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Continuation of my translations of the Japan Defence Agency's  
'WAR HISTORY PUBLICATIONS' - NAVAL OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTH EAST AREA VOL 1  
(to the beginning of operations to recapture Guadalcanal)

CONTINUATION FROM VOL I

# GUADALCANAL (VOL II)

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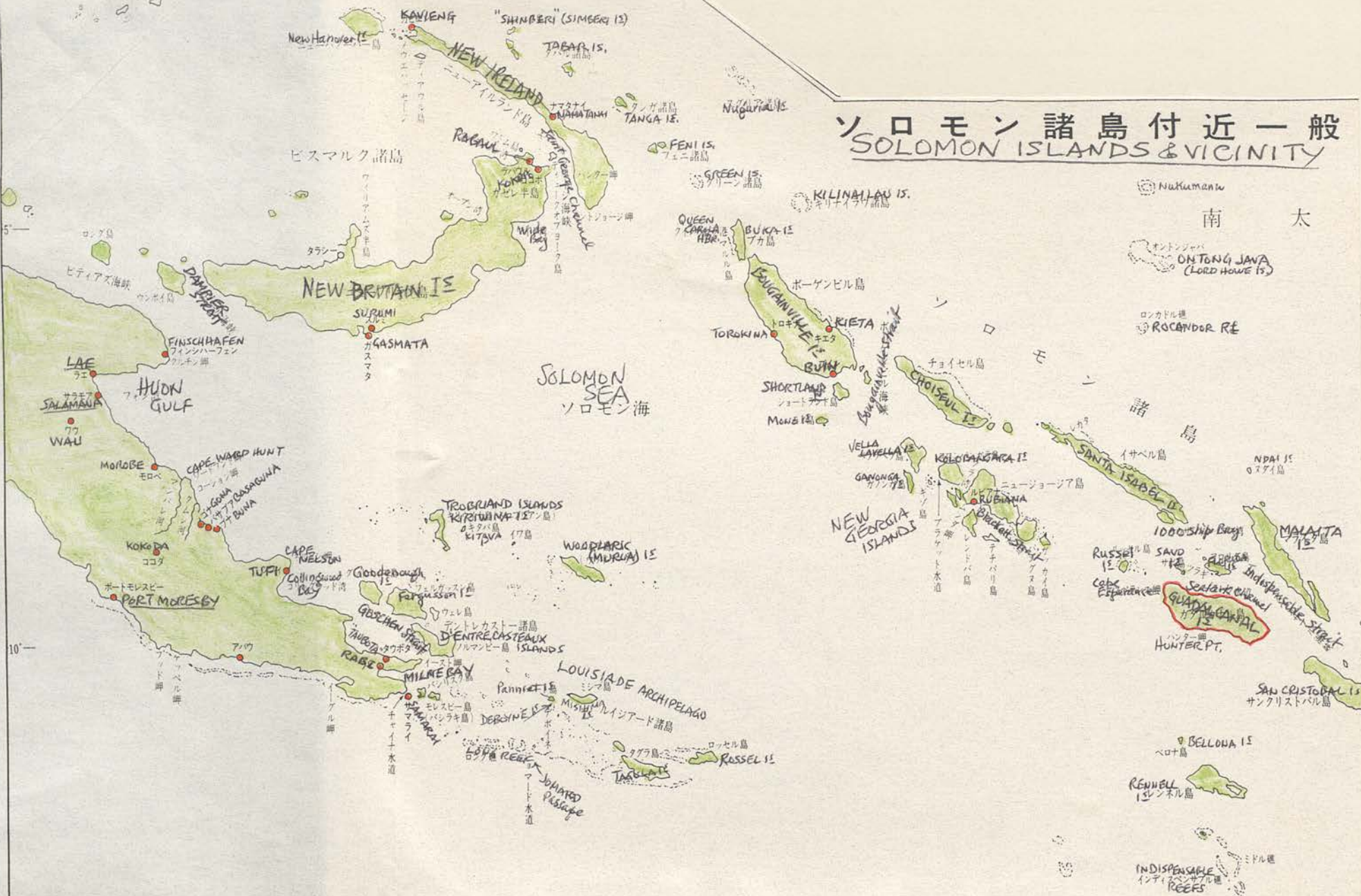
**THEME BOOK**

**SHEETS BOUND SECURELY  
YET ZIP OUT EASILY.  
COVER FOLDS BACK  
AND SHEETS LIE FLAT.**

11 IN. x 8½ IN. 70 SHEETS

No. 11-6518  
COLLEGE RULED

# ソロモン諸島付近一般 SOLOMON ISLANDS & VICINITY



南太平洋

SOLOMON SEA  
ソロモン海

ON TONG JAWA  
(LORD HOWE IS.)

ROCANDOR REE

SANTA ISABEL IS.

MALAITA IS.

GUADALCANTAL IS.

SAN CRISTOBAL IS.

BELLONA IS.

RENNELL IS.

INDISPENSABLE REEFS

Accordingly, at 1340 the 20<sup>th</sup> (August 1942), orders were issued to the SUPPORT FORCE to move up-

540  
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"COMBINED FLEET RADIO ORDER # 224. SUPPORT FORCE (ADVANCE FORCE, STRIKING FORCE) WILL, AS SOON AS REPLENISHED, MOVE FORWARD TO THE SEAS NORTH OF THE GUADALCANAL BASE."

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Prior to this, the Headquarters Combined Fleet, which was at the HASHIRAJIMA anchorage ((Inland Sea near KURE/ETAJIMA)), <sup>(on August 10<sup>th</sup>)</sup> had summoned on board the flagship, the <sup>(the)</sup> Chiefs of Staff of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Fleet (the core of the Main Body) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet (the core of the YAMATO, Carrier Striking Force) and had gone over arrangements for operations and studied the Doctrines and Directives for operations by the Combined Fleet. These arrangements, <sup>(as well as the)</sup> "Doctrines and Directives for operations" are not known, no data being available now. It is believed that those arrangements included <sup>(the Combined Fleet's)</sup> a decision to support the operations of the South East Area forces, to form the SUPPORT FORCE made up of the ADVANCE FORCE and the CARRIER STRIKING FORCE, and to incorporate Desron 3 into the Outer South Seas Force on the 13<sup>th</sup> to transport the KAWAGUCHI Detachment Reinforcements. These are brought out by the entry in the diary of the Chief of Staff of the Combined Fleet for August 13<sup>th</sup> - reflecting the report of Staff Officer MATSUNAGA report of reconnaissance of GUADALCANAL: "At this time our urgent task is to quickly send forward a force to aid in cleaning out <sup>(the enemy)</sup> and to make ready <sup>(Guadalcanal)</sup> the airfield. At the same time the SUPPORT FORCE (underlining in the original text) will move forward <sup>into action</sup> with its expected vigor to ~~destroy~~ the enemy's fighting power and complete the occupation of MORESBY, NAURU and OCEAN. I have given the Staff this Grand Policy!" (Underlining in text by Author). In addition, Staff Officer MIWA's diary entry for 16 August reads: "P.M. - CinCs and Staffs of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleets gathered to formulate counter-measures and ~~see~~ operations plans. We worked up and submitted several plans -- After all, does America plan another attempt or does America plan measures to obstruct a re-invasion by us as a better course? Against these courses of action we must seize the opportunity to broaden the <sup>war's</sup> battle results". The above diary entries show that operations of the SUPPORT FORCE would be a good opportunity to come to grips with, attack and destroy the enemy carrier task force and that they must take advantage of the opportunity to expand and increase war results.

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The Advance Force departed home waters on August 11<sup>th</sup> and sortied from TRUK on the 17<sup>th</sup>. In the meantime, a patrol plane from the Northern Force ((the 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet, charged with patrols and defence of the home islands against enemy attacks from the North Pacific Ocean and Central Pacific down to the latitude of the Bougain Islands)) had sighted an enemy float-plane that had crash-landed/emergency landed 11<sup>0</sup> - 490 miles from SHIRIYA ZAKI ((N.E. tip of Honshu)) and

pursuant to orders from the Combined Fleet, that force sortied to patrol the seas to the east of OKINAWA. The Carrier Striking Force sortied from HASEGAWA anchorage on August 16<sup>th</sup>, the Combined Fleet Main Force on the next day, the 17<sup>th</sup>, both headed for TRUK; at about noon the 20<sup>th</sup>, the Carrier Striking Force was about 300 miles north of TRUK and the Main Force of the Combined Fleet was 480 miles north west of SAIPAN, both forces heading south.

The Carrier Striking Force was reorganized after the Battle of MIDWAY and was training in the Western part of the INDIAN SEA, making landings-<sup>aboard</sup> the carriers on August 15<sup>th</sup> and to conduct combined training on August 25<sup>th</sup>. As this was cut short when they sortied on the 16<sup>th</sup>, their state of training was approaching a capability for operations. Consequently training continued after their departure and studies were made in regard to combat duties, radar (immediately after installation), its use and <sup>radar</sup> deception methods.

542  
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That Crudiv 7, Desron 3, Desdivs 2 and 15 plus tankers KYOKUTO Maru and NIPPON Maru (which had moved up to MERGUI for operations in the INDIAN OCEAN) were ordered on 7 August to cancel their operations and proceed to DAVAO, has already been related. This force, under the command of Com Crudiv 7, sailed from MERGUI the 8<sup>th</sup> for DAVAO but as there was a report of sighting an enemy transport convoy 50 miles east of AMBON on the 11<sup>th</sup>, the force was temporarily assigned to the East Indies Force, however the sighting report having been in error, CinC COMBINED FLEET <sup>(in orders of)</sup> on the 13<sup>th</sup> assigned Desron 3 (less one desdiv) to the Outer South Seas Force and the others to expedite their movement to TRUK, after which one Desdiv of Desron 3 was assigned to the Carrier Striking Force and Crudiv 7, Desdiv 2 and Desdiv 15 were to revert to their basic organizations. Organization of the Carrier Strike Force as of 14 August

542  
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UNIT	COMDR.	FORCES
MAIN FORCE -	CINC 3 <sup>rd</sup> FLEET	CARDIV 1 - (LESS ZUIHO) SHOKAKU, ZUIKAKU, RYUJO Desdiv 10 - (KAZEGUMO, YUJUMO, MAKIGUMO) Desdiv 16 (less 1 destroyer) (TOKITSU KAZE, ANATSUKAZE, HATSUKAZE) AKIKAZE
ADVANCED GUARD	COMBATON 11	Batdiv 11 (HIEI, KIRISHIMA); Crudiv 7 (KUMANO, SUZUYA); Crudiv 8 (less MOGAMI) TONE, CHIKUMA); Desron 10 (less a Desdiv) (NAGARA) Desdiv 19 (URANAMI, SHIKINAMI, AVANAMI)
1 <sup>st</sup> REPLENISHMENT FOR.	Director: TONAN Maru	TONAN Maru, TOEI Maru, TOA Maru, KORYU Maru, #2 KYOEI Maru
2 <sup>nd</sup> REPLENISHMENT FOR.	Director: NITCHO Maru	NITCHO Maru, HOKO Maru
STANDBY FORCE	Com Cardiv 2	CARDIV 2 (less RYUJO) (JUNYO), 1 destroyer from Desdiv 16 (IKAZUCHI), HOSHO, YUKAZE, MOGAMI, 1 <sup>st</sup> Base Air Force

Note: On the 22<sup>nd</sup> the tanker KYOKUTO Maru joined the Replenishment Force  
Crudiv 7 joined its organization on 22 August

543  
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The Commander, ADVANCE FORCE, prior to the orders <sup>(of the 10<sup>th</sup>)</sup> to sortie from home waters, had organized the ADVANCE FORCE as follows:

UNIT	COMMANDER	FORCES	TASK
MAIN FORCE	CINC 2 <sup>nd</sup> Fleet	Cruidiv 4 (ATAGO, TAKAO, MAYA); CRUIDIV 5 (MYŌKO, HAGURO); MUTSU; Desron 2 less Desdiv 18 (less KAGERŌ) and 2 destroyers (until they join their unit); Desron 4 (YURA, Desdiv 9 and Desdiv 27)	Support operations of the South East Area forces
AIR UNIT	Comdr 11 <sup>th</sup> Airron.	Airron 11 (CHITOSE), SANYŌ MARU, 2 destroyers of Desron 2 (until they join their organization)	Same as above
STAND BY FORCE	Com Batdiv 3	Batdiv 3 (KONGO, HARUNA)	Upkeep, training Western Inland Sea
ATTACHED		AKASHI, TSURUMI, SHINKŌKŪ MARU, ONJŌ MARU, NICHIEI MARU, KENYŌ MARU, AREBONO MARU, KŌRYŌ MARU, SURUYA MARU	Continue previous tasks unless specially ordered to the contrary

543  
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Note: On 14 August Desron 2 (less a Desdiv), KAGERŌ, were incorporated in the Outer South Seas Force

(2) Desdiv 24 (Desron 2) incorporated in the Outer South Seas Force on 17 August

(3) Desdiv 27 was incorporated into the South Seas Force on 17 August to transport reinforcements to MARKIN and also take part in the invasions of NAURU and OCEAN.

