

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when filled out)

I. GENERAL

SECRET

(a) Unit Reporting VF-45 (b) Based on or at USS SAN JACINTO (c) Report No. 45
 (d) Take off: Date 18 March 1945 Time (LZT) 0530-0540(I) (Zone); Lat. 30° 42' N Long. 133° 30' E
 (e) Mission Fighter Sweep, Miyakonojo Airfield, Kyushu (f) Time of Return 0845-0850 (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)		
F6F-5	VF-45	12	6	12	Each plane carrier 6 x 5" H.E. rockets	Mark 146, non-delay

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

TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE	TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE
F6F-5		10	USS BATAAN				

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
Zeke	1	1	0750 (I) (ZONE)	East of Miyakonojo A.F., Kyushu	None observed	All planes, the customary brownish with green mottled pattern. Standard roundels.
S.E. VP	6	0	(ZONE)			
T.E.	1	0	(ZONE)			

(h) Apparent Enemy Mission(s) The Zeke attempted interception by making run on one of the Hellcats
 Did Any Part of
 (i) Encounter(s) Occur in Clouds? No If so, Describe Clouds I
(YES OR NO) (BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)
 Time of Day and Brilliance
 (j) of Sun or Moon Day (k) Visibility Unlimited
(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:			GUNS USED	(c) WHERE HIT, ANGLE	(d) DAMAGE CLAIMED
	TYPE A/C	SQUADRON	PILOT OR GUNNER			
Zeke	F6F-5	VF-45	Lt. C.R. Knokey	6 x .50 cal.	Variable	Damaged
			Lt(jg) R.R. Kidwell			
			Lt(jg) M.N. Bunker			
			Lt(jg) C.E. Wilcox			
			Lt(jg) R.J. Doig			
			Lt(jg) R.L. Taylor			
			Ensign R.P.T. Coffin			

ENCLOSURE (B)

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when filled out)

VP-45 REPORT No. **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)
F6F-5	VP-45	Unknown	Unknown	Destroyed - Bureau No. 71583

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	VP-45	Commander Gordon Eugene Schuster, III (File No. 74846)	Plane crashed at target (Miyakonojima Airfield Ryukyu) Pilot did not bail out.	Missing 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	
F6F-5	135	135	3.2	400	250	Av. 1600 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
- URNS
- DIVES
- CEILINGS
- RANGE
- PROTECTION
- ARMAMENT

Zeke absorbed quite a lot of punishment in nature of .50 calibre ammunition, indicating improved leak proofing of tanks, and armor. Fact that Zeke got away was due to his maneuverability and partly attributable to the large and unwieldy number of F6F's which managed to get in each others' way more than anything else.

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when filled out)

(OMIT THIS SHEET IF NO ATTACK WAS MADE)

VT-45

REPORT No. 45

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

(a) Target(s) and Location(s) Miyakonojo Airfield, Kyushu (b) Time Over Target(s) 0705(1) (Zone)
(FOR SHIPS INCLUDE ALL IN AREA UNDER ATTACK)

(c) Clouds Over Target No clouds
(BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)

(d) Visibility of Target Clear (e) Visibility Unlimited
(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 X Altitude of Bomb Release X
(NUMBER) (FEET) (FEET)

(g) Number of Enemy Aircraft Hit on Ground: Destroyed 6 Probably Destroyed X Damaged 2 1

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

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when
filled out)

SECRET

VF-45

REPORT No **45**

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

See attached sheets.

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

SECRET

XII. TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL DATA.

Twelve P6F-5's of VF-45 were launched at 0535 (I), 18 March 1945, to join with ten Hellcats of the USS BATAAN and fly a fighter sweep over Miyakonojo Airfield, Kyushu. The twenty four plane sweep was under the leadership of Commander Gordon T. Scheeter, Group Commander of Air Group FORTY FIVE. Commander Scheeter's division was composed of Lt(jg) Taylor, Lt(jg) Mosely and Lt(jg) Kidwell. The second VF division was led by Lt. C. R. Knokey, with Ens. Coffin, Lt(jg) Barker and Lt(jg) Wilcox flying the other three planes. The third division was made up of Lt. J.E. Perry, Lt(jg) Deig, Lt(jg) Cuffe and Lt(jg) Bywater.

