

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when filled out)

I. GENERAL

(a) Unit Reporting VP-45 (b) Based on or at USS SAN JACINTO (c) Report No. #20
 (d) Take off: Date 16 January 1945 Time (LZT) 0750(I) (Zone); Lat. 19° 53'N Long. 115° 00'E
 (e) Mission Proton fighter sweep, Northern Hainan Island (f) Time of Return 1250 (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)		
P-51	VP-45	8	None	8	Each plane carried 6 - 5" H.E. rockets	Non - Delay

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

TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE	TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE
None							

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
Nick T.E. biplane	2	None	0945(I) (ZONE)	Hainan Island Klungshan A.F.		
	6 - 8	None	0945 (I) (ZONE)	Klungshan A.F.		Blues and green blended remarkably well with surrounding terrain.

(h) Apparent Enemy Mission(s) XX
 Did Any Part of
 (i) Encounter(s) Occur in Clouds? XX If so, Describe Clouds XX (BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)
 Time of Day and Brilliance
 (j) of Sun or Moon XX (NIGHT, BRIGHT MOON, DAY, OVERCAST, ETC.) (k) Visibility XX (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:			(c) WHERE HIT, ANGLE	(d) DAMAGE CLAIMED
	TYPE A/C	SQUADRON	PILOT OR GUNNER		
None					

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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).

Kingshan and Manchoeng airfields and targets in Hai Hov Harbor, Hainan Island

(a) Target(s) and Location(s) _____ (b) Time Over Target(s) 0945-0955(I) (one)

(FOR SHIPS INCLUDE ALL IN AREA UNDER ATTACK)

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

(d) Visibility of Target hazy (e) Visibility 2-3 (MILES)
(CLEAR, HAZY, PARTIALLY OBSCURED BY CLOUDS, ETC.)

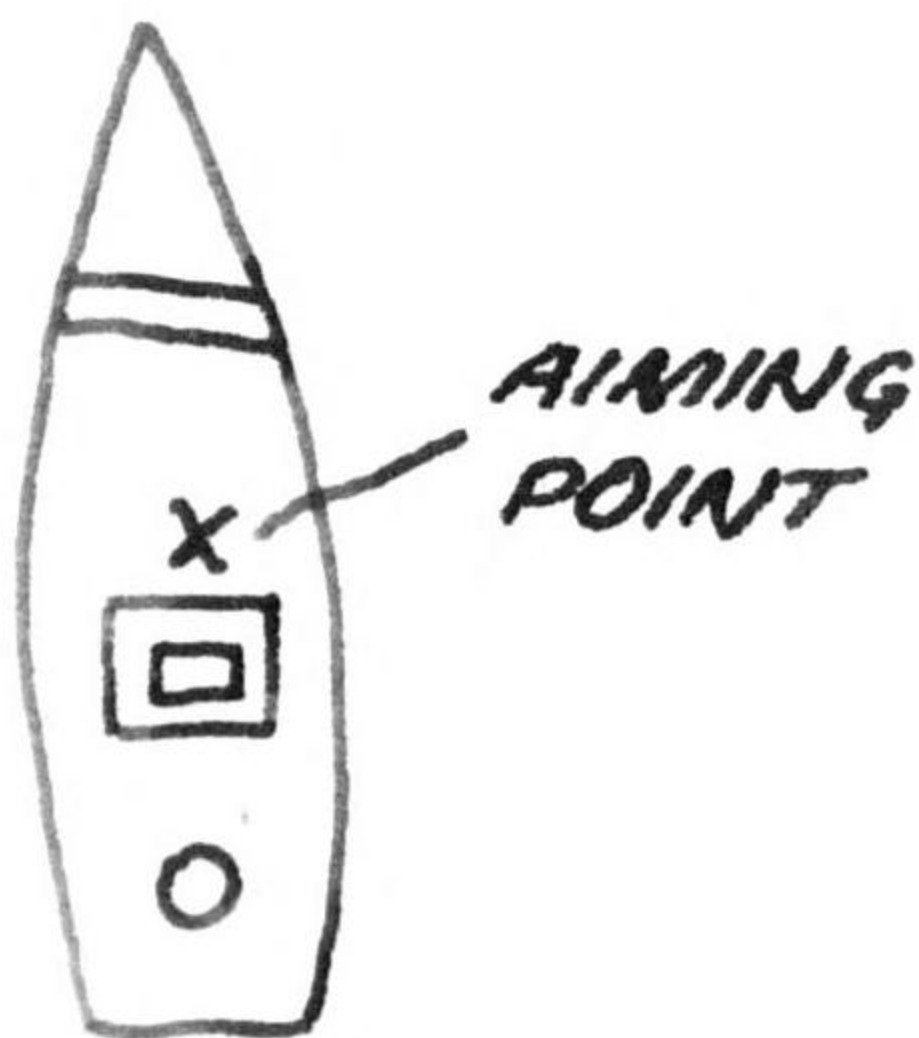
(f) Bombing Tactics: Type IX Bomb Sight Used IX
(LEVEL, GLIDE OR DIVE) (TYPE)

