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VPB71/A8/Ms

PATROL BOMBING SQUADRON SEVENTY-ONE
c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California

MEJ

Serial: 264

JUL 11 1945

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

From: Commanding Officer.
To : The Chief of Naval Operations (Op-33-J-6).

Subject: War History, forwarding of.

Reference: (a) Aviation Circular Ltr. No. 74-44, Op-33-J-6-JEJ,
serial 356533 of 25 July 1944.
(b) Manual for Historical Officers, NavAer 00-25Q-26.

Enclosure: (A) War History of Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE
from December 7, 1941 to April 1, 1945.

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (A) is forwarded
herewith.

2. The first supplement to enclosure (A), covering the period
from April 1, 1945 to July 1, 1945 is now being prepared and will be for-
warded upon completion.

N. C. Gillette, Jr.
N. C. GILLETTE, Jr.

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THE WAR HISTORY

of

PATROL BOMBING SQUADRON SEVENTY-ONE



Copy No. 11

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This history, which covers the period from December 7, 1941 to April 1, 1945,
was prepared by Lieutenant Commander Ward MACFADDEN, USNR, Air Combat Intelli-
gence Officer. Supplements will be issued at intervals of three months.
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FOREWORD

It is unfortunate that the idea of a War History was not inaugurated until 1944, well past the turning point of the War. Better that it was conceived in 1944 however, than not at all. For by virtue of the War Histories of all Naval units, a permanent record which cannot be distorted by time, will be available to all students of Naval Warfare; to all who, by no choice of their own, saw only one small corner of this global war; and to all who, finding their memories growing dim, can turn to the War History to help them relive the most vital years of their own and the world's existence.

For Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE, however, the War History does little injustice. For it was the re-farming of the squadron in 1944 that saw SEVENTY-ONE start on her truly eventful days. The preceding years, although full of service, are well covered by the summary of pre-1944 activities.

And so in April 1944, this War History takes up the story of a cross-sectional group of young American Naval fliers and air-crewmembers, gathered together to train, and somewhat to their surprise, to fight, in PBV-5A's - Catalinas - a plane originally designed for patrol and rescue work, but now called upon to attack heavily armed enemy units at the closest possible range -- the Black Cats!

1 May 1945

N. C. Gillette, Jr.
N. C. GILLETTE, Jr.,
Commander, U. S. Navy,
Commanding Officer.



PATROL BOMBING SQUADRON SEVENTY-ONE

July - 1944

U.S. Naval Air Station

San Diego, California

CHRONOLOGY

December 7, 1941	Based at Argentia, Newfoundland.
December 8, 1941	Ordered to the West Coast.
December 25, 1941	Arrived at Pearl Harbor and began day search operations.
December 25, 1941 - April 1, 1943	Operated from Kaneohe, Midway, Johnston, Canton and New Caledonia.
April 1, 1943	Squadron split to form VP-71 and VB-104.
June 20, 1943	Departed Hawaii for Southwest Pacific.
June 27, 1943 - October 13, 1943	Operated from Espiritu Santo.
October 14, 1943 - March 6, 1944	Operated from Halavo Seaplane Base on Florida Island in the Solomons.
March 6, 1944	Relieved by Patrol Squadron EIGHTY-ONE.
March 24, 1944	Returned to the United States.
April 25, 1944	Re-formed at San Diego, California.
August 25, 1944	Departed San Diego for Hawaii.
August 28, 1944 - November 10, 1944	Training and patrol operations from Kaneohe Bay, T.H. and from Midway.
October 1, 1944	Designation changed to Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE.

msd

November 10, 1944

Departed Hawaii for Southwest Pacific ✓

November 13, 1944

Reported to the SEVENTH Fleet at Manus in the Admiralty Islands.

November 25, 1944 -
December 19, 1944

Conducted Black Cat operations from Morotai, Netherlands East Indies.

January 4, 1945

Departed Morotai for Leyte, P.I.

January 4, 1945 -
January 9, 1945

Conducted search and escort operations from Leyte and Mindoro.

January 10, 1945

Departed Leyte for Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, P.I.

January 12, 1945 -
March 1, 1945

Conducted Black Cat operations from Lingayen Gulf.

March 1, 1945

Departed Lingayen Gulf for Leyte.

March 3, 1945 -
April 26, 1945

Conducted day search operations from Leyte and Samar.

