

The Final Flight of Ensign Paul Blair

By John W. Coe

At the southern end of Manhattan Island in Battery Park, about 150 yards from the South Ferry subway station on the IRT line, there stands the East Coast Memorial, a battle monument commemorating some 4,611 fallen soldiers, sailors, marines, coast guardsmen, merchant marines and airmen who gave their lives in the western waters of the Atlantic Ocean during WWII. The monument is a silent sentinel commemorating all WWII servicemen who went missing in action in the Western Atlantic, later deemed KIA, who perished in America's great struggle against fascism, never to return to their native land. The monument is appropriately oriented toward the Statue of Liberty, sitting as it has for over a century, proclaiming America's commitment to freedom for all who seek refuge on her soil. Inscribed on the western wall of the battle monument, among the names of other honored servicemen, is a simple engraving: "Ensign Paul B. Blair - USN Reserve - Texas." The simplicity and dignity of the monument and its simple inscription is a metaphor for the man himself.

Born in the small town of Alvarado, Tex., on September 30, 1919, Paul Blair was an honor student, a fine high school athlete and, above all, a devoted family man who during the war maintained a steady correspondence with his parents, his sister Betty and his brother Thomas.¹

And like thousands of young men from towns both large and small, Paul Blair went to war to do a terrible job and longed only for the day when he could return and be with his incredibly close-knit family in Texas. There is no bravado, no tales of daring-do and no inflated feeling of self-importance in Blair's sense of himself. There is, instead, only the sense of necessity and a desire for the final day when it would all be over.

Throughout his naval career Blair kept up a prolific correspondence to his family. Indeed it is possible to trace his naval career, however brief, through his letters home, most notably to his mother and father.

After enlisting in the U.S. Navy and attending flight school in Pensacola beginning in May 1943, Paul Blair's naval odyssey began in

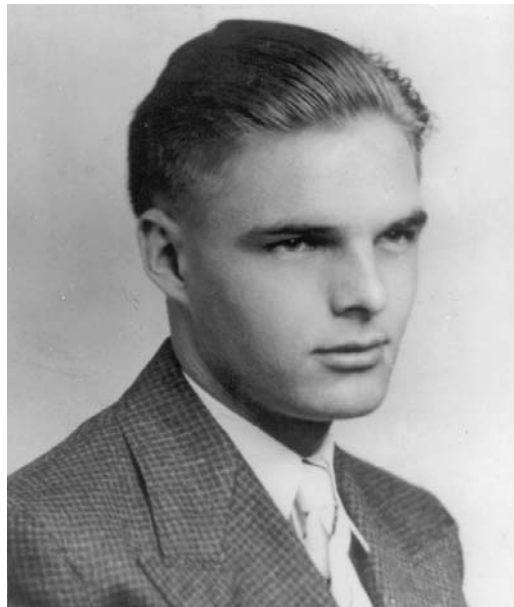
PBYs, his first airplane. "Well," he writes to his parents on June 15, 1943, "am back at the main base (Branson) taking basic - trying to fly on instruments." However, his stay at Branson was short lived. "I just got settled down and learn that routine at one base and they up and transfer me! The first week here we will be studying gunnery. It is kinda dull learning all the names and parts to the machine guns, but I suppose it is necessary." Writing home to his mother on August 9, 1943, Blair notes that, "You ask about P Boats, mom, . . . they are kinda large (4 bunks) a pilots compartment, radio compartment, and rear compartment. Two engines of 1,250 horsepower each burn 300 gallons of gas, and lately I have been flying everyday."

On August 27, 1943, Blair sent a telegram to his mother stating that he "Received commission and wings today - nothing definite until Thursday." Blair was then ordered first to Norfolk, Va., and then to Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn where he notes that he doesn't know how long he will be there . . . before I move on to South America. In fact, he writes, "I don't know much of anything!" All of this was about to change.

In a secret memorandum dated July 30, 1941, Adm. Ernest J. King, Commander in Chief-Atlantic Fleet, (CincLant) detailed his priorities for a Two-Ocean Navy Building Program.

