

# AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED  
(Reclassify when filled out)

## I. GENERAL

(a) Unit Reporting VC-88 (b) Based on or at USS GAGINAW BAY (c) Report No. 67  
 (d) Take off: Date 8 March 1945 Time (LZT) 0930 X (Zone); Lat. 24-45N Long. 142-10E  
 (e) Mission Direct support Capture of Iwo Jima (f) Time of Return 1230K (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>TBM-3</u>	<u>VC-88</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>10-100# G.P. Mk. 30 4 or 6 5" Mk 1 motor rkt. Mk 157 fuze Mk 3 booster.</u>	<u>Mk 100A2 (n.d.)</u>
<u>TN-2</u>	<u>VC-88</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2-5" Mk 1 motor rkt. Mk 157 fuze; Mk 3 booster 2-3.25" Mk 7 motor rkt. Mk 145 fuze 1 4" Mk 106 fuze Mk 3 grenade.</u>	

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

TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE	TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE
<u>TBM</u>	<u>VC-77</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>USS RUDYARD BAY</u>				
<u>TN-2</u>	<u>VC-77</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>" " "</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
			(ZONE)	<u>none</u>		
			(ZONE)			
			(ZONE)			

(h) Apparent Enemy Mission(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Did Any Part of \_\_\_\_\_  
 (i) Encounter(s) Occur in Clouds? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, Describe Clouds \_\_\_\_\_ (BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)  
 Time of Day and Brilliance \_\_\_\_\_  
 (j) of Sun or Moon \_\_\_\_\_ (NIGHT, BRIGHT MOON; DAY, OVERCAST; ETC.) (k) Visibility \_\_\_\_\_ (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:			(c) WHERE HIT, ANGLE	(d) DAMAGE CLAIMED
	TYPE A/C	SQUADRON	PILOT OR GUNNER		
			<u>none</u>		

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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)
<b>TB-3</b>	<b>VC-99</b>	<b>Light AA fire</b>	<b>Port wing, about 12 inches from trailing edge. From below</b>	<b>Small hole about the size of a quarter. Slight</b>

## 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	
<b>TB-3</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>230</b>					<b>4</b>
<b>TA-3</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>120</b>		<b>1200</b>			<b>4</b>

## 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
- TURNS
- 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) **Mortar positions Eastern Iwo Jima** (b) Time Over Target(s) **1045-1220K** (Zone)

(c) Clouds Over Target **2100 Stratus .7** (BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)

(d) Visibility of Target **Rugged terrain** (CLARITY PARTIALLY OBSCURED BY CLOUDS, ETC.) (e) Visibility **5** (MILES)

(f) Bombing Tactics: Type **Level napalm** (GLIDE OR DIVE) Bomb Sight Used **none** (TYPE)

Bombs Dropped per Run **5** (NUMBER) Spacing **25** (FEET) Altitude of Bomb Release **1000** (FEET)

(g) Number of Enemy Aircraft Hit on Ground: Destroyed \_\_\_\_\_ Probably Destroyed \_\_\_\_\_ Damaged \_\_\_\_\_

(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>Mortar positions</b>		<b>4 F4U, 4 P-51, 2 VC-55</b>	<b>40 100# bombs 4 napalm bombs 34 rockets 200# rds. .50 cal</b>	<b>40 bombs 3 napalm 26 rds.</b>	<b>unknown number destroyed</b>
2				<b>26 rds.</b>	<b>destroyed</b>
3				<b>strafing</b>	
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).

**An extremely heavy bombing and rocket attack, with a napalm bombs and strafing, was launched at multiple mortar positions in extremely rough terrain, located in target area 185 K L in eastern Iwo Jima. The front lines reported that it was the ~~best~~ best job of close support seen. An unknown number of mortar positions were destroyed by the intense and accurate attack.**

(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

Four TB-3's of VC-88 piloted by Lt. O.L. HERBSTER and Ensigns H.B. WOOD, J.A. HITT and P.R. FAIRHURST and four FM-2's of VC-88 piloted by Lt. R.M. PECK and Ensigns W.S. MANCE, R.L. CANNON, and R.W. SCHNEIDER combined with four TB-3's and four FM-2's of VC-77 to make an extremely successful attack on mortar positions on Iwo Jima 5 March 1945. The flight leader from VC-77 did an extremely capable job in locating the exact position of the mortars, in target area 185 K and L. Lt. Herbster, leading the VC-88 planes, made a 5 dummy runs with the flight inspecting the positions. All other pilots were given time to make dummy runs until all were completely familiar with the location of their aiming point. These mortars were so located in the rugged terrain that artillery and naval guns fire had not been able to destroy them and they were holding up the advance of our troops.

In making this attack the torpedo bombers preceded the fighters. An average of four runs were made, most of the pilots firing two rockets per run in a 30-35 degree glide. Five bombs were dropped on each of two bombing runs, spaced at 25 feet, from approximately 1000 feet. All rockets and bombs were in the immediate area of the mortars. These runs were made from the northwest to the southwest pulling out over the water.

The fighters attacked with first rockets and then napalm bombs, and only a small amount of strafing, making their runs also from northwest to southeast. The rockets runs were begun at about 2500 feet, in a 30 degree glide, firing at 100 feet altitude and pulling out at 500 feet. Ten rockets were seen to hit directly on the aiming point, other in the area.

to drop their napalm flat runs at about 100 feet altitude or less were made, indicating 180-210 knots. The bombs were released when the aiming point disappeared below the nose of the plane. The three napalms of Peck, Cannon and Mance landed right on the positions, Schneider was a dud, not going off. A perceptible delay noted after Peck's bombs had hit the ground before it spread fire in the area.

The large number of hits on the exact position of the mortars gained great praise from the lines. CASCU told the pilots that the front lines stated it was the best job of close support seen, and the "boys should pat themselves on the back."

During the hop no one saw anti-aircraft fire. After returning to base one small hole, about the size of a quarter was found in Ensign Hitt's plane, about twelve inches from the trailing edge of the wing stub.

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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

**No comments**

REPORT PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

SIGNATURE **H.D. SCHMAAS, Lt. USNR, AGIO VC-88** RANK AND DUTY **H.L. KEMPF, Lt. USNR Commanding** RANK AND DUTY **12 March 1945** DATE