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Report #24

IC (7)

VD-5/
Ser. No. (^{A16-3} 0105)

CHL:fb

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
AIR FORCE
FLEET AIR PHOTOGRAPHIC SQUADRON FIVE

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California

MAR 19 1945

CONFIDENTIAL

From: Commanding Officer.
To: Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Aircraft Action Report No. 26, Photographic Reconnaissance
Truk Airfields and Airfields at Puluwat and Woleai, 21 February 1945.

Enclosure: (A) Subject report.

1. Enclosure (A) is forwarded herewith.

A. D. FRASER

XII. TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL DATA.

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Coverage of Caroline Island airfields was the mission of four Squadron PB4Y-1P's departing Agana Field, Guam, 21 February 1945, 0627 King, with fighter escort of 18 P-38's from the Army's 333rd, 73rd and 19th Fighter Squadrons based on Saipan. Lt. Comdr. L. R. GEHLBACH, USN, was flight leader and, with Lieut. G. H. CONOVER, USNR, was to photograph airfields on Moen, Eten and Param Islands (Truk). Lt.(jg) FITZSIMMONS, USNR, was to stand by near the perimeter of Truk lagoon to act as navigational escort in case of need by the fighters. Lt.(jg) BRAUN left the formation, proceeding alone to Puluwat and Woleai Atolls for vertical photography of their airfields.

Primary mission of the P-38's was strafing of operational aircraft on Truk's airfields, plus acting as fighter protection for the photo planes.

Flight arrived at Truk 1105 K, where they found good weather. GEHLBACH and CONOVER followed the fighters over the Atoll, being unable to keep them in view during their strafing runs. Heavy smoke was observed, however, close by the north air strip on Moen. Successful photo flight lines were run over all targets and radar window was dropped by each photo plane at 5 second intervals during photo runs. Anti-aircraft fire was consistently inaccurate and both VD-5 pilots were certain (after previous experiences over Truk) that the use of window was definitely helpful.

Lt. Comdr. GEHLBACH effected rendezvous north of the lagoon with the P-38's and acted as navigational escort to a point near Guam from which the fighters were given a bearing for return to Saipan. The three photo planes of the Truk flight had returned to base at Guam by 1430 King.

Lt.(jg) BRAUN obtained good vertical coverage of Puluwat and Woleai without opposition of any sort and returned to Guam 1554 King.

REPORT PREPARED BY:

C. H. Lewis
C. H. LEWIS
Lieut., USNR
ACI Officer

APPROVED BY:

A. D. Fraser
A. D. FRASER
Commander, USN
Commanding Officer

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AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when
filled out)

I. GENERAL

(a) Unit Reporting VD-5 (b) Based on or at Guam (c) Report No. 26
 (d) Take off: Date 21 February 1945 Time (LZT) 0627 King (Zone); Lat. 13° 30' N Long. 144° 47' E
 (e) Mission Photo Reconnaissance, Truk Airfields and Airfields at Puluwat and Woleai. (f) Time of Return 1430 King (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)		
PDAY-1P	VD-5	4		3	None	

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

TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE	TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE
P-38	333 FS	8	Saipan				
P-38	73 FS	4	Saipan				
P-38	19 FS	6	Saipan				

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
None			(ZONE)			
			(ZONE)			
			(ZONE)			

(h) Apparent Enemy Mission(s) _____

(i) Encounter(s) Occur in Clouds? _____ If so, Describe Clouds _____
(YES OR NO) (BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)

(j) Time of Day and Brilliance _____ (k) Visibility _____
(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:			GUNS USED	(c) WHERE HIT, ANGLE	(d) DAMAGE CLAIMED
	TYPE A/C	SQUADRON	PILOT OR GUNNER			
None						