

Aircraft Action Reports

2-d (55) USS Saginaw Bay

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET  
AIR FORCE, PACIFIC FLEET

RWB/hof

001312

SECRET

2 June 1945

17239

From: Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet.  
To: Distribution List.

Subject: BRIEF of Action Report U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (Capt. F.C. Sutton) 10 February through 11 March 1945, R/S 010556.

GUNNERY

1. Effectiveness of Gunnery: Considering the shortness of the firing interval (due to the small arc of fire) and the poor visibility, the effectiveness of this ship's gunnery is considered above average. Frequent mention has been made in various reports regarding the need for additional guns on this type ship but its importance justifies a possible repetition. The section both dead ahead and dead astern should be more heavily defended, preferably with 40 mm quadruple mounts. Present 20 mm guns should be replaced by twin 20 mm mounts as rapidly as they become available. The addition of 40 mm quadruple mounts and 20 mm mounts would add more fire power with fewer personnel required to man them and with less weight per unit gun. Radar fire control is greatly needed because of the fact that this CVE does not carry night fighters to supply night coverage. It is anticipated that with the advent of enemy airborne radar, darkness can no longer be counted on for much protection.

Comment: Radar controlled direction and substitution of twin 20 mm for singles have been recommended and will go on ships as soon as plans are worked out. While it is recognized that the bow and stern are the weakest sectors, it is not feasible to add 40 mm quad mounts because of weight and hogging moment considerations. Blind firing directors will be installed as they become available.

2. Training: Every opportunity has been taken to conduct gunnery training exercises. Firing exercises were conducted on a towed AA sleeve whenever they could be scheduled. However, it is believed necessary for gun crews to fire more regularly, utilizing floating objects, balloons, and bursts of star shells. Such was not possible on this operation because of the fact that aircraft operations were constantly being conducted and the ship was steaming in formation at all times.

AIR OPERATIONS.

3. Gasoline Handling: ComServForPac despatch 142226 February limits the pressure to be used in pumping gasoline aboard to 18 pounds P.S.I. Due to the short duration of fueling operations, this pressure is totally inadequate to replenish the gasoline supply during the allotted time. Prior to issuance of the above instructions, pressures from 30 to 35 pounds P.S.I. were used without casualty. During emergency conditions it is recommended that CVEs be authorized to take gasoline aboard pressures not to exceed 35 pounds P.S.I.

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Comment: While some systems may stand increased pressures, the seriousness of a tank failure and the difficulties of repair do not justify the resultant higher delivery rate ordinarily. While a capacity load of gasoline can seldom be received during an ordinary refueling operation it is also very infrequent that the gasoline supply gets so low as to be critical. In case it does, the extra two or three hours to regas are better accepted, than accepting the chances of tank rupture with consequent need for return of the carrier for repairs. Shipalt CVE 399 has been accomplished on a few CVEs to date. Completion of the alteration should speed up the fueling of gasoline tanks considerably, without exceeding the allowable  $9\frac{1}{2}$  pounds pressure on tanks, because the overload discharge rate of salt water is increased thus lowering the discharge head.

4. Degassing Pumps: The present degassing pumps are unsatisfactory for the following reasons:

(a) They cannot be used during landing operations because of their interference with the air pressure of the arresting gear.

(b) The air driven motors continually fail to operate and repeated disassembly has been necessary to remove rust, foreign matter and grease.

(c) The capacity is insufficient. It takes from 30 to 45 minutes to degas a TBM. To overcome this condition it is recommended that two Worthington Water Turbine-driven gasoline pumps, Type 1- $\frac{1}{2}$ , H.L.-6-Horizontal, be installed at stations 11 and 14 on the Hangar Deck. Also that the present drain lines from the hangar deck service stations be increased to a 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " or 2" size. By altering piping and valves, suction could be taken from all flight deck stations for degassing purposes through the hangar deck pumps.

Comment: Some considerable improvement in degassing rate can be obtained by placing the portable degassing pump as near the plane as possible, i.e. with the shortest possible length of suction hose. The pressure hose should be connected to the ships gasoline system and the valves at the fueling station opened or by-passed so that a minimum of interference with gasoline flow will result. Degassing on the hangar deck with the present system is unsatisfactory. The whole procedure has been the subject of considerable correspondence and is under further investigation.

#### OCEANOGRAPHY.

5. Ocean Temperature: During the 16 days while operating east of Iwo Jima a curious rise in ocean temperature was noted. As is well known, there is no diurnal range in sea water. A slight rise is observed when crossing a well defined current. However, a marked rise of 5-6° over the normal temperatures of 68-69° was observed occurring mostly around midnight. As the ship was steaming each night in the same area, the center of maximum rise has been traced to be in position 24-30 N, 143-00 E. While the rate of change of the temperature was about one degree per hour, a drastic change was noted from 0000 to 0100, 5 March 1945. Reconstructing the track from a radar fix obtained at 0440, the positions

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were found to be as follows:

At 0000 (Z-10) 5 March 24-22 N Ocean temperature (injection) 75° F.  
143-04 E.

At 0100 (Z-10) 5 March 24-23 N Ocean temperature (injection) 70° F.  
142-51 E.

A study of chart HO 5257 shows a line of soundings running N-S with depths 1700 fathoms and over. Yet a shoal of 1-3/4 fathoms, surrounded by soundings of 1400-2500 fathoms was reported in 1944 (Ref. Restricted N.M., July 15, 1944) in position 25-13 N, 142-56 E. This bank lies 45 miles North of the average position of greatest rise.

This region is one of volcanic activity. The injection temperatures are certified by Chief Engineer to be correct. Also the rise had definitely been proven not to be due to a current, hence it is conjectured that the marked rise is due to submarine volcanic activity in this region.

#### GENERAL

6. In view of the recent trend towards a more liberal recognition of meritorious achievement in flight by Navy Flight Personnel, it is recommended that an early expression of policy be made for use and guidance in connection with the recognition of meritorious achievement on the part of non-flying personnel.

7. It is also recommended that authorization for the wearing of operation and engagement stars be given as soon as possible after the completion of an operation, and that such information be disseminated by despatch.

8. The use of 5 inch rocket bodies with 5 inch motors was found to be far superior to the 5 inch body with a 3 1/4 inch motor. The increased velocity greatly improved its accuracy and the straighter trajectory permitted hits to be observed, with the accompanying improvement in damage assessment.

#### SQUADRON COMMANDERS' COMMENTS.

9. VF Pilots: Assign at least six more VF pilots to each squadron. With the operation of 20 VF planes, standing condition eleven a majority of the time, taxiing planes forward for landings and having pilots grounded, considerable difficulty is encountered in maintaining the strenuous flight schedule with the present fighter pilot complement. It is anticipated that such schedules will be repeated in future operations. It is therefore recommended that an immediate increase be made in the VF pilot allowance for all composite squadrons operating on CVEs.

10. Plane Markings: Recommend that each squadron be furnished with the squadron markings of other squadron planes so we will know what squadron we are joining, thereby helping much to expedite daylight rendezvous on strike missions.

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Comment: ComAirPac is now in the process of distributing a letter establishing the plane markings for each squadron according to the CVE to which it is assigned.

11. Air Coordinator: Recommend that VF type planes be used for Air Coordinator work. An Air Coordinator can maneuver much better and faster and can work the target better in a VF than he can in a VT plane. Recommend also that only trained Air Coordinators be used. Many Squadron Commanders and Executive Officers have no training of any kind in this work and are not qualified. An Air Coordinator should be highly reliable and well trained.

Comment: Concur that Air Coordinators must be highly trained. It is necessary that all prospective flight leaders of a squadron should be ready to act as Air Coordinator. Air support training is given a great deal of emphasis for VC and CVEG squadrons, both in the U.S. and the Hawaiian area.

12. Call Strikes: Recommended that more call strikes be used. This would keep the number of planes around target area to a minimum and would result in better air discipline; Channels would not be so cluttered up by strike hops that are doing nothing but orbiting for 2 or 3 hours before they are to be used. Much of the interference on the air was not by the planes actually in the strike but by planes that were orbiting and waiting. Also many bombs and rockets were expended needlessly just to satisfy the pilots and to get rid of them. Had they been called when needed they could have used their load to good advantages.

  
C. E. Ekstrom  
By direction

(2 May 1945)

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET  
AIR FORCE, PACIFIC FLEET

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|   |      | BuAer; Head of Engr. Div.                            | 2    |
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| CVE 1,12,16,18,20,23,26,27,28;<br>29,55,57,58,61,62,64,65,66,68;<br>69,70,71,72,74,75,76,77,78,80;<br>81,82,83,84,85,86,87,88,89,90,<br>91,92,93,94,96,97,98,99,100;<br>101,102,103,104,105,106,107,<br>109   | lea. | BuAer; Radio & Electrical Branch                     | 2    |
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|   |      | ComAirLant (ACI Center)                              | 1    |
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| VC 3,4,5,7,8,9,10,11,13,14,20;<br>21,27,33,41,42,63,65,66,68,70;<br>71,72,76,77,78,79,80,81,82,83;<br>84,85,86,87,88,90,91,92,93,94,<br>96,97,98,99   | lea. |  |      |
|   |      | TOTAL  | 304  |

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9 June 1945.

From: Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet.  
To: **Distribution List.**

Subject: BRIEF of Action Report U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (Capt. R. Goldthwaite) for Period 21 March to 29 April 1945, R/S 012930.

