

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

O.M.-44
CONFIDENTIAL
RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when filled out)

I. GENERAL

(a) Unit Reporting VP34 (b) Based on or at USS ORCA, Middleburg Is. (c) Report No. 55
 (d) Take off: Date 31 Aug. 1944 Time (LZT) 18 18 K (Zone); Lat. 00° 22' S Long. 132° 12' E
 (e) Mission Search and attack (f) Time of Return 0710 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)		
PBY-5	VP11	1	-	1	4x500 lb GP Mk 43 4x100 lb GP Mk 30 8x23 lb parafrags	Tail; 4-5" delay do do Nose; instantaneous

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) _____
 Did Any Part of _____
 (i) Encounter(s) Occur in Clouds? _____ If so, Describe Clouds _____
(YES OR NO) (BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)
 Time of Day and Brilliance _____
 (j) of Sun or Moon _____ (k) Visibility _____
(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			

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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				
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

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	
PBY-5	750	600	12.7	1450	1150	300	300			1

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"/>			
LIGHT — Machine gun bullets, 6.5mm-13.2mm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

X. COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE, OWN AND ENEMY AIRCRAFT (use check list at left).

SPEED, CLIMB,
at various altitudes

URNS

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) 00° 55' N, 124° 00' E (b) Time Over Target (s) 0130 K (Zone)
(FOR SHIPS INCLUDE ALL IN AREA UNDER ATTACK)
- (c) Clouds Over Target None
(BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)
- (d) Visibility of Target Clear at 2 miles (e) Visibility 15 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 4 runs 1x500 each Spacing - Altitude of Bomb Release 75'
(NUMBER) (FEET) (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	(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 <u>Small AK (Sugar Dog)</u>	<u>300 tons</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4x500 lb GP Mk 43 4x100 lb GP Mk 30</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Serious (near misses)</u>
2		<u>VP34</u>			
3			<u>8x23 lb parafrags 600x .30&.50 cal MG</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Slight</u>
4				<u>40%</u>	<u>Serious</u>
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

The Catalina, under command of Lt. Comdr. V. V. Utgoff, USN, while on patrol of the northern Celebes, encountered a small cargo vessel resembling a Sugar Dog, proceeding close to the shore at position 0° 55' N, 124° 00' E. It was a bright moonlit night with good visibility, and first contact with the ship was made visually.

Six bombing runs were directed from low altitude against this vessel, releasing one 500 pound bomb on each of the first four runs and two 100 pound bombs on each of the last two runs. No direct hits were obtained, primarily due to the difficulty of making a good approach so near to the hilly shoreline. One 500 pound bomb was a near miss astern and evidently caused serious damage, since the vessel immediately afterward listed, lost way, and began to settle by the stern. There were several near misses also with parafrags.

After expending its bombs the plane strafed the ship and a nearby barge, and, returning up the coast past Amboerang and Menado Bay, strafed 6 more barges, with unobserved results.

No AA fire was encountered.

Squadron assessment: Sugar Dog type cargo vessel seriously damaged and probably sunk by near miss with 500 pound bomb. Seven barges strafed with unobserved results.

With the action reported herein, on 31 August 1944, Patrol Squadron THIRTY FOUR completed its second tour of Black Cat duty. The official figures compiled by the Commander Task Unit 73.2.2 for the seven weeks' operations are as follows:

28,000 tons of cargo vessels sunk or destroyed.
1 destroyer escort seriously damaged.

The total for both tours of duty (see summary in Action Report #39) is as follows:

98,000 tons of cargo vessels sunk or destroyed.
4 destroyers and 2 escort vessels seriously damaged.

In addition some 75-100 barges and small craft were destroyed or damaged.

It is interesting to note some of the reasons for the disparity in results for two periods of operation of approximately the same length:

(1) Although roughly the same number of patrols were scheduled throughout both periods of operations, 177 were

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completed in January-February and 87 in July-August. This was primarily due to missions unfinished because of deterioration of aircraft and equipment - especially radar failures caused by lack of replacement sets or parts and general wear-and-tear.

(2) Increasing scarcity of shipping resulted in fewer contacts.

(a) Virtually no vessels in convoy were found in the second (Netherlands East Indies) period, as compared to the four large convoys attacked in the first (Bismarck Archipelago) period for a total of over 35,000 tons sunk or destroyed.

(b) The ships were generally smaller in size: out of 18 attacks only 3 were against ships of 5000 tons or more. Most of the vessels encountered were of 1000 tons or less.

(c) Such ships as were found were generally in harbors close to shore installations, (evidently preferring to travel in daylight), which not only made attacks extremely hazardous but blacked out radar and thus eliminated contacts except in moonlight or bright starlight - when in fact the harbors were apt to be closed in even when weather over the sea lanes was good.

(3) For the first 5-1/2 weeks in the second period, operations were conducted from Woendi Lagoon, southeast of Biak. The planes on all but the Ceram area search had to fly 500 miles before even reaching an area where shipping might be found; 10 hours or more of a normal 13 to 15 hour patrol was spent in getting there and back. This situation contrasts with that during the first period, when, operating from Samarai, New Guinea, planes were north of New Britain or west of Vitiaz Strait in 3 hours, and in productive areas. During the second phase, after the base of operations was shifted westward to Middleburg Island (Sensipor area), 8 successful attacks were made in 6 nights - 6 of these attacks in areas unattainable from the Woendi base.

The conclusion appears to be that neither the effectiveness of Black Cat operations nor the efficiency of the striking force declined from one period to the other.

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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:

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SIGNATURE RANK AND DUTY
A.C.I. Officer.

V. V. UTGOFF, Lt. Comdr., USN,
SIGNATURE RANK AND DUTY
Commanding.

DATE