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COMMANDER TASK GROUP
58.3 / 38.3

COMMANDER CARRIER DIVISION ONE

ACTION REPORT

First Kyushu - Inland Sea Strikes
Second Kyushu Strikes
Battle of East China Sea
Third Kyushu Strikes
Direct Support of Okinawa Occupation

14 MARCH - 1 JUNE, 1945.

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COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
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UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
TASK GROUP FIFTY-EIGHT POINT THREE/THIRTY-EIGHT POINT THREE

FB2-1/A16-3/vgm

Serial: 0069

18 June 1945.

S-E-C-R-E-T

From: Commander Task Group FIFTY-EIGHT POINT THREE/THIRTY-EIGHT POINT THREE.
(Rear Admiral FREDERICK C. SHERMAN, Commander Carrier Division ONE,
U.S.S. ESSEX, Flagship).
To : Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.
Via : (1) Commander Task Force FIFTY-EIGHT (Commander FIRST Carrier Task
Force, Pacific).
(2) Commander FIFTH Fleet (Commander CENTRAL Pacific Task Forces).
(3) Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean
Areas.

Subject: Operations of Task Group 58.3/38.3 in Support of Occupation of OKI-
NAWA, during the period 14 March - 1 June 1945, report of, including
the following actions:

1. First KYUSHU-INLAND SEA Strikes, 18-19 March 1945.
2. Second KYUSHU Strikes, 29 March 1945.
3. Battle of EAST CHINA SEA, 7 April 1945.
4. Third KYUSHU Strikes, 13-14 May 1945.
5. Direct Support of OKINAWA Occupation, 23-28 March, 30 March-6 April,
8 April-12 May, 15-28 May 1945.

Reference: (a) PacFlt Confidential Letter LCL-45.
(b) ComFIFTHFlt OpPlan 1-45.
(c) ComFIRSTCarTaskForPac (CTF 58) OpOrder 2-45.
(d) ComPhibSPac OpPlan A1-45.
(e) ComTaskGroup 58.3 OpOrder 5-45.

Enclosures: (A) Air-Sea Rescue Operations, Table of. -p. 67
(B) Napalm Fire Bombs, U.S.S. RANDOLPH letter concerning. Photostated with

M-ser. 125601

Randolph serial 0018

PART I - FOREWORD AND COMPOSITION

1. This report will highlight the actions during the subject period from the point of view of the Task Group as a whole, and will not go into details covered by action reports of the individual ships. All dates are East Longitude, and all times are ITEM (-9).

2. Operations covered herein were in support of the Occupation of OKI-NAWA. Task Group 58.3 operated as a unit of Task Force 58 (OTC, Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher), which in turn operated as a part of the FIFTH FLEET under command of Admiral Raymond A. Spruance.

3. At the beginning of these operations, the composition of Task Group 58.3 was as follows:

TASK GROUP 58.3 - FAST CARRIER GROUP THREE - Rear Admiral Frederick C. Sherman

(a) Task Unit 58.3.1 - Air Force

ESSEX (F)	
(1) BUNKER HILL (FF) (VAdm Mitscher)	2 CV
(2) CABOT	1 CVL

(b) Task Unit 58.3.2 - Heavy Support - Vice Admiral W.A. Lee

(3) SOUTH DAKOTA (F)	
(4) NEW JERSEY	2 BB

(c) Task Unit 58.3.3 - Light Support - Rear Admiral J. Cary Jones

PASADENA (F)	
SPRINGFIELD	
ASTORIA	
WILKES-BARRE	4 CL
(5) INDIANAPOLIS (FFF) (Admiral Spruance)	1 CA

(d) Task Unit 58.3.4 - Screen - Captain Higgins

<u>DesRon 62</u>	<u>DesDiv 124</u>
<u>DesDiv 123</u>	
AULT (F)	HANK
ENGLISH	BORIE
C.S. STERRY	J.W. WEEKS
WALDRON	W.L. LIND
(6) HAYNSWORTH	
<u>DesRon 48</u>	<u>DesDiv 96</u>
<u>DesDiv 95</u>	
ERGEN	BLACK
STEMBEL	CHAUNCEY
WALKER	BULLARD
HALE	(7) KIDD

17 DD

(o) Footnotes:

- (1) Detached 11 May.
- (2) " 9 April.
- (3) " 11 May.
- (4) " 22 March; rejoined 8 April-14 April.
- (5) " 23 March.
- (6) " 9 April.
- (7) " 11 April.

(f) The following ships also operated with this Task Group during the periods indicated:

CARRIERS

HANCOCK - 22 March - 9 April.
ENTERPRISE - 10 April - 14 April; 6-16 May.
RANDOLPH - 17 April-1 June
BATAAN - 22 March-17 April; 26 April-1 June.
MONTEREY - 12 May-1 June.

BATTLESHIPS

WASHINGTON - 22 March - 8 April; 15 April - 1 June.
NORTH CAROLINA - 22 March - 8 April; 15 April - 27 April
ALABAMA - 12 May - 1 June.

CRUISERS

OAKLAND - 7 April - 1 June.

DESTROYERS

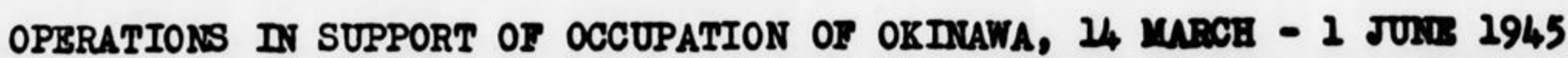
DosRon 52 - 17 April - 1 June.

DosDiv 103

DosDiv 104

OWEN
MILLER
THE SULLIVANS
STEPHEN POTTER
TINGEY

HICKOX
LEWIS HANCOCK
HUNT
MARSHALL



PART II - BRIEF SUMMARY

4. Chronology of Action.

- 14 March Task Group 58.3 sortied ULITHI at 0830 and proceeded independently on northerly courses conducting gunnery and air group exercises.
- 15 March Rendezvous with other Groups of TF 58.
- 16-17 March Refueled and enroute KYUSHU.
- 18-19 March FIRST KYUSHU-INLAND SEA STRIKES. TG under extremely heavy air attacks (Details on pages 7-10).
- 20-21 March Covering FRANKLIN's retirement and enroute fueling rendezvous.
- 22 March Replenished. Task Force reorganization; NEW JERSEY detached; HANCOCK, BATAAN, NORTH CAROLINA, and WASHINGTON, reported for duty.
- 23-24 March Pre-invasion Strikes on NANSEI SHOTO, and special photographic coverage of landing beaches.
- 25 March Replenishment.
- 26-27 March NANSEI SHOTO Strikes continued.
- 28 March Replenishment; morning Strike on MINAMI DAITO JIMA.
- 29 March Search for Jap Fleet; and Strikes on Southern KYUSHU. (Details on pages 11-12)
- 30-31 March NANSEI SHOTO Strikes continued.
- 1 April Direct Support of Landings on OKINAWA.
- 2 April Replenishment.
- 3-4 April OKINAWA Support continued; major Air Battle on 3 April with 46 Japs shot down over target area and 5 near TG.
- 5 April Replenishment.
- 6 April Strikes on TOKUNO and KIKAI; major Air Battle with 19 Japs shot down by CAF and 71 plus 9 probables in AMAMI area. HAYNSWORTH hit by suicider; severe material damage and personnel casualties.
- 7 April Battle of East China Sea (Sinking of YAMATO, AGANO, and DDs). (Details on pages 12-14). HANCOCK hit by suicider; extensive material damage; 28 killed, 52 wounded, 15 missing.
- 8 April Search for Jap Fleet Remnants, and for downed pilots.
- 9 April Replenishment; Search for downed pilots continued. HANCOCK and HAYNSWORTH detached to proceed to rear area for repairs of battle damage; CABOT detached to return to UNITED STATES for overhaul.

10 April Strike on MINAMI DAITO JIMA. ENTERPRISE and OAKLAND reported for duty.

11 April TOKUNO-AMAMI Strikes. TG under heavy air attack, with 11 Japs shot down by ships' gunfire; ENTERPRISE had 2 damaging near misses; ESSEX one; HANK narrowly missed, damaged by strafing; HALE had damaging near miss; BULLARD also received some damage; KIDD hit by suicider, detached and returned to ULITHI.

12 April OKINAWA Target CAP; major Air Battle, destroying 53 airborne Japs, 2 by AA, 2 by CAP, and 49 over target.

13 April Target CAPS.

14 April Replenishment; ENTERPRISE, HANK and HALE detached for repair of battle damage at ULITHI. NEW JERSEY also detached.

15-16 April OKINAWA Support and S. KYUSHU Sweeps; major Air Battle with 36 Japs destroyed in air, 6 by CAP, and 30 in target areas on 16 April.

17 April OKINAWA Support continued. BATAAN had near miss by Kamikazo. Task Force reorganization again effected, dissolving TG 58.3, and assigning RANDOLPH and DesRon 52 to TG 58.3. BATAAN was detached and reported to CTG 58.4 for temporary duty.

18 April Replenishment.

19-22 April OKINAWA Support continued.

23 April Replenishment.

24 April Weathered out. Possible submarine contact covered from 0310 until 1701, with negative results. Last possible contact at 0352.

25-26 April OKINAWA Support continued; KIKAI-AMAMI patrols. BATAAN rejoined on 26 April.

27 April Replenishment. NORTH CAROLINA detached for onward routing to Pearl Harbor.

28-30 April OKINAWA Support continued; major Air Battle on 28 April destroyed 33 enemy planes over target area.

1 May Replenishment.

2-5 May OKINAWA Support and AMAMI GUNTO Strikes and TCAPs. Major Air Battle on 4 May, destroying 51 and damaging 2 enemy airborne planes in target area.

6 May Replenishment; SOUTH DAKOTA had powder explosion in handling room of magazines of #2 turret (killing 11 and injuring 21 others).

7 May OKINAWA Support; AMAMI GUNTO patrols.

8 May Weathered out.

9 May OKINAWA Support; AMAMI GUNTO patrols.

10 May Small Strike on MINAMI DAITO JIMA; replenishment.

11-12 May OKINAWA Support; AMAMI GUNTO patrols; major Air Battle 11 May with 38 airborne enemy planes destroyed, 31 over the target area, and 7 near the Task Group, with 4 of the latter by ships' gunfire. BUNKER HILL hit on 11 May by 2 suiciders which achieved complete surprise, showing on no ship's radar; very extensive material damage; 352 killed, 52 missing reported. SOUTH DAKOTA and BUNKER HILL detached 11 May for return to rear area. ALABAMA and MONTEREY reported for duty. CTF 58 shifted flag to ENTERPRISE.

13-14 May THIRD KYUSHU STRIKES. Very light airborne opposition over targets, with 17 enemy planes destroyed in air and 73 destroyed or damaged on the ground. Heavy air attacks on the Task Group, with 4 enemy destroyed by CAP on 13 May, and 23 near Group on 14 May, 18 by CAP and 5 by AA. ENTERPRISE hit by suicider; extensive material damage; 13 killed, 32 wounded. (Details on pages 14-18).

15-16 May Replenishment. CTF 58 shifted his flag to RANDOLPH. ENTERPRISE detached 16 May for return to rear areas.

17-18 May AMAMI GUNTO Strikes and Patrols.

19 May Replenishment.

20-21 May OKINAWA Support; AMAMI GUNTO Patrols. On 20 May a specially briefed Support mission bombed and destroyed enemy positions within 50 yards of U.S. lines, paving way for immediate capture of long and bitterly contested position.

22 May Weathered out.

23 May Replenishment; Strike on MINAMI DAITO JIMA; AMAMI GUNTO Patrols.

24 May AMAMI GUNTO Patrols; KUSHIRA Airfield Sweep.

25 May AMAMI GUNTO Patrols - almost completely weathered out.

26 May Weathered out.

27 May Replenishment.

28 May OKINAWA TCAPs; foul weather. ComFIFTHFlt and CTF 58 relieved by ComTHIRDFlt and CTF 38 respectively. Designation of TG 58.3 changed to TG 38.3.

29 May Enroute LEYTE GULF, TG 38.3 having been detached to proceed LEYTE GULF for 10 days rehabilitation. RANDOLPH with escorting DDS detached by CTG 38.3 for GUAM carrying ComFIRSTCarTaskForFas.

30-31 May Enroute LEYTE GULF, conducting gunnery exercises.

1 June Entered LEYTE GULF on 80th day after departure from ULITHI - 14 March.

PART III - ACTION HIGHLIGHTS

PHASE 1 - FIRST KYUSHU-INLAND SEA STRIKES - 18-19 March

5. 18 March: The launching point SE of KYUSHU (30-40 N., 133-00 E.) was reached at the scheduled time for pre-dawn launching, but without the element of surprise, for snoopers had approached the Force as early as 2150 of the preceding night, and remained in contact almost continuously thereafter. Numerous bogeys closed this Task Group about 0500, dropping several groups of 12-20 flares, and at 0503 a bandit which approached within range was splashed by TG gunfire. At 0615 TG CAP splashed a FRANCES 60 miles to the north.

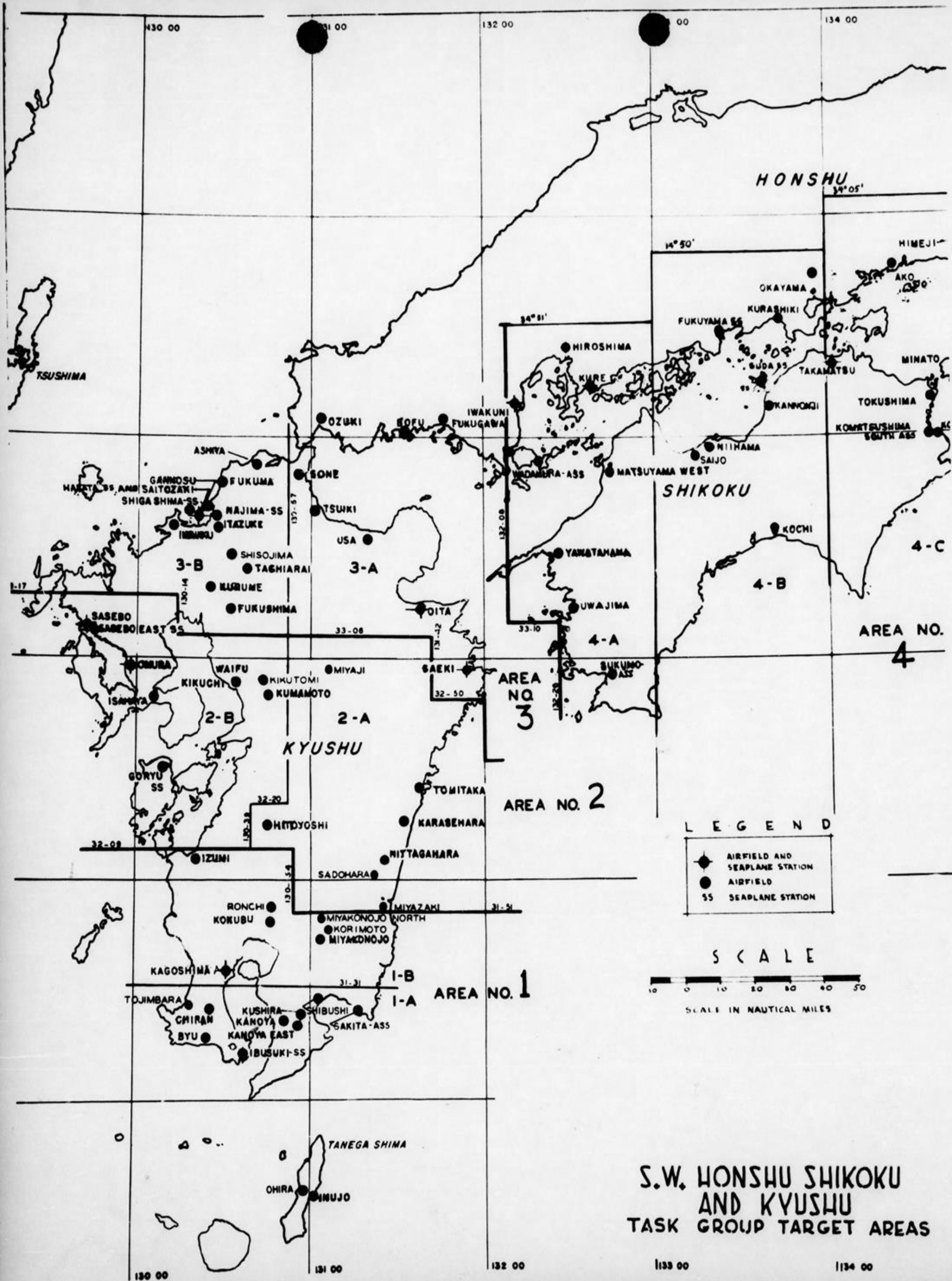
6. Shortly after dawn the enemy staged a substantial attack on the Force, resulting in some damage to the INTREPID and ENTERPRISE, in other Task Groups, but both ships continued operating. No direct attacks developed against this Task Group.

7. Meanwhile, launches were being made as scheduled, against the KYUSHU airfields assigned this Task Group, in Area Number 2 as shown on the chart following this page. A pre-dawn launch at 0415 sent 3 VF(N) intruders over MIYAZAKI, which was effectively strafed in the parking areas and installations, setting several fires.

8. The First Sweeps, launched at 0610, covered all the east coast fields (MIYAZAKI, SADOHARA, NITTAGAHARA, KARASEHARA, and TOMITAKA); HITOYOSHI in the central part of the island; and as far west as KIKUCHI. TOMITAKA was loaded with planes, as later photographs showed, but also had a large airborne contingent of approximately 30 ZEKES, TONYS, and OSCARS which were engaged by Sweep planes in a sharp set-to, and which prevented an attack on the field. At the end of the battle our forces had registered 4 sure and 2 probable kills, and had lost 2 planes, the pilot from 1 of which was later recovered in a fine rescue by an OS2U close to the enemy shore. Another group of the Sweep, ranging to the west, had encountered an estimated 12 VALS or NATES, and downed 1 before they scattered and took refuge by flying at low altitudes in the valleys. While strafing MIYAZAKI, one of our fighters crashed on the field, cause unknown.