GUNNERY

1. Location of Gunnery Control Station: Modification was made to the bridge structure which expanded the facilities for the Flag and moved the Gunnery Control Station one deck higher above the bridge. Work was performed by this ship's force without plans or drawings. It is hoped that Shipalt 442, covering such changes, will provide some protection from the weather and also will reduce the effect of strong winds which make communications and visual sighting with binoculars difficult, due to wind vibrations.

Comment: Shipalt provides for removal of gunnery station and searchlight signalmen to top of conning station. Weight and moment compensation have been specified and are accomplished concurrent with these changes. Weather screen is provided to a height of about 40 inches. A higher screen or venturi will be required to give the requested protection which will add considerable weight. Recommendation for this addition will be withheld pending further service comments.

2. Stellite Barrels: The performance of machine guns and ammunition in the fighter planes was satisfactory allowing for the normal amount of jams and material failure. It would be desirable, however, if stellite barrels for the guns in planes assigned to direct support work could be obtained as it is necessary to shoot unusually long bursts on missions of this type. Approximately twelve gun barrels were burned completely out and others damaged to some extent.

Comment: Stellite barrels are being issued as rapidly as they become available. Squadrons engaged in support work are receiving priority.

3. Rockets: Most of the rockets fired were 5" high explosive heads with the 3.25" motor. An erratic trajectory was observed a few times but as a whole the trajectory was satisfactory. Better penetration would be obtained on targets if the pointed armor piercing caps or windshields were used. These should be shipped in the same box with the rocket body. We were unable to obtain these caps and fired all rockets with the flat shipping plug in the nose.

Comment: With the present 5 inch HE rocket head BuOrd advises that there is practically no difference in the penetrating qualities of the head when fitted with a conical nose plug or with a nose fuze fired safe. Insertion of the nose fuze in all rockets is recommended to provide for selective arming. Rockets should not be fired with the flat shipping plugs left in place.

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4. Napalm: On the napalms dropped to date, 65% of them ignited properly. The failure to ignite is probably due to the fact that a very small arming wire is used in the fuze and it tends to break instead of pull out as it should. Gas tank releases used for the napalm bombs gave trouble but will work in most cases after filing and when properly lubricated. It is expected that a bomb rack will replace this gas tank release in the near future.

Comment: A quick local investigation revealed that the arming solenoid is sufficiently aft of the fuse to make the tendency of the arming wire to break a remote possibility. It is believed that the use of only one fuse, with the attendant chances of separation of the napalm from the fuse upon impact, is the more likely cause of duds.

5. Fuzes: Performance of bombs and fuzes was entirely satisfactory. It is recommended that the use of long delay fuzes and fuzes having anti-withdrawal and anti-disturbance features be given more consideration. To illustrate this point; torpedo planes from this unit were assigned the task of keeping the airfields on Miyako and Ishigaki in Sakishima Gunto inoperative for three days. Pictures taken on the early morning flights indicated that the runways had been repaired during each previous night. If the airstrips had been hit with bombs containing fuzes that detonated after one hour up to one hundred hours the job could probably have been accomplished with a smaller number of planes and bombs. For knocking out bridges, particularly where the structure is reinforced concrete, the M115 series fuze having a delay of 4 to 11 seconds would be most effective. The fuze combination prescribed in every case during the Okinawa operation was an AN-M103A1 nose fuze set on either instantaneous or 0.1 second delay and/or the AN-M100A2 series with primer detonators ranging from non-delay to 0.1 seconds. This combination is effective against buildings, vehicles and troop concentrations where shrapnel and blast are important, but can be improved upon where the target involves fortifications, pill boxes, strong bridges and armored ships.

Comment: Airfield neutralization is covered in Ortsel No. 2. Long delay fuzes are generally available from stocks in ammunition depots and ships; but note that delays of over 24 hours are not recommended. The M-115 series of fuzes, with 8-15 second delay primer detonators are recommended for attacks on pin-point targets, but only when low-level attacks are made requiring delayed detonation for safety. Otherwise GP bombs would tend to bury themselves or break up before detonating. The .01 second delay fuze is recommended for dive and glide attacks on concrete bridges from safe altitudes. FTP-224 has now been issued and should be drawn at the first opportunity. It contains excellent information on selection of bombs and fuzes against various types of targets.

CIC.

6. SK Radar: It is suggested that the SK radars in the same Task Unit be on different frequencies since under this arrangement (1) potential jamming by the enemy might not affect all gear; (2) the use of more than one frequency provides better search results within the Task Unit. This will nullify the use of "CANARY" except by those ships whose SK is on or very close to the canary frequency.



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7. Stationing of CAP: With the almost constant heavy layers of cloud at Okinawa from 2000 to 6000 or 9000 feet, a stacking of two divisions of the LCAP at low mattress and the third at 12000 feet proved most flexible. This permitted investigations of low bogeys out to 40 miles with a full division without depriving the base of low cover. Both at Iwo Jima and Okinawa it was made a practice to use a full division rather than one section in investigating bogeys, regardless of size. This practice gives a much better pip on the FPI (remote) and also provides twice as many pairs of eyes to search out the bogey. The time away from base was never long enough to embarrass the formation from insufficient coverage.

8. Bogeys: It has been this ship's experience that with the heavy cloud layers (2000 to 9000 feet), bogeys at 3500 to 4000 feet showed up as far out as 55 miles whereas in clear weather planes picked up at 55 miles were at 5000-6000 feet.

OVERCROWDED CONDITION OF CVE FLAGSHIPS.

9. Degree and Consequence of Overcrowding: The number of officers now assigned CVE flagships exceeds the available berthing space. During the past operation, the ship carried 145 officers. Of this 119 were in ships complement, 20 staff, and 6 on special assignments. For these officers 120 bunks were available. It was necessary to berth the 25 additional officers on cots in various rooms and passage ways, in CPO quarters and in the isolation ward in sick bay when that space was available. This overcrowded condition serves to injure the morale of the officers and, furthermore, contributes toward the contracting and spreading of infectious diseases.

10. Recommendations:

(a) Reduce to an absolute minimum the number of specialist officers ordered aboard. As an example, it is not considered essential that a specialist Photographic Officer be assigned to a CVE.

Comment: The technical details involved in the rigging of the present CVE complement of two FM-2P and one TBM-3P photographic aircraft and briefing the photo pilots for combat missions in addition to the photographic laboratory administration involved is considered sufficient justification for the assignment of a photographic officer specialist to CVEs. Further recommendations are desired.

(b) Reduce the number of officers on special duty temporarily assigned to flagships. Five officer observers and pilots and one Psychological Warfare officer were carried during the last operation.

(c) Provide a light cruiser for use as a flagship for each combatant CVE Task Unit Commander. The additional Communication and other facilities for the flag would facilitate the exercise of tactical control by the OTC, the additional fire power would be salutary and the present crowded condition of CVE flagships would be greatly reduced.

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ORDNANCE.

11. Ordnance Supply: There was considerable delay encountered in procuring ammunition and aviation ordnance in Kerama Retto. It was necessary for the ship's aviation ordnance officer to make the rounds via motor whale boat to several different ships in the anchorage in order to procure all items requested. The necessity for coordination of all ammunition supply activities was definitely indicated but accomplishment of such objective had not been achieved at the time of this ship's last visit to Kerama Retto on 20 April 1945. There still seems to be little appreciation of the difficult task of loading and unloading supplies and ammunition on CVEs which is caused by the peculiarities of construction requiring the use of wide camels. None has so far been provided.

12. Ammunition Stowage: It is recommended that an immediate and thorough study be made of the stowage of ammunition on CASABLANCA class CVEs, inasmuch as the existing condition with regard to the quantity and types of ammunition required to be carried is vastly different from that originally intended. Standardization should be maintained as much as possible for all ships of this class. Particular emphasis should be placed on adequate space (keeping in mind possible future requirements), facility of supply, best protection possible, most favorable storage conditions, and the separation of various types of explosives in order to attain the highest degree of safety. Magazines at present are either poorly ventilated or not ventilated at all. Ventilation should be provided as temperatures at present are often over 90°F. in some magazines.

Comment: The bomb and rocket stowages and handling facilities have been studied jointly by ComFairWestCoast, ComServPac and ComAirPac, and improved arrangements have been submitted to CNO and Buships for approval. Proposed arrangements stow all rocket motors with fins attached, provide universal bomb stowage, and natural ventilation to magazines; handling and assembling spaces are enlarged and rearming train is speeded up by more direct routes and better handling equipment.

ESCORTS FOR CVE DISPOSITION.

18. The number of escort vessels was inadequate for safe screening of the disposition during a great percentage of the time. The nature of CVE operations, which requires turning into the wind for launching and recovery operations, then reversing course and running down wind in order to maintain a position for close support, requires a greater number of escorts for efficient screening than for other type operations. When reorienting a bent line screen of six or seven escorts for a reversal of course, the bows of the CVEs are exposed for a considerable length of time both before the execution of the signal and after the CVEs have swung beyond 90° from the old course. Such a situation occurring several times during a day in a rather restricted area presents the simplest attack problem to a submarine. It is suggested that one of the DE-DD might be better used if stationed on the downwind bearing from the center and instructed to patrol his station when the disposition is into the wind. When the course is reversed this escort would merely turn 180° with the CVE as would the escort on the upwind bearing from the center. The latter would patrol his station when the disposition was steaming down wind. This would particularly guard against a submarine trailing the disposition and waiting for the opportunity to attack when the course is reversed.

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FUELING.

