

TORPEDO SQUADRON TWELVE

ACA-1 REPORTS

(5 APRIL - 31 MAY 1945)

CONFIDENTIAL

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
AIR FORCE
TORPEDO SQUADRON TWELVE

CONFIDENTIAL

6 June 1945

MEMORANDUM TO THE COMMANDER, AIR GROUP TWELVE.

Subject: Okinawa Support Missions - Comments on.

1. During the period from 14 April 1945 to 20 May 1945, this squadron participated in twenty-two missions in support of our troops on Okinawa in addition to making strikes on other nearby islands and the Japanese mainland as long range support. Prior to this period this squadron had received only limited training in close support missions, having received very little training in California and having participated in only five missions over Iwo Jima. It is believed that more intensive training on the West Coast in support missions, especially in picking out pin-point targets, would have increased the effectiveness of our strikes considerably. Regardless of the limited training, no great difficulties were encountered, and most strikes were reasonably successful.

2. In view of improving future operations of this nature, the following suggestions and recommendations are made:-

- (a) Grid area charts should be accompanied by photographs of the same area. If possible it would be very helpful to superimpose the grid area over the photograph. This squadron feels that the charts used during the Iwo Jima invasion were superior to those used at Okinawa.
- (b) The Air-Coordination job should be a permanent job held by an aviator thoroughly familiar with the terrain and the front lines. It is felt that strike leaders are not fully qualified for the obvious reason that they are not able to obtain all of the necessary information concerning targets. Things just don't look the same from the air as they do from the ground. The Air Coordinator should be able to make trips to the front lines and discuss prospective targets with CASCUs and ground officers. There is nothing more discouraging to the strike leader than to place a bomb on what he thinks is the target, and when he asks for verification, to be told by CASCUs or the Air Coordinator that they don't know, but that it is in that area.
- (c) The use of various colored bursts at different times of the day for target designation is recommended. Toward the latter part of the Okinawa operation, the enemy "caught on" to our use of white phosphorous shells and littered the entire country side with them, resulting in confusion to the pilots and endangering our own troops.

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3. Because of its bomb carrying capabilities, this squadron feels that the TBM far surpasses all other planes for support missions. In general, it is believed that four 500 lb. bombs is the best loading. Considerable use was made of the 4-5 sec. delay fuse with very good results. It enabled pilots to go very low in their dives, thus giving them a better view of the target. They were especially helpful on the many days when the ceiling was down to around 1500 or 2000 feet.

Thomas B. Ellison
THOMAS B. ELLISON
Lt-Comdr., USNavy,
Commanding.

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED
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I. GENERAL

(a) Unit Reporting VT-12 (b) Based on or at USS RANDOLPH (c) Report No. 7
 (d) Take off: Date 14 April 1945 Time (LZT) 0522(I) (Zone); Lat. 26-38N Long. 129-53E
 (e) Mission Okinawa Support Mission 2-A (f) Time of Return 0910(I) (Zone)

II. OWN AIRCRAFT OFFICIALLY COVERED BY THIS REPORT.

TYPE (a)	SQUADRON (b)	NUMBER			BOMBS AND TORPEDOES CARRIED (PER PLANE) (f)	FUZE, SETTING (g)
		TAKING OFF (c)	ENGAGING ENEMY A/C (d)	ATTACKING TARGET (e)		
<u>TBM-3</u>	<u>VT-12</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4 x 500 GP</u>	<u>10 second delay</u>

III. OTHER U. S. OR ALLIED AIRCRAFT EMPLOYED IN THIS OPERATION.

TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE	TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE
<u>F6F-5</u>	<u>VBF-12</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>USS RANDOLPH</u>				

IV. ENEMY AIRCRAFT OBSERVED OR ENGAGED (By Own Aircraft Listed in II Only).

(a) TYPE	(b) NO OBSERVED	(c) NO. ENGAGING OWN A/C	(d) TIME ENCOUNTERED	(e) LOCATION OF ENCOUNTER	(f) BOMBS, TORPEDOES CARRIED; GUNS OBSERVED	(g) CAMOUFLAGE AND MARKING
<u>None</u>			(ZONE)			
			(ZONE)			
			(ZONE)			

(h) Apparent Enemy Mission(s) _____
 Did Any Part of _____
 (i) Encounter(s) Occur in Clouds? _____ If so, Describe Clouds _____
(YES OR NO) (BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)
 Time of Day and Brilliance _____
 (j) of Sun or Moon _____
(NIGHT, BRIGHT MOON; DAY, OVERCAST; ETC.) (k) Visibility _____
(MILES)

V. ENEMY AIRCRAFT DESTROYED OR DAMAGED IN AIR (By Own Aircraft Listed in II Only).

(a) TYPE ENEMY A/C	(b) DESTROYED OR DAMAGED BY:				(c) WHERE HIT, ANGLE	(d) DAMAGE CLAIMED
	TYPE A/C	SQUADRON	PILOT OR GUNNER	GUNS USED		
<u>None</u>						

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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				
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	
THM-3	106	120	4	330	250	-	-	-	-	7

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

CALIBER	NONE	MEAGER	MODERATE	INTENSE
HEAVY — Time-fused shells, 75mm and over	●			
MEDIUM — Impact-fused shells, 20mm-50mm	●			
LIGHT — Machine gun bullets, 6.5mm-13.2mm	●			

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

- SPEED, CLIMB,
at various altitudes

TURNES

DIVES

CEILINGS

RANGE

PROTECTION

ARMAMENT

No opportunity for comparison

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(OMIT THIS SHEET IF NO ATTACK WAS MADE)

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XI. ATTACK ON ENEMY SHIPS OR GROUND OBJECTIVES (By Own Aircraft Listed in II Only).

