

AAFPDA - HIS
UC-1~~SECRET~~SQ-FI-45-41
APRIL 1945**RESTRICTED**

Organizational History, 45th Fighter Squadron, 15th Fighter Group,
VII Fighter Command, Seventh Air Force, Army Air Forces, Pacific
Ocean Area, AFO #86.

April 1, 1945 - April 30, 1945

P.R.C.

1. Date of arrival at and departure from each station occupied in this theatre.

Negative.

2. Losses in action.

On 26 April, while flying an escort mission of B-29's to Kyushu, Japan Capt MORTON M KNOX, O-799997, 1st Lt WILLIAM W REDUS, O-767372, 2d Lts EMERSON L CYPHERS, O-692737 and ROBERT D WRAY, O774399 were missing in action over the target.

3. Awards and Decorations.

Negative.

4. Organization.

Negative.

5. Strength.

1 April 1945 - 61 Officers, 1 F/O and 240 Enlisted Men.

30 April 1945 - 66 Officers, 2 F/O and 245 Enlisted Men.

6. Strength - airplanes by types.

1 April 1945 - 33 P-51D's.

30 April 1945 - 24 P-51D's.

7. Losses - Airplanes by types.

11 - P-51D's.

735-12

00056518
Historical Division AAFPOA,
JUN 16 1945

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While the seventh of April, 1945 may not go down in history as a turning point date of the war, it does and will mark a very definite milestone in the winning of the war. For it was on that date that P-51D fighter type aircraft first escorted B-29 Superfortresses over the Empire home island of Honshu to the capital city of TOKYO. Beside this fact, all others paled. This escort mission was the ultimate in the history of fighter airplanes. It was the longest over water flight to hit a target; it was the longest mission ever flown by P-51's; and it was the first time land-based fighter aircraft hit HONSHU Island.

At the time of the mission it didn't seem possible that so many obstacles could be put in one's way for so important a mission, yet there they were. Up to the date the first mission was flown and for several days thereafter pilots and ground personnel were sleeping in foxholes and eating catch-as-catch-can. Transportation to and from the field was at a premium. The weather was miserably cold at night and chokingly hot and dusty during the day. These purely physical deterrents to high spirits were not helped by the last minute of disseminating target information to the Squadron level.

In spite of these inconveniences, the big day arrived and everyone was very excited—due not only to the import of the mission but to the presence of so many public relations personnel which helped to point up the importance. It might have been an Hollywood opening, the first briefing for the mission, there were so many flash bulbs popping into so many Colonel's faces. The entire Fighter Command, it would seem, arrived to participate in the briefing. In fact their interest was so manifest that at least one pilot was squeezed out of the alert shack altogether and most of them had difficulty hearing what was going on. The fanfare was not limited to still photographers.

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Radio men, motion picture men, BRIEF magazine men, YANK magazine men, civilian journalists, Fighter Command PRO's all thought they had a priority on the pilot's time, as indeed it seemed they did.

When the kleig lights had been dimmed, and when the radio transmission machine had been silenced, and when the briefing was over, it was found that the work of preparing the pilots for the mission was left to be done by the Squadron Leaders and Intelligence officers. This was accomplished with the greatest dispatch possible, and the pilots were equipped with the necessary information to make a successful mission an hour before takeoff time.

Twent P-51's from the 45th Fighter Squadron took off for the mission. All returned safely after what was termed a very successful mission. Two Tojos, 1 Nick, 1 Tony and 1 George were confirmed shot down, 1 Tojo probably, 1 Nick and 2 Tojos were damaged. On 12 April this squadron went on another TOKYO escort mission and accounted for the destruction of 2 Nicks, 1 Tojo, and 1 Tony. Three Tojos and 2 Oscars were reported probably destroyed. On this mission all of our pilots returned.

On 16 April the squadron participated in the first of several attempts to support the OKINAWA operations by hitting the fields at KYUSHU. Up to and including this mission there had been much criticism of the manner in which the briefing of the missions had been handled. This mission was sprung on everyone as a 1st minute hastily contrived operation, which it was. Due to the damage the JAF had been inflicting on OKINAWA it was necessary to fly the mission. Yet when the flight arrived at the target there was not a Jap aircraft to be seen and return fire was inconsequential. Feeling was very high that the squadrons had been kept in ignorance of the importance and planning of the missions, and they made clear their feelings. From this point on there was a visible improvement in the handling of the missions, a greater delegation

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of work and authority to the lower echelons which everyone applauded and took into his stride.

Meanwhile sporadic strikes continued on CHICHI and HABA Island, and once during the month a scramble intercept was sent up. No contact was made with enemy planes although the scope reported them out about fifty miles. It appeared as if their plan was to bomb the airfields before our planes returned from their Long Range Mission, and if that was the plan, it went awry.

On 19 April the squadron participated in the most successful fighter sweep on HONSEU Island to date. The target was ATSUGI FIELD, and seemed to catch the enemy with its guard lowered for although numerous enemy aircraft were observed, they were not aggressive, and the squadron accounted for 4 Jacks and 1 Tojo destroyed, and 2 Jacks and 1 Tojo damaged. Captain FRANCIS LYMAN ENNIS made history that day by taking his flight over the target and making five (5) passes over the runway receiving nothing more than small arms ammunition in his wing. He reported that he would rather "make five runs over any target in JAPAN than one run over MILLE". All planes returned from this mission.

On 26 April the squadron suffered its first losses of the month, the first losses over enemy territory since coming to a forward area the second time. The mission was to escort B-29's over KYUSHU. On the way up and over the target the weather was the worst enemy. Not only were the B-29's never sighted, the target was never sighted. Blue Flight ran into some weather and was never heard from after one member of the flight reported he was at 1000' and alone. None of the rest of the flight was heard on the radio. Air sea rescue searched in vain, and the faint hope that the flight might have gone to OKINAWA vanished upon word from that island that no P-51's had even approached. On the 30th of the month another mission to HONSEU, this time to

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TACHIKAWA AIRFIELD north of TOKYO was abortive due to weather. This was to have been an escort mission but when we arrived at the D.P. the bombers had already gone ahead. The weather being .8 to .10, there was no target for fighters so they returned to base without incident. In the appendix will be found the complete mission reports for these and other missions not mentioned in this narrative.

On 13 April the squadron moved over to its permanent area. It was a great improvement and a naive luxury to eat in a mess hall, wash in a shower, and excrete in a screened-in latrine. Officers and men combined in details to do some fancy landscape gardening and transplanting. An outdoor movie screen was built and we started showing movies every night. Although the pictures available were either very old or strictly Grade "B", attendance was good because there was nothing else to attend.

On 17 April 1945 Major GILMER L. SNIPES was relieved of command of the squadron and ordered back to the states on rotation. He was succeeded by Captain ARTHUR H. BRIDGE who up to that time had been the Squadron Operations Officer.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR H. BRIDGE

When Captain ARTHUR H. BRIDGE assumed command of the 45th Fighter Squadron he had run the gamut of possible squadron jobs, and most of them were in the same squadron he now was called upon to lead. A native Californian, Captain Bridge attended school in his home town, ONTARIO, CALIFORNIA, and received his AB at the University of California in 1941. He worked for a while as a citrus grower and later as a mechanics helper at the POMONA, CALIFORNIA airport until December 1941 when he enlisted as an Aviation Cadet and was sent to the GULF COAST TRAINING COMMAND.

He was commissioned a 2d Lieutenant on 5 August 1942 and has been on

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active duty since that time. All his commissioned flying time has been spent with the 15th Fighter Group, most of it with this squadron. He was with the 78th Fighter Squadron at MIDWAY ISLAND for two months and joined the 45th on 28 March 1943 where he has been ever since. This has included tours of duty on BAKER, NANOMEA, APEMAMA and MAKIN Islands before the present operation to IWO Island.

When he assumed command of the squadron, Captain BRIDGE had 290:35 combat hours, 42 sorties and had been awarded the DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS AIR MEDAL and BRONZE OAK LEAF CLUSTER, AND PURPLE HEART. He is married to Mrs. Catherine V. Bridge of Washington, D.C. who is herself a pilot with many hours in the various fighter-type aircraft he has flown, and was formerly a WASP before they were disbanded.

MEMORANDA OF SECTIONSArmament Section

This month has been a busy one for the armament section. The section is completely set up now, thanks to the cooperation of each of the men.

The replacements received last month are working out very well. M/Sgt JAMES MOORE has taken over as section chief and has taken great interest in his work. The other three men, T/Sgt LOWTHORP, S/Sgt HERWIG and S/Sgt KRAMP, have fitted right into the section and are doing a fine job.

The section has been divided up into flights. It is believed that by having flights, more efficiency and more personal interest will be reached, especially by the higher ranking non-commissioned officers. We have four flights, and at present each flight is caring for six airplanes. As replacement aircraft come in, the flights will increase equally.

This squadron section, in conjunction with the 78th Fighter Squadron has constructed a range for proof firing and harmonization of aircraft weapons.

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Considerable difficulty arose in choosing a proper site for the range, but our troubles were temporarily solved when we received permission from the Air Base command to fire across the runway. We were forced to change the target area once, as the original area had been earmarked for a permanent structure. We now have the range set up and before many days we will have the guns in our airplanes harmonized. Regarding proof firing and harmonization, the flight leaders and the Squadron Commander have decided upon "paint" harmonization, and all guns will converge at 1000 feet in the future, unless changed because of unsatisfactory results.

Chemical Warfare.

During the month of April the chemical warfare section was mainly occupied with general duties within the squadron. One of these was hauling water for the mess kit laundry. The M3A2 decontaminating truck was used for this good advantage of hauling water and providing pressure for cleaning air scoops and under surfaces of the aircraft.

The section was also given the duty of spraying the latrines, showers, and mess hall weekly with a 5% solution of DDT in kerosene.

The decontaminating truck was used in fighting fire once this month. We were able to assist in extinguishing a burning Japanese truck in the 47th motor pool. The fire hose attachment was used and was found satisfactory except for one thing. The 1-1/2 inch fire hose burst after about 5 minutes operation at 400 pounds pressure. Later when the remaining sections were tested one coupling was blown off at the same pressure. Since this hose bears a label to the effect that it was tested at 400 pounds pressure it is to be expected that failure was due to either faulty materiel or deterioration; however, the latter was not revealed upon inspection.

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UC-1S E C R E TCommunications Section

The first long range mission to the Japanese mainland was scheduled for the 7th of April and airborne radio equipment was checked and rechecked. In spite of all our efforts, however, two ships had radio trouble enroute. This set the pattern for all following long range missions. Maintenance can go only so far, and then the design and structure of the set, itself, determines the final result. In the long range missions to date, there has been an average of a little less than two radio write-ups of some nature per mission. Maintenance has never had a 100% day. It is the conclusion of this office that the SCR-522 is not rugged enough for seven hour missions either because of underrating of set parts or poor regulation of dynamotor output. Also the set, and dynamotor in particular, are very susceptible to overheating.

The AN/ARA-8 Homing adapter has proven its dependability and value with succeeding missions. Early criticism of the set arose largely from an ignorance of the part of using personnel as to its proper employment. It has shown its worth, though, in air to air homing to navigational aircraft and in homing to base. In the event of VHF failure, however, pilots have no communication of any kind. Many pilots are anxious to have the DETROLA range receiver reinstalled in all ships as an additional facility.

It was found early in the month that SCR-522 sets tuned on the maintenance bench often lost tuning and collected dust in transit from bench to ship. In order to facilitate the tuning of sets in the ship, a mobile maintenance bench was constructed by T/Sgt PAUL JAROSCAK. The bench is built around a Jap push cart frame and incorporated are a C-10 energizer, an L-130 signal generator, ANL-95 field strength meter, and an L-139 Milliammeter. By means of this bench, receiver and transmitter tuning as well as AN/ARA-8 checks are accomplished with the set in the ship.

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A day or so after the first TOKYO mission the squadron moved into its permanent living area. Electrical wiring was started in advance and was completed by the time of the move. A storage tent is being used to house the power supply which consists of a 15 KVA and a 5 KVA generator. The present operating schedule calls for a twenty-four shift for the 15KVA and a four hour shift for the 5KVA. This allows time for thorough maintenance of both units. The greatest problem in constructing the "power house" was the acquisition of a double pole-double throw switch to allow parallel operation of the two units. This was overcome by turning to Jap signal supply which had on previous occasion proved itself to be a reliable source of supply. In the same connection, much of the tent wiring was done with the aid of Japanese insulators.

The telephone situation became static if not satisfactory during the month. The problem of each squadron maintaining two separate switchboards in line and living areas was eliminated by the establishment of a consolidated group switchboard in the living area. From this board we were allotted seven local lines which proved an adequate number. However, calls from our living area to our line area have to go through three switchboards; Whopper rear (15th Group), Whopper (15th Group) and Nobility (45th). It is a rare occasion when one of these trunk lines are not busy. There is a great need for direct trunk lines from living to line area rather than the present "all lines lead to Whopper" set-up.

