

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Reclassification  
Authority  
When Filled Out

I. GENERAL

Report No. 1879  
R. S. No. \_\_\_\_\_

3 05231

(a) Unit Reporting VFPB-232 (b) Based on or at Marine Air Base, Ulithi (c) Report No. 60

(d) Take off: Date 16 March 1945 Time (LZT) 0911 King (Zone); Lat. 10° 1' N Long 139° 47' E

(e) Mission Glide bomb Yap Airstrip, Yap Island (f) Time of Return 1240 King (Zone)  
See Narrative, Page 4

II. OWN AIRCRAFT OFFICIALLY COVERED BY THIS REPORT.

TYPE (a)	SQUADRON (b)	NUMBER			BOMBS AND TORPEDOES CARRIED (PER PLANE) (f)	FUZE, SETTING (g)
		TAKING OFF (c)	ENGAGING ENEMY A/C (d)	ATTACKING TARGET (e)		
<u>TBM-3</u>	<u>VFPB-232</u>	<u>12</u>		<u>12</u>	<u>1 - 1000 lb. G.P.</u>	<u>.1 nose .025 tail</u>

III. OTHER U. S. OR ALLIED AIRCRAFT EMPLOYED IN THIS OPERATION.

TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE	TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE
<u>F4U-7A</u>	<u>VFPB-23</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Marine Air Base, Ulithi</u>				

IV. ENEMY AIRCRAFT OBSERVED OR ENGAGED (By Own Aircraft Listed in II Only).

(a) TYPE	(b) NO. OBSERVED	(c) NO. ENGAGING OWN A/C	(d) TIME ENCOUNTERED	(e) LOCATION OF ENCOUNTER	(f) BOMBS, TORPEDOES CARRIED; GUNS OBSERVED	(g) CAMOUFLAGE AND MARKING
<u>None</u>			<u>(ZONE)</u>			
			<u>(ZONE)</u>			
			<u>(ZONE)</u>			

(h) Apparent Enemy Mission(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Did Any Part of \_\_\_\_\_

(i) Encounter(s) Occur in Clouds? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, Describe Clouds \_\_\_\_\_  
(YES OR NO) (BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)

Time of Day and Brilliance \_\_\_\_\_

(j) of Sun or Moon \_\_\_\_\_ (NIGHT, BRIGHT MOON; DAY, OVERCAST; ETC.) (k) Visibility \_\_\_\_\_ (MILES)

V. ENEMY AIRCRAFT DESTROYED OR DAMAGED IN AIR (By Own Aircraft Listed in II Only).

(a) TYPE ENEMY A/C	(b) DESTROYED OR DAMAGED BY:				(c) WHERE HIT, ANGLE	(d) DAMAGE CLAIMED
	TYPE A/C	SQUADRON	PILOT OR GUNNER	GUNS USED		
<u>None</u>						

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VI. LOSS OR DAMAGE, COMBAT OR OPERATIONAL, OF OWN AIRCRAFT (of those listed in II only).

(a) TYPE OWN A/C	(b) SQUADRON	(c) CAUSE: TYPE ENEMY A/C, TYPE GUN, OR OPERATIONAL CAUSE	(d) WHERE HIT; ANGLE (List armor, self-sealing tanks, equipment hit)	(e) EXTENT OF LOSS OR DAMAGE, (Give Bureau serial number of planes destroyed)
1	TBM-3 VMTB-232	*Probably 40 mm A/A	Left wing	Lost; Bureau No. 68526
2	TBM-3 VMTB-232	Blast from ground explosion	Right horizontal stabilizer, Right elevator, Right & left wing	Severe damage; No. 68584
3				See page 5.
4				
5				
6				
7				
8		*or structural failure.		
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				

VII. PERSONNEL CASUALTIES (in aircraft listed in II only; identify with planes listed in VI by Nos. at left).

(a) NO.	(b) SQUADRON	(c) NAME, RANK OR RATING	(d) CAUSE	(e) CONDITION OR STATUS
1	VMTB-232	Crowley, Joseph-2nd Lt.	Structural failure or Enemy A/A caused plane to crash	Missing
		Norcross, Edgar R.-PFC		Missing
		Gillispie, Kenneth D.-PFC		Missing
2	VMTB-232	Johnson, Hoyt C., Jr.-Corp.	Blast from ground explosion	Slightly wounded

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VIII. RANGE, FUEL, AND AMMUNITION DATA FOR PLANES RETURNING

(a) TYPE A/C	(b) MILES OUT	(c) MILES RETURN	(d) AV. HOURS IN AIR	(e) AV. FUEL LOADED	(f) AV. FUEL CONSUMED	(g) TOTAL AMMUNITION EXPENDED				(h) NO. OF PLANES RETURNING
						30	.50	20MM	MM	
TBM-3	100	100	**2.0 ***3.5	326 326	130 226	550	420			11
**8 planes ***3 planes. See Narrative, Page 4.										

