VT-12/A4
Serial: 05

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
AIR FORCE
TORPEDO SQUADRON TWELVE

CONFIDENTIAL

1 March 1945

From: The Commanding Officer.
To : The Commander, Air Group TWELVE.

Subject: Action of 17 February 1945 through 22 February 1945, Comments and Recommendations on.

References: (a) VT-12 Aircraft Action Reports 1 through 6.

Enclosure: (A) Copy of reference (a).

(A) STRIKE MISSION AGAINST TACHIKAWA ENGINE PLANT

1. All members of this Squadron who participated in the attack against the Tachikawa Engine Plant felt that this attack was very well planned and executed. Although adverse weather necessitated some modification of the original plan, pilots were so thoroughly familiar with the Squadron Commander's aims and ideas that no confusion resulted, and maximum efficiency was maintained. Much of the success of the mission can be contributed to the split second coordination between the bombers and torpedo planes, and the close support afforded by our fighter escort.

2. Although considerable anti-aircraft fire was encountered, the batteries seemed to be thrown into confusion when "window" was used. This was evidenced by burst dropping astern of the formation immediately after window was dispersed.

3. Recommendations for improvement during future strikes are outlined as follows:

(a) Tactical

(1) Conserve gasoline while over water enroute to the target area by cruising at a normal speed. When over anti-aircraft positions cruise at the maximum possible. Gasoline wasted on the way to the target means the less there is available at a crucial time.

(2) When taken under fire by heavy anti-aircraft guns during the approach to the target, formations must stay well closed up so as to enable the leader to make rapid and frequent changes of course.

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3. (Con't)

(3) Conserve "window" until anti-aircraft burst start getting close then use it freely for a few seconds. On long flights over enemy territory this is absolutely essential.

(4) After the attack, any plane joining the wrong formation, or any plane delayed over the target area should immediately call his division leader and inform him of this fact. Such procedure eliminates the necessity of the squadron remaining over the target longer than is necessary, and greatly relieves the anxiety of the squadron commander.

(b) Material

(1) The Mark IV bomb shackle continues to prove unsatisfactory. Five bombs failed to release due to failure of the shackle and had to be jettisoned, meaning 2500 pounds of bombs that the enemy didn't get that he should have.

(2) The propeller controls on three separate planes have froze and could not be manned for several minutes. As this occured at high altitudes shortly after emerging from a rain squall, the cause was believed to be ice forming on the control units. Fighter pilots experienced similar difficulties.

(3) Fur lined boots and gloves are a necessity for airwomen flying in the Tokyo area. Flannel underwear is also recommended.

(c) STRIKE MISSION AGAINST CHICHI JIMA

1. The wisdom of detailing relatively slow torpedo planes against such heavily defended targets as Chichi Jima without thorough briefing and adequate planning is questioned.

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Pilots were not informed as to what their target was to be until approximately one hour before takeoff. It was impossible, therefore, to adequately study target maps, probable gun positions, and worthwhile targets, as well as plan a coordinated attack. Cloud formations over the target area also prevented the desired high speed approach to a certain extent, resulting in dives on the target being made at speeds slower than is customary. Other things being equal dives should always be made "with the wind". This is particularly true when, for any other reason, dives may be shallow and slow. Torpedo planes, with their relatively shallow dive angles, are particular vulnerable to automatic weapon fire. In order to successfully complete their attacks, it is absolutely necessary that every use be made of tactical and natural advantages existing at the time.

2. It is recommended that air groups not be ordered to strike such heavily defended targets unless it is definitely known that worthwhile military targets are available.

(C) SUPPORT MISSION OF 20 FEBRUARY 1945 IWO JIMA

1. Support by aircraft of this Squadron on this particular flight involved area bombing, dropping all bombs on the first pass. Although the Air Support Commander seemed well pleased with the attack, it is my opinion that more effective damage would have resulted if specific targets had been designated. Anti-aircraft fire was very meager, and conditions were ideal for pin-point bombing. Even though all bombs fell in the target area, it is felt that many were wasted, as the pilots had no specific aiming point.

