

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

050853

RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when filled out)

CONFIDENTIAL

I. GENERAL



(a) Unit Reporting VF-9 (b) Based on or at USS HANCOCK (AG-16) (c) Report No. 1-45
 (d) Take off: Date 16 Feb. 1945 Time (LZT) 0645 K. (Zone); Lat. 34°-02'N. Long. 141°-35'E.
 (e) Mission Fighter Sweep - Airfields in Tokyo target area (f) Time of Return 0945 K. (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>F6F-5</u>	<u>VF-9</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>Full 50 cal.</u>	<u>- - -</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>VF-80</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>USS HANCOCK</u>				
<u>F6F-5</u>	<u>VF-45</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>USS SAN JACINTO</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>Betty</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>0730 (ZONE)</u>	<u>K. 30mil. S.E. Inubo Saki, Honshu, Jap.</u>	<u>Usual</u>	<u>Not observed</u>
<u>Nates & Zekes</u>	<u>20-26</u>	<u>All</u>	<u>0830 (ZONE)</u>	<u>Det. Katori & MObama Honshu, Jap.</u>	<u>Usual</u>	<u>Dotted green & brown</u>
<u>Zekes</u>	<u>4-5</u>	<u>All</u>	<u>0850 (ZONE)</u>	<u>Over water near Inubo, Saki.</u>	<u>Usual</u>	<u>Dotted green & brown - 1 Zekes with belly tank.</u>

(h) Apparent Enemy Mission(s) Intercept our fighter sweep.
 Did Any Part of
 (i) Encounter(s) Occur in Clouds? Yes If so, Describe Clouds Alto-stratus 7500'-8000' - 10/10.
 Time of Day and Brilliance
 (j) of Sun or Moon Day, overcast (k) Visibility 20
(BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)
(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			
<u>Zekes</u>	<u>F6F-5</u>	<u>VF-9</u>	<u>LtCdr. Houek</u>	<u>6 50 cal.</u>	<u>Fwd. pt. of fuselage</u>	<u>Prob.</u>
<u>Nate</u>	"	"	<u>Ens. Cushing</u>	"	<u>Rt. wing root & fuel.</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>
<u>Zekes</u>	"	"	<u>Ens. Cushing</u>	"	<u>Fuselage</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
<u>Zekes</u>	"	"	<u>Ens. Cushing</u>	"	<u>After pt. of fuselage</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
<u>Zekes</u>	"	"	<u>Lt(jg) Emerson</u>	"	<u>Wings & fuselage</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>
<u>Zekes</u>	"	"	<u>Lt(jg) Emerson</u>	"	<u>Engine</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>
<u>Nate</u>	"	"	<u>Lt(jg) Emerson</u>	"	<u>Fuselage</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
<u>Zekes</u>	"	"	<u>Lt(jg) Emerson</u>	"	<u>Fuselage</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
<u>Nate</u>	"	"	<u>Lieut. DeCew</u>	"	<u>Engine & fuselage</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>
<u>Nate</u>	"	"	<u>Lieut. DeCew</u>	"	<u>Fuselage & wings.</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
<u>Nate</u>	"	"	<u>Lt(jg) Maden</u>	"	<u>Stbd. wing root</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>
<u>Zekes</u>	"	"	<u>Lt(jg) Snowden</u>	"	<u>Wing roots & engine</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>
<u>Zekes</u>	"	"	<u>Lt(jg) Snowden</u>	"	<u>Wing & fuselage</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>
<u>Zekes</u>	"	"	<u>Lt(jg) Hartwig</u>	"	<u>Engine</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>

