

3029

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET  
AIR FORCE, PACIFIC FLEET  
NIGHT FIGHTING SQUADRON FIFTY-THREE

VF(N)-53/P15/00  
(ANN:mbd)

c/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, California

CONFIDENTIAL:

24 February 1945

From: Commanding Officer, VF(N)-53.  
To: Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.

Via: (1) Commander, CVC(N)-53.  
(2) Commanding Officer, USS SARATOGA.  
(3) Commander, Task Group 58.5  
(4) Commander, Task Force 58  
(5) Commander, FIFTH FLEET.  
(6) Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Action Report - Forwarding of.

Reference: (a) CominCh Restr. ltr. FF1/A16-3/A9,  
Serial 5085, of 2 August 1943.  
(b) First Car TFI-1A, Para. 6400.

Enclosure: (A) Aircraft Action Report (Form ACA-1),  
No. 1 for VF(N)-53.

1. Pursuant to references (a) and (b), Enclosure  
(A) is forwarded herewith.

cc: A. N. MAIN  
CominChPac (3)  
Joint Intelligence Center,  
P.O.A., Pearl Harbor, T.H.  
CominCh U.S. Fleet  
ComAirPac  
File











# AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
(Reclassify when filled out)

**CONFIDENTIAL**

(OMIT THIS SHEET IF NO ATTACK WAS MADE)

REPORT No. 1

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

(a) Target(s) and Location(s) Hangars, Hanamatsu Airfield, Honshu, Japan. (b) Time Over Target(s) 1815 K (Zone)

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

(d) Visibility of Target Clear, except for slight dusk haze (e) Visibility 10 (MILES)

(f) Bombing Tactics: Type No bombs carried Bomb Sight Used \_\_\_\_\_ (TYPE)

Bombs Dropped per Run \_\_\_\_\_ Spacing \_\_\_\_\_ (FEET) Altitude of Bomb Release \_\_\_\_\_ (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 <b>Hangars South of airfield</b>	-	<b>6</b> <b>VF(N)-53</b>	<b>29 H. H. rockets</b> <b>3250 rds. .50 cal.</b>	<b>18 - 20</b> <b>rockets</b>	<b>Not observed</b>
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).

**Hangars hit by 18 to 20 H. H. rockets. See Para. XII.**

(p) Were Photographs Taken? \_\_\_\_\_ Photographs of Damage, When Taken, Should Be Attached By Staple.



# AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

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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

Designated as a Zipper flight, this operation was designed to patrol and cover certain airfields on Honshu during the period of dusk following a day of fighter sweeps on aircraft and airfields in the Tokyo area. The primary mission was to prevent the enemy from staging a counter strike against our forces at the time they were taking the last daylight strikes aboard. The specific fields assigned were Hamamatsu and Mikatagahara.

Although night fighters were employed, the entire period to and over the target was one of daylight, the return alone being made at night. Eight planes were scheduled for the flight, but one experienced engine trouble after becoming airborne, a second found its radio communications out, and both returned to base. The remaining six aircraft flew to the target without incident and without encountering any enemy aircraft. None of the pilots were able to see any aircraft on the ground at either Hamamatsu or Mikatagahara. Hangars to the East of Hamamatsu were observed to be burning from previous strikes. Approaching from the West at about 10,000 feet, down wind and down sun, the flight made a rocket and strafing run on other hangars to the South of the field. The attack was made in sections in loose formation roughly abreast, firing in an average glide of 40° to 45°. Four planes fired rockets in salvo, a fifth fired five rockets singly (the sixth rocket failing to fire), and the sixth plane was unable to fire on objective, and later jettisoned its rockets at sea. Altitude at release averaged about 3000 feet, air speed 325-350 knots indicated. A minimum of 18 to 20 hits by rockets were observed, of 29 fired, and a substantial portion of the .50 cal. rounds fired are believed to have struck the hangars.

On return, two planes strafed two small ships (estimated 100 feet over all, lugger type) in the mouth of the Taryu River. One was already beached and apparently damaged from previous strikes. Results were not observed.

Low ceiling, icing conditions, inability of all planes to intercept YE consistently or satisfactorily, a vector erroneous by 70°, given by the Radar Patrol Line-controlling DD, failure by forty-three miles of the parent task group to meet point option, and a close margin as to sufficiency of gasoline supply, all complicated the return to base. The flight became separated, and Lieutenant Stewart E. DOTY, USNR, failed to return, and is reported as missing. Lieutenants (U.S.N.R.) Alvin H. MAIN, William G. PARROTT, jr., and William C. REINHARDT, and Ensigns Lee V. ANDRECHT and Leonard T. SKREBA completed the flight and all returned to base. Two of the planes had less than 10 gallons of gasoline upon return to deck. Lt. MAIN's plane had no hydraulic fluid, having sprung a leak in the cockpit, and its radio receiver and ZB both went out of commission after leaving the target. This plane engaged a barrier on landing, damaging the propeller and speed ring and possibly necessitating an engine change.

Evasive action, in the form of substantial changes of altitude and/or such changes of course as would not unduly reduce airspeed, was taken during the approach and on retirement, and may have contributed to the freedom from damage by antiaircraft. Antiaircraft positions were substantially as plotted by flak intelligence, particularly a large concentration of heavy weapons Southeast of Hamamatsu Airfield near the town of Hamamatsu.

(continued on next page)



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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

**This flight demonstrated the hazard incident to operations which extend the F6F-5N to its maximum range, and then require its return to base from beyond fighter director control and under conditions of reduced visibility and darkness. Homing devices do not appear sufficiently reliable to assure consistently prompt return under these conditions without reliance on some aspect of lost plane procedures, with incident delays in landing. Had airborne enemy fighters been encountered it is doubtful that any of the planes would have had sufficient gasoline for return to base.**



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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

In this mission the only substantial material failure common to more than one plane involved the ZB. None of the planes could receive YE signals consistently or with normal strength. Some failed altogether to receive them. The ZB equipment of the five planes which returned was checked and found to be performing satisfactorily in every instance. It is presently believed that the YE on the carrier which was guarding YE for the Task Group at the time was not functioning with full efficiency.

REPORT PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

SIGNATURE

**N. J. SPEERS, Jr., Lt. (jg) USNR, AO1.**

SIGNATURE

**A. N. MAIN, Lieut., USNR, Commanding.**

RANK AND DUTY

**18 Feb, 1945.**

DATE