

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when filled out)

I. GENERAL

Confidential

**USS YAKUTAT
KERAMA RETTO**

(a) Unit Reporting **VPB-27** (b) Based on or at **USS YAKUTAT
KERAMA RETTO** (c) Report No. **2-45**

(d) Take off: Date **27 April 1945** Time (LZT) **1830 I** (Zone); Lat. **26-12 N** Long. **127-18 E**

(e) Mission **Night shipping strike on enemy convoy** (f) Time of Return **0330 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)		
PBM-5	VPB-27	3	0	3	4-500 lb. GP	4-5 second delay

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

TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE	TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE
PBM-5	VBB-208	3	Kerama Retto				

IV. ENEMY AIRCRAFT OBSERVED OR ENGAGED (By Own Aircraft Listed in II Only).

(a) TYPE	(b) NO OBSERVED	(c) NO. ENGAGING OWN A/C	(d) TIME ENCOUNTERED	(e) LOCATION OF ENCOUNTER	(f) BOMBS, TORPEDOES CARRIED; GUNS OBSERVED	(g) CAMOUFLAGE AND MARKING
			(ZONE)			
			(ZONE)			
			(ZONE)			

(h) Apparent Enemy Mission(s) _____

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

(j) Time of Day and Brilliance of Sun or Moon _____ (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			

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VI. LOSS OR DAMAGE, COMBAT OR OPERATIONAL, OF OWN AIRCRAFT (of those listed in II only).

(a) TYPE OWN A/C	(b) SQUADRON	(c) CAUSE: TYPE ENEMY A/C, TYPE GUN, OR OPERATIONAL CAUSE	(d) WHERE HIT, ANGLE (List armor, self-sealing tanks, equipment hit)	(e) EXTENT OF LOSS OR DAMAGE, (Give Bureau serial number of planes destroyed)
1 PBM-5	VPB27	Enemy heavy AA	5-inch shell passed through fuel trunk compartment. Did not explode. Severed controls to port aileron.	Miscellaneous minor flak holes and damage to control cables.
2				
3				
4				
5				
6 PBM-5	VPB27	Medium AA	40 MM. hit bow and exploded; another hit port wing, a third holed hull.	Electrical equipment forward out; 4" flak hole in bilges, major damage to port wing.
7				
8				
9				
10 PBM-5	VPB-27	Medium AA	40 mm. hit buttockboard of port engine nacelle smashing main spar and damage engine mount.	Damage to port wing and port engine so severe that it was impossible to repair. A strike. Buno. 59018
11				
12				
13				
14				

VII. PERSONNEL CASUALTIES (in aircraft listed in II only; identify with planes listed in VI by Nos. at left).

(a) NO.	(b) SQUADRON	(c) NAME, RANK OR RATING	(d) CAUSE	(e) CONDITION OR STATUS
1	VPB27	Lt. F. J. Egles	Flak	treated-back on duty
1	"	Lt.(j.g.) A.L. Krum	Flak	treated-back on duty
1	"	Jaskot, J.J. AMM 1/c	Flak	treated-back on duty

VIII. RANGE, FUEL, AND AMMUNITION DATA FOR PLANES RETURNING

(a) TYPE A/C	(b) MILES OUT	(c) MILES RETURN	(d) AV. HOURS IN AIR	(e) AV. FUEL LOADED	(f) AV. FUEL CONSUMED	(g) TOTAL AMMUNITION EXPENDED				(h) NO. OF PLANES RETURNING	
						.30	.50	20MM	MM		
PBM-5	500	500	10	2,400	1,500			2,200			3

IX. ENEMY ANTI-AIRCRAFT ENCOUNTERED (Check one block on each line).

CALIBER	NONE	MEAGER	MODERATE	INTENSE
HEAVY — Time-fused shells, 75mm and over			X	
MEDIUM — Impact-fused shells, 20mm-50mm				X
LIGHT — Machine gun bullets, 6.5mm-13.2mm			X	

X. COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE, OWN AND ENEMY AIRCRAFT (use check list at left).

- SPEED, CLIMB,
at various altitudes

TURNS

DIVES

CEILINGS

RANGE

PROTECTION

ARMAMENT

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(OMIT THIS SHEET IF NO ATTACK WAS MADE)