King noted that, in his view, there would be two areas of "maximum opposition - the Pacific-Asiatic areas against the Japanese Navy and German-Italian-French (Vichy) navies in the Atlantic." He also noted that in the Atlantic area, "the determining theater of operations is the Natal area off Brazil." He based this assumption on the view that "The U.S. lines of communication (in the Atlantic) are some 2,200 miles long - to eastern Caribbean area - and are readily flanked along the Eastern part of the north coast of Brazil - from Para eastward."² (Emphasis added)

King obviously saw the necessity of establishing a naval presence along the Brazilian coast. To this end, diplomatic negotiations began with Brazil to allow the United States to establish naval bases, mostly patrol, along the bulging coast of Brazil. King felt, and Rear Adm. Jonas H. Ingram, commander of



A young Paul B. Blair in an undated portrait, probably taken prior to enlisting in the U.S. Navy. (From the Emil Buehler Naval Aviation Library of the National Museum of Naval Aviation via the author)



Blair participated in athletic programs, seen here with his 1936 Alvarado High School football team. Blair is number 29. (From the Emil Buehler Naval Aviation Library of the National Museum of Naval Aviation via the author)

a cruiser patrol division in the Caribbean and South Atlantic agreed, that San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, would be inadequate bases from which to counter major Axis submarine activity in the South Atlantic. Moreover, "With a long coastline jutting boldly out into the Atlantic, Brazil's geography gave it importance in America's plan for military preparedness. . . Naval bases would be needed along its coast in order to challenge the German submarine menace . . . its relative closeness to West Africa made it an important site if planes and war material had to be shuttled to combat zones that might develop in Europe and the Mediterranean."³

"Accordingly, contact was made with the government of Brazil, which granted the United States permission to use a number of locations for naval bases."⁴

"The background to a happy cooperation between the Brazilian and United States navies was laid as far back as 1914. On the request of the Government, a United States Naval Mission was sent to Rio de Janeiro, and Admiral Caperton, an admirable ambassador, arrived in command of a fleet."⁵

Brazil had no roads or rails connecting its cities and settlements aligned along its long Atlantic seacoast. The interior of the country was largely undeveloped. Hence, Brazil depended upon coastal shipping for much of its transportation and commercial needs. Brazil also occupied an important strategic position; the slot between the hump of Brazil and the African coast was an avenue for necessary allied shipping and hence vulnerable to German submarine activity. "Fortunately, the Germans were much too busy in the North Atlantic and Caribbean during the first three months of 1942 to send U-boats into the South Atlantic."⁶ For a time then, work on a number of airfields could commence with reasonable safety.

Rear Adm. Jonas H. Ingram, commanding Task Force 3 of the South Atlantic Force United States Navy sailed from Newport April 24, 1941, to patrol the big triangle of ocean comprised between Trinidad, Cape San Roque and the Cape Verde Islands. Ingram noted that while Recife was the natural port of call and replenishment, Bahia, Brazil, was far superior as a naval base in every way except location. Accordingly, both ports, Recife and Bahia, were made available to the U.S. Navy. Natal, Brazil, was also chosen as the principal air base

in Brazil owing to its strategic location and favorable winds. Eventually bases were also established in Amapa, Camocim, Caravellas, Belem, Fortaleza, Galeao, Igarape Assu, Maceio, and Florianopolis. The majority of these bases were U.S. Naval Air Bases.⁷

One important factor complicated the decision to place U.S. naval bases along the coast of Brazil - the presence of German, Italian and French airline companies providing exclusive air transportation between Brazil and Continental Europe. "After the outbreak of war in Europe the Germans and the Italians used their lines to fly contraband, propaganda and spies between Europe and South America."⁸ Brazil was certainly aware of this but refused to stop these activities because the country was extremely dependent on these assets to compensate for their poor communications infrastructure. This was a tough bargain for the United States but the necessity to establish air bases in Brazil, both for transportation and anti-submarine warfare, outweighed any discomfort prompted by Axis air transportation companies present in this sensitive region.