9. The Morning Strikes hit MIYAZAKI, IZUMI, and NITTAGAHARA in well-coordinated attacks. MIYAZAKI was devastated with virtually all the buildings at the field reduced to ashes, as shown in the accompanying photographs. In addition, numerous planes on the field were destroyed or damaged. Photographs of the damage at IZUMI also show excellent results with 6 hangars and 2 shops burning, and 7 hangars damaged by the accurate bombing. At NITTAGAHARA the hangars were well hit, but without the consuming fires that developed at MIYAZAKI and IZUMI. The runway was also damaged, and a small town SE of the field was fired. Two planes were lost in these Strikes, 1 CORSAIR to AA at MIYAZAKI, and 1 AVENGER which lost a wing while diving and crashed at NITTAGAHARA.

10. In the meantime, at 0825 the Task Group AA opened up on a lone JUDY which made a surprise but unsuccessful bomb attack on the BUNKER HILL, and splashed it immediately thereafter.



11. The Second Swoops reported burning 2 hangars and a fuel dump at HITOYOSHI by rocketing and strafing. Airfields and installations were thoroughly strafed at SADOHARA, KAMSEHARA, and KUMAMOTO with damage unobserved. Except for 1 ZEKE shot down near MIYAZAKI, no enemy planes were seen in the air, and few could be found on the ground.

12. In the Afternoon Strikes, ESSEX planes again hit NITTAGAHARA, inflicting further heavy damage, leaving at least 5 of the 8 hangars unserviceable, and destroying 5 single-engine planes on the ground. Both the BUNKER HILL and CABOT planes crossed the island and struck stunning blows in the OHURA area. Extensive bomb and fire damage was inflicted on the landplane and seaplane hangars, large fires were set in fuel tanks south of the field, and several direct hits were scored on the nearby aircraft factory. Of some 30 BETTYS on the field, 13 were believed seriously damaged, and numerous others in lesser degree. Interception of the Strike was attempted by 12 RUFES and 4 TOJCS, of which 4 RUFES and 3 TOJCS were shot down, and 1 of each was damaged. AA was heavy, moderate, and accurate, but all our planes returned safely.

13. The Third Swoops hit the KUMAMOTO aircraft factory with an estimated 50-60 rockets, leaving numerous fires and heavy smoke. Then back at the east coast the second major air battle of the day was joined near TOMITAKA, with the enemy in a group of 30 or more fighters, of which 14 ZEKES, 5 FRANKS, and 2 unidentified singles were definitely splashed, and 2 more were probably destroyed. One of our VF was shot down in the battle.

14. Photo missions flown in the morning and afternoon obtained excellent coverage of most of the fields in the area. Near KIKUCHI one flight shot down a lone NATE, and near ISAHARA the second flight was jumped by 4 VAIS, 1 of which was immediately shot down, and the other 3 of which were damaged and probably destroyed.

15. A resume of the day's activities shows:

Sorties over target	308
Enemy planes - destroyed	45
- probably destroyed or damaged	53
Own planes lost - combat	7
- operational	4
Own aviation personnel lost - combat, pilots	5
- crew	1
- operational	0
Bombs dropped (tons)	77
Rockets fired	704

16. 19 March: From midnight to 0400, when hecklers were again launched against KYUSHU airfields, the enemy continued aggressive shadowing and intermittent attacks on the Force. Flares were dropped frequently, and twice within 10,000 yards of TG 58.3, but no direct attacks on this Group materialized. At 0422, when bogeys again began closing, Condition ONE in the AA batteries was set, and maintained throughout the day until 1910, when all day missions had been recovered, and enemy attacks had apparently subsided.

17. During the night of 18-19 March the Task Force had moved to the NE, to launch attacks against Japanese Fleet units concentrated at KURE and KOBE, spotted by reconnaissance flights on the preceding day. This Task Group and Task Group 58.1 were assigned Japanese Fleet units and dock facilities at KURE as targets, while Task Groups 58.2 and 58.4 hit KOBE.



TG 58.3 - KYUSHU - 18 MARCH 1945 MIYAZAKI AIRFIELD UNDER
ATTACK AT 0900



TG 58.3 - KYUSHU - 18 MARCH 1945 MIYAZAKI AT 1430
COMPARE WITH PREVIOUS PICTURE.



TG 58.3 - KYUSHU - 18 MARCH 1945 IZUMI INSTALLATIONS
BLASTED AND BURNED

18. The First Swoops, launched at 0540, covered KOCHI and MATSUYAMA airfields on SHIKOKU, over which the Strikes enroute to KURE one hour later would pass. A sharp reaction was provoked at MATSUYAMA, where 25 to 30 JACKS and OSCARS were engaged while the field was being thoroughly strafed. At least 4 JACKS were shot down, and 2 JACKS and 1 OSCAR were probably destroyed. No air opposition was met at KOCHI, where the field was strafed and bombed, with 5 hits observed in the hangar area.

19. Strikes were launched at 0630 and proceeded directly to KURE with virtually no air opposition. But flak of all calibers which was thrown up by the shore batteries and by the large number of ships in the harbor far surpassed in intensity anything encountered by our pilots before or after, achieving an almost tangible cone of fire over the target area.

20. Despite the intensity and accuracy of the AA, all attacks were pressed home to good bombing levels and with excellent results, dealing considerable damage to major units of the Jap Fleet at anchor, and to ground installations. Hits on Naval units are summarized as follows:

CV - At least 2 x 1000 pound bombs, plus several rockets

YAMATO - At least 1 bomb (500 or 1000 pounds)

BB - (believed HARUNA) - 2 x 500 pounders and possibly 1 x 1000 pounder

CA - At least 1 x 500 pounder

CVE - 2 x 500 pounders

CVE - Fires observed on second CVE are believed caused by planes of this Task Group

21. Numerous hits scored on the docks and on the Naval Arsenal left 4 good fires burning on retirement, and 4 bomb hits in the Shipyard Forge Shop area were made with damage undetermined in the heavy smoke. As the attack groups retired, bombs which had hung up during the KURE Harbor attack were dropped on installations on KURASHI SHIMA, southwest of KURE, and succeeded in starting a large gasoline or oil fire.

22. The attacks had been highly successful but relatively costly, with 5 HELLDIVERS and 1 AVENGER lost by this Group to flak.

23. Meanwhile the dawn attack on the Task Force had assumed major proportions. The pattern was the same as on the preceding day, and one that was to become familiar in the weeks that followed. Many raids of from 1 to 3 planes each would appear, very often simultaneously with the launching or recovery of planes, taking advantage of the saturated radar scope to avoid detection, and of every available cloud to gain optimum position for launching bombing and suicide attacks. During the height of the early morning and noon attacks, which were the most persistent of the day, superb AA gunnery in this Task Group knocked down 6 attacking planes and CAP destroyed 3 more over the disposition or in the near vicinity. The ESSEX was narrowly missed twice, first at 0743 when Task Group gunfire disrupted the dive of a bomb-carrying Jap plane whose bomb or bombs landed close aboard the starboard side, while the damaged plane barely cleared the flight deck and splashed close aboard the port bow. At 0815 a second enemy plane, believed a JUDY, was hit while diving on the ESSEX and landed close on the port beam. No material damage was reported from either attack.

24. While these actions were in progress, reports were received from other Task Groups that the YORKTOWN had sustained minor damage from glancing bomb hits, the WASP had received a direct bomb hit but was able to resume flight deck operations in an hour, and the FRANKLIN had been severely damaged by a bomb, with tremendous fires and many continued explosions visible from this Group.

25. During the attacks from noon to about 1430 two notable and outstandingly courageous kills were made by CAP of this Task Group. The first was at 1220 when this Group was under heavy attack, and a JUDY had slipped undetected through the outer defenses. One of our CAP planes launched at 1200 was vectored to the nearby bogey and spotted the enemy plane beginning his dive from 4500 feet altitude. The CAP pilot immediately dived in hot pursuit and continued, in total disregard of the welter of AA pouring from the Task Group, until he finally shot the enemy flaming into the water just short of the BUNKER HILL.

26. The second incident was a very similar kill of a MYRT, diving directly at the stricken FRANKLIN. Again the CAP pilot refused to break off despite the AA, until the enemy was destroyed, well within the screen surrounding the FRANKLIN.

27. The Second Sweeps, launched while the Strikes were still in the air, returned to KOCHI and MATSUYAMA, but without being able to arouse any air opposition, even after "gambit" withdrawals from KOCHI attempted to lure the enemy into the air. The attack on the field at KOCHI heavily damaged and burned 3 hangars, fired a fuel dump, destroyed 4 twins and 2 singles on the ground by strafing and rocketing, and damaged an estimated 6 to 10 others in varying degrees. At MATSUYAMA 2 twins were burned on the ground.

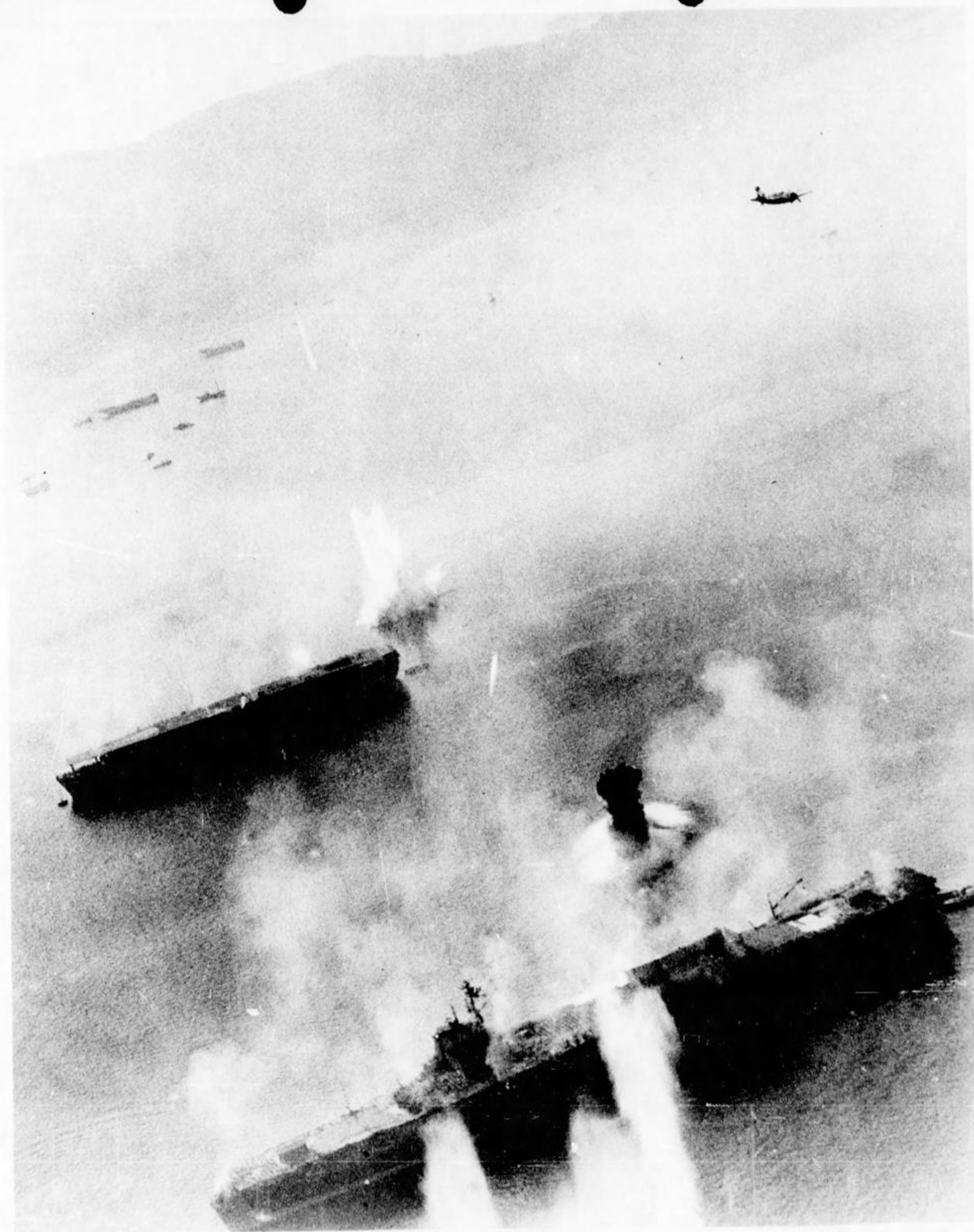
28. The Third Sweeps, which were the last offensive missions of the day, revisited NITAGAHARA, on KYUSHU, to neutralize the many dispersed and camouflaged planes, apparently operational, spotted in the photographs taken the preceding day. The attacks were methodically and accurately delivered, against only moderate AA and nil air borne opposition, and the results were excellent. A total of 16 twin bombers, 2 singles, and 1 transport were destroyed, in addition to 18 twins, 5 singles, and 1 transport damaged more or less severely, for a total of 43 planes destroyed or damaged. Other damage included destruction of a power station near the field, and a train badly shot up, with estimated serious damage to the locomotive.

29. A resume of the day's operations shows:

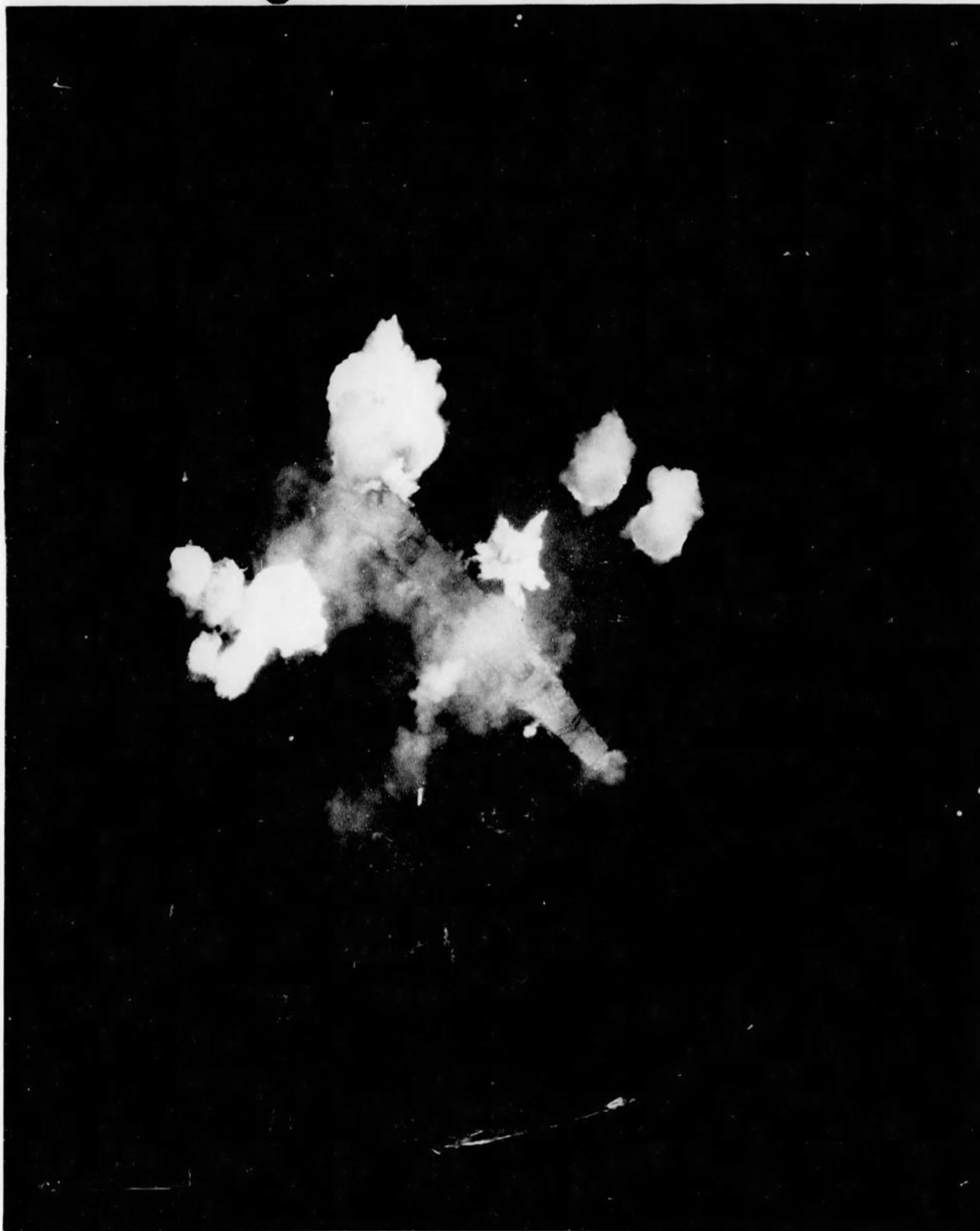
Sorties over target	217
Enemy planes destroyed	48
probably destroyed or damaged	32
Enemy ships damaged - 2 BB, 1 CV, 1 CA, 2 CVE	
Own planes lost - combat	7
- operational	8
Own aviation personnel lost - combat, pilots	5
crew	5
- operational	0
Bombs dropped (tons)	75
Rockets fired	539



TG 58.3 - KURE HARBOR - 19 MARCH 1945 MAJOR ELEMENTS OF
JAP FLEET EFFECTIVELY ATTACKED IN INLAND SEA



TG 58.3 - KURE HARBOR - 19 MARCH 1945 JAP CV AND CVE UNDER
ATTACK



TG 58.3 - KURE HARBOR - 19 MARCH 1945 BOMB ATTACK ON NEW
JAP CV



TG 58.3 - OFF SHIKOKU - 19 MARCH 1945 ACCURATE AA SPLASHES
ANOTHER BANDIT, ASTERN OF BUNKER HILL.

PHASE 2 - SECOND KYUSHU STRIKES - 29 March 1945

30. Task Group 58.3 in company with TG 58.4 proceeded on a northerly course to a launching point south of KYUSHU, at 29-15 N., 131-15 E., to strike enemy Fleet Units reported in southern KYUSHU waters. Search planes, armed with rockets, were launched at 0520 to cover both sides of KYUSHU to a distance of 250 miles from the Force.