Operation of our line switchboard and the consolidated group switchboard requires at least nine men allowing for no spares. This is necessitated by the very heavy teletype traffic which demands two men on duty in our message center at all times. Teletype traffic is much heavier than it was on OAHU. Much of the traffic is unnecessary and the prevailing attitude seem to be,

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"when in doubt use teletype". It is often employed between two stations within hailing distance of each other. With our present section strength, one third of our personnel is used in message center. This is hardly an ideal situation in a tactical organization where the primary job is maintenance of airborne communication equipment.

There were no personnel changes during the month and the actual working strength of the section remains at thirty.

Engineering section.

The most important event during the month of April was preparation for the first fighter escort on the island of JAPAN. While there was very little time to prepare for the first run, the section put forth every effort to have the airplanes ready. Late in the evening of the sixth the ships were serviced and moved to the parking area for takeoff. On the morning of the seventh the aircraft were airborne without mishap for the first long range mission. With the takeoff completed, the section waited for the mission to be completed.

Returning aircraft were accounted for and they were examined for damage. Little evidence could be found. Other escorts were made during the month on the 12th, 16th, 19th, 22nd, 26th and 30th.

On the 24th this section was surprised to see a B-29 come in through our first row of parked airplanes. Stopping in the middle of the first row it caught on fire, threatening other P-51's on the line. Only by reason of the men on the line watching the incoming ships and running at the time of approach of the crashing airplanes were they able to run clear of the wreckage. All airplanes that could be towed and taxied were moved away from the fire. Later when an inventory of damage was taken it was found that four aircraft were completely destroyed and five damaged. Three of the damaged were repaired the following day but it was necessary to transfer two to base.

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Considerable carburetion trouble is being encountered at this time. First it was encountered on some airplanes that were written up as rough. Now it is noted that airplanes which had engine changes recently have the wrong type so they have been grounded for the change.

Corrosion is becoming evident on the airplanes at this time. Corrective action has been taken to correct this condition.

Intelligence section.

During the month of April this section became less a step-child of the organization and assumed it a proper importance in a combat unit. A pyrimidal tent which the Marines had left behind was donated to the section, so we had lebensraum for the first time since we hit IWO JIMA. By scavenging around the vacated dumps, scrounging transportation, and enlisting a lot of voluntary aid, the S-2 section had a highly presentable and practical headquarters from which to operate.

Flying missions to the BONIN Islands occupied the attention of the pilots for the first week of the month. The confusion in regard to vriefing and interrogating the pilots as described in last month's installment was lessened as the Group gave Squadron S-2's a little more leeway to act on their own initiative. As these BONINS missions became more or less a milk run Group became less interested in them. The big thing was, of course, the Very Long Range missions.

On April 7th the first long mission was flown to TOKYO. On April 6th the Squadron S-2's still did not know what part they were to play in briefing the pilots. They were soon to learn. Pilots and S-2's alike were briefed by the Fighter Command in the late afternoon before scheduled missions then were given one strip map with the course on it and told to reproduce one of them for each pilot. Half an hour before the planes took off the maps were completed. There

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was no time to explain the maps to the pilots, and the whole business was as new to them as it was to us.

The mission was a success and it was hardly necessary to use the maps on that mission. Had it been, it would have been another story. The trouble with the whole situation now was that we simply were not getting information about the strikes until it was too late to do else but make up strip maps and distribute them.

On 15 April we had the routes and code names in ample time to make up the maps and brief the pilots before they went to the formal Group briefing. It was very satisfactory and for the first time the pilots felt they had time to absorb all the data necessary to be fully briefed for a long range mission. That was the night before the mission. The next morning at the final weather briefing the pilots were told that the target had been changed and they were to hit KYUSHU instead. It was the first notice the Squadron S-2's had been given of the change of target.

Being so kept in the dark did very little to help the prestige of the Intelligence Section; it did less to help the operating efficiency of the section. What was particularly galling was the fact that the Operations section generally was forewarned what the missions were to be before we were and it was necessary to go to them rather than find out through regular intelligence channels.

This situation was straightened out during the month and by month's end was under control. Group managed to get the information from the Fighter Command and we were forthwith notified in time to complete the preliminary work and give the pilots their own briefing.

During the month the situation in regard to photo coverage of Japanese

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homeland and targets we were to strike showed no signs on improvement. Still the best coverage we had of targets in JAPAN were the photographs which one of our pilots picked up in SAIPAN through conversation with a B-29 Intelligence Officer who had a superfluity and gave us what he didn't need.

Cpl HAROLD A CAISSE was added to the staff of the Intelligence section to replace Sgt LIGHT who was transferred to the Engineering section. The Information and Education section put up a tent in the living area with the War situation. The weather situation promptly took care to destroy the exhibits, but they were indomitably replaced as they were washed out. USAFI was stressed and with very favorable results. The whole procedure of applying and receiving these courses is abominable from the point of view of getting recruits interested in the courses. The information is meager and the curricula not explained in the catalog.

The squadron was so busy flying long range missions that there was no ground school for pilots for the month.

Medical Section.

During the month of April the health of the squadron remained good. Due to existing military conditions, a temporary living area continued to be occupied until 13th April. At this time, the entire personnel moved into a permanent area and were quartered in pyramidal tents. On the same date, a squadron mess hall was put into operation, and the rations of the B and 10 in 1 types were served. Water was limited throughout the month, but adequate. A consolidated officers' mess was opened 25th April where all officers of the 15th Group will be served.

In the permanent living area an excellent salt water shower was erected as well as screened, fly-proof pit latrines. These added greatly to the comfort of the men.


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During the month sick call was held at the 15th Fighter Group Dispensary, which also provided space for quarters cases. The consolidated group dispensary was found to facilitate medical care due to improved equipment and pooling of medical personnel. The dispensary on the line continued to be used as an auxillary dispensary and crash station.

Attempts to improve the sanitary facilities are being continued. Flies were restricted by routine sanitary procedures and frequent spraying of the island by aircraft. Local use of a DDE-kerosene mixture in the squadron area has proven to be of great value. A lecture on field sanitation was given to all the personnel of the squadron.

Ordnance section.

This section at the present time is pretty well set up, and we are proud of our layout. We are setup in a large wall tent with a fly. S/Sgt LUKEHART, Sgts FENTY and WILLS are quartered just behind the section and have telephone connections in their quarters, making it possible for quick action on the part of the Ordnance section in the event of an emergency.

During the first few mission to the Japanese homeland, the 78th and 47th Fighter squadrons encountered considerable trouble with what was supposeably bad ammunition. Our airplanes were equipped with the same type ammunition, yet we encountered no difficulty. The Ordnance sections of the two squadrons removed all the ammunition from their planes and replaced it with new ammunition containing in the belting the armorer piercing-incendiary ammunition. Since our squadron encountered no trouble, we left the old type ammunition in our aircraft. A short time later, however, we had five stoppages which, upon investigation, showed that the striker had dented the primer, but the round had failed to dunction. We, like the other two squadrons, pulled all the ammunition out of our airplanes and out of our reserve stock and replaced it with the

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aforementioned new type ammunition. After this work had been accomplished we checked our firing pin springs and found a good many of them weak. It is believed that these weak firing pin springs did not permit the firing pin to strike the primer with enough force to set off the round. This belief is substantiated by the fact that the 386th Service group test fired our supposedly defective ammunition and encountered no trouble.

Two weapons inspections were held this month to insure the cleanliness and good working order of the weapons throughout the squadron.

The welding equipment of our ordnance maintenance set "A" has been of great value to us, and a large amount of work has been accomplished with it.

During the month we were issued four chrome cal. .50 machine gun barrels. These barrels were to be used in the aircraft to test their ability to withstand firing. We installed the four barrels in two airplanes, three in one and one in another. Before one round had been fired out of these two airplanes, they were destroyed, one by fire and one over the Japanese homeland.

Operations section.

The month of April set a new high for our squadron operations and also a new low. On April 7th, one month from our arrival on IWO JIMA, sixteen P-51D 20NA's from the squadron assisted in the first long range mission of land-based fighters over the Japanese homeland. We suffered no losses and the mission was considered a success. Our primary purpose in being on this island was accomplished and the morale of the men concerned was greatly improved. During the month seven missions to JAPAN were completed. Four of these were escort and three were strafing attacks on enemy airdrome installations. No pilots or planes were lost due to enemy action on any of these missions.

On April 26th, one flight of four P-51D-20NA's was lost due to weather while enroute to KYUSHU, JAPAN on an escort mission. The pilots listed as

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missing in action are: Capt MORFON M KNOX O-799997; 1st Lt WILLIAM J REIDUS O-767273; 2d Lts ROBERT D WRAY O-774399 and EMERSON L CYPHERS O-692737.

Seven dive bombing and strafing missions to CHICHI were held with no losses in pilots or planes. The attacks were centered against the SUSAKI airfield to keep it inoperational.

On 24 April, a B-29 went out of control while landing and destroyed four P-51's and damaged five. No pilots or ground crewmen of this squadron were injured.

On 25 April, two accidents occurred due to materiel failure. 2d Lt SAMUEL G LEITTE was flying at 10000 feet when his engine failed. He attempted a forced landing, touching down on about the last 500 feet of the runway. His plane rolled off the end of the runway and crashed causing a complete loss. Parts of the plane were salvagable. Lt LEITTE received severe lacerations of the forehead.

Later the same morning, 1st Lt DEAN E DECKERT so damaged a P-51 on landing that only a few parts were salvaged. The right landing gear failed to function due to 100% materiel failure, causing the accident. Lt Deckert received no injuries.

28 April, two P-51's were transferred from the 78th Fighter Squadron to us. We began the month with thirty-three P-51D's and at the end of the month the squadron strength was 24 P-51D.

Five new pilots joined the squadron April 22nd, 1st Lts CHARLES H GRANT, FREDERICK R ERNST, ELMER L BISHOP, 2d Lts WILLIAM H HODGIN AND JOHN M MAHONY. These pilots are R.T.U. graduates and all have over a 1000 hours, most of which are in trainer type aircraft. The problem of training has become very difficult due to the loss of airplanes in the past month and also to the constant maintenance necessary to keep the planes in condition for missions to Japan.

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However, with a minimum amount of training in our tactics these pilots should be able to perform satisfactorily under combat conditions.

Personnel Supply section.

After six weeks of living in foxholes, we moved into our new area the first few days of this month. A portion of the new tentage drawn at APO 951 was found to be Class B and unserviceable when unwrapped.

Lack of cooperation of higher echelons made securing of lumber for our mess hall floor a problem and was overcome only by begging and chiseling from outside sources. Although sandbags and plywood were in evidence everywhere, our requisition was returned marked "unavailable at present", and these items were secured in the same manner as the flooring. Requisitions submitted in March for clothing and equipment of men that lost same in fire were not completed until the last week of April.

Light bulbs could not be procured during this month due to inadequate supply at Island Engineer.

A new typewriter was issued to us incomplete. Leg stands were missing and it was necessary to fashion legs out of wood so that it could be used.

Supply ships are arriving regularly, and the 386th Service Group stock is increasing. The outlook for the ensuing month is good enough to warrant a salvage day.

Technical Supply section.

Activity in the Tech Supply section was limited during the month of April. The flow of P-51 parts was prompt in most cases. At different times during the month aircraft was grounded for a number of days.

Some parts for grounded ships were obtained after the B-29 crash on our line area 24 April. These were obtained from wrecked aircraft which had been transferred to the 490th Engineering Squadron, 386th Service Group.

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Considerable difficulty is being encountered with carburetors. Many changes have been made recently. Some were replaced with new carburetors while others were repaired by the 4th Aircraft Repair Unit. At this time they are being repaired by the 2d Aircraft Repair Unit. Carburetors are still the principle cause of trouble at this time.

Transportation section.

After almost five weeks of operations without a site, the section was granted a location in the squadron area. Two pyramidal tents have been set up in addition to a large framework which is covered with tarpaulins and is used as a shop. The framework is made of long iron rods, which, with the help of the Ordnance sections welding equipment, were welded together forming the frame. An adequate grease pit has also been dug and has been used quite extensively. Cpl CRISTINO of the section has done an excellent job in preparing a parking area for our squadron vehicles.

Deep water fording kits which were installed on all our vehicles before departing from APO 951 have been placed on each vehicle.

Cpl CRISTINO has made plans for painting each vehicle, and when the squadrons next months history is written we hope to report that most of our vehicles have been painted. Cpl Cristino has also made some stencils which he will use in painting our squadron insignia on our vehicles. The insignia will be in full color and will add greatly to the appearance of the vehicles.

The vehicles of this squadron were in very poor condition when they returned to OAHU from the GILBERT Islands. This was due largely to climatic conditions in that area. In order that we may preserve as much as possible the under-carriage of our vehicles we are planning to paint them with red lead. At present we have only a small supply of red lead paint on hand, but we will in all probability be able to procure an additional amount by order.