14. This vessel fueled four times from a tanker, taking on 1,279,361 gallons of fuel during the 39 days of operation and fueled escorts 14 times, delivering 495,002 gallons. In other words at least one fueling in three is due to the amount of fuel delivered to escorts. Therefore each CVE is taken out of the operations one day in 27 because of having to fuel its escorts. Furthermore, a great amount of time is spent during these operations with the CVEs endangered by greatly restricted maneuverability. The importance of the support rendered by the CVE groups has reached the point where it would appear advisable to provide each group of six or seven CVEs with one tanker which could fuel the escorts and CVE at such intervals as to maintain full availability of CVE air support as well as maintaining a larger percentage of escorts in the screen at all times. This tanker might well be specially designed to carry aircraft spares and ammunition for the CVEs in addition to the fuel, obviating the necessity for being subjected to the dangers inherent in replenishment so near the objective area, such as at Kerama Retto.



C. E. Ekstrom  
By direction.

(2 May 1945)

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET  
AIR FORCE, PACIFIC FLEET

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| ComMarFAirWest  | 1    | CinCPac  | 4    |
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| ComCarDiv 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,12,<br>22,23,24,25,26,27  | lea. | U.S.N.L.O., Hqtrs. BritPacFlt, Sydney                | 1    |
|   |      | CNO (Op-16-V)  | 3    |
| CV 3,4,6,9,10,11,12,13,14,<br>15,16,17,18,19,20,31,36,38,39   | lea. | CNO (Editor CIC)                                     | 1    |
|   |      | BuAer; Head of Engr. Div.                            | 2    |
| CVL 22,24,25,26,27,28,29,30   | lea. | BuAer; Ship Install. Branch                          | 2    |
|   |      | BuAer; Power Plant Design Branch                     | 2    |
| CVE 1,12,16,18,20,23,26,27,28;<br>29,55,57,58,61,62,64,65,66,68;<br>69,70,71,72,74,75,76,77,78,80;<br>81,82,83,84,85,86,87,88,89,90,<br>91,92,93,94,96,97,98,99,100;<br>101,102,103,104,105,106,107,<br>109   | lea. | BuAer, Radio & Electrical Branch                     | 2    |
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|   |      | Chief, BuShips                                       | 2    |
|   |      | ComAirLant (ACI Center)                              | 1    |
|   |      | ComFAirNorfolk                                       | 1    |
|   |      | OinC, NACIS  | 1    |
|   |      | Bomb and Fuse School, Bldg. 293,<br>N.A.S. San Diego | 1    |
|   |      | U.S.NavOrdTestSta, Inyokern, Calif.                  | 1    |
|   |      | ComAirSupUnits, PhibsTraPac (ACI)                    | 1    |
| VC 3,4,5,7,8,9,10,11,13,14,20;<br>21,27,33,41,42,63,65,66,68,70;<br>71,72,76,77,78,79,80,81,82,83;<br>84,85,86,87,88,90,91,92,93,94,<br>96,97,98,99   | lea. |  |      |
|   |      | TOTAL  | 304  |

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CVE-82/A16-3(a)

U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82)

10/pe

Serial: 024

CONFIDENTIAL

% Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, Calif.  
14 March 1945



From: Commanding Officer.  
To: Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.

Via: (1) Commander Task Groups 51.17, 51.26; Task Unit 52.2.3  
(ComCarDiv-25)  
(2) Commander Task Group 52.2 (ComEsCarForPac)  
(3) Commander Task Force 52 (ComPhibGrpONE)  
(4) Commander Task Force 51 (ComPhibsPac)  
(5) Commander FIFTH Fleet.  
(6) Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas,  
(Advance Headquarters).

Subject: Action Report, IWO JIMA Operation, 10 February to 11 March 1945.

Reference: (a) Articles 712, 874(6), U.S. Navy Regulations.  
(b) PacFltLtr 1CL-45.

Enclosure: (A) Subject Report.  
(B) Action Report of Commander, Composite Squadron EIGHTY-EIGHT,  
and ACA-1 reports attached thereto.

1. Enclosures (A) and (B) are forwarded herewith in compliance with  
the provisions of references (a) and (b).

F.C. SUTTON

Advance copies to:

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*2 may - no comment  
forwarded.*

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U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) ACTION REPORT - IWO JIMA OPERATION

Period 10 February to 11 March 1945

PARTS ONE AND TWO

The Brief Summary and the Preliminaries normally included in Parts One and Two hereof are omitted from this report in accordance with the provisions of Pacific Fleet Confidential Letter 1CL-45, paragraph 5c.

Such information will be included in the Action Report of the SAGINAW BAY's Division Commander, Commander Carrier Division TWENTY-FIVE, who at different stages of this operation exercised tactical command of Task Unit 52.2.3, Task Group 51.17 and Task Group 51.26.

PART THREE

Chronological Account of Action. (All times zone minus 10).

10 February

Sortied from ULITHI HARBOR as the Flagship of Task Unit 52.2.3, Support Carrier Unit Three, composed as follows:

52.2.3 Support Carrier Unit Three - Rear Admiral Henderson U.S. Navy  
U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) (F)  
U.S.S. RUDYERD BAY (CVE-81)  
52.2.32 Commander W.J. Stark, Jr., U.S. Navy  
U.S.S. STOCKTON (DD-646) (F)  
U.S.S. PATTERSON (DD-392)  
U.S.S. JOHN C. BUTLER (DE-339)  
U.S.S. EDMONDS (DE-406)

After sortie, Task Unit 52.2.3 combined with Task Unit 52.2.2, Support Carrier Unit Two, to furnish combat air patrol and anti-submarine patrol for Task Force 54 while enroute to SAIPAN. Gunnery exercises were held.

Positions:

2000 10° 52' N 140° 39' E

11 February

Steaming as before for SAIPAN. CAP and ASP were flown throughout the day.

Positions:

0800 11° 52' N 142° 55' E  
1200 12° 21' N 143° 25' E  
2000 13° 39' N 144° 26' E

U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) ACTION REPORT - IWO JIMA OPERATION

12 February

Arrived SAIPAN and at 0859 anchored in outer anchorage off TANAPAG HARBOR. Two OY airplanes were loaded aboard. At 1437 underway for operating area off the east coast of TINIAN in disposition 5 R consisting of four CVEs. Rehearsal or Training exercises were to be held with units of Task Force 51, the Joint Expeditionary Force, preparatory to the landing operations on IWO JIMA.

Positions:

|      |           |            |
|------|-----------|------------|
| 0800 | 15° 06' N | 145° 40' E |
| 1200 | 15° 12' N | 145° 39' E |
| 2000 | 15° 03' N | 146° 14' E |

13 February

In support of the rehearsal exercise conducted off the east coast of TINIAN, target combat air patrol, simulated direct support and smoker flights were furnished. Upon completion of the training exercise, fueled from U.S.S. COSSAROT (AO-77)

Positions:

|      |           |            |
|------|-----------|------------|
| 0800 | 14° 39' N | 146° 03' E |
| 1200 | 14° 50' N | 146° 22' E |
| 2000 | 15° 19' N | 146° 36' E |

14 February

In company with the U.S.S. RUDYERD BAY (CVE-81) enroute SAIPAN. Anti-submarine patrols were flown. 1133, anchored in Outer Anchorage of TANAPAG HARBOR, SAIPAN.

Positions:

|      |           |            |
|------|-----------|------------|
| 0800 | 15° 09' N | 145° 11' E |
|------|-----------|------------|

15 February

Anchored as before, SAIPAN.

16 February

Task Unit 52.2.3 was detached to form Task Group 51.17, composed as follows:

- T.G. 51.17 Support Carrier Unit Three - Rear Admiral G.R. Henderson, USN
- (1) Carrier Division TWENTY-FIVE (Less U.S.S. PERROF BAY, U.S.S. SARGENT BAY, U.S.S. NATOMA BAY, U.S.S. TULAGI.)
- U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) (F)
- U.S.S. RUDYERD BAY (CVE-81)

## U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) ACTION REPORT - IWO JIMA OPERATION

16 February (Cont.)

- (2) Escorts - Commander W.W. Stark, Jr., U.S.N.  
 U.S.S. STOCKTON (DD-646) (F)  
 U.S.S. PATTERSON (DD-392)  
 U.S.S. JOHN C. BUTLER (DE-339)  
 U.S.S. EDMONDS (DE-406)

1541, underway for IWO JIMA as the Flagship of Task Group 51.17. Joined Task Groups 51.11 and 51.12, Transport Groups Baker and Able respectively for the purpose of furnishing air cover enroute to the objective. No flight operations were required during the balance of the day.

## Positions:

2000 15° 26' N 144° 50' E

17 February

Local and convoy combat air and anti-submarine patrols were flown throughout the day.

## Positions:

0800 16° 31' N 142° 51' E  
 1200 17° 11' N 143° 02' E  
 2000 18° 19' N 142° 03' E

18 February

Routine patrols flown for Task Groups 51.11 and 51.12. 1824, Task Group 51.17 was detached and reformed as Task Unit 52.2.3. At sunset a cold front passed over the area. The wind increased to 32 knots from 006° and the temperature dropped from 79° to 67° by 2100.

0800 20° 25' N 142° 37' E  
 1200 21° 09' N 142° 20' E  
 2000 21° 21' N 141° 56' E

19 February

At dawn arrived at operating area west of IWO JIMA and joined Task Unit 52.2.2 for flight operations. Target and local patrols were furnished throughout the day. Smoker planes were requested at the target but were not used. Propaganda bombs were dropped as directed.

The weather was settled with scattered cumulus and strato-cumulus clouds. The wind was variable from NNE to ENE with velocities from 7 to 14 knots. The Barometer read 30.04. The sea was smooth with a light swell. It was favorable invasion weather.

