

SECRET

ACTION REPORT

ORIGINAL

USS SUWANEE

CVE 27

SERIAL 0107

14 DECEMBER 1943

ACTION REPORTS.

CONTAINS ACA-F REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES
DURING PERIOD 19-22 NOVEMBER 1943
IN PROVIDING AIR STRIKES ON TARAWA
AND COMBAT AIR PATROLS AND SUBMARINE
SEARCHES FOR SOUTHERN ATTACK FORCE •

65294

Change over 6-21-51 JFW

In Reply refer to
File No.

GVE27/A16-3(1)

U. S. S. SUWANNEE

136

Serial 0107

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, Calif.,

CONFIDENTIAL

14 DEC 1943

From: The Commanding Officer.
To: Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Via: (1) Commander Task Group 53.6.
(2) Commander Task Force 53.

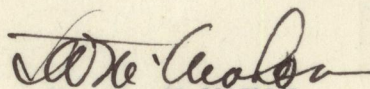
Subject: Action Reports.

Reference: Pacific Fleet Conf. ltr. 36CL-42.

Enclosure: (A) Fightron Sixty Aircraft Action Report #1 of 11/19/43. - P. 2
(B) Fightron Sixty Aircraft Action Report #2 of 11/20/43. - P. 6
(C) Fightron Sixty Aircraft Action Report #3 of 11/21/43. - P. 11
(D) Compron 60 Aircraft Action Report #1 of 11/21/43. - P. 16
(E) Compron 60 Aircraft Action Report #2 of 11/20/43. - P. 22
(F) Compron 60 Aircraft Action Report #3 of 11/20/43. - P. 28
(G) Compron 60 Aircraft Action Report #4 of 11/22/43. - P. 34
(H) Compron 60 Report of Anti-Sub.Action by Aircraft
#1 of 11/20/43 - P. 39
(I) Compron 60 Report of Anti-Sub.Action by Aircraft #2. - P. 42

1. This vessel took part in the GALVANIC operation as a unit of Task Group 53.6. Operations in connection with air support of the Southern Attack Force and routine Combat Air Patrols and Anti-Submarine Patrols were conducted.

2. Forwarded herewith as Enclosures are action reports of attached aircraft units. Other than these aircraft actions this vessel had no action with the enemy.


F. W. McMAHON,

Copy to: Cominch
ComAirPac

[65294]

11

[illegible]

DECLASSIFIED

[illegible][illegible]

TURNS
 DIVES
 CEILINGS
 RANGE
 PROTECTION
 ARMAMENT

Performances not comparable in this case. Pilots all observed that enemy craft seemed extremely slow - their estimates ranging from 110 knots (Ens. Gunnels) to 140 knots (Lt. Dashiell). But enemy pilot took no evasive action, apparently did not recognize our planes as hostile, and hence was probably flying at his most economical cruising speed. All pilots remarked that enemy craft looked extremely clean in design. They noted a turret gun position just aft of the wings, also a tail stinger, but observed no fire from either. No fire was observed from the bow. Only gun fire which they observed came from within the hull, abaft the wing.

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when
filled out)

(OMIT THIS SHEET IF NO ATTACK WAS MADE)

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

(a) Location of Target(s) _____ (b) Time Over Target(s) _____ GCT.
(c) Weather and Clouds Over Target _____
(d) Sun or Moon _____ (e) Visibility _____

XI. TARGETS, RESULTS OF ATTACK.

(a) DESCRIPTION OF TARGET (List All Ships in Group, Whether or Not Individually Attacked)	(b) A/C ATTACKING	(d) BOMBS AND AMMUNITION EXPENDED, EACH TARGET	(e) ALTITUDE OF RELEASE	(f) HITS
	(c) SQUADRON			
1				
2				
3				
5				
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(g) **RESULTS:** (FOR SHIP TARGETS 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, WITH DIAGRAMS OR CHARTS WHERE DESIRABLE. DESCRIBE TARGETS FULLY IN (a), AND IN REPORTING DAMAGE OR DESTRUCTION, IDENTIFY BY NUMBERS AT LEFT. USE ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY).