April 27, 1945 -
September 2, 1945

Conducted air-sea rescue, day search, and weather reconnaissance operations from Samar.

PREVIOUS TOURS OF DUTY

Patrol Squadron SEVENTY-ONE, under the command of Lieutenant Commander W.J. MULLINS, USN, was actively engaged in fighting the "Battle of the Atlantic" even before the United States was officially at war. Based on the seaplane tender ALBEMARLE, it had been conducting search, anti-submarine, and convoy-escort operations from Greenland and Iceland during 1941. Its home port at that time was the Naval Air Station at Quonset Point, Rhode Island.

On and immediately prior to December 7, 1941, the squadron was based at Argentia, Newfoundland. It was awaiting orders, since the decision had been reached during the latter part of November to discontinue winter operations from Argentia because of the unfavorable weather conditions prevailing.

Immediately following the outbreak of war between the United States and Japan the squadron was ordered to the west coast, and the staging of planes to San Francisco via Jacksonville, Florida; Lake Worth, Texas; and Salton Sea, California began immediately.

Patrol Squadron SEVENTY-ONE arrived at Pearl Harbor on Christmas Day, 1941. It was the first Navy patrol squadron to arrive there to reinforce the squadrons which had been all but wiped out in the Japanese surprise attack of December 7. The squadron, now based at Naval Air Station, Kaneohe Bay, immediately began flying 850-mile patrols which averaged 14 hours in length, and required both taking off and returning to base in darkness without the assistance of landing lights. Pilots averaged 170 hours flying time a month during this period.

In the ensuing months detachments operated from Midway, Johnston, Canton and New Caledonia while the squadron was still based at Kanoche. Lieutenant Commander F. BRUNER, USN, was the Commanding Officer during the early part of 1942. Lieutenant Commander G.G. LEAD, USN, Commanded the squadron from May through August of 1942 and was relieved by Lieutenant Commander H.E. SEARS, USN.

A gradual shift from PBY-5's to the amphibious PBY-5A's took place during the summer of 1942. In preparation for division into two separate units, the squadron experienced rapid growth during the remainder of 1942 and the early part of 1943, and at its peak had a complement of 95 officers.

On April 1, 1943, Lieutenant Commander C.K. HARPER, USN, took command of the new VP-71 with nine crews from the old squadron as a nucleus. Lieutenant Commander SEARS took the remaining crews to form Bombing Squadron 104, a Navy Liberator squadron. Lieutenant Commander HARPER returned with his squadron from Midway to Kanoche on May 15, 1943 to re-form, change back to PBY-5's, and to train. On June 20, 1943 the squadron departed for Espiritu Santo by way of Palmyra and Samoa.

Operations from Espiritu Santo were begun a week later, flying 800-mile day searches to the north. For increased range an advance base was maintained at Vanikoro Island, 230 miles north of Espiritu, with the USS MACKINAC tending the planes.

Led by Lieutenant Commander HARPER, six planes made a strike the night of July 17, 1943 on Nauru Island, 675 miles north of Vanikoro, dropping six tons of bombs and scoring numerous hits on the airstrip,

dispersal areas, barracks and the phosphate plant. Intense but inaccurate anti-aircraft fire was encountered.

After returning from this strike, the six crews and the other squadron personnel aboard the USS CHINCOTEAGUE were subjected to repeated bombing attacks over a two-day period, which resulted in severe damage to the tender. Vanikoro was abandoned as an advance base and the CHINCOTEAGUE towed to Espiritu Santo harbor for repairs. Thereafter 650-mile day searches were flown from Espiritu with occasional dumbo, escort, and night anti-submarine missions.

The squadron was ordered to Halavo seaplane base on Florida Island in the Solomons on October 13, 1943. Operations from there included 650-mile patrols to the north and northeast, anti-submarine patrols, night spotting for shelling by surface forces, snooper missions, and dumbo operations out of New Georgia and Rendova Islands, and later Treasury Island. The USS CICS BAY was advance base for dumbo operations from Rendova and Treasury.

On November 1, 1943, Patrol Squadron SEVENTY-ONE covered the landings on Bougainville and later made numerous landings in the open water off the Cape Torokina beachhead, bringing in medical supplies, transporting personnel, and evacuating casualties. Several notable open-sea rescues were made by the squadron in this vicinity under fire from enemy shore batteries and under attack by enemy aircraft.