## Positions:

0800 24° 23' N 140° 28' E  
 1200 24° 54' N 141° 05' E  
 2000 24° 53' N 142° 16' E



## U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) ACTION REPORT - IWO JIMA OPERATION

20 February

Flight operations included direct air support. During the day two planes, one VT and one VF, crashed in the water. The pilot and aircrewmembers of the VT were picked up by the U.S.S. EDMONDS (DE-406). The VF pilot was picked up by the U.S.S. J.C. BUTLER (DE-339). None of the personnel were injured. Ceiling and visibility closed in to such an extent that at 1500 all direct support flights were cancelled. The wind was WSW, 28 knots at 1500, veering to North with a velocity of 26 knots at 1900.

The operating area of Task Unit 52.2.3 was in a sector bearing  $035^{\circ}$  to  $122^{\circ}$  within a radius of 50 miles from Mount SURABACHI on IWO JIMA. The retirement area extended out for a distance of 120 miles.

21 February

Routine flight operations were conducted. The two pilots and aircrewmembers who landed in the water on 20 February were returned aboard.

At 1653 a bogey was reported bearing  $054^{\circ}$  True, distant 61 miles on a course of  $235^{\circ}$  True, estimated to be 1 to 3 planes. At 1704, the bogey was still closing. The ship went to general quarters and two divisions of VF were scrambled. With the divisions scrambled from other ships, 44 VF were airborne plus 12 additional VF in the LCAP. Two divisions were vectored out, one on a course of  $045^{\circ}$  True and another on  $040^{\circ}$  True but no contact with the bogey resulted. At 1710, Task Unit 52.2.5 (SARATOGA group) which was located at approximately  $035^{\circ}$  True, 35 miles from the disposition, reported that one Jill had been shot down. The SARATOGA was reported at 1716 to be under attack and immediately thereafter to have been hit by a suicide plane.

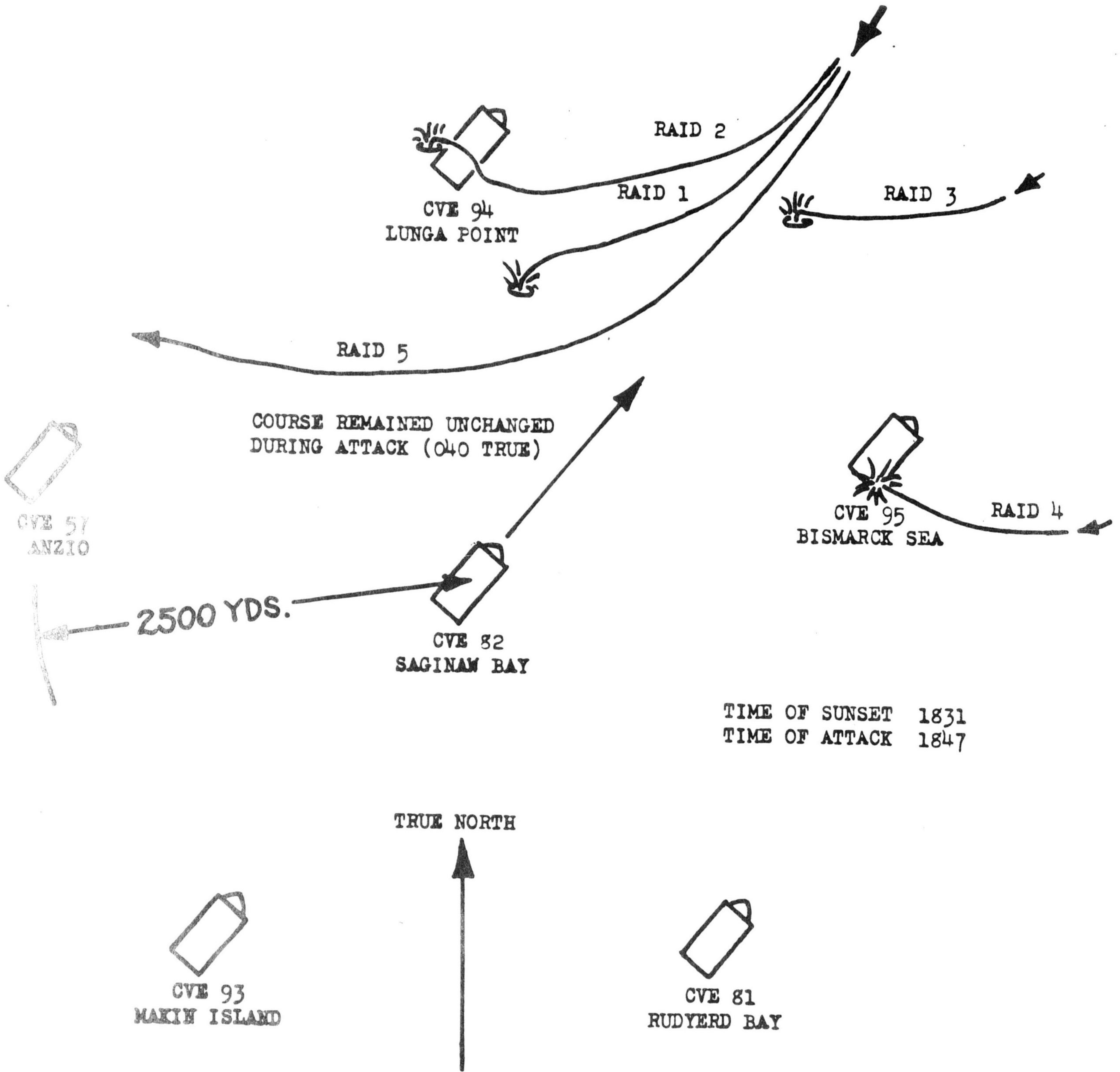
At this time the weather was five-tenths overcast at 1500 feet and eight-tenths at 9,000. The wind was  $047^{\circ}$  True, 21 knots; temperature  $63^{\circ}$ : Sunset was at 1831.

At 1725, one division of the SAGINAW BAY's LCAP was vectored out to investigate a bogey approximately 10 miles north of MINAMI IWO JIMA. At 1745, a tallyho was reported on a Zeke or Jill. The LCAP opened fire at 1000 yards but could not close. The tail chase continued until within gun range of a group of LSTs, when the plane dove, hit an LST or close by it and exploded.

By 1800 no bogies appeared on the radar screen. The combat air patrol was given a Prep Charlie and the last plane landed aboard at 1841.

At this time the disposition was 5 R-M for six CVEs, fleet axis  $000^{\circ}$  True, course  $040^{\circ}$  True. The stations were assigned as indicated in the diagram on the following page.

The ship's position was Latitude  $24^{\circ} 37' N$ , Longitude  $141^{\circ} 48' 5'' E$ , which bore  $105^{\circ}$  True, 29 miles from IWO JIMA.



U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) ACTION REPORT - IWO JIMA OPERATION

21 February (Cont.)

At 1825, a bogey was picked up at 015° True, 25 miles, and three VF from the MAKIN ISLAND which were still airborne were vectored out by MAKIN ISLAND. At 1837, another bogey of 3 B-24 planes was reported at 035° True, 32 miles, which closed to 028° True, 30 miles. Since the first bogey was not closing, the CAP was vectored to the second bogey. At 060° True, 12 miles, radar showed a merged plot but no tallyho was made due to the overcast.

At 1847 the first enemy plane was sighted flying low on the water, lead ahead of the ship, (ie., 040° True), on a course of approximately 240° True, headed for the starboard side of the LUNGA POINT. This plane was taken under fire by the 40 MM guns of group II and several hits were believed to have been made. This plane when approximately 1000 yards from the LUNGA POINT, dropped a torpedo, continued to close and when about 100 yards off the starboard quarter of the LUNGA POINT exploded and hit the water.

A second plane followed the first one in towards the LUNGA POINT, caught fire about 100 yards away from the ship and crashed onto the flight deck amidships with a tremendous burst of flame.

At 1849 a large explosion was observed on the BISMARCK SEA which apparently resulted from a plane crashing into the starboard fantail about 25 feet above the water line. Many explosions followed shortly thereafter including one of major proportions which is believed to have resulted from the war heads going off.

A third plane came in towards the LUNGA POINT following the track of the other two planes but turned left towards the port bow of the SAGINAW BAY on an approximate course of 200° True. 40 MM Group #2 took this plane under fire and 20 MM fire from the LUNGA POINT was also observed. Several hits on this plane were observed. When it was about 1500 yards off the SAGINAW BAY's bow the plane burst into flames and hit the water.

A fourth plane on an estimated course of 270° True flew between the LUNGA POINT and the SAGINAW BAY. 40 MM Group #4 opened on this plane as did the 20 MM of Groups #2, #4 and the 5" gun. No hits were observed as the plane flew over the ANZIO and disappeared to the west.

While the planes were identified as both Bettys and Jills, the consensus of opinion was that they were Jills. The light conditions at the time of attack made positive identification difficult.