Natal was also chosen as the principal air base in Brazil owing to its strategic location and favorable winds. "On December 11, 1941, U.S. Naval Air Squadron VP-52, consisting of six Catalinas (PBY-5s) arrived and was cordially welcomed by the Brazilian Air Force."⁹ Eventually war would come to the South Atlantic.

During April and May 1942 German U-boats sank six ships of 36,000 gross tons in waters within 1,200 miles of the coast of Brazil. On June 15, 1942, Hitler decided to launch a 'real' U-boat blitz against Brazil. Ten U-boats began attacking Brazilian shipping. Between 14 and 17 August, five vessels of the Brazilian Merchant Marine, with a total tonnage of 14,822 gross, were torpedoed and sunk not far offshore from Brazil. Reacting to public opinion, on August 22, 1942, the Brazilian government declared war on Germany and Italy. Brazil's entry into the war on August 22 was an event of great importance in naval history. Brazil was the largest and most populous of the South American Republics. With Brazil as an ally, and Uruguay friendly, we only needed French North Africa in the allied camp to bring the allied nations' influence down to the River Plate in America, and to Cape Agulhas in Africa.

The Battle of the Atlantic had come to the South Atlantic between Brazil and the Continent of Africa.

"In spite of the increased protection and better organization brought by the Brazilian belligerency and the South Atlantic Force, November and December 1942 were the worst months of sinkings in that part of the Atlantic. . . Nine merchant ships were sunk in November and 12 in December . . . in the Freetown and Southeast Atlantic areas, nearer Africa than Brazil, there were respectively 10 sinkings of 49,000 tons and 25 of 127,000 tons. This was another case of Admiral Doenitz finding soft spots."¹⁰

Throughout late 1942 and early 1943 increased submarine activity and the presence of Axis blockade-runners demanded an increased naval aviation response. In May 1943 two squadrons (VB-127 and VB-129) of Venturas were based at Fortaleza and at Ipitanga near Bahia. Moreover, Admiral Ingram anticipated that Admiral Doenitz would move more of his U-boats into the



VP-203 was assigned Martin PBM-3s that were similar to this PBM-5A, BuNo 122081. The primary difference being that the -3s were equipped with Wright R-2600 Cyclone engines that produced 200 to 400 less horsepower per engine that the Pratt & Whitney R-2800s on the -5s. (Photo from the Al Hansen collection, AAHS-P000542)

Brazilian-Freetown area as soon as North Atlantic campaign ended. Ingram was not to be disappointed. In May 1943 Gross Admiral Doenitz sent two 740-tonners - U-154 and U-128 - into the South Atlantic to operate south of Cape San Roque. Additional U-boats were to follow. U-182 and U-195 added to the carnage by sinking, respectively, a Greek freighter and a Liberty ship. On May 20, 1943, U-197 sank a Dutch tanker. On June 2, 1943, U-180 sank a Greek freighter. U-154 torpedoed a tanker and two freighters earlier in May.¹¹ "These events underlined the need for more and longer range antisubmarine planes at Ascension and along the Brazilian coast."¹² Admiral Ingram responded positively to this need.

Ensign Paul B. Blair was about to go to war.

On September 28, 1943, Ensign Blair wrote to his mother and father. "Well, here it is Monday and I finally received my orders today. I have been assigned to VP-203, a Patrol Squadron flying PBMs. Until a few days ago this squadron was here in Norfolk, but in the last week or two they moved to Floyd Bennett Field in New York City . . . we also found out that the Squadron is only in New York temporarily - waiting to go to South America. What do you think of that, Mom? Not much, I suppose, but honestly, *I really think I got one of the safest assignments I could have gotten.* (Emphasis added) Now I kinda like idea of going, but I suppose I'll be sick of the place before I come back to the States."

Shortly before Blair was transferred to South America, he transitioned into the PBM. "Took a hop yesterday and another one today each for a couple of hours in a PBM (Patrol Boat by Martin). . . . It dwarfs the PB.Y." This was an understatement if ever there was one.

