



# AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED  
(Reclassify when filled out)

REPORT No. 59

## 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	VB-3	Heavy AA fire	Bilge, 8 to 10 o'clock, below	Large hole where shell entered side of bilge and at top of bilge where shell went out. Landing gear damaged to extent could not be lowered and wheels up landing made. Plane left on beach, transferred to CASU 62, disposition unknown at present time Bureau no. 69124.
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12	VB-3	Barrier crash-operational		12
13				13
14				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	VB-3	E.W. WHITLEY, AMM, USNR.	Struck by enemy AA.	Killed in action.
1	VB-3	W.E. JONES, AMMSO, USNR.	Unknown-after plane was struck by AA fire	Small abrasion of hand.
11	VB-3	Lt(jg) J.H. O'CONNOR, USNR	Barrier crash upon landing when tail hook bounced over wires following normal landing.	Concussion of brain. Condition good.

## 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	
VB-3	---	---	2.5	580	140			630		3
VB-3	---	---	2.5	233	113			5200		4

## 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

NONE

- TURN
- DIVE
- CEILING
- 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) Ravines, northern Iwo Jima (b) Time Over Target(s) 0800-0830 X (Zone)  
(FOR SHIPS INCLUDE ALL IN AREA UNDER ATTACK)

(c) Clouds Over Target 4000 Cumulus .2  
(BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)

(d) Visibility of Target Clear except for rugged terrain (e) Visibility 15  
(CLEAR, HAZY, PARTIALLY OBSCURED BY CLOUDS, ETC.) (MILES)

(f) Bombing Tactics: Type Glide Bomb Sight Used None  
(LEVEL, GLIDE OR DIVE) (TYPE)

Bombs Dropped per Run 1 or 2 Spacing 0 Altitude of Bomb Release 2000  
(NUMBER) (FEET) (FEET)

(g) Number of Enemy Aircraft Hit on Ground: Destroyed \_\_\_\_\_ Probably Destroyed \_\_\_\_\_ Damaged \_\_\_\_\_

(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 Two ravines containing pillboxes, caves and 2 blockhouse (15'x15')		4 TBM: 4 FM-2 VC-88	8-500# G.P. bombs 55-5" H.E. rockets 4900 rds. .50 cal.	At least One emplacement 5 bombs destroyed. Extent all rcts of other damage and straf- or destruction ing unknown.	
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).

Two ravines in target area 233 D, I, E, J, 234 B, E, F, and 250 X in northern Iwo Jima were bombed, rocketed and strafed heavily and accurately. Several pillboxes, a blockhouse, emplacements, and caves were seen in deep crevasses. At least three bombs and all the rockets and strafing went into the ravines. The explosions and dust prevented accurate assessment of the damage but at least one gun emplacement was seen to be hit and destroyed. The air coordinator reported that the strike was hitting the exact spot desired.

(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 TBM-3's of VC-88, piloted by Lt's(jg) C. D. HIGGINS, V. R. SHAN, G. M. PATTERSON and Ensign R. P. PROVOST and four FM-2's, piloted by Lt's(jg) J. H. O'CONNOR, R. A. WHITE, F. A. O'BRIEN and Ensign G. J. MCGLARD, joined with four TBM's and four FM-2's of VC-82, on a direct support mission at Iwo Jima on 6 March 1945. Two ravines in northern Iwo Jima in target areas 233 D, E, I, J; 234 B, C, F, and 280 X, which contained several pillboxes, emplacements, a blockhouse and caves, were the objects of a heavy bombing, rocket and strafing attack. The planes of VC-88 dropped 8 500# bombs and fired 86 5" H.E. rockets and 4900 rounds of .50 calibre, with at least five bombs and all the rockets and strafing going into these enemy positions. Because of explosions and dust it was difficult to observe the extent of the destruction or damage in the ravines; at least one emplacement, however, was seen to blow up when hit. All of the fighter planes and several TBM's made six runs on these positions, from southeast to northwest.

One TBM-3, piloted by Ensign Provost, was struck by a heavy anti-aircraft shell which killed the radioman, E. W. NEELY, AOM3c, USNR. Provost had made two dummy runs four firing runs and had used up all his bombs, rockets and ammunition in his wing guns. He had started a turn, at about 3300 feet, to get into position for another run with the expectation of having Neely take photographs, when a heavy AA shell ripped through the port side of the bilge, apparently killing Neely immediately and went out through the top of the bilge. Provost believes the shell exploded as it came out of the plane. The turret gunner, W. B. JONES, AOM3c, called Provost that Neely was hurt and that plane was smoking and perhaps might blow up. Provost had plane under control, called field at Iwo Jima and was given clearance immediately and told that a doctor would be waiting. The pilot found he was unable to drop his landing gear. Believing, however, that Neely needed medical aid as quickly as possible and had a chance of survival if he got it, he landed wheels up on the northeast-southwest runway, landing southwest, on Airfield #1, Iwo Jima. It was an excellent landing and the plane skidded to a stop without further damage. It was then discovered that Neely was dead, had died immediately when the shell exploded. Jones received a small abrasion on his hand and Provost was uninjured. The plane was turned over to CASU 52 and there was no opportunity for examination of specific damage. Provost and Jones were returned to the carrier almost immediately by destroyer.

Lt(jg) J. H. O'CONNOR hit a barrier when landing on the carrier. The reason is difficult to understand. He made a very good landing and his hook seemed to drag, not bounce, along the deck; however, the hook did miss all the wires and the plane piled into barriers number 2 and three, nosed up, and flipped over on its back. O'Connor was rendered unconscious but was hauled from the plane, which did not catch on fire. He suffered a concussion but was in good condition. The plane was a strike.

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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

Landing gear of one **TM-3** was rendered inoperative by direct hit of heavy anti-aircraft shell. Pilot made emergency landing, wheels up, on air field #1, Iwo Jima, without difficulty.

There was some ordnance trouble in that the "single" switch for rockets on one **FM-2** did not operate properly and all rockets had to be fired on one run. The port outboard gun of another **FM-2** failed to fire. One rocket of a **TM-3** failed to fire and was brought back to the ship. The wing guns on this same plane would not fire.

REPORT PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

SIGNATURE

**H.D. SCHMAAS, Lt. USNR, AGIO, VC-88**

RANK AND DUTY

SIGNATURE

**H.L. KEMPT, Lt. USNR, Commanding**

RANK AND DUTY

**11 March 1945**

DATE