(4) On the 20<sup>th</sup> Desdiv 2 rejoined its organization (Desron 4) and the same day, Desdiv 15 came under orders of Desron 4 and rejoined its organization on the 23<sup>rd</sup>

544  
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While at TRUK the CINC 2<sup>nd</sup> Fleet / Commander Support Force, Vice Admiral Nobutaka KONDO at 1520 the 20<sup>th</sup> ordered the ADVANCE FORCE to make preparations for sortie and issued the following orders with regard to SUPPORT FORCE operations, informing all forces:

- SUPPORT FORCE RADIO ORDER #1. (1) ENEMY SITUATION - AS REPORTED BY SOUTH EAST AREA FORCES. (2) SUPPORT FORCE WILL PROMPTLY MOVE UP TO THE SOLOMONS AREA, SUPPORT THE SOUTH EAST AREA FORCES, AND MAKE CONTACT WITH AND DESTROY THE ENEMY CARRIER TASK FORCE. (3) ADVANCE FORCE MAIN FORCE (CRUIDIV 4, CRUIDIV 5, Desron 4 (less Desdivs 2 and 27)) WILL SORTIE TRUK'S <sup>AT 1900 THE 20<sup>th</sup></sup> VIA NORTH PASS, PASS THROUGH 7°-22'N, 154°-02'E (Anchor note - 120 miles East of TRUK) at 0600 THE 21<sup>st</sup> AND THEREAFTER TAKE GENERAL COURSE 150°, INTENDING TO PASS THROUGH 6°S-161°-40'E AT 1600 THE 23<sup>rd</sup>. (4) THE CARRIER STRIKING FORCE WILL OPERATE IN CONFORMITY WITH THE ADVANCE FORCE. (5) ALL OTHER SHIPS THAN ABOVE WILL CONTINUE THEIR PRESENT TASKS.

544  
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The ADVANCE Force sortied from TRUK on schedule. The Carrier Striking Force (under CINC 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet, Vice Admiral Chūichi NAAGUMO) cancelled its entry into TRUK, continued to steam south and both Forces joined together at 0500 the 21<sup>st</sup>. However joining together at sea did not permit a conference to go over operational arrangements, and while documents were dropped from aircraft of the STRIKING FORCE, this method only passed information of our plans.

In the Attack on WAKE (Cruidiv 8 and Cardiv 2) and in the Battle of the Coral Sea (Cruidiv 5 and Cardiv 5), <sup>although</sup> the air operations were the criterion for the operations, the Commander of the Carrier Division was the junior ((to the Cruidiv Comdr.)) and there were details of support

of the operations. This time, also, there was the same relationship between the Commander of the SUPPORT Force and the Commander of the Carrier Striking Force ((i.e. the latter was the junior)) and moreover they didn't have time to meet and go over arrangements beforehand, so they went ahead with the operations.

Headquarters Combined Fleet on receiving the report that enemy aircraft had moved up to GUADALCANAL recognized that the enemy carrier that had appeared previously was a special carrier to transport the aircraft (to Guadalcanal) and that the enemy could repeat this aircraft transportation in the same way in the future. It was believed that, for the present, the urgent task was to <sup>quickly</sup> attack and destroy the enemy aircraft that had moved up to GUADALCANAL and to prevent the use of the airfield by the enemy. At 1842 the 26<sup>th</sup> the following request of the South East Area Force was made in the name of Chief of Staff (Combined Fleet's 201842) "CONSIDER IT NECESSARY <sup>(AT THIS TIME PROMPTLY)</sup> TO DESTROY THE ENEMY AIRCRAFT IN THE AREA OF THE GUADALCANAL BASE BY AIR ATTACKS, GUNFIRE ATTACKS ETC., AND ALSO TO PREVENT THE USE OF THE GUADALCANAL BASE BY THE ENEMY"

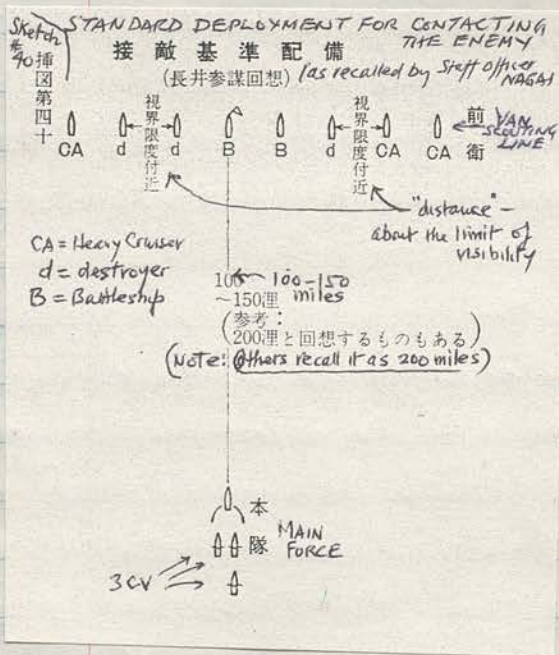
### THE 3<sup>rd</sup> FLEET'S BATTLE PLAN

As mentioned previously, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet, as a result of the lessons of the Battle of MIDWAY, was rebuilt as the Carrier Striking Force which had originally formed by temporarily adding battleships, cruisers and destroyers to their <sup>(previous)</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> AIR FLEET but its screen force was augmented and its air squadrons reorganized. The plan for the organization of a carrier division was to have two large and one small aircraft carrier (previously it had been 2 ships), the number of fighter and dive bomber aircraft carried to be increased and the torpedo bomber number decreased. These were battle lessons from the Battle of MIDWAY. The small aircraft carrier would carry principally fighter aircraft <sup>and have the task of</sup> the air defense for that carrier division. The attacks by the aircraft squadrons of the big carriers, having very good percentage of hits, superior speed and flexibility of attack, <sup>(first of all)</sup> would use the relatively less vulnerable dive bombers (rather than torpedo-bombers) to bomb and damage the flight decks of enemy carriers to render them inoperative, <sup>then</sup> use torpedo bombers to make torpedo attacks and sink them. Thus, the main attack strength was placed on the dive bomber, the torpedo-bomber to be used chiefly for enemy search and

later, for torpedo attacks. After the Battle of MIDWAY, the aircraft complements of the SHOKAKU and ZUIKAKU became: Zero fighters -27, Dive Bombers-27 and torpedo-bombers 18 (Before MIDWAY these were <sup>21, each,</sup> fighters, divebombers, and torpedo/bombers.)

At the same time of this new Carrier organization, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet - under the direction of the Combined Fleet formulated a battle plan which took into consideration all facets of the MIDWAY operations: "The aircraft carrier is the center, the main objective, of the decisive air battle; surface forces will cooperate with them" because the policy, a tremendous shift from the <sup>previous</sup> tactical concept that the battleship divisions were the main strength of the Fleet Battle. Although there are no data at hand regarding this Battle Plan, according to the recollections of those who were concerned with it at that time, the STANDARD DEPLOYMENT FOR CONTACTING THE ENEMY was as shown in the sketch (#40) below:

546  
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Various "Deployments for Contacting the Enemy" up to Number 11 had been determined, and each of them were dependant on the extent of a search for the enemy by another force (the 2<sup>nd</sup> Fleet or the Base Air Force) or on intelligence on the enemy. The sketch at the left (No 40) was the deployment when search for the enemy had to be conducted by one's own force.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet in moving forward toward the enemy would keep its forces concentrated in order to maintain visual signal contact since they would be operating under radio-silence but on reaching an area <sup>where</sup> contact with the enemy could be expected, the Van Scouting

546  
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Line would be ordered to advance and deploy as shown in the sketch, above. The reasoning for the distant, widely separated Van Scouting Line were:

(1) As this Van would be able to sight enemy search-planes earlier, not only would the Main Force have more time to <sup>(make preparations)</sup> for its attack but there was also less chances of the Main Force being sighted by enemy search planes. For its own searches all units of the Van Scouting Line carried mostly 3 place float-reconnaissance aircraft which were suitable for enemy-search operations

(2) In operations on the high seas when ship-born aircraft are launched, they know the intended movements of their ship but if their ship's movements are

changed from those anticipated, there is a concern over not being able to get back to their ship under radio-silence conditions. For this reason the scope of operations of ship-board planes is restricted, and operations to conform to the battle situation are sometimes impossible. With the Van Scouting Line deployed far in advance and widely spread out like this, an aircraft that is returning can sight any of the ships of the Van Scouting Line and be thereby guided to its own ship.

(3) ~~We were~~ confident of attacks by carrier aircraft. However as the principal <sup>power</sup> force in our attack <sup>force</sup> was the dive bomber, but it was difficult for them to sink enemy ships. When the enemy advanced to the vicinity of the Van Scouting Line, the order to "Attack" in conjunction with our carrier air attack would be given, and the enemy fleet, damaged by the air attack, would then be brought to grips, confident of increased battle results.

This formation had the objective of giving full scope to the attack-power of the aircraft carriers and <sup>it</sup> was believed that the Van Scouting Line would absorb a part of the enemy attacking power. However this was neither official, nor alluded to, but to ships or forces in the Van Scouting Line this was understood as <sup>However,</sup> natural criticism that "we are sacrifices for the carriers" was heard.

On the other hand <sup>as</sup> this formation reduced the close-in protective strength for the carriers, <sup>other</sup> voices in opposition <sup>were raised,</sup> ~~rose~~ from that side. <sup>also</sup> Ultimately the carriers disapproved of the Van Scouting Line but Third Fleet, as well as Combined Fleet, adopted this plan in order to obtain a decisive air battle. It was judged that the carriers' lessened close-in protection <sup>for the</sup> was offset by the reduced chance of their being attacked, or of the reduced chances of <sup>their</sup> receiving a surprise attack and by the increases made in their combat air patrols. Besides, there were plans to strengthen the lookout potential of carriers and others by <sup>the</sup> installation of RADAR.

This battle plan was formulated just before the Striking Force sortied from home waters; there was no time to distribute it to all the forces of that command before the sortie so the Staff, 3rd Fleet intended to distribute and explain it when they assembled at TRUK. However, due to the appearance of the enemy carriers on August 20th, they did not enter port but instead advanced to the south to attack. Therefore, as an emergency measure, these battle plans were delivered by



air craft to the ADVANCE FORCE and forces under command of the Striking Force on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

It was under such conditions that it was decided that the Striking Force would begin these operations based on a new battle plan, without the opportunity to train and with concern that even that plan's meaning or ideas were understood.

547  
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OPERATIONS OF ALLIED FORCES

The next day after American forces landed <sup>the</sup> at GUADALCANAL airfield they made a survey of the airfield. As a result, in two days they completed a runway 900 meters long and 50 meters wide and in addition, within one week made a 400 meter extension useable. The Japanese Forces had begun the airfield packing down and rolling the earth but had made no preparations for water-proofing it and about 200 meters of the middle of the runway had not been completed, new fill had not been packed nor rolled. The Marine's Engineers made ready the surface, fully grading it, readying it to receive airplanes

They named this airfield HENDERSON FIELD. 90 <sup>mm</sup> Anti Aircraft guns were emplaced around the airfield which forced Japanese bombers to above 8,000 meters. However, their bombing was extremely accurate.

American transports had withdrawn before they had completed unloading but all of the ammunition and most of the rations had been put ashore. After occupying the area considerable rice and canned goods that had been abandoned by Japanese forces fell into their hands but from 10 August onward their supply situation made 2 meals a day necessary. They had <sup>only</sup> landed one bulldozer and <sup>some</sup> other material for working on the airfield but <sup>(their shortages with)</sup> supplemented material left behind by the Japanese forces.

548  
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On the 12<sup>th</sup> the runway was <sup>about</sup> completed and a PB4Y made a successful test-landing; on August 19<sup>th</sup> Major General VANDERGRIFT reported HENDERSON FIELD prepared to use planes in good weather; on 15 August 4 destroyer-transports had landed air base



GUADALCANAL AIRFIELD SHORTLY AFTER ITS CAPTURE

548  
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personnel, aviation gasoline, lubricating oil and bombs. The runway was completed on the 19<sup>th</sup> and on the 20<sup>th</sup> the hoped for fighter and dive bomber squadrons landed; these first <sup>(U.S. Marine Corps Aviation)</sup> arrivals had been training on EPATE (in the New Hebrides Islands, N.E. of New Caledonia) consisted of 19 F4F fighters and 12 SBD dive bombers. They had been launched

from the (converted) escort-carrier LONG ISLAND some 200 miles South east of GUADALCANAL; that carrier immediately retired.

