

16 January 1945

318TH FIGHTER GROUP MISSION REPORT # 1-43
 P-38 PROVISIONAL SQUADRON MISSION REPORT # 1-5.

1. A. Twelve (12) P-38L's
 B. None
2. A. One (1) P-38L (Lost at sea - Pilot bailed out and was picked up by DE at 2256.)
 B. None
3. High cover for B-24 strike on Iwo Jima.
4. Lts. JACOBSON, BYRAM, LIEBGOTT, STAMPE. (Violet 12) - (19th Ftr. Sqdn.)
 Capt. VOGT, Lts. ANDERSON, LOFLIN, DUNN. (Violet 13) - (19th Ftr. Sqdn.)
 Lts. WILSON, MATTISON, SHEPARD, REDFIELD. (Violet 14) - (73rd Ftr. Sqdn.)

Takeoff: 1025

Landed: 1815

Violet 14-1 developed a prop oscillation immediately after takeoff and pancaked at 1050.

Flights rendezvoused with 3 B-29's (navigation escort) over East Field at 1035, and picked up a heading of 334 degrees to Minami Island. At approximately 1235, the formation proceeded to climb to altitude from 10,000 feet. Upon reaching a point 250 miles south of Iwo Jima, formation encountered extremely bad weather. Radio contact with navigation escort was disrupted.

The formation became scattered, Violet 13-3 and 13-4 and 12-4 broke through the overcast approximately 70 miles north of Iwo Jima. Violet 12-1 let down through the overcast and came out 15 miles north of Iwo Jima, at an altitude of 500 feet. Violet 12-1 contacted Violet 13-1 and informed him of the ceiling. Violet 13-1 and Violet 12-3 let down through the overcast. Violet 12-1 and 12-3 strafed beached LSM's beached on the east coast with unobserved results, and received intense inaccurate automatic weapons fire from coast positions. All contact completely lost with Violet 12-2 and 13-2. No shipping or enemy aircraft sighted.

Violet 14-3, 14-4 let down through the overcast to the deck at approximately 1350, and sighted Haha Jima, about 30 miles northeast of them. They were joined by three other P-38's and took vector of 200 degrees hoping that this would bring them to Iwo Jima. Flying through hard rain and still on the deck, they abandoned the idea of reaching Iwo Jima and took vector of 160 degrees which brought them back to base. Violet 14-2 let down through the overcast and found himself over Kita Iwo. He took vector 180 degrees and after a few minutes sighted Iwo Jima from where he proceeded to Minami and rendezvoused with other P-38's.

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318th Fighter Group Mission Report # 1-43 -- CONTINUED

4. CONT'D

Violet 12-2 and 13-2, lost all contact with P-38's and B-29 escort. Forced to return to Saipan alone. At 2005, Lt. BYRAM, Violet 12-2, was forced to bail out of his airplane, 20 to 25 miles northwest of Saipan. Airplane completely out of gas. Violet 13-2 landed at Isely Field at 2000.

- 5. A. Solid overcast from 500 feet to 24,000 feet in the vicinity of Iwo Jima. Icing condition existed at 18,000 feet.
- B. Communication good until formations entered overcast. All radio contact was then lost with navigation escort.
- 6. Undetermined.
- 7. 7,499 gallons gas. 250 rounds .50 cal. 8 rounds 20mm.
- 8. Radar installation observed on the volcanic cone on the south end of Iwo Jima. Bombers strike force was not sighted at any time during the mission.

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

16 January 1945

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18th Fighter Group Mission Report # 1-43 -- CONTINUED

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