

VMF 122

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Report # 56

#C(20)

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AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

6820

RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when filled out)

052093

I. GENERAL

CONFIDENTIAL

(a) Unit Reporting VNF 122 (b) Based on or at PELELIU ISLAND (c) Report No. 50
 (d) Take off: Date 16 APRIL 1945 Time (LZT) 0800 -10 (Zone); Lat. 7 DEG. 11' N Long. 154 DEG. E.
 (e) Mission BOMB BOAT WORKS-AURAPUSHEKARU (f) Time of Return 0900 -10 (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>FG-1D</u>	<u>VNF 122</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2-500 LB. G.P.'S.</u>	<u>4-S SEC. DELAY TAIL</u>

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

TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE	TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE

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
			(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 _____ (k) Visibility _____
(NIGHT, BRIGHT MOON; DAY, OVERCAST; ETC.) (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		

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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 FG-1D	122	PROBABLY STRUCK BY AA FIRE.	NOT KNOWN.	PLANE CRASHED BUREAU #70471
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
1	122	QUINTUS "B" NELSON MAJOR, USMC	BELIEVED TO HAVE CRASHED.	KILLED IN ACTION.

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	
FG-1D	20	20	1	230	90			1000		1

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

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

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

- SPEED, CLIMB,
at various altitudes

URNS

DIVES

CEILINGS

RANGE

PROTECTION

ARMAMENT

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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) POSSIBLE BOAT WORKS - AIRPUSHI ISLAND Time Over Target(s) 0820 -10 (Zone)
- (c) Clouds Over Target SOLID OVERCAST ABOVE 12,000'
(BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)
- (d) Visibility of Target CLEAR (e) Visibility 15 MILES TO EAST. 4 MILES TO WEST.
(CLEAR, HAZY, PARTIALLY OBSCURED BY CLOUDS, ETC.) (MILES)
- (f) Bombing Tactics: Type DIVE Bomb Sight Used NONE
(LEVEL, GLIDE OR DIVE) (TYPE)
- Bombs Dropped per Run 2 Spacing - Altitude of Bomb Release 1000' AV.
(NUMBER) (FEET) (FEET)
- (g) Number of Enemy Aircraft Hit on Ground: Destroyed 0 Probably Destroyed 0 Damaged 0

(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 BUILDINGS	117'x100'	1 VMF 122	1-500 LB. G.P.	1	UNDETERMINED.
2 BOAT BASIN	-	1 VMF 122	2-500 LB. G.P.'S.	2	UNDETERMINED.
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).



(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

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN ON 12 APRIL 1945 REVEALED FIVE BARGES AT THE NORTH END OF AURAPUSHEKARU NEAR THE POINT WHERE THE KOROR-MALAKAL CAUSEWAY CROSSES. THREE OF THE BARGES LINED UP SIDE BY SIDE WERE RIDING HIGH IN THE WATER AND APPEARED TO BE NEW. THE OTHERS LOOKED LIKE PREVIOUSLY STRAFED DERELICTS. ADDITIONAL STUDY OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS AND OF THE AREA IN GENERAL POINTED TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE BUILDINGS AT THIS LOCATION MIGHT HELL CONCEAL A SAW MILL AND BARGE BUILDING ESTABLISHMENT. SUPPORTING THIS BELIEF WAS A LUMBER PILE BEHIND THE BUILDINGS, WHAT APPEARED TO BE RAYS IN FRONT LEADING TO THE WATER, AND A GREAT DEAL OF FLOATING ODDS AND ENDS OF LUMBER IN THE ADJACENT WATERS. THE BUILDINGS, JOINED BY ONE ROOF, MEASURED 117'X100'. STEREOSCOPIC EXAMINATION REVEALED THAT ONE CORNER WAS DAMAGED FROM A PREVIOUS BOMB HIT. TWO BOMBS RELEASED OVER THIS TARGET ON 14 APRIL 1945 MISSED THEIR MARK AND IT WAS DECIDED TO STRIKE IT AGAIN ON THIS DATE USING TWO PLANES EACH EQUIPPED WITH TWO 500 POUND G.P.'S.

AS THE BELOW STATEMENTS INDICATE THE NUMEROUS AA POSITIONS ON ARAKABESAN AND KOROR WERE ACTIVE EVEN BEFORE THE BOMBING RUNS BEGAN. LT. DILKS REPORTS THAT ONE OF THE BOMBS RELEASED BY MAJOR NELSON STRUCK THE TARGET SHATTERING THE BUILDING IN QUESTION. BOTH BOMBS RELEASED BY LT. DILKS ARE REPORTED TO HAVE STRUCK THE BOAT BASIN. AN EXACT APPRAISAL OF THE DAMAGE WAS IMPOSSIBLE DUE TO THE INTENSITY OF THE AA FIRE.

MAJOR NELSON FAILED TO RETURN FROM THIS STRIKE AND IS BELIEVED TO HAVE CRASHED ON THE NORTHERN TIP OF AURAPUSHEKARU. LT. DILKS WHO ACCOMPANIED HIM ON THIS STRIKE MAKES THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