In the meantime the American carrier force, which had moved to the South after the amphibious landings, remained outside the search areas of Japanese aircraft, under orders to protect the lines of sea communication with GUADALCANAL, patrol and search the seas in the vicinity of the SOLOMONS and ESPIRITO SANTO ((NEW HEBRIDES)) and safeguard the sea lanes. This carrier force, <sup>(is believed to have)</sup> accompanied the escort-carrier LONG ISLAND to the vicinity of GUADALCANAL to some point during the mornings of the 20<sup>th</sup> but there are no data available on this.

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## VI OPERATIONS FROM AUGUST 21<sup>st</sup> ONWARD

### OPERATIONS OF THE 21<sup>st</sup> --- OPERATIONS BY THE VARIOUS FORCES

Headquarters Combined Fleet, <sup>(the situation on the morning and afternoon of the 20<sup>th</sup> --)</sup> in view of the appearance of the enemy carrier task force, -- the movement of enemy aircraft up to GUADALCANAL, and the ICHIKI Advance Force's attack, arrived at the conclusion that hereafter the enemy would apply all of his power to use the GUADALCANAL airfield and would muster his military strengths from all areas in order to prevent our recapture of it. The Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet sent the following radio to all forces:

ESTIMATE OF THE ENEMY SITUATION. THE ENEMY IS DETERMINED TO SECURE THE TULAGI AREA AND IS <sup>NOW</sup> MUSTERING HIS FORCES TO UTILIZE THE GUADALCANAL AIRBASE AND CONCENTRATE FORCE FROM ALL AREAS IN THE SOLOMONS SEAS TO PREPARE FOR OUR OPERATIONS TO RECAPTURE IT. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES AN ALERTNESS IS NECESSARY AS THERE IS A PROBABILITY OF AN ATTACK IN THE GILBERTS AREA. RADIO INTELLIGENCE REPORTS <sup>INDICATIONS</sup> THAT ON THE 20<sup>th</sup> AN ENEMY FORCE WAS IN THE PALMYRA AREA HEADED SOUTH (COMBINED FLEET SECRET RADIO 210100)

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The Advance Force and the Carrier Striking Force joined at 0500 the 21<sup>st</sup> and then separated, headed south as they refuelled; the Carrier Striking Force reported that at 1600 the 23<sup>rd</sup> it would reach position 4°-30' South, 161-40 East (130 miles north-east of ONTONG JAWA). Previously, Commander South East Area Force had requested that the move forward of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon <sup>(its landing)</sup> scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup>, be given support. In the meantime a search plane that had taken off from STORTLAND

early in the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> reported "0845 SIGHTED 5 SHIPS BEARING 30°, 530 MILES FROM SHORTLAND, COURSE 250° SPEED 20 KNOTS SHIP TYPES UNKNOWN". THAT PLANE AT 0916 SENT "WE ARE ENGAGED IN AIR COMBAT", and thereafter failed to return, indicating an enemy carrier was present. Also, a different search plane at 1230 reported: "2 ENEMY CRUISERS <sup>(AND)</sup> 1 DESTROYER SIGHTED, BEARING 112°, 430 MILES FROM SHORTLAND COURSE 305° SPEED 16 KNOTS" and at 1305 reported that transports had been mistaken for cruisers

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A search and attack force of 36 land based bombers and <sup>(Zero)</sup> 13 fighters had taken off from RABAU at 0607 and headed for the enemy carrier but could not sight any enemy ships within their attack range -- the above sightings being some 800 miles from RABAU, outside land-bombers' attack range. The Zero fighters continued on to GUADALCANAL after the land bombers had turned back, penetrated GUADALCANAL'S air-space and attacked 13 enemy fighter planes then on patrol and reported shooting down 6 (2 of which were unconfirmed), all our planes returning safely.

Commander South East Area Force, estimating that the previously sighted transports intended to reinforce and replenish GUADALCANAL, ordered the Outer South Seas Force to attack them. Thereupon the Commander Outer South Seas Force ordered the KAWAKAZE, then cruising <sup>(to the)</sup> South West of ONTONG JAVA and the YUNAGI, at REKATA ((Bay - NE SANTA ISABEL)), to attack them (message received at Guadalcanal 2 at 1536 the 21<sup>st</sup>)

OUTER SOUTH SEAS FORCE RADIO ORDER #46, (1) 2 ENEMY TRANSPORTS AND ONE LIGHT CRUISER POSITION AT 1230, 9°-50'S., 163°-07'E. (AUTHOR'S NOTE - about 130 miles east of southern tip of GUADALCANAL) ON COURSE 305° 16 KNOTS APPEAR TO BE A REINFORCEMENT FORCE FOR GUADALCANAL. (2) KAWAKAZE AND YUNAGI (STANDING BY AT REKATA) WILL SPEEDILY PENETRATE TO THE GUADALCANAL BASE AND THE TULAGI ANCHORAGE AND ATTACK AND DESTROY THIS ENEMY. THE C.O. KAWAKAZE WILL BE IN COMMAND DURING THIS OPERATION.

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The Commanding Officer of the KAWAKAZE ordered the YUNAGI to join the KAWAKAZE that day at 2100 in position 29°-10 miles from NDAI ((GOWSER)) Island. The YUNAGI departed REKATA at 1800 but due to high winds and waves could not make more than 22 knots, so reported it had little prospects of reaching LUNGA ROADS by dawn. Therefore, the KAWAKAZE alone made the attack, which will be covered later on.

#### SOUTHWARD MOVE OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> ECHELON

Commander Outer South Seas Force, learning that SUPPORT FORCE had started south

In support of the advance by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon, ordered the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon to be prepared to land (on Guadalcanal) on the 24<sup>th</sup>. (radio order received by Condesron 2 at 1010 the 21<sup>st</sup>) OUTER SOUTH SEAS FORCE RADIO ORDER #44. (1) INTEND TO CHANGE THE DATE FOR LANDING THE 2<sup>nd</sup> ECHELON TO THE 24<sup>th</sup>. (2) ESCORT FORCE OPERATE AS DESIRED AFTER NOON 21<sup>st</sup> BUT BE AT POSITION 6°-30' S, 160°-30' E THE EVENING OF THE 23<sup>rd</sup> (Author's note: 160 miles north of TANU Point). (3) MINESWEEPERS OF THE ESCORT FORCE REFUEL FROM AKEBONO MARU AT SHORTLAND THE AFTERNOON OF THE 22<sup>nd</sup>, AFTER WHICH REJOIN THE ESCORT FORCE

551  
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The 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon which had been retiring northward since 1200 the 20<sup>th</sup>, reversed course at 1215 and headed south; 4 minesweepers also left the formation to head for SHORTLAND.

That morning the Commander of the GUADALCANAL Garrison Force reported that at the same time that the ICHIKI Advanced Force was in the process of attacking the airfield, the activity by enemy aircraft there was the same as previously, that at 1000 6 planes were patrolling aloft. From the reports

By the reports of the situation of enemy aircraft using the GUADALCANAL base and the sightings of an enemy fleet believed to be an enemy carrier task force by our patrol planes, the Staff of the Combined Fleet believed it necessary to land the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon before the enemy could completely use the GUADALCANAL base, and in the name of the Chief of Staff so informed the South East Area forces: (received by Condesron 2 at 1510 the 21<sup>st</sup>) ESTIMATE OF THE ENEMY SITUATION IN THE AREA AS SET FORTH IN COMBINED FLEET SECRET <sup>RADIO</sup> 210100. AS COMPLETE USE OF GUADALCANAL BASE BY ENEMY AND OPERATIONS BY A STRONG ENEMY CARRIER TASK FORCE IN THE SOLOMONS ARE WOULD MAKE SUPPORT OPERATIONS BY OUR SUPPORT FORCE SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT, <sup>OPERATIONS</sup> FORCES IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS, EXCEPT THOSE IN COMBINED FLEET SECRET RADIO 201842, ARE REQUESTED TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO SPEEDY MEANS OF TRANSPORT USING LIGHT, NIMBLE CRAFT TO LAND THE ICHIKI DETACHMENT AND TO PRESS AHEAD QUICKLY WITH THE LANDING OPERATIONS.

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Headquarters 11<sup>th</sup> Air Fleet, after conferring with XVIII Army concerning the proposal for speed transportation by light craft, informed the Outer South Seas Force in the name of the Chief of Staff (received by Condesron 2 1820 the 21<sup>st</sup>) that: (1) AFTER CONFERRING WITH ARMY WITH REGARD TO THE MATTER OF TRANSFERRING THE FOLLOW-ON ICHIKI FORCE AT SEA TO MINESWEEPERS AND THEN QUICKLY MOVE THEM UP TO THE GUADALCANAL BASE, THAT COMMAND

DOES NOT AGREE TO THE ABOVE PROCEDURE FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS: (A) THE ICHIKI FOLLOW-ON FORCE HAS A RAPID-FIRE ARTILLERY UNIT WHICH WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO TRANSFER AT SEA AND AS A STRATEGM HAS LITTLE FIGHTING POWER (B) THE PREVIOUSLY DISPATCHED ICHIKI FORCE, BEING PICKED TROOPS WERE CONFIDENT OF COMPLETELY CAPTURING THE AIRFIELD (C) THE ABOVE ARMY'S INCLINATION IS IF REINFORCEMENTS ARE TO BE RAPIDLY DISPATCHED TO ASSIST, IT WOULD BE WELL TO TRANSFER THE NAVAL LANDING FORCE THAT ARE ABOARD THE KINRYU MARU TO MINE-SWEEPERS AND QUICKLY SEND THEM (3) WITH REGARD TO CARRYING OUT ITEM (2), I WILL LEAVE THE MATTER OF POSTPONING THE LANDING ON THE 24<sup>th</sup> TO YOUR HEADQUARTERS.

To this the Chief of Staff 8<sup>th</sup> Fleet replied that it was necessary to seize a favorable opportunity on the 24<sup>th</sup> to land the reinforcements while the SUPPORT FORCE was moving up; that the mine sweepers, to which the naval landing force were to be transferred, were at SHORTLAND refuelling and as there was concern whether they could make the landing on the 24<sup>th</sup>, it would be better not to do so then.

Hereupon, the Commander South East Area Force decided to land the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon on the 24<sup>th</sup> and ordered the forces under his command (received by Comdesron 2 at 2155 the 21<sup>st</sup>) as follows: SOUTHEAST AREA FORCE RADIO ORDER # 11. (1) CHANGE THE DATE OF THE LANDING OF THE SECOND ECHELON OF THE ICHIKI DETACHMENT TO AUGUST 24<sup>th</sup>. (2) SEPARATE ORDERS WILL BE ISSUED WITH REGARD TO OPERATIONS OF THE BASE AIR FORCE (3) THE OPERATIONS OF OTHER FORCES WILL BE AS DETERMINED BY THEIR COMMANDERS.

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The Outer South Seas Force's Main Body and its Support Force took up their operations in support of the southward movement of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon.

ATTACK BY THE ((DD)) KAWAKAZE ON THE GUADALCANAL ANCHORAGE

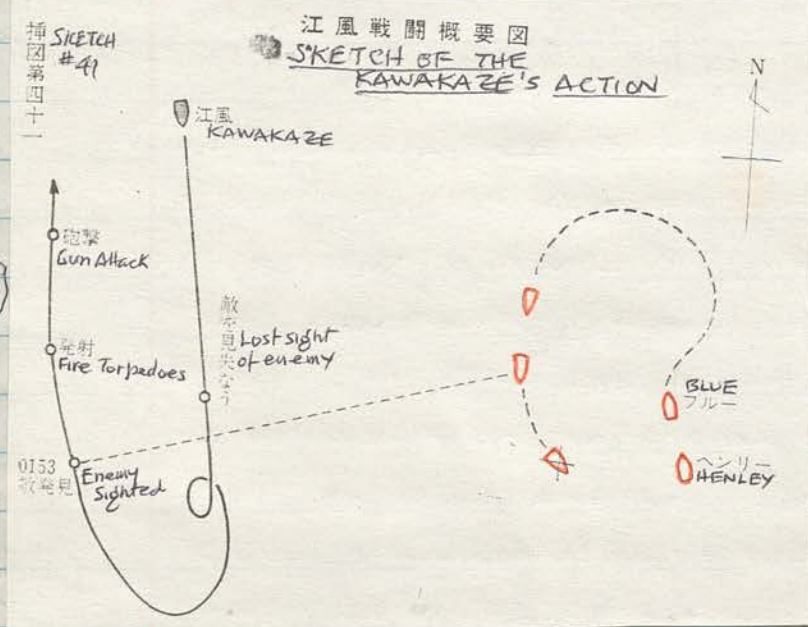
The destroyer KAWAKAZE made a one ship foray, arriving at LUNGA Anchorage at 0100 the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Visibility was bad <sup>(although)</sup> and it approached that Point up to 1.5 kilometers. It was unable to sight any enemy transports. Afterward, while making a search of the area, <sup>(at 0200)</sup> 2 destroyers were sighted cruising in formation and the leading ship was ~~attacked~~ with gunfire and torpedoes (6 torpedoes - 6 rounds) after which it retired to the north; the opponents did not return the fire.