2. Congestion on the Air Support frequency is rapidly becoming intolerable. Radio discipline during this attack was very poor, as important messages from the Commander, Support Air were often broken by transmission being made without a check first being made to see if the circuit was clear. Pilots were by no means the only offenders. Some surface ships and fire control parties in particular displayed a lack of appreciation of the value of good radio discipline.

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(D) SPECIAL SUPPORT MISSION OF 20 FEBRUARY 1945 IWO JIMA

1. Tactics during this mission again consisted of area bombing. Weather conditions over the target were unfavorable, and results were unobserved as to damage done.

(E) SUPPORT MISSION OF 21 FEBRUARY 1945 IWO JIMA

1. Pilots of this Squadron were unanimous in their opinion that this mission was the most successful of all the Iwo Jima support missions. Although two general areas were assigned for bombing, it was possible to pick out definite points of aim in the target area. Attacks were deliberate and unhurried, one bomb being dropped per dive. The squadron commander was in constant communication with the Air Coordinator receiving new points of aim. The Air Coordinator greatly aided the pilots by coaching them during their dives. Pilots were able to observe the impact of their bombs and make necessary corrections on their next run.

2. Radio discipline in the target area continued to be poor.

3. Failure of the Mark IV shackle was again experienced when two bombs could not be released.

(F) SUPPORT MISSION OF 22 FEBRUARY 1945 IWO JIMA

1. Planes of this squadron were again ordered to support the ground forces by concentrated area bombing. The target area was well saturated with bombs and rockets, but the effectiveness of the attack is unknown. It is doubtful that any major damage to enemy installations and positions resulted from the attack. A large majority of the pilots expressed a desire for a more definite point of aim.

2. When two or more air groups are operating together, it is recommended that the Air Coordinator assign specific targets to each group rather than try to coordinate the two groups on one attack. It is seldom possible for the group leaders to discuss their plans before the attack due to congestion on the air. Much confusion could be eliminated if definite times of attack were given to each group individually.

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(F) SUPPORT MISSION OF 22 FEBRUARY 1945 IWO JIMA(Con't)

3. Radio discipline in the target area continued to be poor.

4. All material and equipment functioned properly.

THOMAS B. ELLISON

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AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when filled out)

CONFIDENTIAL

I. GENERAL

(a) Unit Reporting VT-12 (b) Based on or at USS RANDOLPH (c) Report No. 1

(d) Take off: Date 17 February 1945 Time (LZT) 0915-K-10 (Zone); Lat. 33-25 N Long. 142-35E

(e) Mission Strike Tachikawa Engine Plant (f) Time of Return 1345K (Zone)

II. OWN AIRCRAFT OFFICIALLY COVERED BY THIS REPORT.

TYPE (a)	SQUADRON (b)	NUMBER TAKING OFF (c)	NUMBER ENGAGING ENEMY A/C (d)	NUMBER ATTACKING TARGET (e)	BOMBS AND TORPEDOES CARRIED (PER PLANE) (f)	FUZE, SETTING (g)
TBM-3	VT-12	15	0	14	4 x 500# GP	.025 Nose .025 Tail

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

TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE	TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE
F6F-5	VBF-12	16	USS RANDOLPH	Also similar units from USS YORKTOWN and			
F6F-5(P)	VF-12	2	USS RANDOLPH	CVL squadrons from			USS CABOT & LANGLEY
SB2C-4E	VB-12	11	USS RANDOLPH				

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
Various	150 on Ground	None	(ZONE)			
	None observed		(ZONE)			
	in Air.		(ZONE)			

(h) Apparent Enemy Mission(s)

(i) Did Any Part of Encounter(s) Occur in Clouds? No (YES OR NO) If so, Describe Clouds (BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)

(j) Time of Day and Brilliance of Sun or Moon Day - Bright (NIGHT, BRIGHT MOON; DAY, OVERCAST; ETC.) (k) Visibility 20 (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: TYPE A/C	SQUADRON	PILOT OR GUNNER	GUNS USED	(c) WHERE HIT, ANGLE	(d) DAMAGE CLAIMED

