

S-E-C-R-E-T

U.S.S. SUWANNEE (CVE-27)

ACTION REPORT - OKINAWA

PART V/- SPECIAL COMMENTS AND INFORMATION

SECTION (A) - AIR OPERATIONS (4) Damage to enemy.

PLANES AND SHIPS DAMAGED AND DESTROYED

STRIKE No.	DATE 1945	TIME OF LAUNCH	LOCATION	ENEMY A/C DESTROYED		ENEMY SHIPPING		
				IN AIR	GROUND OR WATER	DESTROYED	PROBABLY DESTROYED	DAMAGED
2	APRIL 3	1000	Okinawa					8 Small boats
1	8	0545	Miyako		1 Zeke			Small tramp steamer
2	9	0930	Miyako		1 S/E			
1	12	0530	S.E. of Okinawa	1 Myrt				
3	13	1530	West of Okinawa	5 Sonia's				
4	23	1300	Ishigaki			1 Lugger		
1	26	0530	Iriomote					3 Luggers
1	27	0530	Ikema					1 Lugger
2	29	0730	Ishigaki		4 S/E			
	MAY							
5	1	1530	Ikema					1 Lugger
1	3	0500	Ishigaki			3 Luggers		
6	11	1630	Miyako		1 T/E			
5	15	1530	South of Okinawa	3 Val's				
4	27	1400	Miyako			3 Fishing boats		
5	27	1600	Ikema					1 Lugger
1	28	0515	Miyako		2 S/E			
4	30	1400	Ikema			3 Fishing boats		
	JUNE							
5	1	1600	Yerabu					1 Lugger
1	3	0515	Miyako		1 Zeke 1 Tojo 3 Biplanes			
1	6	0500	Miyako			4 Small boats		
4	9	1330	Yerabu			1 Fishing boat		
6	12	1600	Kobi Sho		2 Frances			

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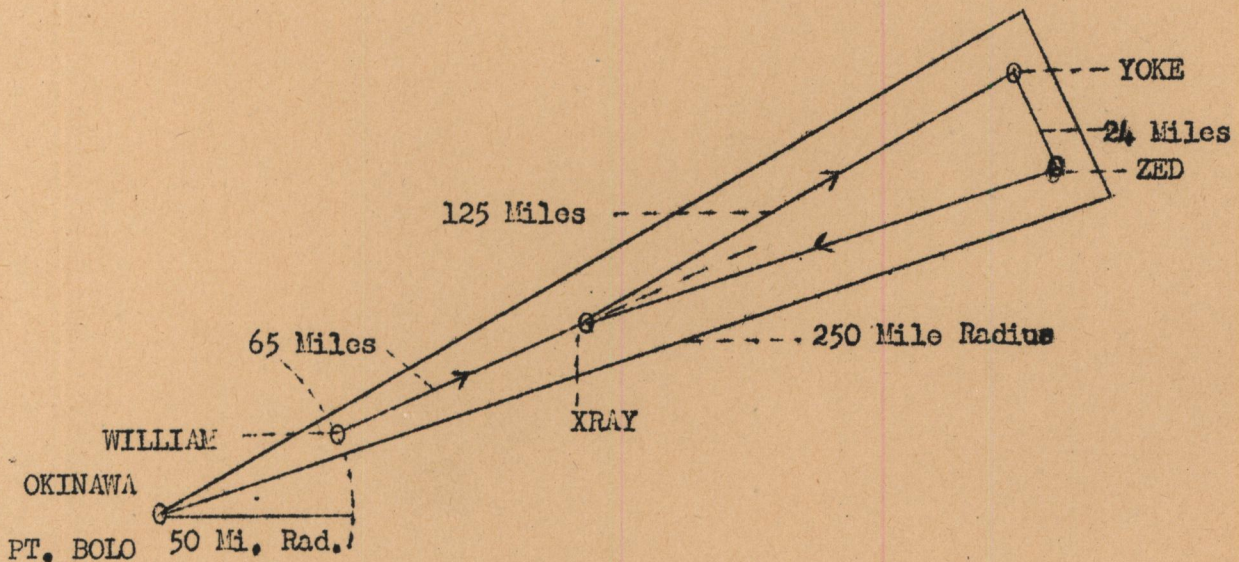
ACTION REPORT - OKINAWA

PART V - SPECIAL COMMENTS AND INFORMATION

SECTION (A) - AIR OPERATIONS (5) Searches flown.

