





# AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED  
(Reclassify when filled out)

(OMIT THIS SHEET IF NO ATTACK WAS MADE)

VF-45

REPORT No. 46

**SECRET**

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

Approximately 9 large luggers, or small engines aft freighters (Sugar Dog - JST) in bay NE of Noma Misaki, Kyushu, 4 luggers or (b) Time Over Target(s) 0830-0855(1) (Zone)

(a) Target(s) and Location(s) Sugar Dogs S. of Kyushu  
(FOR SHIPS INCLUDE ALL IN AREA UNDER ATTACK)

(c) Clouds Over Target 5000' 8/10ths alto cumulus west of Kyushu. None at other targets.  
(BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)

(d) Visibility of Target Clear  
(CLEAR, HAZY, PARTIALLY OBSCURED BY CLOUDS, ETC.)

(e) Visibility unlimited except to west  
(MILES)

(f) Bombing Tactics: Type X  
(LEVEL, GLIDE OR DIVE)

Bomb Sight Used X  
(TYPE)

Bombs Dropped per Run X Spacing X Altitude of Bomb Release X  
(NUMBER) (FEET)

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

(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.)

~~SECRET~~

**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

**See attached sheet**

SECRET

### XII. TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL DATA.

Eight (8) Hellcats and one P6F-5P of VF-45 were launched from the USS SAN JACINTO at 0645 (I), 18 March 1945, to accompany nine (9) TBM's of VT-45, and approximately 40 P6F-5's, 32 TBM's and 27 SB2C's of the USS FRANKLIN, the USS BATAAN and the USS HANCOCK, on a combined strike on Kagoshima Airfield, Kyushu. The two 4-plane divisions of VF-45 flew high cover for the strike. Lt. Forkner led one division, with Lt(jr) Snay, Lt(jg) Anderson and Ensign Hynson; and Lt. Cain, Lt(jr) Paul, Lt(jg) Thompson and Lt(jg) Pettigrew composed the second division.

After the planes rendezvoused, they climbed on course, and the SAN JACINTO VF gradually attained an altitude of 22,000 feet. The strike leader took the flight in to the target across the southeastern peninsula of Kyushu. Enroute, the flight was taken under fire by heavy anti-aircraft fire from Kanoya Airfield. The fire was heavier but accurate. One torpedo plane in the flight was hit, but continued in the flight, smoking all the way.

Upon arrival at the target objective the dive bombers and torpedo bombers made their runs from northeast to southwest. The high cover fighters from the SAN JACINTO circled out of range of the anti-aircraft fire (which was intense in both heavy and medium calibre) at 16,000 feet, east of Kagoshima Field. There was no enemy airborne opposition. Lt. Forkner had the SAN JACINTO photo plane joined up with his division. This photo plane was being flown by Lt(jg) Willis, who waited until almost all of the bombs were dropped on the target before he commenced his photo runs for damage assessment (See ACA-1, No. 22, VT-45 for example of photo coverage). The high cover fighters observed that a high percentage of the bombs hit the hangar area and the large aircraft assembly plant immediately west of the airfield hangars. Lt. Forkner's division of high cover VF preceded by Lt. Cain's four planes then flew to the designated rendezvous point approximately 10 miles to seaward of the west coast of Kyushu, and orbited while the bombers were joining up below. Lt. Van Hoven of VT-45 was heard to transmit over the radio a message that he had been hit, that his engine was missing quite badly and that he believed he would have to set the plane down in the water. Lt. Forkner's division immediately let down to endeavor to locate the damaged torpedo plane, but without success. While down at lower altitude Lt. Forkner spotted two small engines aft freighters (Sugar Dog - JMSF) under way on a northeasterly course. These two small ships were strafed heavily in two runs by the 4 planes of the division.

Lt. Van Hoven had been able to make his way out of the immediate area and joined by Lt. Cain and Lt(jg) Paul, had ditched his TBM close to a picket destroyer, where he and his two aircrewmembers were safely picked up. Lt. Cain's division had left the target area ahead of Lt. Forkner, and prior to joining Lt. Van Hoven, had strafed seven luggers in the bay just east and north of Noma Misaki, setting one afire. As Lt. Cain's division rounded southern Kyushu, they saw two more luggers, both of which were strafed and left in flames.

After Lt. Forkner had set course for base from the rendezvous area, and while flying over the water south of Kyushu, two more small engines aft freighters (Sugar Dog - JMSF) were observed under way. Each of the small ships were strafed by Lt. Forkner's whole division which let down in a single strafing run on their course. Both of the Sugar Dogs were well riddled, and both were seen stopped dead in the water, after the attack. The second one of the ships was observed to be smoking quite heavily after the strafing attack. Southeast of Kyushu Lt. Forkner caught up with another returning strike element, and without further incident the nine Hellcats landed safely at 1030 (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:

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SIGNATURE **ACI Officer** RANK AND DUTY

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

**3-22-45** DATE