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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	TBM-3	VT-12	Operational-Propeller control frozen	Crashed barrier	Strike #23644
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	
TBM-3	190	180	4½	312	260	1300	460	None	None	15

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

TURNS
DIVES
CEILINGS
RANGE
PROTECTION
ARMAMENT

No opportunity to compare

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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) Tachikawa Engine Plant (FOR SHIPS INCLUDE ALL IN AREA UNDER ATTACK) (b) Time Over Target(s) 1135K(-10) (Zone)

(c) Clouds Over Target None (BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)

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

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

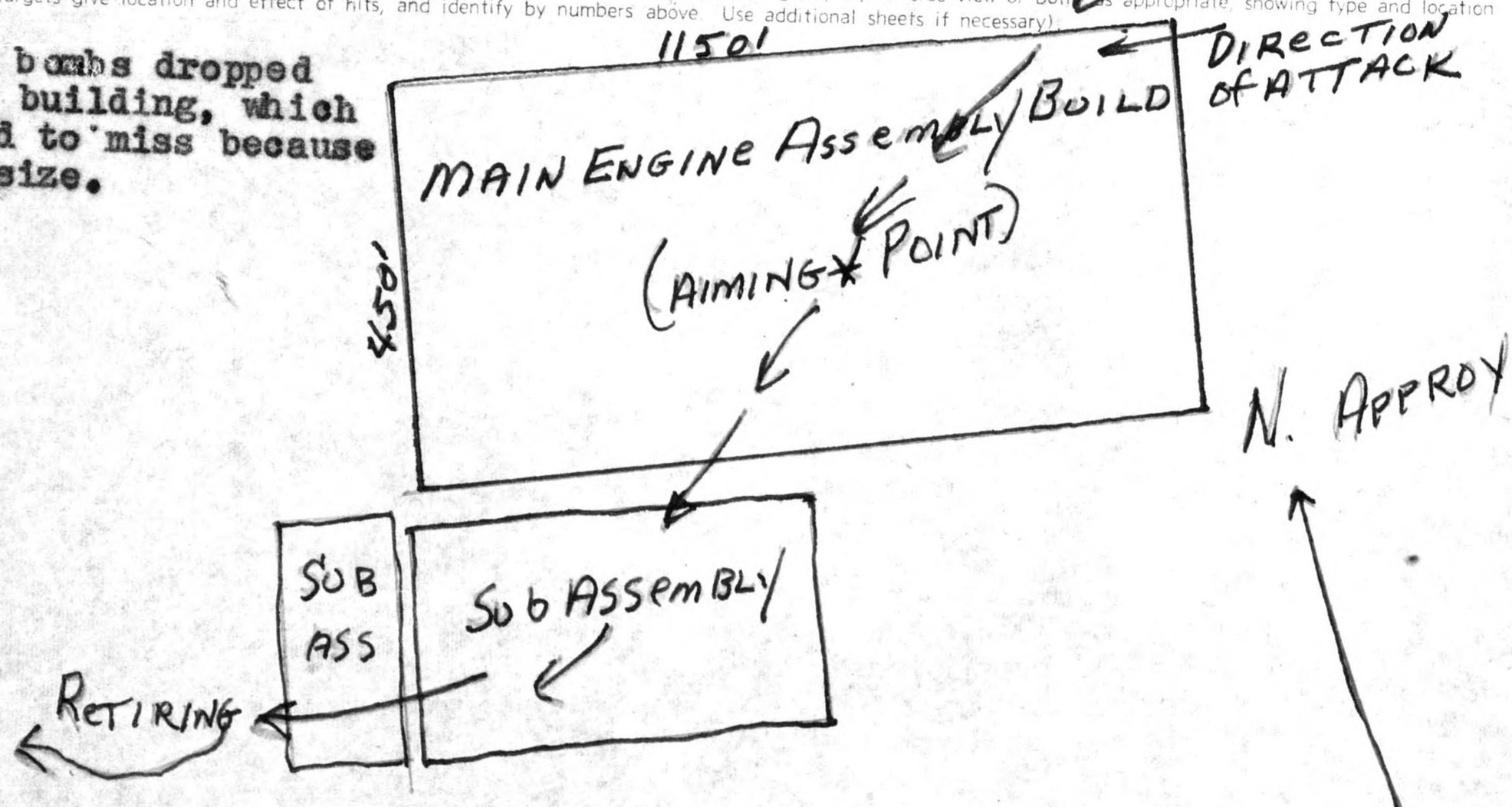
Bombs Dropped per Run 4 (NUMBER) Spacing Select (FEET) Altitude of Bomb Release 3500-2000 (FEET)