While proceeding north <sup>at 0550</sup> the KAWAKAZE was attacked by machine guns by 2 carrier-type aircraft, in which one man was seriously wounded but no other damage received. The YUNAGI joined at 1020 after which they headed for SHORTLAND to refuel.

According to U.S. data, the enemy ships attacked by the KAWAKAZE were the

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U.S. destroyers BLUE and HENLEY which had escorted 2 transports to Guadalcanal the 21<sup>st</sup> and were two of the three ships that reached the Guadalcanal Anchorage. These two destroyers were detached from the transport convoy to conduct a radar patrol of IRONBOTTOM SOUND <sup>to prevent an</sup> anticipated landing of Japanese forces. (IRONBOTTOM SOUND, between GUADALCANAL Island and Florida Island, was <sup>so</sup> named by the U.S. Navy to commemorate the large number of naval vessels sunk there in the several months after the 1<sup>st</sup> Battle of the SOLOMONS). At 0155 the BLUE detected by radar and sonar a high-speed vessel 4500 meters on the starboard beam. As it was bringing its guns and torpedo tubes to bear, the range had closed to 3,000 meters and it received a torpedo hit on the stern and was unable to proceed; after moving to TULAGI, it was disposed of on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. A sketch of the KAWAKAZE'S ACTION appears to the left (sketch #41)



### OPERATIONS ON THE 22<sup>nd</sup>

#### OPERATIONS OF THE SOUTH EAST AREA FORCES

At 1000 the 22<sup>nd</sup> the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon was in position 2°-40' South, 159°-35' East (350 miles north of GUADALCANAL) proceeding south, zigzagging at 9 knots. At that time the 553 Carrier Striking Force was about 200 miles north-east of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon and the Advance Force was some 120 miles to the northwest, both of those forces continuing refuelling as they proceeded southward. On GUADALCANAL,

as related earlier, TAVU Point was reporting that the (CHICK) Advanced Force had failed in its attack and had been practically wiped out.

The GUADALCANAL Garrison Force in its strong point on the west bank of the MATANIKAU River was short of provisions and on the 19<sup>th</sup> had reported that it had only two days rations. On the other hand, it seemed that the enemy was active in resupplying its forces on GUADALCANAL, our Garrison Force there reporting that two enemy destroyers at anchor in LUNGA Roads the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

A search plane from our Base Air Force at 0910 the 22<sup>nd</sup> reported sighting an enemy force of 2 cruisers and 2 destroyers, bearing 120°, 488 miles from SWORTLAND and another search plane was not heard from after 0510 that day.

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It had been planned to attack GUADALCANAL that day with an air attack force of land based bombers covered by Zero fighters, but all of the CAPE ST GEORGE area was covered with bad weather, and this air strike was regretfully cancelled. The Chief of Staff 11<sup>th</sup> Air Fleet advised all commands of this and also requested the Carrier Striking Force (Received by Desron 2 at 1145 on the 22<sup>nd</sup>) to make an attack the next day, the 23<sup>rd</sup>, on the enemy air power in the GUADALCANAL area and on ships at anchor there in conjunction with the advance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon, as follows: "BECAUSE OF BAD WEATHER TODAY OUR ATTACK ON GUADALCANAL COULD NOT BE MADE. IT IS REQUESTED THAT YOUR FORCE ATTACK ENEMY AIR POWER AND SURFACE FORCES TOMORROW IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE MOVEMENT OF THE TRANSPORT CONVOY. FURTHERMORE WE PLAN TO ATTACK GUADALCANAL TOMORROW AT ABOUT 1100."

The Main Force and Support Force of the Outer South Seas Force on the 22<sup>nd</sup> continued to cruise <sup>in support</sup> ahead of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon; that day the first section of CruDiv 6 left the formation headed for SHORTLAND to refuel; ~~alternately~~ alternately, others refuelled to support the advance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon.

In order to prevent the resupply and reinforcement <sup>(of GUADALCANAL)</sup> by enemy vessels, Commander Outer South Seas Force on the 22<sup>nd</sup> ordered the KAGERU, after topping off with fuel, to continue her previous <sup>successively</sup> duty. He ordered the YUNAGI and the KAWAKAZE and DesDiv 30 (MUTSUKI, MOCHIZUKI and YUZUKI), under the command of ComdesDiv 30, to make a night attack on the GUADALCANAL area, if possible, on the night of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and also had the YUZUKI load food and ammunition at RABAU to deliver to the GUADALCANAL Garrison Force.

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#### REQUEST FOR AIR COVER FOR THE 2<sup>nd</sup> ECHELON

Headquarters 11<sup>th</sup> Air Fleet, in accordance with the agreement with the XVIII Army regarding the "KI" ((ICHIKI) Reinforcements?) operations, again conferred with the <sup>(on the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup>)</sup> Army with regard to the advance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon; as a result, at 0857 the same day the Chief of Staff sent the following to all forces: (1) ON THE 21<sup>st</sup> A RADIO FROM GUADALCANAL STATED "THE ICHIKI ADVANCED FORCE WAS PRACTICALLY ANNIHILATED PRIOR TO ITS FORAY INTO THE AIRFIELD". ALTHOUGH SENDER REQUESTED CLOSE AIR COVER, THERE IS GREAT DOUBT AS TO THE ORIGINATOR OF THE ABOVE INTELLIGENCE REPORT. (2) IT WAS AGREED IN THE CONFERENCE WITH XVIII ARMY THAT REGARDLESS OF WHAT DAMAGE WAS INFLECTED ON THE ICHIKI ADVANCED FORCE, THE LANDING BY THE SECOND ECHELON SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT AS SCHEDULED.

The Commander of the Reinforcement Force, who was <sup>(escorting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon as they)</sup> headed for GUADALCANAL,

was concerned over an air attack from that base and at 1120 the 22<sup>nd</sup> requested the South East Area Force ((who was Comdr Base Air Force as Comd 11<sup>th</sup> Air Fleet)) to send air cover, as follows: IT IS REQUESTED THAT CLOSE AIR COVER BE FURNISHED THE TRANSPORT CONVOY FROM TOMORROW THE 23<sup>rd</sup> UNTIL IT HAS WITHDRAWN OUTSIDE THE ATTACK RADIUS OF THE GUADALCANAL BASE (EXPECTED TO BE THE 23<sup>rd</sup>), TRANSPORT CONVOYS 1200 POSITION 23<sup>rd</sup> - 5°-20' South, 160°-20' East (Author's Note: - 40 miles east of ONTONG JAVA)

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The Staff of the 8<sup>th</sup> Fleet, also, emphasized the necessity for the destruction of the enemy's air power before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon drew near to GUADALCANAL and the requirement for the provision of direct air cover over the convoy in case there were some enemy planes remaining; the Chief of Staff radioed the Base Air Force at 1305 the 22<sup>nd</sup> as follows; (8<sup>th</sup> Fleet 22130562)

IN VIEW OF REPORTS THAT ENEMY CARRIER TYPE AIRCRAFT HAVE MOVED UP TO THE GUADALCANAL BASE, EVEN IF WE STRIVE TO ATTACK AND DESTROY THEM BEFORE THE 2<sup>nd</sup> ECHELON DRAWS NEAR TO GUADALCANAL, THERE IS A REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE AIR COVER FOR THE 2<sup>nd</sup> ECHELON IN CASE THERE ARE SOME ENEMY PLANES REMAINING. ALSO IN VIEW OF APPEARANCE OF ENEMY LIGHT CRAFT IN THE GUADALCANAL ANCHORAGE<sup>(AND AS)</sup> IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT A SWEEP IN THE VICINITY OF THE LANDING POINT BE MADE, WILL HAVE AN ATTACK MADE ~~BY~~<sup>ALL</sup> DESTROYERS AVAILABLE. IF THE ADVANCE FORCE MOVES UP CLOSE, DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION, WILL TRANSFER<sup>THE</sup> RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROTECTION OF THE 2<sup>nd</sup> ECHELON TO THEM. THIS FORCE INTENDS TO MOVE UP TO THAT AREA ON THE NIGHT OF THE 23<sup>rd</sup> WITH APPROPRIATE FORCES (Received by Desron 2 at 0045 the 23<sup>rd</sup>).

The Chief of Staff 11<sup>th</sup> Air Fleet sent the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet the following request for air cover for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon on the 24<sup>th</sup>: "IN CONNECTION WITH 8<sup>th</sup> FLEET'S 22130562 (sic), WOULD ESPECIALLY APPRECIATE YOUR FURNISHING AIR PATROLS OVER THE TRANSPORT CONVOY ON THE 24<sup>th</sup> IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ENEMY SITUATION, AND<sup>(WITH)</sup> THE RESULTS OF OUR ATTACK ON GUADALCANAL TOMORROW THE 23<sup>rd</sup>" (Remainder omitted by Author)

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The Headquarters/Staff of the Combined<sup>(Fleet)</sup> aware of the status of the above requests, sent<sup>(its)</sup> all forces<sup>16</sup> guidance by radio, the gist of which was "THE LOCATION OF



THE ENEMY <sup>(CARRIER)</sup> TASK FORCE IS UNKNOWN AND WE NEED THIS INFORMATION. DUE TO THE NECESSITY TO CONCEAL THE POSITION OF OURS, THE BASE AIR FORCE SHOULD ATTACK GUADALCANAL BASE THE 23<sup>rd</sup>, AND IF THE RESULTS ARE MEAGER, MAKE AN ATTACK WITH THE CARRIER STRIKING FORCE ON THE 24<sup>th</sup>. IN THIS CASE THE ARRIVAL OF OUR TRANSPORT CONVOY SHOULD BE POSTPONED TO THE 24<sup>th</sup>."

### OPERATIONS OF THE SUBMARINE FORCE

Subron 1 (I-9, I-15, I-17, I-19, I-26, I-31, I-33) <sup>(newest submarines, all carried float plane)</sup> had been in home waters since late July getting ready for deployment to the INDIAN OCEAN but in response to the sudden change in the situation in the South East Area, they departed on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August and sped south toward the Solomon Islands. The Commander VANGUARD FORCE (Cinc 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet) (Submarine Fleet) - Vice Admiral Teruhisa KOMATSU who had departed YOKOSUKA August 18<sup>th</sup> for TRUK, on receiving the report of sighting the enemy carrier force on the 20<sup>th</sup>, ordered Subron 1 to take station in the "A" DEPLOYMENT LINE (between Lat.  $7^{\circ}40'S - 165^{\circ}00'E$  to  $9^{\circ}40'S$ ,  $163^{\circ}20'E$ ) and stand-by.

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On the 21<sup>st</sup> at 1550 the Cinc Combined Fleet ordered Subron 3 and Subron 7, which had until then been operating as a part of the Outer South Seas Force, back under the command of Commander VANGUARD FORCE. By this order all submarine forces operating in the South East Area were placed under the above command. At 0830 the 22<sup>nd</sup> that Commander ordered Subron 3 to take station, as soon ready, on the "B" Deployment Line ( $12^{\circ}20'S$  South,  $159^{\circ}20'E$  to  $12^{\circ}20'S$  -  $158^{\circ}20'$ ) and stand-by.

At that time the <sup>(of Subron 3)</sup> units capable of operating in the South East Area were three submarines, the I-11 at TRUK, the I-174 and I-175 at RABAUL, the others being enroute to home waters for repairs. Accordingly, the I-11, which had left TRUK the 20<sup>th</sup> and was headed south for the SOLOMONS, immediately headed for the "B" Deployment Line and the I-175 and I-174 departed RABAUL on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, respectively, heading for the "B" Deployment Line.

Also, Commander VANGUARD FORCE on the 22<sup>nd</sup> ordered the 3 subs. of Subdiv 13, 1 submarine of Subdiv 21, and the other sub of the latter division to standby in three separate areas, respectively, east of SAN CRISTOBAL Island, south of the SOLOMONS, and off Port MORESBY. At that time the three submarines of Subdiv 13 were already in their assigned area, the others <sup>(were ordered to)</sup> arrive on their proper stations between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>.

