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On all sides of our runways, with the exception of the side where the power house and engineering line shack were located, and the mess hall, was a continuous row of bunkers. Aside from that, no dispersal of aircraft was possible. We simply had to rely upon the walls of the bunkers. Fortunately, they didn't catch us with any airplanes on the ground for which we had a pilot. One or two old SB2U-3's were left. The strafing was limited and they didn't even put holes in those sitting out in the open.

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DOD DIR 5200.9

That winds up my free-hand story. If you gentlemen have any questions I'll try to answer them.

Q. You mentioned three or four feet - is that the maximum depth you can go before you reach the water level?

A. Yes, sir. The water table is about five feet underground in normal conditions, but a storm or high wind may pile the water over the reef and raise it. Then anything lower than three or four feet would flood.

Q. What were the weather conditions over the target area at time of the attacks?

A. Pilots judged they had broken clouds from 2500 to 3000 feet up to about eight to ten thousand feet. They used the clouds as cover to a considerable extent, to get away from the Zeros. Some of them went right down on the water where they thought they would be free from a diving attack. But the Zeros came right down there with them. They had so much speed over the F2Z's they could pull up and attack without diving. So our pilots found the best way to get away was to duck in and out of the clouds.

Q. How many B-17's went out on the morning of the 4th?

A. As I recall it, there were in the neighborhood of 18 or 21. They all got back. Two B-17's later got lost and were forced down on account of fuel. As long as the enemy surface vessels were around they kept shooting them out. Of course, the farther the surface vessels got away the longer their flight was and they were getting back well into the night. Some ran into navigational difficulties. Of the two that were lost, one was later found and all but one member of the crew was rescued. No trace of the other was found.

Q. Did you have any preliminary arrangements for radio communication with the naval task forces out there.

A. No.

Q. Did you know they were out there?

A. Yes, we knew they were in the vicinity. When they were sending the B-17's out Sand Island would always give us information that no friendly ships were inside such and such a line so as to eliminate the possibility of attack by the B-17's on friend-