This tour of duty was concluded March 6, 1944 when the squadron was relieved by Patrol Squadron EIGHTY-ONE. Arriving at Kaneche in its own planes, the squadron continued on to San Diego by surface transportation, reaching there March 24, 1944. All hands were granted leave preparatory to the re-forming of the squadron.

THE PRESENT SQUADRON

San Diego

The history of the present squadron properly begins with its recommissioning on April 25, 1944, when Commander Norman C. GILLETTE, Jr., USN, assumed command at a brief ceremony in the squadron hangar at the Naval Air Station, San Diego, California. In the weeks immediately preceding, the majority of the squadron personnel had been assembled, the squadron organization had been set up, the planes had been delivered and test flown, and all preparations had been made to start activities the moment the squadron was officially commissioned.

The training program which was begun immediately thereafter, followed the syllabus prescribed by Commander Fleet Air, West Coast, and included a full schedule of training both in the air and on the ground. In the ground training course, special emphasis was placed on Recognition of our own and enemy planes and warships, with all hands attending classes in this subject an hour a day, five days a week, for eight weeks.

In addition to the routine flight training, the squadron flew regular patrols under the operational control of Commander, Fleet Air Wing FOURTEEN and participated in exercises simulating attacks on the West Coast by enemy task forces, in which Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE successfully located and tracked the "enemy" aircraft carriers.

The final phase of training on the West Coast was the "Simulated Trans-Pac" in which every effort was made to duplicate as nearly as possible the conditions to be encountered on the flight to Hawaii. Having successfully executed this flight, everything was in readiness for the move to Hawaii which began August 25 and was completed without incident August 28.

Kaneohe

With the arrival of Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE at its new base at the Naval Air Station, Kaneohe Bay, T.H., the second phase of the present cruise began. Training activities were continued with emphasis on Anti-Submarine Warfare and Gunnery, but a considerably heavier schedule of operational patrols was maintained. Between September 5 and October 16, the squadron maintained a detachment of six planes and nine crews at Midway which flew regular operational patrols and engaged in Gunnery training.

On October 8, Commander GILLETTE, on the outward leg of what was to have been the last patrol from Midway before returning to Kaneohe, was compelled to make a forced landing at sea 150 miles from base, due to a major fuel line failure. In the landing the plane broke in two and sank. Ensign Milton GURVIS, Navigator, and a passenger were trapped in the plane and lost their lives. The other eight members of the crew were found in a rubber life raft by searching planes of VLB-71 later the same day and were picked up the following morning with only minor injuries by the USS LITCHFIELD (DD-336), which had been despatched from Midway.

In anticipation of departure for the combat zone, ground training at Kaneohe emphasized Survival, Escape and Evasion Techniques, and a review of the recognition features of enemy ships and planes with particular attention to the new types.

The squadron's stay in the "Paradise of the Pacific" lasted approximately ten weeks. Early in November orders were received from Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet via Fleet Air Wing TWK to report to the SEVENTH Fleet, and on November 10 movement to Manus in the Admiralties was begun, staging through Johnston and Kwajalein Islands.

Morotai

Upon arrival in the Southwest Pacific, Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE lost little time in getting into action. At Manus, Commander Aircraft, SEVENTH Fleet directed the squadron to conduct Black Cat operations as landplanes from Morotai, Netherlands East Indies, with a maximum of ten planes present at any one time, the remainder basing at Owi and effecting rotation between the two bases as required by rest and maintenance requirements. Operational control was under Commander, Fleet Air Wing SEVENTEEN.

Black Cat patrols were begun the night of November 25 searching for enemy shipping in the sea lanes and harbors of Mindanao, the Sulu Archipelago, Borneo, and Celebes, and were continued until December 19. It soon became apparent that the Japs had diverted their shipping to the west of Borneo and beyond the effective range of the Catalinas. In spite of the scarcity of water-borne targets, the squadron succeeded in sinking or seriously damaging over 13,000 tons of shipping in the brief period of operations from Morotai and in addition made seven effective attacks on docks, shipyards, warehouses, and other land objectives in enemy-held harbors. A total of eighty-seven Black Cat missions were flown from Morotai.