On 17 April 1945 a special search for units of the Japanese Navy which were believed to be headed for Okinawa was launched at 1530, consisting of 4 F6F-5's and 4 TBM-3's. The planes flew in teams of 1 F6F and 1 TBM, each team covering a 12 degree sector. The four sectors assigned this carrier lay between 336 degrees and 24 degrees.

Each team flew from the carrier directly to its Point William (a point midway in the sector on a circle with a radius of 50 miles from reference Point Bolo) and then proceeded for 65 miles down the center of the sector to Point Xray, where a 6 degree left turn was made and the remainder of the sector flown as indicated in the diagram below. Each team flew directly to the carrier after returning to Point Xray. Actual distance flown between points William and Yoke varied between 140 and 155 miles, instead of 190 miles due to the necessity of returning to the ship by 1835, ten minutes before sundown. The planes were recovered at 1845. There were no sightings.



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ACTION REPORT - OKINAWAPART V - SPECIAL COMMENTS AND INFORMATIONSECTION (A) - AIR OPERATIONS (6) Photographic sorties.

1. 5 March 1945. Target - Gatukai Island near Guadacanal. Cameras used - K-17, 6 inch lens and K-17, 24 inch lens on verticals and obliques. Seven strips, total of 250 exposures. Day very good with a few scattered clouds. Plane used - F6F-5P. Time over target - 2 hours.
2. 7 April 1945. Target - Okinawa. Vertical coverage with aircraft camera F-56, 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch lens; four runs; total of 100 exposures. Day fair photographically. Plane used - TBM-3P. Time over target - 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours.
3. 8 April 1945. Target - Miyako Jima airfields: Hirara, Nobara and Sukuma. Verticals with camera K-17, 12 inch lens and 2 K-17, 6 inch lens, in oblique positions. Total exposures - approximately 500. About 3/10 cloud coverage, but day was clear. Plane used - F6F-5P. Time over targets - 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours.
4. 14 April 1945. Target - Minna Jima and northern sections of Okinawa. Vertical coverage with aircraft camera F-56, 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch lens; total exposures - 60. Day very good photographically. Plane used - TBM-3P. Time over target - 2 hours.
5. 16 April 1945. Target - Ie Jima. Coverage of verticals and obliques with camera F-56, 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch lens, covering area of ground action and northeast shore line. 90 exposures total. Day very good photographically; encountered heavy light caliber shell fire while on oblique runs around base of high pinnacle. Plane used TBM-3P. Time over target - 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours.
6. 17 April 1945. Target - Motobu Peninsula (Okinawa). Vertical coverage with camera F-56, 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch lens; 11 mapping runs, 460 exposures. Air was very rough over mountain area but satisfactory coverage was made. Plane used - TBM-3P. Time over target - 2 hours.
7. 18 April 1945. Target - Miyako Jima. Cameras used - K-17, 24 inch lens and K-17, 12 inch lens in vertical coverage of peninsula at southwest end of island and a strip along southern side. Two sortie strips of 120 total exposures made. Clouds and low ceiling over practically whole island. Plane used - F6F-5P. Time over target - 45 minutes.
8. 19 April 1945. Target - Miyako Jima. Vertical coverage with aircraft camera K-17, 12 inch lens and K-17, 6 inch lens. Six sortie strips, total 150 exposures. Day very poor photographically with over 5/10 cloud coverage. A slight amount of heavy A/A fire encountered. Plane used - F6F-5P. Time over target - 1 hour 20 minutes.

S-E-C-R-E-TU.S.S. SUWANNEE (CVE-27)ACTION REPORT - OKINAWA - PART VI - SPECIAL COMMENTS AND INFORMATION -
SECTION (A) - AIR OPERATIONS (6)
Photographic sorties.

9. 21 April 1945. Two missions flown on morning and afternoon strikes over target - Ishigaki Jima airfields and adjoining areas. Cameras used K-17, 24 inch lens on 15 degree oblique mount and K-17, 6 inch lens vertical; 24 sortie strips with 500 exposures. Day was good photographically. Light caliber A/A was heavy. Plane used - F6F-5P. Total time over target - 2 hours.

10. 23 April 1945. Target - 3 Ishigaki Jima airfields. Cameras used K-17, 24 inch lens on 6 degree obliques and K-17, 12 inch lens vertical; 7 sortie strips of 100 exposures. Day good photographically but heavy amount of accurate light caliber A/A damaged plane, causing landing crack-up. Cameras and film recovered undamaged. Plane used - F6F-5P. Time over target 1 hour.

11. 26 April 1945. Target - Sakishima Group. Cameras used - K-17, 12 and 24 inch lens. Day very poor. No pictures taken. Time over target - 1 hour. Plane used - F6F-5P.

