

# AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED  
(Reclassify when filled out)

52850

## I. GENERAL

(a) Unit Reporting VP-45 (b) Based on or at USS SAN JACINTO (c) Report No. 97  
 (d) Take off: Date 15 April 1945 Time (LZT) 1325(I) (Zone); Lat. 27° 03'N Long. 130° 14'E  
 (e) Mission Search, Kyushu Japan (Kanoya Airfield) (f) Time of Return 1710 (I) (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>PCP-5</u>	<u>VP-45</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>Each plane carried 1 x 500 lb. GP bomb</u>	<u>M81-64, None fuze, instantaneous</u>

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

TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE	TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE
<u>Approximately 60 B-24 from the USS BELLEAU WOOD</u>							
<u>USS HENRY and USS BRUNINGTON</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
<u>S.S.</u>	<u>App. 125</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>1505 (ZONE)</u>	<u>Kanoya and</u>	<u>None observed</u>	<u>One airborne Zeke</u>
<u>T.B.</u>	<u>App. 50</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>1530(I)</u> <u>(ZONE)</u>	<u>Takayama</u> <u>Airfields,</u> <u>Kyushu</u>	<u>None observed</u>	<u>and several single</u> <u>engine enemy VP</u> <u>marked at Kanoya</u> <u>airfield were paint-</u> <u>ed dark blue res-</u>

sembling Hellcats. The Jap planes had standard red  
nose balls.

(h) Apparent Enemy Mission(s) X  
 Did Any Part of  
 (i) Encounter(s) Occur in Clouds? X If so, Describe Clouds X  
(YES OR NO) (BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)  
 Time of Day and Brilliance  
 (j) of Sun or Moon X (k) Visibility X  
(NIGHT, BRIGHT MOON; DAY, OVERCAST; ETC.) (MILES)

## V. ENEMY AIRCRAFT DESTROYED OR DAMAGED IN AIR (By Own Aircraft Listed in II Only).

(a) TYPE ENEMY A/C	(b) DESTROYED OR DAMAGED BY:				(c) WHERE HIT, ANGLE	(d) DAMAGE CLAIMED
	TYPE A/C	SQUADRON	PILOT OR GUNNER	GUNS USED		
<u>None</u>						



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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) Ranong and Takayama Airfields, Myanmar (FOR SHIPS INCLUDE ALL IN AREA UNDER ATTACK) (b) Time Over Target(s) 1505-1530(1) (Zone)
- (c) Clouds Over Target Clear (BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)
- (d) Visibility of Target Clear (CLEAR, HAZY, PARTIALLY OBSCURED BY CLOUDS, ETC.) (e) Visibility Unlimited (MILES)
- (f) Bombing Tactics: Type 01100 (LEVEL, GLIDE OR DIVE) Bomb Sight Used Mark 8 range 4 (TYPE)
- Bombs Dropped per Run 1 (NUMBER) Spacing 1 (FEET) Altitude of Bomb Release 2000 (FEET)
- (g) Number of Enemy Aircraft Hit on Ground: Destroyed 2 Probably Destroyed 6 Damaged 10-11

(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					
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).

(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 P-51's of Fighting Squadron FORTY FIVE were launched by the USS SAN JACINTO at 1325 (1) 15 March 1945, to join with approximately sixty VF from the USS HENNINGTON, HENRY AND BELLEAU WOOD for a fighter sweep of Kanoya Airfield, southern Kyushu. The leader of the sweep was from the USS HENNINGTON, and Lt. L.S. Fortner led the four planes of the SAN JACINTO. The three other pilots were Lt(jg)'s Snay and Taylor and Ensign Stapleton.

The flight was separated into two groups, the leading element being the USS HENNINGTON planes together with eight VFB from the USS BELLEAU WOOD and the four fighter bombers from the SAN JACINTO. When the leading group was passing over the southern coast of Kyushu several large bogies were tally-hoed by the HENRY planes. Upon hearing these bogey reports and believing aerial combat imminent the flight leader ordered all bombs to be jettisoned in preparation for an air battle. Lt(jg) Taylor obeyed these instructions, dropping his bomb short of the target objective, but Lt. Fortner, Lt(jg) Snay and Ens. Stapleton "hung on" to their quarter-tonnors inasmuch as they could not see the immediate necessity for throwing them away.

Upon arriving in a position for the attack, Lt. Fortner, who saw no airborne enemy aircraft, asked permission to lead his planes in a bombing run on the field. This permission was granted by the flight leader, who also ordered all other VF with bombs to make their runs on the field and to gain altitude as quickly as possible proceeding to rendezvous over the inlet immediately east of the eastern coast of Kyushu.

Lt. Fortner's division made their bombing run from west to east, the release point for Fortner and Stapleton being 2000 feet and the pull out being "on the deck". Lt. Fortner's bomb hit a saw-tooth building in the 22nd Naval Air Base approximately 1000 feet north of the hangar area. (A large fire resulted, and the building was still ablaze when the planes departed). Stapleton's bomb fell just south of the hangar area, presumably in the large cluster of twin-engine aircraft which were parked on the field. The bomb hit was not actually seen. Snay's bomb did not release.

All four Hellcats strafed while going down in their run. A more lucrative strafing target could hardly be imagined: at least 50 twin engine planes and approximately 75 fighters, all drawn up cheek-to-heel in the open, new, shiny and vulnerable. A minimum of twelve enemy planes were given a lethal spray of machine gun bullets, including ten twin-engine bombers and two single engine VF. The attention of the pilots was diverted by the bombing run, but they definitely knew that at least one bomber went up in flames.

Lt(jg) Snay pulled out at a slightly higher altitude than the other three Hellcats and became separated from them. He joined up on planes of the USS HENRY and returned to Base still carrying his bomb, not knowing that it had failed to release. The other three pilots, under the leadership of Lt. Fortner, were ordered to orbit, but as the rest of the sweep planes continued to make runs on Kanoya Airfield, Lt. Fortner led his three plane division to Takayama Airfield, four miles to the south-east. This single strip airfield was likewise loaded in stockyard fashion with fighters: Zekes, Oscars and possibly Franks. The three fighters made a single pass on Takayama field, strafing at least six Zekes. These Zekes were parked at the western edge of the runway and were ineffectually concealed by brush or netting camouflage. Flames and smoke arose from the half-dozen Zekes as the Hellcats pulled out. Owing to the paucity of the Hellcats with him, Lt. Fortner orbited over the rendezvous

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position for approximately fifteen minutes at 1000 feet, finally departing at 1530 (I) in company with 7 BELLICAN WOOD fighters.

On the return trip a single strafing pass was made on Chira Airfield, Tanaga Shima. No Japanese aircraft were located on the field, but there was a considerable amount of heavy and medium anti-aircraft fire. One of the BELLICAN WOOD's VF was hit by this AA and was forced to make a water landing.

The planes returned without further incident, rendezvousing at 1710 (I).

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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

**All material and equipment functioned satisfactorily.**

REPORT PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

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RANK AND DUTY ASST Officer

SIGNATURE L. E. FORKNER, Lt., USNR  
RANK AND DUTY Commanding Officer

4-27-45  
DATE

ACTING