During this same period the squadron loaned two PBV-5A's and two crews to the Second Emergency Rescue Squadron of the THIRTEENTH Army Air Force. These planes and crews were used to provide Dumbo coverage for Army strikes, principally in the Philippines and Borneo, and for special rescue and evacuation missions. Between November 25 and December 4, thirteen such missions were flown. All of these flights were made with one

Army and one Navy pilot at the controls, and the remainder of the crew evenly divided between Army and Navy personnel. The outstanding mission of this type was on December 1, when Ensign Paul H. ORRIS, USNR, landed in the open sea north of Mindanao, under unfavorable conditions of sea and weather, and spent one and one-half hours picking up seven survivors of an Army Liberator. The take-off was made under instrument conditions and the survivors returned safely to Morotai.

On December 6, Lieutenant (jg) Richard W. SHELLEY, USNR, failed to return from patrol. Special searches which were conducted for several days found no ~~trace~~ of the missing plane or crew. Not until December 16 was it learned that the plane had crashed in Sarangani Bay, Mindanao. Lieutenant (jg) SHELLEY and two members of his crew were killed in the crash but the others made their way ashore and eventually were taken to the headquarters of friendly guerrillas from where they were picked up by FBY and returned to Morotai.

During the entire stay at Morotai the base was under frequent night air attack and members of the squadron soon learned to take cover in their foxholes in the minimum amount of time when "Washing Machine Charlie" came over for his almost nightly visits. These attacks reached their peak during the Christmas season with six alerts Christmas Eve and a total of fifteen over a three-day period. Added to the hazard of bombs, which did in fact kill personnel in adjoining encampments, was the danger from falling shrapnel and spent ammunition as well as ricochets or premature bursting of shells from depressed anti-aircraft guns firing at low-flying planes. With all of Morotai in enemy hands except the small

peninsula on which the airfield is located, and with enemy reinforcements having fairly easy access to the island from nearby Halmahera, the danger of a breakthrough of the perimeter line, which was only a mile from the Navy Search Group camp was ever-present. Enemy patrols attacked the perimeter positions almost nightly and there were numerous cases of infiltration by individuals or small groups.

Between December 24 and December 27 the squadron provided one plane each night for joint operations with PT boats engaged in anti-barge patrol in the waters between Morotai and the northernmost tip of Halmahera. Lieutenant Commander William L. KAUBER, USN, on the night of December 24, sighted two camouflaged enemy barges near the coast of Halmahera and sank them both by direct hits with 100-pound bombs.

Black Cat patrols from Morotai were discontinued December 19 by order of Commander Aircraft, SEVENTH Fleet, and with the exception of the joint operations with PT boats previously mentioned, the squadron was in a rest and maintenance status until January 4, 1945 when it moved forward to Leyte.

Leyte - Mindoro

The squadron's operations from Leyte and Mindoro covered the period from January 4 to January 9. The principal assignment during this period was to provide night air cover for the invasion convoys which were moving north toward Lingayen Gulf. In addition, a detachment of three planes based at Mindoro flew night searches to the China coast. Both groups were based on seaplane tenders, the USS TANGIER at Leyte, and the USS HALF MOON and USS SAN PABLO at Mindoro.

Convoy coverage was provided nightly January 4-7. On the final night of the assignment the importance of this protection for our ships was strikingly demonstrated. Commander GILLETTE, on a "Tomcat" mission, made contact with an unidentified surface vessel at a position thirty miles south and forty miles west of Manila Bay and twenty miles distant from the convoy. It was proceeding at high speed on an attack course. The Task Force Commander, upon being notified, ordered the plane to orbit over the unidentified ship and sent three destroyers to intercept. When illuminated by starshells, it proved to be a Japanese destroyer of the HATSUHARU class. It was hit by repeated salvos, and after two magazine explosions, completely disrupted and sank.

The squadron reassembled at Leyte January eighth and ninth and on the tenth, which was the day after the Lingayen landings, Commander GILLETTE led twelve planes to Lingayen Gulf.

Lingayen Gulf

With the arrival at Lingayen Gulf the most active phase of Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE's combat duty began. It was to last through the month of February. Black Cat operations were resumed the night of January 12 when three planes flew offensive reconnaissance missions to Formosa and the Southeast China coast, and one plane flew a sector of the barrier patrol around the Lingayen Gulf area.

In contrast with the situation at Morotai where enemy ships were few and far between, this was virgin territory. The Japs were obviously not expecting night attacks and on one occasion even turned on landing lights at a Formosa seaplane base when one of our planes came in on a bombing run. Unescorted merchant ships were frequently sighted near Formosa and the China coast. The enemy was soon alerted however, and shore searchlights and anti-aircraft batteries became progressively stronger, while merchant shipping, which at first had been poorly protected, changed to well escorted convoys.