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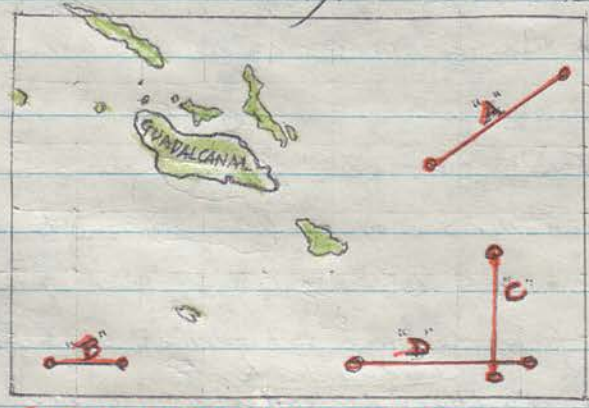
In the meantime, in order to prevent enemy sending reinforcements to GUADALCANAL, the Commander of the Outer South Seas Force, who had ordered the destroyer KAGURO and Desdiv 30 to make night attacks on that area, now on the 22<sup>nd</sup> wanted Commander (Submarines) Vanguard Force to station <sup>submarines</sup> east of TAIVU Point and in the vicinity of the eastern tip of INDISPENSABLE STRAIT. For this purpose, Commander Vanguard Force at 1200 the 23<sup>rd</sup> directed ComSubron 7 to change his deployments in INDISPENSABLE STRAIT and the western passages to GUADALCANAL in order to block enemy reinforcement convoys and retirement routes.

OPERATIONS ON THE 23<sup>rd</sup>

POSTPONEMENT OF DATES FOR LANDING THE 2<sup>ND</sup> ECHELON.

At 0500 the 23<sup>rd</sup> there was a report from the GUADALCANAL GARRISON Commander to the effect that: an enemy transport (4000 ton class) was at anchor in LUNGA ROADS, four enemy destroyers were patrolling and two fighter aircraft were flying aerial patrols. Next, <sup>at 0540</sup> the submarine I-17, <sup>enroute to the "A" Deployment Line</sup> reported receiving machine gun attack by 3 <sup>enemy</sup> carrier-type aircraft in position 6°-45' S, 164°-40' E and also the I-11, enroute to the "B" Deployment Line, in position 7°-32' S, 162°-08' E, reported sighting enemy carrier aircraft, confirming the presence of an enemy aircraft carrier in that vicinity. Therefore, Commander Vanguard Force ordered Subron 1 to shift to the "C" Deployment Line (From 10°-40' S, 164°-00' E to 12°-40' S, 162°-20' E) and again the same day directed Subron 1 to shift by dawn the 24<sup>th</sup> to the "D" Deployment line (From 12°-20' S, 164°-40' E to 12°-20' S, 162°-20' E) and await the enemy. The 2<sup>nd</sup> ECHELON sighted enemy aircraft as it was standing

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SUBMARINE DEPLOYMENT LINES

south; at 0730 Commander Reinforcement Force sighted a Consolidated (PSY) plane in position 5°-03' S, 160°-23' East (about 40 miles east of ONTONG JAVA) and at 0745 reported that enemy aircraft were maintaining contact. This position was about 300 miles from GUADALCANAL and some 180 miles from the position where the I-11 had sighted enemy aircraft. On receiving the above reports from Commander

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Reinforcement Force, the Commander Outer South Seas Force ordered the Convoy to take precautions against air attack and to immediately retire temporarily toward the north; the Convoy changed course to north at 0840. The Chief of Staff, 8<sup>th</sup> Fleet, made recommendations to the Chief of Staff, 11<sup>th</sup> Air Fleet with regard to movements of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon (received by Desron 2 at 1000 the 23<sup>rd</sup>) as follows: "IT SEEMS THAT SOME ENEMY PLANES ARE BASED AT GUADALCANAL AND IN THE BELIEF THAT THE 2<sup>nd</sup> ECHELON, WHICH IS <sup>NOW</sup> BEING SHADOWED BY ENEMY AIRCRAFT, SHOULD NOT CONTINUE SOUTHWARD, ~~BUT~~ <sup>(IT WAS ORDERED TO)</sup> REVERSE COURSE TEMPORARILY. <sup>(WHETHER (HEREAFTER))</sup> A DECISION TO ADVANCE OR RETIRE IS REQUESTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE RESULTS OF TODAY'S ATTACK BY THE BASE AIR FORCE AND ALSO THE ACTIONS BY THE CARRIER STRIKING FORCE. IF THERE IS NO ATTACK ON GUADALCANAL, <sup>(AND SINCE THE)</sup> ENTRY OF THE 2<sup>nd</sup> ECHELON WITHIN <sup>BOMB-ATTACK</sup> RADIUS WOULD BE DISADVANTAGEOUS, IT IS BELIEVED THAT, DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION, THE SCHEDULED DATE FOR THEIR LANDING MUST BE POSTPONED ONE DAY"

This day, the Base Air Force flew <sup>(11)</sup> patrol sectors in zones A, B, C, + D, and did not see the enemy; however the patrol plane flying the 115<sup>o</sup> sector <sup>(from RABAU)</sup> failed to return. 24 land bombers of the 6<sup>th</sup> Air Attack Force and 13 Zero fighters of the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Attack Force took off from RABAU early in the morning and headed for GUADALCANAL but <sup>as</sup> the airfield and vicinity were completely clouded over, they were unable to reach their objective and returned.

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The Staff/Headquarters of the 11<sup>th</sup> Air Fleet after studying the recommendations regarding the advance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon, again confirmed that the date for the landing would be as scheduled on the 24<sup>th</sup>, lest the Reinforcement Force miss the chance to advance, and passed this to the Outer South Seas Force. The previous day the Combined Fleet had sent its guidance by radio that <sup>(the results of the attack by)</sup> the Base Air Force on the 23<sup>rd</sup> did not succeed; an attack on the 24<sup>th</sup> by the carrier striking force <sup>(and this decision was probably made in)</sup> should be made, ~~and it was~~ expectation of this, of a quick recapture of the airfield, plus a rescue of the ICHIKI Advanced Force.

At 1612 the Chief of Staff rescinded his order to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon to retire and informed them: "THE 2<sup>nd</sup> ECHELON, FOR THE PRESENT, WILL OPERATE SO AS TO MAKE ITS LANDING ON THE 24<sup>TH</sup>". To this, the Commander of the Reinforcement Force at 1845 requested "LANDING ON THE 24<sup>TH</sup> IMPOSSIBLE DUE TO CONSIDERATIONS OF CONVOY SPEED; REQUEST NEW DIRECTIVES."

It is not clear whether the Staff/Headquarters of the 11<sup>th</sup> Air Fleet

in directing that the landing would be on the 24<sup>th</sup>, as scheduled, had restudied the date for the landing and whether that Staff/Headquarters knew that the speed of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon would not allow a landing on the 24<sup>th</sup>, or whether they estimated it would be advantageous to land them after the enemy air power had been attacked and destroyed on the 24<sup>th</sup> by the power of the BASE Air Force and the Carrier Striking Force.

At any rate, that Headquarters radioed: "THE DATE FOR LANDING THE ICHIKI FORCE HAS BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL AUGUST 25TH AND ALL FORCES WILL OPERATE AS DIRECTED BY THEIR COMMANDERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ABOVE" (received by DBSRON 2 at 2308 and entered before his "REQUEST NEW DIRECTIVES" message)--

The Chief of Staff, 11<sup>th</sup> Air Fleet at 2308<sup>(that day)</sup> informed the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet regarding postponement of the landing date:

THE ENEMY'S REINFORCEMENT OF GUADALCANAL <sup>HAS BEEN</sup> VERY REMARKABLE AND THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE LANDING AT THIS TIME WAS THE RESULT OF THE APPEARANCE OF ENEMY LARGE TYPE AIRCRAFT. NOT ONLY IS IT CLEAR THAT <sup>FORTHCOMING OPERATIONS FOR</sup> THE RECAPTURE OF GUADALCANAL WILL BE MORE AND MORE DIFFICULT BUT WE ALSO WE MUST QUICKLY COME TO THE AID OF OUR FORCES ON GUADALCANAL. WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR GOOD OFFICES TOWARD CARRYING OUT THE LANDING WITHOUT FAIL ON THE 25<sup>TH</sup> AS SET FORTH IN 11TH AIR FLEET'S SECRET RADIO 230531.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon reversed course at 2130 and once again began its move southward so as to land on the 25<sup>th</sup>, on course 160° speed 9 knots. The 1<sup>st</sup> Section of CruDiv 6, the Outer South Seas Force's Support Force was acting as indirect support to the west of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon. The Outer South Seas Force's Main Force (CHOKAI, KINUGASA and ISONAMI)(CDD) entered SHOTLAND at 1610 to refuel and leave the ISONAMI there to make a night attack on GUADALCANAL. The 2 heavy cruisers departed at 2015, escorted by the YUNAGI (in place of the ISONAMI), headed east to act as support for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon.

Also, Outer South Seas Force ordered DesDiv 30 [KAGERO, KAWAKAZE, YUNAGI] which was making preparations for a night attack on GUADALCANAL to carry it out. Afterward, along with the postponement of the landing day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon, that Commander interchanged the ISONAMI for the YUNAGI and changed their <sup>night</sup> foray to the 24<sup>th</sup>. However the

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KAGERO had already completed its preparations and had departed, arriving 1.5 miles off LUNGA Road at 2300 the 23<sup>rd</sup>; sighting no enemy ships it carried out a gun bombardment of the shore. After reaching the TULAGI anchorage and sighting no enemy, it returned.

### OPERATIONS OF THE CARRIER STRIKING FORCE

The Commander Carrier Striking Force at 0425 the 23<sup>rd</sup> issued ordered various operations with regard to the "KA" (GUADALCANAL) operations. These were additional outlines of operations in case <sup>(air power of the</sup> the Carrier Striking Force were to attack that base <sup>(and provide air cover there,</sup> as requested by the Base Air Force on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, as well as conforming to the (above mentioned) guidance by the Combined Fleet Headquarters.

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"CARRIER STRIKING FORCE VISUAL SIGNAL #3. THE VARIOUS OPERATIONS OF THE CARRIER STRIKING FORCE IN THE "KA" OPERATIONS WILL BE AS FOLLOWS: METHOD #1 (THE BASIC METHOD UNLESS ORDERED TO THE CONTRARY) ALL FORCES WILL ADVANCE WHILE KEEPING ALERT PATROLS TO THE EAST TO BE IN POSITION APPROXIMATELY  $8^{\circ}-36'$  SOUTH  $164^{\circ}-10'$  EAST AT 0400 THE 24<sup>TH</sup>, AND COME TO GRIPS WITH, ATTACK AND DESTROY THE ENEMY FLEET SOUTH EAST OF SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND. METHOD #2 ((CA)) TONE, ((CV)) RYUJO, ((DD)) TOKITSUKAZE AND ((DD)) AMATSUKAZE FORM A DETACHMENT UNDER COM CRUDIV 8 CHARGED WITH SUPPORT OF THE REINFORCEMENT FORCE AND ATTACKING GUADALCANAL ISLAND. OTHER FORCES OPERATE ACCORDING TO METHOD #1. METHOD #3. SUPPORT FORCE ((OF THE STRIKING FORCE)) WILL IMMEDIATELY OPERATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH METHOD #2, OTHER FORCES WILL OPERATE AS DESIRED AROUND  $4^{\circ}-30'S$  -  $161-50'E$ , WATCHING THE ENEMY'S MOVEMENTS, SHIFTING TO METHOD #1. METHOD #4 ALL FORCES WILL OPERATE AGAINST THE EAST."

Next, the Chief of Staff 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet informed his force at 0545 "UNLESS THERE IS A GREAT CHANGE IN THE ENEMY SITUATION, INTEND TO OPERATE ACCORDING TO METHOD #1. IN CASE THERE ARE NO SUBSTANTIAL RESULTS IN TODAY'S ATTACK <sup>(ON GUADALCANAL)</sup> BY THE BASE AIR FORCE, METHOD #2 WILL BE ORDERED TOMORROW."

The Carrier Striking Force launched 5 float scouting planes of Crudiv 7 and Crudiv 8 at 0900 to carry out <sup>van</sup> search for the enemy, as it proceeded southward, and at 1200 had reached position  $3^{\circ}-45'S$ ,  $161-07'E$  without any enemy sightings. In addition, at 1205 the <sup>(CV))</sup> SHOKAKU launched 8 torpedo-bombers and carried out searches from  $100^{\circ}-170^{\circ}$  to distances of from 230 - 250 miles, without sighting

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the enemy. The Commander Carrier Striking Force, issued orders with regard to contacts by searchers with the enemy: "SECRECY BEING PARAMOUNT, EXCEPT FOR SIGHTINGS OF LARGE ENEMY FORCES OR AIRCRAFT CARRIERS, MAKE REPORTS AFTER RETURN TO <sup>YOUR</sup> SHIP. SUBMARINES WILL NOT APPROACH EITHER ENEMY NOR FRIENDLY FORCES.