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

(a) Target(s) and Location(s) **Enemy convoy of five large tankers and freighters & 5 escorts** (b) Time Over Target(s) **2250 I** (Zone)

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

(d) Visibility of Target **Hazy** (e) Visibility **1 1/2 miles** (CLEAR, HAZY, PARTIALLY OBSCURED BY CLOUDS, ETC.) (MILES)

(f) Bombing Tactics: Type **low level masthead attack** Bomb Sight Used **seaman's eye** (LEVEL, GLIDE OR DIVE) (TYPE)

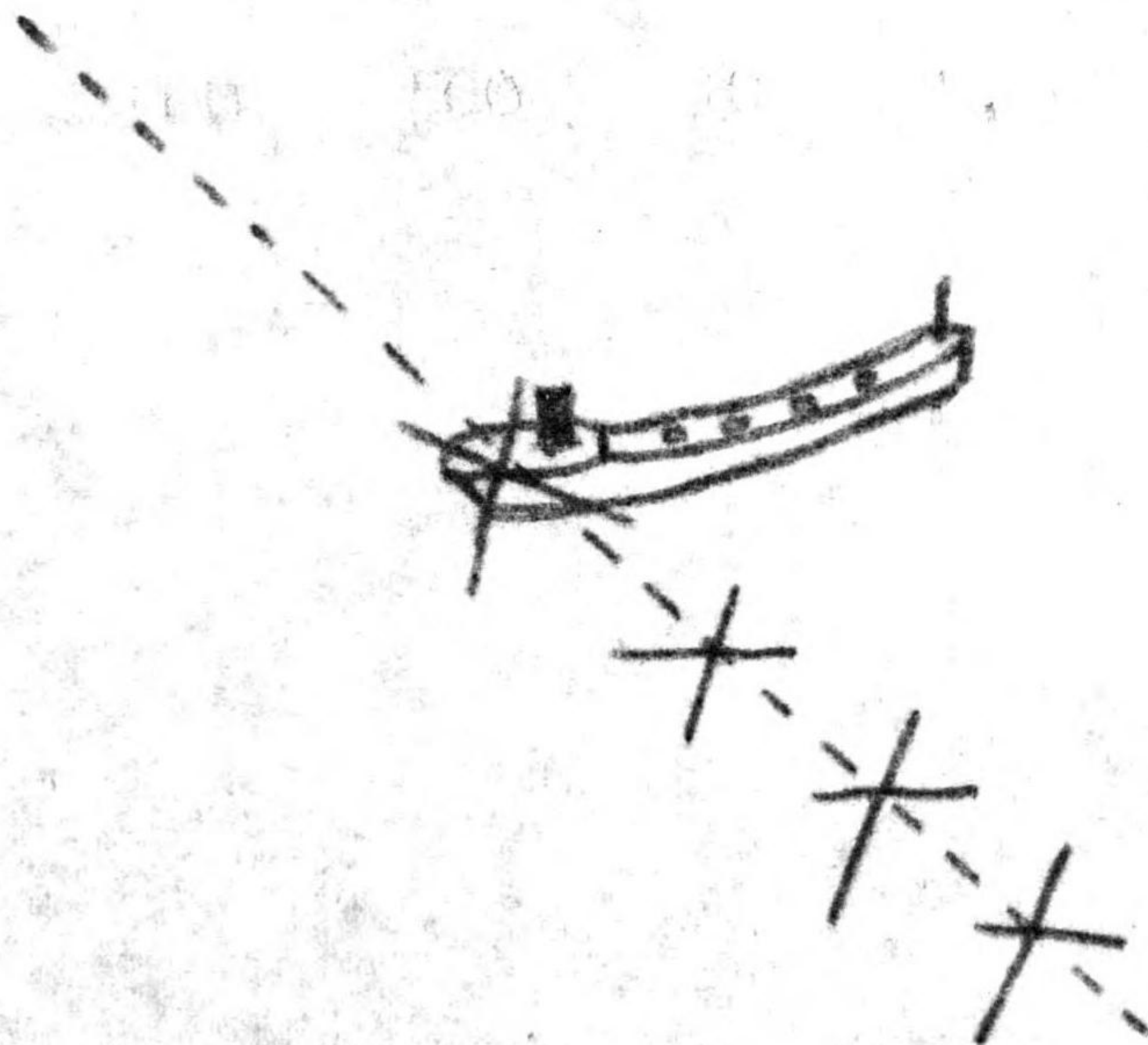
Bombs Dropped per Run **4** Spacing **30 feet** Altitude of Bomb Release **150-200 feet** (NUMBER) (FEET) (FEET)