12. 27 April 1945. Target - Ishigaki Jima airfields and adjoining areas; vertical and oblique coverage, with aircraft camera K-18, 24 inch lens. Four flight lines, 60 exposures. Heavy A/A fire, fairly accurate made it rough, particularly over Miyara A/F area. Photo results very good, day perfect for photography. Total time over target - 1½ hours. Plane used - TBM-3P.

13. 1 May 1945. Target - Ishigaki Jima airfields. Day rather poor photographically. Six sortie runs of 45 exposures taken with K-18, 24 inch lens in vertical coverage. Time over target - 1 hour, in plane F6F-5P. Small amount of light caliber A/A fire.

14. 6 May 1945. Target - Miyako Jima airfields and Ikenia Jima. Camera - K-18, 24 inch lens. Six sortie strips of 48 exposures. Day photographically good with resulting photographs good. Slight amount of medium A/A observed. Time over target - 1 hour. Plane F6F-5P.

15. 7 May 1945. Target - Miyako Jima airfields and Ikema Jima. Camera - K-18, 24 inch lens, vertical mount. Seven sortie strips, 47 exposures. Day very good photographically. Medium A/A fire was moderate. Total time over target - 1 hour, in F6F-5P.

16. 11 May 1945. Target - Minna Jima, Yerabu Jima. Camera - K-18, 24 inch, vertical mount. Four sortie strips, 47 exposures. Poor photographic day. Photos full of clouds.

17. 12 May 1945. Target - Okinawa. Camera used - K-17, 12 inch lens. Nine overlapping mapping runs, 250 exposures. Slip stream, prop wash during diving and strafing necessitated making one short fill-in run to cover possible rough or missed spots. Day ideal for photography. Time over target - 1 hour 45 minutes. Plane - TBM-3P.

S-E-C-R-E-TU.S.S. SUWANNEE (CVE-27)ACTION REPORT - OKINAWA - PART VI - SPECIAL COMMENTS AND INFORMATION-
SECTION (A) - AIR OPERATIONS (6)
Photographic sorties.

18. 14 May 1945. Target - Miyako Jima and Ishigaki Jima. Camera - K-18, 24 inch lens; verticals and obliques of airfields. Twelve flight lines, 100 exposures 5/10 cloud coverage and heavy A/A fire necessitated delay until clouds moved off areas to be photographed. Photo coverage good. Time over target - 2 hours 15 minutes. Plane - TBM-3P.
19. 15 May 1945. Target - Miyako Jima. Verticals and obliques of airfields. Camera - K-18, 24 inch lens; total exposures - 50. 4/10 cloud coverage made it necessary to take obliques. Day was dull. Time over target - 1 hour. Plane - TBM-3P.
20. 16 May 1945. Target - Ihoja Jima. Camera - K-17, 24 inch lens. Vertical complete coverage of island with standard mapping runs of 9 flight lines; 200 feet altitude obliques of various beaches and possible landing areas in 7 strips. Total exposures in verticals and obliques - 700. Day very good photographically. Time over target - 3½ hours. Plane TBM-3P.
21. 23 May 1945; Target - Miyako Jima of Sakishima Group. Camera K-18, 24 inch lens. K-17, 12 inch lens. No pictures - heavy overcast and low solid coverage of clouds. Time over target 2 hours. Plane - TBM-3P.
22. 27 May 1945. Target - Miyako Jima. Verticals of A/F Hilara, Nobara, and Sukuma. Camera - K-18, 24 inch lens; 7 flight lines, 95 exposures. Medium and heavy A/A fire was moderate but fairly accurate. Day very good, with few scattered moving clouds. Time over target - 1 hour 15 minutes. Plane - TBM-3P.
23. 30 May 1945. Target - Miyako Jima. Camera - K-18, 24 inch lens. Verticals of airfields and adjoining areas. Seven flight lines, 65 exposures. Strip oblique with K-17, 6 inch lens, at 200 feet altitude, 80 exposures. Clouds closing in stopped further photographing. A/A fire was heavy and accurate. Time over target - 1 hour. Plane - TBM-3P.
24. 2 June 1945. Target - Miyako Jima. Camera K-18, 24 inch lens. Verticals of 3 airfields. Five flight lines, 47 exposures. A/A fire was troublesome but moderate; high area cast and dull. Time over target - 30 minutes. Plane - TBM-3P.
25. 6 June 1945. Target - Miyako Jima. Camera - K-18, 24 inch lens. Verticals of airfields and adjoining areas. Eight lines, 93 exposures. Obliques with K-17, 12 inch lens, of coast; altitude 200 feet; 45 exposures in one run. Encountered much small caliber A/A fire. Total time over target - 1 hour 15 minutes. Plane - TBM-3P.
26. 13 June 1945. Target - Iriomote Jima. Cameras - split K-17, 24 inch lens. No pictures - solid, low coverage of clouds and heavy haze. Plane - F6F-5P.