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

(g) Number of Enemy Aircraft Hit on Ground: Destroyed 2 Probably Destroyed IX Damaged 4

(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 amidships	1500 tons (SC-JUST)	8 VF VF-45	18 rockets, 8000 rds of .50 cal. ammunition	2	seriously damaged
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? Yes 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

Eight (8) P6F-5's of VF-45 were launched from the USS SAN JACINTO one-half hour before sunrise, 16 January, 1945, rendezvoused and departed for their target, flying at 1500', at the base of the clouds. About 80 miles on course, approximately 15 fishing junks at lat. 20°00'N, Long 113°30'E, which appeared to be friendly, and therefore were not attacked. About 70 miles from the target, clearing weather was observed overhead, and an easy climb to altitude was begun. At 0915 (I) the flight made a land fall at Nan Chau Island, at an altitude of 8000 feet. The weather was clear overhead, but visibility was limited to two miles on the ground owing to haze.

At 0945 (I) the two fighter divisions made a coordinated strafing and rocket attack on Kungshan Airfield, N. Hainan, the Group Commander's division going in from east to west and the second division going in from southeast to northwest. Several additional runs were made resulting in the destruction of two Nicks which burned from strafing in revetments at the southwest corner of the field; the damaging of four single engine biplanes, by strafing, three parked south of the field and one just north of the intersecting strips; and the burning of at least four hangars north of the field and an ammunition storage dump northeast of the field by approximately 23 rockets.

At 0950 all eight planes made repeated strafing and rocket attacks on a 1500 ton engine aft freighter (Sugar Charlie - JMSF) proceeding north from Hoi How Harbor, just east of Kungshan Airfield. This SC was the only worth while shipping target in the area, and she was seriously damaged by two rockets hits and repeated strafing runs by all 8 planes and left dead in the water. (See photograph).

At 1015 the sweep located and attacked Manchoeng Airfield, noting that it was absolutely nil as regards aircraft. Two strafing attacks were made on the control tower and facilities area located about one mile west of the field and connected thereto by a good road.

At 1025 (I) the flight made four strafing runs on two 80 foot fuel luggers, one in the river and the other at a dock in Tsingtan Harbor, causing the one in the river to stop dead in the water. Neither lugger could be made to burn, and appeared to be empty.

The 8 - plane flight then rendezvoused over the mouth of Tsingtan Harbor and returned to base.

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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

Equipment and armament were OK, except the followings

- (1) The gun-sight on the lead fighter plane was approximately 35 mils low at 900 foot range.
- (2) In #3 gun on another fighter, a cartridge with a split case was wedged in too tightly to be extracted.
- (3) On a third F6F-5, the hatch holder caught in the same belt, stopping feed on #5 gun.
- (4) It is of interest to note that 48 rockets were fired without any sort of casualty to the rocket armament. This weapon is becoming increasingly more popular with all members of the squadron and when properly employed has proven a most damaging and destructive weapon against any type target not well protected by armor. Rocket attacks have been made employing dives anywhere from 0° to 60° angle of dive. Each pilot has been equipped with a simplified sighting table for the various dive angles and has been encouraged to use it and become thoroughly familiar with it. Continued practice on live targets is gradually improving the accuracy of the entire squadron, and gratifying hits are now being realized.

During its course of training this squadron completed the entire VF rocket training course at Quonset Point, R.I. Much worthwhile experience was gained from this training, but it still cannot begin to provide the practice and experience gained from actual combat use of the weapon. In particular it has been noted that there are many opportunities to fire rockets from a level flight attitude at high speed. This type of attack is not even considered in the rocket training course but should be given some consideration in future training exercises.

There has been much argument, pro and con, as to the effectiveness of the A/C rocket. Actually there should be no question as to the effectiveness; it is the same as a 5" H.E. shell, which is a highly destructive missile. What must be appreciated in connection with its use is the fact that, as normally employed with the Mark 146 non-delay base fuse, penetration practically always results when the target is shipping, small warships, or any but the heaviest type of building structures. Consequently the explosion is internal as is also the damage done; so it is not discernable to the pilot in the firing plane as there is no external disruption of structure as occurs with a heavy caliber bomb hit. If your rocket hits, you have done considerable damage whether it is apparent to you or not. Very few 5" H.E. rocket body duds have ever been reported, and none have as yet been observed by this squadron.

REPORT PREPARED BY:

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1-17-45
DATE