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We have encountered some trouble with the clutch mechanisms on a few of our lighter vehicles. This is due primarily to the soft roads and soft soil. When a vehicle bogs down in this soil, a stress and strain is placed on the clutch mechanism and in some cases the clutch cannot function properly. WE have had to turn one (1) 1/4 ton jeep into 3rd echelon, and we are anticipating still more trouble along this line. One other vehicle, a 3/4 ton weapons carrier went to the 3rd echelon shop this month, and it was given new rings and a thorough tuneup.

We encountered some trouble with our vehicle radiators leaking, and it felt that this is due to the water used in them.

Sgt BARCLAY, formerly of this section was transferred to the Engineering section on request and Pfc HARRIGRAVES replaced him coming from the Engineer-section.

Daily first echelon maintenance is being carried out and our vehicles are mechanically in good condition.

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CONFIDENTIAL

From: CO Fiteron Four Five.

7 April 1945

To : CO Fiteron Fifteen. (Att: S-2)

45th Fighter Squadron Mission 4-1

15th Fighter Group Mission 4-

MISSION REPORT

1. a. 20 P-51D's of Fiteron Four Five.
 - b. Tojo, Tony, Mick, one Irving, and one Mary.
2. a. None.
 - b. 2 Tojos, 1 Mick, 1 Tony, 1 Mary confirmed.
1 Tojo probable
1 Mick and 2 Tojos damaged.
3. Escort B-29's to Tokyo.
4. Red Flight - Major Snipes, Lt Henderson, Capt Maltby, Lt Wes Brown.
Yellow Flight - Capt Morey, Lt's McCorkle, Fisher, Slater.
Blue Flight - Capt Bridge, Lt Dunlap, Capt Campbell, Capt G. Hunter.
Green Flight - Capt Annis, Lt Walker, Capt Knox, Lt P. Hunter.
Red Reserve - Lts Harrigan, Reinert, Deckert, Bettberg.

0700

1045 - 1130

1420

Major Gilmer Snipes led a strike of 20 P-51D's, four of which were scheduled to replace abortive sorties, on an escort of B-29's to Tokyo. Rendezvous was made at Kita Kook, 10000 feet altitude, 0725, with three navigational B-29's and left immediately on course of 345° to the MF Komu Shima for the combat B-29's. No abortive sorties developed and Red Reserve Flight was ordered to base, pancaking at 0811. The flight to Komu was made at IAS 200 MPH at an altitude of 10000 feet until opposite Hachi'o, at which time a climb was begun to enable the flight to reach Komu at 17000 - 18000 feet.

Rendezvous was made with the B-29's to be escorted to Tokyo at 1025. The B-29's were at 15000 feet and the entire escort was run at these altitudes. Landfall was made at 1030 on Honshu. The flight followed the W coast of

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15th Ftr Sq Mission 4-1, 15th Ftr Sq Mission 4- 7Apr'45 contd.

Gugami went to a point N of Atami where the first bogies were encountered. At this point wing tanks were dropped.

RED FLIGHT: When Major Snipes switched his tanks the engine quit for a full two minutes and he lost several thousand feet of altitude. When the engine caught, Major Snipes began climbing back to position, when he observed a Tony one thousand feet above him. He attempted to give the Tony a burst, but could not pull his nose up high enough to bring his guns to bear. Lt Henderson, his wingman, did get hits on the Tony.

After reforming, Major Snipes and Lt Henderson sighted a Nick and two Tojos. The Tojos were flying line abreast at the same altitude with Red Flight. Red Leader and his wingman made tail passes on the Tojos while flying mutual support. Major Snipes saw his target smoke from the trailing edge of the wing before he overran the Tojo which was not sighted again. When Lt Henderson's target came into Major Snipes range in a gentle bank to the left, it was observed to have the right landing gear part way down. Lt Henderson had got in effective bursts and observed the wheel down (although his belief is that it was the left one), and also thought the prop was windmilling. Major Snipes gave one burst and Tojo began to come to pieces. When it had gone down to 2000 - 3000 feet, the pilot was seen bail out by Major Snipes and Lt Henderson.

Capt Walby, leading the second element, and the wingman, Lt Wes Brown, had been dispatched for the Tony by Major Snipes. The Tony made a head on approach going after the bomber formation. Capt Walby pulled up in a climb and stalled out got in a good burst. Lt Brown, following, was able to observe the Tony going straight down without pulling out until lost from sight at 2000 - 3000 feet, and it is believed the plane was destroyed.

After heading on to Tokyo, Capt Walby observed a twin engine plane (possibly a Myrt, Blush, or Nick) from 2 o'clock make a run on the L-5

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15th Ftr Sq Mission 1, 15th Ftr Sq Mission 4. 7A 05 contd.

drop a phosphorous bomb. In the maneuver to make a head on attack on the Jap, Lt W. Brown's plane slipped forward and brought flame from the enemy which nosed down and went into a tight spiral. Capt Maltby observed the Jap going down to low altitude, and does not believe recovery possible.

Flak was observed in heavy concentrations N of Hiratsuka and around Tokyo proper. A barrage fire with a ceiling of about 15000 feet seemed very accurate against the bombers, although too low to bother the fighters. Capt Maltby observed a B-29 go into a spin on the western outskirts of Tokyo, break into fire, and disintegrate. Three parachutes were observed to open.

Red Flight sighted in number Tokyo, Nicks, and Tojos from just SE of Fujisawa until they were N of the N side of Tokyo Bay.

Red Flight followed the bombers from Tokyo directly to Iwo on a course of 150° at an average altitude of 10000 feet. On leaving the target, several bombers seemed anxious to give fighters navigational aid to base. Red Flight withdrew from the target area with a group of bombers just N of Imbo Saki. Red Flight's participation in the action over the target was strictly offensive. Attacks were not pressed on the fighters by the enemy who was after our bombers.

YELLOW FLIGHT: Capt Norey led this flight which flew over target area at 16000 - 18000 feet. At landfall Capt Norey's wingman, Lt McCorkle, had trouble jettisoning one of his wing tanks. Accidentally he hit the mixture control which knocked out his engine. He dropped 8000 feet before he found out what was wrong. Heading N over Sagami Wan, he got his engine going again, flew across and above the bombers. While crossing over the bombers, Lt McCorkle felt his plane being hit. He got a .50 cal. shot in the root of the stabilizer where it joins the fuselage, and also a hit in the rudder cable which was not cut by the shot. Not being able to find his flight Lt McCorkle climbed

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15th Ftr Sq Mission 4-1, 15th Ftr Sq Mission 4- 7 Apr 45 contd.

to 15500 feet, saw a flight from the 531st Fighter Squadron. He joined them and stayed with them, orbiting at 12000-15000 feet around the rendezvous for 30 minutes. He made no radio contact with this flight which went on a course of 210° and flew it for 15 minutes. At this time he saw a B-29 on his right parallel with him. He joined this plane which took him back to base. Lt McCormick did not have IU installed in his plane and his radio was out part of the time. He observed one 150 feet tanker on the W shore of Sagami Wan and 3 or 4 smaller craft. The rest of the flight proceeded on course over Yokohama to Tokyo. They could see no other friendly fighters or bombers. They made four 180° turns over the city of Tokyo and to the E. They noted the damage of previous B-29 raids and a large airfield E of Tokyo Wan with several aircraft on the ground. Capt Moray saw six unidentified enemy aircraft going down in smoke. En route to the rendezvous over Imbo Saki three enemy bombers flying west were observed. The flight did not disturb these bombers. At rendezvous they picked up two B-29's and came home with them. While over the target they noted two white phosphorous bombs above the flak at 15000-16000 feet. The flak was heavy and in continuous barrage but was not aimed at this flight which received no hits other than Lt McCormick's

BLUE FLIGHT: After seeing landfall on Honshu, Blue Flight lost Red Flight in the area NW of Sagami Wan. Three Tojos were sighted in this area at 3000 feet. En route to Tokyo from here, Capt Hunter got in a burst at a Wick which swept past at 70° and disappeared. It is not believed extensive damage was done to this plane.

Just W of Hiratsuka, Blue Flight was at 15000 feet on course to Tokyo, when four Tojos attack from 22000 feet. Capt Campbell and Capt Hunter, of the second element, in mutual support turned into a head on attack on the first Tojo.

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45th Ftr Sq Mission 4-1, 15th Ftr Sq Mission 4. 7Apr45 contd.

Capt Hunter got hits, and then Capt Campbell fired the Tojo which went into a steep bank spouting smoke and flames not to be seen again. It is not expected that this plane will fly again.

Capt Bridge and Lt Dunlap took on a second Tojo upon which Capt Bridge was able to see his tracers striking between the fuselage and wing. Lt Dunlap followed Capt Bridge and broke right in order to make a 20° deflection shot on the Tojo which went into a split S and disappeared.

As a result of the combat Capt Bridge became separated from Blue Flight, and sighting a single plane of the 47th Fighter Squadron, joined this plane for mutual support. While with this plane, Capt Bridge had an opportunity for one more quick pass at another Tojo. Several Hicks or Irvings were observed about the outskirts of Tokyo. The plane from the 47th Squadron left to rejoin its Squadron, and Capt Bridge tagged on to a flight of the 78th Fighter Squadron. On the way to landfall, Capt Ennis' flight (Green Flight) was sighted and Capt Bridge continued to base with them.

The remainder of Blue Flight flew around the Tokyo Bay dock area over Yokohama, Kawasaki, and Tokyo. After passing the E side of Tokyo Bay, the flight did a 180° turn and flew back toward Tokyo Bay area again. Observing that the bombers were coming out of their run, Capt Campbell led the flight to the established Rally Point, latitude 35°N, longitude 140°45'E. At this point Capt Campbell was able to locate the three navig. dumboes and to sight the surfaced rescue sub. Several other flights joined while Capt Campbell led Blue Flight in an orbit, a climb to altitude, another orbit to an on course position. Blue Flight was guided to base by the first navig. B-29 to leave the Rally Point.

Capt Bridge reports sighting a parachute approximately half way between Fujisawa and Hiratsuka, believed to be Japanese. Two white phosphorous bombs

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45th Ftr Sq Mission 4-1, 15th Ftr Sq Mission 4. 7 Apr 5 contd.
 were observed 17000-18000 feet half way between Tokyo and Hashioji.

GREEN FLIGHT: Capt Ennis led this flight over the target. They arrived over Tokyo at 1100 and were there for 20 minutes. From landfall to target area flex was observed, all of it directed on the bombers. No one was hit. Flex was heavy, accurate, and trailing. Many enemy aircraft were observed, a compilation totalling 15 to 20 Nicks, 4 Zexes, 1 Tojo, and one Mary. This last plane was identified as a Mary even though it had retractable landing gear. The flight was at 17000 feet travelling 250 MPH when Capt Knox, element leader, spotted the Mary flying parallel to the bombers ahead to his right at 13000 feet. He dove down on the Mary approaching from 6:30 o'clock and gave one burst. There was no deflection and this burst shot the tail off. The Mary took no evasive action before or after being hit. The plane exploded after Capt Ennis. Lts Walker and Hunter had taken a few shots at it. The plane was on fire and smoking from Capt Knox's burst. All four pilots saw the plane going down in smoke and quite out of control. Lt Walker then saw two Nicks coming towards the bombers from 2 o'clock. He fired from 1500 feet, 60° deflection, and saw his incendiaries hit the plane, damaging it. It was still able to make a pass at a bomber in spite of the hits he got on the plane. The second Nick peeled off without firing and was seen diving, leaving a trail of smoke. Since no one had had a chance to hit it, it is believed to have had a mechanical failure. The flight continued 3 after spending 20 minutes over the target and flex to the HP. Capt Ennis asked for a DU heading on Dog Channel. The beam was so wide that they called Capt Hunter on New Channel and told him they would stay with the bombers. Mascot 5 brought them back to base on a vector of 175°-210° taking them east of Haha. The flight proceeded at 1420.

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45th Fir sq Mission 441 45th Fir sq mission 441 7Apr45 contd.

5. a. En route Waffles 10/10, Mattress unknown, Alt 8000 feet, Visibility 10 miles. Over target CAVU.

b. Good.

6. None.

7. 5555 rds cal. .50 ammo. expended. 6360 gallons of gasoline.

8. Supplementary information will be forwarded.

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To: CO Fitergr Fifteen (ATT: S-2)

12 April 1945

45th Fiteron Mission 4-2
15th Fitergr Mission 4-

MISSION REPORT

1. a. 16 P-51D's of Fiteron Four Five.
- b. 25 Nicks, 5 Oscars, 5 Tojos, 1 Hamp, 1 Zece, 1 Tony, 3 Unidentified (1 with gull wings)
2. a. None.
- b. Destroyed: 2 Nicks (1 Lt Dunlap, 1 split by Capt Ennis and Lt Roberts), 1 Tojo, (Lt Richins), 1 Tony (Capt Hunter).
Probables: 3 Tojos, (2 Capt Hunter and Lt Rettberg), (1 Capt Bridge and Lt Harrigan), 2 Oscars, (1 Lt Redus and Lt Reinert, 1 Lt Henderson and Lt Statsmann).
Damaged: None.