31. At 0545 Strikes and Photo teams were launched by all carriers of this Task Group (which on this operation were ESSEX, BUNKER HILL, HANCOCK, BATAAN, and CABOT), with orders to proceed in company to a position near TAKE SHIMA, 30-49 N., 130-26 E., and then to skirt the west coast of KYUSHU to a distance of not more than 200 miles from the launching point. If Fleet Units were not sighted, or reported by the Search by that time, Strikes were to hit KANOYA airfield in southeastern KYUSHU, except that planes carrying torpedoes were to attack shipping targets of opportunity.

32. The Search found no evidence of the Jap fleet in an area which extended to SASEBO on the west, and to the Inland Sea on the east. The Strikes returned to the KAGOSHIMA Bay area, and finding the ceiling at KANOYA too low for bombing, attacked other fields closer to the coasts. At TOJIMA, on the west, the only plane sighted on the field was promptly strafed and burned, and all other efforts were directed at the installations. Bombing and rocketing completely destroyed 2 warehouses and several smaller buildings; severely damaged 1 double hangar, 3 shops and a warehouse; and damaged in lesser degree another double hangar, a barracks building, and several smaller structures.

33. At IBUSUKI and KAGOSHIMA a good haul was made on grounded planes, destroying 1 EMILY, 3 JAKES, 3 CHERRYS, and 2 RUFES, in addition to damaging 4 JAKES, 4 CHERRYS, and 1 RUFE. Installations at CHIRAN, IBUSUKI, KAGOSHIMA, FURUE, and YAMAKAWA were well hit, resulting in demolition of a wharf, 6 warehouses, and 4 dwellings at FURUE; heavy damage to the docks at IBUSUKI and YAMAKAWA from the 14 torpedoes fired at them, as well as bomb, rocket, and strafing damage to 5 warehouses, 4 barracks, 3 large hangars, a radio station, searchlight, 4 railroad cars, and a railroad station.

34. Upon completion of the above attacks, a large number of miscellaneous shipping units were discovered and attacked with excellent results. At least 3 Sugar Bakers, 1 Sugar Dog, 1 subchaser, 2 schooners, and 4 fishing boats were sunk; 2 oilers of the Sugar Able class, 3 Sugar Dogs, 2 luggers, 2 sampans, and 2 fishing boats were heavily damaged and believed probably sunk; lesser damage was inflicted on a total of 3 Sugar Bakers, 2 Sugar Charlies, at least 16 Sugar Dogs, 2 fishing boats, and 1 lugger. On no other single day were so many shipping targets presented, or was so much shipping damage inflicted by this Task Group.

35. In the meantime rescue operations had been set in motion to attempt recovery of a HELLDIVER pilot downed in KAGOSHIMA Bay as the result of an operational accident. The pilot's position was scarcely a happy one, only 3 miles from either side of the bay and 15 miles from its mouth within short range of numerous enemy airfields. Two CS2Us with 24 fighters for escort were dispatched to the area, in the hope of rescuing not only the pilot but also his gunner, whose parachute had been seen to open. Unfortunately when the rescue planes arrived no trace of the gunner could be found. The rescue mission was intercepted by aggressive Jap fighters, and a sharp battle ensued,

during which one of our VF pilots was downed and ditched near the VB pilot. Finally after 5 ZEKES had been splashed and the air had been cleared of opposition, the CS2U's slipped quickly in, and recovered both pilots, snatching them from the very grasp of the enemy.

36. The Force was under attack almost continuously from noon until 1530, but only 1 enemy plane slipped through the CAP and AA defenses. His bomb attack on the CABOT was unsuccessful, and he was splashed by the CAP just outside the screen while retiring. Two other enemy planes were destroyed by the CAP over or near the disposition.

37. A resume of the day's activities shows:

Sorties over target	210
Enemy planes - destroyed	20
- probably destroyed or damaged	10
Enemy ships - sunk (tons)	6550
- probably sunk or damaged (tons)	20000
Own planes lost - combat	6
- operational	7
Own aviation personnel lost - combat, pilots	3
crow	1
- operational, pilots	3
crow	6
Bombs dropped (tons)	94
Rockets fired	215
Torpedoes launched	14

PHASE 3 - BATTLE OF THE EAST CHINA SEA - 7 April 1945

38. This Task Group was operating in company with TGs 58.1 and 58.4 SE of AMAMI GUNTO, with the same carriers as on the Second KYUSHU Strikes, namely, ESSEX, BUNKER HILL, HANCOCK, BATMAN, and CABOT. The enemy's all-out air effort, begun on 5 April and coordinated with a major drive by their OKINAWA land forces, reached its highest intensity, for this Task Group, at least, on 6 April. On that day ships and planes of this Task Group destroyed or damaged 105 air borne enemy planes, 94 of them sure kills, and destroyed or damaged an additional 17 on the ground. Following the heavy losses inflicted upon the enemy came a report that units of the Japanese Fleet had been sighted heading south from Bungo Channel, possibly to join in a triphibious effort to halt the occupation of OKINAWA.

39. Intensified Searches had been flown on the 6th but with negative surface results. Searches out to 325 miles from the Force were again scheduled for the 7th, with prospects heightened by further reports during the night that Japanese Fleet units, including at least 1 battleship, had been sighted along the east coast of KYUSHU.

40. All offensive missions were held on deck pending results of the Search. At 0815 a flash report from Search planes of this Task Group gave a sighting at 30-44 N., 129-10 E. of an enemy force composed of 1 BB, 1 or 2 CL, and 7 or 8 DD on course 300 T., speed 12 knots. Weather at the contact was poor, with ceiling 3000 feet, visibility 5 to 8 miles, and occasional rain squalls. Fifteen minutes later the enemy course was reported changed to 240 T., which seemed a probable commitment toward OKINAWA for action rather than toward SASEBO for a change of Fleet base, which might have

been implied in the course of 300 T. In any event, this Task Group launched at 0905 a Special Tracking Team of 16 VF plus two 4-plane Communication Links to track and report enemy movements.

41. Arming of all available VB and VT was commenced immediately, and at 1000 a total of 106 VB and VT with 80 VF as escort were launched for the attack. TG 58.1 launched at the same time. Planes of the two Groups were ordered by CTF 58 to make coordinated attacks, to be followed by TG 58.4, which launched about one hour later.

42. At 1115 the Tracking Team picked up the enemy, now on course 200 T., and maintained contact until the Strikes arrived, having drawn considerable heavy gunfire in the meantime, but with no damage suffered. No enemy air opposition was encountered during this period. In fact during the entire action, beginning with the first sighting at 0815, planes from this Task Group saw only 3 enemy planes in the vicinity of the Japanese Force. Two of these were splashed (the third escaped in the clouds), and all three were believed transients, not directly connected with the Fleet movements.

43. At approximately 1230 planes from TGs 58.3 and 58.1 began arriving at the scene of action. Detailed action reports of the participating Air Groups are not available at present writing, so this report can only sketch in broad outline the action and results of Task Group 58.3's attacks.

44. Weather at the contact had deteriorated, and throughout at least the first phase of the battle heavy recurrent rain squalls greatly multiplied the difficulties of the Target Coordinator's task in directing the attacks and assessing immediate damage during the hour and a half over which the attacks were spread.

45. One of TG 58.1's Air Groups was first on the scene, and was directed by the Target Coordinator to make the first attack, followed by Air Groups of this Task Group (except that the HANCOCK Group was late and never succeeded in locating the target in the bad weather). Major attacks were concentrated on the YAMATO, and it is conservatively estimated that planes from this Task Group scored a minimum of 8 torpedo and 5 bomb hits on the battleship, with a possibility of several more hits if the estimates of each of the 4 participating Air Groups can be substantiated. When TGs 58.3 and 58.1 had finished their attacks on the YAMATO she was smoking heavily and listing, and although still able to maneuver at good speed was obviously badly hurt.

46. Meanwhile, intense and accurate AA had been experienced from ships of the Jap Screen, and attacks against them had been initiated to facilitate the attacks on the YAMATO. The CL AGANO was seriously damaged by bombs and a possible torpedo hit by this Task Group, and was left burning, dead in the water. This Group definitely exploded and sank 1 DD by torpedo, probably sank a second DD, also by torpedo, and inflicted heavy damage on 2 additional DDs, one of the latter two being of the TERUTSUKI class, and all the others believed of the TAKANAMI class.

47. When the Group's planes had completed their attacks there was no question that the YAMATO was as tough as reputed, for she had taken enough punishment to have destroyed any but hardiest of ships. But there was also no doubt that she had been measurably weakened, and that her escorts had been largely incapacitated, paving the way for finishing blows dealt by later attacks.

48. This Group's losses were 3 planes by flak: 1 HELLDIVER, 1 AVENGER, and 1 HELICAT. The fighter pilot made a water landing close to the Task Force and was rescued, but the other 2 planes crashed at the scene of action with no survivors of the 2 pilots and 3 aircrewmen.

49. In the meantime, beginning about 1200 the enemy's air attack of the previous day was resumed against the Task Force in intense and unremitting assaults. A total of 18 attacking planes were destroyed at or near the Force, 15 by CAP and 3 by ships' gunfire, but 1 suicider slipped through the defenses and crashed squarely on the flight deck of the HANCOCK at 1211. Fortunately the material damage and personnel casualties were relatively light with 28 reported killed, 52 wounded, and about 15 missing. Further flight operations were prevented by a 20 foot square hole in the flight deck, upward buckling of the forward elevator, and both catapults being put out of commission. Fires were under control by 1230 and were extinguished with commendable speed and efficiency. Her Strike planes were taken aboard at 1615 by manual operation of the barriers, and the ship remained with the Task Group until the next replenishment day.

PHASE 4 - THIRD KYUSHU STRIKES - 13-14 May 1945

50. 13 May: Offensive air operations had been cancelled at 1215 on the preceding day and a northerly course set for the scheduled launching area off KYUSHU. TG 58.1 accompanied this Group, to which the MONTEREY had reported on 12 May, making 5 carriers in all with the ESSEX, ENTERPRISE, RANDOLPH, and BATTAN. This Group was assigned Target Areas 2 and 3A, indicated on chart following page 7.

51. Since rejoining the Group on 6 May the ENTERPRISE had done valuable night heckler work on the airfields of the RYUKYUS and southern KYUSHU. But her greatest effectiveness was demonstrated during the nights preceding these Third Strikes on KYUSHU. Since she was the only night carrier with the Task Force, her scope of operations covered the entire island of KYUSHU, and during the two nights preceding these Strikes her hecklers attacked virtually every airfield of importance thereon. Prior to the day launches on 13 May, VF(N) and VT(N) bombed (with incendiary clusters), rocketed, and strafed airfields at KANOYA, KANOYA EAST, KUSHIMA, SHIBUSHI, KOKUBU, KAGOSHIMA, CHIRAN, and INUJO in the extreme south; MIYAZAKI, NITTAHARA, and TOMITAKA along the east coast; and KUMAMOTO, OMURA, and SASEBO in the middle west. Numerous fires and explosions were reported caused by the attacks, and 1 RUFE was splashed and 1 GEORGE smoked as the attackers retired from the target area. Night fighters of the Dawn TCAI shot down a total of 8 enemy planes in the KANOYA area. Closer to the Force, the Task Group Dawn CAP destroyed 2 JAKES and 1 TONY, for a total of 12 kills and 1 damaged by VF(N).

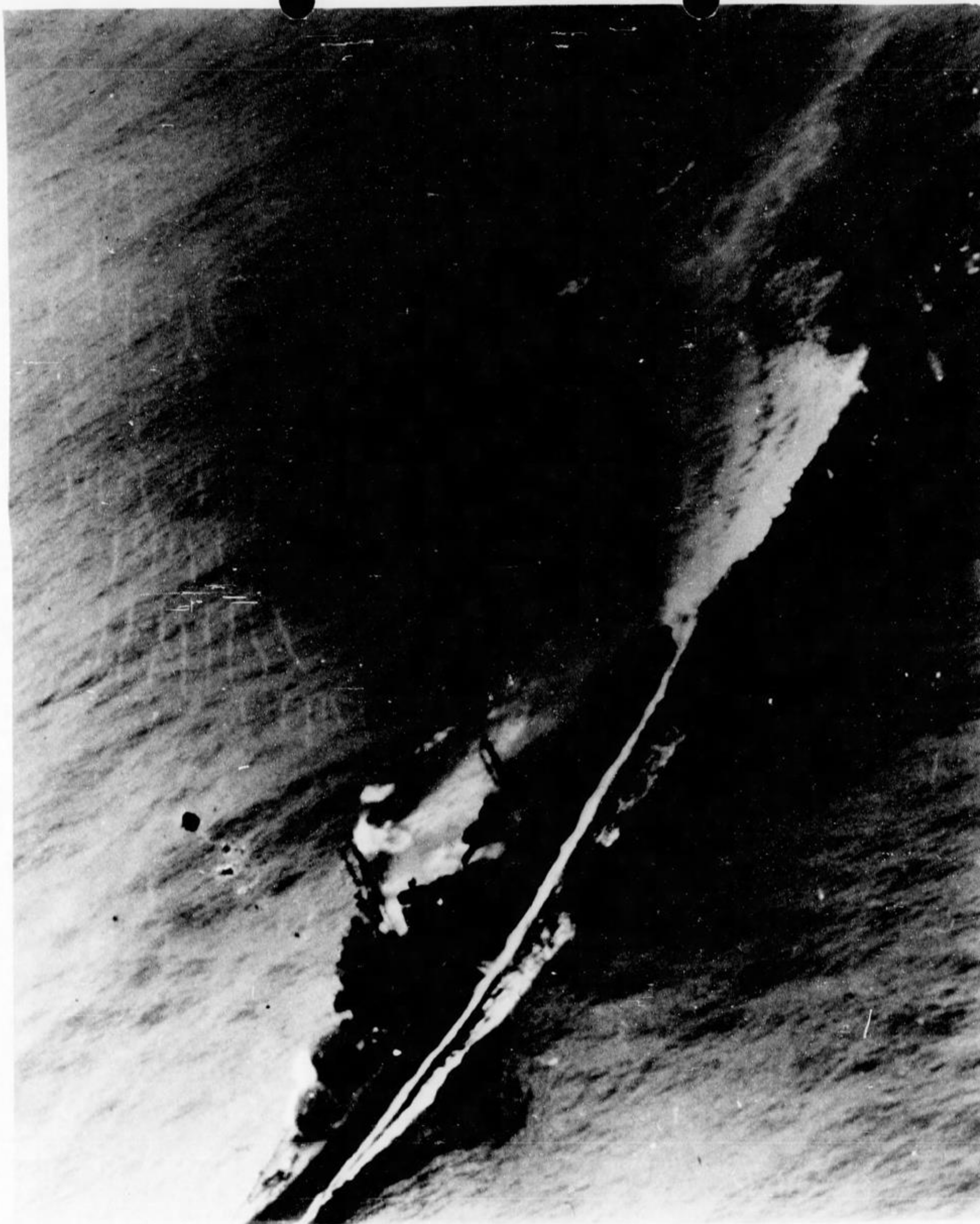
52. The First Swoops found no airborne opposition whatever, despite coverage of the east coast from MIYAZAKI to SASEBO and as far west as KIKUTOMI and KIKUCHI. Installations at the two latter fields were thoroughly strafed, rocketed, and bombed with damage unobserved. Near MIYAZAKI a locomotive was strafed and the train stopped, but it is believed without serious damage to the locomotive, as the train had moved when the area was again covered a few hours later. A good fire was set in the town of MIYAZAKI, in the absence of any worthwhile targets on the field itself. Very few non-rocketed planes were observed on any fields by these early Swoops, but satisfactory results were achieved at KIKUCHI (MIFU) where 1 BETTY, 1 FRANCES and 1 VAL were



YAMATO AND SIX OF HER ESCORT JUST PRIOR TO FIRST ATTACK



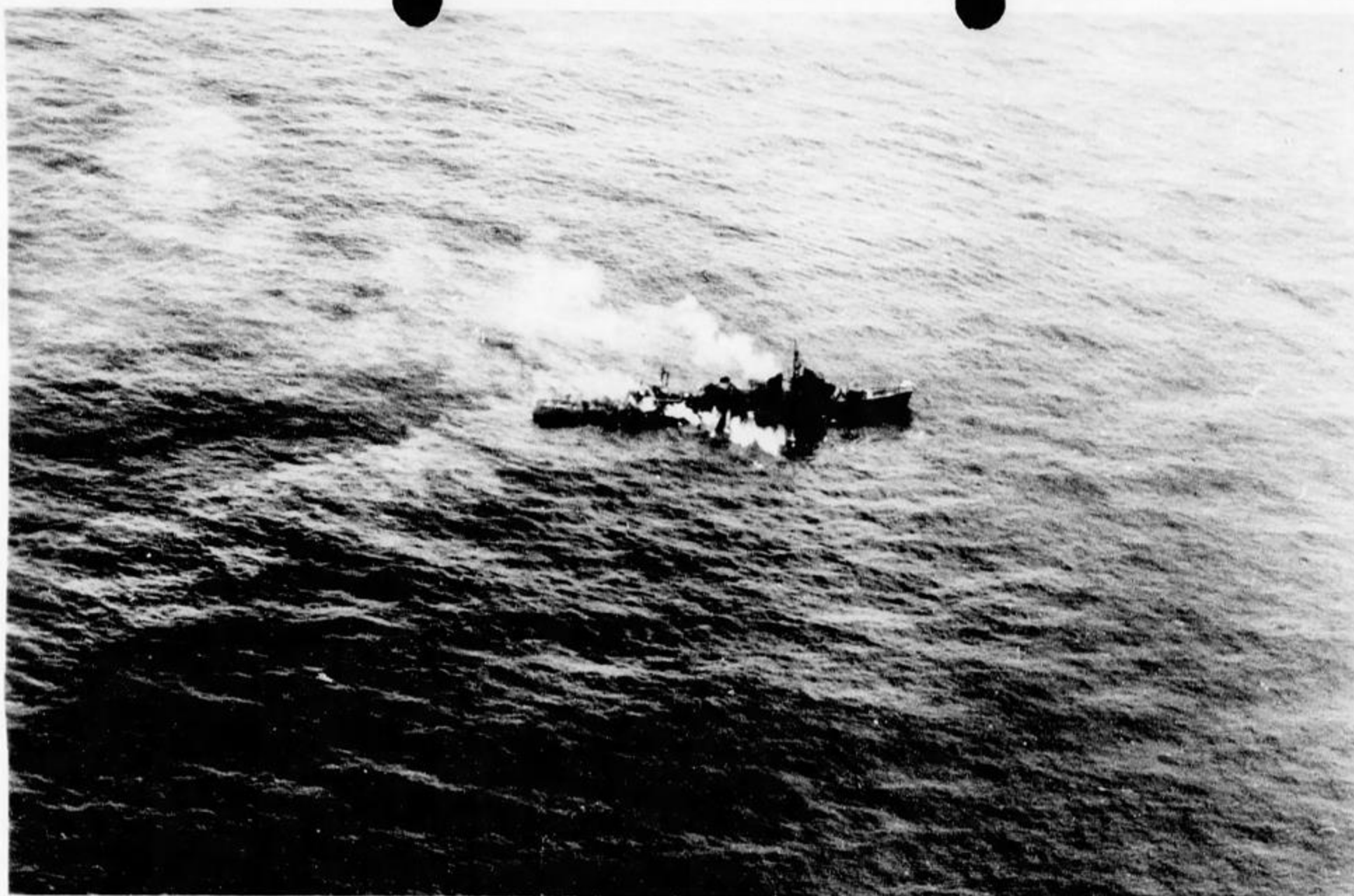
TG 58.3 - BATTLE OF THE EAST CHINA SEA - 7 APRIL 1945
 YAMATO STILL MANEUVERING AT HIGH SPEED BUT WITH FIRES
 AMIDSHIPS AFTER BOMB AND TORPEDO HITS BY THE GROUP.
 TERUTSUKI CLASS DD, RIGHT FRONT, NOT YET DAMAGED.