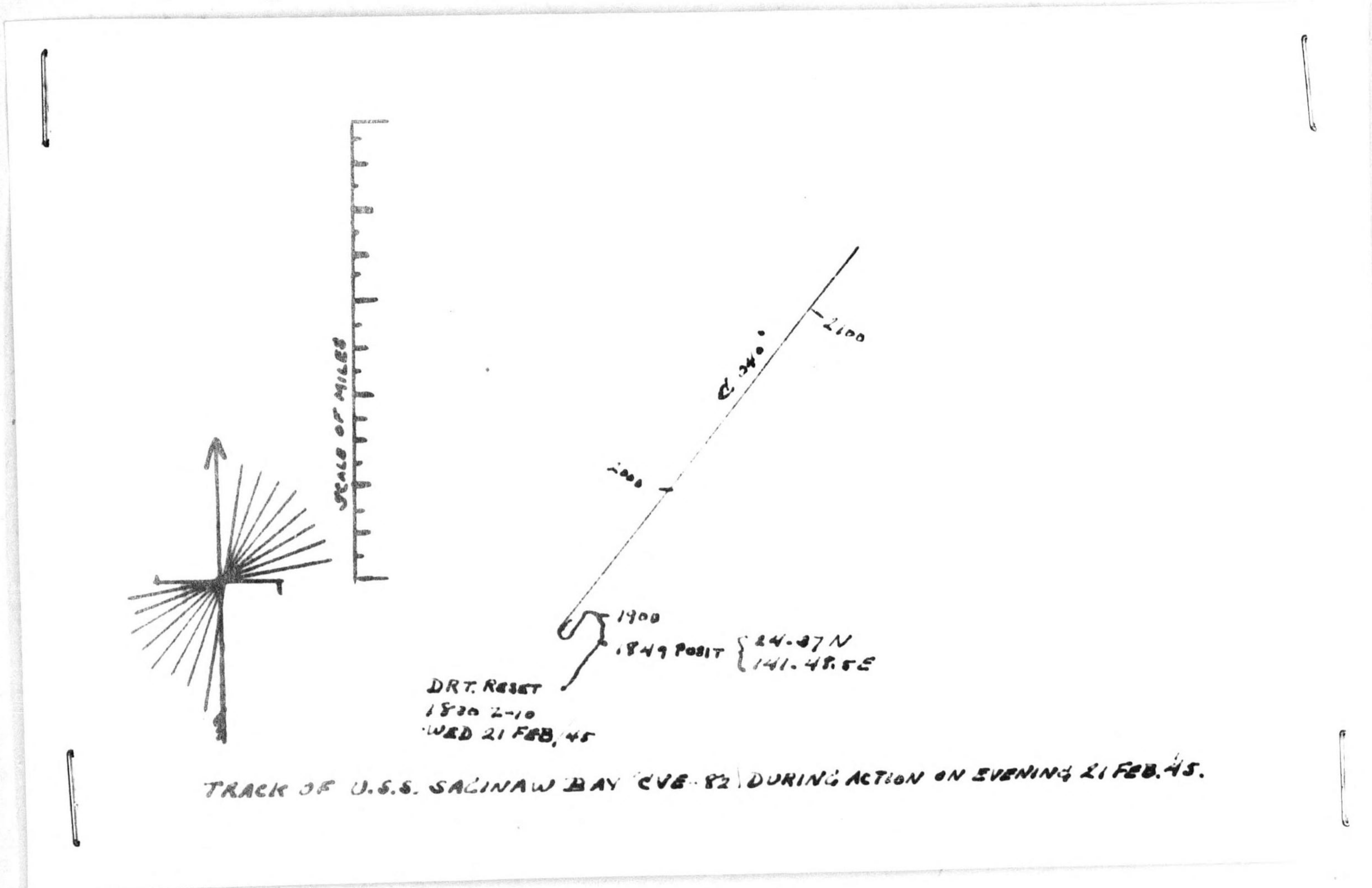
The ship's course and speed from 1800 to 2119 was as follows:

| Time        | Course | Speed in knots |
|-------------|--------|----------------|
| 1800 - 1849 | 040°   | 8              |
| 1849 - 1853 | 040°   | 15             |
| 1853 - 1855 | 025°   | 15             |
| 1855 - 1856 | 010°   | 15             |
| 1856 - 1859 | 310°   | 15             |
| 1859 - 1903 | 220°   | 15             |
| 1903 - 1907 | 220°   | 12             |
| 1907 - 2119 | 040°   | 12             |

U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) ACTION REPORT ONIWO JIMA OPERATION

21 February (Cont.)

Following is the D.R.T. track of the ship during this period.



Secured from general quarters at 2144.

22 February

In addition to the routine patrols and direct support, Artillery Spotters were flown over the target throughout the day for the 5th Marine Amphibious Corps. Several bogies were intercepted but proved to be friendly. A light to moderate rain fell throughout the day, accompanied by a light fog which thickened in the afternoon. Wind was ENE to ESE, 20 knots. The weather continued to close in and further flight operations were cancelled. All planes were aboard by 1718.

23 February

Flight operations were conducted as usual. The planes flying direct support encountered very accurate AA over the target. At 1433 a VT from the SARGENT BAY made an emergency landing aboard. One of the aircrewmembers had received a shrapnel wound while over the target and was promptly given medical attention.

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U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) ACTION REPORT - IWO JIMA OPERATION

23 February (Cont.)

At 1845 in company with U.S.S. ANZIO, U.S.S. RUDYERD BAY, and U.S.S. PETROF BAY set course for fueling area.

At 1900 general quarters sounded. The disposition consisted of seven CVEs in formation 5 R-M, fleet axis 000° True. The bogies were picked up at 015° True, 105 miles and 030° True, 120 miles. The raid at 015° closed and dropped window which covered the SK scope from 230° to 130°, at a distance of 10 to 20 miles. This raid was estimated to be 3 to 4 planes and it orbited North and West of the disposition for approximately one hour. No attack however, developed.

The raid at 030° moved south to 120° True, distant 60 miles and then disappeared from the screen. The planes orbiting north of the disposition and dropping window may have intended merely to divert the night fighters and thus permit other raids to fly into IWO JIMA unmolested. During the time that the attack was expected to close, the disposition's course was downwind which was of great advantage both to lookouts and to gunnery personnel. 2116, secured from general quarters.

24 February

Local patrols were flown while underway to and operating in the fueling area. 1515, commenced taking fuel, aviation gasoline and diesel oil from U.S.S. NESHANIC (AO-71). Upon completion of fueling 4 FM-2 and 3 TBM-3 replacement aircraft, 3 replacement pilots and 6 aircrewmen were received aboard from the U.S.S. TULAGI (CVE-72). Set course for IWO JIMA to resume air support operations.

Positions:

|      |           |            |
|------|-----------|------------|
| 0800 | 22° 10' N | 140° 22' E |
| 1200 | 21° 49' N | 140° 13' E |
| 2000 | 22° 31' N | 140° 53' E |

25 February

0950, rejoined Task Unit 52.2.2 and operated as a unit of 7 CVEs, composed as follows:

U.S.S. MAKIN ISLAND (F) Rear Admiral Durgin, U.S. Navy  
U.S.S. LUNGA POINT  
U.S.S. WAKE ISLAND  
U.S.S. PETROF BAY  
U.S.S. ANZIO  
U.S.S. RUDYERD BAY  
U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (F) Rear Admiral Henderson, U.S. Navy

Officer in Tactical Command was in U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82).

Several bogies were tallyhoed which proved to be TBMs and one a B-29.

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U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) ACTION REPORT - IWO JIMA OPERATION

26 February

All flight operations were cancelled at 1246 because of weather. Resumed LCAP at 1650. U.S.S. PAUL HAMILTON (DD-590) was topped off.

27 February

Two OY airplanes were launched for MOTOYAMA Airfield number one on IWO JIMA for use as shore based observation planes. Carrier based planes, however, continued to fly the artillery spotters. 1707, general quarters sounded for a bogey which proved to be a TBM. 1815, secured from general quarters.

28 February

Routine flight operations were conducted. The weather was generally fair and sunny. The sea and swell were light to moderate.

1 March

U.S.S. HUTCHINS came alongside and received Marine spotters aboard for transportation to IWO JIMA. At 1750 a bogey was picked up at  $018^{\circ}$  True, 45 miles, estimated to be one or two planes. A division of the LCAP was vectored to make the interception. The bogey closed to  $005^{\circ}$  True, 20 miles and radar showed a merged plot but the LCAP missed a tallyho in the overcast. The bogey track then faded but the U.S.S. ENTERPRISE and U.S.S. BENNION (DD-662) whose position was near the bogey's track, reported firing on a Zeke.

2 March

0653, passed a mine at Latitude  $24^{\circ} 46'$  N, Longitude  $141^{\circ} 58'$  E. U.S.S. TAYLOR (DE-415) was ordered to investigate.

0757, during flight operations, while planes were being launched and taken aboard, fueled from U.S.S. GUADALUPE (AO-32). Bogies throughout the day again proved to be friendly. The wind was ENE, 20 to 30 knots; sea and swell were moderate.

3 March

Rocket bodies and motors were loaded aboard from U.S.S. HUTCHINS (DD-476). Flight operations were held as usual. All bogies were friendly. The wind was SE to SW, 14 to 16 knots.

4 March

Flight operations were secured at 0950 because of the weather. The last plane landed at 1019. The weather cleared in the afternoon. At 1513, LCAP was launched to fly until sunset.

U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) ACTION REPORT - IWO JIMA OPERATION

5 - 6 March

Routine flight operations were held. On 6 March at approximately 0900, a TBM-3 on a direct support mission over the target area was struck by AA and made an emergency landing on the airfield at IWO JIMA. The explosion which occurred in the radio compartment killed the radioman. Neither the pilot or other aircrewman were injured.

Flight operations consisted almost entirely of direct support strikes plus a special strike on CHICHI JIMA by 4 VF from the SAGINAW BAY and 4 VF and 1 VT from U.S.S. ANZIO (CVE-57). One VF made a forced landing at IWO JIMA due to AA damage. Details of this special strike are contained in the ACA-1 reports attached hereto.

8 March

Routine flight operations.