3. Escort to Tokyo and return per FO #40 H₁, VII Fighter Command.

4. Red Flight - Major Snipes, Lts Redus, Henderson, Statsmann.
Yellow Flight - Capt Morey, Lts Deckert, Fisher, Richins.
Blue Flight - Capt Bridge, Lts Harrigan, Capt Hunter, Lt Rettberg.
Green Flight - Capt Campbell, Lts Roberts, Dunlap, Dennis.
Red Res. Flight - Capt Ennis, Lt Reinert, Capt Knox, Lt McCorkle.
Note: On schedule.

Flights over target:

- Red Flight - Capt Bridge, Lt Harrigan, Capt Hunter, Lt Rettberg.
Yellow Flight - Lts Fisher, Richins.
Blue Flight - Capt Ennis, Lts Roberts, Dunlap, Deckert.
Green Flight - Lts Henderson, Statsmann, Redus, Reinert.

0800

1200 - 1245

1545

20 P-51D's were airborne at 0800 for escort mission to Tokyo and return under the leadership of Major Snipes. Major Snipes was forced to return since his wheels would not retract, and he turned the leadership of the flight over to Capt Bridge and called Capt Ennis from Red Res. to take his place. He pancaked at 0830. Capt Campbell was forced to return due to radio failure. He tried to contact Capt Ennis but was unable to do so, so waggled his wings, left his flight, and returned to base at 0832. After rendezvous with the navigation B-29's at 0840, 11000 feet over Kita Rocks additional abortives made changes in the flights necessary resulting in the formation outlined in "Flights over target" above. 140 miles out Capt Morey and Lt Dennis found their planes developing rough engines which caused them to abort. They pancaked at 1015. Capt Knox and Lt McCorkle, the two remaining spares, were ordered to return and pancaked at 0930.

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CONFIDENTIAL45th Ftr Sq. ⁴² 15th Ftr Gp Mission 4- 12Apr'45

After making rendezvous with the navigation B-29's over Kita Rock, the flight was on course at 0845. Flying a level course until within sight of the assembly point at 11000 feet, speed was 205 MPH IAS. The weather en route was 10/10, top of cloud cover 8000 feet with haze to 11000 feet, and visibility 10 miles. There were breaks of clear weather for a total of 1/4 of the entire route to assembly point. When the B-29's for strike were within sight a climb was begun to 18000 feet. Assembly with the combat B-29's which were from 13000 to 15000 feet was made at 1130. After rendezvous, the strike was on course to target at 1140.

RED FLIGHT: A little short of the target Capt Bridges element sighted a Nick preparing to attack the bombers. They made a tight 360° turn, but as they came around they saw three planes 800 feet above, in front of, and out of range of the B-29's. The Nick was no longer observed, so they pushed throttle full and got ahead of the B-29's when the three unidentified aircraft came in. Capt Bridge fired at the lead ship, and both he and Lt Harrigan, his wingman, saw big flashes under the wing which were identified as rockets with much more flame than our standard types. Lt Harrigan saw Capt Bridge's hits on this plane. At this time a Zeke or an Oscar painted black and red made a pass, close in, on the B-29's. Capt Bridge passing within close range of the B-29's opened fire. The B-29's were firing on this plane at the same time, and Capt Bridge received hits which were observed by Lt Harrigan in his wing. Capt Bridge reports that the slug came through his fuselage and into the cockpit. Immediately, Capt Bridge and his wingman turned to the right and away.

While this action was taking place Capt Hunter and Lt Rettberg saw what they believed were three Tojos coming head on from ahead and to the right in range of bomber formation. They attacked the first and saw lots of flame under both wings. They had given one or two second burst, and at first believed this fire to be hits. Capt Hunter turned his head and observed two explosions out of range in front of the B-29's which he describes as being similar to the fire of a flame thrower. It is believed that these explosions were the results of rocket fire from the first plane. After this Capt Hunter pulled over to the second plane and the same action resulted. Pulling up and to the right, and over, Capt Hunter saw a Nick coming in from 2 o'clock on the same level with the B-29's below Red Flight. Lt Rettberg saw the tail of the Nick blown off by the B-29's.

Capt Hunter and Lt Rettberg then scissored over the bombers to the turnign point where they did a 360° orbit then turned left 140° above and on the left side of the B-29's. Immediately over the outskirts of Tokyo Capt Hunter saw a Tony a mile away. At first this was believed to be a stray P-51, and Capt Hunter tracked him until he was identified by his square appearance. Closing too fast he chopped the throttle and turned hard on the tail of the Tony. From 300 to 500 feet, he gave him a short burst and the Tony flamed from both wings. Lt Rettberg saw the Tony go straight down emitting clouds of smoke. It is believed this plane was destroyed.

Capt Bridge in the meantime had turned away from the B-29's when receiving fire. After making an orbit, he returned to the formation of the B-29's and saw 5 elements of P-51s. Unable to identify which was his, he cruised down and in front of the B-29's scissoring. Major Vande Hey was heard to call "if friendly waggle wings". Capt Bridge's element immediately did so, joined and flew with Major Vande Hey's element to the rally point. The life guard sub and dumbo were observed from 13000 feet, but no B-29's were seen. A B-29

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

45th Ftr Sq Miss 4-2 15th Ftr Gp Miss 4-

12 Apr 45

identified as T Square 41 was observed coming off the target and followed to base. Capt Hunter's element was joined by Lt Redus' element from the Green Flight and proceeded to rally point and joined Cyclone Charlie, the navigational B-29. Return was made to base.

YELLOW FLIGHT: At landfall Lt Richins' left wing tank did not release, in spite of every effort to shake it loose, so he carried it with him over the target. The first enemy activity seen were two incandescent bursts at benchmark 3293 at 15000 feet. Right afterwards two Nicks were seen above at 20000 feet. They were chased to the left of the formation. Lt Fisher climbed to make an attack. At this time a Tojo, brown with red insignia, coming up at 9000 feet was observed by Lt Richins. He was 500 feet below, and heading for the B-29's, and apparently did not see this flight. Lt Richins called him in to Lt Fisher who broke off his attack on the Nick as to cover Lt Richins tail. Lt Richins turned on to the Tojo's tail and opened fire at 3000 to 800 feet 10° deflection and closed to 9° deflection. Lt Richins observed strikes on fuselage and pieces coming off the plane. The plane started slowly into a vertical dive and was last seen going down straight. Lt Richins broke off at 8000 feet because he was being followed by a Nick at which Lt Fisher was firing. The Nick did a split S and Lts Richins and Fisher climbed back into position. Lt Fisher saw numerous hits on the Tojo that Lt Richins was firing at and did not see him pull out of his dive.

They saw over the target two Nicks blown to pieces - one by a P-51, the other by a B-29. After seeing their turn, the flight saw another stream of unescorted bombers going over target, so they made a turn and went over target again escorting the B-29's. The second trip over the target was uneventful, no planes or flag being observed. En route to rally point while S-ing over bombers Lt Fisher's engine went dead. He took an emergency heading of 215° E of Fujiama, losing altitude from 17000 to 13000 feet. The engine caught and ran intermittently from this point on, and was rough all the way home. Lt Fisher came out over the water and spotted the sub. He came home with Cyclone 21. Lt Richins followed Lt Fisher but lost him in the haze over the bay. He flew on the same vector for 10 minutes, picked up Super Dumbo, orbited around him and tacked on to Capt Ennis flight for his return to base. En route his left wing tank released.

BIRD FLIGHT: No enemy aircraft observed by this flight until they passed over lake E of Fuji. There they observed three Tojos in string formation from 12 o'clock on level with bombers, but were out of range to attack them. Three Nicks in no particular formation tried to approach the B-29's four minutes before bombs away. Since the flight could not get underneath the bombers no attack was made on these planes. Over the target approximately seven Nicks were observed. After bombs away the B-29's made a 30 mile 180° turn. N of Fujiama at 17000 feet a silver Hamp attacked the bombers. Capt Ennis got a burst at the Hamp but no hits were observed. The Hamp split S'd and left the formation. N and W of Fuji two black Nicks were spotted in formation. Capt Ennis and Lt Roberts took the right, and Lt Dandak and Lt Dackert took the left. Capt Ennis' element started a diving attack at 12000 feet and gradually closed in on the bogies. They started firing from about 750 feet, closed in to 200 feet then broke away. Hits were observed on the right engine nacelle and right hand side of fuselage. Several pieces came off and smoke emitted from the plane for sometime. Capt Ennis then dove down on the Nick and pulled out at

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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3000 feet, at which time the lone was proceeding in a slow spiral to the right and indicating over 550 MPH. Capt Ennis and Lt Roberts joined up and proceeded on a vector of 194° to HP. Lt Dunlap's element took the left Nick. Lt Dunlap's second burst hit on the right wing root. He saw pieces come off and smoke on the right side of the fuselage. He closed to 500 yards directly astern and slightly above and fired. Lt Deckert fired a short burst but saw only a few strikes on the left wing approximately half way between the engine nacelle and wing root. He had caught the casing of Lt Dunlap's shell in his wing. Lt Deckert separated from his element and flew to the rally point at 9000 feet. He saw nothing, so took a 164° vector and called super dumbo. No one answered. He then flew 20 minutes more and contacted Cyclone 21 who instructed him to a vector of 180° and called Cyclone 22. When he contacted Cyclone 22 he was told his vector was O K and to continue on course. He had trouble with his engine which kept cutting out all of the way home. Lt Dunlap ID'd to Cyclone Charlie which brought him home. When Lt Deckert called for ID he could get only U. Capt Ennis and Lt Roberts went on course of 194°, picked up Lt Richins and came home with Cyclone Able. Fifty miles from base the lost Cyclone Able and called Brother Agate who gave them correct headings to base.

GREEN FLIGHT: Between the initial point and the target the first group of bogies were sighted by Green Flight. Three Oscars were observed making a head on attack at the B-29's. The Oscar on the right fired rockets which burst 100 feet in front of the B-29's. The pilot reporting this believes that the rockets were fused. Lt Henderson and his wingman, Lt Staatsmann, took the left Oscar, and started firing from 2000 feet. Lt Henderson did not see hits, but his wingman believes there were hits from both P-51's. The Oscar made a 90° turn and did a wing-over. The P-51's followed for a few thousand feet and then returned to position.

Another Oscar was seen on the right of the formation turning for a head on attack. Lts Henderson and Staatsmann started firing from 2000 feet and the Oscar broke off and down. No damage was observed.

Lt Redus noticed three Nicks at the same altitude as the B-29's in a formation of 1 Nick forward and 2 abreast 1000 feet behind out of range start an attack from 1:30 o'clock on the B-29's. The first Nick fired one rocket from each wing. Lt Redus called to Lt Henderson, and then made a pass at the second Nick. From 16500 feet he did a wing-over and fired a full deflection from out of range while Lt Staatsmann fired at the third Nick. The Jays broke away in a wing-over, although no hits were observed. This element then pulled back into position.

Next, an Oscar was sighted at 3 o'clock from the bomber's formation trailing for a head on pass. Both elements started to push over together, and Lt Redus was able to get a lead on the Oscar from 1500 feet for a full deflection good burst. At first his aim was low, but he pulled up and saw hits on the wings. The Oscar did a split S and was gone. Lt Redus pulled back into formation. The other element could not be located and Lt Redus and Lt Reinert remained with the bombers through their turn over the target, made a 360° orbit and scissoring out of range of the B-29's joined Capt Bridges element for return to base.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

45th Ftr Sq Miss 4-2 15th Ftr Gp Miss 8- 12A pr493

5. a. No cloud cover, haze to 15000 feet. Visibility 10 miles
- b. Good except where individual planes' equipment was inoperative. Three pilots report they were able to receive "U" only when using DU. Only one pilot with "U" equipment was able to "D".
6. None.
7. 5570 rounds cal..50 ammo. expended. 6031 gallons of gasoline. Average of 75 gallons gasoline remaining in planes.
8. It is recommended that F-51's follow any bomber to base rather than go to rally point for special navigation B-29's. It is believed that this policy will save time on the return leg.
Lt Statsmann reported sighting a Jay fighter with a gull wing. This is believed to be an unusual sighting, and possible verification of statement by POW that such a fighter was in production.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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From OO Fiteron Four Five.

To OO Fitergr Fifteen. (ATT: S-2)

16 April 1945

15th Fighter Squadron Mission 44
15th Fighter Group Mission 4.