(h) Were Photographs Taken? _____ Photographs of Damage, When Taken, Should Be Attached.

CONFIDENTIAL**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
Release
Pull-Out
Dive Angle
Strafing
Retirement
Defensive Tactics**DEFENSE, ENEMY**Evasive Tactics, Ships
Concealment
Anti-aircraft
Searchlights
Night Fighter Tactics**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

Lieut. E. L. DASHIELL, Jr., USN, (1939), leading his division of four planes in combat air patrol at 10,000 ft. over the base, received a vector of 240° from FDO at 2130 (GCT). He went out, climbing as directed to 12,000 ft., followed by Ens. W. B. GUNNELS, AVN, his wing man; Ens. J.D. SHEA, AVN, and Ens. G.C. WILSON, AVN. Bogey's height was estimated at 7,000 ft. When they intercepted bogey, he was flying at about 8,500 ft., slightly left of their course and on an opposite course, approximately six miles away. Bogey made a 60° turn to the right and started away. Lieut. DASHIELL instructed Ens. SHEA and Ens. WILSON to cross over and bracket bogey on the starboard side. With Ens. GUNNELS, Lieut. DASHIELL went in on the port side. As he went into position to make his run, Lieut. DASHIELL passed across bogey's bow. He saw bogey flash a white light at him from within the plane - evidently an identification signal, indicating that bogey did not yet recognize the F6F-3 as a hostile plane. Also he plainly saw the two red discs on bogey's wingtips, identifying it as an enemy plane.

Lieut. DASHIELL began an overhead run, followed by Ens. GUNNELS. He started firing about 1,200 ft. above the enemy, raking the pilot's compartment and the motors with medium-long burst. The outboard port motor immediately began to trail white smoke, then burst into flame, pouring out black smoke, as Lieut. DASHIELL pulled out and climbed into position for another run. Ens. GUNNELS went in after him, firing until he was close in, and followed Lieut. DASHIELL in a left chandelle. Ens. SHEA was then in position for a high side run. As he went in, the enemy fell into a steep spiral, then into a vertical dive. Ens. SHEA fired at the tail stinger; and Ens. WILSON, following him, also fired a short burst. All four pilots saw the enemy strike the water in flames, saw the splash, then a smudge of foam and oil on the water.

When interrogated, the pilots were not aware that the plane Lieut. DASHIELL had shot down was an "Emily". Each pilot separately described it as a four-motor flying boat with long, slender wings, evenly tapered both fore and aft, and rounded wingtips. Each remarked emphatically on the single fin and rudder which is characteristic of this plane; and on the long hull, projecting well forward of the wings. They also noted that it was an unusually large plane. Ens. GUNNELS observed the non-retractable floats projecting well forward of the wings, near the wing tips. Ens. WILSON observed the clean sweep of the hull, with its nearly invisible step. All four pilots thought that the plane had parasol wings. But since they had gone into action assuming it was a "Mavis", and since the plane they described was in all other respects clearly identifiable as "Emily", the Air Combat Information Officer felt that he was justified in identifying the plane definitely as "Emily". With the exception of Ens. SHEA, who was still doubtful, the pilots all agreed with this identification when they were shown pictures of "Emily" recently published as a supplement to Pacific Fleet Air Operations Memoranda 14-43.

DECLASSIFIED

XIII. MATERIAL DATA. (Comment freely on performance or suitability, following check list at left.
 Use additional sheets if necessary)

ARMAMENT

Guns, Sunights
 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

REPORT PREPARED BY

G.P. WERTENBAKER, Lt(jg), AVS, USNR

ACI Officer

SIGNATURE

RANK AND DUTY

APPROVED BY

Lt.Cdr. H.O. FEILBACH, A-V(N), USNR,
 Commanding, VF-60

SIGNATURE

RANK AND DUTY

DATE

CONFIDENTIAL

I. GENERAL

(a) Unit Reporting VF-60 (b) Based on, or at USS SUWANNEE off Tarawa (c) Report No. 2
(d) Date of Action 20 November 1943 (e) Take off: Time 1840 (GCT); Lat. 01° 20' N. Long. 173° 15' E.
(f) Mission C.A.P.; straffing ground targets on Bititu Island. (g) Time of Return 2200 (GCT)