**FIGHTING SQUADRON NINE
FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**

Report No. 1-45**V. ENEMY AIRCRAFT DESTROYED OR DAMAGED IN AIR (CONTINUED)**

Destroyed or damaged by:						Damage
Type	Type A/C	Squad.	Pilot	Guns Used.	Where hit.	Claimed
Nate	F6F-5	VF-9	Lieut. Hudson	6 50 cal.	Fuselage	Damaged
Nate	"	"	Lieut. Hudson	"	Rt. Wing	Damaged
Nate	"	"	Lieut. Hudson	"	Fuselage & Wing	Damaged
Nate	"	"	Lieut. Hudson	"	Fuselage	Damaged
Zeke	"	"	Lieut. Hudson	"	Rt. wing	Damaged
Dinah	"	"	Ens. McLaurin	"	Wing roots, engines	Destroyed
Nate	"	"	Ens. McLaurin	"	Port wing, root	Damaged
Zeke	"	"	Lt(jg) Champion	"	Engine & cockpit	Destroyed
Zeke	"	"	Lt(jg) Champion	"	Engine & fuselage	Probable
Zeke	"	"	Lt(jg) Champion	"	Wing & Fuselage	Probable
Nate	"	"	Lt(jg) Champion	"	Fuselage	Damaged
Nate	"	"	Lt(jg) Champion	"	Fuselage	Damaged
Zeke	"	"	Lt(jg) Champion	"	Wings & fuselage	Damaged
Zeke	"	"	Lt(jg) Champion	"	Wing roots	Damaged
Zeke	"	"	Lt(jg) Story	"	Engine & fuselage	Destroyed
Zeke	"	"	Lt(jg) Story	"	Fuselage & tail	Damaged
Nate	"	"	Lieut. Franger	"	Engine	Destroyed
Nate	"	"	Lieut. Franger	"	Fuselage	Damaged
Zeke	"	"	Lt(jg) Smeehuyzen	"	Fuselage	Damaged
Zeke	"	"	Lt(jg) Smeehuyzen	"	Wing	Damaged
Nate	"	"	Lieut. Phillips	"	Fuselage & cockpit	Damaged
Nate	"	"	Lieut. Ball	"	Wings & fuselage	Probable
Zeke	"	"	Lieut. Ball	"	Fuselage	Probable
Nate	"	"	Lieut. Kussmann	"	Top of fuselage	Destroyed
Nate	"	"	Lieut. Kussmann	"	Wing & fuselage	Probable
Oscar	"	"	Lieut. Kussmann	"	Tail & fuselage	Damaged
Oscar	"	"	Lieut. Kussmann	"	Side of fuselage	Damaged
Nate	"	"	Lt(jg) Connor	"	Engine & fuselage	Destroyed

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(OMIT THIS SHEET IF NO ATTACK WAS MADE)

REPORT No. 1-45

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

(a) Target(s) and Location(s) Katori Airfield, Honshu, Japan
Mobara Airfield, Honshu, Japan (b) Time Over Target(s) 0750 Z.
0830 Z. (Zone)

(c) Clouds Over Target 7500'-8000' Alto-stratus 10/10
(BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)

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

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

Bombs Dropped per Run -- Spacing -- Altitude of Bomb Release --
(NUMBER) (FEET)

(g) Number of Enemy Aircraft Hit on Ground: Destroyed 8 Katori
2 Mobara Probably Destroyed 6 Katori
1 Mobara Damaged 12 Katori
2 Mobara
By strafing

(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.

XII TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL DATA (CONTINUED)

at rendezvous point where he shot at and saw hits in after fuselage of another Zeke.

Lt(jg) Emerson

Rendezvoused after strafing attack on Katori damaged one Nate at beginning of melee when he fired from head on, seeing hits and piece fly off and got a 90% deflection shot when Nate turned violently away into a dive. With the sky full of Zekes, coming out of the clouds and from below our planes began to form up into defensive formation when Emerson destroyed a Zeke with belly tank which made flat side run, Emerson turning toward him and exploding him with a 60° deflection shot. At this point Lt(jg) Parker was last seen by Emerson. Emerson then damaged a Zeke by getting hits on Zeke's fuselage with 3 second burst from astern. Pulling back up into melee Emerson destroyed a Zeke in head on run, seeing tracers go into it and pieces flying off engine, the Zeke exploding and jolting Emerson's plane as he pulled up to avoid collision.

Lt(jg) Parker

Flew wing on Emerson throughout the strafing attack on Katori and was with Emerson during fight with the Nate and the destruction by Emerson of the first Zeke during the melee. After Emerson destroyed the Zeke he and Parker were weaving together and were trying to get back into formation when Zeke began a run on Parker from a little forward and above. Emerson pulled over to shoot at Zeke which dove to deck. As Emerson wrapped up in a turn to right he last saw Parker roll over to right firing on the tail of a Zeke heading in westerly direction in an almost vertical dive. This was in the east central part of the narrow neck of Inuba Peninsula, Honshu, Japan, 35°-30'N - 140°-20' E.