(g) Number of Enemy Aircraft Hit on Ground: Destroyed **0** Probably Destroyed **0** Damaged **0**

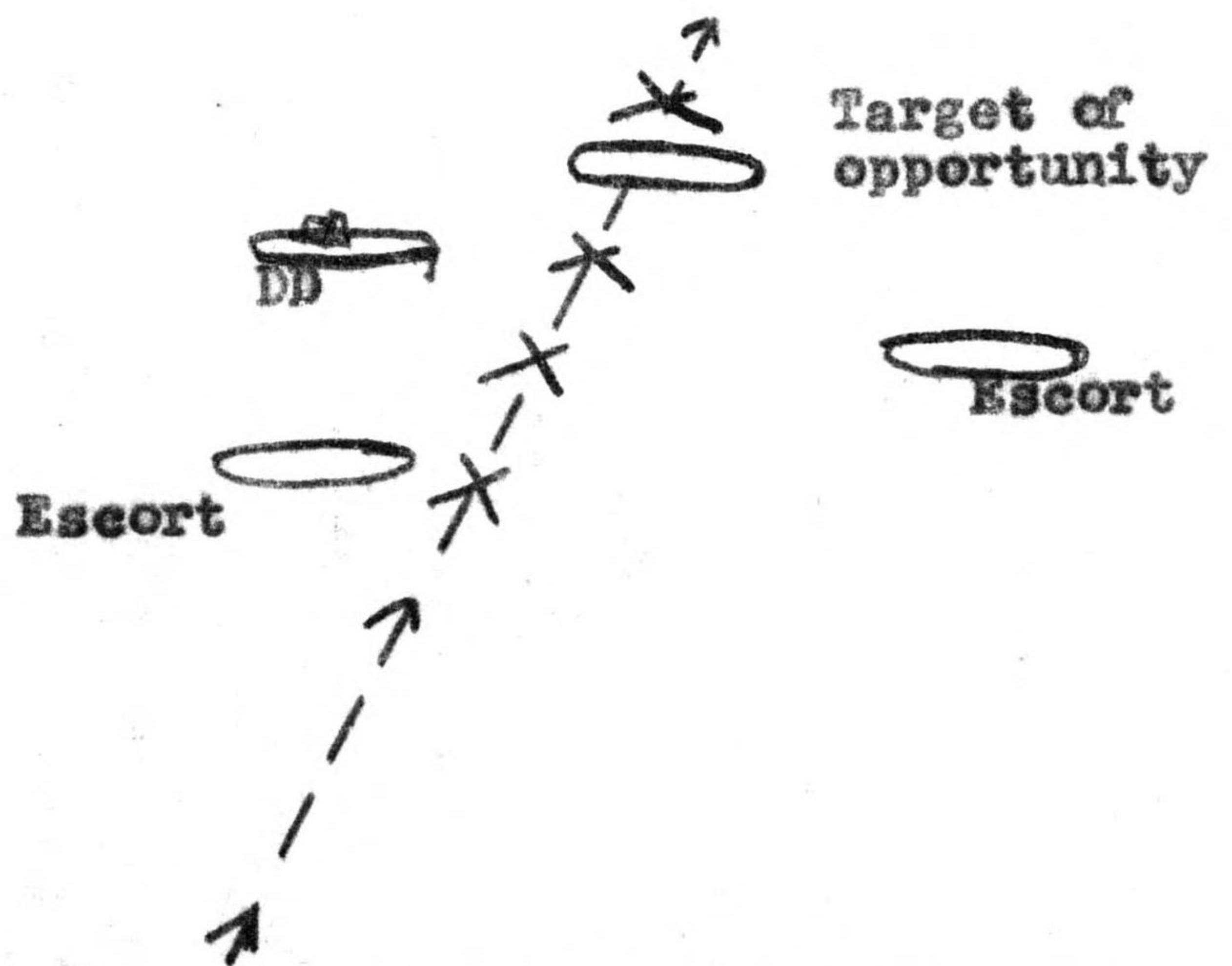
(h) AIMING POINT	(i) DIMENSIONS OR TONNAGE	(j) NO. A/C ATTACKING (k) SQUADRON	(l) BOMBS AND AMMUNITION EXPENDED EACH AIMING POINT	(m) NO HITS On Aiming Point	(n) DAMAGE (None, slight, serious, destroyed or sunk)
1 Beam to stern	400-500' 5,500tons	one VPB-27	4-500 lb. GP 400 rds. 50 cal.	1	Serious, possibly destroyed, sunk.
2 bow	Sugar Charlie	one VBB-27	4-500 lb. GP 1,200 rds. 50 cal.	?	Unknown but hit considered probable
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).

