

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when
filled out)

52850

I. GENERAL

SECRET

(a) Unit Reporting VF-45 (b) Based on or at USS SAN JACINTO (c) Report No. 65
 (d) Take off: Date 27 March 1945 Time (LZT) 1220-1225(I) (Zone); Lat. 28° 42'N Long. 129° 43'E
 (e) Mission Strike, Kikai Jima and Aomori O Shima (f) Time of Return 1530 (I) (Zone)
(2 F6F's in at 1655)

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)		
F6F-5	VF-45	11	None	11	Each plane carried 6 x 5" H.B. rockets a piece	Mark 146 - non-delay
F6F-5	VF-45	11	X	X	X	X

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

TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE	TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE
TBM-3	VT-45	8	USS SAN JACINTO				

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
1 Zeke Probable	1	None	(I) 1320 (ZONE)	Kikai Shima Wan Airfield	X	Dirty brown mottled
1 S.E.	1	None	(I) 1320 (ZONE)	Kikai Shima Wan Airfield	X	"

(h) Apparent Enemy Mission(s) X
 Did Any Part of
 (i) Encounter(s) Occur in Clouds? X If so, Describe Clouds X
(YES OR NO) (BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)
 Time of Day and Brilliance
 (j) of Sun or Moon X (k) Visibility X
(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		
None						

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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	VF-45	Enemy anti-aircraft probable medium calibre automatic AA	Unknown	Bu. No. 71600
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	VF-45	Lt(jg) Billy J. Pottigrew, A-1, USNR File No. 326442	Plane hit by anti-aircraft fire, made hard water landing, pilot found to be dead in his life jacket approximately an hour and a half later. Exact cause of death unknown.	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		
FGP-5	95	95	3.2	400	195					Av. 1000 rds. per plane	11

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
- TURNING
- DIVES
- CEILINGS
- RANGE
- PROTECTION
- ARMAMENT

No encounter with enemy airborne aircraft.

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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) shipping, W end of Oshima Raikyo (b) Time Over Target(s) 1330-1415(I)
(FOR SHIPS INCLUDE ALL IN AREA UNDER ATTACK) (Zone)
- (c) Clouds Over Target 6000, alto-cumula, 7/10ths
(BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)
- (d) Visibility of Target Clear under clouds (e) Visibility 8-10
(CLEAR, HAZY, PARTIALLY OBSCURED BY CLOUDS, ETC.) (MILES)
- (f) Bombing Tactics: Type X Bomb Sight Used X
(LEVEL, GLIDE OR DIVE) (TYPE)
- Bombs Dropped per Run X Spacing I Altitude of Bomb Release X
(NUMBER) (FEET) (FEET)
- (g) Number of Enemy Aircraft Hit on Ground: Destroyed X Probably Destroyed 1 Damaged 1

(h) AIMING POINT	(i) DIMENSIONS OR TONNAGE	(j) NO A/C ATTACKING	(l) BOMBS AND AMMUNITION EXPENDED: EACH AIMING POINT	(m) NO HITS On Aiming Point	(n) DAMAGE (None slight serious, destroyed or sunk)
		(k) SQUADRON			
1					
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).

(p) Were Photographs Taken? Yes, but they were taken for reconnaissance purposes and not damage assessment
 Photographs of Damage, When Taken, Should Be Attached By Staple: assessment
 (See USS SAN JACINTO photos Sorties #69)

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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

See attached sheets.

SECRET

XII. TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL DATA.

Twelve Hellcats, including one photographic plane, were launched at 1220 (I) 27 March 1945, to accompany eight TBM's of VI-45 on a strike against Kikai Shima, Amami Gunto.

The planes arrived at Wan Airfield, Kikai Shima, in approximately an hour after take off. There all fighters except the photographic plane made a strafing run on the field, where five single engine planes were sighted. Three of these planes were battered and unflyable, but two, one probably a Zeke and the other an unidentified fighter plane, were believed serviceable. All 5 planes were heavily strafed, and the Zeke burned internally - the glow of fire inside the engine could be seen through the cowl flaps.

After this run, two four-plane divisions flew westward to Amami O Shima, while the three remaining fighters rendezvoused with the photographic plane. The latter four Hellcats remained with the 8 TBM's and returned to base with them. While crossing Amami O Shima a BELLEAU WOOD pilot was heard to state on the radio that there were approximately 20 cargo ships in O Shima Kaikyo, the strait which separates Amami from Kakeroma Shima.

The SAN JACINTO fighters veered southward to take a crack at these ships. These two divisions were led by Lt. L.R. Forkner, who had in his division Lt(jg) Enry and Lt(jg) Taylor and Ensign Hynson. The second division consisted of Lt. J.B. Cain, Lt(jg) Pettigrew, Lt(jg) Paul and Ensign Krier. As they neared the southwestern part of Amami O Shima, at an altitude of 8,000 feet, a hole in the cloud cover was spotted, and the Hellcats went down through it. At an altitude of approximately 5,000 feet, several engines aft freighters were seen lying at anchor, undamaged, in Satsukawa Wan, on the northwest coast of Kakeroma Shima. All eight planes pushed over in 40 degree rocket runs on the freighters. In Satsukawa Wan were two Sugar Charlies and four Sugar Dogs (JMST) riding at anchor. Rocket hits were scored on at least three of the freighters. (One Sugar Charlie and two Sugar Dogs) in the face of intense and accurate medium and heavy anti-aircraft fire coming up from the north shore of Kakeroma Shima and the south shore of Amami O Shima.

Lt(jg) Pettigrew went down lower than the rest of the flight, and obtained at least four observed rocket hits on the largest freighter, which exploded and then started burning from bow to stern. The other freighters that were hit, likewise were aflame. As Pettigrew pulled out of his rocket run his plane was mortally damaged by anti-aircraft fire, and he radioed that he was hit. His plane rapidly lost altitude, trailing heavy white smoke, and he barely cleared Kakeroma Shima to make a hard crash landing in the water just off Mo Saki on the south east coast. A rescue transmission was instantly sent by Lt(jg) Paul, and the Task Group Commander had instituted rescue measures within two minutes. Lt. Cain and Ens. Krier orbited the spot where Pettigrew's plane crashed, and approximately a minute after the plane had disappeared from view, aye marker appeared on the water, and the downed pilot, in his life jacket, in the center of the marker. It was thought that Pettigrew moved and splashed after he came to the surface, but the orbiting pilots were not certain of this. When an OS2U landed in the bay an hour and a half later, they discovered that Pettigrew was dead. The cause of death has not been ascertained from the Kingfisher pilot.

All the remaining planes eventually returned safely to Base.

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

All material and equipment functioned satisfactorily.

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

REPORT PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

S. W. PLAUCHE, Jr., Lt(jg), USNR
SIGNATURE **ACT Officer** RANK AND DUTY

L. E. FORKNER, Lt., USNR
SIGNATURE **Commanding Officer** RANK AND DUTY

4-5-65

DATE

ACTING