

VMF 122

167
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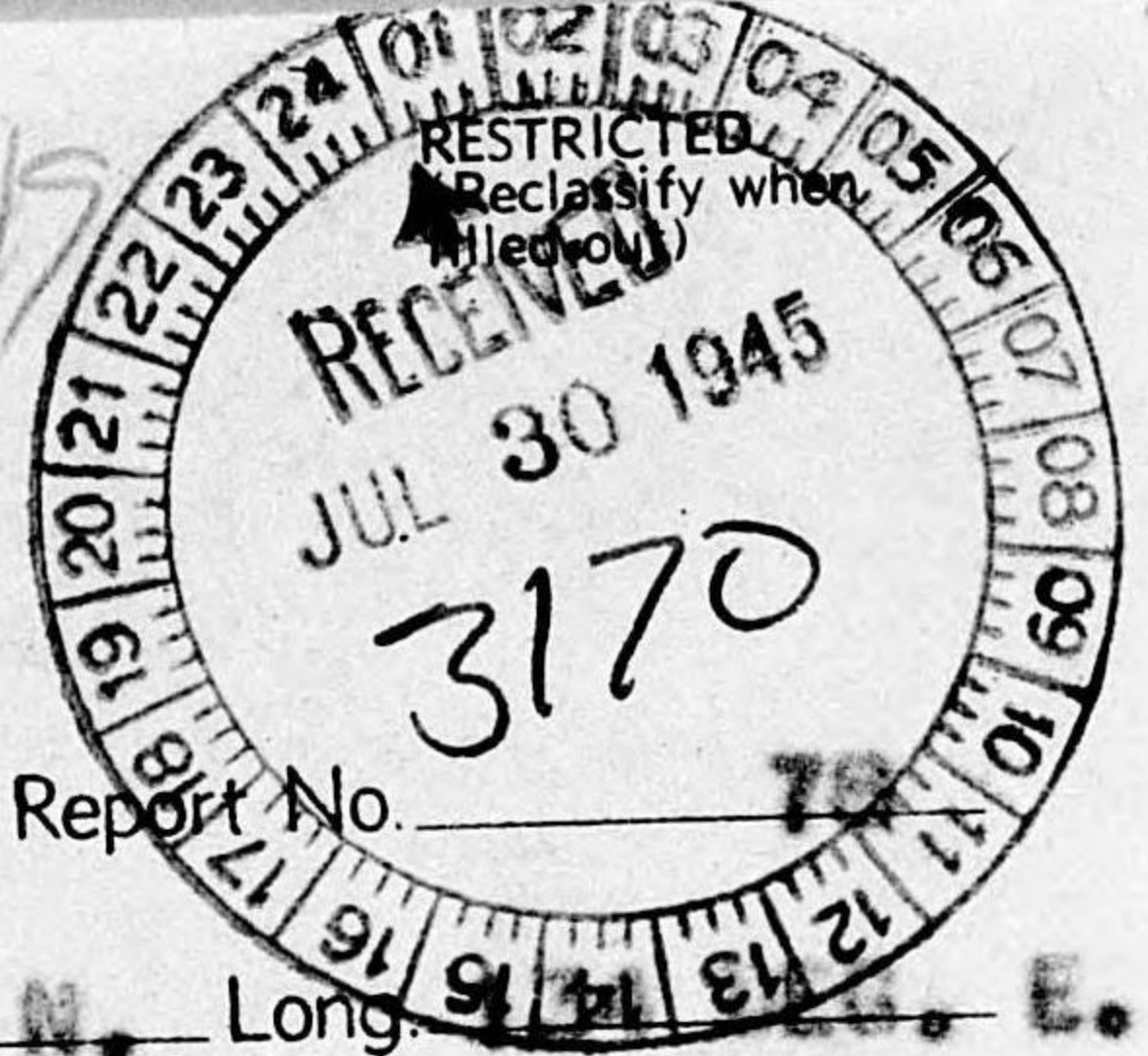
Report # 78

HC(20)

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AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

056049



17713

I. GENERAL

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(a) Unit Reporting VMF 122 (b) Based on or at PELELIU ISLAND (c) Report No. 79

(d) Take off: Date 18 JULY 1945 Time (LZT) 1000 -10 (Zone); Lat. 7 DEG. N. Long. 152 DEG. E.

