

REPORT No. 80

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
- Fuizing
- 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

During the night shipping was reported as being in Futami Harbor, Chichi Jima. A strike, consisting of 8 F4U-2 aircraft from this unit and 8 TBM aircraft from the USS SARGENT BAY, was dispatched at 0700 King, to destroy the shipping. The fighter aircraft fired rockets at and strafed the ships, furnished fighter cover and strafed ground positions to keep anti-aircraft fire down.

They made the first run from 4000 feet approaching in a 30 degree glide from the northeast. Runs were as indicated in the supplement opposite this page. Twenty-four rockets and 3500 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition were fired at the six largest vessels. Five of the vessels were identified as being FTD or FTO class freighters of approximately 1000 to 2000 tons. One new appearing, larger transport type vessel was anchored south of the above vessels as indicated in the diagram. This vessel had high freeboard and a large centrally located island. It was estimated as being approximately 4000 to 5000 tons and was thought to be of the TB class. There were no direct hits by rockets; three were in the water and 30-40 feet short. These three may have caused damage but none was evident, nor was there evidence of damage from the strafing. In addition to the above ships, there were six SC class freighters tied up east of the seaplane base and there were several small craft moving about the harbor. Rockets were fired at about 1500 feet and most of the strafing was done between altitudes of 2000 and 1000 feet. The FM-2 aircraft passed over the target at a speed of 250 knots. One of the fighters fired two rockets at some barracks or warehouses on the east side of the harbor (see #7 on diagram). A small secondary explosion resulted from a hit on a building 50 feet by 150 feet but there was no further observation of this target.

All aircraft recovered to the west toward the entrance of the harbor. Heavy anti-aircraft took them under fire from each side of the harbor. It was thought to be 3 inch batteries. Lt(jg) J. M. HUSTON was apparently hit by this fire as he approached the harbor entrance. None of the other pilots saw a hit and his airplane was not on fire, but it suddenly nosed over into a 45 degree glide crashing into the water, exploding and burning. At the time the plane nosed over, it was at about 1500 feet altitude and was estimated to have crashed while making about 175 knots. There was no wreckage left afloat and only a greenish yellow spot on the water marked the crash. There was no evidence of a survivor and it is believed that it would have been impossible to survive the crash and resulting explosion. (Position of crash is indicated on diagram). The position of the crash is in enemy territory but possibilities of compromise of classified material is considered improbable. He may have been hit and killed by light fire as no one reported observing any damage to the plane; most of the bursts in the vicinity where he crashed were from 3 inch (or equivalent) guns.

On the second and third runs the pilots went to 6000 feet and used the cloud cover over the eastern part of the island. They made their approaches out of the clouds and attacked in steeper runs. These attacks were on the anti-aircraft positions which surrounded the harbor. Two rockets and 4500 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition were expended on these positions. The pilot fired at the gun flashes. They made high speed runs, 300 knots indicated air speed, and stayed above 1000 feet altitude. Tracks of all runs have been indicated on the chart. The strafing attacks are considered to have lessened the effectiveness of the anti-aircraft fire, aiding and protecting the F4U aircraft. One bomb hit, on ships, was observed, the fighters were not in position to see most of the bombing attacks.