

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

BOMBER FIGHTING SQUADRON EIGHTY FIVE
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

VBF-85/A16-3

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~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED - OPNAV INST 5500.30
BY: [] DATE: 27 Nov 87

15 June 1945.

From: Commander, Bomber Fighting Squadron EIGHTY-FIVE.
To: Commander, Carrier Air Group EIGHTY-FIVE.
Subject: Comments and Recommendations, following Combat Operations for the Period 24 May 1945 to 13 June 1945.

Reference: (a) PacFlt. Conf. Ltr. 1CL-45.
(b) Aircraft Action Report VP-85 #27 dated 6-8-45, (VBF-85 #25, CVG-85 #20).
(c) Aircraft Action Report VB-85 #25 dated 6-7-45, (VBF-85 #26, CVG-85 #22).
(d) Aircraft Action Report VT-85 #21 dated 6-6-45, (VBF-85 #27, CVG-85 #24).
(e) Aircraft Action Report VB-85 #28 dated 6-9-45, (VBF-85 #28, CVG-85 #26).

Enclosure: (A) Aircraft Action Reports of VBF-85, numbers 22-24, 25-A, 29-31, inclusive.

1. In accordance with reference (a), submitted herewith is enclosure (A).

2. References (b) to (e) inclusive are joint reports and are being forwarded as follows:

- (b) - By Fighting Squadron EIGHTY-FIVE.
- (c) - By Bombing Squadron EIGHTY-FIVE.
- (d) - By Torpedo Squadron EIGHTY-FIVE.
- (e) - By Bombing Squadron EIGHTY-FIVE.

3. During the subject period Carrier Air Group EIGHTY-FIVE was embarked in the U.S.S. SHANGRI-LA (CV-38), attached to FIRST Carrier Task Group 58.4, to 28 May 1945, and thereafter attached to SECOND Carrier Task Group 38.4.

4. Operations - During the subject period the squadron flew a total of 448 sorties comprising the following:

Strikes, Sweeps and Air Support - - - - -	56
Target, Sub and Rescue CAP and Searches - - - - -	164
CAP over own and other groups, and RAPCAP - - - - -	193
Utility and other - - - - -	35
	Total - 448

During the subject period operations in the Okinawa area have been of a routine nature and require no comment. In addition the squadron participated in two strikes against airfields in Southern Kyushu, Japan, on 3 June 1945 and 8 June 1945. On the

ENCLOSURE (B).

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first occasion pilots of this squadron had their initial encounter with real competition. The Japanese were flying aircraft which matched the performance of the F4U in rate and speed of climb and rate of roll, and exceeded it in speed of dive and ability to turn. This may be partially explained by the fact that the F4U's were required to fly 300 miles to the target with two droppable tanks, jettison one, and fight the airplane with one full droppable tank and full main tank of gas, plus full load of ammunition. The opposition, on the other hand, was fighting over his home fields in a clean condition.

This command is very unhappy about the marked differences of opinion of participating pilots in the recognition and identification of enemy aircraft, especially in the newer types as witnessed by ACA-1 report covering this action. Positive identification is necessary in order to evaluate enemy performance as to type. Photography is apparently the only sure means of positively substantiating individual pilot recognition of enemy fighter types.

5. Material - This squadron has experienced an excessive number of emergency landings during this period. These are covered in detail in U.S.S. SHANGRI-LA (CV-38) action report. The 150 gallon universal droppable tank is the only tank available which can be used in this airplane to satisfy flight and catapult requirements. Unfortunately, this tank is made of such cheap material that it rusts inside very rapidly. This rust has contaminated the fuel system in varying degrees and caused the moving parts in some carburetors to bind. With continual use, a dangerous amount of water condenses in this tank from two contributing causes. First, the gas in tank is used at altitude and when plane descends rapidly warm moist air enters the vent and condenses in the comparatively cold tank skin. Second, the tanks of planes in the hangar deck are degassed, permitting moisture to condense in the tank. Corrective measures must be taken to improve this tank. In the meantime a compromise solution between rust and condensation from repeated use, and jettisoning tank on each flight, must be found.

S. B. STRONG.

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ENCLOSURE (D).