(a) Target(s) and Location(s) Artillery position on Okinawa (b) Time Over Target(s) 0830 (Zone)
(FOR SHIPS INCLUDE ALL IN AREA UNDER ATTACK)

(c) Clouds Over Target None
(BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)

(d) Visibility of Target Clear with slight haze (e) Visibility 10
(CLEAR, HAZY, PARTIALLY OBSCURED BY CLOUDS, ETC.) (MILES)

(f) Bombing Tactics: Type Glide Bomb Sight Used Mark VIII
(LEVEL, GLIDE OR DIVE) (TYPE)

Bombs Dropped per Run 4 Spacing 40 Altitude of Bomb Release 2000
(NUMBER) (FEET) (FEET)

(g) Number of Enemy Aircraft Hit on Ground: Destroyed None Probably Destroyed None Damaged None

(h) AIMING POINT	(i) DIMENSIONS OR TONNAGE	(j) NO. A/C ATTACKING (k) SQUADRON	(l) BOMBS AND AMMUNITION EXPENDED, EACH AIMING POINT	(m) NO. HITS On Aiming Point	(n) DAMAGE (None, slight, serious, destroyed or sunk)
1 <u>Wooded area in Grid 7874</u>	<u>700'x300'</u>	<u>7 VT-12</u>	<u>27 x 500# bombs</u>	<u>4 direct</u>	<u>Not observed</u>
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

(o) RESULTS: (For all hits claimed on ship targets and for land targets of special interest, draw diagram, top or side view or both, as appropriate, showing type and location of hits. For all targets give location and effect of hits, and identify by numbers above. Use additional sheets if necessary).

Target coordinator reported that four bombs fell directly on the concealed gun position and that 23 fell in the immediate area. Since the position was well screened by trees and foliage it was impossible to evaluate the amount of damage done.

(p) Were Photographs Taken? No Photographs of Damage, When Taken, Should Be Attached By Staple.

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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

Seven torpedo planes of VT-12 with Lieut. Curtis Hamilton as Flight Leader took off from the RANDOLPH to give support to the advanced of the 24th Army corps in Souther Okinawa. Reporting to Approach Point 2, east of the island, they were instructed by CASCU to proceed inland and orbit over the central part of the island. From this orbiting point they were directed by the Target Coordinator to drop their bombs in one run over the target area designated, which was a heavy gun position in woods, in grid area 7874. Runs were made singly, in column, and after completion the planes rendezvoused and returned to the ship.

All but one of the bombs dropped in the target area and four were reported by the target coordinator to be directly on the gun position. The one bomb that failed to hit the target area hung up and was later jettisoned.

It is recommended, when time permits, the Air Support Group be allowed to drop single bombs instead of salvo, so that pin point bombing may be practiced. In this way errors in range or deflection may be corrected. In most all cases of air support, the aircraft have been ordered to release all bombs on first run for reasons not obvious to pilots. Delayed fusing up to 15 seconds seems effective among heavy emplacements.

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XIII. MATERIAL DATA. (Comment freely on performance or suitability, following check list at left.
Use additional sheets if necessary).

ARMAMENT

Guns, Gunsights
Turrets
Ammunition
Bombs, Torpedoes
Bomb Sights
Bomb Releases

COMMUNICATIONS

Radio, Radar
Homing Devices
Visual Signals
Codes, Ciphers

RECOGNITION

IFF
Signals
Battle Lights
Procedures

PROTECTION

Armor; Points and Angles
of Fire Needing Further
Protection
Leak Proofing

EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

Parachutes
Life Belts, Life Rafts
Safety Belts
Emergency Kits
Rations, First Aid

NAVIGATIONAL EQUIPMENT

Compasses
Driftsights
Octants
Automatic Pilots
Charts
Field Lighting

INSTRUMENTS

Flight
Power Plant

OXYGEN SYSTEM

**CAMOUFLAGE AND
DECEPTION DEVICES**

STRUCTURE

Airframe
Control Surfaces
Control System
Dive Flaps
Landing Gear
Heating System
Flight Characteristics
At Various Loadings

POWER PLANT

Engines
Engine Accessories
Propellers
Lubricating System
Starters
Exhaust Dampers

HYDRAULIC SYSTEM

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

Auxiliary Plant
Lights

FUEL SYSTEM

FLIGHT CLOTHING

MAINTENANCE

BASE FACILITIES

Plane Servicing Equipment
Personnel Facilities

No material difficulties were experienced with the exception of failure of one bomb shackle, Mark IV which failed to release.

REPORT PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

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SIGNATURE A.C.I. Officer. RANK AND DUTY

THOMAS B. HILLISON
SIGNATURE Lt-Comdr., USN, Commanding. RANK AND DUTY

14 April 1945
DATE