MISSION REPORT

1. a. 19 P-51D's of Fiteron Four Five.
b. None.
2. a. None.
b. Unknown.
3. Fighter Strike on Kenoya Airfield East. Per FO #49.
4. Red Flight - Capt Bridge, Lts Posey, Walker, Lottie.
Yellow Flight - Capt Maltby, Lts Garay, Wes. Brown, Lortie.
Blue Flight - Capt Campbell, F/O Combs, Lts P. Hunter, Watt.
Green Flight - Capt Knox, Lts Cyphers, McCormick, Wray.
Red Res. Flight - Capt G. Hunter, Lts Wm Brown, Nettberg, Klein.
Yellow Res. Flight - Lts Henderson, Dennis.

Flights over target.

Red Flight - Capt Bridge, Lts Walker, Lottie.
Yellow Flight - Capt Maltby, Lts Garay, Wes. Brown, Lortie.
Blue Flight - Capt Campbell, F/O Combs, Lts Dennis, Watt.
Green Flight - Capt Knox, Lts Cyphers, McCormick, Wray.
Red Res. Flight - Capt G. Hunter, Lts Wm Brown, Nettberg, Klein.

0940

1103 - 1105

1745

Capt Bridge leading a total of 22 P-51D's was airborne at 0940. Lt P. W. Hunter found his plane developing a rough engine and returned to base before reaching the BP landing at 1005. Lt Dennis of Yellow Reserve took Lt Hunter's place in Blue Flight. After rendezvous was made at 1020, altitude 9500 feet, five miles N of the surface vessel 100 miles on course, Lt Henderson of Yellow Reserve was ordered back to base and parachuted at 1050. Ninety miles out Lt Posey of Red Flight was forced to return to base due to a rough engine. He parachuted at 1115.

The rendezvous had been made and the strike was on course at 1025. Flight to the departure point was made at IAS 205 MPH at 9500 feet. A climb was begun just S. of Tanaga Shima which put the flight at 12000 feet, where they orbited for 10 minutes awaiting the arrival of the 21st Fighter Group. Dropping the wing tanks at the departure point the flight proceeded to Toy-nisaki, turned and crossed Ariake - Pen, and proceeded over the town Kita Kato. The run on the target was made at 10000 feet, diving to less than 15 feet at IAS ranging from 360 to over 400 MPH. All flights, except Red Reserve which was protection for the life guard sub, Dragon 35, swept over the field line abreast. On approaching the field proper the planes

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45th Fir Sq Mission 4-4, 15th Str Sq Mission 4-

16Apr45 contd.

took advantage of all cover to mask enemy fire. This meant ducking behind and over trees and houses. The same policy was followed leaving the target. The course from the target took the planes N and then on a curving route SE over Arika-san to the Rally Point.

RED FLIGHT: This flight covered the E side of the field. S of the field and under the cover of trees Capt Bridge, flight leader, observed aircraft. All three planes strafed right up the field and N of the field got hits on a black cement building. On the way out everyone shot at targets of opportunity such as farm houses, haystacks, and the beach. N and W of the large hangar Capt Bridge observed four bright flashes of AA. The only other fire they drew was from automatic weapons which was intense. Capt Bridge received two hits on fairing of right wing root and one on the forward edge of the elevator. It was noted that in the fields contiguous to the airfield there were many concrete blocks four feet tall and about 10 feet in diameter which may be to prevent glider landing.

YELLOW FLIGHT: Yellow Flight was immediately W of Red Flight in the pass on the target. Capt Maltby, leading the flight, strafed two AA positions on the E side of the field and one of the center hangars at the N end of the field. He was so low that he was able to see his incendiaries ricochet inside the hangar and had to pull sharply up to clear it. In the short period it took him to cross the field he observed one flak burst 25 feet above the ground. Machine gun fire was received on the S end of the field and Automatic Weapons were firing from approx. 500 yards N of and parallel to the field. Three individual guns were observed at this location. With oriental cunning the tower gave Capt Maltby the green light as he made the pass. Lt Wes Brown received a flak burst while over the field which damaged his elevator. His plane started to porpoise, and he thought it was due to excessive speed rather than enemy fire at the time. He strafed the field and on route out strafed a rectangular building with a patio beside the railroad track four or five miles N of the field. This building was emitting black smoke and from a distance was believed to be a section of cars on the tracks. On the route out Lt Carey got hits on the tower at Shibuchi airfield. Capt Maltby picked up light fire as he crossed the beach S of Shibuchi and gave the tower a short burst.

BLUE FLIGHT: This flight led by Capt Campbell was assigned the left center of the field and also got the green light as they crossed the field. They noted light automatic weapons fire from the W and N side of the field. On the SW corner of the field one Jack and part of a Betty were observed. This flight retired following Yellow Flight and saw automatic weapons fire from the beach, but at no time did anyone in this flight get hit. Aside from strafing the field they got many shots in a building on the N end of the field.

GREEN FLIGHT: Capt Knox was the only member of green flight to strafe the field. He observed a new Jack in the SW corner of the field, and enemy fire from the SW and N end of the field. He got hits on the hangars and proceeded on the same course outlined above to the rally point. Lt Cyphers lost part of his cowling due to undetermined causes, on his approach to the field and lost airspeed.

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45th Ftr Sq Mission 44, 15th Ftr Sq Mission 44 16Apr45 contd.

He turned W of the field and swung N expecting to rejoin the flight. Unable to do so and with a rough engine he swung N and over Kam-San to the sea. Observing a few scattered sampans he opened fire before getting to the rally point. Unable to locate any planes in the area he made radio contact with Capt Knox and was given the heading to Iwo. Proceeding on radio directions which were given by Capt Bridge from this time, Lt Cyphers was able to navigate to base without visual contact with other planes. Lt Wray developed engine trouble over In-odaka. Sheltered by Lt McCorkle he flew to Tai-Saki and back to the rally point. While Lts McCorkle and Wray were orbiting the lost contact with the other P-51's and headed for base on the tail of a B-29. Between 200-220 miles from base they heard radio conversation indicating a 78th Squadron plane had "gone in". The B-29 they were with flew to the position where an oil slick, dye marker, and a smoke bomb were observed. At this point they were given instructions to proceed to base with another B-29.

RED RES. FLIGHT! Red Reserve arrived at the position of the lifeguard sub Dragon 35 at 1350. They orbited over the sub at 5000 feet until 1420 when they started on course to Iwo. Capt Hunter, flight leader, saw a pilot bail out over the sub and be picked up. En route back he noted a large ship at 30° N - 138° E, but did not go down to investigate further.

5. a. .5 to .2 coverage to departure point. Bases 2000, Tops 11000, Visibility 20 miles. Over target no cloud cover, haze to 5000 feet.

b. IU was good. There should be working on other channels, using A and B for conventional homings and D for IU.

6. Unknown.

7. 14,670 rounds of cal. .50 ammo. expended. 3832 gallons of gasoline. Average gallons remaining in planes, 70 gallons.

8. It is suggested that future briefings be handled with a greater realization that information concerning the target is of the most value to the pilots who will fly the mission. The briefing for this mission was considered extremely poor in every respect. The squadron S-2's were not notified that the briefing would take place. Upon questioning, the Group S-2 reports that he was not notified that there would be a briefing. More than half of the pilots of the 45th Fighter Squadron participating in this mission, were unable to get seats at the briefing. They could not see the maps used for the briefing. A great deal of what was said was unintelligible. Strip maps were not issued prior to the briefing, and those notes that were made were not related to any information the pilots had had previously. A photograph of a target is not alone valuable if it does not show related areas.

The pilots of this mission experienced a lowering of confidence in their leaders. Their reaction to a briefing which appears rushed, haphazard, is detrimental to their combat morale. These statements are not an opinion but are based upon a great many individual statements from the pilots participating in the mission. It is strongly recommended that some steps be taken to convince the pilots that the missions they are flying are not planned in a capricious manner.

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From: OO Fiteron Four Five.

17 April 1945

To : OO Fitergr Fifteen. (Att: 4-2)

15th Fighter Squadron Mission 4-5

15th Fighter Group Mission 4-6

MISSION REPORT

1. a. 9 P-51D's of Fiteron Four Five.
b. Unknown.
2. a. None.
b. Unknown.
3. Dive Bombing and Strafing Radio Station #6 Chichi Island.
4. Yellow Flight - Lts Henderson, Kester, Harrigan, Wenzelbar.

0930

1015 - 1022

1100

Four P-51D's of the 15th Fighter Squadron were airborne on a consolidated strike on Chichi Island with flights from the other squadrons of the 15th Fighter Group at 0930, and on course at 0935. Lt Harrigan was forced to abort immediately after takeoff when his engine cut out temporarily. The cause for abort is believed to be faulty spark plugs. This is not confirmed as yet.

At an altitude of 10000 feet IAS 250 MPH and on a vector of 020° the strike encountered favorable weather all of the way to target. Haha was sighted at 1000, and landfall was made on Chichi at 1015. There was an open spot in the cloud cover immediately over the target area (263 B). Lt Henderson leading Yellow Flight, which was the 15th Fighter Squadron's contribution to the strike, approached the target on a N to S run, peeled off at 10000 feet, released bombs at 5000 feet and pulled out at 4000 feet. The two remaining planes followed the same course. All pilots strafed on their way down. Lt Henderson observed his tracers in the long building in the target area. Lt Henderson's bombs were seen to hit in the target area. Lt Kester had one bomb fall short of the target area, and one bomb hang up. As he went around he gave a burst with his guns and the bomb fell in the water E of the island. Lt Wenzelbar's hits were unobserved, but believed to be in the target area. The flight retired on a curving course to the E of the island and then swung N until almost parallel with the N tip, then S to the RP south of Chichi. Return to base was made at 1500 to 2000 feet IAS 270 MPH. The field at Chichi was observed to be still badly cratered. No shipping observed. Bombs from Red Flight were observed to fall in the deck area in the NE corner of the bay. No flak encountered or observed.

5. a. En route cloud cover .4, Base 1500, Tops 3000, Visibility excellent. Over target cloud cover .5, Base 1500, Tops 4000, Visibility good.

b. Fair to good. Red leaders transmission was slightly garbled. This was believed due to his throat mike.

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45th Ftr Sq Mission 4-5, 15th Ftr Sq Mission 4- 17Apr45 contd.

6. Unknown.

7. 3775 rounds of cal. .50 ammo. expended. 316 gallons of gasoline.

8. None.

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From: CO Fiteron Four Five.

To : CO Fiteron Fifteen. (Att: S-2)

17 April 1945

45th Fighter Squadron Mission 4.6

15th Fighter Group Mission 4.

MISSION REPORT

1. a. 4 P-51D's of Fiteron Four Five.
b. Unknown.
2. a. None.
b. Unknown.
3. Submarine Search and Dive Bombing of Enemy Shipping Chichi Island (245 J, 246 A and B) in Conjunction with 47th and 78th Fiterons.
4. Yellow Flight - Capt Campbell, Lts Cowan, P. Hunter, Moore.

1315

1450 - 1500

1545

Capt Campbell led a force of four planes known as Yellow Flight in a combined search for a reported submarine SW of Chichi and dive bombing attack on enemy shipping in Futami Harbor. The flights from the three squadrons had joined up and were on course at 1327. They flew a vector of 005° to Nuko Island where they orbited the Nuko Baito. Yellow Flight then took a vector of 270° for 30 - 35 miles searching for the sub and returned to Yone Island on a vector of 140°. While making an orbit over Yone Invader Red came in from the E. No shipping was observed on the search.

Capt Campbell led Yellow Flight on a dive bombing attack on the shipping in the N end of Futami Bay. The run was made from NE to SW, starting at 9000 feet releasing bombs at 6000 feet, pulling out at 4000 feet. Capt Campbell's element aimed its bombs at a ship in 246 AB. Lt Hunter's element aimed its bombs at ships in 245 J. Lt Hunter's bombs landed in the water and failed to explode. Lt Hunter says he is sure the bombs were armed, and no reason can be given for the failure. All bombs missed the targets.

Five ships in all were seen. All were approximately 150 feet long. Three were located in 245 J, one in 246 AB, one in 246 J or C. The bombs from the 78th Squadron were observed to fall in 246 B, G, and F slightly left of the shipping. No flak was encountered. Lt Moore gave one short burst on his dive. No other pilots fired their guns.

The flight retired from the target by way of the entrance to Futami Harbor, and made rendezvous with the strike SW of Chichi. The strike then returned to base.

5. a. En route, cloud cover .3, Bases 1000, Tops 3000, Visibility 15 miles. Over target, no cloud cover.

b. Good. IU was used by all pilots on return. Lt Moore was able to get complete signals. Lts P. Hunter and Cowan received an on course signal which

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5th Ftr Sq, Mission 4-6, 15 Ftr Sq Mission 4- 17Apr45 contd.

was probably correct since they were on a vector very close to an exact heading. Capt Campbell turned trying to pick up a D or U signal but was unable to get anything.

6. Unknown.

7. 8 x 500 lb. ANM131 demo bombs, tail fusing 4.5 second delay. 110 rounds of cal. .50 ammo expended. 643 gallons of gasoline.