"TAKING OFF AT 0800 WE CLIMBED TO 5000' AND ARRIVED IN THE VICINITY OF THE TARGET AT 0815. WE WERE BOTH FAMILIAR WITH THE TARGET LOCATION AND ITS GENERAL APPEARANCE. IT WAS DECIDED THAT MAJOR NELSON SHOULD GO IN FIRST AND IF HE SUCCEEDED IN HITTING THE BUILDINGS I WAS TO TRY FOR THE BOAT BASIN AND ONLY BARGES IT MIGHT CONTAIN. THERE WAS A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF MEDIUM AND HEAVY AA VISIBLE EVEN BEFORE WE STARTED OUR RUNS. MAJOR NELSON MADE HIS RUN FROM SOUTHWEST TO NORTHEAST ACROSS THE TARGET AREA WHILE I APPROACHED FROM WEST TO EAST ALONG THE NORTH SHORE OF NEBAGOL. I HAD JUST STARTED MY DIVE WHEN I NOTICED TWO EXPLOSIONS. ONE WAS ON THE EAST COAST OF MALAKAL, THE OTHER DIRECTLY ON THE TARGET. I WAS IN MY DIVE AND INTENT ON GETTING ON MY TARGET WHEN I HEARD MAJOR NELSON SAY 'DILKS'. THE REST OF HIS TRANSMISSION WAS GARBLED. I HEARD NOTHING FURTHER. I THOUGHT I SAW HIS PLANE LOW OVER THE TARGET AREA AND AGAIN, FOR A FRACTION OF A SECOND, OVER LEBUGOL CHANNEL. AFTER RELEASING MY BOMBS I RETIRED OVER MALAKAL HARBOR AND LOOKED FOR MAJOR NELSON. CALLING HIM ON THE RADIO PRODUCED NO RESULTS. LT. COOLEY CALLED SAYING HE BELIEVED THE MAJOR MUST HAVE 'GONE IN'.

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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

WHEN HE RETURNED HE BOTH WENT DOWN LOW OVER AURAPUSHEKARU. I SAW A BURNED OUT AREA BUT NO SIGNS OF THE AIRCRAFT. IN ALL I SPENT 40 MINUTES CIRCLING THE AREA WITHOUT FINDING ANY TRACE OF THE MAJOR OR HIS PLANE. I CAN'T EXPLAIN THE WIDE INTERVAL BETWEEN THE TWO BOMB EXPLOSIONS UNLESS THE ONE WAS SHOT OFF BY AA FIRE OR ACCIDENTALLY RELEASED. OUR RADIO CONTACT ON THE WAY TO THE TARGET WAS SATISFACTORY."

THE SELF-EXPLANATORY STATEMENT OF 1ST LT. W. E. COOLEY OF VNF 121 IS AS FOLLOWS:

"MY DIVISION TOOK OFF DIRECTLY BEHIND MAJOR NELSON AND LT. DILKS. WE WERE GOING ON A ROUTINE BARGE SWEEP AROUND THE NORTHERN PALAUS. I KNEW ABOUT THE TWO PLANE STRIKE MAJOR NELSON WAS LEADING AND DECIDED TO WATCH IT ON THE WAY UP TO BABELTHUAP. I HAD 5000' ALTITUDE AND WAS ON THE EAST SIDE OF AURAPUSHEKARU WHEN I SAW MAJOR NELSON GO INTO HIS DIVE. THE AA WAS PARTICULARLY INTENSE. I BELIEVE EVERY POSITION ON BOTH KOROR AND ARAKABESAN WAS ACTIVE. THERE WERE NUMEROUS PHOSPHORUS SHELLS. THE BLACK BURSTS OF HEAVY WERE EXPLODING AT AROUND 4000'. MAJOR NELSON DOVE THROUGH THIS BARRAGE IN WHAT APPEARED TO BE A 60 DEGREE DIVE. I SAW ONE EXPLOSION ADJACENT TO THE WHARF ON THE EAST COAST OF MALAKAL AND IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER A SECOND EXPLOSION ON THE NORTH TIP OF AURAPUSHEKARU. I SAW HIM BREAK HIS DIVE AT ABOUT 15 DEGREES AND THEN CONTINUE ON. I ESTIMATE HE WAS AT 1500' AT THIS TIME. THERE WAS A HIGH OVERCAST AT 12,000' AND A STORM TO THE WEST MAKING VISIBILITY IN THAT DIRECTION POOR. I LOST SIGHT OF THE PLANE. SEVERAL SECONDS LATER THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION ALONG THE SIDE OF THE HILL AT THE NORTH TIP OF THE ISLAND. RED FLAMES SHOT UP INTO THE AIR FOR A DISTANCE OF 150' FOLLOWED BY A DENSE CLOUD OF BLACK SMOKE. I IMMEDIATELY THOUGHT OF NAPALM BUT THEN I REALIZED IT COULDN'T BE THAT. I HEARD NO RADIO TRANSMISSION. WITH MY DIVISION I CONTINUED ON UP TO BABELTHUAP WHERE WE RELEASED OUR BOMBS. WHILE THERE I HEARD LT. DILKS CALLING FOR MAJOR NELSON OVER THE RADIO AND REALIZED THAT HE (MAJOR NELSON) MUST HAVE "GONE IN". I CALLED LT. DILKS AND TOLD HIM TO WAIT. RETURNING TO THE AREA I INSTRUCTED THE OTHERS IN MY DIVISION TO MAKE A HIGH STRAFING PASS IN AN ATTEMPT TO SILENCE THE AA WHILE LT. DILKS AND I WENT DOWN TO SEARCH THE AREA. I SAW A BURNED OUT SPACE ON THE SIDE OF THE HILL WHERE I HAD PREVIOUSLY SEEN THE FIRE. I DID NOT SEE ANY REMNANTS OF THE PLANE, ONLY A CHARRED HOLE IN THE GROUND. THE NUMEROUS AA POSITIONS PRECLUDED THE POSSIBILITY OF A MORE EXTENSIVE SEARCH."

REPORT PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

J. R. FLETCHER

CAPT., USMC
ACIO, VNF 122

I. E. BONISKE

MAJOR, USMC
COMD'G, VNF 122

16 APRIL 45

SIGNATURE

RANK AND DUTY

SIGNATURE

RANK AND DUTY

DATE