9 March

Flight operations as scheduled. At 1000, Task Group 51.26 was formed, composed as follows:

T.G. 51.26 Carrier Support and Covering Group, Rear Admiral G.R. Henderson  
U.S. Navy

T.U. 51.26.1 Support Unit One, Rear Admiral Henderson  
U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (F)  
U.S.S. SARGENT BAY  
U.S.S. RUDYERD BAY  
U.S.S. TULAGI

Plus 3 Destroyers and 5 Destroyer Escorts.

T.U. 51.26.2 Support Unit Two, Rear Admiral Gardner, U.S. Navy  
U.S.S. ENTERPRISE (F)  
U.S.S. ALASKA (CE-1)  
U.S.S. FLINT

Plus 7 Destroyers

10 - 11 March

Routine flight operations. At 1900 on 11 March Task Unit 51.26.1 was detached and set course for ULITHI.

U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) ACTION REPORT - IWO JIMA OPERATION

PART FOUR

A. Performance of own ordnance material and equipment.

(1) Detailed information on ship's gunnery:

(a) Ammunition expended: - Item 9 on ComInch Form F-01 AA-1 for 21 February attached hereto lists the ammunition expended.

(b) Fire discipline: - During the raid of 21 February, the SAGINAW BAY was in the center of the formation and its arc of fire was restricted by the presence of the other ships in the disposition. However, firing in the direction of friendly ships was held to a minimum consistent with the danger from attacking aircraft, with due regard for limited visibility caused by both darkness and battle smoke. The order for opening fire was given by the Group Control Officer on orders from Control. On the whole, gun crews obeyed orders and fire discipline was considered far above average.

(c) Gunnery Communications: - There were no communication failures. The station of the Group Control Officers in whose sector the action occurred was in the immediate proximity of the firing director and very close to the guns, and orders were given partly by telephone and partly by direct communications.

(d) Radar fire control methods: - This ship has no radar fire control. However, early warning of the approach of enemy aircraft was given by ship's "SK" Radar.

(e) Effectiveness of gunnery, surface and anti-aircraft: - Reference is made at this point to the attached ComInch Form F-01-AA-1, and especially to item 26 thereof. Considering the shortness of the firing interval (due to the small arc of fire) and the poor visibility, the effectiveness of this ship's gunnery is considered above average. Frequent mention has been made in various reports regarding the need for additional guns on this type ship but its importance justifies a possible repetition. The section both dead ahead and dead astern should be more heavily defended, preferably with 40 MM quadruple mounts. Present 20 MM guns should be replaced by twin 20 MM mounts as rapidly as they become available. The addition of 40 MM quadruple mounts and 20 MM mounts would add more fire power with fewer personnel required to man them and with less weight per unit gun. Radar fire control is greatly needed due to the fact that this CVE does not carry night fighters to supply night coverage. It is anticipated that with the advent of enemy airborne radar, darkness can no longer be counted on for much protection.

(d) Material and training deficiencies: - Every opportunity has been taken to conduct gunnery training exercises. Firing exercises were conducted on a towed AA sleeve whenever they could be scheduled. However, it is believed necessary for gun crews to fire more regularly, utilizing floating objects, balloons, and bursts of star shells. Such was not possible on this operation due to the fact that aircraft operations were constantly being conducted and the ship was steaming in formation at all times.

PART FIVE

Damage

1. No battle damage was sustained by this ship during the operation. Assists in the destruction of two Jills are claimed during the raid of 21 February 1945, and damage is claimed on a third Jill which flew through the disposition and disappeared to the west. Complete information concerning this raid is contained in ComInch Form F-01-AA-1 for 21 February, attached hereto.



U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) ACTION REPORT - IWO JIMA OPERATION

PART SIX

Special comments and information.

A. Air Operations.

1. A table of sorties and plane availability by days appears on the following page.

2. Complete information covering the bombs, rockets and ammunition expended at the target on each sortie is contained in the ACA-1 reports enclosed herewith. Following is a list of aviation ordnance expended:

|         |                               |
|---------|-------------------------------|
| 170     | 100 lb. G.P. Bombs            |
| 144     | 500 lb. G.P. Bombs            |
| 115,000 | rounds 50 Cal. A/C ammunition |
| 15,000  | rounds 30 Cal. A/C ammunition |
| 1,400   | 5" High Explosive Rockets     |
| 20      | Napalms                       |

3. Own losses and rescue operations:

Aircraft

| Date    | Time of Launch | Type  | Circumstances                              |
|---------|----------------|-------|--|
| 17 Feb. | 1500           | FM-2  | Barrier Crash                              |
| 19 Feb. | 0900           | FM-2  | Barrier Crash                              |
| 20 Feb. | 1400           | FM-2  | Crashed into water after fly-off launch.   |
| 20 Feb. | 1100           | TBM-3 | Crashed into water after aileron shot up.  |
| 22 Feb. | 1548           | FM-2  | Barrier Crash                              |
| 22 Feb. | 1000           | TBM-3 | Barrier Crash                              |
| 6 Mar.  | 0700           | TBM-3 | Belly landing on Airstrip - hit by AA      |
| 6 Mar.  | 0700           | FM-2  | Barrier Crash                              |
| 7 Mar.  | 0530           | FM-2  | Forced landing IWO - Wing hit by AA        |
| 7 Mar.  | 0700           | FM-2  | Hit soft spot on IWO Airstrip when landing |
| 7 Mar.  | 0700           | FM-2  | Downwind landing, ran off runway at IWO    |

Rescue Operations

One VF pilot crashed into the water immediately after launching. He escaped from the cockpit and was picked up by a Destroyer Escort which was sent over to effect his rescue.

One VT pilot and two aircrewmembers were forced to make a cross-wind water landing because of the loss of aileron control. The pilot and both aircrewmembers were picked up by a Destroyer Escort.

4. Damage to enemy by aircraft.

(a) No enemy planes were destroyed. One Fox Tare Dog and several 50 foot luggers were damaged in FUTAMI HARBOR, CHICHI JIMA on 7 March.

(b) Damage to land targets:-Complete information including the date, location, nature of target and extent of damage is included in the ACA-1 reports enclosed herewith.

U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) ACTION REPORT - IWO JIMA OPERATION

TABLE OF SORTIES AND PLANE AVAILABILITY

| Date    | LASP      | LCAP       | TASP      | TCAP       | DIR.SUP.   |            | SPECIAL                        | DAILY TOTAL | AVAILABILITY |           |
|---------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|--------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|
|         |           |            |           |            | VF         | VT         |                                |             | VF           | VT        |
| 11 Feb. | 8         | 20         |           |            |            |            |                                | 28          | 17           | 10        |
| 12 Feb. |           |            |           |            |            |            | 2 VT Search                    | 2           | 19           | 11        |
| 13 Feb. | 4         |            |           |            |            |            | 6 VT - 15 VF Rehearsal         | 25          | 19           | 10        |
| 14 Feb. |           |            |           |            |            |            | 2 VT - FD Exercise             | 2           | 20           | 11        |
| 15 Feb. |           |            |           |            |            |            | Anchored SAIPAN                |             |              |           |
| 16 Feb. |           |            |           |            |            |            | Anchored SAIPAN                |             |              |           |
| 17 Feb. | 12        | 16         |           |            |            |            |                                | 28          | 19           | 12        |
| 18 Feb. | 12        | 16         |           |            |            |            |                                | 28          | 19           | 12        |
| 19 Feb. | 4         | 12         | 3         | 16         |            |            | 3 VT Snaker                    | 41          | 17           | 12        |
| 20 Feb. | 4         | 12         |           |            | 11         | 12         | 3 VT Propaganda                | 39          | 16           | 9         |
| 21 Feb. | 4         | 20         | 3         | 16         |            |            |                                | 43          | 15           | 10        |
| 22 Feb. | 4         | 12         | 3         | 16         | 2          |            | 3 VT Art.Spot.                 | 42          | 15           | 9         |
| 23 Feb. |           | 16         |           | 16         | 4          | 4          | 5 VT Art.Spot.                 | 45          | 15           | 9         |
| 24 Feb. | 2         | 12         |           |            |            |            |                                | 14          | 18           | 12        |
| 25 Feb. |           | 4          | 12        | 24         | 8          | 8          | 4 VT Art.Spot.                 | 60          | 19           | 12        |
| 26 Feb. |           | 4          | 6         | 16         | 7          | 6          | 4 VT Art.Spot.                 | 43          | 18           | 11        |
| 27 Feb. | 4         | 8          | 6         | 24         |            |            | 3 VT Art.Spot.                 | 45          | 19           | 12        |
| 28 Feb. | 8         | 16         | 6         | 16         |            |            | 3 VT Art.Spot.                 | 49          | 19           | 12        |
| 1 Mar.  | 8         | 16         | 6         | 16         |            |            |                                | 46          | 17           | 11        |
| 2 Mar.  | 8         | 16         | 6         | 16         |            |            | 2 VT Propaganda                | 48          | 19           | 11        |
| 3 Mar.  | 2         | 12         |           |            | 12         | 12         | 2 VT Radar Cal                 | 40          | 18           | 11        |
| 4 Mar.  | 6         | 12         |           | 8          |            |            |                                | 26          | 17           | 11        |
| 5 Mar.  | 3         | 12         |           |            | 12         | 12         |                                | 39          | 18           | 10        |
| 6 Mar.  |           | 8          |           |            | 12         | 16         | 1 VT Courier                   | 36          | 17           | 8         |
| 7 Mar.  |           | 8          |           |            | 12         | 12         | 4 VF Strike                    | 36          | 14           | 8         |
| 8 Mar.  |           | 8          |           |            | 16         | 12         | 1 VT Courier                   | 37          | 17           | 10        |
| 9 Mar.  |           |            | 6         |            | 28         | 8          | 5 VT 1 VF Obs. and Coordinator | 48          | 17           | 11        |
| 10 Mar. |           | 16         | 12        |            |            |            | 3 VT Courier                   | 31          | 19           | 11        |
| 11 Mar. |           | 16         |           |            |            |            |                                | 16          | 19           | 11        |
|         | <u>93</u> | <u>292</u> | <u>69</u> | <u>184</u> | <u>125</u> | <u>102</u> | <u>72</u>                      | <u>937</u>  | <u>19</u>    | <u>11</u> |

Total Flights 937  
 Total Sorties over Target 454.