8. It is suggested that on such occasions as today that a pilot equipped with field glasses and a map could accurately plot all shipping in Futani Harbor.

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From: OO Fiteron Four Five.

18 April 1945

To: OO Fiteron Fifteen. (Att: 3.2)

45th Fighter Squadron Mission 4.7
15th Fighter Group Mission 4.

MISSION REPORT

1. a. 10 P-51B's of Fiteron Four Five.
b. Unknown.
2. a. None.
b. Unknown.
3. Search for Shipping in Futami Harbor and Dive Bombing of Susaki Airfield, Chichi Island.
4. Red Flight - Capt Knox, Lts Cybers, Harrigan, Wasy.
Yellow Flight - Lts Slater, Wilder, Roberts, Bates.
Blue Flight - Lts Walker, Zalesky.

0800

0920 - 0925

1010

10 planes of the 45th Fighter Squadron were airborne at 0800 and on course to Chichi at 0810. Capt Knox led the strike to 10000 feet on a vector of 018°. Immediately after leaving base, the strike began to encounter weather and upon reaching Chichi the cloud cover was 3. The islands themselves were completely clouded and vertical visibility was less than one mile. In order to definitely establish the position of the strike, Capt Knox led it N over Hako Hatto where he made an orbit and returned to Chichi making another orbit ending up just W of Futami Harbor. The flight then flew S and back along the W coast of Chichi. Through a small hole in the cloud cover a brief glimpse of Susaki Airframe was available.

RED FLIGHT: Capt Knox led his flight from 5000 feet in a peel-off to the N and on a 270° turn dropped his bombs from 4000 feet through the clouds. Retirement was made to the W. None of the pilots in this flight are sure that their bombs hit anywhere but S of 212 N. No observations of any kind were made due to weather. The flight proceeded to the HP 5000 feet over Minami Jima.

YELLOW FLIGHT: Lt Slater led his flight from S to N on a glide bombing run from 5000 - 3000 feet at a 30° angle, 275 IAS. Lt Bates observed four hits land in the water between Taku Rock and a beach. No flak was encountered, no observations possible. The flight orbited and rendezvoused with Red Flight. Lt Slater's element joined Lt Harrigan's of Red Flight and Lt Robert's element joined Capt Knox for the return trip.

BLUE FLIGHT: Lt Walker, protected by Lt Zalesky, flew the Josephine for this mission. He flew to a point W of Chichi with the main strike, and then let down to 1000 feet 3 miles off the W coast and orbited until he saw the

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45th Ftr Sq Mission 4-7, 45th Ftr Sq Mission 4. 18Apr45 contd.

planes leaving the target. He then flew to the rendezvous point and returned to base with the strike.

5. a. En route cloud cover .6, Tops 5000 - 6000 feet, Bases 1000 - 2000 feet. Visibility 10 miles. Over target cloud cover 10/10, Tops 5000 feet, Bases 1000 feet. Visibility very poor due to haze.

b. Capt Knox reports too much radio conversation. Lt Slater had trouble with his radio which almost caused him to abort. It finally warmed up, worked satisfactorily for a while, then his throat mike cut out.

Three pilots tested for IU. Lt Cybere received an on course signal loud and clear while leaving target. Lt Slater and Lt Wilder report their IU reception not very clear.

Lt Walker reports he was unable to contact the destroyer on C channel.

6. Unknown.

7. 15 x 500 lb. AN113A1 G.P. bombs, 1110 rounds of cal. .50 ammo. expended. 1544 gallons of gasoline.

8. The destroyer was not seen or contacted. The weather was far from what was forecasted.

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From: CO Pitzeron Four Five.

To : CO Pitzeron Fifteen. (ATT: S-2)

19 April 1945

45th Fighter Squadron Mission 4.3

15th Fighter Group Mission 4.

MISSION REPORT

1. a. 16 P-51D's of Pitzeron Four Five.

b. Airbornes: 11 Jacks, 2 Sonys, 1 Tojo (possibly George), 1 Yellow Trainer.

On Ground: Excess of 150 planes including 2 4-engine (probably Lis), several Hicks, and many single engine planes.

2. a. None.

b. 4 Jacks, (Major Wells and Lt Thornton; Capt Henderson; Capt Campbell; Lt Statsmann), 1 Tojo (Lt Slater and Lt Yakish) destroyed.

Probably destroyed: None.

Damaged: 2 Jacks (Major Wells and Lt Dennis; Capt Henderson, Lt Kester, and Lt Statsmann) 1 Tojo (Capt Banie and Lt Barry)

3. Fighter Strike on Atsugi Airfield, Honshu.

- 4. Red Flight - Capt Banie, Lts Barry, Slater, Yakish.
- Yellow Flight - Capt Henderson, Lts Kester, Statsmann, Moore.
- Blue Flight - Capt Campbell, Lts Hoesy, P. Hunter, Wilder.
- Green Flight - Major Wells, Lt Thornton, Dennis, Condon.
- Red Res. Flight - Lts Walker, Gowan, Deckert, Joyner.

Flights over target:

- Red Flight - Capt Banie, Lts Barry, Slater, Yakish.
- Yellow Flight - Capt Henderson, Lts Kester, Statsmann, Moore.
- Blue Flight - Capt Campbell, Lts Hoesy, P. Hunter, Wilder.
- Green Flight - Major Wells, Lt Thornton, Dennis, Condon.

0755

1100 - 1122

1450

Immediately after takeoff, Lt Deckert of Red Reserve Flight was forced to pancake due to a rough engine. Time 0815. The flights from the 15th Squadron arrived at the rendezvous point at 0830. The navigator E-29's were just starting on course at this time. The flight to departure point was made at 10000 feet and then a climb was begun to 12000 feet. Landfall was made at 1042, and the 15th Group proceeded up the peninsula S of Fuji-San until even with the S coast of Sagami Wan. Here the 15th Group broke away from the main strike and followed a course SE of Fuji-San and approximately parallel to the northern shore of Sagami Wan dropping down to 8000 feet. None of the planes which were scheduled to go over the target were forced to abort, and Red Reserve had been ordered back to base when 100 miles out. Pancake time 0905.

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45th Ftr Sq Mission 4-8, 15th Ftr Sq Mission 4. 19Apr45 contd.

RED FLIGHT: Capt Ennis leading this flight flew over Atsugi Airfield SW to NE in a slow dive down to 4000 feet at 350 IAS. The flight did a 180° turn and returned across the field at 5000 feet firing their guns as they went. They then made an in-place turn to the left, crossed the field a third time, dropping their wing tanks from 3000 feet on the E side of the field into a row of buildings. Nobody strafed on this pass. The flight made another in place turn to the right and entered the field from the E at an altitude of 1500 - 1000 feet, IAS 300. Lt Slater and Yakish hit a Tojo which was just airborne (its wheels were up). Lt Yakish saw the plane roll over on its back at an altitude of 300-400 feet and Capt Ennis looking around saw a plane that had crashed on the ramp which was the plane his element had fired at. On this run there was a great concentration of AA. Lt Barry's left DU antenna was hit. The fire was accurate and spasmodically intense. The flight then turned to the S and made a head on run from S to N over the W side of the field. They had spotted a Lis on the runway 300 feet S of the buildings on the W side of the field. The dropped from 4000 to 1000 feet crossing the field at 300 IAS. They saw hits on the Lis as well as in the entire area being strafed. The flight pulled up to 4000 feet N of the field, turned to the right, and ran head on into a Tojo 5000 feet away. The Tojo took evasive action and received only one burst. The flight then made a quick 180° turn and circled him. The Tojo had turned to attack the flight's tail but the F-51's outmaneuvered him and closed to within 30 feet, but the Tojo did not blow up. The flight proceeded E of the field to the rally point. Over Hiri Taku they saw yellow training planes with red roundels at 2000 feet, but did not attack as there were too many guns over that area. Trailing meager flak bursts were observed over Sugami Wan at 5000 feet. The flight rediversed at 10500 feet over the rally point.

YELLOW FLIGHT: Capt Henderson led Yellow Flight into the target immediately behind Red Flight on a dummy run from SW to NE. The run was started at 6500 feet and continued to 4000 feet. After passing the target and pulling out, the first flight of the 21st Fighter Group was seen to make its pass from the W. Hits were observed among the parked aircraft and two planes were observed burning. At the S end one was emitting white smoke and at the NE end just off the runway one was billowing black smoke. Flashes were observed all over the W taxi strip among the planes. Approximately 150 planes were on the field. One plane was seen taking off. It was a single engine unidentified plane, probably that reported by Red Flight. In the vicinity of the town Nita a large fire in the W branch of Sugami River was reported by Lt Moore. Large clouds of black smoke were seen there.

Yellow Flight then flew S of Atsugi Airfield and started noisecoring. Two Jacks west of the field and across the river at 3000 feet altitude were called in. Yellow Flight observed a plane, believed to be of the 45th Fighter Squadron, immediately on the tail of one of the Jacks. Hits were observed, and the Jack smoked and went into a straight dive. By the time Yellow Flight arrived at the scene, the second of the first pair of Jacks had disappeared. However, another Jack from under the clouds came at them on a head on pass. Yellow Flight started firing at 1500 feet and closed to 500 feet. At least three of the flight got hits. The Jack did a snap and a slow roll, a half roll, and then a split S from 4000 feet. Yellow flight pulled away and sighted another Jack coming head on 1000 feet below them. At this time Yellow Flight was at approximately 6000 feet. Capt Henderson led his flight in a 180° turn, and saw the Jack go into an Immelman. Capt Henderson pulled up inside the Jack and started firing on a 20° deflection at the tail of the Jack. The Jack, and Capt Henderson stalled. Capt

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45th Ftr Sq Mission 4-5, 15th Ftr Sq Mission 4 19Apr45

Henderson recovered, but the Jack fell sideways in front of Capt Henderson, who followed the Jack down continuing fire. The Jack broke into flames and smoke, pieces came off, and he disappeared in the haze while in a flat spin at 2000 feet. Lt Staatsmann's element had been forced to break away as this engagement began, so Capt Henderson and Lt Kester started S for the rally point. As they crossed the river tracers came past their wings from the direction of the town and field of Atsugi. After the engagement with the first Jack, and before Capt Henderson shot down the second Jack, Lt Staatsmann discovered a Tony on his tail. He called in Capt Henderson, and he and Lt Moore took evasive action. They scissorsed, dove, stalled, and pulled out to the left. The Tony disappeared, but a Jack was observed as they were 5000 feet W of Atsugi. The Jack was coming in from the N and Lts Staatsmann and Moore turned and started to fire as they closed to 1500 feet. Lt Staatsmann got hits in the tail and lengthwise through the fuselage. Lt Moore got hits in the front end of the canopy. Closing from 80° to 05°, firing all of the time, Lt Staatsmann continued getting hits. The Jack did two quick snaps and peeled off into a dive to the left. Continuing to fire the element followed the Jack down to 4000 feet where the tail flew off and the plane blew up. It appeared to have been cut in half, and was observed to crash just W of Atsugi Airfield.

Capt Henderson observed heavy flak solid from the airfield to the mouth of the river and S to Kanakura at altitudes of 5000 - 10000 feet. He retired midway between the mouth of the river and I-no-shima. The fire seemed to be of barrage type. Lt Staatsmann led his element to the rally point immediately after Capt Henderson got out of visual range. He followed the same course and made the same observations. The two elements rejoined just before reaching the rally point where two of the navigator B-29's were observed making a large orbit at 10000 feet. As they came up one broke off and they followed to base.

BLUE FLIGHT: Capt Campbell leading Blue Flight led down to 7000 feet on the pass over Atsugi airfield. His flight followed Yellow Flight, and as did Yellow Flight, he observed a flight from the 21st Group to strike when Blue Flight was turning away. Capt Campbell observed five fires on Atsugi field. Blue Flight then swung S of the field and W. It then made a second pass over the field at approximately 6000 feet. Capt Campbell said the field was loaded with planes which included two extremely large silver multi-engine planes in the SW corner. Yellow Flight then began to scissors S of the target. At 1115 two bogies were sighted at 12 o'clock high. Observing them to be enemy, he opened fire on the lead plane as the wingman broke away. Firing from below, approximately 1500 feet, Capt Campbell got hits beneath the Jack's fuselage with a 75° deflection shot. The Jack turned away to the left and rolled down. Capt Campbell followed and fired again. At 5000 feet Capt Campbell, Lts Hovey, F. Hunter, and Wilder observed the pilot to bail out. The second Jack which had rolled away was observed to explode in flames, and this is believed to be the plane which Lt Staatsmann shot down. Blue Flight then retired on the same course as Yellow Flight. Capt Campbell and Lt Hunter attempted to DV on the navigator B-29's without success. Rendezvous was successfully made with Cyclone B-ker and Blue Flight started to base. Lt F. Hunter's plane developed engine trouble. One cylinder froze, and the left bank began missing badly. There was extreme vibration and the engine cut out intermittently. Capt Campbell ordered Lt Hunter's element to take the lead, and en route to base Capt Ennis ordered Lt Hunter to cut off his DV. Capt Ennis then notified all Air, Sea Rescue facilities to track the plane without

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15th Ftr Sq Mission 4-8, 15th Ftr Sq Mission 4.