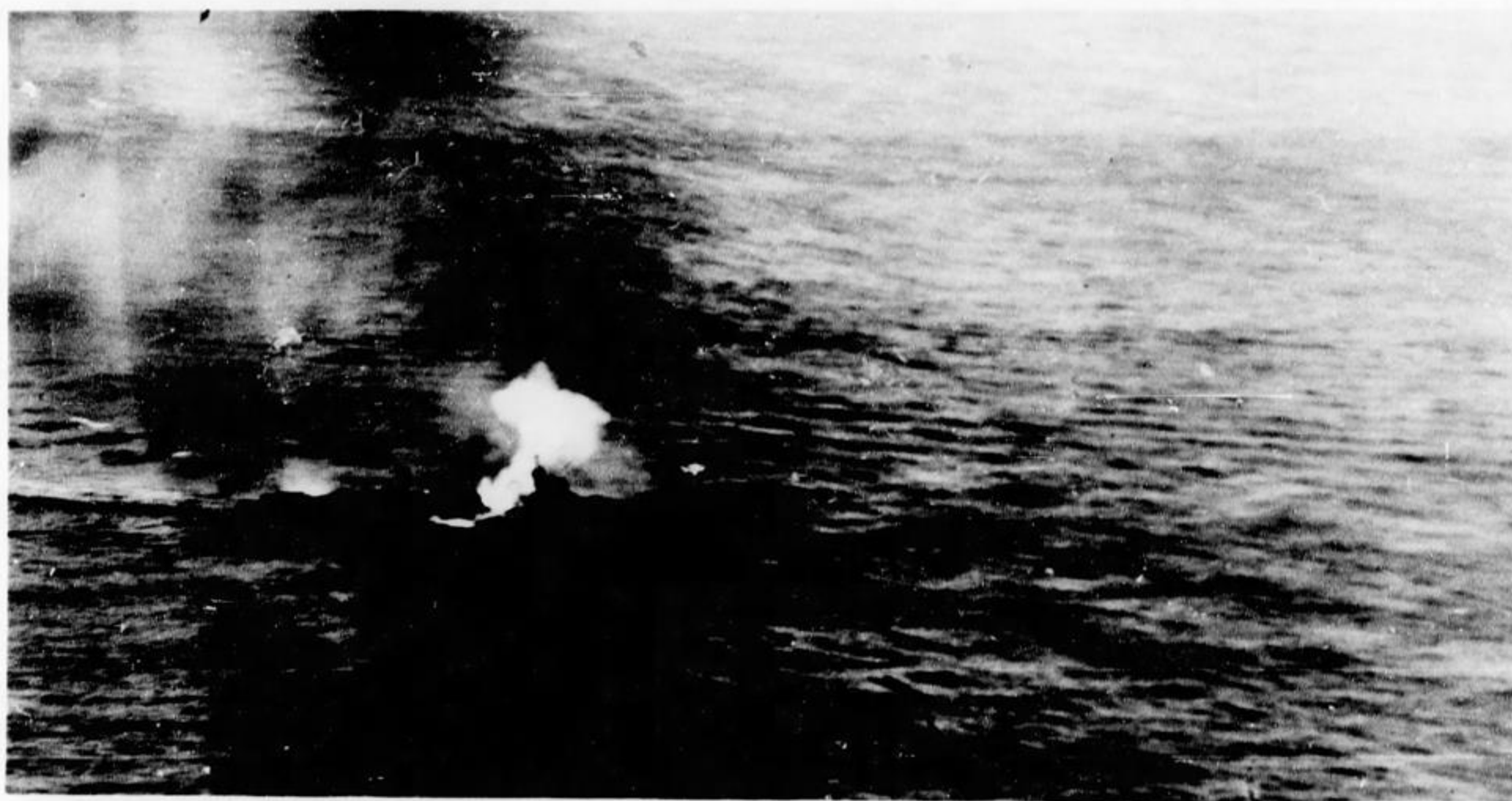
TG 58.3 - BATTLE OF THE EAST CHINA SEA - 7 APRIL 1945
TERUTSUKI CLASS DD STILL MAKING GOOD SPEED, BUT BURNING
AMIDSHIPS FROM EARLY ATTACK BY THE GROUP



TG 58.3 - BATTLE OF THE EAST CHINA SEA - 7 APRIL 1945 CL
AGANO LEFT DEAD IN WATER, DOWN BY THE STERN, HOLED ON THE
PORT SIDE, AND DAMAGED TOPSIDE AFTER ATTACK BY THIS TASK
GROUP'S PLANES



FIRST TAKANAMI CLASS DD, DEAD IN WATER, AND OTHERWISE DAMAGED



TG 58.3 - BATTLE OF THE EAST CHINA SEA - 7 APRIL 1945 SECOND TAKANAMI CLASS DD WITH LITTLE OR NO WAY ON, AND SERIOUSLY DAMAGED AMIDSHIPS. WHEN THE GROUP'S ATTACKS WERE COMPLETED 4 DD WERE THE ONLY UNDAMAGED SHIPS ON THE SCENE.

burned, and 2 singles were damaged. In addition 1 twin was reported destroyed at TOMITAKA.

53. The Morning Strikes were divided between TAMANA and SAEKI. The first was well hit with bombs concentrated on the hangar area, and with good fires started in a large hangar and buildings in addition to blast damage. A sampan was strafed and sunk after the attack on the field.

54. At SAEKI it was found that the D-29 raids had burned out most of the hangars (although apparently all were still standing and looked in good order from a distance), and part of the field had been thoroughly cratered. At the land field the Strikes' bombing was concentrated on the hangars, and left 1 triple and 1 quadruple hangar at the north end of the row burning heavily. Across the narrow waterway the seaplane station was likewise well hit, with more diversified damage. At least 2 hangars were hit and the one farthest to the northwest was burned. A building believed to be Administrative headquarters was bombed, and a gasoline or oil dump exploded with flames shooting to 1500 feet. In addition, shops and miscellaneous buildings west of the athletic field, the landplane Administration building and the north bridge between the two fields all had direct or nearby hits and were moderately to seriously damaged. The AA was accurate, with the light caliber particularly intense. One HELLDIVER was shot down and crashed in the bay. A parachute was seen to open at least partly, but no survivors were spotted during the Strike or by later Rescue planes.

55. The Second Sweeps attacked TOMITAKA and KUMAMOTO with moderately good results. Numerous spotted planes SW of TOMITAKA field were bombed, rocketed, and strafed, but low-level examination convinced most of the pilots that the planes were probably non-operational before the attack. AA was meager to moderate, of light and medium caliber, and no appreciable damage was suffered by our planes. Upon retirement, a radar station to the NE was heavily strafed, and 1 of the 4 buildings was left ablaze.

56. At KUMAMOTO, of an estimated 14 planes on the ground, 4 twins (TOFSYS or DETTYS) were destroyed, and just north of the field a train was strafed and the locomotive exploded, as shown in the accompanying photograph.

57. The Afternoon Strikes were again divided, hitting KIKUCHI, and SAEKI for the second time. At KIKUCHI the hangar area at the SW end of the field was accurately and heavily hit, causing large fires and numerous explosions, and reported destruction or critical damage to 5-8 hangars and numerous smaller buildings close by. SAEKI seaplane station was attacked with reported good results, although accurate assessment of damage was impossible in the heavy smoke and dust that quickly obscured the area. Direct hits were observed on 3 large buildings, including one of the seaplane hangars, and on several slightly smaller structures in the barracks or warehouse area. The storage area north of the railyard was also well bombed, but with undetermined results. The light AA was again intense and accurate, and shot down 1 HELLDIVER and 1 AVENGER. There was a possibility of one survivor from the AVENGER, but none could be located by Rescue planes which covered the area thoroughly.

58. The Third Sweeps attempted to reconnoiter SASSEBO, but a thick smoke screen prevented accurate observation, other than definite visual recognition of 2 large warships among a sizable number of other ships. At OMURA 6



TG 58.3 - KYUSHU - 13 MAY 1945 SAEKI LANDPLANE HANGARS,
PREVIOUSLY GUTTED BY B-29s, PROVE STILL GOOD TARGETS FOR
PIN-POINT BOMBING



TG 58.3 - KYUSHU - 13 MAY 1945 SAEKI SEAPLANE BUILDINGS
ARE ACCURATELY BOMBED



TG 58.3 - KYUSHU - 13 MAY 1945 DESTRUCTION OF
LOCOMOTIVE NEAR KUMAMOTO



TG 58.3 - KYUSHU - 13 MAY 1945 KIKUCHI (WAIFU)
CAMOUFLAGED INSTALLATIONS UNDER LOW-LEVEL RECONNAISSANCE
AT 0645



TG 58.3 - KYUSHU - 13 MAY 1945 KIKUCHI (WAI-FU)
UNDER ATTACK AT 1330

BETTYs revolved east of the field were strafed, with undetermined damage, and shops north of the seaplane station were strafed, rocketed, and bombed, starting several fires, and destroying at least 1 shop. At the entrance to AMAKUSA NADA 6 MTBs of 75-100 foot, each carrying 2 torpedoes, and 22 smaller boats estimated 25-40 foot were discovered and attacked. None are known sunk, but 4 of each type boat were left burning and dead in the water. One Sugar Baker was also attacked and damaged north of NAGASAKI.

59. TACHIARAI was the second major airfield attacked by the Third Swoops, and with good results reported. Bombs and rockets blasted buildings and smaller shops at the NW of the field, setting 1 large building afire, and leaving the area covered with smoke. On the field only 3 or 4 planes were seen. All were attacked, and one, a BETTY, was burned. It was observed that previous attacks, believed by B-29s, had severely damaged the remaining installations at the field.

60. At MIYAZAKI only 1 operational plane was found. It was promptly strafed and burned.

61. 14 May: ENTERPRISE night hecklers again ranged far and wide during the night of 13-14 May. The 17 fields covered included the familiar ones in southern, eastern, and western KYUSHU, plus GANNOSU and ITAZUKE to the northwest; SAEKI, OITA, USA, and TSUIKI to the northeast; and MATSUYAMA WEST and KOCHI on SHIKOKU. At KOCHI an estimated 45 operational planes were caught on the ground and heavily strafed with many resulting fires. Reported bomb damage on at least 4 fields was very substantial, including numerous fires and explosions of moderate proportions in addition to three especially notable incidents. At MIYAZAKI bombs were dropped in the north central part of the field and resulted in several small fires, which in turn were followed 5 minutes later by a total of 24 separate large explosions. At GANNOSU, along the west edge of the field 10 fires followed by explosions were believed possible aircraft destroyed. The KANOYA Naval Air Depot was the scene of the third incident, a very substantial fire and explosion causing unknown damage. Total ordnance expended on these attacks was 47 rockets and 6.6 tons of 100 pound G.P. bombs, and incendiaries. In addition to the damage on the ground, night planes shot down 1 OSCAR over the target area, and 3 bandits near the Force, 1 DIMA, 1 BETTY, and 1 ZEKE.

62. The fine work done by the night hecklers and fighters undoubtedly embarrassed the enemy, but did not prevent him from launching an early and sustained attack on the Force. Bogies were on the screen with little interruption during most of the night. Shortly after 0600 bogies began closing and numerous raids were plotted during the next half hour. At 0652 a TONY was splashed by CAP. At 0655 another bogey was picked up 4 miles from the formation, and the Task Group immediately opened fire, but 2 minutes later a suicider dived into the ENTERPRISE, hitting the flight deck slightly to starboard and just abaft #1 elevator. The elevator was completely destroyed and the flight deck was badly bulged. Other material damage was fortunately moderate, and personnel casualties very light under the circumstances, with 13 reported killed and 32 wounded. Resulting fires were well controlled, never assuming major proportions, and were completely extinguished by 0800. All ENTERPRISE planes in the air were safely landed aboard ships of TG 58.1, which was free from attack at the time. Enemy attacks continued unrelentingly until about 1030, by which time a total of 20 planes had been shot down within

or near the disposition (excluding the 3 destroyed by night fighters), 5 of them by AA, and 15 by C/P. No further enemy air activity was experienced near the Task Group. During the morning's action, the DATAN was hit on the port quarter by a salvo of 4 x 5 inch shells causing light damage, but unfortunately killing 7 and wounding 27 enlisted men. A small fire was soon extinguished, and flight operations continued without interruption.

63. Meanwhile, despite the air attacks, the Task Group flight schedule had been closely adhered to, with only minor delays in launches and recoveries.

64. The three Swoops launched throughout the day had substantially the same experience as on the preceding day, namely, virtually no air opposition, and very few planes observed on the ground. All airfields in Areas 3-A and 3-B, and all in Area 2-B except GORYU, ISAHAYA, and SASEBO were covered. Attacks on TSUKI, OMURA, and KIKUCHI yielded good results, and at the end of the day, including the planes hit by the Strikes, a total of 22 had been destroyed on the ground, 24 probably destroyed, and at least 16 damaged. Of the few air borne enemy sighted, 4 were shot down by Sweep planes. One of a group of 5 TONIS was damaged, and all 5 immediately ducked into the clouds.

65. Surface targets of opportunity were also attacked by the Swoops, and by escorts of rescue planes, resulting in a total tonnage of 11,000 damaged or sunk. Of this total 1 Tare Baker and 3 luggers were definitely sunk, and 1 lugger probably sunk. The rest, comprising 3 Sugar Able Sugars, 1 Sugar Charlie, 1 Sugar Dog, 4 luggers, 5 barges, 2 tugs, and 1 motor boat, were damaged in varying degrees.

66. The Morning Strikes, flown by each of the 4 day carriers, all hit USA airfield installations. Prior damage by B-29s was very considerable, and the added weight of explosives dropped by the Strikes is believed to have left the area worthless as a future target. Buildings at the NW, SE, and southern edges of the field offered the best targets and were thoroughly bombed. Heavy dust and smoke obscured the results, but numerous direct hits and at least 4 large fires were reported. Six single-engine planes along the north edge of the field were strafed with no results observed, and it is believed these planes were probably dummies. Eight to twelve revotted planes were bombed and strafed with unknown results. Accurate AA shot down 1 AVENGER which crashed with no survivors, and 1 HELLDIVER, which made a water landing in the Inland Sea, within 3 miles from the shore of the peninsula northeast of USA.

67. So many fine air-sea rescues have already been made close to enemy positions that they are becoming almost a commonplace, but is believed that few if any have equalled or surpassed the rescue of the pilot and gunner of this HELLDIVER. As the two men escaped from the ditched plane, VF escorts of the Strike were detached to orbit them until rescue planes could arrive. Gunfire from shore positions was not especially bothersome to the downed aviators, but two enemy vessels which headed for them presented a serious hazard until these craft were attacked and driven from the area, badly damaged, by the orbiting fighter planes. Meanwhile 2 OS2Us from the ASTORIA, with VF escorts, were enroute to attempt the rescue. No air opposition appeared, and the surface area was kept clear by the fighters, but the shore batteries became a very real threat to the sea-planes. Once again, however, they pulled it off, and each of the KINGFISHERS, with fine airmanship and seamanship,

plucked an aviator from under the enemy's guns and out of his formerly private son. Moderate AA from shore batteries farther south was fairly accurate, but caused no damage, and the return to the Force was completed without further incident.

68. The Afternoon Strikes were assigned OMURA airfield and the KUMAMOTO Aircraft Factory as primary targets. Bad weather in the OMURA area forced a diversion, and that section of the Strike attacked IZUMI airfield and the MINAMITA plant of the Japan Nitrogen Fertilizer Company. The latter target was well hit, with most bombs hitting the electrolysis building, and some bombs on the compressor and synthesis buildings, and on the nitric acid unit. Many large fires were started, some of which were still burning 2 hours later when a Photo Mission passed the area. At IZUMI, hangars east of the field were rocketed and strafed, setting 2 good fires; one warehouse was severely damaged; additional craters were put in the runways; and of 9 planes attacked in revetments south of the field, 2 were burned and 2 others heavily damaged.

69. At KUMAMOTO the bombing force was divided, as it was found that the aircraft factory had already been heavily damaged. Only the dive bombers struck this target, and good hits were observed. As a result of the cumulative damage, this factory was reported no longer a worthwhile target. The AVENGERS were directed to attack an Army Air Depot building SW of KIKUCHI. The area was well hit, with numerous fires and explosions resulting. The AVENGERS also destroyed the only remaining hangar on the field. Planes in the dispersal areas were given a thorough strafing. Two were burned, and others were seen smoking but could not definitely be claimed as destroyed.

