

November 1944 Mission Reports - Rescues (contd)

24 November 1944 (contd)

1945: Landed, Morotai. The two survivors were turned over to a RAAF Flight Surgeon.

PLAYMATE 13 Took off from Middleburg Island at 0200 with 1750 gallons gas. It flew through thunderstorms for the first hour, then ran into good weather. At 0510, ten miles north of Namlea clusters of lights were seen in Waperan and Waeplaoe villages, a fire was seen at 03°09'S 126°53'E, and large numbers of lights, some quite large, at 03°05'S 126°49'E. At 0700 10 single masted boats and 3 schooners were seen at Wantji on Wantji Island. None were under way.

At 0815 three ships estimated 150 feet long were seen under way in a bay at 05°41'S 122°45'E. Due to distance, an accurate estimate of size could not be made. These were not seen in the bay at 1400, on return.

Due to tail wind, Cat arrived at RZ point at 0915: Rainbow 7 arrived at 0950. The VHF set was turned on at intervals for communication. Orbit point was reached at 1015 and Cat orbited until 1115, when Ballot while relayed through Rainbow 7 a report that a life raft was seen at 56 Foxy. Cat proceeded to this position and sighted a P-38 circling the raft which was seven miles West of Makassar. Raft was showing sea marker and pilot was flashing a mirror. Landing was made at 1145 and Lt Strader was taken aboard, apparently in good condition. Position was 05°07'S 119°18'E. Landing gear was lowered to assist in taxiing and the hinge on the strut well door broke, jamming the gear. The well door was removed and take-off was made at 1205. Escort was dispersed at about 1245, east of the orbit point after having been with the Cat almost three hours.

At 1445 the Auxiliary Power Unit was coaxed to run for a few minutes and a position report and ETA were sent in. From 1830 to 1900 unsuccessful attempts were made to charge the batteries with the APU. Atlantic was called on voice at 1845 and informed that the IFF was inoperative and that ETA was 1945. Orders were received to land at the Mar Strip. Cat reached Middleburg Island at 1945 at 9000 feet and landed at Mar at 2005. There were 40 gallons of gas left in the tanks. Lt Strader was placed in an ambulance for routine check at the Hospital, and the Cat returned to Middleburg. Rescued pilot was: 1st Lt Charles R. Strader, Jr., ASN 0758249, 339th Fighter Sqdn., 347th Fighter Group, APO 159. Crew of Cat: 1st Lt J. R. Dickinson, Pilot; 1st Lt F. Rauschkolb, Pilot; 1st Lt F. W. Abele, Navigator; S/Sgt O. M. Lawson, Engr; Sgt W. D. Craighead, Radio Opr; S/Sgt R. J. Jennings, Radar Opr; Sgt J. W. Gutmann, Surgical Tech;

28 November 1944

PLAYMATE 21: PBV-5A #E-74 (Navy). 1st Lt Denison, Pilot; F/O Siperstein, Nav; Cpl Sisco, Radio Opr; Pfc Shorette, Surgical Tech; additional navy crew members.

0545: Take-off (Cover Cebu Strike).

1045: Rendezvous at Baliango Point with fighter cover. No fighters appeared. Could contact no one on merry go round or cake. VHF shorted when on.

1125: Landed to let Philippine Lieutenant off.

1145: Took off.

1220: Fighter cover appeared. We could not contact them. It consisted of 4 P-47's.

1245: Landed at Dipolog.

1300: Took off. Four survivors were picked up at Dipolog. The rescued men were: 2nd Lt Arthur R. Schell, 0756412, 8th Fighter Group, 5th Air Force,