Nevertheless the squadron succeeded in sinking or damaging a total of 71,585 tons of enemy shipping in low-level night attacks while operating from Lingayen, and in addition made thirteen damaging night raids on shore targets including barracks, harbor installations, radio stations, and industrial plants on Formosa and adjacent islands and in China. A total of 161 night missions was flown from Lingayen.

Anti-aircraft fire was encountered regularly on these flights and on several occasions the squadron's planes were heavily hit. Four men were seriously wounded by shrapnel. Enemy aircraft were frequently

picked up on radar and seen visually, but they showed little inclination to attack and on only one occasion did a night interceptor open fire.

As has usually been the case with Black Cat operations, the weather was a major obstacle to be overcome. Winds up to fifty knots, extreme turbulence, low ceilings and poor visibility added to the other difficulties and dangers involved in long range missions over enemy territory at night.

During this entire period the squadron was based on seaplane tenders. The USS CURRITUCK, USS TANGIER, and USS ORCA accommodated all or part of the squadron at various times, but it was the USS BARATARIA (AVP-33) that principally supported the squadron during the Lingayen operations. A real bond of friendship developed between the squadron and the ship's company, and all hands of Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE recall with pleasure their stay on the BARATARIA and their happy association with her capable and genial Captain, Commander Garrett S. COLEMAN, USN, and his officers and crew.

Maintenance of planes presented serious problems at Lingayen. Water take-offs with full gas tanks and heavy bomb loads put a severe strain on engines that were already nearly due for replacement, and increased difficulty was experienced in keeping four planes ready to fly each night. A long step toward solving this problem was taken with the establishment of a service and maintenance unit at Mangaldan airstrip. This informal organization, with personnel drawn from the squadron, from PATSU 17-2, and from Aircraft Emergency Service Unit ONE, not to mention the numerous Filipino recruits, was under the personal supervision of Lieutenant Commander KAUBER who deserves the greatest credit for a

difficult and trying job well done under the most adverse conditions. With the maintenance unit in operation, necessary work on the planes was performed more quickly and efficiently, and the strain on engines was greatly reduced by taking off from the water with a light gas load and refueling at the airstrip. Further relief came with the establishment of a ramp on Caballitian Island, near the seaplane anchorage, where light repair facilities were available.

A heavy loss was sustained on February 3 when Lieutenant (jg) Albert J. LEHMICKE, Jr., USNR, failed to return from a night patrol to Formosa. The last and only contact with the plane was a routine radio check shortly after take-off. Special searches were sent out for three consecutive days with negative results. Unfavorable weather with high winds and low visibility hindered the special search planes. In addition, all other aircraft units operating in the Formosa area were notified of the loss and requested to maintain a close watch for survivors, but no word has been received of the missing plane or crew.

Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE proudly records in its War History the following despatch received February 23, 1945 from Admiral F.D. WAGNER, Commander Aircraft, SEVENTH Fleet:

"YOUR AGGRESSIVE BLACK CAT PATROLS ARE WRITING NEW PAGES IN THE OUTSTANDING RECORD OF SOUTHWESTPAC BLACK CAT OPERATIONS."

The tour of duty at Lingayen came to an end March 1 and immediately thereafter the squadron moved to the seaplane base at Jinamoc Island in Leyte Gulf and commenced day search operations.

Samar

Jinamoc Island, only a few miles from Tacloban airstrip on Leyte, served as a temporary base for Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE and operations were begun from there on March 3, 1945, flying four 600-mile day searches to the north. Operational control was transferred to Fleet Air Wing TEN. On March 16, movement of the squadron to Guiuan airstrip on Samar was begun and substantially completed within a few days. Operations were conducted from the new base beginning March 17 in the same sectors previously covered from Jinamoc. Eighty-five patrols averaging 10.1 hours were flown during the month. There were no enemy contacts.

Between March 23 and March 27 special coverage was provided to protect the western flank of the convoys moving north for the invasion of Okinawa.

Operations from Samar included various other special missions from time to time. Several transport flights were made during the month for Commander Aircraft, SEVENTH Fleet, Commander Philippine Sea Frontier, and various boards of inspection and survey. A commendation letter was received from Admiral J.L. KAUFFMAN, Commander Philippine Sea Frontier, for the efficient performance of duty by Lieutenant Allen J. HUTTENBERG, USNR, and his crew on one such flight between March 3 and March 6.

