

CONFIDENTIAL

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when filled out)

VD-1 REPORT No **358-45**

VI. LOSS OR DAMAGE, COMBAT OR OPERATIONAL, OF OWN AIRCRAFT (of those listed in II only).

(a) TYPE OWN A/C	(b) SQUADRON	(c) CAUSE: TYPE ENEMY A/C TYPE GUN, OR OPERATIONAL CAUSE	(d) WHERE HIT, ANGLE (List armor, self-sealing tanks, equipment hit)	(e) EXTENT OF LOSS OR DAMAGE (Give Bureau serial number of planes destroyed)
1	FB4Y-1P	VD-1	operational	not hit
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				

VII. PERSONNEL CASUALTIES (in aircraft listed in II only; identify with planes listed in VI by Nos. at left).

(a) NO	(b) SQUADRON	(c) NAME, RANK OR RATING	(d) CAUSE	(e) CONDITION OR STATUS
	none			

VIII. RANGE, FUEL, AND AMMUNITION DATA FOR PLANES RETURNING

(a) TYPE A/C	(b) MILES OUT	(c) MILES RETURN	(d) AV HOURS IN AIR	(e) AV FUEL LOADED	(f) AV FUEL CONSUMED	(g) TOTAL AMMUNITION EXPENDED				(h) NO OF PLANES RETURNING
						30	50	20MM	MM	
FB4Y-1P	700	700	10.2	3100	2800		400			

IX. ENEMY ANTI-AIRCRAFT ENCOUNTERED (Check one block on each line).

CALIBER	NONE	MEAGER	MODERATE	INTENSE
HEAVY — Time-fused shells, 75mm and over				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
MEDIUM — Impact-fused shells, 20mm-50mm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
LIGHT — Machine gun bullets, 6.5mm-13.2mm.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

X. COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE, OWN AND ENEMY AIRCRAFT (use check list at left).

SPEED, CLIMB,
at various altitudes

TURNS
 DIVES
 CEILINGS
 RANGE
 PROTECTION
 ARMAMENT

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XII. TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL DATA. (Narrative and comment. Describe action fully and comment freely, following applicable items in check list at left. Use additional sheets if necessary.)

ENGAGEMENT WITH ENEMY

OWN AIRCRAFT

Disposition
Altitudes
Speeds
Approach Tactics
Use of Cover, Deception
Angles of Attack and
Their Effectiveness
Distance of Opening Fire
Defense Tactics and
Their Effectiveness

ENEMY AIRCRAFT

Method of Locating, Distance
Disposition
Altitudes
Speeds
Approach Tactics
Use of Cover, Deception
Angles of Attack
Distance of Opening Fire
Defensive Tactics

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Own Weaknesses
Enemy Weaknesses
Offensive Tactics, Own
" " , Enemy
Defensive Tactics, Own
" " , Enemy
Flexible Gunnery, Own
Escort Tactics
Fighter Direction
Use of Radar
Night Fighting
Recognition, Aircraft

ATTACK

OWN TACTICS

Method of Locating Target
Approach to Target
Altitudes, Speeds
Approach
Dive
Pull-Out
Dive Angle
Strafing
Retirement
Defensive Tactics
Use of Jamming

DEFENSE, ENEMY

Evasive Tactics, Ships
Concealment
Searchlights
Night Fighter Tactics
Use of Jamming

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Bombing Tactics
Torpedo Tactics
Effectiveness of
Bombs, Torpedoes
Selection of Targets
Fuzing
Strafing Tactics
Defensive Tactics
Use of Radar
Reconnaissance
Photography
Briefing

OPERATIONAL

Navigation
Homing
Rendezvous
Recognition, Ships
Communications
Flight Operations
Search and Tracking
Base Operations
Maintenance

Photographic Reconnaissance of the Mito-Hitachi area of Honshu, Japan was performed on 10 July, 1945 by combined aircraft of Photographic Squadron One and Photographic Squadron Three with Commander Photographic Group Two as flight leader.

Taking off from Iwo at 0615 King, the composition of the flight was as follows:

Plane 28-Lt. Comdr. J. C. HUTCHISON, ComPhotoGroup 2 and
C. O. VD-1

Plane 24 Lt. W. E. HUGHES, VD-1

Plane 27 Lt. H. O. ENDERSON, VD-1

Plane 33 Lt. J. E. TOMES, VD-3

Off Choshi Point, the formation was on its final climb to 20,000 feet, when Plane 28 commenced developing operational difficulties. Engine No. 2 showed excessively high (290 C.) cylinder head and oil temperatures (100 C.) and the communications equipment became unreliable with operation of the VHF and intercom intermittent.

Landfall was made at Onohama. The aircraft formation broke up and each plane went about the problem of running the flight lines assigned to it. These flight lines ran approximately north and south, paralleling the beach from Isohara to Onuki. Eight lines twenty-five miles long and nearly two miles apart comprised the assigned mission. It was not, therefore, possible for the aircraft to fly close enough together to afford mutual support in the event of fighter interception.

Just as Plane 28 started its initial flight line, the crew observed six fighters approaching from the west. As the distance closed, they were identified as Tony's. They broke their loose formation and one Tony came in on the Liberator from five o'clock high firing wing guns and cannon. The cannon appeared to fire thru the arc of the fighters propeller. Waist, tail and top deck guns of Plane 28 returned the fire as the photo plane continued on its flight line. The Tony broke off the attack, passed beneath the Liberator and then climbed for altitude.