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ACTION REPORT - OKINAWA - PART V - SPECIAL COMMENTS AND INFORMATION -
SECTION (A) - AIR OPERATIONS (6)
Photographic sorties.

27. 14 June 1945. Target - Ishigaki Jima. Camera - K-18, 24 inch lens.
Verticals of 4 airfields; 6 sortie runs, 65 exposures. K-17, 12 inch lens of
cable station and ship formation, 35 exposures. Cloud coverage 5/10 but moving
with bright sunlight in open areas. Time over target - 1 hour. Plane - TEM-3P.

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U.S.S. SUWANNEE (CVE-27)

ACTION REPORT - OKINAWA

PART VI - SPECIAL COMMENTS AND INFORMATION

SECTION (A) - AIR OPERATIONS (7)

(a) Planes and Equipment.

- (1) The F6F-5 was inadequate for high altitude interception against the more modern enemy aircraft. On occasions fast, high-flying bogies were picked up by radar, yet CAP was unable to effect interception.
- (2) At no time were replacement planes in full combat readiness. Guns were preserved, radios and IFF were inoperative, and such equipment as microphones and pararafts were frequently missing.
- (3) Many of the replacement planes had been previously used to the extent that 4 to 6 days work were required to put them in combat readiness, and then they were good only for a short time due to high engine hours.
- (4) As many CAP's were at 20,000 feet or higher it was generally felt that the cockpit heater should be reinstalled.
- (5) The Air Group had considerable trouble with condensation on the gun camera haze filters. An R.U.D.M. has been submitted which outlines a procedure for eliminating this. The filters should be made so that there is an airtight seal which would eliminate condensation.
- (6) In general, the Sperry Altitude Gyro is superior to the gyro horizon. Increased use and maintenance information should render it completely satisfactory for universal installation.
- (7) Many pilots felt that all armament switches could be moved to a more advantageous position. The suggested locations are (1) across the top of the instrument panel as in the F4U, (2) on the left side of the cockpit on the sill below the windshield just aft of the ignition switch.
- (8) Some difficulty was experienced with fuselage buckling around the turret section and just forward of the tail in the TBM-3's. This buckling is believed to result from the impact of carrier landings with heavy loads bordering on, and occasionally exceeding, the maximum recommended. Generally, these wrinkles in the fuselage appeared after the plane had made 40 to 50 carrier landings. Approximately one-third were made with a load of 3x325# depth charges and 8x3-inch head rockets aboard.
- (9) Wings on practically all planes have wrinkled, probably due to pulling out of high speed dives with heavy loads still aboard. This problem is complicated, for in order to make an attack which will minimize danger from AA fire and develop a dive which will be steep enough to allow a hit, it is impossible to hold down speed. The high-speed approach is also necessary to keep the plane in a nose-down attitude so that wingmen can see the target.

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ACTION REPORT - OKINAWA - PART VI - SPECIAL COMMENTS AND INFORMATION -
SECTION (A) - AIR OPERATIONS (7)

(a) Planes and Equipment(continued).

Under these conditions, when a pull-out is made with the plane still well loaded, there is a danger of excessive "G"'s. The plane should be strengthened if its use in these tactics is to be continued.

On two, and possibly three, occasions large portions of the horizontal stabilizer and elevator have sheared off when planes were in high speed dives or just after they had pulled out.

(10) Automatic pilots performed satisfactorily as a whole; however, the ship had no spare parts, and if an auto pilot went out of commission it could not be repaired. The artificial horizon gave the most trouble. In most planes it gave an erroneous reading because it was tilted slightly at all times.

(11) The survival equipment never had an adequate test and comments cannot be made on its effectiveness, other than to state that the equipment has been very well maintained and has been added to as new equipment became available. Toward the latter part of the operation the policy was adopted of having one plane in each attacking group carry an extra two-man raft in the radio compartment, to be dropped to survivors in the event a plane should have to make a water landing.

(b) Methods of Approach and Attack.

