

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when
filled out)

I. GENERAL

U.S.S. HALF MOON (AVF26)

(a) Unit Reporting VP-52 (b) Based on or at NAGAI BAY, NEW GUINEA (c) Report No. 46
 (d) Date of Action 29 November 1943 (e) Take off: Time 0657 (GCT); Lat. _____ Long. _____
 (f) Mission Reconnaissance and illumination for bombardment (g) Time of Return 1915 (GCT)

II. OWN AIRCRAFT OFFICIALLY COVERED BY THIS REPORT.

(a) TYPE	(b) SQUADRON	(c) NO. OF SORTIES	(d) NO. ENGAGING ENEMY A/C	(e) NO. ATTACK- ING TARGET	(f) BOMBS AND TORPEDOES CARRIED (PER PLANE)	(g) FUZE, SETTING
PBY-5	VP-52	1			Two 50 gal. drums filled with aviation gasoline	Mk. 19 Inst. Fuses adapted to filler holes.
					Two 100 pound G.P.	Instantaneous
					Two incendiary clusters	

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

TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE	TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE

IV. ENEMY AIRCRAFT ENCOUNTERED (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
VF	6	None	1100 (GCT)	Ring Ring Plantation (GASHATA, NEW BRITAIN)		
			(GCT)			
			(GCT)			
			(GCT)			

(h) Apparent Enemy Mission(s) _____

(i) Weather and Clouds at Location of Encounter(s) _____

(j) Sun or Moon _____ (k) Visibility _____

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:				(c) WHERE HIT, ANGLE	(d) DAMAGE CLAIMED
	TYPE A/C	SQUADRON	PILOT OR GUNNER	GUNS USED		

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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	(e) EXTENT OF LOSS OR DAMAGE, REMARKS
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

(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, PLANES RETURNING				
						NO. OF PLANES	.30	.50	20MM	MM.
PT-9			12.5	1450	1000					

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

SPEED, CLIMB,
at various altitudes

TURNS

DIVES

CEILINGS

RANGE

PROTECTION

ARMAMENT

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(OMIT THIS SHEET IF NO ATTACK WAS MADE)

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

(a) Location of Target(s) 6 miles east of GASHATA, NEW BRITAIN (b) Time Over Target(s) 1100 GCT

(c) Weather and Clouds Over Target Broken clouds at 6000 feet

(d) Sun or Moon No Moon (e) Visibility 3000 yards

XI. TARGETS, RESULTS OF ATTACK.

	(a) DESCRIPTION OF TARGET (List All Ships in Group, Whether or Not Individually Attacked)	(b) A/C ATTACKING (c) SQUADRON	(d) BOMBS AND AMMUNITION EXPENDED, EACH TARGET	(e) ALTITUDE OF RELEASE	(f) HITS
	1	Supply dump area at Ring Ring Plantation		2 gasoline drums, 2 100 lb. G.P., 2 incendiary clusters	1200'
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

(g) **RESULTS:** (FOR SHIP TARGETS 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, WITH DIAGRAMS OR CHARTS WHERE DESIRABLE. DESCRIBE TARGETS FULLY IN (a), AND IN REPORTING DAMAGE OR DESTRUCTION, IDENTIFY BY NUMBERS AT LEFT. USE ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY).

(h) Were Photographs Taken? No Photographs of Damage, When Taken, Should Be Attached.

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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
Release
Pull-Out
Dive Angle
Strafing
Retirement
Defensive Tactics

DEFENSE, ENEMY

Evasive Tactics, Ships
Concealment
Anti-aircraft
Searchlights
Night Fighter Tactics

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

On the night of 29 November, 1943 Lt. Cdr. Sommer searched along the south coast of NEW BRITAIN from WIDE BAY to GASBATA, seeking possible Jap surface forces which might have interfered with the scheduled bombardment of RINGING PLANTATION by a friendly force of three destroyers. This search was negative. At 2400L our destroyers put a pattern of star shells over the target. One minute later Lt. Cdr. Sommer dived at the dump area from 4000 feet and at 1200 feet released two drums of gasoline armed with Mk 13 fuses, two incendiary clusters, and two 100 pound G.P. bombs. These were intended to start a fire in order to pin point the target. A fire commenced as the bombs struck and burned for about five minutes. After dropping the bombs and contraptions, Lt. Cdr. Sommer climbed to 6000 feet, at which altitude he made runs from east to west five miles in length and five miles behind the target, putting over four or five Mk 6 one million candle power flares on each run. A total of eighty-four flares were dropped in this manner. While on one flare dropping run, the gunners on the PBV reported six enemy single seater fighters in column with running lights turned on passing immediately under our aircraft. These planes did not approach again. The bombardment, which had commenced at 2400L, ended approximately thirty minutes later. The illuminating Cat then proceeded to its base, landing at 0815L.

The crew of the plane was as follows:

PIIC	Lieut. Comdr. R. A. Sommer, USN.
1st Pilot	Comdr. W. O. Gallery, Jr., USN.
2nd Pilot	Lt. R. E. Tollyson, A-V(N), USNR.
3rd Pilot	Lt.(jg) E. L. Byrd, A-V(R), USNR.
4th Pilot	Ens. H. Abbe, III, A-V(N), USNR.
Technical Observer	Lt.(jg) Sam Roy, USN.
Plane Captain	Hockwell, R. E., AM1c, (CA), USN.
2nd Mechanic	Thomas, J. "T", AM1c, (CA), USN.
1st Radioman	Traby, E. G., AM1c, (CA), USN.
2nd Radioman	Mills, W. P., AM1c, (CA), V-8, USNR.
Bombardier	Wilhelm, J. F., AM1c, (CA), USN.
Gunner	Roberts, J. S., ACM2c, (CA), USN.

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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

1. About 2/3 of the Mk 6 flares functioned properly, giving a brilliant light. About 1/3 of these flares either fizzled and sputtered dimly and intermittently or dropped very rapidly.

2. The "W. O. Gallery Special" bombs, or gasoline drums, caused a fire which was of a rather disappointing size and duration. No provision was made to compensate for differences of trail among the various fire inducing articles dropped. It is believed that loose loops of cable connecting the drums, the bombs, and the clusters on either wing would have eliminated trail differences. It is also believed that a streamer attached to the gasoline drums would have ensured nose impact and consequent positive detonation of the fuses.

3. The gasoline drums were carried on the torpedo racks by means of improvised slings.

4. Maximum ordinate for the destroyers' projectiles was calculated before the flight, based on the predicted distance of our forces from the target. This was found to be a very desirable precaution, since terrain forced the PBV to turn seaward and cross the line of fire after the initial drop in order to get in position to drop flares.

REPORT PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

H. S. MCGOWAN, Lt., AVS, USNR ACIO

H. A. SCHMER, Lt. Cdr., USN Commanding.

SIGNATURE

RANK AND DUTY

SIGNATURE

RANK AND DUTY

DATE