

# AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED  
(Reclassify when filled out)

## I. GENERAL

Sweep 2D

(a) Unit Reporting VF-9 (b) Based on or at USS LEXINGTON (CV-16) (c) Report No. 3-45  
 (d) Take off: Date 16 Feb. 1945 Time (LZT) 1045 K. (Zone); Lat. 34°-19'N. Long. 141°-46'E.  
 (e) Mission Fighter Sweep-Airfields in Tokyo Target Area (f) Time of Return 1400 K. (Zone)

14. Confirmed Task Force Order 1-45

## 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)		
P6F-5	VF-9	12	12	12	Full 50 cal. Four 5" HVAR carried by 9 planes.	Instant

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

TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE	TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE
P6F-5	VF-80	12	USS HANCOCK				
P6F-5	VF-45	8	USS SAN JACINTON				

## 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
Zeke	15-20	15-20	1140- K. 1300 (ZONE)	Inba Lake	Usual	Dark brown-green
Tony	6	6	1140- K. 1300 (ZONE)	Inba Lake	Usual	Unpainted
Tojo	5	5	1140- K. 1300 (ZONE)	Inba Lake	Usual	Dark green-brown
Oscar	1	1	1150 K.	Inba Lake	Usual	Dark green-brown

(h) Apparent Enemy Mission(s) Intercept our fighter sweep.  
 Did Any Part of  
 (i) Encounter(s) Occur in Clouds? Yes If so, Describe Clouds Alto-stratus 8/10 8000'  
(YES OR NO) (BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)  
 Time of Day and Brilliance  
 (j) of Sun or Moon Overcast Day (k) Visibility 15 miles  
(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			
S/E VF	P6F-5	VF-9	Lt(jg) Kent	6 50 cal.	Fuselage-6 above	Damaged
S/E VF	"	"	Lt(jg) Kent	"	Fuselage-7 above	Damaged
S/E VF	"	"	Lt(jg) Kent	"	Fuselage-4 above	Damaged
Zeke	"	"	Lt. McGowan	"	Belly - 5 below	Destroyed
Zeke	"	"	Lt. McGowan	"	Fuselage-12 below	Damaged
Tony	"	"	Lt. McGowan	"	Engine-8 above	Damaged
Tony	"	"	Lt. McGowan	"	Fuselage-6 level	Damaged
Tojo	"	"	Lt(jg) Reiner	"	Cockpit & Eng.-6 ab.	Destroyed
Zeke	"	"	Lt(jg) Reiner	"	Belly - 6 below	Probable
Tony	"	"	Lt. Valencia	"	Cockpit, Fuse-4 level	Destroyed
Tojo	"	"	Lt(jg) Mitchell	"	Engine - 2 above	Destroyed
Tony	"	"	Lt(jg) French	"	Wing Roots-6 level	Destroyed
Tony	"	"	Lt(jg) Smith	"	Engine - 4 above	Destroyed
Oscar	"	"	Lt. Beauneau	"	Fuselage-5 level	Destroyed

## V ENEMY AIRCRAFT DESTROYED OR DAMAGED IN AIR (CONTINUED)

<u>Type</u>	<u>Destroyed or damaged by:</u>			<u>Guns Used</u>	<u>Where Hit, angle</u>	<u>Damage claimed</u>
	<u>Type</u>	<u>Sqd.</u>	<u>Pilot</u>			
Zeke	F6F-5	VF-9	Lt. Bonneau	6 50 cal.	Tail Surf-6 above	Damaged
Zeke	"	"	Lt. Bonneau	"	Fuselage-12 for'd	Damaged
Zeke	"	"	Lt. Bonneau	"	Fuselage-5 above	Damaged
Tony	"	"	Lt. Bonneau	"	Right Wing-4 abv.	Damaged
Zeke	"	"	Lt(jg) Andrews	"	Fuselage-8 below	Damaged
Tony	"	"	Lt(jg) Andrews	"	Fuselage-8 above	Damaged
Tony	"	"	Lt(jg) Andrews	"	Wing Root-5 level	Damaged
Tojo	"	"	Lt(jg) Andrews	"	Fuselage-6 above	Damaged
Zeke	"	"	Lieut. Hilkene	"		Destroy
Zeke	"	"	Lt(jg) Cartledge	"	Engine-12 level	Probable
Zeke	"	"	Lt(jg) Cartledge	"	Engine-12 level	Damaged