II. OWN AIRCRAFT OFFICIALLY COVERED BY THIS REPORT.

(a) TYPE	(b) SQUADRON	(c) NO. OF SORTIES	(d) NO. ENGAGING ENEMY A/C	(e) NO. ATTACK- ING TARGET	(f) BOMBS AND TORPEDOES CARRIED (PER PLANE)	(g) FUZE, SETTING
F6F-3	VF-60	12	----	12	- - - - -	- - - - -

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

III. OTHER U. S. OR ALLIED AIRCRAFT EMPLOYED IN THIS OPERATION:			
TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE

IV. ENEMY AIRCRAFT ENCOUNTERED (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
	None		(GCT)			
			(GCT)			
			(GCT)			
			(GCT)			

(h) Apparent Enemy Mission(s) _____

(i) Weather and Clouds at Location of Encounter(s)_____

(j) Sun or Moon _____ (k) Visibility _____

V. ENEMY AIRCRAFT DESTROYED OR DAMAGED IN AIR (By Own Aircraft Listed in II Only).

[illegible]

Encl. (B)

6.

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	(e) EXTENT OF LOSS OR DAMAGE, REMARKS
1 F6F-3	VF-60	.30 cal. AA gun	Port wing, 4' from root	One bullet hole.
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12				
13				
14				

VII. PERSONNEL CASUALTIES (in aircraft listed in II only; identify with planes listed in VI by Nos. at left).

[illegible]

VIII. RANGE, FUEL, AND AMMUNITION DATA

[illegible]

IX. COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE, OWN AND ENEMY AIRCRAFT (use check list at left).

SPEED, CLIMB,
at various altitudes

No enemy aircraft encountered.

TURNS
 DIVES
 CEILINGS
 RANGE
 PROTECTION
 ARMAMENT

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED
(Reclassify when
filled out)

(OMIT THIS SHEET IF NO ATTACK WAS MADE)

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

(a) Location of Target(s) North shore; guns on NW tip of Bititu Is. (b) Time Over Target(s) 2130 GCT.
(c) Weather and Clouds Over Target Scattered clouds, about .3, from 3,000 to 4,000 feet; clear.
(d) Sun or Moon Sun, elevation about 55°. (e) Visibility Unlimited.

XI. TARGETS, RESULTS OF ATTACK.

(a) DESCRIPTION OF TARGET (List All Ships in Group, Whether or Not Individually Attacked)	(b) A/C ATTACKING	(d) BOMBS AND AMMUNITION EXPENDED, EACH TARGET	(e) ALTITUDE OF RELEASE	(f) HITS
	(c) SQUADRON			
1 Personnel defending beaches against landings by U. S. Marines.	12 VF-60	3,600 rounds.	1,500 to 500 ft.	Probable.
2 40 mm. gun emplacement firing on Marines in lagoon while landing.	12 VF-60	10,950 rounds.	1,500 to 500 ft.	Probable.
3				
5				
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7				
8				

(g) RESULTS: (FOR SHIP TARGETS 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, WITH DIAGRAMS OR CHARTS WHERE DESIRABLE. DESCRIBE TARGETS FULLY IN (a), AND IN REPORTING DAMAGE OR DESTRUCTION, IDENTIFY BY NUMBERS AT LEFT. USE ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY).

- (1) Beaches on the north shore of Bititu, where Marines were landing from barges, were covered with a heavy pall of smoke from previous bombardments. It was therefore impossible to observe effect of strafing. No enemy personnel were actually seen, and no anti-aircraft fire was noticed here.
- (2) Gun, which was the immediate objective of this strafing action, was silenced after three passes, the gun crew either killed or wounded or forced to abandon their fire. Some anti-aircraft fire was observed, but not much, and it was diminishing. Several fires were observed in small buildings visible through the trees. This area, which had been one of the most heavily fortified on the island, containing both coast defense and automatic guns, gave our forces no further trouble during their landings.

(h) Were Photographs Taken? _____ Photographs of Damage, When Taken, Should Be Attached.