An unusual assignment was given the squadron between March 28 and March 30. Two typhoons had been reported approaching the Philippine area from the east, and on each of these days a special weather plane

was sent out to track the storms and report their progress. A commandatory message on the results of these flights was received from Commander Aircraft, SEVENTH Fleet.

There were two special searches during March. On the 21st and again on the 22nd, Commander Norman C. GILLETTE, Jr., USN, and Lieutenant Allen J. HUTTENBERG, USNR, searched for a missing transport plane (R4D) between Samar and Morotai with negative results. On March 25, Lieutenant (jg) Harold F. ALLEN, Jr., USNR, escorted by two Corsairs, searched for a Marine fighter pilot reported to have made a forced landing at sea. The southwest coast of Cebu and adjacent waters were carefully searched with negative results.

On March 31, the log showed that since the re-forming of the squadron a little over eleven months previously, a total of 2196 sorties and 11,564.3 flight hours had been recorded.

At the end of the month, and of the period covered by this report, Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE was continuing day searches from Samar but was making preparations for an anticipated change of duty to Air-Sea Rescue operations from the same base.

(Insert in Squadron War History replacing page 19)

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

The War History of
PATROL BOMBING SQUADRON SEVENTY-ONE

Supplement Number 1

Samar (April 1 to July 1, 1945)

At the beginning of this period, Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE was based at Guiuan airstrip on Samar, Philippine Islands, and was continuing the day search operations which had been begun early in March. A new Task Unit organization, the Samar Search Group, was established April 1 with Commander N. C. GILLETTE, Jr., USN, as Task Unit Commander. It consisted of Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE and a six-plane (PV-1) detachment of Patrol Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-SEVEN. The latter began operations April 14, providing one plane daily in a sector of approximately 450 miles paralleling the east coast of Luzon, while SEVENTY-ONE continued covering four 600-mile sectors to the northeast each day, flying a total of 104 such missions during the month. No enemy contacts resulted from these patrols.

On April 27, Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE discontinued day searches and relieved Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTEEN as Air-Sea Rescue Squadron for the central Philippines area. In these operations the squadron came under the direct control of the THIRTEENTH Army Air Force, which through its Air-Sea Rescue Unit, assigned the daily missions. Commander GILLETTE continued to direct the operations of the detachment of PV-1's in conducting day searches.

Air-Sea Rescue operations were begun April 27 and continued for the remainder of the period covered by this report, during which time a total of 249 such flights were made. These included searches for missing aircraft,

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evacuation of sick and wounded, courier missions, dumbo coverage of Army strikes, transportation flights and special survey and reconnaissance missions.

Between April 27 and June 21 a daily courier plane made a round-trip to Mindanao carrying an EIGHTH Army courier and official mail as well as passengers and gear from Tanuan airstrip on Leyte. An average of eleven passengers each way was carried on these flights. Parang was the original terminal of these trips but following the landings at Macajalar Bay on May 10, this point was added to the itinerary until May 31, when it was replaced by a stop at the Del Monte airstrip. After June 21 this daily trip was taken over by the THIRTEENTH Army Air Force.

A special courier mission was flown on May 1 by Commander N. C. GILLETTE, Jr., USN. Carrying two Army couriers and official mail, he landed at Tarakan, Borneo, and returned with Brigadier General T. D. WHITE, Commanding General, THIRTEENTH Army Air Force, as a passenger, and with official films of the landings which had been made that day by Australian troops supported by U. S. Naval forces. Lieutenant Morris E. HALLER, USN, repeated this courier trip on May 2.

Again on June 10, Commander GILLETTE had a part in a Borneo invasion. On this occasion he flew an Army courier to Brunei Bay where the Australians were going ashore under the covering fire of U. S. naval vessels. Official mail was carried both ways. The following day, June 11, Lieutenant Curtis L. LAYTON, USNR, repeated the round trip courier mission to Brunei Bay.

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With the departure of Patrol Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-SEVEN, this squadron on June 8 assumed coverage of the search sector which parallels the east coast of Luzon. One plane each day searched this sector. There were no enemy contacts, but on June 14 Lieutenant Curtis L. LAYTON, USNR, while covering this sector, sighted a survivor in a rubber life-raft sixty miles from land and in imminent danger of drifting into the enemy-held Patan Islands. Executing a skillful open-sea landing and take-off, Lieutenant LAYTON rescued the survivor, an Army fighter pilot who had been in the water for five days, and returned him safely to base. The following message was received from Commander Aircraft, SEVENTH Fleet, "CONGRATULATIONS TO SECTOR "D" OF TODAY FOR AN EXCELLENT RESCUE".