1.



2.



X Indicates bomb drops

X Indicates probable position of bomb drops.

(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.)

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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

Search planes of Fleet Air Wing ONE early the morning of 27 April 1945 spotted a heavily escorted Jap convoy of fat freighters and oilers slipping up the China coast to sneak across the Yellow Sea into Korea's protective coves and inlets. Three PBM-5's of VPB-27 and three from VPB-208 were ordered alerted for a special strike mission since at this phase of the Okinawa operation Mariners were the only planes available that could pack a 2,000 pound bomb load that far and return.

At 1800 the six aircraft took off from Kerama Retto with 4-500 pound GP's nestled in the bomb bays of each plane. Trackers had been snooping along the convoy course throughout the day and were ready to home in the planes of the special strike mission. As the attack group heard the interception point, the weather was good -- too good, in fact. A brilliant full moon sparkled across the sea without a cloud in the sky. Except for haze it was like daylight. The planes approached in echelons of three, the first trio in left echelon, the second in right echelon. Both groups were in a loose formation and it was decided to sweep over the convoy on a cross moon path.

The first echelon of planes (from VPB-208) delivered the initial attack, going in low and fast. The VPB-27 Mariners followed about three minutes later -- a time lag they were to regret as it gave the convoy ample opportunity to bring guns to bear on the second group of planes. As VPB-208 swept across the ships AA fire lighted the sky but the heavy bursts appeared to be exploding well above the attacking planes.

Lieutenant Walter J. McGuire, executive officer of VPB-27, was the first plane of his squadron to attack. Using 46 inches and 2600 RPM, Lieutenant McGuire was indicating 190 knots as he came across the first ship of the screening escorts. With an eye on a fat tanker (believed to have been a Sugar Able) Lieutenant McGuire slipped around in front of the first escort vessel and to the stern of another escort to get a beam-to-quarter run across his target. He was boring down on his target with everything set for an ideal drop when all of a sudden bedlam broke loose in the plane, the controls flipped crazily and the port wing dropped. Lieutenant McGuire pressed the pickle and turned all his attention to fighting the bucking plane. Pulling up and away he discovered a 5-inch shell had torn completely through his plane from starboard to port, entering just below the flight engineer's position, passing through the door leading down from the flight deck, severing controls to the left aileron and tearing on out the port side. Miraculously the shell failed to explode. Lieutenant McGuire regained control of the plane and heard his deck and tail gunners report that the first three bombs appeared to fall short but that the fourth looked like a direct hit on the fantail of the ship, as smoke, water and debris flew high in the air. All gunners strafed during the attack.