70. A brief statistical summary of the 2-day Strikes, without attempting to itemize the ground damage inflicted, shows the following results:

Sorties over target	757
Enemy planes - destroyed	74
- probably destroyed or damaged	44
Enemy ships - sunk or damaged (tons)	11000
Own planes lost - combat	6
- operational	1
Own aviation personnel lost - combat, pilots	5
" crew	5
- operational	0
Bombs dropped (tons)	286
Rockets fired	800

PHASE 5 - DIRECT SUPPORT OF OKINAWA OCCUPATION -

23-28 March, 30 March - 6 April, 8 April - 12 May 15-28 May

Major Air Battles

71. During the 79 days over which the entire operations of this Task Group extended, offensive missions were flown against the enemy on a total of 52 days. On several days these missions were confined to Target CAP on account of poor weather over the land target areas, which also prevented any enemy contacts. But on each of 34 days contact with enemy planes was made, and at least 1 bandit shot down. However, the distribution of planes shot down over those 34 days was very uneven, with 384 of the total 632 crowded

into 8 days, one of which, 18 March, has been described above. Summary figures for these days are as follows:

ENEMY PLANES DESTROYED IN AIR BY A/C IN MAJOR BATTLES

	<u>MARCH</u>	<u>APRIL</u>					<u>MAY</u>	
	<u>18</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>11</u>
Target	36	46	71	49	30	33	51	31
Force	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	38	51	90	51	36	33	51	34

72. With the exception of 18 March, when the score was run up in the First KYUSHU Strikes, each of these days found the enemy launching large-scale air offensives against the landing forces and the Fleet at OKINAWA, and with TF 58 frequently included as a target. However, as indicated in the above table, a relatively small proportion of the enemy planes was destroyed near the Force, and in most instances our planes succeeded in intercepting and destroying the bulk of the enemy forces before they could reach their target areas. The majority of the interceptions were as far north as AMAMI GUNTO, with others just to the north of OKINAWA. It is probably conservative to say that at least 50% of these destroyed were either bomb-carrying or suicide attack planes. Had they succeeded in getting through to OKINAWA, the Fleet and Landing Forces would undoubtedly have had a far rougher time than they did.

73. On 3 April our Search planes were returning to base when the Communication Relay team spotted enemy planes on TOKUNO field and immediately attacked. Strafing destroyed 3 and severely damaged 4 or 5 others. As the pull-out was being made, our planes sighted an estimated 9 single-engine fixed-landing-gear planes (identified as MARVS or SONIAS), covered by 4 to 6 TONYS approaching the field. The Relay team turned to attack and shot down 2 TONYS followed by 2 MARVS. As the battle continued more Search planes arrived, simultaneously with a large enemy group from the north, part of which joined the melee at TOKUNO, and part of which was engaged by Swoop planes near KIKAI. At the end of the fight, our planes had shot down 40 Japs out of an estimated 45 in the vicinity, thereby drawing the sting from the first major air counter-attack, and at one of the most vulnerable stages of our landing force operations. This Group's loss was 2 HELICATS, of which 1 pilot was rescued. CTF 58's message to CTG 58.3 said, "Your Group certainly performed a marvelous job today. Well done."

74. 6 April saw the Japs launch a coordinated all-out attack in the air and by their land forces at OKINAWA, leading up to the Banzai charge of the YAMATO on the 7th. The Task Force was also subjected to a persistent 2-hour attack beginning at 1055. During this prolonged assault CAP of this Task Group shot down 19 enemy planes, and AA accounted for 3 more. However, the largest bag of the day was collected by the Afternoon Search from the ESSEX, which again intercepted the main body of the Jap air attack. In the 3 hour engagement that followed, a total of 49 Japs were shot down, 8 by BUNKER HILL planes, and the rest by ESSEX planes. At the close of the day a grand total of 90 enemy planes had been destroyed in the air, with 69 accounted for by Air Group 83 aboard the ESSEX, equalling the record for that ship for one day's operations.

75. Air battles on succeeding days followed substantially the same pattern, with the enemy forces about evenly divided between ZEKES, and later model fighters, as escorts, and bomb-carrying or suicide planes, many of them pre-war models, even including the biplane intermediate trainer Type 93 or 94.

OKINAWA Support Missions

76. From 23 March until the landings on 1 April offensive missions flown by this Group were devoted primarily to neutralization of air fields, and to attacks on beach defenses. The efficiency of many of these missions was exceedingly difficult to evaluate, since many of the targets assigned were gun positions, trenches, and caves, on which damage assessment is next to impossible. Shipping was also a high priority target, and during the first 2 weeks considerable tonnage of medium and small size ships and boats was successfully attacked. Thereafter shipping targets appeared only sporadically.

77. Following the landings on OKINAWA on 1 April, the Strikes and Support missions were frequently directed to hit targets of opportunity, or to dump their explosives on towns for general-area destruction. It was again difficult to assess the effectiveness of any one of these missions or of their cumulative total, although in the aggregate the damage done was undoubtedly very substantial. Among the wide variety of targets attacked on many occasions, in addition to those noted above, were factories, warehouses, barracks, storage areas, camouflaged boats on the beach, midget-submarine pens, docks, troop concentrations, radar and radio stations, fuel and ammunition dumps, bridges and causeways, lighthouses, trucks and tanks, and even haystacks in search of concealed ammunition dumps.

78. Two attacks are particularly noteworthy, the first a series of Strikes on the midget-submarine base at UNTEN KO, and the second a good example of close ground support. At UNTEN KO the first attacks reported little success due to the excellent camouflage of the submarine pens and nearby installations. However, close examination of photographs taken during those attacks revealed a number of concealed pens and provided an opportunity for briefing the pilots on the pin-point targets. Permission was obtained from CASCU to hit the area again, and the results were excellent, with 3 or 4 pens destroyed to the accompaniment of heavy explosions and huge fires. Additional pens were located on pictures taken during this attack, and the whole process repeated twice again, ending with a total of 11 pens wrecked, several MTBs and midget submarines destroyed, and general devastation of the buildings, fuel dumps, and loose stores, as well as the principal dock facilities.

79. The outstanding instance of close-support of the ground troops came on 20 May when a Support mission was directed to land at KATENA field for special briefing. There it developed that a small ridge, surmounting a natural amphitheater sloping to the southward, had held up our ground forces to the NE of SHURI for over a week. More than 300 men had been killed in attempting to take this position. The ground forces had finally decided that close-support bombing was the only remaining alternative, and had agreed to accept the risk of bomb "overs" into their lines. The Support mission was carefully briefed with a blowup photograph of the position, and a Marine Lieutenant rode in the Strike Leader's plane to coach him on to the precise



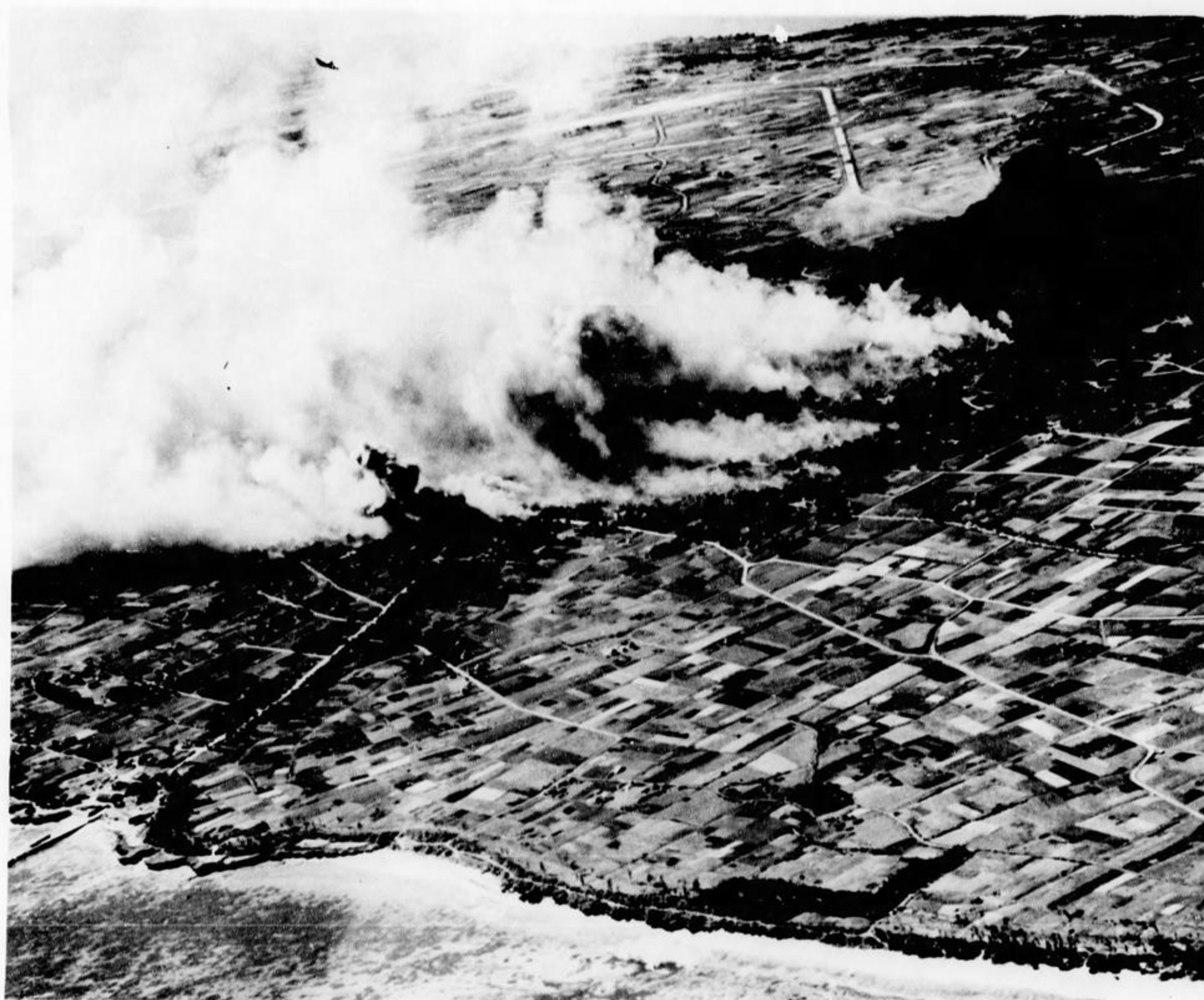
TG 58.3 - OKINAWA - 23 MARCH 1945 PRE-INVASION BOMBING OF
ENEMY BEACH DEFENSES NEAR MOUTH OF BISHI GAWA.



TG 58.3 - OKINAWA - MARCH 1945 AT UNTEN KO A NEST OF MIDGET
SUB PENS WERE DESTROYED. SEVERAL BURNT OUT AND BURNING ARE
SHOWN ABOVE.



TG 58.3 - OKINAWA - 1 APRIL 1945 ROADS CLOSED BY PIN POINT
BOMBING ON "L" DAY



TG 58.3 - OKINAWA GUNTO - 3 APRIL 1945 TOWN ON IE SHIMA
BURNS FIERCELY AFTER BOMBING ATTACK BY THIS GROUP. AIRFIELD
IN BACKGROUND, CITADEL AT RIGHT CENTER.



TG 58.3 - OKINAWA - 20 APRIL 1945 SUGAR MILL BOMBED AND
BURNED NEAR NAHA IS TYPICAL OF MANY SMALL INDUSTRIAL TARGETS
DESTROYED BY THE GROUP.



TG 58.3 - KIKAI SHIMA - 9 MAY 1945 NAPALM AND ROCKET
ATTACKS BY VF OF THIS GROUP START HEAVY FIRES IN DOCK
AREA NEAR WAN AIRFIELD.

PART IV - STATISTICAL SUMMARY

81. Detailed statistics for the entire operation 14 March - 1 June, broken down by phases, set forth on chart after page 24, are summarized as follows:

Task Group 58.3 - March 14 - 1 June.

(A) Destruction of Enemy Aircraft

(1) Destroyed in air by A/C	632
Destroyed in air by AA	43
Destroyed on ground	151
Total destroyed	826
(2) Probably destroyed or damaged	
In air by A/C	51
On ground	291
Total	342
(3) Grand Total	1168

(B) Damage to Enemy Shipping

Type of Vessel	Sunk	Probably Sunk	Damaged	Total
BB			2	2
CV			1	1
CL			1	1
CL			1	1
CVE			2	2
DD	1	1	6	8
Midget SS	1		1	2
SL			1	1
TB	1		1	2
SLI		2		2
FTC			1	1
S/S			3	3
SB	3	3	4	10
SBS			1	1
FTD		3		3
SC	2	4	4	10
SD	8	11	33	52
	16	24	62	102
Misc. small craft	124	69	294	487

(C) Own Aviation Losses

(1) Aircraft	VF	VF(N)	VB	VT	Total
Combat	60	6	12	11	89
Operational	65	11	18	8	102
	125	17	30	19	191

(2) Aviation Personnel	Pilots	Crew	Total
Combat	50	18	68
Operational	23	8	31
	73	26	99

(D) Battle Damage to Own Ships

HANCOCK	6 April	Hit by suicider. Extensive material damage; 28 killed, 52 wounded, 15 missing.
HALYNSWORTH	6 April	Hit by suicider. Severe material damage and personnel casualties.
NORTH CAROLINA	6 April	Hit by 5" shell in foundation of #2 director; 13 killed, 44 wounded.
ENTERPRISE	11 April	Near misses, light damage, but battle efficiency considerably impaired requiring availability at ULITHI.
KIDD	11 April	Hit by suicider; ship holed above waterline; forward fire room ruined; CIC demolished; 20 dead, 60 wounded, including C.O.
HANK	11 April	Strafed by suicider, #4-40 MM director badly damaged; other damage minor; 2 killed, 1 wounded, 1 missing.
HALE	11 April	Near miss; ruptured fuel tank; other damage superficial; 1 man slightly injured.
BULLARD	11 April	Very minor damage from close miss by suicider.
ESSEX	11 April	Concussion from near bomb hit did miscellaneous damage, affecting battle efficiency only in case of radar; SC being rendered inoperative, and SK lost 60% efficient; 1 serious and 19 minor injuries.

BUNKER HILL	11 May	Hit by 2 suiciders; very extensive material damage; 352 killed, 52 missing.
BATLIN	14 May	Hit by salvo of 4 x 5" shells from TG; 7 killed, 27 wounded; considerable light damage.
ENTERPRISE	14 May	Hit by suicider; extensive material damage; 13 killed, 32 wounded.

PART IV TASK GROUP 38.3 STATISTICAL SUMMARY	PHASE 1 FIRST KYUSHU- INLAND SEA STRIKES 18-19 March	PHASE 2 SECOND KYUSHU STRIKES 29 March	PHASE 3 BATTLE OF THE EAST CHINA SEA 7 April	PHASE 4 THIRD KYUSHU STRIKES 13-14 May	PHASE 5 DIRECT SUPPORT OF OKINAWA OCCUPATION 23 March - 28 May	GRAND TOTAL 14 March - 1 June
TOTAL SORTIES	710	337	350	1047	15270	17714
Over Target - total	525	210	251	757	10770	12513
Scops-Strikes	459	172	176	639	6427	7873
TCAP	-	8	10	-	213	231
Search	20	23	49	-	393	485
Photo	43	7	5	64	318	437
Night	3	-	11	54	217	285
Over Force - total	185	127	99	290	4500	5201
May	174	97	99	220	4374	4964
Rescue	11	30	-	38	51	130
Night	-	-	-	32	75	107
AIRCRAFT ORDNANCE						
Bombs	152 tons	94 tons	38 tons	286 tons	2714 tons	3284 tons
Rockets	1243	213	4	800	12369	14631
Mapelms	-	-	-	-	291	291
Torpedoes	-	14	46	-	-	60
DAMAGE TO ENEMY A/C BY A/C						
Destroyed - in air	47	10	25	39	511	632
- on ground	38	10	-	30	73	151
85	20	25	69	584	783	
Damaged - in air	16	-	1	1	33	51
- on ground	69	10	-	43	169	291
85	10	1	44	202	342	
170	30	26	113	786	1123	
ENEMY A/C DESTROYED BY SHIPS' GUNFIRE	8		3	5	27	43
DAMAGE TO ENEMY SHIPPING						
Sunk	3SD	3SB, 1SD, 2schooners, 4 fishing boats, 1 sub chaser. 6550 tons	1DD	1TB, 3luggers, 1sampan	2SC, 4SD, 1midget SS, 3MTB, 1 landing craft, 35barges, 6 suicide boats, 8luggers, 63 miscellaneous small craft	
Probably Sunk	3CD	2SAI, 3SD, 2 fishing boats, 2 luggers, 2 sampans. 10900 tons	1DD	4MTB, 5 small craft	3SBS, 4SC, 5SD, 3FTD, 1 suicide boat, 3 sampans, 2 luggers, 48 miscellaneous small craft.	
Damaged	Old BB (Kengo) YAMATO 1 CV 1 CA 2 CVE 1 TB	3SB, 2SC, 16SD, 2 fishing boats, 1 lugger. 9100 tons	YAMATO 1 CL 4 DD	3SAS, 1SB, 1SC, 1SD, 5 luggers, 5 barges, 2 tugs, 1small craft.	2DD, 1DD/DE, 1midget SS, 1SA, 1 SBS, 1SC, 1FTG, 16SD, 1MTB, 1 x 125' fishing vessel, 15 small merchant vessels, 5500' powerboats, 2suicide boats, 2 large landing craft, 28luggers, 224 miscellaneous small craft.	
OWN LOSSES						
Planes lost - in combat	7VF-5VB-2VT	5VF-1VT	1VF-1VB-1VT	1VF-3VB-2VT	3VB-5VT-46VF-6VFN	60VF- 6VFN-12VB-11VT
operationally	11VF-1VFN	4VB-3VT	6VF	1VF	11VB-5VT-47VF-10VFN	65VF-11VFN-18VB-8VT
TOTAL LOST	18VF-1VFN-5VB-2VT	5VF-4VB-4VT	7VF-1VB-1VT	2VF-3VB-2VT	93VF-16VFN-17VB-10VT	125VF-17VFN-30VB-19VT
Personnel lost - in combat	10 pilots - 6 crew	3 pilots - 1 crew	2 pilots - 3 crew	5 pilots - 5 crew	30 pilots - 3 crew	50 pilots - 18 crew
operationally	- - -	3 pilots - 6 crew	6 pilots	- - -	14 pilots - 2 crew	23 pilots - 8 crew
TOTAL LOST	10 pilots - 6 crew	6 pilots - 7 crew	8 pilots - 3 crew	5 pilots - 5 crew	44 pilots - 5 crew	73 pilots - 26 crew