At a maximum takeoff weight of slightly over 60,000 lbs and a combat range of 1,880 nautical miles the PBM greatly exceeded the capabilities of the PB.Y. However, the PBM never achieved the popularity of the PB.Y, its smaller predecessor, even though Martin's PBM Mariner offered considerably greater

military capability at the expense of increased complexity. It was a remarkably durable aircraft although several accounts state that the earlier versions ". . . suffered from a number of problems, many of them related to the engines. These were overcome when the more powerful Pratt & Whitney R-2800 replaced the Wright R-2600 in 1944."¹³ This fact becomes an important feature in the final flight of Ensign Blair. The Pratt & Whitney engines were installed in the PBM-5. The older Wright R-2600 engines were in the PBM-3s, the aircraft assigned to VP-203.

VP-203 under the command of Lt. Cmdr. M. D. Burns consisted of 12 PBM-3s and was deployed to Bahia, Brazil, between October 4 and November 23, 1943. On October 6, 1943, Blair wrote to his parents that, "Today we are leaving for Brazil. . . . You are both the best parents in the whole world and I love you both more than I can ever tell."

Sometime after October 25, 1943, Blair wrote to his parents suggesting that he was less than pleased with his lot in life.¹⁴ This is the first correspondence Blair wrote home that was anything but upbeat in attitude. Blair wrote that, "The tone of every letter I received, including yours, seems to have the underlying thought that I am perfectly satisfied and happy with my new surroundings. Well, that is erroneous, because I'm not. However, things could be a lot worse elsewhere and according to the scuttlebutt (Navy underground gossip) things are a h--l of a lot worse elsewhere, so I suppose I should thank my lucky stars that I'm where I am."

Patrol Squadron VP-203 began to earn its keep shortly after the turn of the New Year. "VP 203-P-5, Lt. S.V. Brown, Patrol Plane Commander sighted a suspicious merchant vessel which upon investigation was identified as the German Blockade runner *BURGENLAND*. The *USS OMAHA* (CL4) and The *USS JOUETT* (DD395), dispatched to the scene, sank the enemy vessel."¹⁵ Blair refers obliquely to this incident when he wrote to his parents on January 13, 1944, saying that, ". . . we have



VP 203-P-4 crewmates of Ensign Blair. (Left to Right, kneeling) Lt.(jg.) Watson, Lt.(jg.) Barkeer, Ens. Blair, 1st Radioman Maner.

(Left to Right, standing) 2nd Ordnanceman Kulpa, 2nd Flight Engineer Burnett, 1st Flight Engineer Harris, 1st Ordnanceman Kleene. Only Lt. Livid DeBonis, PPC and a 2nd radioman are missing from the photo. (From the Emil Buehler Naval Aviation Library of the National Museum of Naval Aviation via the author)

had some excitement around these parts recently. I wish I could tell you some of the things we do and some of the places we go . . .”

The following day Blair wrote home to inform his mother and father that “. . . I think in about a week we are going to move to another base. It is in the same country, but a little farther away from the States.” On January 16, 1944, “Lt. Cmdr. Burns led a section of three aircraft from Aratu to Galeao (Rio de Janeiro), Brazil, and the squadron’s administrative headquarters were set up there, detachments left at Natal and Aratu.”¹⁶

On that same day Blair wrote home to his parents a long and poignant letter, the first of many to follow. It is a testament to his admiration and gratitude to his parents. He writes, “. . . I think of both of you every day. You see, I never say much to you about it, but I think I have the best father and mother in the world and I love you both very deeply. I often remember those days when things weren’t going so well for us, how both of you went without so Thomas, Betty and myself might have things - how you sent me to school when both of you didn’t possibly see how you could afford to do so. It is true that other parents might have had a little more, but no other parents gave as much in relation to what they had than you both did, and that is what counts.”