U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) ACTION REPORT - IWO JIMA OPERATION

PART SIX (Cont.)

5. No night aircraft operations were conducted.

6. On 7 March at 0530 4 VF from SAGINAW BAY plus 4 VF and 1 VT from the ANZIO took off on a strike mission against CHICHI JIMA, which was 130 miles due north. No airborne planes were encountered and only non-operational planes were observed on the air field. Details covering the strafing and rocket damage are set forth in the enclosed ACA-1 reports.

7. No photographic sorties were requested by Commander Support Aircraft.

8. Comments on Air operations.

(a) Increased pressure for pumping aviation gasoline aboard.

ComServForPac despatch 142226 February limits the pressure to be used in pumping gasoline aboard to 18 pounds P.S.I. Due to the short duration of fueling operations, this pressure is totally inadequate to replenish the gasoline supply during the allotted time. Prior to issuance of the above instructions, pressures from 30 to 35 pounds P.S.I. were used without casualty. During emergency conditions it is recommended that CVEs be authorized to take gasoline aboard with pressures not to exceed 35 pounds P.S.I.

(b) Replacement of degassing pumps.

The present degassing pumps are unsatisfactory for the following reasons:

1. They cannot be used during landing operations because of their interference with the air pressure of the arresting gear.  
2. The air driven motors continually fail to operate and repeated disassembly has been necessary to remove rust, foreign matter and grease.

3. The capacity is insufficient. It takes from 30 to 45 minutes to degas a TBM. To overcome this condition it is recommended that two Worthington Water Turbine-driven gasoline pumps, Type 1- $\frac{1}{2}$ , H.L.-6 - Horizontal, be installed at stations 13 and 14 on the Hangar Deck. Also that the present drain lines from the hangar deck service stations be increased to a 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " or 2" size. By altering piping and valves, suction could be taken from all flight deck stations for degassing purposes through the hangar deck pumps.

(c) Additional comments and recommendations concerning air operations are contained in the report of Commander Composite Squadron EIGHTY-EIGHT, enclosed herewith.

B. Special comments on Combat Information Center and Radar, Communications and Navigation.

1. COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER and RADAR.

The ship's Combat Information Center controlled not only the ship's Fighter Direction but also the Fighter Direction for Commander Carrier Division TWENTY-FIVE in his capacity as Commander Task Unit 52.2.3 and Task Groups 51.17 and 51.26. A report covering attacks, fighter direction, visual fighter direction, Japanese tactics, window, I.F.F., C.I.C. equipment, weather and personnel is included in the Action Report of the Division Commander and for the sake of

## U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) ACTION REPORT - IWO JIMA OPERATION

## PART SIX (Cont.)

## 1. COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER and RADAR (Cont.)

brevity and to avoid duplicitous repetition, it is omitted from this report.

With reference to radar countermeasures, during the dusk raid of 23 February, a signal was detected at 150/1000/8 believed to have been that of the Japanese airborne Mark 6 Mod 4. The frequency of 150 mcs. was jammed with the AN/SPT-1 and AM-18 from 1935 to 2045. Its effectiveness however was unknown. On 6 March, from 1801 to 1806 very effective random noise modulated jamming was observed on the SK. Other SK radars in the vicinity were likewise affected. It is believed that the jamming signal originated within a friendly group of ships fifteen miles distant.

## 2. COMMUNICATIONS.

Communications during this operation were better organized and functioned more smoothly than in any previous operation in which this ship participated.

The enlisted complement of the Communication Department, however, was called upon to perform an exacting and exhausting job. The Radio and Signal personnel were continuously on a watch-on and watch-off basis since departure from port. To relieve this strain it is recommended that both Flag and Ship's complement of Signalmen and Radiomen be increased.

The following comments are made concerning circuits guarded during this operation:- 1. NPM Primary and NPM Secondary (jump). Little difficulty was experienced in copying these schedules except between the hours (approximately) of 0200 K and 0500 K when the signal strength was very weak. NPM's practice of repeating the traffic that had been sent during those hours indicates that the situation is understood. 2. 2032 KCS (CW) Task Group Commanders Circuit. It was found with some embarrassment, that transmissions of this circuit completely blocked out reception on 2096 KCS (Voice), the Inter Fighter Director Circuit. It is recommended that more widely separated frequencies be selected. 3. 2620 KCS (Voice) Air Support Commander Circuit. A very satisfactory circuit both in use and frequency. 4. 65.34 MCS - TBS Secondary. Used very successfully as an air operations circuit. It is recommended that some voice code word be designated meaning "Man TBS Secondary". It has been noted that, though an operator was kept on this circuit, it was seldom used between the hours of 2200 K and 0430 K. Such a code word to be passed over TBS Primary would alleviate the load on Radio Personnel. Radar Personnel frequently complained that this circuit interfered with the SK. It is therefore recommended that a new TBS Secondary frequency be designated. 5. MAN Gear was used on various frequencies during the operation as an emergency night maneuvering circuit. It is believed that more emphasis should be laid on the importance of such an emergency circuit.

Authenticators continue to be only "fair" on key circuits. A new procedure went into effect during the operation resulting in frequent repeats of authenticators, and it was often necessary to change back to the superseded procedure before other units would accept them as correct. It is recommended that no change in systems or procedure be made during an operation. The overloaded circuits cannot bear needless repeats and "arguments" between operators.

U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) ACTION REPORT - IWO JIMA OPERATION

PART SIX (Cont.)

3. NAVIGATION.

(a) Currents:-

11 February, at latitude 11° 33' N, Longitude 142° 43' E the following current was observed; Set 205°, Velocity 1.0 knots.

13 February, when operating 30 miles east of SAIPAN, the following current was observed; Set 245°, velocity 1/4 knot.

2 March, 100 miles ENE of IWO JIMA current was observed as follows; Set 036°, velocity 2 knots.

(b) Unusual rise noted in ocean temperature:-

During the 16 days while operating east of IWO JIMA a curious rise in ocean temperature was noted. As is well known, there is no diurnal range in sea water. A slight rise is observed when crossing a well defined current. However, a marked rise of 5-6° over the normal temperatures of 68-69° was observed occurring mostly around midnight. As the ship was steaming each night in the same area, the center of maximum rise has been traced to be in position 24-30 N, 143-00 E. While the rate of change of the temperature was about one degree per hour, a drastic change was noted from 0000 to 0100, 5 March 1945. Reconstructing the track from a radar fix obtained at 0440, the positions were found to be as follows:

At 0000 (Z-10) 5 March 24-22 N Ocean temperature (injection) 75° F.  
143-04 E

At 0100 (Z-10) 5 March 24-23 N Ocean temperature (injection) 70° F.  
142-51 E

A study of chart HO 5257 shows a line of soundings running N-S with depths 1700 fathoms and over. Yet a shoal of 1-3/4 fathoms, surrounded by soundings of 1400-2500 fathoms was reported in 1944 (Ref. Restricted N.M., July 15, 1944) in position 25-13 N, 142-56 E. This bank lies 45 miles North of the average position of greatest rise.

This region is one of volcanic activity. The injection temperatures are certified by the Chief Engineer to be correct. Also the rise has definitely been proven not to be due to a current, hence it is conjectured that the marked rise is due to submarine volcanic activity in this region.

| Hour | Injection Temperatures - Degrees Fahrenheit |    |    |    |          |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |    |    |    |    |
|------|---|----|----|----|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|----|----|----|----|
|      | Day   | 19 | 20 | 21 | February |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | March |    |    |    |    |
|      |   |    |    | 22 | 23       | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 1  | 2  | 3     | 4  | 5  | 6  |    |
| 2200 |   | 69 | 68 | 68 | 70       | 68 | 71 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 72 | 72 | 73    | 72 | 72 | 74 | 72 |
| 2300 |   | 69 | 69 | 67 | 70       | 69 | 71 | 71 | 71 | 72 | 74 | 74 | 74    | 73 | 74 | 75 | 73 |
| 0000 |   | 69 | 69 | 68 | 67       | 73 | 71 | 72 | 71 | 74 | 74 | 75 | 74    | 74 | 75 | 73 | 74 |
| 0100 |   | 69 | 69 | 67 | 69       | 71 | 72 | 71 | 70 | 72 | 74 | 75 | 73    | 73 | 70 | 71 | 74 |
| 0200 |   | 69 | 68 | 68 | 69       | 71 | 72 | 70 | 68 | 69 | 72 | 74 | 69    | 69 | 72 | 70 | 75 |
| 0300 |   | 69 | 68 | 69 | 69       | 71 | 70 | 69 | 68 | 69 | 68 | 72 | 68    | 69 | 70 | 70 | 70 |

U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82) ACTION REPORT - IWO JIMA OPERATION

PART SEVEN

Personnel performance and casualties.

Personnel performance was entirely satisfactory. One casualty resulted from action with the enemy. The following casualty report was submitted to the Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery under date of 7 March 1945.

