

10 February 1945

CONSOLIDATED REPORT

P-38 PROVISIONAL SQUADRON MISSION REPORT # 2-4
318TH FIGHTER GROUP MISSION REPORT # 2-13

1. A. Ten (10) P-38L's.
B. Two (2) ZEKES
2. A. One (1) P-38L
B. Two (2) ZEKES
3. Escort two squadrons of B-24's on bombing mission to Iwo Jima.
4. Lts. AMON, BENNETT (H), REDFIELD, F/O WALKER (Violet 33) - (73rd)
Lt. KANE, Capt. BIRNEY (Violet 34) - (73rd)
Capt. OTTENSTEIN; F/O JAMES, Capt. OBERT, Lt. DUERSCHMIDT (Violet 35) - (333d)

Takeoff: 0935 - Over Target: 1430 - Landed: 1813

The three flights rendezvoused with the bombers over Kagman Point Field and proceeded on course to Iwo Jima at 9,000 feet. They climbed to 18,000 feet one-half hour from the target. At Minami Rock, the formation headed northeast of Iwo Jima to the IP, which was 2 miles north of the island. Enroute to the IP, just east of Iwo Jima, one ZEKE was called in, heading toward the island at 14,000 feet. Capt. OTTENSTEIN nosed over to attack but the ZEKE passed under the fighters and circled to the left. Capt. OTTENSTEIN made a pass and observed hits on the ZEKE. Then F/O JAMES got on the ZEKE's tail and opened fire at 200 feet. The ZEKE immediately exploded into a mass of flaming wreckage. The pilot did not have an opportunity to bail out. Capt. OTTENSTEIN, Capt. OBERT, and Lt. DUERSCHMIDT witnessed the destruction of the ZEKE.

Capt. OTTENSTEIN's flight then rejoined and continued to escort the bombers, who were proceeding to the IP. Upon reaching the IP, the formation turned around for the bomb run. Violet 33 and 35 remained at 18,000 feet and Violet 34 (Lt. KANE and Capt. BIRNEY) climbed to 22,000 feet to provide high cover. As the formation approached the island for the bomb run, Lt. KANE spotted one ZEKE coming almost head on at his altitude. He fired one burst before pulling up as the ZEKE split-essed. After leveling off, Lt. KANE saw the ZEKE diving down and was unable to locate his wing man, Capt. BIRNEY. Capt. OTTENSTEIN saw this ZEKE dog-fighting with Capt. BIRNEY. He observed the ZEKE fire at the P-38 which started to smoke and shortly disappeared out of sight but seemed to be under control. Lt. AMON, while escorting the bombers on their run, heard someone call in that a P-38 was going down and almost immediately thereafter heard Capt. BIRNEY ask for a vector without giving any explanation. Lt. AMON called Capt. BIRNEY and told him to wait a minute. He then called BUZZARD 1 and requested that a vector be given to Violet 34-2 (Capt. BIRNEY). No further communications were received from Capt. BIRNEY.

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4. CONT'D

After the ZEKE's engagement with Capt. BIRNEY, Capt. OBERT and Lt. DUERSCHMIDT observed the ZEKE heading for Iwo Jima, at 18,000 feet. Both pilots attacked and observed hits on the ZEKE. The ZEKE started to smoke and Lt. DUERSCHMIDT followed him, giving him a long burst. The ZEKE burst into flames at 11,000 feet and fell off, out of control. The pilot did not bail out. Capt. OTTENSTEIN and F/O JAMES saw the ZEKE crash in the water.

The bombers had completed their bomb run by the time the above action ended and the fighters therefore proceeded to rejoin and head south. They picked up the B-24's on the route home.

Heavy, intense A/A was observed. It was inaccurate and seemed to be coming from all over the island. It was barrage type over the island and continuously pointed following the bomber formation.

5. A. Good enroute, over target and return. Clouds .5 to .6 cumulus, 1,500 to 6,500 feet.
B. Poor between the fighters and bombers.
6. None
7. Ammunition expended -- 1,565 rounds 50 cal. - 105 rounds 20 mm.
Total gasoline consumed -- 8,000 gallons
8. One large ship observed just northeast of Iwo Jima, heading north. Three to four large ships observed along northwest coast, which appeared to be anchored. One medium ship observed just off the south tip of the island. Further identification of shipping was not possible due to high altitude of the fighters. Escorting a large formation of B-24's slows down P-38's to a point where gasoline reserve becomes a serious problem. It is recommended that two or three navigating bombers be used. Dumbo made no contact with Capt. BIRNEY.

SANDERS

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

STATEMENTS OF PILOTS
(318TH FTR. GRP. MISSION REPORT # 2-13)

F/O HARRY W. JAMES, T-3008
(Violet 35-2)

While escorting B-24's at 18,000 feet, Capt OTTENSTEIN and I spotted one ZEKE at 15,000 feet heading east toward Iwo Jima. As Capt. OTTENSTEIN made a pass, the ZEKE turned to the left. I then got on the ZEKE's tail and opened fire at 200 feet. The ZEKE immediately exploded into a mass of flaming wreckage. Several phosphorous bombs were thrown out with the wreckage, and these also exploded. The ZEKE was painted very dark green or black. The red roundels on wings and fuselage were smaller than usual.

Shortly after, I observed Capt. OBERT and Lt. DUERSCHMIDT attack a second ZEKE which was heading for Iwo Jima. The ZEKE started to smoke after both pilots made an element pass, and split "S'd". Lt. DUERSCHMIDT followed the ZEKE and I saw it burst into flames at 11,000 feet. I observed it crash in the water north-east of the island.

/s/ Harry W. James
/t/ HARRY W. JAMES
F/O, Air Corps.

1st Lt. WAYNE A. DUERSCHMIDT, O-807269
(Violet 35-4)

While escorting the B-24's to IP, north of Iwo Jima, I heard one ZEKE called in. I observed Capt. OTTENSTEIN make a pass on the ZEKE, which was heading toward the island at about 14,000 feet. Then F/O JAMES got on the ZEKE's tail and opened fire at about 200 feet. The ZEKE immediately exploded into a mass of flames.

Shortly after, someone called in a second ZEKE heading for Iwo Jima, at 18,000 feet. We started to climb to intercept. Capt. OBERT and myself made an element pass from 90 degrees. The ZEKE started to smoke and Capt. OBERT broke off the attack. I followed the ZEKE and gave him a long burst from 30 degrees. The ZEKE burst into flames at 11,000 feet. The pilot did not bail out. The ZEKE took no violent evasive action other than a split "S". It was painted a very dark drab color and had no other markings except the red roundels on wings and fuselage.

/s/ Wayne A. Duerschmidt
/t/ WAYNE A. DUERSCHMIDT
1st Lt., Air Corps.

A TRUE COPY:



FREDERICK H. DEAMANT
Major, Air Corps.

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