After rendezvous the 22 plane flight departed for the target at 0556 (I), and made a high speed climb to the southeastern coast of Kyushu, which was crossed at Lat. 31° 33'N at an altitude of 12,000 feet.

When the sweep was fifteen miles from Miyakonojo field the target could be clearly observed. Commander Scheeter ordered the Bataan fighters to swing to the south and make a run from SE to NE following a run to be made by eight of the SAN JACINTO Hellcats from NE to SW. Commander Scheeter's four plane division stayed up at 11,000 feet to provide cover for the attack on the target, consisting of hangars and airfield facilities on the eastern side of Miyakonojo Airfield. At the same time Commander Scheeter split the group into the two fighter elements, and the SAN JACINTO 8 plane fighter element made a high speed let down to about 8000 feet. From that altitude Lt. Knokey started a 50° dive on the airfield installations, followed by the other 7 Hellcats. In the dive all eight planes strafed and fired all of their rockets at the two large hangars and adjacent buildings. In their dive the pilots spotted six single engine VF planes parked in front of one of the hangars. Jap personnel were seen running toward the planes at the time. Both the planes and personnel were included in the strafing attack and all of the Jap planes were set afire, as well as the hangars and several other buildings, all of which were furiously ablaze from the many rocket hits.

Lt. Knokey spotted a twin engine plane on the west side of the field, but could not bring his guns to bear on the plane. However, Ensign Coffin, Knokey's wingman, managed to get in a good burst on the twin, observing hits but no fire. As Lt. Knokey pulled out of the dive going over the field, he called Commander Scheeter on the radio reporting the Jap planes on the deck. Commander Scheeter "Rogered" for the message. At this time the Bataan fighters were observed just finishing their dives on the hangar area. (Both of the large double hangars were later observed burned to the ground).

SECRET

At this point Lt. Knokey joined up his eight plane element, and Commander Scheeter told Knokey over the radio that the former's four plane division were commencing their runs, and to rendezvous with him as soon as he had completed his attack. Commander Scheeter made a high speed let-down across the field going west to east, a lit S'd back from east to west with all four planes firing their rockets at the buildings. Commander Scheeter started his pull out at approximately 1500 feet, but it appeared to Lt(jg) Kidwell that a piece of his starboard wing came off, and Comdr. Scheeter crashed about 1500 feet southeast of the airfield without bailing out. Kidwell called Lt. Knokey reporting the crash, and Knokey immediately tried to contact Commander Scheeter. Having no luck, Knokey headed back to the field and observed a crashed plane burning at the spot where Commander Scheeter had gone in southeast of the field. After verifying from Kidwell that there was no chance of Commander Scheeter's getting out of the plane, Lt. Knokey assumed lead of the sweep, and proceeded to reconnoiter Miyakonojo North and Korimoto Airfields. Both fields were apparently inoperational, and no aircraft were observed at either field. Course was set for base. When the formation was just over the east coast of Kyushu at 7,000 feet altitude, a Zeke made a run on Lt(jg)'s Taylor and Mosely from 6 o'clock below. Taylor pulled up, fired a 3 - 4 second burst but could observe no results. Lt. Knokey and his wingman, Ensign Coffin, made a section run on the Zeke and Knokey observed his incendiaries sparkling in the Zeke's wings and fuselage. Kidwell, Bunker, Wilcox and Daig also got bursts in on the Zeke, which hissing smoked, heading west and losing altitude rapidly. In the general melee which ensued the 21 Hellcats had endeavored to knock down the Zeke but without success.

The Bataan fighters still had several rockets left, which they expended on a power plant on the east coast of Kyushu. The flight then rendezvoused and returned to base.

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when
filled out)

VF-45

REPORT No. 45

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

All armament and equipment, with the exception of the starboard wing of Commander Schector's P-51, functioned normally and satisfactorily.

REPORT PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

SIGNATURE A. P. [unclear] Jr., Lt(jg) RANK AND DUTY

SIGNATURE L. B. [unclear] Lt., USMC RANK AND DUTY
Commanding Officer

RANK AND DUTY

DATE 3-26-45