On February 13, 1944, Blair wrote to his brother Thomas and his family urging his brother not to join the navy. “So old Jack is in the Navy now. Just wait a couple of weeks a get a couple of reports from him, Tommy and I think you will change your mind about wanting to enlist in the navy, that is, if he gives you the straight dope!” . . . Guess that is all for now. Will write again soon, although there is seldom anything to talk about.” Another understatement. What Blair really meant is that, due to wartime censorship and secrecy there was little that he could talk about. On April 4, 1944, VP 203-P-10 commanded by Lt. L. C. Niehaus “. . . made a searchlight strafing attack on a crash-diving enemy submarine and the depth charges failed to drop in a well-timed and coordinated bombing attack on the submarine whose decks were then awash.”¹⁷

On April 17, 1944, Blair wrote to his parents noting that, “I have been reading in the news where the draft boards are going to be much harder on young men who were previously deferred due to occupational deferments. . . How is this going to affect Tommy when his deferment runs out?”

There follows a series of letters all expressing the same desire to be home with family. On May 11, 1944, in a letter to his brother Tommy he says, “Friends back home are all over the globe. Someday we can all be together again.” On May 19, 1944, he reiterates his wish that his “. . . brother’s deferment will outlive the war.” On June 3, 1944, in another letter to his brother Tommy he wrote, “You had better enjoy being with Wynette and Bob, Tommy, because when, and if, you have to leave you will find the armed force’s main drawback is missing your loved ones.” The Normandy invasion of June 6, 1944, offered Blair a little encouragement. “Invasion started today, I am glad it has finally started. That means the war is just that much closer to an end . . . sure wish I could come home . . .” Again on June 23, 1944, he notes that the “War news is good. B-29s are bombing Japan.” Finally, his last letter dated July 15, 1944, to his brother again indicates his wish to come home.

It was not to be.

“On July 20, 1944, 203-P-4, Lt. Livid DeBonis, USNR, PPC, and his nine-man crew, failed to return from a night search mission. Extensive search by squadron and other aircraft for survivors or wreckage proved futile, but later, from a merchant ship, it was learned that a plane crashed at sea at a time and position which definitely identified the loss.”¹⁸

On July 20, 1944, the officers and men, including Ensign Paul B. Blair, of 203-P-4 were officially declared “missing at sea.”

An administrative report states that:

“At 1735 hours . . . 20 July 1944, Lt. DeBonis took-off from Guanabara Bay on a routine anti-submarine search mission. The gross weight at takeoff was 49,170 pounds including 2,046 gallons of fuel. The last radio contact with the plane was made at 2300. The following information was reported by the officers and crew of the S.S. *John Marshall* when that ship made port the next day; at 2330 an aircraft approached the ship in a glide from the stbd (starboard) side motors idling, crossed the ship’s track astern and “gunned” its engines. The plane then started a circle to the stbd soon afterwards crashing

into a sea and exploding in a huge gasoline fire which burned for at least 45 minutes, about two miles on the ship's port quarter, Lat. 23-19 south, Long. 39-30 west. The "ping" of depth charges exploding was heard by crew members inside the ship. General quarters was sounded on board the ship and a radio message just received directed the ship to change course to clear a certain submarine area. The ship changed course and arrived in Rio de Janeiro the following day, 21 July 1944. . . ."¹⁹

Additional comments on the report only add to the uncertainty surrounding the cause of the crash. Noted as a "probable cause" are either (a) Pilot's loss of control while maneuvering near the water or (b) Pilot's misjudgment of altitude resulting in "flying into the water." Finally, the absolute cause is listed as "100% undetermined." The ultimate answers to this mystery lie at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. With the passage of time and the relentless work of the sea, the riddle will never be fully understood.

On the same day that Ensign Blair's PBM went into the sea, his brother Thomas wrote to him. "Wherever you might go we know that you will always be O.K. because God will watch over you." The envelope containing the letter was returned to Thomas Blair marked "Unclaimed."

On August 6, 1944, Lt. Cmdr. M.D. Burns, Commanding Officer of Patrol Squadron 203 wrote a long, touching letter to Paul Blair's parents.