IX. ENEMY ANTI-AIRCRAFT ENCOUNTERED (Check one block on each line).

CALIBER	NONE	MEAGER	MODERATE	INTENSE
HEAVY — Time-fused shells, 75mm and over	X			
MEDIUM — Impact-fused shells, 20mm-50mm		X		
LIGHT — Machine gun bullets, 6.5mm-13.2mm		X		

X. COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE, OWN AND ENEMY AIRCRAFT (use check list at left).

SPEED, CLIMB,  
at various altitudes

Not applicable

TURNS  
DIVES  
CEILINGS  
RANGE  
PROTECTION  
ARMAMENT

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EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE

(OMIT THIS SHEET IF NO ATTACK WAS MADE)

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XI. ATTACK ON ENEMY SHIPS OR GROUND OBJECTIVES (By Own Aircraft Listed in II Only).

(a) Target(s) and Location(s) Yap Airstrip, Yap Island (b) Time Over Target(s) 0956 Klag (Zone)  
(FOR SHIPS INCLUDE ALL IN AREA UNDER ATTACK)

(c) Clouds Over Target CAVU  
(BASE IN FEET. TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)

(d) Visibility of Target Clear (e) Visibility 30  
(CLEAR, HAZY, PARTIALLY OBSCURED BY CLOUDS, ETC.) (MILES)

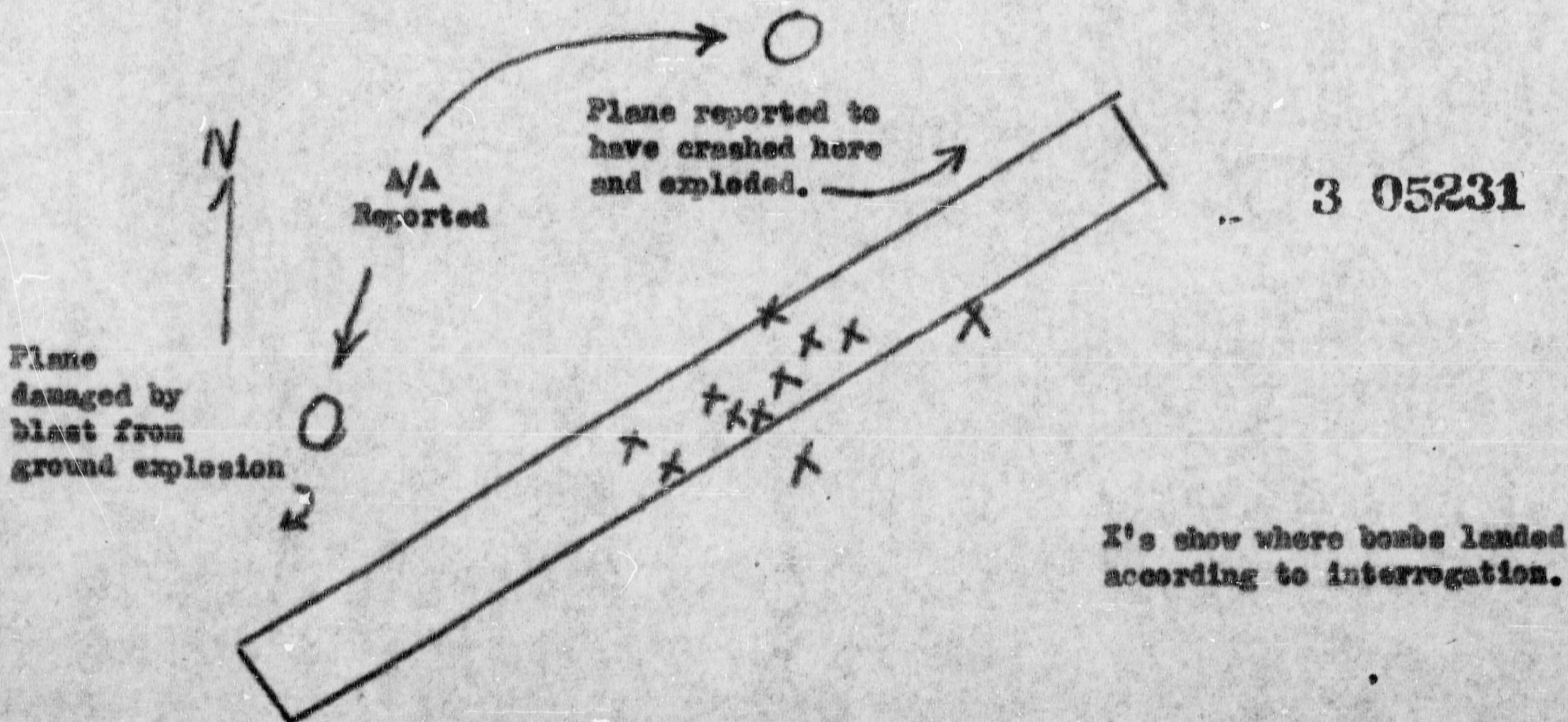
(f) Bombing Tactics: Type Slide Bomb Sight Used None  
(LEVEL, GLIDE OR DIVE) (TYPE)