At this time the Carrier Striking Force had reached position  $8^{\circ}-30'S$ - $163^{\circ}-50'E$  before dawn on the 24<sup>th</sup> planning to make contact with and attack and destroy the enemy carrier task force. It had so notified all forces concerned (visual signal received by Desron 2 at 1555 the 23<sup>rd</sup>) but had no definite intelligence regarding the enemy carrier force and the next day received the "guidance radio" (referred to previously) to the effect that "it is necessary that <sup>our</sup> carrier striking force's position be secret". In addition, as will be related later, the ADVANCE FORCE had reported being sighted by an enemy flying boat. For these reasons, the Carrier Striking Force, recognizing <sup>(the necessity)</sup> ~~it~~, for not prematurely entering the enemy's patrol zone, and preparing for the enemy carrier force while keeping their <sup>own</sup> movements secret, reported at 1540 - "HAVE NOT RECEIVED INTELLIGENCE CONCERNING THE ENEMY FLEET TODAY; UNLESS <sup>(OTHERWISE)</sup> ORDERED, ~~CARRIER~~ WILL REVERSE COURSE TONIGHT AND TOMORROW MORNING AGAIN HEAD SOUTH". AT 1625 in position  $4^{\circ}-40'S$ ,  $161^{\circ}-30'E$ , course was changed to  $330^{\circ}$

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At a critique of these operations at TRUK on November 7<sup>th</sup> the Commander of the Carrier Striking Force explained in regard to this change of course: "On the 23<sup>rd</sup> I had expected to know something but there was nothing, on the contrary, the Advance Force was sighted by an enemy flying boat but the Carrier Striking Force, fortunately, escaped being sighted. Under these conditions, it was considered dangerous to advance to the South as scheduled on the 24<sup>th</sup> and course was changed in the evening to move northward. At that time, the Staff of the Combined Fleet were of the same opinion."

After the above change of course the Commander Carrier Striking Force at 1700 informed all forces concerned of his intended movements the following morning <sup>(by visual signal)</sup> "CARRIER STRIKING FORCE. 0500 24 AUGUST POSITION WILL BE  $2^{\circ}-30'S$ ,  $160-30'E$ , COURSE  $150^{\circ}$  SPEED 16 KNOTS." In the meantime that Commander

at 1625 issued the search plan for dawn the next day

As will be related later, at 2000 the 23<sup>rd</sup>, Cin C Combined Fleet ordered the Support Force ((2<sup>nd</sup> + 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleets)) : " IF NO INTELLIGENCE REGARDING THE ENEMY CARRIER FORCE IS OBTAINED DURING TOMORROW MORNING THE 24<sup>TH</sup>, WHILE CONTINUING TO SEEK SUCH, MAKE AN ATTACK WITH APPROPRIATE FORCE ON GUADALCANAL IN THE AFTERNOON.

Accordingly Commander Carrier Striking Force issued orders of 2345 for operations according to Method # 2 for the next day, the 24<sup>th</sup>: CARRIER STRIKING FORCE VISUAL SIGNAL NO 3. (1) CARRIER STRIKING FORCE IS TO OPERATE BY METHOD # 2 TOMORROW, HOWEVER IF THE ENEMY CARRIER FORCE IS SIGHTED DURING THE MORNING SHIFT WE WILL SHIFT TO METHOD # 1. (2) AT 0200 THE 24<sup>TH</sup> SUPPORT FORCE ((<sup>THE</sup> CARRIER STRIKING FORCE)) WILL SEPARATE, <sup>AND</sup> HEAD SOUTH IN THE AREA TO THE WEST OF THE MAIN FORCE, AND THEN OPERATE SO AS TO BE ABLE TO ATTACK GUADALCANAL (3) REMAINDER OF THIS FORCE WILL OPERATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH TANA 33 (Author's note: the visual signal sent at 1700) ((bottom page 190)) HOWEVER FROM 0500 ONWARD SPEED WILL BE 20 KNOTS."

561  
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CARRIER AIR STRENGTH, as of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, is tabulated below

SHIP	ZERO FIGHTERS	DIVE BOMBERS	TORPEDO BOMBERS	TOTAL	NOTES
SHOKAKU	27	27	18	72	the number to be expected from each ship
ZUIKAKU	27	27	18	72	
RYUJO	24	0	9	33	
TOTAL	78	54	45	177	

### OPERATIONS OF THE ADVANCE FORCE

The Advance Force continued its southern advance from the previous day and at 1200 the 23<sup>rd</sup> had reached position 3°-57'S, 160-54E, about 120 miles north-east of ONTONG JAVA and some 20 miles south-west of the Carrier Striking Force. In the meantime 7 float-scout planes were launched from Cruisers 4 and 5, the (CL) YURA and the (CVs) CHITOSE to make searches of a sector 90°-170° to a distance of 280 miles. <sup>Near</sup> the end of their search, two of these planes each sighted an enemy flying boat, otherwise no enemy was observed.

561  
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The Commander Advance Force on the morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup> received the <sup>Carrier</sup> Striking Force's schedule of operations, issued the schedule of operations for the Advance Force for the 24<sup>th</sup> as follows, notifying all units (visual signal received by Desdiv 2 the 23<sup>rd</sup> at 1327). REFER CARRIER STRIKING FORCE <sup>RADIO</sup> 230450 (Author's note: Carrier Striking Force's Visual Signal # 3 ((above)) converted to a radio report?). CONFORMING TO CARRIER STRIKING FORCE'S MOVEMENTS,

THE MAIN FORCE OF THE ADVANCE FORCE WILL OPERATE TOMORROW MORNING THE 24<sup>TH</sup> AS DESIRED, <sup>60 MILES</sup> TO THE EAST OF THE CARRIER STRIKING FORCE, CENTERED NEAR  $5^{\circ}-30'S, 164^{\circ}-50'E$  (INTENDS TO) AND CONDUCT ENEMY SEARCHES FROM  $30^{\circ}$  TO  $125^{\circ}$ , TO 300 MILES DISTANCE.

After recovering its search planes at 1430, the Advance Force took course  $130^{\circ}$  speed 20, advancing to the south-east. This movement put them the next morning to the east of the Carrier Striking Force in order to guard the eastern area at the time of its enemy search and attack.

Afterwards, as the Carrier Striking force had reversed course, the Advance Force also reversed course at 1915 and headed north  $-0^{\circ}$  degrees. Then that commander at 2140 radioed all forces his schedule of operations:

ADVANCE FORCE HAS REVERSED COURSE AND MOVING GENERALLY EAST OF THE CARRIER STRIKING FORCE WILL REACH POSITION  $3^{\circ}-10'S, 162^{\circ}-10'E$  AT 0500 THE 24<sup>TH</sup>, AND THEREAFTER TAKE COURSE  $150^{\circ}$  SPEED 16 KNOTS. THIS FORCE INTENDS TO REFUEL ON THE 26<sup>TH</sup> IN THE VICINITY OF 120 MILES NORTH OF ONTONG JAWA

That day (the 23<sup>rd</sup>), due to the necessity to conceal the location of the Carrier Striking Force, the strict enforcement of radio silence and the unfavorable condition of radio communication, the Advance Force, under the direct command of Commander Support Force, <sup>(seems to have been)</sup> without any knowledge of the overall situation. Although the Advance Force was sighted on the 23<sup>rd</sup> by enemy patrol aircraft, there are no data <sup>(on this available)</sup> and the situation is obscure.

#### OPERATIONS OF THE COMBINED FLEET'S MAIN FORCE.

From Communications Intelligence reports and the reports from the I-17 and I-11 of sighting enemy carrier planes, the Staff Headquarters of the Combined Fleet estimated that an enemy carrier task force was probably on the move. It was also known that the Base Air Force had not been able to attack GUADALCANAL the day before and again that day.

It was in these circumstances that at 2000 the 23<sup>rd</sup> the CMC Combined Fleet issued orders for the next days operations, the 24<sup>th</sup>: COMBINED FLEET RADIO

ORDER #227. OPERATIONS IN THE GUADALCANAL AREA FOR TOMORROW THE 24<sup>TH</sup> WILL BE CARRIED OUT AS FOLLOWS: (1) BASE AIR FORCE WILL ATTACK

GUADALCANAL AIRFIELD AND ENEMY FACILITIES THERE WITH LARGEST FORCE

FORCE POSSIBLE AND AT SAME TIME CARRY OUT PREVIOUSLY ORDERED ENEMY SEARCHES

(EXTENDING ENEMY SEARCH LINES TO THE EAST TO UTMOST) (2) SUPPORT FORCE, UNLESS

IT RECEIVES INTELLIGENCE OF THE ENEMY CARRIER FORCE DURING THE MORNING,



WHILE CONTINUING TO OBTAIN SAME, ATTACK GUADALCANAL WITH DESIRED FORCES IN THE AFTERNOON.

- (3) SUBMARINES ON "A" DEPLOYMENT LINE SPEED SOUTH ABOUT 150 MILES MAKING SWEEP ENROUTE.
- (4) OTHER FORCES AS ORDERED BY THEIR COMMANDER.
- (5) COMMENCE OPERATIONS SET FORTH IN COMBINED FLEET RADIO ORDER #219 PARAGRAPH 2 A, LATTER PART, (LANDING OF THE KAWAGUCHI DETACHMENT) (Author's Note: According to Order #219 those landing operations were scheduled for 30 August)

That day the Main Force of the Combined Fleet was about 180 miles to the south of TRUK heading eastward while refuelling and at 2200 began to start south at 18 knots from near NUKUORO Island ( $5^{\circ}10'N - 155^{\circ}E$ ) on course  $130^{\circ}$ .

#### OPERATIONS OF ALLIED FORCES

The American Carrier Task Force had been ordered to protect the sea-lines of communication with GUADALCANAL from outside the search zones of Japanese aircraft; its move northward has been covered previously. This Carrier force was centered in 3 carriers, the ENTERPRISE, SARATOGA, and WASP, and at daybreak the 23<sup>rd</sup> were about 150 miles to the east of GUADALCANAL. In addition many ships were being concentrated in that area to oppose the great power of Japan's forces. The Carrier HORNET had departed Pearl Harbor escorted by cruisers and destroyers on August 17, headed south; warships from the Atlantic Ocean, beginning with the new type battleships WASHINGTON and SOUTH DAKOTA, Anti-Aircraft Cruisers and destroyers had passed through the PANAMA CANAL and being sent as reinforcements.

At 0750 the 23<sup>rd</sup> a (PBV) Consolidated Flying Boat which had taken off from NDENI ((Santa Cruz Islands)) reported sighting a Japanese transport convoy heading for GUADALCANAL. 8 Search aircraft which had taken off from the SARATOGA at dawn to search the arc  $345^{\circ} - 045^{\circ}$  to a distance of 180 miles had sighted 2 submarines, one of which was attacked, but otherwise had not sighted any Japanese surface forces. At 1245 the SARATOGA launched 36 SBDs and 6 TBFs against the Japanese transport convoy reported by the PBV search plane and an hour and a half later 23 Marine aircraft from GUADALCANAL took off to attack the same convoy. However due both to bad weather and the reversal of course by the convoy prevented its being sighted by either attack group, both of which landed at dusk at HENDERSON FIELD. 5 PBVs took off as a night attack strike force but these also failed to sight a target. The Commander of the American

Carrier Task Force, Vice Admiral Fletcher had received from Pacific Fleet Intelligence Section intelligence to the effect that the Japanese aircraft carriers were north of TRUK. Reasoning that a major clash would not occur for several days, he sent the WASP south to refuel the afternoon of the 23<sup>rd</sup>

## VII THE BATTLE OF THE 24<sup>TH</sup> - THE SECOND BATTLE OF THE SOLOMONS OPERATIONS BY THE SUPPORT FORCE'S CARRIER STRIKING FORCE

### SINKING OF THE RYUJO

After the order for the <sup>Carrier Striking Force's</sup> Detachment to be sent forward, the Chief of Staff 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet sent word with regard to the operations of the Detachment: (1) IT SEEMS THAT SOME 30 ENEMY CARRIER TYPE AIRCRAFT MOVED TO GUADALCANAL. (2) THE REINFORCEMENT FORCE (ESCORTED BY DESRON 2) AT 2130 THE 3<sup>RD</sup> WAS IN POSITION 3°-12'S, 160°-02', COURSE 160° SPEED 9 KNOTS (3) IF THE ENEMY CARRIER FORCE IS NOT SIGHTED TOMORROW MORNING, GUADALCANAL WILL BE ATTACKED WITHOUT FURTHER ORDERS, CHIEFLY TO DESTROY ENEMY AIRCRAFT (4) NO OBJECTION IF PLANES RETURN TO LAND BASES. AFTER THE ATTACK DETACHMENT WILL REFUEL AT POINT "A" (2°-00'S, 160°-00'E).