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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 <b>F6F-5</b>	<b>VF-9</b>	<b>Zeko</b>	<b>Hyd. syst; prop; wings</b>	<b>Repairable</b>
2 "	"	<b>Tojo-12.7 &amp; 20 mm.</b>	<b>Left wing; cockpit</b>	<b>New hood &amp; control cables</b>
3 "	"	<b>Unident VF-20 mm.</b>	<b>Bottom of cowl</b>	<b>Minor</b>
4 "	"	<b>Unident VF-12.7mm.</b>	<b>Hole in rt. wing tip</b>	<b>Minor</b>
5 "	"	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Plane lost-Info. 71445</b>
6 "	"	<b>Zeko-12.7 &amp; 20mm.</b>	<b>Cockpit -exploded</b>	<b>Plane lost-Info. 71397</b>
7				
8				
9				
10				
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
5	VF-9	Comdr. Philip H. Torrey, Jr.	Unknown	Missing in action
6	VF-9	Lieut. William K. Wilkerson	Enemy VF (Zeko)	Killed in action.

## 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	
<b>F6F-5</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>24000</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>10</b>

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

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

## 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) None (b) Time Over Target(s) \_\_\_\_\_ (Zone) \_\_\_\_\_  
(FOR SHIPS INCLUDE ALL IN AREA UNDER ATTACK)

(c) Clouds Over Target \_\_\_\_\_ (BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)

(d) Visibility of Target \_\_\_\_\_ (CLEAR, HAZY, PARTIALLY OBSCURED BY CLOUDS, ETC.) (e) Visibility \_\_\_\_\_ (MILES)

(f) Bombing Tactics: Type \_\_\_\_\_ (LEVEL, GLIDE OR DIVE) Bomb Sight Used \_\_\_\_\_ (TYPE)

Bombs Dropped per Run \_\_\_\_\_ (NUMBER) Spacing \_\_\_\_\_ (FEET) Altitude of Bomb Release \_\_\_\_\_ (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					
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.)

### ENGAGEMENT WITH ENEMY

#### OWN AIRCRAFT

Disposition  
Altitudes  
Speeds  
Approach Tactics  
Use of Cover, Deception  
Angles of Attack and  
Their Effectiveness  
Distance of Opening Fire  
Defensive 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

Fighter sweep 2D was launched on schedule at 1045 K. and the three divisions, led by Comdr. Torrey, Group Comdr. of Air Group Nine, rendezvoused with three divisions from VF-20, based aboard the Hancock and two divisions from VF-45 based aboard the San Jacinto. Rendezvous was effected at 2000 feet, off the port beam of Task Group 58.2.

The weather was undesirable with light rain, 10/10 overcast, ceiling 800 feet and possible icing conditions prevalent at the rendezvous point. At the target, the ceiling lifted to 8000 feet and the overcast broke to an 8/10 cover, although a light haze existed down to the ground. Visibility was estimated to be 15 miles.

Comdr. Torrey, flight leader, set a course for the Inba airfield area and climbed steadily to 6000 feet. The coast-line was reached between Choja and Naruto. No A/A or enemy aircraft were encountered. On passing Inba Lake, the formation was led west and then south around Inba Airfield, to check the Chiba area for enemy airborne planes. None were seen, nor was any A/A encountered. Over Chiba the flight leader circled to the left and again led the sweep north toward Inba maintaining an altitude of 8000 feet, speed 200 knots.

Northeast of Inba Lake the flight leader ordered a strafing and HVAR attack on Inba Airfield, attack to be made from north to south with retirement out over Inba Lake, for prior to take-off it had been decided to carry out an attack providing the air was clear of bogies.

At 1140 the dive was begun, but as the flight leader nosed down three tally-hoes were called, totalling seven Jap fighters. Comdr. Torrey leveled off at 4500 feet, and immediately began a defensive weaving circle to the left. All planes carrying 5" HVAR's jettisoned them at this time, when possible, in the direction of Inba Airfield.

Lt. Valencia's division was the first to be attacked by a single Tojo, coming down fast in a steep dive from astern. The division, in a 180° turn, put Lt(jg) Mitchell in an attacking position, and after a short burst by him the Jap bailed out. Three Tony's followed the Tojo and in the melee which followed, this division became separated from the rest of the formation. Lt. Valencia, Lt(jg) French and Lt(jg) Smith each destroyed one of the Tonys. Valencia then called the Flight Leader for a rendezvous point but no answer was received. Finally at 1215 Valencia found and joined the others.

In the meantime, from 1145 until 1225, the rest of the formation was under continuous attack. Zekes and Tonys came down in individual steep stern runs and then broke away below. Our planes used a weave in defense. Lt. McLowan, Lt. Bonneau, Lt. Hilkene and Lt(jg) Reiner were all credited with destroying one each.