19Apr45 contd.

IFF, and be prepared to give him assistance. When the northernmost surface vessel was crossed it was seen to be giving out with a smoke signal and dye marker signal as well as cruising at great speed to make itself visible by its wake. Lt Hunter as well as the pilots not immediately concerned experienced great confidence by this show of cooperation, and extend their congratulations to Air, Sea Rescue. Lt Hunter made an emergency landing at base without mishap.

GREEN FLIGHT: This flight, led by Major Wells, zigzagged to the target from 8000 - 4000 feet. They went in a U turn N, S, and W of field. Over the target they ran into AA fire and Lt Dennis had a scratch on the upper surface of the wing. Passing over the field no enemy planes were noticed. Then Major Wells called in a bogey climbing to the N at 5000 feet. The flight started in that direction. Lts Dennis and Gordon got hits in the plane but no results were seen. It was observed to be a Jack, and took no evasive action before it split Sd and passed down out of range. Major Wells saw another Jack at 6000 feet heading towards him. He and Lt Thornton closed in on him from 1000 feet to 50 feet and shot at him with a 10" deflection shot. The Jack dove and this element followed it to 3000 feet. Shots were seen to go into the engine and the cockpit by both Major Wells and Lt Thornton. They broke out at 3000 feet seeing the plane on fire and obviously out of control. Few large fires were noted at the NW end of the field and at least 20 fires were sprinkled all over the field. Lt Dennis noticed a Tony behind him. He kept turning and the Tony broke off without firing. The flight headed out to sea after the engagement with the Jack and losing the Tony. They noted a great deal of flak at the mouth of the river but by passed it and proceeded to the rally point.

5. a. On course .7 cloud cover, Tops 9500, Bases unknown, Visibility 15 miles, until 100 miles from Japan where there was an overcast of .9 and an undercast of .7, Tops 14000 and 6000. Over target no cloud cover, visibility 5 miles.

b. As remarked in BLUE FLIGHT it was impossible to pick up the navigator B-29's on IU while over target, except on conversational intervals. Homing to base and other communications were excellent.

6. Unknown.

7. 13790 rounds of cal. .50 ammo. expended, 5895 gallons of gasoline. Lt Moore arrived at base with all gauges indicating empty. (See remarks)

8. Attention of Air, Sea Rescue Service is called to the narrative. (See Blue Flight)

A ship, presumably a tanker, was observed afire half way between Tori and Smith Islands. There was much smoke and a large oil slick.

Lt Moore developed engine trouble on the return route and began running low on gas. 175 miles from base Capt Henderson sent Lt Moore ahead of the Navigator B-29. Lt Statamann gave him cover and they were able to get a vector by sighting back to the returning force they had left. When it was reached it was possible for them to come directly in. Lt Moore's engine quit over the field, and he made an emergency landing with all fuel tank gauges reading empty.

The briefing for this mission was excellent. The manner in which the Squadron leaders, operation officers, communications officers, and intelligence officers, were pre-briefed by Fighter Command is very much appreciated. Many remarks were

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15th Ftr Sq Mission 4-8, 15th Ftr Gp Mission 4.

19Apr45 contd.

made on the advantage achieved by breaking the briefing down to groups. Within the squadron, it was possible to prepare strip maps and an extensive lay out of reconnaissance photographs which were used as briefing aids in a final summary the night before takeoff. As a result, the pilots of the squadron reported no difficulties in picking out landmarks over Japan, and were able to locate positions and matters of military value they observed on this mission.

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From: CG Piteron Four Five.

19 April 1945

To : CG Piteron Fifteen. (AFS: S-2)

47th Fighter Squadron Mission 4.3

15th Fighter Group Mission 4.

MISSION REPORT

1. a. 4 P-51D's of Piteron Four Five.
b. Unknown.
2. a. None.
b. Unknown.
3. Reconnaissance of Sasaki Airfield and Dive Bombing of Targets of Opportunity Chuichi Island.
4. Yellow Flight - Capt Maltby, Lts Carey, Richins, Lortie.

1335

1435 - 1500

1545

Yellow Flight was airborne at 1335 and joined flights of the 47th and 76th Fighter Squadrons 2 miles W of Iwo Island. The flights joined up and the strike was on course at 1345 on a vector of 022°. A gradual climbing course was taken to 10000 feet, IAS 200 MPH. The flight passed Haha Island at a point 10 miles W of the island. Reconnaissance at this point failed to reveal anything. The weather en route to the target became gradually worse. Ten miles W of Chuichi a vector of 090° was taken, altitude 10000 feet, to the target. The island was entirely closed in. Cloud cover was 10/10, bases lower than 1000 feet and tops 3500 feet. The flight was over target at 1435 however no target observation could be made owing to the weather. Yellow Flight orbited the island three times searching for breaks in the clouds, none were found. A bomb run could not be made because of this. At 1455, owing to the lack of visibility, the bombs were jettisoned in the general vicinity of the target. No observation of hits was made. No flak encountered. Flight reformed on a course of 203° was taken to Iwo Island. Yellow Flight passed at 1545.

5. a. En route .5 cloud cover. Visibility unlimited. Scattered clouds. Over target. 10/10 cloud cover, bases less than 1000 feet, Tops 3500 feet. Island entirely closed in.

b. Good.

6. Unknown.

7. 8 x 500 lb. ANM-103 daisy bombs, none ANM 101A2, tail fuse .025 delay. 560 gallons of gasoline.

8. None.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

From: 60 Fiteron Four Five.

22 April 1945

To : 60 Fitergr Fifteen. (Att: S-2)

45th Fighter Squadron Mission 4-10

15th Fighter Group Mission 4-

MISSION REPORT

1. a. 16 P-51D's of Fiteron Four Five.
b. 3 Unidentified Single Engine Aircraft, plus 2 Tojos or Oscars.
2. a. None.
b. None.
3. Fighter Sweep on Saruka and Atsugahara Airfields, Honshu, Japan.
4. Red Flight: Capt Moray, Lts Cowan, McCorkle, Joyner
Yellow Flights: Capt G. Hunter, Lts Robinson, Hettberg, Wansmaker
Blue Flight: Capt Malthy, Lts Singleton, Harrigan, Zalesky
Green Flight: Lts Walker, Bates, Reinert, Edwards.
Red Res. Flight: Capt Campbell, Lts Kemake, Deckert, Lortie.

Flights over target:

Red Flight: No change.

Yellow Flight: No change.

Blue Flight: Lt Deckert substituted for Lt Harrigan.

Green Flight: No change.

0830

1220 - 1235

1535

Immediately after takeoff, Lt Harrigan of Blue Flight found that his tail wheel would not retract and his engine acting up, so he returned to base without losing sight of two, pancaking at 0900. Lt Deckert of Red Reserve moved into Blue Flight in his place. Lts Kemake and Lortie of Red Reserve were ordered back to base at about 100 miles out. They pancaked at 1030. Capt Campbell of Red Reserve was called upon by the 78th Fighter Squadron to take over as element leader of Red Flight (see 78th Fighter Sq Mission Report).

Rendezvous was made with the B-29's at 0927 at an altitude of 10000 feet. The strike was on course at the same altitude to the departure point at an average IAS 205 MPH. Landfall was made between 1210 and 1215 on the coast of Honshu S of Toyohashi. The coast was followed N to and across Ise-Wan and farther W to the scheduled point of departure. The strike then swung N dropping down to 4000 feet over the mountains. While there was no cloud cover, there was extreme haze to 8000 feet, and visibility was limited to 2 miles. While on this northerly heading, and about half way between the coast and the point on which the strike turned, two enemy planes were seen in trail at 2000 feet going from E to W. Capt Malthy of Blue Flight believes these were Oscars, whereas Lt McCorkle of Red Flight felt they were Tojos. At 1230, over a point on which the pilots do not agree as to location, the strike turned E for its run. Observation was extremely difficult

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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45th Ftr Sq Mission 4-10, 15th Ftr Sq Mission 4-

22Apr45 contd.

due to weather, however, several of the pilots remarked that on the turn and course to Ise-Wan a large river was visible running into the bay. This is believed to be the river that emptys just N of Suzuka Airfield. The flights made their runs from 6000 feet to the deck passing over rice fields only. These fields had appeared at a distance to be a possible landing field. Lt McCorkle thought he saw a plane burning approximately 3 to 5 miles inland. His observation was made by both Lt McCorkle and Capt Morey when they turned over Ise-Wan. Lt Walker thought he saw the field which was the target approximately 3 miles SW when Invader leader ordered the turn, and also observed what might have been a plane burning there. On the run, targets of opportunity including group buildings, and small boats, were strafed by all flights. After crossing over the bay, Capt Maltby led the Squadron back to what he thought was an airfield, but on closer inspection it turned out to be level ground covered with water. He then led the Squadron down Ise-Wan strafing small boats 50' to 150' long, and over the west coast of the mouth of the bay.

RED FLIGHT: Before retiring from the target area, and when leading the Squadron to a possible airfield site, Capt Morey strafed a large building which he believes was a railroad station. On the way down the bay, Capt Morey strafed a small boat just N of the peninsula and two boats just S of the point. Lt McCorkle strafed a dredge at the mouth of one of the inlets on the point as he was retiring. A radio station was observed by Lt McCorkle just E of Toba. It had one tower 60' to 80' high. After crossing the coast the flight turned E along Kumano-Mada until they reached a point approximately at Daio-zaki. Here they turned to the rally point. Capt Morey's DU was inoperative, but Lt McCorkle got a steady on course to the rally point. Rendezvous was effected with the B-29's and return to base was made without incident.

YELLOW FLIGHT: Capt Hunter and his flight strafed a 50' boat on the N and S sides of the peninsula as they retired from the target area. Both boats had a sail and an engine, and were leaving distinctive wakes. While crossing the peninsula, the flight strafed buildings and observed the radio station reported by Red Flight. After reaching the sea, the flight climbed to 5000 feet, and Capt Hunter turned on his DU. He received an on course while on a vector of 150° which carried him directly to the B-29's.

BLUE FLIGHT: While on the way to the bay Capt Maltby's engine cut out momentarily, so he headed straight out towards the rally point. On the way he took occasion to strafe a small boat hugging the coast. He reports one Japanese in a row boat firing directly at him with a pistol or sub machine gun. The Jap did not hit him. Lt Deckert and Lt Zalesky strafed some buildings and set a roof on fire. Lt Singleton noted a 50' junk and strafed it as he passed. Lt Zalesky joined up with Capt Maltby, and Lt Deckert returned with Lts Bettberg and Wansmaker of Yellow Flight. Capt Maltby was having trouble with his engine during the entire trip. 350 miles N of Iwo he sped ahead of his navigating B-29 in order to return to base before running out of gas. Reaching base he called twice to Maple Tower asking permission to land, but was kept orbiting until all other flights were down. He landed with 15 gallons of gasoline.

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Five.

30 April 1945

From

To

En. (Att: B-2)

45th Fl

Mission 4-5

5th Fl

on 4.

MISSION REPORT

1. a. 14 B-29's
b. None.
2. a. None.
b. None.
3. Escort of B-29's to Tachikawa Airfield, Honaha, Japan.
4. Red Flight - Lt Col Spain, Lt Wm Brown.
Yellow Flight - Lts Fisher, Joyner, Richins, Wananaker.
Blue Flight - Capt Campbell, F/O Combs, Lts Wes Brown, Thornton.
Green Flight - Lt P. Hunter, Lt Hosey, Lt Roberts, Lt Gordon.

0735

1115 - 1155

1425

Lt Deckert of Red Flight was forced to return to base from 180 miles. His tachometer was surging and he also developed gas fumes in the cockpit. Lt Remake his wingman returned with him as escort; both pancaked at 0943. The rest of the Squadron's striking force were enroute at 0840, proceeded to landfall at 10000 feet. They hit landfall at 1115, orbited three times waiting for the bombers to arrive. Since the striking force arrived at landfall 35 minutes late it was presumed that the bombers had not waited, so Col Spain, strike leader, ordered the force to proceed on a vector of 28° to the target. The target area was overcast so the flight returned on a vector of 240° to S of Fuji, then roamed westward toward the Shizuoka area looking for Jap fighters. The descent from 19000 to 10000 feet. Finding nothing of interest the force returned to rally point, picked up navigator B-29's and returned to base without further incident. At landfall F/O Combs engine was cutting out so he returned to base prior to the striking force with a navigator B-29. At 1135 about 9 B-29's were observed E of Fuji but obviously in no need of escort.

5. a. En route .3 to .5 undercast, Tops 7000 feet. Over target .8 to 10/10, undercast, Tops 5000 feet.

b. Communications good; DU good.

