

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WW II History

Plan of the Day

Spotlight

Sonargirl

Classifieds

Meridian Passages

Central Pacific Edition

M/V Mermaid Vigilance

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Emily Splashed

Action over Baker Island

Baker is a small island just 37 nm south of Howland Island (where we are searching for Amelia Earhart's Electra). In 1935, an attempt at colonization was begun on the two islands, but the small settlements of four men each were evacuated in 1942 after Japanese air and naval attacks. Two of the colonists on Howland Island were killed in the attacks and buried there. In September of the following year, an airfield was established on Baker. During construction, the *Independence* class light carriers USS *Princeton* (CVL-23) and USS *Belleau Wood* (CVL-24) provided air cover. Built on a cruiser hulls, the vessels each could carry more than 30 aircraft including squadrons of new F6F Hellcat fighters.



USS Princeton (CVL-23)

On September 1, 1943 a four engine Japanese flying boat, a Kawanishi H8K (known to U.S. forces as "Emily") approached Howland Island from the west. Four F6 Hellcats were on CAP (combat air patrol) over the Baker airfield construction operations and were vectored to the bogey by the FDO (fighter director officer) on board the radar-equipped destroyer USS *Trathen* (DD-530). The unsuspecting Emily was detected at a range of over 30 miles and was

taken completely by surprise. Passing just south of Howland at 7,000 feet, the Japanese plane had apparently completed its reconnaissance and reversed course to head back west when a Hellcat piloted by Lt. (j.g.) Richard Loesch descended out of the sun from 10,000 feet



Kawanishi H8K "Emily" Flying Boat

and opened fire with its six 50-caliber machine guns. On the heels of that attack was wingman Ens. A. W. Nyquist in a second F6 who made a similar run at the enemy. Closing to within 100 yards, the fighters fired 300 rounds each into the Emily which made no defensive maneuver. Streaming gasoline, the plane was seen to descend in a slow spiral until it hit the water and exploded in flames. No survivors were observed. This was the first combat action of an F6F Hellcat, which replaced the



F6F Hellcat Carrier-based Fighter

All photos courtesy U.S. Navy

continued...

Plan of the Day March 27, 2017

1000 Est. REMUS Launch

1400 Daily Progress Meeting: Ops Ctr.

Sue Morris aka Sonargirl

Sue joined the Nauticos team in 1997 and this is her third trip out on the Amelia search. She's been an operations technician, a watch leader, and this time she's a member of the education team, too. Sue is not afraid to jump in wherever she is needed, assisting the WHOI team with REMUS and creating a photography library to help track issues that come up. She's extremely creative and hands-on. Sue says she loves the opportunities this kind of work brings.



Sue is married to Jeff Morris and her brother is Dave Jourdan. She says, "I like working with the guys and being part of a team that is all focused on the same thing. I like that I can balance being a mom, volunteer, coach and go on expeditions, too."

Sue has four children and three grandchildren. She coaches cheerleading, lives in Southern Maryland and loves travel, learning about other cultures, food and beer. One of her most unusual projects involved working for Oceaneering Technologies helping to build motion bases for the Spiderman theme park ride at Universal Studios in Japan.

Marika Lorraine



... continued from page 1

F4F Wildcat as the primary U.S. carrier based fighter of the Pacific war.

The enemy plane was shot down so suddenly it failed to send a radio report. Two days later a second Emily was picked up on radar about 20 miles from Baker at 8,000 feet and the CAP aloft was dispatched, this time operating from the carrier *Belleau Wood*. Four F6 fighters sped to the scene. Attacks were again made from above, but this time the Japanese plane was able to take evasive action. Racing for cloud cover, the damaged aircraft was able to escape and contact was temporarily lost. However, one of the fighters flew around the clouds and spied the flying boat at a lower altitude. Two others jettisoned their belly fuel tanks to gain speed and took up the pursuit. Catching the enemy at a distance of 50 miles from Baker, the F6's piloted by Lt. (j.g.) Coleman and Ens. E. J. Philippe pressed the attack. The Emily appeared to be making a water landing when it exploded, burned, and sank. No survivors were seen.

A third Emily was shot down by planes from *Princeton* on September 8. Apparently, none of them were able to get off a radio report to their base in the Gilberts owing to the quick action of the Hellcats.

The carrier *Princeton* subsequently met her end at the Battle of Leyte Gulf on October 24, 1944 when a single bomb from a Japanese "Judy" dive bomber penetrated the flight deck and exploded in the hanger, causing fires and further explosions. Other ships rendering assistance were caught in secondary blasts causing many casualties. 108 men of the crew of over 1,400 were lost; the cruiser *Birmingham* got the worst of it with 233 men killed and severe damage. Three other ships suffered lesser damage. *Princeton* was scuttled with torpedoes that afternoon.

MERMAID MARCH MADNESS

Exclusive Passages Updates!

CURRENT STANDINGS: What a difference a round makes! We scoffed at the "Perfect" bracket, which is now in the lead with 73 points. Among the humans, Alan had a setback and has moved down to the quarterdeck with Marika. In command after the Regional Finals are:

- 1: Cap'n Spence 70
- 2: Sonargirl Sue 69
- 3: Alan & Marika 68

Falling rapidly astern:

Jeff	62		
Bryan	59	Pam	50
Dave	59	Greg	46
Comm Tom	54	Bill	43
Mark	50	Neil	39

Cap'n Joe is holding steady on the anchor line with 31 points.



MERMAID CLASSIFIEDS

PERSONALS 100

NURSE or Physician's Assistant position available to reduce workload on ship's doctor. Specialty in head knocks, suturing, and/or mental illness desired. Send resumé to Doc Pam, Sick Bay.

WANTED 200

PHOTOS! For Crossing the Dateline Pinup Calendar, featuring Men of the Mermaid. Don't be shy! Submit to Sue or Marika. You know where to find them.

STORIES for *Meridian Passages*. Plenty of expedition time remains for you to contribute to this award winning publication. Dave 4031.

LESSONS LEARNED. For *EEDE Final Report*. Keep 'em coming! See Spence 4051.

FOR SALE 400

CROSSING THE DATELINE pinup calendar, special edition with one day missing. Featuring all your favorite explorers. Will look great on your bulkhead or taped under the upper berth. Spence 3051.

BRACKETS. NCAA pool brackets, like new, hardly used. Will trade for Skyflakes. Joe, 306 lower berth.

LOST & FOUND 500

STILL FOUND: Mostly clean blue, yellow, & white sock with logo "<d" sock. Free to a good home. Still hanging in Ops. See Bill 3071.

Place New Ads by Friday – ed.