Lieut. DeCew

After strafing Katori, encountered Nates in beginning of melee destroyed a Nate who had just completed a run on another friendly plane, rolling right over on him getting a no deflection, almost head on shot, pilot of Nate bailing out. DeCew, with his wingman Baden, fired on at least three other Nates during this melee getting damaging hits on at least one of them.

Lt(jg) Baden

In the melee with the Nates Baden destroyed one Nate which came in high on port side of Baden and DeCew who pulled up and around him, Baden getting full deflection to smaller degree deflection and as they broke off flames shot out of starboard wing root and plane passed out of sight engulfed in flames.

Lt(jg) Snowden

Snowden with Hartwig on his wing became separated from DeCew and Baden in melee following rendezvous after strafing of Katori Airfield. Snowden and Hartwig headed south toward Mobarra following Houck's division. Snowden destroyed a Zeke getting on his tail, fire coming out of the wing roots and engine cowling and then exploding. Snowden and Hartwig rejoined DeCew, strafed Mobarra, rendezvoused over water, and got into the second melee. Snowden destroyed a Zeke which he caught in a dive, shooting at Zeke as they curved around a cloud.

XII TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL DATA (CONTINUED)

This Zeke burst into flame, burning in a big ball of fire and fell into clouds at 2000'. At the rendezvous point over the water he shot at a Zeke which Hartwig got on and destroyed, this plane blowing up in front of Snowden, some of the pieces hitting Snowden's plane. Snowden's plane was hit by a bullet from above which went into the right side of the fuselage at the cockpit coverrail, knocking out Snowden's compass. He joined up and returned with VBF-9 sweep.

Lt(jg) Hartwig

In the melee over the water after strafing of Mobarra Hartwig destroyed a Zeke which Snowden had shot at, Hartwig hitting the plane in the engine during a long burst from a range of 1000' to 100'. The Zeke's engine began to smoke badly and stopped and smoke came out of Zeke's right wing. Hartwig overran, Snowden started run from behind and plane exploded, pieces hitting Snowden's plane.

Lieut. Hudson

Hudson, in the melee after strafing Katori, got two tail shots one 90° deflection and one 150° deflection from ahead on 4 Nates, getting hits on each, damaging the four. He shot at several other Nates and Zekes without observing results and in another melee damaged another Zeke when he got a tail shot hitting along right wing. Hudson and his division returned from rendezvous not taking part in attack on Mobarra Airfield.

Ens. McLaurin

Damaged a Nate in melee following rendezvous after strafing of Katori, getting hits at port wing root with a 30° deflection shot from above, the Nate starting to smoke as McLaurin pulled up to join Hudson, his division leader. During the continuing melee a Dinah approached from NE at 3500' and tried to climb to clouds. This Dinah was destroyed by McLaurin when he and Hudson got on Dinah's tail - McLaurin hitting wing roots and engines which started to burn pieces flying off and hitting McLaurin's plane, Dinah seen to crash on ground.

Lt(jg) Champion

In the melee following the rendezvous after strafing of Katori Champion fired on about eight Nates and Zekes hitting and damaging four. Champion, with Story protecting his wing probably destroyed two Zekes getting good bursts into each with 30° head on deflection shots, both Zekes starting to smoke as they passed out of sight. Champion destroyed a Zeke, which came head on, with a good burst at 30° deflection, bullets hitting engine and cockpit, the Zeke burning brightly and floundering around as if pilot died. Champion then pulled around on his tail, got two more bursts and Zeke exploded.

Lt(jg) Story.

As flight went in to strafe Katori his division peeled off to attack Zekes taking off from the field. Story flying wing on Champion got a good 30° head on deflection shot at one of the Zekes and destroyed it, the Zeke crashing into the water.

XII TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL DATA (CONTINUED)

Lieut. Franger

In the melee with Nates after rendezvous following strafing of Katori, Franger destroyed a Nate by hitting him in the engine on a head on run, the Nate bursting into flames, burning furiously as it passed over Franger, Smeehuyzen, the wingman, seeing it explode. Franger pulled out of this attack and damaged another Nate getting on his tail. He saw bullets going into fuselage but broke off to switch gas tanks, motor starting to quit.