GROUND TARGETS DAMAGED OR DESTROYED

FIRST KYUSHU- INLAND SEA STRIKES 18-19 March	Hangars, shops, barracks and miscellaneous buildings at KOCHI, KARASEHARA, NITTAGAHARA, MIYAZAKI, IZUMI, HITOYOSHI, OMURA heavily hit. Two 500# bombs and 50-60 rockets caused fires and heavy smoke at KUMAMOTO aircraft plant. Four fires started in KURE ARSENAL AREA. Heavy strafing stopped 2 trains.
SECOND KYUSHU STRIKES 29 March	Hangars, shops, barracks and warehouses at TOJIMBARA and at YAMAKAWA SS severely damaged. Deck installations and radio station YAMAKAWA bombed - dock itself hit by torpedoes with resulting large explosion. Decks and warehouses at FURUE, TAKASU, FURUCKO and NAGATA bombed and strafed.
BATTLE OF THE EAST CHINA SEA 7 April	Radio Station TAKE SHIMA destroyed.
THIRD KYUSHU STRIKES 13-14 May	Hangars, shops, warehouses and miscellaneous buildings at following airfields pounded by bombs and rockets from Task Group planes including night hecklers: USA, OITA, SAKKI, MIYAZAKI, KANOYA, KOKUBU, KAGOSHIMA, CHIRAN, IZUMI, KIKUCHI, WAIFU, TACHIARAI, ITAZAKE, GANNOSU, OMURA. Ammunition and fuel storage dumps were exploded at USA and SAKKI. Japan Nitrogen Fertilizer Company plant at MIN-AMATA heavily damaged with many large fires still burning 2 hours after the strike. RR Station in town near SADOHARA destroyed and nearby factory damaged. KUMAMOTO aircraft plant again hit. 2 locomotives destroyed.
DIRECT SUPPORT OF OKINAWA OCCUPATION 23-28 March 30 March-6 April 8 April-12 May 15-28 May	OKINAWA - Barracks, factories, warehouses, roads and bridges, strongpoints including gun emplacements and pillboxes, caves and other earthworks, fuel and ammunition storage, radio/radar installations, dock areas, troop concentrations, trucks and tanks, midget sub-pens, airfields and airfield installations at NAHA, KADENA, YONTAN. AMAMI - Barracks, factories, storage areas, fuel dumps, dock areas, gun positions, radio stations and facilities at KONIYA. KIKAI-TOKUNO - Barracks, warehouses, miscellaneous buildings, fuel dumps, dock installations, gun positions and airfields & installations. HIRAKI IMITO SHIMA - Phosphate plant, sugar mill, dock installations, storage area, ammunition storage, gun positions, and airfield and airfield installations. KYUSHU - Airfields and airfield installations at KUSHIRA, KANOYA and KANOYA EAST. Miscellaneous targets on islands throughout the NANSEI SHOTO area were hit including lighthouse at TSUKEN SHIMA; lighthouse, airfield and buildings at IJE SHIMA; Radio Stations at AGUNI SHIMA, TAKARA and GAJA SHIMA; radio station and warehouses at OKINOYERABU; small factories at IJE SHIMA; radio station, warehouses and fuel dumps on YORON SHIMA; and airfields - SUKUMA, HIRARA, TANEGA. Ships of this Task Group destroyed a total of 68 mines during the entire period covered by this action report.

PART V-- COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

TACTICS AND OPERATIONS

SUSTAINED OPERATIONS AT SEA.

82. This Task Group operated at sea for 79 continuous days. This was made possible by the excellent replenishment services rendered by Task Group 50.8, by the rugged construction of our ships and machinery, and by the sweat and ingenuity of the thousands of men in the Task Group who fought and labored to keep the ships afloat and in operation.

83. These extended operations at sea have proven beyond a doubt that our Fleet has marvelous ability to keep the seas close to hostile shores. The development of our sea-going Replenishment Task Group permits our Fleet to operate for protracted periods at distances over 1000 miles from our nearest base.

84. However, this extended period at sea took its toll from both ships and men. Our machinery was not designed for such long continuous combat steaming. As a result, there has been an accumulation of repairs that require a long period in port to effect. For the destroyers this approximates an overhaul. The general efficiency of the crews deteriorated under the many days of action and constant tension caused by the ever-threatening Kamikaze attacks which sometimes struck with little or no warning.

85. It is estimated that after the 79 days at sea, 30 days should be allowed to bring ships and men back to the fighting trim necessary for another sustained operation.

86. This long period of replenishment, overhaul, and recreation reduces the fighting efficiency of the crews, so that a period of training is necessary about half way through this time. This, of course, interrupts machinery overhaul and replenishment, but must be accepted for the overall fighting efficiency of the Task Group.

Recommended: That for the maintenance of material and personnel fighting efficiency a 30 day period at sea be followed by 10-12 days at anchor as the optimum at this time.

87. The greatest single asset of the fast carrier is its mobility. Any employment which fails to capitalize on this fact is not utilizing them to their fullest effectiveness. A considerable amount of fast carrier employment during this operation was in such category. They were retained in a fixed area and used for close-in support of OKINAWA. As one wit described it, the Fast Carrier Task Force was a "multi-billion dollar worm on a hook."

(a) In the first place, by such employment we gave the enemy the offensive and placed ourselves on the defensive, which is always an undesirable situation for air power, which is primarily a weapon of offense.

(b) Secondly, fast carriers are a weapon that have tremendous striking power. However, they are very vulnerable, especially against an enemy who is willing to destroy himself in order to inflict damage upon our carriers.

88. In the past we have been successful in obtaining tactical surprise in our fast carrier strikes. The enemy seems to have been completely disorganized by these attacks, and generally has offered no effective counter attack during the first day. On the second day he seems to have been able to gather his forces and

his wits together sufficiently to strike back with varying degrees of success. The longer we remain in the area the less we gain from our initial surprise and the more the enemy can reorganize his counter-attack. Therefore it would appear that the most effective employment of the fast carriers, balancing damage inflicted upon the enemy against own losses, is in lightning-like strikes against the enemy, inflicting maximum damage possible within a two day period, and then a rapid withdrawal from the area, with a renewal of the same tactics later but without a fixed pattern.

89. For continuous operations of a defensive nature in support of amphibious operations it is considered that CVEs should be utilized. Their small size and excellent maneuverability should make them a more difficult target for the Kamikazes. If they are lost, they can be replaced more easily than can the expensive and complex fast carriers.

90. The fast carriers can more effectively support amphibious operations by fast strikes against the source of the enemy's air power. This will serve to disrupt his planned movement of aircraft to the forward airfields and bring about a state of confusion that will prevent effective attacks being launched against our amphibious forces. This plan of employment also gives us the advantage of assuming the offensive against the enemy and does not allow him freedom to plan and execute attacks against us.

Elimination of Battleships from the Fast Carrier Task Groups.

91. The fast battleships which have been included in Task Group 58.3 have limited this Task Group to 26 knots formation speed. For sustained cruising the battleships have been unable to maintain even 26 knots, as demonstrated during this Task Group's dash from Ulithi to the Philippines for the Ormoc Bay Strike in November of 1944. Only one of the three fast battleships was able to maintain the 26 knot speed. All other ships of the Task Group - carriers, cruisers, and destroyers, can readily steam at better than 30 knots, and there have been numerous occasions when 30 knots or more was required for expeditious flight operations. Now that enemy threat of BBs or heavy surface ships no longer exists, it is -

Recommended: That the battleships be eliminated from the Fast Carrier Task Groups so that the maximum speed of these groups can be utilized both for fast run-ins to target areas and for flight operations during conditions of light airs. Assignment of additional CLs and CLAs to each task group would compensate for the loss of the battleship's heavy AA batteries.

Operation of Five or more Carriers in a Task Group.

92. During the recent operations Task Group 58.3 demonstrated the feasibility of operating 5 and 6 carriers in one task group. The advantages of a greater number of carriers per task group are:

- (1) Increase in size of strikes.
- (2) Better coordination of strikes.
- (3) Smaller percentage of fighters required for own CAP.
- (4) Larger number of carriers can be operated in a given area and air space.
- (5) Fewer number of supporting ships (BBs, CLs, DDs) required.
- (6) Better coordination due to fewer task groups.
- (7) Improvement in communications by reduction of number of

task groups.

It is considered feasible to operate up to eight carriers in one task group.

Recommended: That in order to profit from the advantages in operating a larger number of carriers in each task group, the trend be to increase the number of carriers assigned to each task group.

AIR OPERATIONS

INTENSITY of OPERATIONS

93. Probably the best measure of the intensity of the recent operations is in the record of Air Group 83, which operated from the ESSEX, the only carrier of this Task Group which was present throughout the entire operation. CAAG-83 flew a total of 24,853 hours, an average of 10,163 hours per month, which compares with 3,622 hours per month for the highest of previous Air Groups operating from the ESSEX. CAAG-83 had 52 days of combat out of 79 days at sea compared with 61 days of combat out of 139 (not continuous) days at sea (highest previous average).

94. A breakdown of total flight time for the entire period by type of plane and hours per pilot of Air Group 83 shows:

	F6F(N)	F6F	F4U	SE2C	TBM
Total hours	612	10412	8993	2321	2515
Av, per pilot *	76.5	186	163	93	101
Av, of 10					
highest pilots	-----	203	200	110	110

* Based on average pilot complement per squadron.

Arming Plan for Attacks on Naval Forces.

95. For use against heavy combatant ships (BBs or CAs) it is believed that the torpedo is by far most effective weapon. In order to permit the torpedo to do its work of sinking these vessels it is considered that the most effective employment of the dive bomber and VFB is in support of the torpedo attacks. The function of the dive bomber and fighter-bomber is to knock out the enemy AA and permit the VT to make unopposed torpedo runs. The most effective arming for the VB and VFB in accomplishing this task is the GP bomb with instantaneous or .01 second delay fuse. In the attack against the YAMATO it is believed that 1/2 of the VF should have been armed with rockets for use against the enemy DDs. It is extremely difficult for fighter bombers to hit a destroyer. If 1/2 the fighters had been equipped with rockets it is believed that none of the destroyers which screened the YAMATO would have escaped.

Requests for Air Support.

96. The requests for air support were frequently received late at night. An examination of these requests revealed little or no change in the requirement from the preceding day. It is believed that CSA should have been able to deliver his support air needs to the carriers early the previous day. This would permit

proper briefing of pilots and orderly spotting of carrier deck and arming of planes without breaking out the crews in the middle of the night.

97. A frequent complaint of the pilots on support air missions was the long delay in assigning targets. Frequently the planes would report on station and be ordered to orbit and wait. A few minutes before the scheduled departure time for return to base the CSA would assign the target. Time did not permit pilots to find the targets on the chart, proceed to the area, check the location, and then deliver an effective attack. This caused the flight to be late in returning with a consequent disruption of the Task Group operating schedule, which in turn caused succeeding flights to be late on arrival. On several occasions, near the end of the period on station, flights were assigned a general area in which to look for targets of opportunity. Again the time allowed was not adequate, and either the bombs were hurriedly dropped or else the flight was late in returning. On one occasion a flight was ordered to jettison their bombs at sea in spite of the large enemy-held portion of OKINAWA that existed as a target. Soon after this, a jettisoning zone on OKINAWA was established at the suggestion of the Task Force Commander.

Recommended: That in future Support Air missions the pilots be given their target assignment sufficiently early to permit a well planned attack and return to carrier on schedule. It should also be standard procedure to set up a jettisoning zone deep in enemy territory so that bombs jettisoned would kill Japs instead of fish.

98. Pilots ordered to report to CSA for Target CAP on several occasions reported that after checking in with CSA they were not given adequate directions to fly an effective combat air patrol. In some cases they were not assigned any altitude for station.

PLANNING OF SUPPORT MISSIONS

99. It is presumed that the frequent long delays in assigning targets to the Support Missions were probably the result of CnSCU's desire to have a striking force on station and ready at hand to meet any requests from the ground forces for quick close-up support. However, the fact is that throughout the many Support Missions flown by our planes, only one such call was apparently made. A very large proportion of the Supports were directed, apparently as last-minute resorts, to bomb villages and towns, although the planes were not loaded with incendiaries. It is believed that far more effective utilization of our forces would have resulted from: (1) Reduction by 1/2 or 2/3 of the number of Support Missions kept "on call" in the air; (2) use of a planned incendiary program against the towns or villages with properly loaded planes.

Jap Degassing or Self-sealing of Grounded Planes.

100. The increasingly smaller proportion of fires started by strafing of grounded planes since the First TOKYO Strikes in February leads to the conclusion that the Japs are usually degassing all planes except those standing-by for immediate operations. The possibility also exists that self-sealing tanks may be far more widely used now, but the fact that air-borne enemy planes continue to burn readily when hit by 50 caliber m.g. fire tends to refute this contention. It was found, however, that better-than-average results in burning grounded planes, particularly revetted ones, was obtained by the VF of Air Group 84 which were

equipped with 20 mm guns. It is believed that large-scale, positive destruction of revetted and dispersed planes will not be reached until the 20 mm gun is in general Fleet use on the fighters.

Composition of VF and VFB Squadrons.

101. The ESSEX had a mixed complement of F6F and F4U fighters. This caused considerable reduction in operating efficiency and maintenance.

Recommended: That carrier air groups be trained and equipped with either all F6F or all F4U fighters.

Napalm Fire Bombs.

102. Following the unsatisfactory early results obtained from the use of Napalm Fire Bombs, the RANDOLPH experimented and eventually obtained excellent results by using wing tanks. Attention is invited to the report of these results contained in Enclosure (B).

Photography for Target Reconnaissance.

103. Photographs taken of the KYUSHU airfields proved to be of immense value for target selection. Pilots returning from the initial fighter sweeps and strikes reported few enemy aircraft could be observed on the fields attacked. Development of photos taken during these attacks revealed literally hundreds of aircraft, mostly in revetments, and in some instances cleverly camouflaged. These photos were used to brief the pilots for further attacks and as a result many revetted aircraft were destroyed. Attacks on well defended enemy fields must be delivered with all despatch possible in order to prevent an alerted A.A. defense from shooting down our planes, or to prevent enemy fighters from adjacent areas from rallying for a counter-attack. This does not permit pilots to orbit the target and look for concealed aircraft. By the use of photos, pilots can know beforehand where to go for the hidden planes.

Recommended: That photos of enemy fields taken by the frequent Army Air Force photo missions over the Empire be provided to the fast carriers for use prior to future attacks on these objectives.

104. Another example of the use of photography in target selection occurred at UNTLN KO, OKINAWA, where a midget-submarine base and MTB base had been previously discovered. The air group assigned this target made several attacks upon visible installations and then reported to the Commander Support Aircraft that no worthwhile targets remained and requested assignment of another target. Later, photo reconnaissance revealed that at least a dozen cleverly camouflaged midget-submarine pens existed. Pilots were carefully briefed on the exact locations and achieved amazing success in destroying many of these installations which in some cases contained midget submarines and MTBs. On several subsequent days photo reconnaissance revealed new targets which were carefully pinpointed and destroyed by the attacking aircraft. None of these successful attacks would have been possible without the excellent photo reconnaissance to assist in briefing the pilots.

Shore Bombardment.

105. Cruisers, battleships, and destroyers of this Task Group carried out

shore bombardments of Minama Daito Jima and Okinawa. Detailed reports are contained in individual ship action reports.

Enemy Planes Destroyed by AA.

106. Throughout the operations, a total of approximately 55 enemy attack planes, either bombers or suiciders, approached within gun range of this Task Group and were taken under fire. It is believed that a total of 43 were definitely shot down.

AA Coordination.

107. The AA coordination plan was very effectively used by this Task Group. All ships have been unanimous in praising its use by this Group. A good analysis of its effectiveness is contained in the U.S.S. ESSEX action report part VIII P. The following are some of the major accomplishments of the plan as used by this Group:

- (1) Prompt warning of enemy attacks direct to gunnery stations on all ships.
- (2) Aiding pick up of contacts by giving solutions obtained from tracking ships.
- (3) Preventing firing on friendly planes in several instances.
- (4) Close-in CAP and night fighter interceptions from fire control radar data passed to FDO.
- (5) Excellent flow of tactical information enabling the OTC to more effectively maneuver the Task Group.

108. The AA coordination plan can only reach its maximum effectiveness with (1) IFF on fire control radar equipment, (2) An overhead search radar, and (3) A close-in search radar, which is urgent.

AA training.

109. Sleeve and TDD drone practices were held on replenishment days and enroute to and retiring from the operation. It is believed that sleeve practices are valuable as training although high-speed targets would be even better.

Recommended: That maneuvering towed glider targets, rocket targets, and longer range control of TDD drones be developed to the point where they can be successfully employed by ships in the forward areas. A practical target for radar controlled firing is also needed. If possible, large drones should be provided at sea in the forward area.

Performance of Material.

110. Material in general did the job it was designed to do. However it is felt that the MK I computer is already obsolete, especially against high-speed radically maneuvering targets such as suicide divers and Baka bombs. The lack of new equipment was keenly felt.

AIR SEA RESCUE

General.

111. Outstanding performance by all units resulted in the rescue of 81% of all the downed airmen who it is believed had a good possibility of surviving a parachute jump, crash, or water landing. The morale of both pilots and air-crewmembers continues to reflect the tremendous lift provided by such achievements. The outstanding rescues of 2 pilots from KAGOSHIMA Bay, and of a pilot and his gunner from deep within the Inland Sea (described above in paragraphs 35 and 67), on 29 March and 14 May respectively, not only demonstrated again the courage and skill of the OS2U pilots, but also have been the subject of continued favorable comment by aviators of the Group since their occurrence. Credit should again be reflected on the pilots of the ASTORIA, whose planes performed both of these noteworthy exploits.

Rescues by OS2Us.