Between May 26 and June 14, four crews with two planes operated from Puerto Princesa on Palawan as a separate detachment. Their principal assignment was to transport Australian Intelligence officers on reconnaissance flights to North Borneo in preparation for the invasion at Brunei Bay. On several occasions landings were made and reconnaissance parties put ashore to secure information from the natives. Lieutenant Albin T. MADAY, USNR, of this detachment, piloted the first U. S. plane to land on the newly captured airstrip on Labuan Island in Brunei Bay, which at that time had only 2800 feet of serviceable runway. The following message was transmitted to Lieutenant MADAY from Advance Headquarters, NINTH Australian Division, "CONGRATULATIONS ON LANDING AND TAKEOFF MADE UNDER DIFFICULT CONDITIONS X WELL DONE X"

On June 16, a second detachment commenced similar operations from Tawi Tawi (Sanga Sanga Island) to the Balikpapan area of Borneo in preparation for the impending landings at that point. The Tawi Tawi group flew nine

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reconnaissance missions between June 16 and June 25.

With the approach of the typhoon season, weather flights assumed major importance in the operations of the unit. During the first half of June five special weather flights, one an all-night mission, were made to investigate tropical disturbances thought to be developing to the east and northeast of the Philippine area. On June 16, Commander Aircraft, SEVENTH Fleet established three weather sectors from Samar, directing that as soon as additional planes were available, two sectors should be covered daily and the third when specifically ordered. Patrol Bombing Squadron FIFTY-THREE, a PBY squadron commanded by Lieutenant Commander Gerald H. DUFFY, USN, was ordered to Samar for duty under Commander N. C. GILLETTE, Jr., as Task Unit Commander, and with the specific assignment of flying the weather sectors. Coverage of these sectors was commenced June 22 and was accomplished daily thereafter.

Training activities occupied an important place in the squadron's program during this period. On the basis of intensive flight checks and a comprehensive written examination covering seamanship, flight, engineering, navigation, communications, naval administration, ordnance, radio and radar, seven First Pilots from a group of twenty-seven candidates were officially designated as Patrol Plane Commanders in May. Flight checkouts for the remaining candidates were continued during June. All pilots were given refresher instruction in the use of the Long Range Navigation equipment which was checked and calibrated, and on all regular patrol flights strafing runs and practice firing was conducted.

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

The arrival on April 4 of two relief crews inaugurated the personnel rotation program. By the end of June a total of eight crews had been relieved and had returned to the United States via Naval Air Transport. The following Patrol Plane Commanders, with their crews, were detached on the dates indicated:

Lieutenant Ralph C. TREJO, USNR	April 10
Lieutenant Michael J. LOEHR, USNR	April 10
Lieutenant Glen I. PALMER, USNR	May 12
Lieutenant Everly W. COX, USNR	May 15
Lieutenant Allen J. HUTTENBERG, USNR	May 27
Lieutenant Arcia O. TURNER, USN	June 14
Lieutenant Melvin H. WARNER, USN	June 23
Lieutenant Curtis L. LAYTON, USNR	June 27

While based at Samar, Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE for the first time during the present cruise, had the benefit of a well-equipped and efficiently run service and maintenance unit. CASU 42 (F) under Lieutenant Commander A. K. BARNES, USNR, deserves high praise for its excellent work in keeping the squadron's war-weary aircraft, which at the end of June had accumulated a total of over 15,000 flight hours, in flyable condition. CASU 42 (F) made it possible for the squadron to meet its commitments which averaged 3.9 assigned missions daily for the entire period and 7.2 daily flights of all types. Personnel of the CASU unit demonstrated an interest in the condition of the planes, and in the outcome of their missions, which could hardly have been greater had they been directly attached to the squadron.

A brief summary of each of the principal missions, excluding routine patrols and regular courier runs, executed by Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE during these three months is included as a part of this first supplement to the squadron War History beginning at page 59 (1).

The War History of
PATROL BOMBING SQUADRON SEVENTY-ONE

Supplement Number 2

Samar

(July 1 to September 2, 1945)

This second and final supplement to Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY ONE's War History covers the period from July 1, 1945 to the surrender of Japan on September 2, 1945 - V-J Day.

