

24 December 1944

318TH FIGHTER GROUP MISSION REPORT # 12-46 (Consolidated)  
P-38 PROVISIONAL SQUADRON MISSION REPORT # 12-4

1. A. Eighteen (18) P-38L's. (One did not reach the target)  
B. None
2. A. None  
B. One (1) ZEKE destroyed on the ground; Two (2) twin-engine aircraft damaged on the ground; Four (4) single-engine aircraft damaged on the ground.
3. Fighter sweep on Iwo Jima.
4. Capt. PARK, Lts. RIVAS, ERBELE, DUPOY. (Violet 34)  
Capt. McCOWN, Lts. BYERS, SNYDER, RESER. (Violet 35) 73<sup>RD</sup> FIRON  
Capt. OTTENSTEIN, Lts. DUKET, KENDLE, DONAHUE. (Violet 36)  
Lts. JACOBSON, DUNN, LIEBGOTT, GARDEN. (Violet 37)  
Lts. WILSON, BESCHE. (Violet 38) 73<sup>RD</sup> FIRON

Takeoff: 0615 - Over Target: 1015 - Land: 1332

The five flights rendezvoused with three B-29's (navigating escort) over East Field and headed for Iwo Jima. Approximately 15 minutes after takeoff, Violet 35-4 lost coolant out of his right engine and the left turbo started to smoke. He returned to Saipan, landing at Isely Field at 0650. The remaining 17 P-38's were escorted to within 30 miles of Iwo Jima. Violet 38 remained with the B-29's and Violets 34, 35, 36, & 37 were set on course for the target area. They formed line abreast and made one strafing run across the island from northwest to southeast.

Violet 34-1 observed three aircraft near the junction of the runways on Airfield #2. One was a silver single-engine fighter (probably a TOJO) and the other two were dark, camouflaged ZEKES. Violet 34-1 hit the silver plane with a long burst, but it did not explode or catch fire. He then strafed the ZEKES, setting one of them on fire. This ZEKE was definitely destroyed. Violet 34-1 then strafed three beached ships on the east shore of the island, near the boat landing, with unobserved results.

Violet 34-2 did not pick up a target until he was almost across the island. He then observed and strafed a gun position located near the beached ships on the east shore. The results of the strafing were not observed.

Violet 34-3 strafed a ZEKE in a revetment just southeast of the #2 Airfield runway intersection. Hits were observed but no specific damage noted. Violet 34-3 then observed 3 other operational aircraft parked just south of the ZEKE's revetment. He was unable to get his nose down in time to strafe these three aircraft.

Violet 34-4 observed 5 aircraft in bunkers south of Airfield #2. He fired a long burst at the aircraft and observed hits on two of them, but they did not burn. He then observed a truck full of Japs on the

## 4. Cont'd

road just east of the runways. The Japs dismounted and scattered for cover but Violet 34-4 was pulling up at the time and could not strafe the troops. While passing over the east shore of the island, he observed and strafed a possible gun position on the beach east of the runways. He observed hits in the revetment.

Violet 35-1 found no targets other than a truck and steam roller on the south tip of Airfield #2, which he strafed. He observed one single engine aircraft in a revetment on the northeast corner of Airfield #1.

Violet 35-2 strafed a VAL in a revetment between Airfield #1 and Airfield #2, south of the intersection of No. 2 runways. No hits were observed.

Violet 35-3 strafed a silver single-engine aircraft in one of a line of revetments connecting the two airfields. 20mm hits were observed and the enemy plane was left smoking. He then strafed a truck and enemy personnel on the north tip of Airfield #1.

Violet 36-1 observed a gun position near the beach west of Airfield #2. He strafed it with unobserved results. He next observed a large, screen-type radar just southwest of the turnaround on Airfield #2. He strafed this installation without being able to determine specific damage. A gun position just to the left of the radar was firing as Violet 36-1 passed this area.

Violet 36-2 saw two twin-engine aircraft parked 100 feet apart between the ridge and the west taxiway of #2 Airfield. He strafed both planes, observing many hits on each. He also hit a Jap who was running from one plane to the other.

Violet 36-3 found himself on the deck at the west beach. He fired into unidentified beach positions. As he pulled up, he noticed a large white puff of smoke similar to drifting steam on his left. He turned and fired into the smoke. Continuing his pass, he strafed grass huts south and west of Airfield #3. Nosing over, he then strafed a concentration of running Japs (approximately 50 or 60) midway between the western end of Airfield #3 and the north turnaround of Airfield #2. Retiring southeastward, he continued to strafe across the island.

Violet 36-4 was approximately 150 feet to the left of Violet 36-3 and made an almost identical strafing run. He observed an additional concentration of troops north of those attacked by Violet 36-3. He strafed these troops and observed his fire hitting among them. Retiring southeastward, he fired at some buildings (probably concrete) 3,000 feet northeast of the East-West runway of #2 Airfield.

Violet 37-1 approached the island pulling up to 1,000 feet. He nosed over at the beach and observed numerous wrecked aircraft on and about Airfield #3. His course during the run was approximately 3209 and took him over the area formerly occupied by the industrial plant. This entire area appeared levelled. The P-38's on his right forced him to strafe north of his assigned target area. Numerous grass shacks were seen and strafed north of the turnaround. He continued his strafing run north and northeast of Airfield #2, hitting what appeared to be cement structures approximately 5,000 feet northeast of the turnaround.

Violet 37-2 fired into a large house 7,000 feet northwest of the turnaround and into the gun position south of #3 airfield. He then

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4. Cont'd

strafed the gun position east of the radar station near #2 Airfield.

Violet 373- strafed houses southeast of #3 Airfield. He observed two fires, one approximately 2,000 feet east of #3 Airfield and the other 2,000 feet west of #3 Airfield. He retired northeast, strafing the gun position directly east of the east end of #3 Airfield.

Violet 37-4 strafed across the center of Airfield #3 and, turning left, strafed the radar station 2,500 feet north-northeast of the east end of Airfield #3. He observed his 20mm shells entering the building. Violet 37-4 retired north off the island.

Meager to moderate A/A from machine guns and automatic weapons was received from the following points:

Automatic weapons positions east of Airfield #2.

M/G position next to radar southeast of the turnaround on Airfield #2.

M/G's near three beached ships on east coast.

M/G 100 yards east of the west shore, due west of Airfield #2.

The A/A fire seemed to be accurate as to direction but inaccurate as to altitude. Violet 36-1 received a jagged tear on the right outer collant jacket cowling from a probable automatic weapon. Violet 36-2 received a small hole in the nose of his plane from a probable machine gun.

After the P-38's completed their strafing runs, they rendezvoused with the B-29's between Iwo Jima and Minami Rock and headed for base.

5. A. Good enroute and return; clouds .4 to .6. Over target, poor -- solid overcast at 700 feet and raining.  
B. Loud and clear.
6. See narrative.
7. 7,140 rounds .50 cal. 976 rounds 20mm. 12,495 gallons gas.
8. The radar station just southwest of the turnaround on Airfield #2 was definitely identified. This installation does not appear on current maps or photographic interpretations.

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318TH FIGHTER GROUP, AAF  
A.P.O. # 244

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