Lt. Comdr. HUTCHISON, PPC of Plane 28 was unable to establish communications with other Liberators of the flight. In an effort to close with Plane 33, he increased power settings. Four Tony's scissored back and forth above the Liberator, but did not renew the attack, appearing rather to be jockeying for a favorable position from which to initiate an attack.

After about thirty seconds operation at high power, engine No. 2 swallowed a valve, blew a cylinder and the propeller had to be feathered. Seeing this, two Tony's made flat side runs on the Liberator which now broke from its flight line and took violent evasive action, diving as it headed for the coast. Another Tony made a head on run from twelve o'clock low. Cannon fire and M.G. fire was observed coming from all enemy aircraft that closed to attack. With the exception of the head on attack, the other runs did not appear to be well executed. No hits were scored on the Liberator, due perhaps to the evasive action, which itself made improbable any damage being inflicted on the enemy fighters by the free guns of Plane 28.

The enemy fighters broke off as the Liberator commenced passing over the antiaircraft batteries around Mizuki. Flak was heavy, intense and accurate. About 25 bursts were counted, some ahead, but most behind and on altitude. As Plane 28 headed on out to sea, bomb bay tanks were jettisoned as the Liberator continued diving for high speed retirement from the action, and to reach cloud cover that appeared to be about thirty miles offshore. Plane 28 did not again observe the enemy aircraft.

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XII. TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL DATA. (Narrative and comment. Describe action fully and comment freely, following applicable items in check list at left. Use additional sheets if necessary.)

ENGAGEMENT WITH ENEMY

OWN AIRCRAFT

- Disposition
- Altitudes
- Speeds
- Approach Tactics
- Use of Cover, Deception
- Angles of Attack and Their Effectiveness
- Distance of Opening Fire
- Defense Tactics and Their Effectiveness

ENEMY AIRCRAFT

- Method of Locating, Distance
- Disposition
- Altitudes
- Speeds
- Approach Tactics
- Use of Cover, Deception
- Angles of Attack
- Distance of Opening Fire
- Defensive Tactics

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Own Weaknesses
- Enemy Weaknesses
- Offensive Tactics, Own
- Defensive Tactics, Own
- Flexible Gunnery, Own
- Escort Tactics
- Fighter Direction
- Use of Radar
- Night Fighting
- Recognition, Aircraft

ATTACK

OWN TACTICS

- Method of Locating Target
- Approach to Target
- Altitudes, Speeds
- Approach
- Dive
- Pull-Out
- Dive Angle
- Strafing
- Retirement
- Defensive Tactics
- Use of Jamming

DEFENSE, ENEMY

- Evasive Tactics, Ships
- Concealment
- Searchlights
- Night Fighter Tactics
- Use of Jamming

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Bombing Tactics
- Torpedo Tactics
- Effectiveness of Bombs, Torpedoes
- Selection of Targets
- Fuzing
- Strafing Tactics
- Defensive Tactics
- Use of Radar
- Reconnaissance
- Photography
- Briefing

OPERATIONAL

- Navigation
- Homing
- Rendezvous
- Recognition, Ships
- Communications
- Flight Operations
- Search and Tracking
- Base Operations
- Maintenance

At 10,000 feet, it was again possible to use the VHF and intercom on Plane 28. Communications were established with Lt. HUGHES in Plane 24, and control of the flight turned over to him. In order to enable Plane 28 to return to Iwo on three engines an auto lean, belly turret, waist guns and ammunition were thrown over the side.

The other photo-Liberators continued the assigned mission. None was intercepted by enemy aircraft. Flak was generally heavy, intense and accurate. Heaviest concentrations were found over Mito, Hitachi, Mozuki and Ota. Lt. ENDERSON in Plane 27 ran into continuously pointed fire over Mito. He was forced to break off his flight line when his plane was rocked, but not hit by a burst close aboard, which appeared almost colorless. He believes that the fire may have been heavier than it appeared, and that some smokeless powder rounds may have been fired along with the black powder rounds. No photo-Liberator was hit by flak.

Good quality K-18 twenty-four inch coverage was obtained of approximately 80% of the assigned target area. In this mission which was the first mapping flight by a navy photographic squadron over the home island of Honshu, Lieut. HUGHES used for the first time in combat, the new K-18 mount which he had developed. With this innovation many of the "Holidays" which inevitably appear between flight lines run over strongly held and defended enemy positions were filled, and much territory that would not have been covered with other than six inch Tri-Metrogon was obtained.

While this photo mission was scheduled to coincide with a fast carrier task force strike on airfields in the Tokio area by units attached to the Third Fleet. This planning was of questionable value. Fewer than fifty presumably friendly aircraft were sighted, and these were in the vicinity of Choshi and flying at low altitude. The photographic target area was far enough removed from the Tokio strike area to cancel any possibility of carrier fleet fighters supporting or protecting the photographic planes.

Because Army and Navy units on Iwo had already committed all their available aircraft to the support of a B-29 and fighter strike on the Nagoya area, neither fighters nor Dumbo could be assigned the photographic mission. Accordingly, the mission was flown without either fighter escort, cover, or Dumbo. While search Liberators are able to operate in areas dominated by enemy fighters, photographic planes cannot fulfil their assigned mission if intercepted.

All aircraft of the flight had returned and landed at Iwo when Plane 28 came in at 1715 King.

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