6. None.
7. 5290 gallons of gasoline expended.
8. None.

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From: CO Fiteron Four Five.

23 April 1945

To : CO Fitergr Fifteen. (Att: 3-2)

45th Fighter Squadron Mission 4-11

15th Fighter Group Mission 4-

MISSION REPORT

1. a. 6 P-51D's of Fiteron Four Five.
b. None.
2. a. None.
b. Unknown.
3. Dive Bombing Chichi Island per WO #64.
4. Red Flight - Capt Ennis, Lts Lortie, Statsmann, Kamake.
Green Flight - Lt Roberts (Josephine), Lt Edwards (Escort).

0930

1007 - 1012

1115

RED FLIGHT: Capt Ennis led four flights of the 15th Fighter Group on dive bombing mission to Chichi. Red Flight was airborne at 0930, and on course at 0940. The strike climbed 500 feet per minute to 10000 feet at an IAS 180 MPH, then levelled out on a vector of 015° - 018° , IAS 240 MPH. At 1007, Capt Ennis calculated his position as over the target, but cloud cover and visibility were so poor that nothing was seen of the target.

At this time, Red Leader heard Chieftan 1 announce his presence, and ordered the strike to base. Capt Ennis continued on course for 3 minutes, let down on 180° , did another 180° , and broke out at 800 feet. The target was not visible, and the strike returned on a vector of 200° - 204° climbing to 10000 feet. At 1023, Capt Ennis called Brother Agate for a vector. At 1028, he was able to contact Brother Agate, and received a vector of 197° . This brought the strike past Kita Rock. A dive bomb run on Kita from 10000 feet to 5000 feet was made NE - SW. Only the fringes of the island were visible. Capt Ennis believes that all of Red Flight's bombs hit in shore on Kita. Two bombs from another flight were seen to hit the water. Flights rendezvoused 2 miles SE of Kita at 4000 feet. Capt Ennis called Green Flight leader (Josephine) and told him to navigate to base as Green Flight could not attain proposed speed of the other flights. Red Flight returned to base on a vector of 350° - 184° on the deck.

GREEN FLIGHT: Green flight consisted of 1 P-51 Josephine and a P-51 escort. Green Flight followed the main strike to Chichi, where it tagged on the Red Flight to Kita. Here, Capt Ennis ordered them to return alone. Pancaked base at 1115.

5. a. .8 cloud cover (three thin alto stratus levels) Tops 5500 feet, Base 800 feet, Visibility 1-2 miles.
b. Good.
6. Unknown.
7. 8 x 500 dumb bombs, nose fuse AN-M103, tail AN-M101A2, .025 second delay, 750 gallons gasoline.
8. None.

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From: [REDACTED]

24 April 1945

To : C. [REDACTED] (Att: S-2)

45th Fighter Squadron Mission 4-12

15th Fighter Group Mission 4-

MISSION REPORT

1. a. 4 P-51D's of Fiteron Four Five.
b. None.
2. a. None.
b. Unknown.
3. Glide Bombing and Strafing Target Area 247 V, Chichi Island.
4. Blue Flight - Capt G. Hunter, Lt's Wm Brown, Rettberg, Klein.

1000

1043 - 1045

1145

Lt Rettberg had a very rough engine and noticed gas fumes were coming into his cockpit so he was forced to return and pancaked at 1015. Capt Hunter led the remaining three planes to Chichi on a vector of 18° at 9000 feet, IAS 240 MPH. The flight came straight over Chichi from W to E over the target area. They sd back and made a run on the tunnel in TA 247 V from S to N from 8000 feet at a 45° angle, IAS 350 - 370, pulling out and dropping their bombs at 3500 feet. They were unable to see whether or not their bombs fell in the entrance to the tunnel. Bombs were seen to fall in water near 246 J from another flight. Lt Brown's bomb on the left wing hung up. The flight retired to the E and S and rendezvoused 10 miles S of Chichi. Lt Brown jettisoned his bomb over the water. The flight returned to base on a vector of 240°. 20 miles N of Iwo they turned to 180° and pancaked at 1145.

5. a. En route .8 overcast, Bases 1000, Tops 7000, scattered clouds at 12000 feet, Visibility 10 miles. Over target, .5 overcast, target area open, Bases 2000, Tops 4000, Visibility 10 miles.

b. Good.

6. Unknown.

7. 8 x 500 lb. demc bombs, instantaneous nose fuse, .025 second delay tail fuse. 180 rounds cal .50 amm9 expended, 390 gallons gasoline.

8. It was noted that targets of this type are too hard to pick up and hit from altitudes higher than 3000 feet. It is believed that a more obvious target would produce better bombing results.

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From:

26 April 1945

To: 1 CO [redacted] [redacted] (Att: 5-)

45th Fighter Squadron Mission 4-23

15th Fighter Group Mission 4-17

MISSION REPORT

1. a. 14 P-51D's of Fiteron Four Five.
b. None.
2. a. Missing: Four pilots and 4 P-51's; Blue Flight - Capt Knox, Lts Cyphers, Redus, Wray.
b. None.
3. Escort of B-29's to Kyushu.
4. Red Flight - Capt Bridge, Lts Garey, Harrigan, Kenake.
Yellow Flight - Capt Henderson, Lts Kester, Statsman, Moore.
Blue Flight - Capt Knox, Lts Cyphers, Redus, Wray.
Green Flight - Major Wells, Lt Wilder.

0655

1100 - 1130

1010

Lt Lortie of Red Flight could not get the landing gear of his plane to retract and pancaked at 0658. He was replaced by Lt Garey of Red Reserve. Lt Statsmann of Yellow Flight was forced to return from 60 miles out when his engine started cutting out. He pancaked at 0730, and was replaced by Lt Slater of Red Reserve. Lt Wes Brown of Red Reserve was forced to return from 80 miles out when his prop began throwing oil. He pancaked at 0735. 550 miles from base Lt Hovey's engine was cutting out at 1900 RPM. Capt Bridge ordered his element leader, Lt Richins, to escort Lt Hovey to base. They pancaked at 1210.

Airborne at 0655, the 45th Fighter Squadron joined immediately off Iwo and followed the other two squadrons of the group on the way to the Assemble Point. It became apparent that rendezvous was not being successfully made, and Major Tapp of the 78th Fighter Squadron called Captain Bridge and suggested that he BU to the 29's. Capt Bridge, whose Squadron had merely been following, turned on his BU and found that the B-29's were behind them. They did a 360° turn, and followed the signal directly to the B-29's. They were on course to Kyushu at altitudes from 8000 to 14000 feet, and speeds between 215 - 200 MPH. At approximately 100 miles from Japan, the weather became progressively worse until there remained about 500 feet between the top of the undercast, 17500 feet, and the base of the overcast, 18000 feet. The strike climbed, some of the planes following the B-29's through the clouds and some climbing above the overcast. At about this time, Lt Cyphers of Blue Flight was heard to call in that he was alone at 1000 feet. Capt Bridge told Lt Cyphers to immediately home on the navigator B-29's, and call for a vector. Several of the pilots heard the conversation and are convinced that Lt Cyphers received the message. This was at approximately 1030K. Just after that, Capt Bridge called all flights in his Squadron. Blue Flight failed to acknowledge. Blue Flight is still missing, and it is believed

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45th ... 4th Ftr Gp Mission 4-17

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that they ... their difficulties during this period of extreme bad weather ... the call from Lt Gyphers.

RED FLIGHT: Capt Bridge, leading Red Flight, had a brief glimpse at land and possibly sea while following with the strike on a vector of 020°. Course was changed to 350°, and Capt Bridge spotted two squadrons, or at least one full squadron escorted by 8 or 10 B-51's. Red Flight joined and followed in a big loop over what appeared to be a peninsula. The weather was extremely bad and the very rare glimpses of the terrain below were not sufficient for Capt Bridge to definitely locate himself. They did not see any bombs drop. No flak was encountered. After the sweep, and no enemy fighters being observed, Red Flight homed on the navigator B-29's. Return to Base was made with Navigator B-29's Cloudhopper 3 and 4.

YELLOW FLIGHT: This flight, led by Capt Henderson never saw landfall. In fact at no time did they see land whatsoever. At 1800 the flight picked up a B-29 squadron and escorted them over an airfield on instruments at altitudes from 18000 - 20000 feet. After they left the bombers they joined on to the navigator B-29's Cloudhopper 3 and 4 for return to base.

BLUE FLIGHT: Missing.

GREEN FLIGHT: This flight, consisting of Major Wells and Lt Wilder made no visual contact with land. They followed 30 bombers over target area for 30 minutes at an altitude of 18000 feet. The bombers were at 16000 feet. They then followed the strike force and had no trouble joining navigator B-29 Cloudhopper 4 which brought them back to base. Both pilots report their engines rough over the target and all the way back to base.

5. a. On course to within 100 miles of Ayusai: cloud cover, .6 to .8; Tops, 7000 - 8000 feet; Bases, unknown. From 100 miles of Ayusai to target and return: undercast; Cloud cover, 10/10; Tops 14000 - 17500 feet; Bases unknown. Overcast; cloud cover, 10/10, Tops unknown, Bases 18000 to 21000 feet.

b. All reports on MI were extremely satisfactory. Capt Bridge's transmitter was slightly garbled. Lt Moore's transmitter went dead and then came on several times. Communications otherwise good.

6. None.

7. 180 rounds cal. .50 ammo. expended. 4695 gallons of gasoline.

8. Capt Bridge recommends that when the navigator B-29's are flying in pairs, they fly abreast and somewhat in trail. This would allow more fighters to have closer positions to the navigators. Capt Bridge also recommends that the navigator B-29's maintain a more constant airspeed. On this mission, it was necessary for the fighters to weave considerably, and it was not always possible to maintain position. Major Wells made the following suggestions: Squadron leaders should be allowed to cancel a mission due to weather. He thinks that with such weather reports today's mission should have been called off before takeoff. Lts Michins and Honey were unable to contact the Air, Sea Rescue facilities on their abortive return, except Box Kite 31 from about 500 miles distance.

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29 April 1945

FROM: CO

TO : CO (Attn: 2-2)

15th Fighter Mission 4-14
15th Fighter Group Mission 4-19

MISSION REPORT

1. a. 2 F-51D's of Piteron Four Five
b. None
2. a. None
b. Unknown
3. Escort and Air Sea Rescue for Fighter Sweep of Chichi Island.
4. Invader Blue: Lts Watt and Thornton

1035

1135-1150

1235

This flight consisted of a "Josephine" and escort. The flight followed the strike force to 1 mile East of Chichi Island where it orbited while they went in to their targets. Observation proved the Susaki Airfield still inoperational. There were a lot of small boats in the harbor, nothing of any consequential size. Lt. Thornton saw a near-hit on one of the boats by a flight which went in to hit the shipping in the harbor. None of the boats looked like anything more than barges. No flak or enemy fire of any type was observed by this flight. The strike force rendezvoused 10 miles E of Chichi at 5000' and returned to base passing over Haha Island at 2000' to make observations. None were made by this flight and no return fire encountered.

5. a. On course; cloud coverage .9, tops 4000', bottoms 2000'. Over target: cloud coverage .4, tops 5500', bottoms 2000' with a slight haze.

b. Good. IU worked satisfactorily. Red leader sounded garbled on both receivers.

6. Unknown.

7. No ammunition expended; 180 gals gas expended.

8. None.

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45th Ftr Sq Mission 4-10, 15th Ftr Op Mission 4- 22Apr45 contd.

GREEN FLIGHT: Turning to hit the alternate target this flight led by Lt Walker crossed under the 78th Fighter Squadron which had strafed what may or may not have been Suzuka Airfield. They came out on to the beach and headed down the coast. In route the entire flight strafed buildings about 3 miles NE of what they thought was the primary target. In the inlet on the tip below Daio-zaki Lt Edwards saw and strafed a ship about 200 feet long. The flight proceeded to rally point, joined Blue Flight, rendezvoused with bombers at 10000 feet and proceeded home. They orbited the field for 15 minutes before they were able to land.

5. a. En route .3 cloud cover, top of undercast 8500 feet, base of overcast 15000 feet, visibility 10 miles. Over target, no cloud cover, haze to 8000 feet, visibility 3 miles.

b. DU was excellent on this mission. The Super Dumbos are particularly complimented. Capt Morey is the only pilot who reported his DU out, and this was operational. Radio communication was good, but discipline is still needed.

6. Unknown.

7. 6,715 gal gas. Average gas left 85 gal (exception Capt Maltby, 15 gal).
18,560 cal .50 ammunition expended.

8. Lt Cowan's gun sight went out after the second burst. Both filaments burned out at the same time. The only enemy fire reported was from small arms fire along the shore and one burst of flak reported by Lt Wananaker at 200' on the first pass. It is suggested that rather than tie up planes waiting to land, single planes join on to any flight they see and come in with them.

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