At 1225, south of Inba, the attacks ceased after one lone Tojo made a head-on run at Comdr. Torrey, and the formation again headed north toward Inba Lake, altitude 5500 feet, speed 210 knots. Directly east of Inba Lake, 2 miles SE of Narita, the flight leader, for no apparent reason, began a series of steep dives and climbs from 5000 feet. Lt(jg) Kent, wingman,

endeavoring to stay with him, stalled and spun at the top of the second climb; next saw Comdr. Torrey at the bottom of his third dive, but in crossing over to attempt a join up, Kent lost him under his right wing. Comdr. Torrey was not seen again.

At 1230, after Lt. Hilkene advised Lt. Bonneau that he was out of ammunition, Bonneau called the flight leader for the flight leader's position. No answer was received, and since almost all planes were low on gas and ammunition, Bonneau ordered planes to join on him to weave to the rendezvous point 20 miles east of Choja. Once more Zekes and Tonys attacked with individual stern runs, making the withdrawal a running battle out to the rendezvous point, a distance of approximately 50 miles. Lt. Hilkene and his wingman, Lt(jg) Cartledge, momentarily separated from the others on leaving the coast, were attacked by six Zekes, resulting in Hilkene's being shot down by a hit and an explosion in his cockpit. Cartledge then dove for the deck and got away safely.

On reaching the rendezvous point Lt. Bonneau saw an unidentified F6F crash and sink, investigated and found no survivor. The formation returned to base, landing at 1400.

Jap planes made individual attacks from above and astern, diving out of the clouds and then either pulling back up or breaking away in a split S. Our defense consisted of weaving tactics.

An account of the individual actions in which planes were destroyed is attached.

Lt(jg) Kent shot at and damaged three S/E Jap fighters, two of which were climbing for altitude after a run on the rear of our formation and the other breaking away in a turn. Kent saw numerous hits along the fuselage of all three planes.

Lt. McGowan destroyed a Zeke from below with a burst in the belly as the Zeke reached the top of his climb. The Zeke burned. In addition, McGowan damaged another Zeke and two Tonys, the Zeke during his run, and the two Tonys as they climbed for altitude.

Lt(jg) Reiner destroyed a Tojo and probably destroyed a Zeke. The Zeke "flew right in front of me" making a run on Lt. McGowan and Reiner hit him in the belly as the plane dived in front of him. The Tojo came in on a run to Reiner's left, so he pulled over and from directly behind and above, got hits on the engine and cockpit. The Tojo also went down out of control to crash and burn.

Lt. Valencia destroyed a Tony after the Tony completed an attack from astern and then crossed over Valencia's flight path. As he crossed Valencia got in a long burst from 300 to 00, hitting cockpit, radiator and aft end of fuselage. Tony began to smoke at the radiator and then burst into flames.

Lt(jg) Mitchell destroyed a Tojo, by turning into it from above while weaving. A short, then a long burst, started the Tojo smoking after which Lt. Valencia saw the pilot bail out.

Lt(jg) French destroyed a Tony by closing in fast from a slight turn. Wing roots were set afire, pieces were seen to leave the plane, and then as French made a sharp turn to avoid collision the Tony flamed and went down.

Lt(jg) Smith destroyed a Tony which made a head on run on the opposite section. Smith turned into him, fired, and on hitting the engine, saw the Tony burn, smoke, and go down.

Lt. Bonneau destroyed an Oscar, by turning into him as he dove to attack. Bonneau saw hits on the fuselage, and a short time after, watched the pilot bail out. Bonneau also damaged three Zekes and one Tony, all of them as they recovered from attacks on our formation.

Lt(jg) Andrews damaged one Zeke, two Tonys, and a Tojo in the melee, from all angles behind, with hits on wings and fuselage.

Lt. Hilkene, before he was shot down, was seen to destroy a Zeke. Confirmed by Lt(jg) Cartledge, wingman.

Lt(jg) Cartledge, in two head on runs probably destroyed a Zeke and damaged another. The first plane was seen to go down smoking badly after hits on the engine. On the second, Cartledge got a good burst into the engine.

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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 reported satisfactory.**

Sweep 2 D

* Comdr. Torrey	Lieut. Bonneau
Lt(jg) Kent	Lt(jg) Andrews
Lieut. McGowan	Lieut. Hilkeno
Lt(jg) Reiner	Lt(jg) Cartledge
Lieut. Valencia	
Lt(jg) Mitchell	
Lt(jg) French	
Lt(jg) Smith	

\*Flight leader.

REPORT PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

**R. C. MURPHY, Lieut., USNR**

**J. "S" KITCHEN, Lieut., USNR**

**21 Feb. 1945**

SIGNATURE **Combat Information Officer** RANK AND DUTY

SIGNATURE **Commanding Officer** RANK AND DUTY

DATE