(1) Most of the targets assigned to the fighter squadron were airfields and revetment areas in the Sakishima Gunto. As all of these airfields were located within a few miles of the coast line, the split "S" or roll over type run was used extensively for bombing, rocket and strafing work. The approach was started from seaward at 16,000 to 11,000 feet with 180 to 200 knots. The retirement was to seaward over the least amount of enemy land or known active AA positions. The runs were steep and fast, which provided the best protection against AA. The minimum recovery altitude was set at 1500 feet. Whenever possible the sun and cloud cover were used to advantage.

(2) Methods of approach and attack for the VT proved satisfactory. Weather permitting, attacks were initiated at altitudes of 8,000 - 12,000 feet. Excess altitude was used to maintain a speed of 180 - 200 knots to the point of final push-over, which was started at 5,000 - 7,000 feet. The path of approach was always chosen with regard to the lightest anti-aircraft fire. On approach and retirement, shortest run to the coast line and maximum use of cloud cover or sun was used. All indications pointed to the enemy's having no effective radar controlled anti-aircraft fire in this area. In many instances, where attacking planes were able to remain concealed by clouds until the final phase of the attack, no AA fire was seen at all.

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SECTION (A) - AIR OPERATIONS (7)

(b) Methods of Approach and Attack(continued).

Where a solid overcast prevented a normal glide - bombing attack, bombs were dropped in horizontal runs. Radar and timed runs were used to locate the targets. This method of attack was used only as a last resort and results were probably of only a nuisance value.

(c) Effectiveness of Patrols.

Results of anti-submarine patrols were entirely negative and in this sense were effective, as their presence may have been responsible for keeping any submarines in the area down. Radar was used extensively on all patrols, and under normal conditions its range varied from 15 to 60 miles.

(d) Interception.

Interceptions were generally handicapped by radar deficiencies in connection with altitude estimation. The newer type radar (SP) equipment installed on the 105-class CVE's aided greatly in placing patrols at the best level for interception.

(e) Operating Range.

All strikes against the Sakishima area were well within the maximum range. Strikes were run at short range, allowing the fighters to carry a full load of bombs and rockets and remain in the target area as much as 2½ hours. Planes were launched with the belly tank only half full. VF planes seldom returned low on gas. However, it was felt that a full belly tank could be used on CAP to insure plenty of fuel when high power operation was demanded.

(f) Tactics.

(1) As airborne opposition was never encountered while striking the Sakishima area, a special escort doctrine was adopted by this group. VF proceeded to target independently and made a bombing run according to the procedure outlined in section (7)(b). At the completion of the run the VF rendezvoused with the VT who were just arriving on target.

Most strikes were composed of 8 VF and 8 VT. As VT commenced a high-speed approach from 10,000 feet, 4 VF took position ahead and 4 VF behind at 11,000 to 12,000 feet. The lead division of VF strafed known AA positions while the rear division of VF attacked any areas where gun flashes were seen. This procedure gave the VT the maximum coverage against AA. Fighters continued to cover VT until rendezvoused. The VT then returned to base while the fighters remained in the area for the maximum time allowed.

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SECTION (A) - AIR OPERATIONS (7)

(f) Tactics(continued).

(2) The tactics used during this operation have proved generally satisfactory. They were based on USF-10(A) and previous combat experience, modified somewhat for support work to allow planes a greater interval in the interest of good dives and resulting high percentage of hits.

(g) Training.

No glaring deficiencies in the group's training were noted. However, the syllabus could well include more group flights and rendezvous, particularly following pre-dawn take-off. Also, with the large current use of rockets by both VF and VT, more emphasis should be placed on training for rocket firing.

(h) Deficiencies in Aircraft Equipment.

(1) Canteens: A suitable holder, both in the pilot's cockpit and the radio-man's compartment, is badly needed, especially when operating in the warmer areas.

First Aid Kits: Very seldom do two planes have their first aid kits installed in the same place. There is urgent need of a standard stowage space.

(2) Survival Equipment.

Life Raft (Mark II): As late as 26 May replacement TEM-3's were still being received which contained the obsolete Mark IV raft, which is jammed into the compartment in such a way that its removal in case of emergency would be impossible. In most cases if the emergency bag is at all present it contains little if any equipment.

The ship had no scales delicate enough to test the charge of the raft's CO² bottles.

It has been found that the use of talcum powder on the inside of the raft and container is very helpful. However, powder should not be put in the life raft stowage compartment in the aircraft, because when moisture gets into the compartment it causes the powder to form a paste and thus burdens, rather than facilitates, the removal of the raft.

Parachutes: It is recommended that a stowage space be provided in the radioman's compartment for the QAC chute. During combat operation the chutes must be left in the planes and the stowage space that is provided will not accommodate a QAC chute equipped with a para-raft. 531