Bombs Dropped per Run 1 Spacing 0 Altitude of Bomb Release 2000  
(NUMBER) (FEET) (FEET)

(g) Number of Enemy Aircraft Hit on Ground: Destroyed None Probably Destroyed None Damaged None

(h) AIMING POINT	(i) DIMENSIONS OR TONNAGE	(j) NO A/C ATTACKING (k) SQUADRON	(l) BOMBS AND AMMUNITION EXPENDED, EACH AIMING POINT	(m) NO. HITS On Aiming Point	(n) DAMAGE (None, slight, serious, destroyed or sunk)
1 <b>Yap Airstrip</b>	<b>200' x 4650'</b>	<b>12 VMFB-232</b>	<b>12 - 1000 G.P.</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Serious</b>
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

(o) RESULTS: (For all hits claimed on ship targets and for land targets of special interest, draw diagram, top or side view or both, as appropriate, showing type and location of hits. For all targets give location and effect of hits, and identify by numbers above. Use additional sheets if necessary).



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(p) Were Photographs Taken? No Photographs of Damage, When Taken, Should Be Attached By Staple.

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**XII. TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL DATA.** (Narrative and comment. Describe action fully and comment freely, following applicable items in check list at left. Use additional sheets if necessary.)

**ENGAGEMENT WITH ENEMY**

**OWN AIRCRAFT**

- Disposition
- Altitudes
- Speeds
- Approach Tactics
- Use of Cover, Deception
- Angles of Attack and Their Effectiveness
- Distance of Opening Fire
- Defense Tactics and Their Effectiveness

**ENEMY AIRCRAFT**

- Method of Locating, Distance
- Disposition
- Altitudes
- Speeds
- Approach Tactics
- Use of Cover, Deception
- Angles of Attack
- Distance of Opening Fire
- Defensive Tactics

**COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Own Weaknesses
- Enemy Weaknesses
- Offensive Tactics, Own
- " " , Enemy
- Defensive Tactics, Own
- " " , Enemy
- Flexible Gunnery, Own
- Escort Tactics
- Fighter Direction
- Use of Radar
- Night Fighting
- Recognition, Aircraft

**ATTACK**

**OWN TACTICS**

- Method of Locating Target
- Approach to Target
- Altitudes, Speeds
- Approach
- Dive
- Pull-Out
- Dive Angle
- Strafing
- Retirement
- Defensive Tactics
- Use of Jamming

**DEFENSE, ENEMY**

- Evasive Tactics, Ships
- Concealment
- Searchlights
- Night Fighter Tactics
- Use of Jamming

**COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Bombing Tactics
- Torpedo Tactics
- Effectiveness of Bombs, Torpedoes
- Selection of Targets
- Fuzing
- Strafing Tactics
- Defensive Tactics
- Use of Radar
- Reconnaissance
- Photography
- Briefing

**OPERATIONAL**

- Navigation
- Homing
- Rendezvous
- Recognition, Ships
- Communications
- Flight Operations
- Search and Tracking
- Base Operations
- Maintenance

All planes took off from Marine Air Base, Ulithi on 16 March 1945, the PBY-5A (Dumbo) at 0903 King Time and the 12 TBM-3's for the strike at 0911 King Time. Each striking plane carried one 1000 lb. G.P. bomb.