The squadron continued to operate from the Naval Air Base, Samar, although as had been the case during the months immediately preceding, detachments were stationed at various times at other airfields in the Philippines. A wide variety of missions was executed during the period including air-sea rescue, sector searches, weather reconnaissance, evacuation of sick and wounded persons from isolated points, special searches for missing aircraft and surface vessels, aerial surveys, special courier flights, and a brief period of Black Cat missions to the China coast. One plane was maintained in an alert status at all times prepared to respond to emergency calls.

On July 1 and 2 a detachment of four planes conducted Black Cat operations from Clark Field to the vicinity of Hainan Island off the south-east China coast. Intelligence reports had indicated that the Japs were evacuating Hainan Island by small craft across the narrow straits to the Luichow peninsula of China. Two planes, specially equipped for strafing with eight .50 calibre wing guns, and carrying four 100-pound incendiary clusters were sent out each night. The only sighting during the two nights that this operation was conducted was a two-masted sailing craft which was strafed. Incendiary bombs were dropped on buildings at Hoian, China which

was thought to be the Japs' debarkation point. The detachment which carried out this assignment was headed by Commander M. C. GILLETTE, Jr., USN.

On July 2 a plane of Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE again participated in the early phases of a Borneo invasion. Lieutenant Victor A. BLANDIN, USN, staging through Tawi Tawi, landed at Balikpapan on "D-plus one" day. On the return trip, two combat photographers with official films of the landings and four other passengers were carried. Lieutenant BLANDIN was commended by Rear Admiral A. C. NOBLE, Commander Amphibious Group EIGHT, for being the only Catalina of the four that landed at Balikpapan to be able to take off again. Two of the others cracked up and sank and one was damaged to such an extent that it had to be beached while attempting to take off in the heavy swells.

An evacuation mission worthy of special mention was performed by Lieutenant Walter B. LEVY, USNR, on July 26. On this occasion Lieutenant LEVY landed in the open sea seventy-five miles northeast of the Naval Air Base at Samar and took aboard an emergency patient from an IST. The latter was one of a convoy of seventeen vessels and was bringing in survivors of the UNDERHILL (DE-682) which had been torpedoed and sunk. The Commander, Philippine Sea Frontier sent a congratulatory message in which he credited the saving of the man's life to the time saved by getting him to the base hospital by air.

During August two separate detachments were established. Commencing August 23 a standby alert plane was maintained at Puerto Princesa, Palawan for airways air-sea rescue duty. The second detachment consisted of six crews with four planes and was based at Sangley Point near Manila.

On August 31 this group commenced daily coverage of two 600-mile search sectors southwest across the China Sea.

Training activities and flight checkouts for Patrol Plane Commander candidates continued during the period of this report and an additional eight First Pilots were designated Patrol Plane Commanders.

A rapid stepping up in the replacement of both planes and crews occurred during August. Eleven new PBV-6A's had been received prior to September 2 with one additional plane to complete the squadron's complement scheduled for delivery within a few days. Twelve of the original eighteen crews had returned to the United States before September 2 with two more scheduled to go within a week and the prospect that the last four crews of the original squadron would be relieved by the middle of September.

On August 28 operational and administrative control of the squadron passed from the SEVENTH Fleet to the Philippine Sea Frontier. An internal change of command also took place on August 24 when Commander Norman C. GILLETTE, Jr., USN, who had served as Commanding Officer since the re-forming of the squadron at San Diego on April 25, 1944, was detached and returned to the United States. With the assumption of command by Lieutenant Commander William L. KAUBER, USN, Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-ONE concludes its War History.



NORMAN C. GILLETTE, Jr.

Commander, United States Navy

COMMANDING OFFICER

Commander Norman C. GILLETTE, Jr. comes from a distinguished Navy family. His father, a Captain, and his brother, a Lieutenant Commander who is skipper of a submarine, are also presently on active duty in the Pacific. Thus there are three members of the Gillette family striking solid blows at the Japs from below the sea, on the surface, and in the air.

Commander GILLETTE was born in Newport, Rhode Island, while his father was on the USS TEXAS at Vera Cruz during the Mexican incident of 1915. Following World War I, the senior Gillette was stationed at various naval bases, but with numerous family connections in Chicago, the Gillettes have always considered that city as their "home town".

While still enrolled in high school in Washington, D.C., Commander GILLETTE received an appointment to the Naval Academy.