Lt(jg) Smeehuyzen

As the division recovered from the attack on the Nate damaged by Franger they dove on a Zeke in a tight turn, Smeehuyzen getting hits around fuselage behind the pilot damaging the Zeke - pulled away because he was getting near Jap A/A. As the division approached Mobara Airfield to take part in strafing attack a couple of Zekes were seen in the air so the division stayed up to cover the attack and started after Zeke west of Mobara, Smeehuyzen getting good burst at fairly long range and damaging Zeke.

Lieut. Phillips

After retirement and rendezvous following strafing of Katori he engaged 2 Nates at about 6500' damaging one Nate with a 60° to full deflection shot.

Lieut. Ball

In melee after strafing of Katori Ball probably destroyed a Nate which Ball turned into as Nate came in on port bow - Ball scoring many hits all over Nate in a long burst in a head on run from above. 2 or 3 minutes later a Zeke came in from left side, Ball pulled up in right turn and ~~damaged~~ ^{probably damaged} Zeke holding a long burst on the Zeke from 90° deflection all the way around to a tail shot. Zeke shook and wings rocked but continued on. Ball's guns were not converging properly and had they been properly boresighted Ball would have probably done greater damage to these two planes.

Lieut. Kussmann

In melee following rendezvous after strafing of Katori a Nate dove through formation and pulled up in front of Kussmann who destroyed this Nate with a no deflection shot, the Nate burning well and falling out of control. Kussmann probably destroyed another Nate which came in from the right side and pulled right in front of Kussmann and Connor, his wingman, who were then in a sharp turn, Kussmann hitting Nates's wing and fuselage, pieces flaking off and causing a small fire in the fuselage even with, or a little aft of the pilot. Kussmann damaged two Oscars in this same melee, he shot at one which dove through the formation and continued below and ahead and at the other by making a sharp turn to right with full deflection shot at this Oscar which was on the tail of another F6F.

XII TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL DATA (CONTINUED)

Lt(jg) Connor

In the melee after rendezvous following strafing of Katori Connor destroyed a Nate which dove through the formation, Connor getting a 15-25° deflection shot, tracers entering engine and fuselage, a small flame breaking out of left side of engine, Nate pulling up sharply to left, burst into flame and headed for the ground out of control almost on his back.

The following is a tabulation of the planes destroyed, probably destroyed and damaged in the strafing attacks on Katori and Mobara Airfields

<u>Name</u>	KATORI	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Probably Destroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
Zeke		2		1
Tojo		2		1
Nate			1	2
Tabby			1	
Betty			1	
Kate or Jill				2
Single Engine Plane		2	2	4
Twin Engine Plane		2	1	2
		<hr/>		
Total		8	6	12
	MOBARA			
Zeke		1	1	1
Single Engine Plane		1		1
		<hr/>		
Total		2	1	2
		<hr/>		
Grand Total		10	7	14

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

LtComdr. Houck's right gas tank was hit by 12.7 M.G. or flak but did not lose any gas. After first run only one or two of LtComdr. Houck's guns would work but this may have been due to a hit by 12.7 M.G. or flak in left guns.

SWEEP 2A

* LtComdr. Houck
Ensign Cushing
Lt(jg) Emerson
Lt(jg) Parker

Lieut. Franger
Lt(jg) Sneeheyson
Lieut. Phillips
Lt(jg) Prior

Lieut. DeCew
Lt(jg) Baden
Lt(jg) Snowden
Lt(jg) Hartwig

Lieut. Ball
Ensign Warner
Lieut. Kussmann
Lt(jg) Connor

Lt. Hudson
Ensign McLaurin
Lt(jg) Champion
Lt(jg) Story

* Flight leader

REPORT PREPARED BY:

R. C. MURPHY, Lieut., USNR
Combat Information Officer

SIGNATURE

RANK AND DUTY

APPROVED BY:

J. "S" KITCHEN, Lieut., USNR
Commanding Officer

SIGNATURE

RANK AND DUTY

21 Feb. 1945

DATE