"You have already received notification that your son is missing. This is to tell you that we have not yet given up hope of his return. Although aircrews of the squadron are now weak with fatigue from long hours spent in searching, flights will continue to be dispatched in the hope of finding him and the rest of his crew. Your son was the copilot of a combat crew which took-off at 1730 hours (local time) 20 July 1944 for an all-night flight in search of a submarine that had sunk United Nations' ships in the immediate area . . . Routine position reports were received from your son's aircraft every two hours until 2300 (Local Time) when last radio contact - a routine transmission - was heard by the base . . . A "maximum effort" air search was begun with all squadron aircraft taking to the air aided by all available airplanes from other squadrons in the area. . . This intensive search went on for six days during which I saw your son's friends and shipmates return from those searches tired and discouraged but still with the fire of loyalty to Paul, driving their exhausted bodies to rise again the following day to "continue the search." This search is still going on. It will continue as long as this squadron patrols the seas in this area. . .

A memorial service was held here for your son and his aircrew with all his squadron shipmates and buddies in attendance to pay their last respects. It was beautiful service and was, I believe, a gesture well worthy of honoring the fighting men of a gallant crew. Their squadron shipmates and I share

with you the regret that they did not return. They gave all they had - their lives - in the service of their country. Very Sincerely Yours, M. D. Burns, Lt. Cmdr., U.S. Navy, Commanding Officer."²⁰

For a time, the Blair family remained hopeful that Paul would be found and brought to safety. The absence of a definitive and final statement left the door open to optimism. Writing to her son shortly after he was lost at sea, she says,

"Last Wednesday I received a message from the government that has nearly put me on the rocks but am getting a little better now and feel sure you are safe and when you get back to your base you will want mail from home. Son, when you are able to go out again you do be careful. . . We are hoping and praying that they will let you come home for a little while when you get back to your home base. . . Son, we are hoping, trusting and praying for you nights and every minute of the day and hope to hear from you soon.

The letter was returned, "Undeliverable."

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Blair appear to have pursued other avenues to verify their loss. A letter from an ex-squadron member, L. H. Barker, is clearly in response to an earlier cable from Mrs. Blair seeking additional information. Barker writes that, "I do not know what official word you have received and I am going a little beyond my authority in this letter. Just exactly what happened we will never know. But I am going to tell you what we do know." Barker then reiterates the official details of the night in question and closes with the comment, "I want to help all I can. There must be many things you want to know about that I haven't explained in this letter so please ask me."

A letter dated July 28, 1944, from the Bureau of Naval Personnel confirms the earlier reports that: "It is with deep regret this bureau confirms the report that your son, Ens. Paul Bishop Blair, United States Naval Reserve, is missing." Finally, on September 21, 1944, the Bureau of Naval Personnel noted that, "It is with deep regret you are now advised, that although the body of your son was not recovered, the Judge Advocate General of the Navy, in reviewing the circumstances of the crash has held that a conclusion of death was justified. The date of death is July 20, 1944."

Ironically, had Ensign Blair lived for just a few more months, his dream of returning home may have been realized. The end of the conflict in Europe brought to a close the need for naval patrol bases along the Brazilian coast. By late 1944 U.S. naval emphasis shifted toward the Pacific. "Recife and her sister ports became less important to the war effort."²¹ By late 1945, the bases and the repair facilities were turned over to the Brazilian government. Earlier, on June 30, 1945, U.S. Patrol Bombing Squadron 203 (VPB-203) was decommissioned. Thus ended an era of naval patrol and bombing presence in the waters of the Southern Atlantic.

Many years later, on August 30, 1970, Mrs. Blair wrote to The American Battle Monuments Commission seeking information regarding the memorializing of her son Ens. Paul B. Blair. William E. Ryan, Jr., Director of Operations and Finance

of the American Battle Monuments Commission answered noting that, “In accordance with our governments’ program of honoring the memory of those of our Dead whose remains were not recovered or identified, Ensign Blair’s name has been permanently inscribed upon the Tablets of the Missing of the East Coast Memorial, Battery Park, New York City, N.Y.”