(g) Number of Enemy Aircraft Hit on Ground: Destroyed None Probably Destroyed None Damaged None

(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 Main Bldg	1150' x 450'	14 / VT-12	47 x 500# GP	41	Serious
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).

Most of bombs dropped on main building, which was hard to miss because of its size.



(p) Were Photographs Taken? Yes Photographs of Damage, WhenTaken, Should Be Attached By Staple.

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REPORT No. 1

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

Approach to the target was made from slightly north of the Hokoda airfield, to the northern section of Tokyo, then on to Tachikawa, coming in over the engine factory from the north east. A high speed approach was started at 15000 feet, nosing over into approximately a 45° dive at 11000 feet. Bombs were released between 2 and 3 thousand feet at an average speed of 325 knots indicated and the pull out was between 1500 and 2500 feet. Very little strafing was done during the run because of the high speed and altitude of pullout and also due to the proximity of other planes participating in the attack.

Current tactical doctrine for carrier based planes was followed quite closely in the strike. Fighters flew above the bombing formation and went into a dive right with the bombers during the run on the target. The attack was synchronized to the split second with torpedo planes nosing over just as the last section of dive bombers started their dive - thereby arriving at the dropping point just after the last dive bomber had gotten "bombs away".

Anti-aircraft fire was encountered shortly after arriving over the mainland and continued in moderate intensity throughout the Tokyo area and during retirement until the open sea was again reached in the vicinity of Hiratsuka. Fire was accurate as to altitude and range but poor in deflection. Window was used and seemed to be effective as bursts usually fell afteof the formation after it was dropped. Small calibre fire was encountered below 6000 feet and was fairly intense but inaccurate. R.C.M. jamming equipment was also used but its effect not known.

Enemy fighters were observed in the area at a distance too far to be identified but did not attack the torpedo plane formation. This was believed due in part at least to the fact that a full day of sweeps had been conducted the day before over enemy airfields in the Tokyo area by fighters from four of our Task Groups.

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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

On five different planes of VT-12 one Mark IV bomb shackle failed to release over the target. Four of these bombs were subsequently jettisoned over water on the return trip but on the fifth plane the bomb crashed through the bomb bay when landing aboard the carrier. However it did not explode. The pilot had failed to check his bomb bay carefully before landing. Other mechanical difficulties encountered included three propeller controls that froze at high altitude. It was a temporary condition that was remedied by warmer atmosphere. One propeller control locked before reaching the target area and the pilot was forced to return to base. The pilot was unable to slow down his approach and crashed the barrier damaging the plane to the extent of being a strike. One case of hydraulic failure also prevented opening of bomb bay over target.

An unusual occurrence of the raid involved Lieut. Charles H. JAEP III, USN, three of whose bombs failed to release over the target. He circled back over the area by himself and this time got the other 3 off, retiring unhit although considerable flak was concentrated on his plane. He caught up with the formation near the rendezvous point and is credited with 4 direct hits in the target area.

REPORT PREPARED BY:

Howard M. Reedy
SIGNATURE

Lt (j.g) ACI officer
RANK AND DUTY

APPROVED BY:

SIGNATURE

RANK AND DUTY

DATE