(e) Mission ROUTINE FIGHTER SQUAD-NORTHERN PALAUS (f) Time of Return 1145 -10 (Zone)

II. OWN AIRCRAFT OFFICIALLY COVERED BY THIS REPORT.

(a) TYPE	(b) SQUADRON	NUMBER			(f) BOMBS AND TORPEDOES CARRIED (PER PLANE)	(g) FUZE, SETTING
		(c) TAKING OFF	(d) ENGAGING ENEMY A/C	(e) ATTACKING TARGET		
F4U-1D	VMF 122	4	0	4	2-500 LB. G.P.'S.	NOSE PLUG 4-5 SEC. DELAY TAIL

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) _____

(i) Did Any Part of Encounter(s) Occur in Clouds? _____ If so, Describe Clouds _____ (BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)

(j) Time of Day and Brilliance 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:			GUNS USED	(c) WHERE HIT, ANGLE	(d) DAMAGE CLAIMED
	TYPE A/C	SQUADRON	PILOT OR GUNNER			

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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 F4U-1D	122	AA-PROBABLY 40 MM.	ENGINE-LEFT WING- EMPENAGE.	BAILLED OUT OVER OCEAN. PLANE CARRIED BUREAU #B2475.
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	
F4U-1D	80	80	1.8	230	175		400			3

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"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
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

SPEED, CLIMB,
 at various altitudes
 TURNS
 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) TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY - PALAU AREA (b) Time Over Target(s) 1030 - 10 (Zone)
(FOR SHIPS INCLUDE ALL IN AREA UNDER ATTACK)

(c) Clouds Over Target 4/10 CUMULUS AT 1800'
(BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)

(d) Visibility of Target CLEAR (e) Visibility 20 MILES
(CLEAR, HAZY, PARTIALLY OBSCURED BY CLOUDS, ETC.) (MILES)

(f) Bombing Tactics: Type GLIDE Bomb Sight Used NONE
(LEVEL, GLIDE OR DIVE) (TYPE)

Bombs Dropped per Run (1) 2 Spacing - Altitude of Bomb Release 325' 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 BRIDGE	15' X 30'	1 VMF 122	2-500 LB. G.P.S.	0	BELIEVE DESTROYED.
2 DAM	30' X 4'	2 VMF 122	3-500 LB. G.P.S.	0	SLIGHT
3 BUILDING	40' X 20'	1 VMF 122	1-500 LB. G.P.	1	DESTROYED
4 CAVE	-	1 VMF 122	1-500 LB. G.P.	1	UNDETERMINED
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

THIS ROUTINE FIGHTER SWEEP, ARMED AS INDICATED, WAS INSTRUCTED TO MAKE A SWEEP OF THE NORTHERN PALAUS STRIKING ANY WORTHWHILE TARGET OR TARGETS WHICH MIGHT BE ENCOUNTERED. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF AN ISOLATED BUILDING AND A PARTIALLY REPAIRED BRIDGE HERE AND THERE, NO OBVIOUS BOMBING TARGETS REMAIN INTACT. THE BOMBING TARGETS SELECTED IN THIS INSTANCE ARE THOSE LISTED UNDER XI. THE FACT THAT ONE BOMB IS UNACCOUNTED FOR UNDER XI (1) IS EXPLAINED IN THE ATTACHED STATEMENT OF CAPT. BRANAGAN.

THE MEDIUM CALIBRE AA RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LOST AIRCRAFT IS BELIEVED TO HAVE ORIGINATED FROM THE NGATPANG DISTRICT OF BABELTHUAP, AT TX 593-935. AA FIRE WAS ALSO NOTED AT TX 645-992. MAP REFERENCES USED ARE FROM THE "SPECIAL AIR AND GUNNERY TARGET MAP" OF THE PALAUS, SCALE 1:20,000.

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT OF CAPT. WILLIAM I. BRANAGAN, USMCR, RELATIVE TO HIS PARACHUTE LANDING AND SUBSEQUENT RESCUE IS SELF EXPLANATORY:

