

During the forenoon, search aircraft were sent to direct the hospital ship TJITJALENGKA to the Fleet. This ship had been sent at my request to remain at call within 30 miles of a position 85 miles to the eastward of the normal dawn position of the Fleet in the fuelling area. Casualties by now fit to be moved were transferred to TJITJALENGKA by destroyer in the afternoon.

During the day Sakishima was covered by TU 52.1.3.

At 1910 the Fleet disengaged from the Tanker Group for the night.

At this stage it became necessary to consider the date on which the Fleet would leave the operations area for major storing in the rear bases. The tankers and repair ships of the Fleet Train, based at Leyte, require early notice of a firm date for redistribution in order that with their slow speed they might reach their new stations in time to meet the Fleet and fulfil their functions.

As the Fleet was due at the storing ports early in June, and as it was evident that a considerable amount of work would be required to make good the battle damage to carriers, it appeared desirable to conclude operations with the twelfth strike day on 25th May, and so ensure the Fleet being ready to resume operations when required in July.

After consultation with A.C.I., I accordingly sent the following signal:—

Action COM 5th Fleet C IN C PAC both
Info C-in-C., B.P.F. VA(Q) FONAS(A)
CTF 112 From CTF 57

Propose with your concurrence TF57 continues present strikes until 24 and 25 May then CTF57 in KING GEORGE V, 3 destroyers proceed Guam arriving 1000 28th leave 0600 30th for Manus. If you concur request authority these four ships fuel with U.S. supplies Guam. Remainder TF57 to Manus after fuelling Cootie 26th arriving in forenoon 30th. Could carry out further strikes if losses remain light on 28th and 29th May which would delay above programme for four days. CTF112 will divert slow tankers to Manus or Cootie which necessitates early decision on your needs.

15th May.

The Fleet reformed on the Tanker Group at 0630, and fuelling and exchange of stores, aircraft and correspondence was continued and completed by 1700.

H.M. Ships TROUBRIDGE and TENACIOUS joined TF 57.

H.M.A.S. NEPAL from TU 112.2.5 joined TF 57.

Captain D.25 in GRENVILLE joined TU 112.2.5 to be left in the servicing area, and Captain D.4 in H.M.S. QUILLIAM assumed Senior Officer Destroyers. This was done, with the concurrence of Rear Admiral Destroyers, in order to give different Captains D experience as the Senior Officer.

The following were detached to Leyte in the afternoon:—

H.M. Ships STRIKER and NAPIER.

H.M.A.S. NIZAM with R.F.A.s WAVE KING and WAVE MONARCH.

H.M. Ships PHEASANT and WOODCOCK with R.F.A.s ARNDAL and DINGLEDALE.

It had been hoped that H.M.A.S. NIZAM would join TF 57 for the next two strike periods, but she was not fit for operations owing to a small number of cases of infantile paralysis, for which she remained in quarantine.

TU 52.1.3 again covered Sakishima to-day.

At 1705 the Fleet disengaged from the Tanker Group and departure was taken for the operations area.

During the day the following signals were received:—

CTF 57. From COM 5th Fleet
Not necessary. keep up coverage of Sakishima after 25th.

CTF 57. From CINCPAC
Arrival KING GEORGE V and 3 destroyers Guam 28th May approved. Will be pleased welcome you. Guam has available fuel for topping off.

16th May.

At 0510 A.C.I. assumed tactical command. Radar pickets were sent out and counter-Kamikaze destroyers closed their carriers.

At 0540 in position 23° 40' N 126° 51' E the Fleet and island CAPS and the first bomber strike for Miyako were flown off.

Five bomber strikes were sent to the islands during the day, three to Miyako and two to Ishigaki. As the result of these and the efforts of the CAPS, all runways were made unserviceable; four new aircraft which appeared operational were strafed but did not burn, 3 others were damaged; 10 small craft of various classes were damaged and four of them left in a sinking condition; 4 lorry loads of Japanese troops were exterminated; a large explosion was caused in Ohama town; 5 direct hits with S.A.P. bombs were made on a large cave shelter.

Several of our planes were damaged by flak.

One Avenger taking off from H.M.S. FORMIDABLE ditched; H.M.S. QUALITY rescued the crew one of whom was injured. A Corsair from H.M.S. VICTORIOUS developed engine trouble at 20,000 feet and was forced to ditch near the Fleet; H.M.S. TENACIOUS rescued the pilot.

At 1735 a Corsair from H.M.S. VICTORIOUS ditched 3 miles from Miyako; the Lifeguard submarine U.S.S. BLUEFISH was informed and made another skilful rescue by picking up this pilot during the night. The Dumbo aircraft from Kerama Retto, unaware of the rescue, as was A.C.I. at the time, carried out a search the following morning. These fine efforts by the American rescue submarines and aircraft have been greatly appreciated.

The dusk CAP landed on at 1935 and the Fleet withdrew to the southward for the night. No enemy were airborne in the vicinity during the day.

CTF 57 assumed tactical command at 1950.

Seven enemy aircraft were damaged on the ground. 77½ tons of bombs and 112 R/P were expended on the targets, 2 suicide type boats were sunk, 2 small craft were probably sunk, and a large number of assorted types of barge and small craft were damaged, several being