112. In all, the OS2Us were dispatched on 15 rescue missions, and recovered a total of 20 downed airmen. On 2 occasions the seaplane's engine failed to start after picking up the survivors. The parent cruiser and escorting destroyers were dispatched to the scene in one instance, but the OS2U pilot finally succeeded in starting his engine, and returned safely to base. In the other case a destroyer was rushed to the scene and succeeded in rescuing both the original survivor and the pilot of the stalled plane, after which the plane was destroyed by gunfire.

Rescues by Submarines.

113. Excellent services were rendered by the submarines, 3 of which (SEA DEVIL, TENCH, and BOWFIN) recovered a total of 7 downed airmen.

Rescues by Dumbos.

114. Fine cooperation was also received from the Dumbos furnished by CTU 51.10, whose services were offered whenever practicable. A total of 13 aviators were rescued by the Dumbos. In general, Dumbo services were requested only when the distances were too great for the OS2Us, as it is considered that use of seaplanes from the Task Group afforded better control of the rescue operations and subsequent disposition of survivors by the Task Group Commander. A detailed listing of Air Sea Rescue operations will be found in Enclosure (A).

COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER.

General.

115. This operation, the longest and most strenuous of the war thus far, gave the Combat Information Center more opportunities to prove its ability than any previous operation.

116. An idea of the enemy strength encountered during the operation may be obtained from the following statistics:

Total day raids plotted during operation	183
Total night " " " "	174
Total all " " " "	357

(Above figures do not include numerous friendlies showing bogey.)

117. The most strenuous period of operation for CIC was from 2100 on 17 March to 2400 on 19 March, during which time 44 night and 42 day raids were picked up, for a total of 86 raids in 51 hours. During this time there was only 15 hours and 46 minutes during which enemy planes were not reported.

RADARS

118. The expeditious and efficient carrying out of group Fighter Direction duties in 58.3 was handicapped by the condition of the flagship's (USS ESSEX) radars. Due to the extended period she has foregone yard work all ship's radars, in particular the SC and SK, have operated at a fraction of efficiency. As a result of the near miss experienced by the ESSEX on 11 April the SC radar antenna was lost and the set put out of commission for the balance of the operation. The SK with its inherent 90 degree blind spot (due to location of antenna just out-board of stack) only operated at about 35% efficiency but was the only radar available for early warning. The ship's SM radar suffering likewise from long usage without ample overhaul was most unreliable in determining altitude, and was a total loss in determining friendly from bogey contacts.

119. As a result, the ESSEX depended almost entirely on radar information passed to the flagship from other units in the group. The cooperation and information obtained from ships in the Group were excellent. The outstanding units, in addition to the carriers, were the WILKES-BARRE and the SPRINGFIELD.

120. During the operation numerous high-flying snoopers were encountered (see Tactics below). The inability of present radar sets to pick up and consistently track with any amount of accuracy these snoopers flying between 25 and 35 thousand feet is exceedingly serious. On one occasion the presence of a high flyer was determined only by the window dropped, which remained in the vicinity for 45 minutes. This was the first time this Group had encountered window during day light.

121. As a result of this shortcoming TG 58.3 experimented on tracking one division of CAP at Angels 1 out to 30 miles, ascending at this point to Angels 25. The following comments were received from ships in company on this experiment:

ALABAMA - "Information normal up to Angels 25 with usual fades."

SPRINGFIELD - "Usual fades up to Angels 15, good results to Angels 20, unreliable above that."

WILKES-BARRE - "Performance better than usual at medium Angels. Information above Angels 20 unreliable."

MONTEREY - "Information poor on SP up to Angels 15. Between Angels 15 and 21 information good."

RANDOLPH - "Average to good results at all altitudes on SK and SC radars."

BATAAN - "Information and Angel determination erratic up to Angels 15. Above 15 consistent through 25."

The second run was started with the division at Angels 25, range 30 miles. They proceeded out to 80 miles at Angels 25 and returned at Angels 30.

WASHINGTON reported, "On run-in had track from 45 to 40 miles. At

no other time could the division be picked up."

ESSEX - "Had fair information (considering condition of radars) from 50 miles in to 13 miles."

SPRINGFIELD - "Spotty track on outbound leg. Had one plot on inbound leg at 75 miles."

WILKES-BARRE - "Two plots only at distance 26 and 22 miles."

MONTEREY - "Tracked to 47 miles, lost there on both SP and SK and never definitely established contact again."

RANDOLPH - "No track out between 40 and 80 miles. Good track in from 62 miles to 12 miles with only 2 fades of 6-8 miles each."

PASADENA - "Only one contact at 75 miles."

IFF

122. There is a need for interrogation equipment on Fire Control radars. Such equipment would be especially valuable when high-flyers are in the area. Under present conditions, it being impossible to track them on approaching the force, the Fire Control radars often have no time to be coached on a definite bogey contact.

Atmospherics.

123. On 16 and 17 May while operating just east of Okinawa unusual atmospheric conditions persisted which played havoc with radar information. During this time land was picked up at 275 miles and surface contacts at 80, whereas the Radar Picket Line 30 miles away was in a fade. During this same period aircraft were picked up by one of the guard ships at 375 miles and "lights only" at 400 miles. This was during one of the B-29 raids on KYUSHU.

RADIO

124. VHF communications on this operation were the best that have been experienced. This was due primarily to the use of individual Task Group CAP and Strike channels. The use of HF channel 3000 gave excellent inter-task group communications and was superior to 2096 which was used during the first part of the operation but which was too crowded with beach traffic from Okinawa.

125. MAN proved unsatisfactory for general inter-group work due to its unreliability beyond 30 to 35 miles.

126. Feed-over of the Task Group MAN 35.6 mc. into the Force. MAN 37.6 mc is still the cause of many repeats. Use of this same equipment by other task groups on adjacent frequencies is becoming increasingly noticeable. Communications were complicated not only by this feed-over but also by poor radio discipline of several amphibious groups using this frequency, including many extraneous transmissions and even music and baseball scores.

127. The location of the antennae may be the cause of many of the feed-overs of VHF channels experienced in many CICs. It is believed that a careful survey should be made in order to locate all antennae in the best possible spots to eliminate the feed-overs and directional feature which are now being experienced.

128. Numerous instances were noticed of VHF channels being completely blocked by a shorted circuit or microphone throwing a continuous carrier wave on the air.

Logistic Uses.

129. During this operation for the first time extensive use was made of VHF for the transmission of logistic requirements.

Atmospherics.

130. Radio reception was affected by the atmospheric conditions referred to above. TBS and VHF transmissions were heard from Task Groups over 100 miles away.

TACTICS

131. The enemy is becoming increasingly shrewd in his method of attack. With the exception of the raids on 21 March and 6 April which were picked up at medium altitude, detection of enemy contacts was most difficult. Extremely high-flying reconnaissance planes at 25,000 to 35,000 feet were used successfully. The meager information on these high flyers once they have been picked up, generally between twenty to thirty miles, leaves much to be desired. As a result only approximately one quarter of these search planes was successfully intercepted.

132. Apparently the enemy has learned from experience and from his own use of radar that the chances of a large bombing group successfully approaching the Force without long-range interception are small. Consequently he is now showing a tendency to send in several singles or two-three plane raids at the same time on different bearings. Such multiple single attacks were hard to intercept especially under the weather conditions generally experienced, low ceiling, poor visibility. Other elements that hindered the interception of this and other raids were: (1) radar screen still cluttered with friendlies; (2) lack of immediate positive altitude determination - especially on high flyers; (3) lack of clear radio channels.

MATERIAL

133. The shipboard VHF equipment (BC639/640) presently installed in the ESSEX and BATAAN is the only equipment of that type presently installed in the fast carriers. While this equipment has functioned satisfactorily, it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain spare parts, crystals, etc. It is recommended that ESSEX and BATAAN be furnished with their full allowance of the TDQ-RCK radios as soon as practicable.

FIGHTER DIRECTION

134. It is felt that no useful purpose would be served by inclusion here of a complete chronological summary of CIC operations. The following paragraphs summarize the lessons learned throughout the cruise:

(a) We learned through the sad experience of the damaging of the BUNKER HILL that the Japs can or rather did in this particular instance come in fully undetected by any radar in the Task Group. The first warning at 1009 came from a screening vessel (USS AULT) that bandits had been visually sighted overhead and within a minute two Kamikazes had crashed onto the BUNKER HILL. A

third was knocked down by ships' gunfire. The Task Group at the time was in a victor formation with AA batteries in condition 1E.

(b) The last report of any bogeys previous to the AULT's had been one from Task Group 58.4 at 0955 in which they reported their CAP splashing one JILL bearing 090° - 70 miles from Task Group 58.3.

(c) It is believed that the planes that attacked the BUNKER HILL came in very low and upon sighting the Group climbed rapidly into the clouds that were very prevalent over the Force and then proceeded to close rapidly. On this, and on other occasions, once the bandits got over the Force and in the clouds, it proved almost impossible to pick them up by radar and distinguish them from any friendlies that were orbiting overhead because of the characteristics of our identification equipment. This brings out again the importance of the lookouts not only being alert but also adept in recognition.

PHOTOGRAPHY.

135. An unusually heavy photographic schedule was assigned this group at the beginning of this operation. However, the assignments during the latter part of the operation required little photography other than that for damage assessment purposes. Due to the excellent cooperation of photographic pilots and photographic laboratory personnel above-average results were secured on all photographic missions.

136. On 18 March, excellent and complete coverage was secured of all the major airfields of central KYUSHU that were assigned. Three reported locations of minor airfields were photographed, confirming the location of two of them and providing negative information in the third case.

137. On 19 March, complete and above-average coverage was secured of the Japanese Fleet units at KURE in spite of intense anti-aircraft fire.

138. Trimetrogon coverage of the eastern half of southern KYUSHU was good, but only about 60% completed due to adverse weather conditions and cloud cover.

139. Excellent and complete low-oblique beach coverage of the east coast of central KYUSHU was obtained in both black and white and color photography.

140. On love minus 8 day excellent and complete low-oblique beach coverage of the assigned areas in OKINAWA and adjacent eastern islands was obtained. Trimetrogon mapping coverage of southern OKINAWA was only about 75% completed due to low ceiling and the mechanical failure of two cameras.

141. The southern third of AMAMI O-SHIMA and all of KIKAI SHIMA were mapped with excellent results.

142. Excellent vertical coverage of YOKOATE was obtained. The reported airfield on this island was proved to be non-existent. Complete coverage of TAKARA proved the reported airfield to be only a very poor emergency landing strip.

143. All photo pilots on the CVs and CVLs, as well as the photo reconnaissance unit, carried out their assignments in a very satisfactory manner. During the period covered by this report only one photo pilot was lost, the plane being shot down by anti-aircraft fire over OKINAWA.

144. The supply of photographs and photo interpretation reports from

Interpron TWO, GUM, was much more complete, and much faster, than during any previous operation. Much needless duplication of photography could be prevented, however, by a closer coordination of photographic assignments and a better dissemination of photographs between the task groups. Some exchanging of selected sets between the various groups was done. In each case the exchange photographs were helpful as basic intelligence material until the arrival of more complete information.

LOGISTICS.

General.

145. The logistic services rendered to this Task Group at sea by CTG 50.8 were in every way excellent. Of special interest is the success of the ammunition and stores transfers at sea. Many ships have expressed a preference for restocking at sea rather than in port, due to the ease of the operation and the faster transfer rates which are realized.

Fueling.

146. At all times first priority was given to fueling. Supplies of fuel oil and aviation gasoline were plentiful and efficiently dispensed, but the supply of aviation lube oil was not always sufficient for full replenishment.

Other Services.

147. In addition to their primary mission the tankers performed a number of other services such as giving fresh, frozen, and dry provisions and stores to the destroyers; carrying airplane drop tanks for the carriers; delivering and collecting U.S. mail; receiving empty ammunition containers; and delivering replacement personnel and "urgently needed" items of freight. The efficiency of the replenishment operation by the Logistics Group was very commendable.

Ammunition.

148. There was a shortage of certain fuses and depth charges but in general the service was very good. Some of the AEs were slow in transferring ammunition at their first replenishment but they soon caught on. The transfer of ammunition to carriers was at the rate of approximately 30 tons per hour, which under good conditions can be increased to 35 tons per hour.

Recommended: That the personnel complement of the AEs be increased to permit faster "breakout" service.

149. On several occasions the individual AEs were found low or completely lacking on a number of items of ammunition, thereby requiring the combatant ships to go alongside two or more AEs to complete their requirements.

Recommended: That only AEs with stocks of all commonly used items be retained in the forward replenishment areas.

Stores.

150. The procurement at sea of "urgently needed" materials is of the highest importance. Many items, which because of their critical nature are not regularly available or available only in limited quantities in the forward area,

and other items, for which the rate of expenditure has been especially unpredictable and severe, are so essential to the operation of the ships that their lack can affect seriously the military efficiency of the entire Task Group. These items are for the most part aviation material, ordnance material, electronic material, and certain ships spare parts.

151. The Task Group's "urgent" requirements were transmitted to CTG 50.8 who out of a multitude of items requested (ranging from airplane engines to nuts and bolts) fulfilled from his own ships on the spot approximately 1/3 of the requests and attempted procurement of the remainder at his ports of replenishment. Many ships in the replenishment group, especially the CVEs, willingly gave up their own stocks to help the Task Group.

Recommended: That wherever possible the CVEs' allowance of aviation material be increased.

152. Stocking of radio and vacuum tubes by one of the supply ships proved most valuable, and it is considered that this practice should be continued if at all practicable.

153. To date, approximately 10% of this "urgently needed" freight has been received from GUAM. The Naval Supply Depot Guam is to be congratulated on its efficient follow-up system and on keeping the fleet informed as to what procurement action has been taken.

Recommended: That a Fleet Service Unit be established at GUAM to handle all the "urgent" carrier task group needs and to expedite delivery.

154. There were not sufficient F4U drop tanks available to meet the Task Group needs.

Recommended: That steps be taken to correct this situation.

Provisions.

155. For operations over 45 days in duration it is mandatory that provisions be delivered at sea for destroyers and very desirable for the other ships of the group. The use of an AF loaded in the U.S. is especially desirable. Other than mail, probably the greatest morale aid was for the men to get apples and oranges. Each ship was routed at least twice alongside the ALDEBARAN (AF). In order to obtain the maximum amount of provisions it was found to be more efficient to leave a battleship alongside a number of hours and have it function afterward as an issue ship to the destroyers. The U.S.S. MERCURY was able to take a heavy ship on the port side and a destroyer on the starboard side while the ALDEBARAN was able to take a heavy on both sides.

Mail.

156. On the whole, considering the length of the operation and the uncertainty as to the future movements of the Task Group, it is considered that the delivery of Air Mail and First Class Mail was generally satisfactory. However it is believed that had mail of other classes been delivered, the boost to morale would have outweighed greatly any adverse considerations.

Recommended: That provision be made for delivery at sea of mail of all classes, especially during protracted operations.

Fleet Personnel Replacement.

157. During replenishment rendezvous at sea with units of Service Squadron SIX, officers brought out drafts of general service ratings from ULITHI as fleet replacements. These men were made available by Commander Service Squadron SIX (CTG 50.8) for assignment by Commander Task Group 58.3, and were assigned by him to the ships of various types under his command. Principal employment was replacement of battle casualties occurring throughout this extended operation, and secondarily to fill vacancies and shortages generally. A small residue of men not assigned during the cruise were transferred on arrival in port for allocation to fleet units by Commander Service Squadron TEN's Fleet Personnel Distribution Unit. The greatest need was for non-rated men, whereas rated personnel were frequently a drug on the market.

Replacement Planes and Pilots.

158. A very marked improvement was noted in the quality of both planes and pilots. With very few exceptions all planes received were new and in good operating condition. Also the TBM-3E with the Ash gear and Mk-8 shackle is a great improvement over the TBM-3.

159. In all cases the replacement pilots have fitted in with the squadrons in a very satisfactory manner. The only point which might require careful attention is the assignment of relatively senior aviators with little or no aviation experience as leaders of VF combat teams. It is often difficult to fit them in as division leaders when there are many juniors who have much more experience.

160. On 7 April a Marine replacement unit of 4 VF recently received aboard the ESSEX was launched as one of the Communication Relay Teams during the tracking of the Japanese Fleet. The division became completely lost and eventually landed in the water when fuel was exhausted. Extensive searches finally recovered 3 of the pilots on the second day following, far from their projected track. Inexperience is considered the underlying cause of the loss. The pilots' navigation was carefully checked before takeoff, but excellent navigating could not off-set difficulties into which lack of experience lead them. Direct causes of their trouble were: (1) keeping station at 20,000 instead of 10,000 feet, and failure to compensate for the high velocity winds at the upper altitude; (2) pilots' inability to read YE signal at any time (believed probably due to distance); and (3) the fact that the lost planes were never identified on any radar screen of this Task Group at any time.

INTELLIGENCE

161. The length and nature of the recent operation presented intelligence problems differing widely from any previously encountered. Pre-attack briefing on specific targets was largely limited to the KYUSHU Strikes, the one other notable exception being the attacks on the UNTEN KO midget-submarine base described above. In the direct support phase at OKINAWA, CASCU specified the number and loading of planes in advance but targets were not designated until planes were on station.

162. While operating against KIKAI, TOKUNO, and AMAMI attempts were made to maintain a damage assessment chart of the target areas, but the effort proved

of little value, primarily for two reasons: (1) the targets generally did not lend themselves readily to damage assessment, and the multitude of pilot reports received were frequently contradictory and misleading: (2) owing to the irregularity of operations in the area, complete, daily photographic coverage was not feasible for the individual task group. Attempts were made to interchange photographs between the task groups, and while this proved helpful, it was certainly not the final answer.

163. One of the difficulties lay in the fact that from the Fleet and Task Force points of view the primary targets were aircraft in the air, aircraft on the ground, neutralization of airfields, and shipping. The major effort was accordingly devoted to these objectives, and any other targets were definitely secondary considerations. Very often neither shipping nor aircraft targets were presented, and the pilots had to resort to targets of opportunity. Attempts to differentiate and assign priorities on such targets of opportunity did not prove practicable.

164. Centralized, regular photographic coverage and rapid dissemination of the resulting prints would possibly have helped. It is recognized that this would have placed a heavy load on the Force Flagship, but there seems no other way to achieve the desired results. Whether the additional effort expended would have been justified by greater damage to a very thin target area is a question to be decided in higher echelons.