564  
Accordingly, the Detachment Commander (Com Cru Div 8 - Rear Admiral Chuichi HARA) planned to advance to a position 24°, 106 miles from NDAI Island\* at 1100 the 24<sup>th</sup> (about 200 miles from the GUADALCANAL base), launch his air attack <sup>force</sup> at 1200 and for the Detachment to retire to the northward, <sup>(planes of the</sup> the air strike to return to the base on BURKA IS. However, in accordance with the desire of the Commanding officer of the RYUJO, it was decided that they would return and land aboard their carrier.

The Detachment separated from the main force at 0200 the 24<sup>th</sup> and headed south. At 0713 they were shadowed by an enemy patrol plane, which was attacked by our air patrol which left, trailing smoke from one engine. The Detachment reached its scheduled position at 1000 but until this time they had no intelligence <sup>(of sightings)</sup> from the Carrier Striking Force. <sup>Then</sup> At 1020 the first attack wave (6 torpedo bombers and 6 Zero fighters) was launched and headed for GUADALCANAL. Next, at 1048 a Diversionary Attack Force

\* 6°2'N 160°3'E  
due north of the northern tip of MALAITA IS

(9 Zero fighters) was launched, after which the Detachment withdrew temporarily to the north; at 1130 <sup>(course was)</sup> changed to 270° and afterward course was altered to head for their position to recover their aircraft. During this, at 1141 one enemy patrol plane was sighted and at 1157 a <sup>(based)</sup> land plane ((B-17?)) was also sighted.

564  
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The Attack Force of 6 torpedo-bombers (each loaded with 6-60 kilogram ((132#)) bombs) escorted by 6 Zero fighters, and the Diversionary Attack Force, under the command of Lieut. Kenjiro ITOH, struck the airfield at about 1230, making its bombing attack; prior to it and afterwards, some 15 enemy fighters <sup>were</sup> engaged, and they reported shooting down <sup>(practically)</sup> all planes. We lost 3 torpedo bombers and 2 Zero fighters and one torpedo bomber and one fighter were damaged. Crews of planes that crash landed were picked up afterward by the MOCCHIZUKI.

The Detachment while heading for its plane-recovery point sighted 2 B-17s at 1255; these B-17s made a bombing attack on the RYUJO at 1258 but made no hits. Next, at 1357 the RYUJO was attacked <sup>simultaneously</sup> by ~~some~~ 10-15 enemy dive bombers and about 5 torpedo planes; the RYUJO endeavored to evade, but received several near misses and finally a torpedo hit amidships to port, and <sup>it</sup> became unable to recover <sup>its</sup> aircraft. Therefore the Detachment <sup>(at 1400)</sup> ordered the returning aircraft of his attack groups to land at <sup>the</sup> BUKA airfield, but most of the attack groups had <sup>already</sup> returned to the vicinity of their carrier.

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The TONE also had been attacked by 3 enemy dive bombers and 4 torpedo planes but had evaded their attacks <sup>(receiving)</sup> without any damage and reported that it had shot down 1 fighter, 3 dive bombers, and 5 torpedo planes (one plane not confirmed).

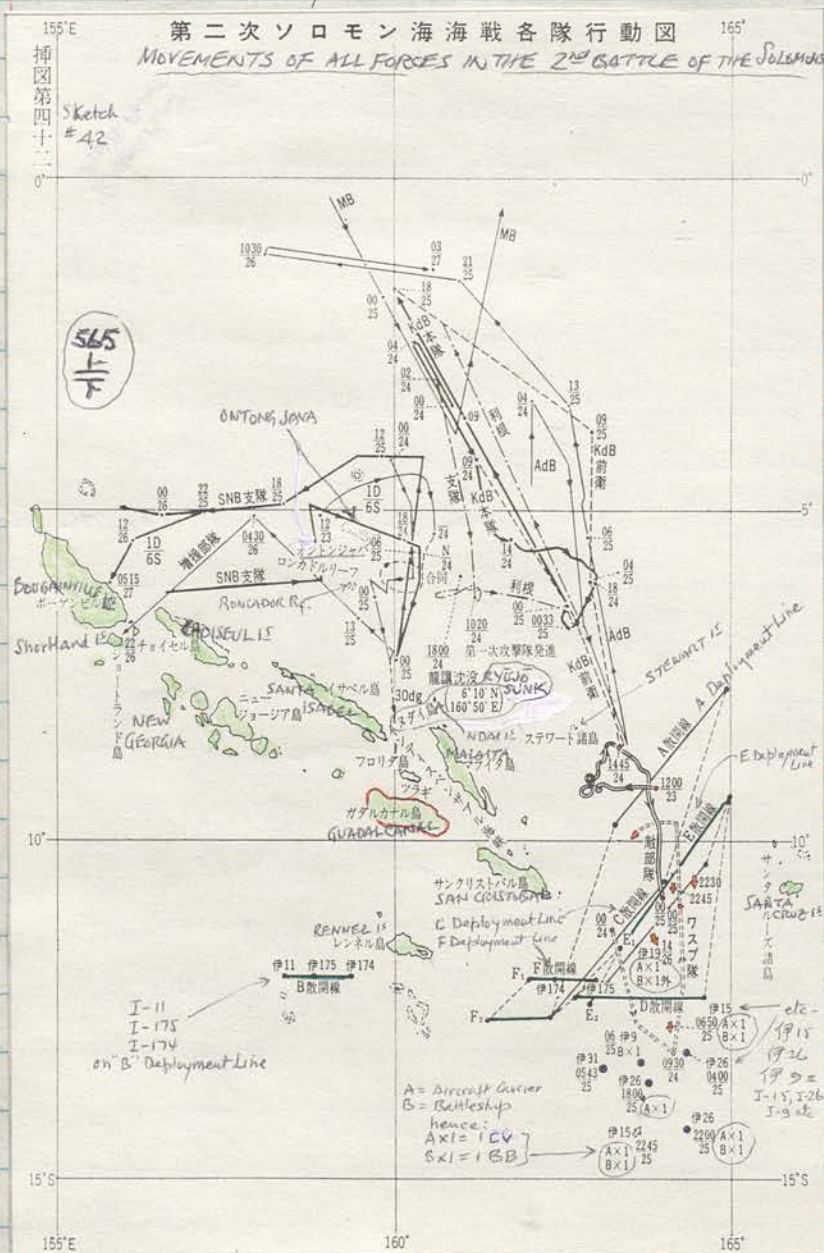
At 1408 the Commander ordered the Detachment to withdraw northward; while the RYUJO was being escorted north, its engines and boilers became inoperative <sup>and</sup> in spite of desperate efforts by the crew, fires erupted, and the ship's list reached 20° and gradually increased. From 1410 on, when the attack groups began to arrive, the carrier could not land them aboard and while a part returned to the BUKA base, most of them made emergency landings in the water. From 1515 onward, aviators in the water and the crew of the RYUJO began to be picked up.

Prior to the above, shortly after the Detachment had launched its attack groups a report, "SIGHTED LARGE ENEMY FORCE", was received from a CHIKUMA search-plane and then at 1455 came the order from Commander <sup>(carrier)</sup> Striking Force for the Detachment to rejoin the main force, if possible, after completion of its attack. Also the

Advance Guard of the Carrier Striking Force (see page 172 bottom  $\frac{542}{F}$  - i.e., Batdiv 11, Cradivs 7 & 8, Desron 10 (less, Desdiv) plus Desdiv 19)) had commenced a movement to the southward, planning for a night battle (as will be related later on). Under these conditions the Detachment Commander, after rescuing the crew of the RYUJO, ordered that ship disposed of by Desdiv 16 and rejoined the Advance Guard of the Carrier Striking Force the next day, the 25<sup>th</sup>, at 1535.

The RYUJO flooded and sank that day (24<sup>th</sup>) in position 6°10'S, 160°50'E, about 200 miles north of GUADALCANAL. Desdiv 16, after carrying out its task rejoined

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Batdiv 11 the next day, the 25<sup>th</sup>.

The Commander of the Detachment believed that the reason for the loss of the RYUJO that after launching the attack groups, it retired temporarily and in reversing course to head for its position to recover its aircraft, it returned to its original position, making it easy for the enemy to sight and concentrate his attack on the RYUJO. According to U.S. source data, the Detachment was attacked by 30 SBDs and 8 TBFs from the USS SARATOGA.

OPERATIONS OF THE MAINFORCE OF THE CARRIER STRIKING FORCE  
ENEMY-SEARCH

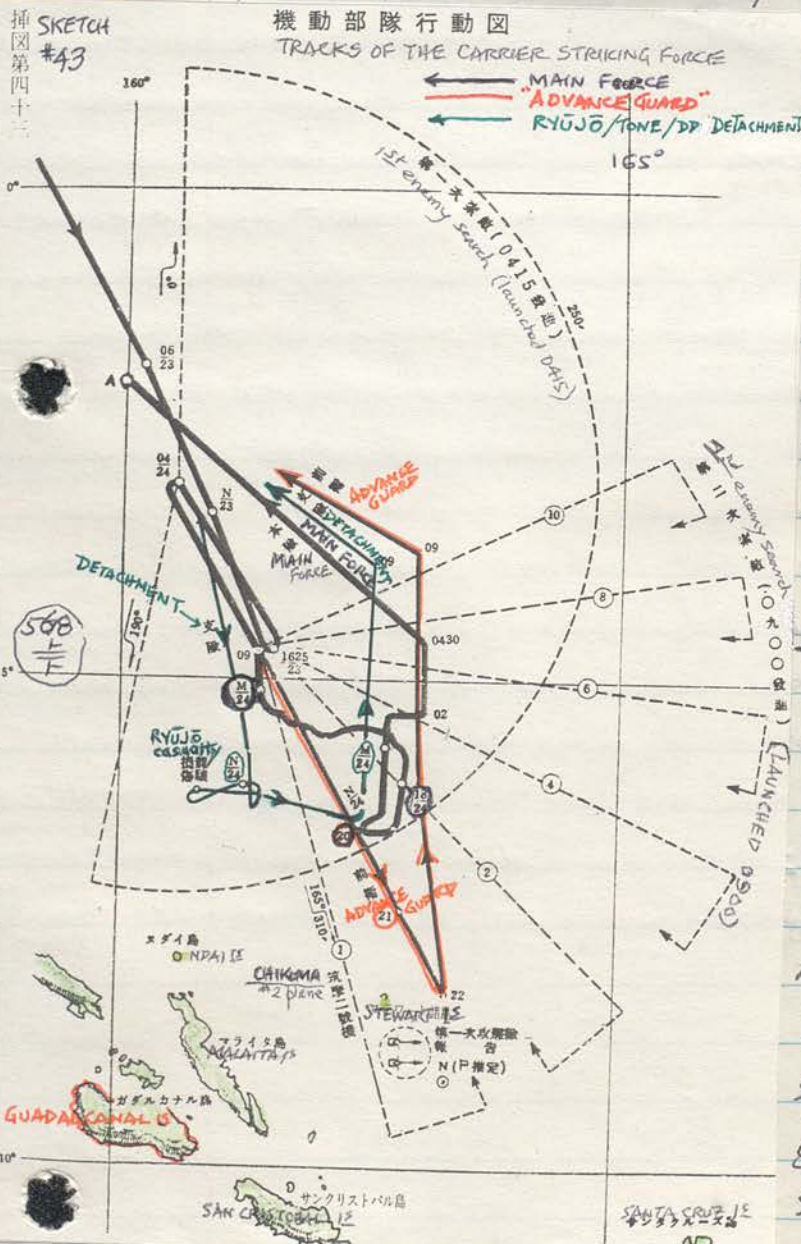
On the 24<sup>th</sup>, the Main Force of the Carrier Striking Force, having sent on the Detachment, reversed course at 0400 to 150° and took speed 15 knots.