Professor John Keegan, the preeminent English military historian and scholar wrote a ground-breaking book entitled *The Face of Battle* in which he “revolutionized our understanding of the nature of combat by concentrating on the actions and experiences of soldiers rather than passing judgment on the strategies of generals.” In this important book Keegan shows that it is ordinary human beings, rarely generals and admirals, who fight battles. The fears, heroism, ferocity, solidarity and self-preservation of ordinary warriors are indeed the stuff of warfare.

Centuries earlier, the Greek poet Homer also saw the ambiguity of war. While depicting battle in the most graphic and gruesome detail, he also noted the personal consequences of battlefield death and heroics. In the epic poem, *the Iliad*, Homer described a battle between a pair of Trojan brothers, Xanthus and Thoon, two sons of Phaenops, killed by Diomed (Diomedes), son of Tydeus.

He (Diomed) then gave chase to Xanthus and Thoon, the two sons of Phaenops, both of them very dear to him, for he was now worn out with age, and begat no more sons to inherit his possessions. But Diomed (Diomedes) took both their lives and left their father sorrowing bitterly, for he nevermore saw them come home from battle alive, and his kinsmen divided his wealth among themselves.²²

And so it was with Paul Blair and the multitude of soldiers, airmen and sailors, many of whom never return from combat. The sacrifice and heartbreak of those at home must also be factored into the calculus of war. Ultimately, the best we can do is to honor on monuments erected to their memory those who perished. It is therefore a fitting remembrance to their sacrifice that the names of the Missing at Sea in the Waters of the Atlantic, including the name of Ens. Paul B. Blair, are engraved forever on the Tablet of the Missing in New York City.

Endnotes

- 1 The Blair correspondence is on file in the Emil Buehler Naval Aviation Library (EBNAL) in the National Museum of Naval Aviation on board NAS Pensacola, Pensacola,

Fla. All quotes, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from this collection.

- 2 Memorandum, Adm. E. J. King, U.S. Navy to Chairman, General Board re: Priorities in 2 Ocean Navy Building Program, July 30, 1941.
- 3 Colleta, Paula E., Editor, Bauer, K. Jack, Associate Editor, *United States Navy and Marine Bases Overseas*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn., 1985, p.42.
- 4 Colleta and Bauer, pp.42-43.
- 5 Morison, Samuel L., *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II-The Battle of the Atlantic, 1939-43*, Vol. I, Castle Books, Edison, N.J., 1947, p.377.
- 6 Morison, Vol. I, p.379.
- 7 Colleta and Bauer, p.42-50.
- 8 Morison, Vol. I, p.379.
- 9 Morison, Vol. I, p.378.
- 10 Morison, Vol. I, p.385.
- 11 For a complete list and details of German U-boat activity during this period in the Brazilian-Freetown areas, see Morison, Vol. I, Chapter XII.
- 12 Morison, Vol. I, p.385.
- 13 This information courtesy EBNAL in the National Museum of Naval Aviation on board NAS Pensacola, Pensacola, Fla.
- 14 The date of this letter is uncertain. However, the letter references a date of October 25, 1943, when he received correspondence from home. Therefore, the date of this letter has to be after October 25, 1943.
- 15 Memorandum From: Commander Patrol Bombing Squadron 203. To: The Chief of Naval Operations, History Unit, Op-33-J-6, office editorial research. Courtesy of the Naval Heritage and History Command hereafter referred to as Squadron History.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Squadron History, Part II - Documented Narrative, p.12.
- 19 Quoted from Administrative Report, Squadron History, date of report not recorded.
- 20 Letter from M.D. Burns, C.O. VPB-203, to Mr. and Mrs. Blair, August 6, 1944. (EBNAL)
- 21 Coletta and Bauer, p.43.
- 22 Homer, *The Iliad*, Book V, Translated by Samuel Butler, Ed. Louise R. Loomis, Walter J. Black, Inc., Roslyn, N.Y., 1942, p.71. (This translation of the Iliad uses the Latinized version, Diomed, of Diomedes.)

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