"ON 18 JULY 1945 AT APPROXIMATELY 1050, WHILE ON A ROUTINE FIGHTER SWEEP OVER THE NORTHERN PALAUS, MY PLANE WAS STRUCK IN THE ENGINE BY WHAT APPEARED TO BE MEDIUM CALIBRE, CONTACT FUSED, AA FIRE. INITIALLY ARMED WITH TWO 500 POUND G.P. BOMBS, I HAD RELEASED ONE OVER A SMALL BRIDGE IN THE CENTRAL PART OF BABELTHUAP. WHEN HIT I WAS ENGAGED IN MAKING STRAFING PASSES AT LIKELY LOOKING TARGETS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME KEEPING ON THE LOOKOUT FOR ANOTHER SUITABLE BOMBING TARGET. MY DIVISION HAD SPLIT INTO SECTIONS TO MORE EFFECTIVELY COVER THE ISLAND. MY WINGMAN AND I WERE WORKING OVER THE WESTERN HALF OF THE ISLAND. NOTING A GROUP OF SUSPICIOUS LOOKING SHACKS ALONG THE SIDE OF A HILL JUST INLAND FROM NGATPANG BAY I FOLLOWED THE CONTOURS OF THE VALLEY WHILE STRAFING. CLOSE TO THE DECK (MY ALTITUDE WASN'T MORE THAN 50 FEET), I HAD TO PULL UP TO CROSS A HILL IN FRONT. MY I.A.S. AT THE TIME WAS 240 KNOTS. JUST AS I CLEARED THE HILL I HEARD TWO EXPLOSIONS IN MY ENGINE AND SAW ONE EXPLOSION MIDBOARD ON MY LEFT WING. I ALSO HEARD SEVERAL HITS IN THE TAIL SECTION. OIL SPATTERED OVER THE WINDSHIELD AND THE COCKPIT FILLED WITH SMOKE. I DECIDED TO KEEP LOW AND HEAD FOR THE EAST COAST. I HAD NOTICED A DESTROYER ESCORT ON THAT SIDE OF THE ISLAND A SHORT WHILE BEFORE AND I ALSO WANTED TO AVOID ADDITIONAL AA POSITIONS KNOWN TO BE ACTIVE ON THE WEST SIDE. I CROSSED THE ISLAND AT 450 FEET INDICATED AND WAS ABLE TO MAINTAIN MY SPEED OF 210 KNOTS. THE PLANE - AN F4U-1D - REACTED WELL BUT WAS A LITTLE SLOTTISH ON THE CONTROLS. ON REACHING THE COAST I AGAIN SAW THE DE AND HEADED IN ITS DIRECTION. I THREW BACK THE HOOD AND WAS IMMEDIATELY COVERED WITH OIL. I DECIDED TO BAIL OUT. THE PLANE WAS BURNING AND I WAS AFRAID IT MIGHT EXPLODE IF I TRIED TO MAKE A WATER LANDING. I WENT UP TO 1800 FEET, TURNED ON THE MASTER ARMING AND BOMB ARMING SWITCHES (I STILL HAD ONE UNEXPENDED BOMB), AND TRIMMED THE PLANE FOR A GRAVEYARD SPIRAL TO THE LEFT. MY I.A.S. AT THIS POINT

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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

REPORT PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

J. R. FLETCHER CAPT., USMC
SIGNATURE ACIO, VMP 122

D. H. SAPP MAJOR, USAC
SIGNATURE COMD'G, VMP 122

20 JULY 45 DATE

WAS 140 KNOTS. I FOUND THAT I COULDN'T GET OVER THE SIDE AT THIS SPELD. I THEN CROUCHED ON THE SEAT, FLYING BY THE STICK ALONE, AND EASED THE THROTTLE BACK TO ABOUT 1500 RPM'S. I HELD MY ALTITUDE WHILE MY AIRSPEED DROPPED OFF. AT 100 KNOTS I WAS ABLE TO DIVE OVER THE LEFT SIDE. AS I COUNTED THREE I SAW THE PLANE GO BY. WHEN WELL PAST I PULLED THE RIPCORD. THE CHUTE OPENED PROPERLY WITH VERY LITTLE SHOCK. THE DESCENT TO THE BEST OF MY RECOLLECTION TOOK ABOUT A MINUTE AND A HALF. THERE WERE NO NEARBY REFERENCE POINTS WHICH MADE IT DIFFICULT TO JUDGE DISTANCES. I KEPT THE CHEST AND LEG STRAPS BUCKLED UNTIL I HIT THE WATER. THE CHUTE COLLAPSED. I EXPERIENCED NO DIFFICULTY IN GETTING OUT OR IN INFLATING MY LIFE JACKET. I'VE GONE OVER THE PROCEDURE SO MANY TIMES IN MY MIND THAT WHAT TO DO AND HOW TO DO IT CAME TO ME WITHOUT THINKING. I INTENDED TO INFLATE THE RAFT ONLY PART WAY BEFORE GETTING ON BUT IT JUMPED OUT OF MY HAND WHEN THE CO2 ENTERED AND INFLATED ALL THE WAY. AFTER ONE UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT I GOT ON OVER THE LOWER END. MY WINGMAN AND A DUMBO WERE OVERHEAD AT THIS TIME AND I COULD SEE THE DESTROYER ESCORT A SHORT DISTANCE OFF. I WAS PICKED UP JUST 18 MINUTES AFTER LANDING.

THE PLANE EXPLODED ON LANDING AND A FEW SECONDS LATER THE BOMB DETONATED. THE LOCUS, I LATER LEARNED WAS 7 DEGREES 23 MINUTES NORTH LATITUDE AND 134 DEGREES 40 MINUTES EAST LONGITUDE."