At 0415, in accordance with plans, 19 shipboard bombers were launched to search the sector 0°-190°

Except for the report of the plane searching the 150° line that <sup>surfaced</sup> submarine of unknown nationality had been sighted, no enemy was sighted; at 0917 all of these search planes had completed landing back-

aboard. In the meantime the Advance Force, also, had no reports of enemy sightings by the Base Air Force. We had not been able to sight the enemy but the Advance Guard of the Carrier Striking Force had been sighted <sup>(and shadowed)</sup> by enemy patrol planes at 0830 and again at 1100; when our combat air patrol headed for them, they broke off contact, and it is probable that the Main Force was also sighted. Prior to this, the Commander Carrier Striking Force at 0349 the 24<sup>th</sup> had ordered the Advance Guard to conduct a search with 6 float-scout planes at 0900 <sup>each plane</sup> covering 15° sectors from 060° - 150° to a distance of 300 miles. Afterward the Chief of Staff 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet,

567  
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Rear Admiral Ryūnosuke KUSAKA had some doubt over drawing near to Guadalcanal and advocated adding an additional search leg to the right of the search sector. However the order for the enemy search plan had already been issued and his staff believed that a search <sup>too</sup> near <sup>to</sup> Guadalcanal would have a lesser probability of sighting the enemy carrier movements, so increases in the search was given up, and instead, the right hand search was made to take search line 165° and to turn left at the end of its outbound search leg. (In the original plan will turn right - see sketch #43). At 0900, on schedule, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Search for the enemy was launched. This time the CHIKUMA's #2 float-plane radioed at 1205: "SIGHTED LARGE ENEMY FORCE. BEING PURSUED BY OUR FIGHTERS," but thereafter was not heard from. That radio message was not received on the flagship, the SHOKAKU but the staff of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet learned of this at 1225 by visual signal from the CHIKUMA. The message itself did not give the enemy's position but the Commander Carrier Striking Force estimated from CHIKUMA #2 plane's search

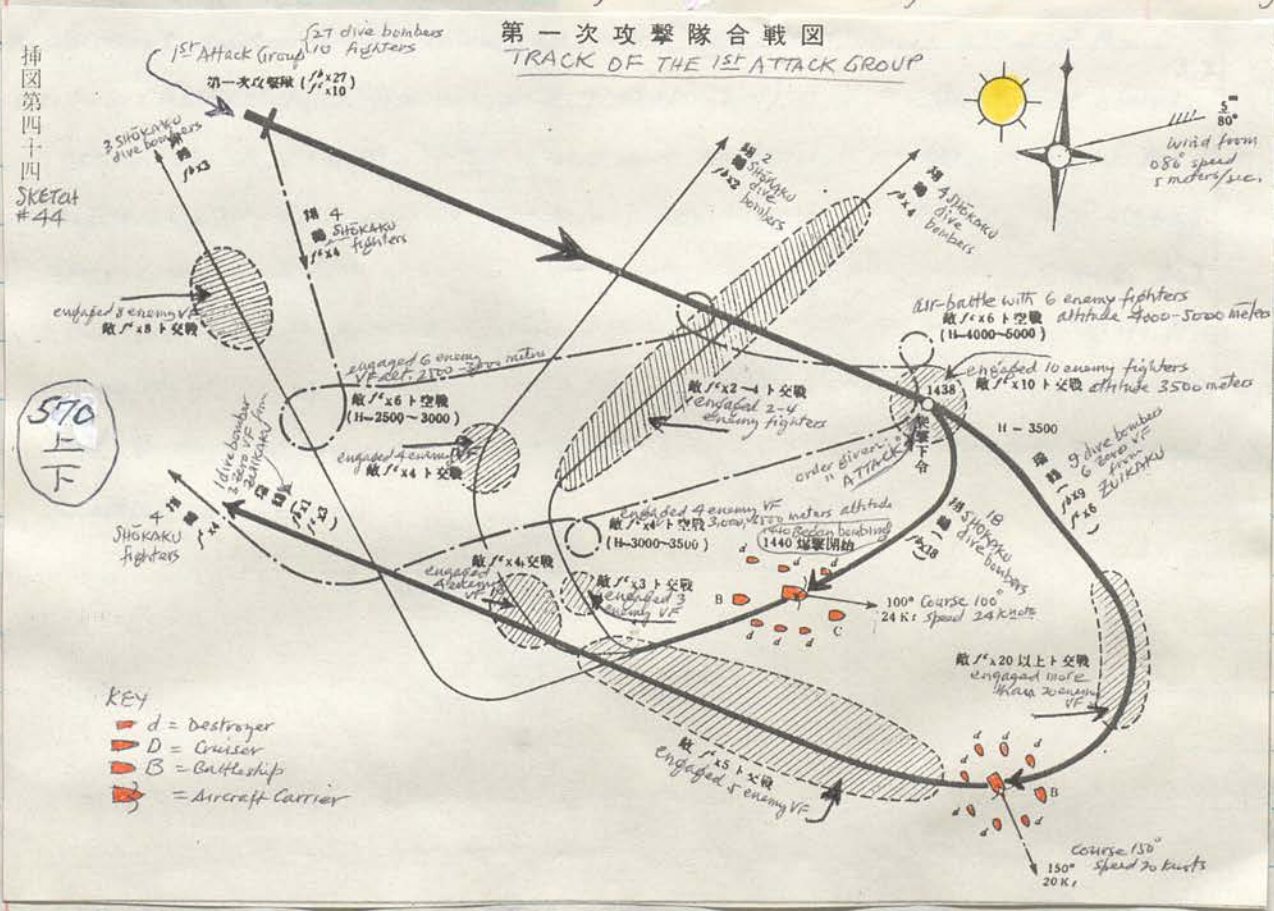
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course and time of take off that it was 153°, 260 miles from his flagship and had the 1<sup>st</sup> attack group launched. Next, a float scout plane was launched from the HEI and the CHIKUMA to establish contact and act as shadowing-planes. The CHIKUMA's

#5 plane sighted an enemy fleet at 1450<sup>and reported</sup> SIGHTED A.I.A. GUNFIRE 8:00 S, 160-00'E 1450. OUR 1<sup>ST</sup> ATTACK GROUP IS ATTACKING. Afterward contact was lost due to OBSTRUCTIONS BY ENEMY FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. The HIEI's plane also was unable to sight the enemy up until sunset because of enemy interference.

THE 1<sup>ST</sup> ATTACK

The 1<sup>ST</sup> Attack Group, 27 dive bombers and 10 Zero fighters (18 dive bombers and 4 zeros from the SHOKAKU <sup>and</sup> 9 dive bombers and 6 Zeros from the ZUIKAKU), under the command of Lt. Comdr Mamoru SEKI, the "VAL" Squadron Leader of the SHOKAKU, took off at 1255 on course 153°. At 1400 they received the enemy's position that had been reported by the HIEI's float-plane, and changed course to 160°. That HIEI float-plane, flying the search line adjoining that of the #2 CHIKUMA plane, <sup>had</sup> intercepted the latter's sighting report and came over closer to establish contact. The 1<sup>ST</sup> Attack Group at 1420 sighted the enemy carrier task force divided into two groups, the first bearing 141°-16 miles from the STEWART Islands, the second group bearing 167°-27 miles. They commenced their attack at 1438, being hindered by more than 30 enemy fighter



569  
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aircraft and braving violent anti aircraft fire, the SHOKAKU planes attacked the first enemy carrier group (escorted by 1 Battleship, 2 Cruisers and 7 destroyers) while the ZUIKAKU planes hit the 2<sup>nd</sup> group (accompanied by 1 Battleship, 10 Cruisers and destroyers). They reported hitting the first group with 6 or more 250 kilogram bombs (550 lbs.) causing great damage with fires breaking out, the second carrier group being hit by more than 2-250 kilogram bombs which caused explosions and large fires, and more than 12 enemy fighters shot down. However our losses were substantial: 17 dive bombers and 3 Zero fighters destroyed or failed to return, damaged by enemy fire and forced to ditch at sea were 3 Zero fighters and 1 dive bomber; only 13 aircraft ((of the 37 that took off)) returned to their ships. See "TRACK CHART of the 1<sup>st</sup> Attack Group" (bottom of Page 198-opposite)

According to U.S. sources these two groups were centered in the ENTERPRISE and in the SARATOGA, respectively. The Enterprise Group was in a circular screen formation with the battleship NORTH CAROLINA, 2 cruisers and 6 destroyers deployed on a radius of 2 miles; The SARATOGA group was in a similar formation including 2 cruisers and five destroyers.

The ENTERPRISE's radar detected a large formation at 1402 at a distance of 88 miles enabling 53 F4F fighters to be aloft, awaiting our attack; in addition, several SBD's <sup>(on ASW patrol)</sup> were deployed for an ambush; <sup>aloft</sup> all the planes were directed, as a bunch, for interception of the attack but between the air battles of the fighter aircraft the Japanese dive bombers reached their objective, almost without interference and, in the midst of the concentrated fire from 5 inch, 1.1 inch and 20<sup>mm</sup> fire of the 10 ships protecting the ENTERPRISE, <sup>(12 dive bombers)</sup> one after another, <sup>(misses)</sup> began their dives. 2-3<sup>rd</sup> badly damaged by the A.A. gunfire, failed to make hits but finally the ENTERPRISE received 3 direct hits and 2-near misses which started large fires and caused her to list 3°. The crew applied themselves to fighting the fires and repairs to the flight deck using steel plates so that within one hour the Enterprise was making 24 knots, recovering its aircraft.

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However there are no records regarding the ZUIKAKU aircraft's attack on the SARATOGA - they did not make any hits.

### THE 2<sup>nd</sup> ATTACK

Immediately after the 1<sup>st</sup> Attack Group took off, a 2<sup>nd</sup> Attack was prepared, and at 1400 27 dive bombers and 9 Zero fighters (~~SHOKAKU~~ - 9 dive bombers, 3 Zeros; ZUIKAKU -

571  
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18 dive bombers - 6 Zeros), under the command of Lieut. Sadamu TAKAHASHI, the ZUIKAKU's dive bomber Squadron Commander, took off. The 1400 enemy position was  $9^{\circ}30'S$ ,  $163^{\circ}20'E$ ; course  $130^{\circ}$  speed 20 knots; from this, the enemy's position at 1600 was calculated and course  $150^{\circ}$  taken but upon arrival at 1543 at the anticipated position, the enemy was not seen; search was continued until sunset (1612) without sighting anything. The basis of this was principally due to bad communications. Below, quoted from the item, "AIRCRAFT COMMUNICATIONS," OF Volume 8 - "The 2<sup>nd</sup> BATTLE OF THE SOLOMONS," of "The BATTLE LESSONS OF THE GREAT EAST ASIA WAR", compiled April 3 1943 by the YOKOSUKA NAVAL AIR SQUADRON'S STUDY GROUP, is stated:

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of the Solomons, <sup>many</sup> very important radio transmissions from the flagship to the <sup>air</sup> attack force commander, although received by most of the other aircraft, were missed by the SHOKAKU commander's plane due to <sup>extremely</sup> unsatisfactory reception; also due to the ZUIKAKU commander's plane receiving the position of the enemy carrier task force in error, it resulted in the escape of the enemy, a very serious matter. . . . ((details of this omitted as not relevant, historically . . . "for want of a nail, a shoe was lost . . . ."))

571  
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The 2<sup>nd</sup> Attack Group, failing to sight the enemy, had to return to their ship but their ships' movements subsequent to take off had not followed the intended plan and information of this change was tardy. As a result, the attack group had to search for their ships in the dark from 1815 - 2020 during which 4 planes became lost, one of which had to ditch.

According to U.S. data, the American force detected a Japanese group of planes at 1451, <sup>fifty miles</sup> to the westward and as that group changed course to the south, the American force was not attacked.

#### OPERATIONS OF THE MAIN FORCE

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When he started south, the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup>, the Commander Carrier Striking Force ordered his command to take Screened Cruising Formation #1 (no material at hand gives the time of this order). This cruising formation was based on the previously mentioned "Battle War Doctrine" - with the "Advance Guard" not too far in advance, as shown in sketch # 45 (at the top of the next page, page 201)). This formation was taken about 0837.



572  
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"Advance Guard,  
NOTE: According to Carrier Striking Force Battle Report Number 1" (Batdiv 11 Battle Report #1) the Advance Guard was 10 miles in the van, with a frigate of 40 miles. After the 1st<sup>air</sup> Attack Group had taken off, the Commander Carrier Striking Force ordered the Advance Guard "TONIGHT WE WILL ATTACK AND DESTROY THE ENEMY BY MEANS OF NIGHT BATTLE". This was a repetition directive based on the above mentioned "Battle WAR DOCTRINE". At 1400, after the 2nd air Attack Group had been launched, the Carrier Striking Force advanced eastward, course 100° speed 24 knots and at 1407 was in position 5°-13'S, 161°-37'E (130 miles east of ONTONG JAVA). It is not known why the Carrier Striking Force moved to the east at 1400 but it had received a report that the ADVANCE FORCE which was paralleling its southward movement 60 miles to the eastward was attacked by enemy carrier aircraft, and it is presumed this move was made to bring <sup>(the ADVANCE FORCE)</sup> under <sup>the</sup> air protection of his own force.

