

BOMBER FIGHTING SQUADRON EIGHTY FIVE

c/o Fleet Post Office

San Francisco, California

Statement of Lieutenant R. T. SCHAEFFER, (A3)DE, USNR.

I was leading the third division of the returning group of 13 planes, orbiting CV-38 at 1000 feet, when my engine coughed and stopped. I quickly checked my gas gauge (it read 80 gallons) and my tank setting (it was on reserve). I had switched to reserve upon sighting the carrier. These were 0.8K. Fuel pressure was fluctuating between 0 and 16; oil pressure 85, and cylinder head temperature 200°. I put the mixture from auto rich to full rich and turned on the electric fuel pump, and the engine caught again but ran poorly, the fuel pressure still flicking back to 0 every so often.

I nosed over and flew up the starboard side of CV-38, blimping engine, then on passing carrier put wheels and flaps down. The ship commenced a turn into the wind. I circled once at 300 feet, engine still running roughly. Pumping the throttle seemed to help a little so I kept that up when she started quitting. The cylinder head temperature began to climb so I pulled up flaps but left the wheels down. On my second up-wind leg, at about 200 feet, the engine stopped again. I pulled up my wheels, dumped my flaps, checked the shoulder straps, checked the hood locking device, and prepared for a water landing. Just before making contact with the water the engine caught again, pulling the nose up. I hoped she would continue to run, but it stopped completely again, nosed over, and hit a wave, a bit too fast, as the belly seemed to hit before the tail and one of the flaps (starboard) snapped off. I slid to a stop, undid safety strap, and climbed out on port wing.

I am certain that I had enough fuel (had been using 1500 RPM and 28 inches). I had tried my belly tank several times in flight, but was unable to use it, as I couldn't get any suction from it.

R. T. SCHAEFFER.