- (a) 6 March 1945. IWO JIMA, VOLCANO ISLANDS. A crew member of TBM operating over IWO JIMA, VOLCANO ISLANDS, plane was struck by enemy anti-aircraft fire. The shell exploded inside the plane, causing casualty.
- (b) NEELEY, Eldon Wesley, 629 81 94, ARM3c V-6, USNR.
- (c) INJURIES, MULTIPLE, EXTREME #2542. KL "K", SL "R".
- (d) Fatal.
- (e) Buried in the Marine Cemetery on IWO JIMA, VOLCANO ISLANDS.

No other casualties were experienced.

PART EIGHT

Conclusions and Recommendations.

1. In view of the recent trend towards a more liberal recognition of meritorious achievement in flight by Navy Flight Personnel, it is recommended that an early expression of policy be made for use and guidance in connection with the recognition of meritorious achievement on the part of non-flying personnel.

It is also recommended that authorization for the wearing of operation and engagement stars be given as soon as possible after the completion of an operation, and that such information be disseminated by despatch.

2. The use of 5 inch rocket bodies with 5 inch motors was found to be far superior to the 5 inch body with a  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inch motor. The increased velocity greatly improved its accuracy and the straighter trajectory permitted hits to be observed with the accompanying improvement in damage assessment.

3. When the number of VF aircraft on CVEs was increased from sixteen to twenty, no corresponding proportional increase was made in the VF pilot allowance. When a flight schedule requires the use of all available VF aircraft, the demands made upon the present VF pilot complement are excessive. On one day, 60 flights were made, 36 of them by 24 VF pilots. The duration of the average flight made by VF pilots during the operation was  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours. The continuance of such a schedule would bring about a marked increase in pilot fatigue.

It is anticipated that the above schedule will be repeated in future operations. It is therefore recommended that an immediate increase be made in the VF pilot allowance for all composite squadrons operating on CVEs.

F.C. SUTTON,  
Captain, U.S. Navy,  
Commanding.

MINCH F-01 AA-1  
Feb., 1944

CONFIDENTIAL

REVISED FORM FOR REPORTING A.A. ACTION BY SURFACE SHIPS

Location of ship (area) Near Iwo Jima U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82)  
Zone Time -10 Date 21 February 1945

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1. Surprise attack (yes or no) No Day or Night Dusk  
2. Method picking plane up (Radar, binoculars, naked eye) Radar  
3. Range plane was picked up (50,30,10, less than 5 miles) Thirty (30) miles  
4. Total number of planes observed Five (5) Type Jill  
5. Number of planes attacking own ship One (1) Type Jill  
6. Number of planes taken under fire by own ship Three (3)  
(a) Of those attacking own ship One (1) Type Jill  
(b) Others Two (2) Type Jill  
7. Speed and altitude of approach in knots and feet 300 Knots - 75 to 100 feet  
8. Number of guns firing-by caliber 1 - 5"/38, 4 - 40MM Twins, 10 - 20MM  
9. Ammunition expended-by caliber 5"/38 - 1 Rd., 40MM - 300 Rds., 20MM - 1000 Rds.  
10. Percent service allowance expended Less than one (1) percent  
11. Method of control Director and Local Method of spotting By eye  
Method of ranging By eye Method of firing Estimation  
12. Approximate time-tracking to first shot Thirty (30) seconds  
13. Approximate time of first hits First shots  
14. Approximate time first shot to last shot Two (2) to five (5) minutes  
15. Approximate position angle open fire Two (2) to zero

16. Approximate position angle cease fire Zero
17. Approximate bearing first shot 340° Relative
18. Approximate bearing last shot Two planes - One plane 300°, the other 240°
19. Approximate range first shot 3,000 yards Altitude of Plane 75 feet
20. Approximate minimum range aircraft approached 1500 yards Altitude 75 feet
21. Approximate range last shot #3 plane - 6000 yards Altitude of Plane 75 feet
22. Approximate altitude of bomb release None Size of bomb -----
23. Approximate range torpedo release None Size torpedo -----
24. Number hits on ship by bombs None by torpedoes None Was ship strafed? No  
 Size gun -----
25. Number near bomb misses damaging ship -----
26. Planes shot down: Two (2)
- |                              | SURE<br>(By own ship alone) | SURE<br>(Assist) | PROBABLE     | DAMAGED        |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| (a) Those attacking own ship | <u>-----</u>                | <u>One (1)</u>   | <u>-----</u> | <u>-----</u>   |
| (b) Other aircraft           | <u>-----</u>                | <u>One (1)</u>   | <u>-----</u> | <u>One (1)</u> |
27. Best estimate of size gun or guns responsible for each "Sure" 40MM
28. Performance of ammunition (excellent, good, bad, poor) Excellent
29. What failures in material occurred in this action? None
30. Sketch:

See Page Four A



UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET  
AIR FORCE  
COMPOSITE SQUADRON EIGHTY EIGHT

S-E-C-R-E-T  
Serial 008

Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, Calif.  
13 March 1945.

**From:** Commanding Officer, Composite Squadron EIGHTY EIGHT.  
**To :** Commanding Officer, U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE-82).  
**Subject:** Composite Squadron EIGHTY EIGHT's operations during the occupation of Iwo Jima 10 February to 11 March 1945 - Squadron Commander's report on.  
**Reference:** (a) ACA-1 Aircraft Action Reports, VC-88 #28 to #76 inclusive.  
**Enclosure:** (A) Original copy of ACA-1 Aircraft Action Reports, VC-88 #28 to #76 inclusive.

1. As Commanding Officer of Composite Squadron EIGHTY EIGHT, during the Iwo Jima campaign I would like to make the following statements:

1. Assign at least six (6) more VF pilots to each squadron. With the operation of 20 VF planes, standing condition eleven a majority of the time, taxiing planes forward for landings and having pilots grounded, considerable difficulty is encountered in maintaining the strenuous flight schedule with the present fighter pilot complement.
2. Recommend that another yeoman be assigned to Composite Squadrons. Composite Squadrons are not what they started out to be. They are now practically Air Groups. We have always felt the need for another yeoman, but in the last three (3) months we have had definite need for another yeoman.
3. Recommend that each squadron be furnished with the squadron markings of other squadron planes so we will know with what squadron we are joining, thereby helping much to expedite daylight rendezvous on strike missions.
4. Recommend that squadrons be furnished with better and more advance information regarding types and times friendly planes will be in operational areas.
5. Recommend that VF type planes be used for Air Coordinator work. An Air Coordinator can maneuver much better and faster and can work target better in a VF than he can in a VT plane. I believe it is an all round better plane for an Air Coordinator's work.

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET  
AIR FORCE  
COMPOSITE SQUADRON EIGHTY EIGHT

S-E-C-R-E-T  
Serial 008

Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, Calif.  
13 March 1945

Subject: Composite Squadron EIGHTY EIGHT's operations during the  
occupation of Iwo Jima 10 February to 11 March 1945 -  
Squadron Commander's report on - - - - - Cont'd.

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6. Recommend that only Trained Air Coordinators be used. Many Squadron Commanders and Executive Officers have no training of any kind in this work and are not qualified. An Air Coordinator should be highly reliable and well trained.

7. Recommend that bombing with delayed action fuzes be used when possible. Many times during the Iwo Jima operation, when practically no anti-aircraft fire was encountered, low level bombing with delayed action fuzes could have been employed to good advantage and probably would have had better results than glide bombing in a VT plane.

8. Recommend that FS rockets be used by Air Coordinators and possibly Flight Leaders to mark targets. Regular rockets are not satisfactory for marking targets, one cannot see where they hit.

9. Recommend that more call strikes be used. This would keep the number of planes around target area to a minimum and would result in better air discipline; Channels would not be so cluttered up by strike hops that are doing nothing but orbiting for 2 or 3 hours before they are to be used. Much of the interference on the air was not by the planes actually in the strike but by planes that were orbiting and waiting. Also many bombs and rockets were expended needlessly just to satisfy the pilots and to get rid of them. Had they been called when needed they could have used their load to good advantage.

10. There was practically no area bombing in this operation, every mission was a pin-point bombing mission and no dive bombers were ever used. Pin-point bombing can not be done with any degree of accuracy in a VT plane. Many and most of our targets that we repeatedly missed in VT planes could have been easily hit with a dive bomber. Single gun positions, small holes and caves that require accuracy in bombing could have been eliminated much sooner and better by dive bombers.

11. Recommend that dive bombers be employed in future operations that will require all pin-point bombing such as this one did.

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET  
AIR FORCE  
COMPOSITE SQUADRON EIGHTY EIGHT

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13 March 1945

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occupation of Iwo Jima 10 February to 11 March 1945 -  
Squadron Commander's report on - - - - - Cont'd.

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12. In the middle of the operations we received aboard three (3) VT pilots that hadn't flown for three (3) months. We could have used VF pilots but we certainly cannot use any pilot that has not made a carrier landing for three months.

13. Bomb shackles that hold napalm bombs are not satisfactory. No one ever knows when it will release. Several times our pilots were unable to get the bombs off at all. A bomb release like this cuts down the accuracy of the bombing. It usually comes off after you have pulled two or three times and have passed over the target. A new bomb release mechanism should be devised for FM-2 napalm bombing.

14. Many dye markers were dropped by A.S.P. planes in order to mark their original positions of navigation in their sectors. Also many other dye markers were dropped around for some reason or other. Many times these dye markers were sighted and valuable time was wasted investigating them. Indiscriminate droppings of dye markers should be discontinued.

E. L. KEMPF