

VMB-423

158  
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Report #210

LC (9)

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# AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED  
(Reclassify when filled out)

(OMIT THIS SHEET IF NO ATTACK WAS MADE)

**CONFIDENTIAL**

REPORT No **210**

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

- (a) Target(s) and Location(s) Baniu Area, Bougainville (b) Time Over Target(s) 0915-0916 (Zone)  
(FOR SHIPS INCLUDE ALL IN AREA UNDER ATTACK)
- (c) Clouds Over Target CAVU  
(BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)
- (d) Visibility of Target Clear (e) Visibility 30 miles  
(CLEAR, HAZY, PARTIALLY OBSCURED BY CLOUDS, ETC.) (MILES)
- (f) Bombing Tactics: Type Low level Bomb Sight Used None  
(LEVEL, GLIDE OR DIVE) (TYPE)
- Bombs Dropped per Run 8 Spacing 150 feet Altitude of Bomb Release 100 feet  
(NUMBER) (FEET) (FEET)
- (g) Number of Enemy Aircraft Hit on Ground: Destroyed None Probably Destroyed None Damaged None

(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 <u>Baniu Area, Bougainville</u>		<u>8</u> <u>VMB-423</u>	<u>40 X 250 # GP</u>	<u>40</u>	
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.)

The target was well covered with bombs as forty 250 pounders were in the target with eight 250 pounders slightly short. One fire was started with smoke to 300 feet but the speed of the planes prevented an assessment of results.

The target area was thoroughly strafed, approximately 12,000 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition being expended.

(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

CALL	PILOT	T/O GREEN	T/O/T	P/C GREEN
301B21	LtCol. ANDERSON	0830	0915	1015
302B21	GRIFFITTS	0830	0915	1016
303B21	MARTIN	0831	0915	1016
304B21	HOPPER	0831	0916	1016
305B21	FRIEDMAN	0832	0916	1017
306B21	CANNON	0832	0916	1019

On 18 February, 1945, Lieutenant Colonel ANDERSON, Commanding Officer of VNB-423, led six PBJs in a low level bombing and strafing attack on Jap personnel in Baniu Area Bougainville, coordinated with a similar attack on the same target by New Zealand Venturas. This strike was planned to surprise the enemy, relying on the speed of the planes and the choice of an approach to achieve this effect.

The flight was airborne by 0832 and after joining-up in two, three plane sections in vee javelin down proceeded to the east side of Bougainville on a course of 129° magnetic for 81 miles. At a point nine miles southeast of Cape L'Avardy the formation turned right to a course of 282° magnetic for the run to the target. The run over the target was made in three plane sections line abreast. Bombs were dropped from tree top level at 180 knots indicated, the first section releasing at 0915 and the second section at 0916.

The target area was thoroughly strafed, approximately 12,000 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition being expended. Two planes of the first section were PBJ-1J's with eight nose guns and four package guns firing forward. The fire power of these planes was very effective. The detrimental effect of the large amount of powder smoke resulting from the twelve guns was minimized by keeping the pilot's window open which kept the pilot's compartment relatively free of smoke.

The target was well covered with bombs as forty 250 pounders were in the target with eight 250 pounders slightly short. One fire was started with smoke to 800 feet but the speed of the planes prevented an assessment of results.

The flight encountered moderate, inaccurate machine gun fire from positions west of the target.

The New Zealand Venturas took off two minutes after the PBJs ~~were~~ proceeding down the west side of Bougainville making a low level attack on a course of approximately 070° magnetic four minutes after the PBJs.

(All times in this narrative are local).

WARD D. MARTIN  
Capt., USMCR  
Intelligence Officer

NORMAN J. ANDERSON  
LtCol., USMC  
Commanding Officer