Flak Intelligence.

165. Flak Intelligence officers were severely handicapped during these operations by the general lack of Flak Intelligence material available prior to departure, and the negligible amount of current target data received while at sea. However, it is believed that the type of Flak Intelligence maps received upon arrival at LEYTE, and the recently instituted system of dissemination of latest information by dispatch represent excellent steps toward the solution of this problem.

GENERAL

166. It has been noted that the recent trend in awarding engagement stars has been to make the star virtually the equivalent of a campaign rather than an engagement award. It is recognized that on comparatively short operations involving a limited number of actions such a policy may well be dictated by a desire to avoid issuing too many awards. However, it is believed that the star should signify an actual engagement with the enemy rather than simply being present during a campaign and that one star for an entire period does not constitute adequate recognition of actual participation in combat with the enemy. It is accordingly recommended that each of the following five actions be designated as meriting the award of a star to be worn on the Pacific-Asiatic Campaign Ribbon as provided by Navy Department General Orders Nos. 194 of 4 June 1943, and 207 of 7 February 1944.

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. FIRST KYUSHU-INLAND SEA STRIKES | 18-19 March 1945 |
| 2. SECOND KYUSHU STRIKES | 29 March 1945 |
| 3. BATTLE OF THE EAST CHINA SEA | 7 April 1945 |
| 4. THIRD KYUSHU STRIKES | 13-14 May 1945 |
| 5. Direct Support of OKINAWA Occupation | 23-28 March 1945 |
| | 30 March-6 April 1945 |
| | 8 April-12 May 1945 |
| | 15-28 May 1945 |

167. It is further recommended that the announcement of the above awards be made as expeditiously as possible to permit prompt public recognition of the parts played by personnel returning to the United States from the active areas.

Fredrick C. Sherman

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COMMANDER TASK GROUP FIFTY-EIGHT POINT THREE

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AIR - SEA RESCUE OPERATIONS

ENCLOSURE (A)

No.	Date	Ship	Type	Mission	Rescue Unit	Personnel Rescued		Remarks
						Yes	No	
	March							
1	14	Bunker Hill	VT	Exercises	None		*3	Wings broke off in 50° dive.
2	14	Essex	VT	Exercises	USS WEEKS	2		Water landing in formation
3	15	Bunker Hill	VMF	CAP	USS WEEKS	1		Crashed on down wind leg of approach.
4	16	Bunker Hill	VMF	CAP	USS WALDRON	1		Crashed immediately after takeoff
5	18	Bunker Hill	VMF	Sweep #1	OS2U USS NEW JERSEY	1		Down off Miyazaki
6	18	Essex	VBF	Sweep #3	Rescue Sub		1	Seen in Liferaft off Tomitaka
7	18	Essex	VBF	Strike "A"	USS WALDRON	1		Ran out of gas 30 yards astern.
8	18	Essex	VT	Strike "A"	USS BOWFIN	2		Hit by AA over Kure
9	18	Essex	VB	Strike "A"	None		*2	Wing shot off by AA over Kure
10	18	Essex	VB	Strike "A"	None		*2	Hit by AA at Kure - crashed in flames
11	18	Essex	VB	Strike "A"	None		2	Believed to have made water landing south of Kure
12	18	Essex	VMF	Sweep #1	Rescue Sub		*1	Last seen burning off Tomitaka
13	18	Essex	VMF	Sweep #1	Rescue Sub		1	Possibly hit by Zeke near Tomitaka
14	18	Essex	VT	Strike "A"	None		*2	Shot down over Nittagahara - exploded on impact.
15	18	Essex	VF	Sweep #1	USS WALDRON	1		Water landing in formation.
16	23	Cabot	VT	Strike "B"	USS WALDRON	3		All in good condition
17	24	Bunker Hill	VF	Strike "A"	VOS - USS ASTORIA		*1	CAG84. Dead on arrival of OS2U.

(1)

AIR - SEA RESCUE OPERATIONS

No.	Date	Ship	Type	Mission	Rescue Unit	Personnel Rescued		Remarks
						Yes	No	
	March							
18	24	Bataan	VT	Strike "A"	VOS-WILKES-BARRE	2		Both in good condition?
19	24	Bunker Hill	VF	Combat	VOS-USS SPRING'LD	1		Condition good.
20	24	Bunker Hill	VB	Combat	VOS-USS ASTORIA	2		Condition good but tired.
21	24	Hancock	VF	Combat	HMS WHELP	1		Rescued 70 miles W. of Okinawa
22	24	Hancock	VF	Combat	USS MCGOWAN	1		Down within 10 miles of TG58.4.
23	26	Hancock	VF	Search #1	USS WALDRON	1		Crashed after launching.
24	27	Essex	VF	TCAP #6	VOS-USS WASH'TON	1		Hit by light AA over Okinawa
25	28	Essex	VF	- - - -	USS CHAUNCEY	1		Plane blew off fan-tail
26	28	Essex	VF	- - - -	USS CHAUNCEY	1		Plane skidded off port bow
27	29	Bunker Hill	2VB 2VT 1VT	Strike	VOS USS WILKES-BARRE -USS ENGLISH	2 3	*8	Five planes lost due to mid-air collision enroute to Okinawa Made screen and ditched.
28	29	Hancock	VF	Strike	VOS-USS ASTORIA	1		Picked up in Kagoshima Wan
29	29	Hancock	VB	Strike	VOS USS ASTORIA	1	*1	Picked up in Kagoshima Wan
30	29	Hancock	VF	Rescue Escort	VOS USS ASTORIA		*1	Shot down over Kagoshima Wan, no rescue possible.
31	29	Hancock	VF	Strike	USS STEMBEL	1		Waterlanding due combat damage
32	29	Essex	VB	Search #1	None		*1	Jumped by 4 Zekes east of Sasebo
33	30	Bunker Hill	VB	- - - -	USS ERBEN	2		Landed within screen
34	31	Essex	2VB	Support "D"	OS2U - TF52	1	*3	Mid-air collision -
		ENCLOSURE (A)		(2)	near Unten Ko	1		combat photo'er missing.

AIR - SEA RESCUE OPERATIONS

No.	Date	Ship	Type	Mission	Rescue Unit	Personnel Rescued		Remarks
						Yes	No	
35	March 31	Essex	VF	TCAP #3	USS ENGLISH	1		Off portside on takeoff.
36	April 1	Essex	VFP	Photo	None			*1 AA hit over Naha
37	1	Essex	VT	H-55 Strike	USS MUSTIN	2		Hit by AA at Kadena
38	1	Hancock	VB	Support	USS COLHOUN	2		Ditched 5 miles E. of Okinawa
39	1	Cabot	VT	Support	Dumbo	3		Landed Okinawa, paddled out to sea
40	2	Essex	VFN	Ferry	USS HALE	1		Flyable Dud made nearby landing
41	3	Essex	VBF	Strike	USS WEEKS	1		Flight deck crash
42	3	Bataan	VF	Strike	Dumbo			*1 Down in Vicinity Kik
43	3	Bataan	VF	CAP	USS AULT	1		Rescued within TG58.3
44	3	Cabot	VF	Strike	Dumbo	1		Landed near Kikai
45	6	Bunker Hill	VF	Sweep #1	USS STEMBEL	1		Ditched within Form.
46	4	Hancock	VB	Strike	USS ENGLISH	2		Ditched within Form.
47	6	Hancock	VF	Sweep #2	None			*1 Downed by AA near Kikai
48	6	Essex	VF	Search #2	Dumbo			1 NE Okinawa seen swimming close ashore.
49	6	Essex	VB	Strike "B"	VOS Mission recalled			2 One person seen to parachute close ashore Kikai
50	6	Bunker Hill	VF	CAP	USS HALE	1		Ditched in Formation
51	7	Hancock	VF	CAP # 2	None			*1 Crashed on takeoff.
52	7	Essex	VB	Shipping Strike	USS TENCH	2		Rescued off GajaShima
53	7	Essex	4VBF	Communication Relay	All out Search USS SEA DEVIL	3	1	All ditched due to aerial navigation error

ENCLOSURE (A)

(3)

AIR - SEA RESCUE OPERATIONS

No.	Date	Ship	Type	Mission	Rescue Unit	Personnel Rescued		Remarks
						Yes	No	
April								
54	7	Bataan	VF	CAP	USS WEEKS	1		Landed in Formation
55	8	Bunker Hill	VF	Search-Shipping Strike	Dumbo	1		Rescued 45 miles SW of Kyushu
56	9	Essex	VBF	CAP #3	USS AULT	1		Out of fuel near base
57	10	Essex	VF	CAP #3	Special Searches		1	Lost in weather 68 miles from TG
58	11	Essex	VF	CAP # 3	None		*1	AA exploded plane near Kikai
59	13	Enterprise	VFN	TNCAP #4	Dumbo		1	Last heard from N. of Okinawa chasing Betty.
60	13	Essex	VF	CAP #4	USS J.S. WEEKS	1		Loss of power 1 mile from base
61	15	Essex	VF	Air Support #1	USS WALDRON	1		Eng.failure shortly after takeoff
62	15	Bunker Hill	VF	Kyushu Sweep	USS ERBEN	1		Picked up within TG
63	16	Essex	VF	Kyushu Sweep	Dumbo	1		Rescued from Kagoshima Bay
64	16	Essex	VF	Kyushu Sweep	None		*1	Crash landed near Kanoya East A/F
65	16	Essex	VF	Kyushu Sweep	Dumbo	1		Landing 12 miles S. of Kyushu
66	16	Essex	VF	CAP #3	USS WALDRON	1		Water landing within formation
67	16	Bataan	VF	CAP #1	USS SPERRY	1		Water landing within formation
68	16	Bunker Hill	VF	CAP #2	USS MCCLELLAND	1		Rescued off Okinawa by R.P.
69	16	Bunker Hill	2VF	Kyushu Sweep	None		*2	AA hit both planes over Kanoya
70	17	Essex	VFN	NCAP	Dumbo	1		Hit by Betty before splashed

ENCLOSURE (A)

(4)

AIR - SEA RESCUE OPERATIONS

ENCLOSURE (A)

No.	Date	Ship	Type	Mission	Rescue Unit	Personnel Rescued		Remarks
						Yes	No	
71	April 17	Bunker Hill	VFN	RAPCAP	None			*1 Exploding Betty caused VF to crash
72	17	Bunker Hill	VB	Support #4	ICI-764, DD685	2		Landed off E. Coast of Okinawa
73	17	Randolph	VF	- - - -	Plane guard DD		1	Tail hook pulled out on landing
74	17	Randolph	VB	Support #3	None		2	Last heard requesting clearance to Yontan
75	17	Essex	VB	Support #2	USS WALDRON	1		*1 Spun in on takeoff
76	18	Essex	VF	CAP #1	Plane guard-CAP #1			*1 Defective Catapult launch
77	18	Essex	VB	Ferry	Plane Guard-CAP #1			*1 No crewman aboard, Waterlanding after wave-off.
78	19	Essex	VB	REDCAP #3	USS SPERRY	1		Eng. failure within Formation
79	21	Randolph	VB	CAP	USS TINGEY	2		Waterlanding in TG
80	21	Essex	VB	Support #1	USS MILLER	2		Eng. Failure in Dis.
81	26	Essex	VB	Support #1	VOS-USS WILKES-BARRE	2		Mid-air collision returning from Okinawa
82	26	Bunker Hill	VF	- - - -	USS TINGEY	1		
83	28	Bunker Hill	VF	TCAP #7	LCS 81	1		Attacked by Zekes near Tori Shima
84	29	Randolph	VFN	Kikai Dusk Bat	USS TINGEY	1		Hit by flak-ditched near ship
85	30	Essex	VF	CAP #1	None			*1 Crashed after dive in Pursuit of Frances from 25000'
86	May 2	Randolph	2VFN	Kikai Dawn CAP Special Searches			2	Kikai-Amami Area
87	3	Randolph	VF	Kikai Pat. #3	Dumbo	1		Downed off Okinawa

AIR - SEA RESCUE OPERATIONS

ENCLOSURE (A)

No.	Date	Ship	Type	Mission	Rescue Unit	Personnel Rescued		Remarks
						Yes	No	
	May							
87	3	Randolph	VF	Kikai Pat.#3	Dumbo	1		Downed off Okinawa
88	3	Bunker Hill	VF	Sweep #3	VOS-USS ASTORIA	1		Ditched 60 miles N. of Disposition
89	3	Bunker Hill	VF	Sweep #3	None		1	Good water landing S. of Tanega Shima
90	4	Randolph	VF	Amami Pat.#5	USS WALKER	1		Water landing near picket line
91	4	Randolph	VF	TCAP	USS LIND	1		Water landing near picket line
92	4	Essex	VBF	CAP #2	Special Search		1	Hit by Zeke 20 miles south of Tokuno Shima
93	5	Randolph	VT	Support #2	USS ERBEN	3		Rescued within TG
94	9	Enterprise	VFN	Dawn CAP	USS ERBEN		*1	Crashed aft. catapult
95	9	Bataan	VF	Tokuno Photo	None		*1	Hit by flak off Tokuno
96	9	Essex	VBF	Kikai-Amami Pat.#6	Planes searched		1	Downed by AA off Kakeroma Shima
97	11	Bataan	VF	TCAP #1	Dumbo	1		Rescued in good condition
98	11	Essex	VF	TCAP #7	USS MILLER	1		Ditched after take-off
99	12	Randolph	VT	Support #5	None		*1	CAG12 shot down behind enemy lines.
100	13	Essex	VF	CAP	USS ERBEN	1		Taxied off catapult
101	13	Essex	VB	Strike "A"	None		*2	C0,VB83 crashed at Saeki, possibly one survivor
102	13	Essex	VB	Strike "B"	None		*2	AA hit plane over Saeki; crashed.
103	13	Monterey	VT	Strike "3"	None		3	possible one survivor; light AA hit over Saeki.
104	14	Randolph	VB	Strike "A"	VOS-USS ASTORIA	2		Rescued from Inland Sea

AIR - SEA RESCUE OPERATIONS

No.	Date	Ship	Type	Mission	Rescue Unit	Personnel Rescued		Remarks
						Yes	No	
	May							
105	14	Bataan	VT	Strike "A"	None		*3	AA hit, crashed in Suo Nada
106	14	Randolph	VF	Sweep	Planes searched		*1	Hit by AA at Sado-hara
107	18	Essex	VT	Strike #4	PBM-Search Plane	3#		Flak off s. Amami
108	18	Essex	VT	Strike #4	None		*3	Exploded over Kakeroma
109	18	Randolph	VF	K-Y Pat. #6	None		*1	Crashed on Tokuno
110	20	Essex	VF	TCAP #3	USS ERBEN	1#		Spun in while in circle.
111	20	Monterey	VF	CAP	USS HICKOX	1		Landed inside screen
112	21	Randolph	2VFN	Dusk TF CAP	2 Specail Searches		1	pilot said he parachuted. Collided in mid-air near TG.
113	23	Essex	VF	Message Drop	USS TINGEY	1		Eng. failure shortly after launch
114	23	Randolph	VT	Minami Strike	VOS-U.S. WASHINGTON	3		Rescued 8 miles off target
115	23	Randolph	VT	Minami Strike	USS ERBEN	3		Ditched off star-board bow

1 aircrewman died on Okinawa after being rescued.
 1 Pilot died on U.S.S. ERBEN after being picked up.
 * No chance of rescue

R-E-C-A-P-I-T-U-L-A-T-I-O-N

	PILOTS	CREW	TOTAL
Rescued	74	28	102
Missing	52	24	76
Total down	126	52	178
Less non-rescueable personnel			52
			126

Rescued successfully 81% of downed airmen who were considered possibly rescueable

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Al6-3/JHF/jwe

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
TASK FORCE FIFTY-EIGHT

S-E-C-R-E-T

SECRET

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

FIRST ENDORSEMENT to:

CTG-58.3/38.3 Secret ltr.
FB2-1/Al6-3/vgm, Serial 6-1498
0069, dated 18 June 1945.

AUG 2-1945

From: Commander Task Force FIFTY-EIGHT (Commander FIRST Carrier Task Force, Pacific).
To : Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.
Via : (1) Commander FIFTH Fleet (Commander CENTRAL PACIFIC Task Forces).
(2) Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas.

Subject: Operations of Task Group 58.3/38.3 in Support of Occupation of OKINAWA, during the period 14 March - 1 June 1945, report of, including the following actions:

1. First KYUSHU-INLAND SEA Strikes, 18-19 March 1945.
2. Second KYUSHU Strikes, 29 March 1945.
3. Battle of EAST CHINA SEA, 7 April 1945.
4. Third KYUSHU Strikes, 13-14 May 1945.
5. Direct Support of OKINAWA Occupation, 23-28 March, 30 March-6 April, 8 April-12 May, 15-28 May 1945.

1. Forwarded.

2. The recommendation that the engagement stars be awarded as specified is strongly concurred in.

3. Except as noted below the comments and recommendations are concurred in:

(a) Elimination of Fast Battleships From Fast Carrier Task Groups - It would be desirable if all ships of the Fast Carrier Task Groups were capable of at least 30 knots speed. The IOWA class battleship can make this speed. The battleships are the best anti-aircraft ships now available. It is probable that there are insufficient CL's and CLAA's available to effect a replacement. There are times when heavy bombardment of areas not near amphibious operations is desirable. In view of the above ComFIRST CarTaskFor does not concur in the recommendation to eliminate battleships from Fast Carrier Task Groups.

(b) Operation of Five (5) or More Carriers in a Task Group - It has been repeatedly advocated that the ideal carrier task group should contain 3 CVs and 1 CVL. This combination gives the optimum number of striking planes. Any greater number of operating carriers within one task group reduces the efficiency of operation by:
(1) Reducing the air space available to an air group.

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Subject: Operations of Task Group 58.3/38.3 in Support of Occupation of OKINAWA, during the period 14 March - 1 June 1945, report of.

- (2) Overloading airborne communication channels.
- (3) Increasing the time into the wind on any given operation thus restricting maneuverability of the task group.
- (4) Less compact formations for AA. defense.

Although five (5) carriers (3 CVs & 2 CVLs) can be operated efficiently together the number of available CVLs will not allow an equal number of similarly constituted task groups.

/s/M. A. MITSCHER,
Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy

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