XIII. TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL DATA.

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Lieutenant Franz J. Egli was second across and he too came in low and fast toward his target, which was to the left center of the convoy. As the range closed the ships poured up a heavy barrage of all sorts of AA fire which broke just forward and above the plane. Lieutenant Egli altered course to starboard and gratefully noticed the AA fire was bursting to his port side. Approaching closer he found his original target appeared to be a destroyer so he dodged around it, ignored fire from another escort, and headed for the dark hulk of a tanker or freighter which lay nearly dead ahead. No defensive fire was coming from the ship so Lieutenant Egli swung slightly to starboard and started a shallow dive for his target. Bombs were dropped from about 150 feet at 185 knots but before the results could be seen there was a blinding flash in the pilots compartment as the plane took a 40 mm. hit in the bow. Shrapnel from the explosive shell tore the electrical system forward to shreds, put some 40 flak holes in the forward compartment, destroyed the automatic pilot, knocked out the airspeed indicator, and in general played havoc with the plane. Another shell slammed into the port wing six feet outboard of the engine nacelle, carving a three foot hole between the flap and the trailing edge. Other flak holes appeared in the bomb bay and added ventilation was given the forward bunk room. Lieutenant Egli and his crew members were too busy getting away to determine the damage to their target. From all accounts, however, "it should have been a hit."

Lieutenant (jg) Otho L. Edwards, last man across the target, had the worst luck. He came in just far enough behind the others to notice that ships were concentrating on the attacking planes instead of him. But once the lead planes were over the target, "all Hell broke loose on me just as I was heading for a fat and well filled enemy freighter", Edwards reported. With the target dead ahead and only seconds to go until the release point, Lieutenant (jg) Edwards's plane suddenly was flung violently upward. He pressed the bomb release, then started fighting the controls with the co-pilot lending a hand in the struggle. The radio altimeter was out and as the plane waddled along like a lame duck, the pressure altimeter read minus 140 feet. From his fast approach run at 190 knots the plane fell off to an indicated air speed of 80 to 85 knots. Full power was used but to no avail. The plane vibrated so much that it was almost impossible to control. Then came the crowning blow. His AOM called over ICS to report the bombs had failed to release. Quickly Lieutenant (jg) Edwards jettisoned the bomb load. Even that didn't help much and the plane still struggled along barely holding flying speed and only a few feet off the water. Waist guns were tossed overboard. So was the galley and everything else that could be flung out a hatch. Finally the plane struggled up to 100 knots and began to climb a bit. By using full power on the starboard engine and reduced settings on the port power plant, things became a bit more normal. But the long 500 mile trek back to base was an ordeal. When the Mariner was once again on the waters of its home lagoon with all crew members safe, Edwards looked out to see a gaping hole in the port engine nacelle where a direct hit had blasted the main spar, severely damaged the engine mount and destroyed the bomb release system. The bomb bay door never would close on the trip home. Damage to the plane was so severe that it was recommended for striking.

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A summary of the night's activity showed that the squadron's planes severely damaged one good sized Jap tanker and possibly hit or damaged another. In addition some 2200 rounds of .50 caliber had been scattered over the Jap infested decks of merchant ships and war vessels. However VPB-27 wound up with one PBM that was ready to strike and salvage locally and two others that required extensive repairs before they were ready for service again.

On the human side of the ledger, however, the score was 100 per cent in our favor. We had three casualties, none of whom needed any more than first aid treatment for relatively minor flak scratches.

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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

The assigned mission was carried out according to tactics prescribed but hindsight makes it appear as if the Mariners might have packed a more effective punch if they had carried torpedoes.

In this instance the convoy was bunched close together for added protection. Pilots seemed to feel the PBM presents too big a target for a low level attack against adequately escorted enemy shipping. Use of torpedoes would have enabled the strike group to drop from a reasonably safe distance without having to fly directly across the ships and their escorts in the bright moonlight. A darker night, or cloud cover, in all probability would have subjected the attacking force to less defensive firepower.

All planes strafed extensively in the approach runs after the ships opened up on them and a total of 2,200 rounds were fired by the three VPB-27 PBM's. All guns operated perfectly and the only malfunction of equipment was the failure of Lieutenant (jg) Edward's bomb release system which of course is directly attributable to battle damage sustained before he tried to drop.

REPORT PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

SIGNATURE **Lt. (jg.) Wm. T. Bailey, A CIO** RANK AND DUTY

SIGNATURE **E.H. Chase, 2nd, Lt. Comdr. USN** RANK AND DUTY
Commanding Officer.

14 May 1945
DATE