Major Allen L. Feldmeier, USMC was strike leader and led the first division of 6 planes. Captain Carol D. Dalton, USMC led the second division of 6 planes.

The target was Yap Airstrip on Yap Island, a narrow section of which near the center had been reported as operational. Target dimensions were 200 feet by 4650 feet. Weather was CAVU.

The planes approached the target from the southeast at 9000 feet and broke off to the southwest using glides of 35 to 40 degrees, starting at 8500 feet, releasing at 2000 feet and pulling out between 1000 and 1500 feet.

A plane piloted by Second Lieutenant Crowley (031322) USMCR (SSN 9980) was the fourth plane in the second division. After it started its glide for the attack, while between 6000 and 8000 feet, it flipped over and was observed to have lost all or part of the left wing. Gunners in another plane reported that they had seen Lieutenant Crowley's plane cartwheel and spin to the ground near the northeast quarter of the Yap Airstrip where it exploded. No one was seen parachuting from the plane. The crewmen who are missing with Lieutenant Crowley are PFC Edgar Russell Horcross (470313) USMCR (SSN-757) and PFC Kenneth David Gillispie (842203) USMCR (SSN-714).

A plane piloted by Second Lieutenant Samuel J. Griffin, USMCR while pulling out of its glide was between 1000 and 1200 feet near the southwest end of the Yap Airstrip when it was struck by a mass of debris hurled into the air by a ground explosion. The plane was damaged and the radio-gunner, Corporal Hoyt C. Johnson, Jr. (868426) USMCR received a laceration of the left thigh and multiple abrasions of the left leg. The laceration required 2 sutures. It is not known whether the plane was damaged by an exploding bomb or by the explosion of a fuel or ammunition dump hit by strafing. No bombs were reported to have struck the area from which the explosion came. Two other pilots in the second division reported that they felt a strong concussion as they passed over the southwest end of the Yap strip but their planes were not damaged.

12 bombs, including that in the plane which crashed, were expended at the target and an estimated 8 hits were scored on the strip. The planes strafed the target area.

Light anti-aircraft fire was observed from 2 positions along the northwest side of Yap Airstrip. No fire had been observed at the time that Lieutenant Crowley's plane started to crash but it is believed that he might have been hit by 40 or 75 mm fire.

One pilot reported that he saw a Frances on the ground 50 yards south of the center of Yap Airstrip. (Subsequent reconnaissance failed to locate the Frances.)

The Rally Point was 5 miles southwest of Yap at 2000 feet. Major Feldmeier and two other pilots remained in the vicinity of Yap for approximately one and one half hours searching for signs of Lieutenant Crowley and gunners without result. The other planes started at once for their base.

Night TBM's returned to Marine Air Base, Ulithi at 1112 King Time and three TBM's at 1240 King Time. The PBY returned at 1410 King Time.

**XIII. MATERIAL DATA.** (Comment freely on performance or suitability, following check list at left.  
Use additional sheets if necessary).

**ARMAMENT**

- Guns, Gunsights
- Turrets
- Ammunition
- Bombs, Torpedoes
- Bomb Sights
- Bomb Releases

**COMMUNICATIONS**

- Radio, Radar
- Homing Devices
- Visual Signals
- Codes, Ciphers

**RECOGNITION**

- IFF
- Signals
- Battle Lights
- Procedures

**PROTECTION**

- Armor; Points and Angles  
of Fire Needing Further  
Protection
- Leak Proofing

**EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT**

- Parachutes
- Life Belts, Life Rafts
- Safety Belts
- Emergency Kits
- Rations, First Aid

**NAVIGATIONAL EQUIPMENT**

- Compasses
- Driftsights
- Octants
- Automatic Pilots
- Charts
- Field Lighting

**INSTRUMENTS**

- Flight
- Power Plant

**OXYGEN SYSTEM**

**CAMOUFLAGE AND  
DECEPTION DEVICES**

**STRUCTURE**

- Airframe
- Control Surfaces
- Control System
- Dive Flaps
- Landing Gear
- Heating System
- Flight Characteristics  
At Various Loadings

**POWER PLANT**

- Engines
- Engine Accessories
- Propellers
- Lubricating System
- Starters
- Exhaust Dampers

**HYDRAULIC SYSTEM**

**ELECTRICAL SYSTEM**

- Auxiliary Plant
- Lights

**FUEL SYSTEM**

**FLIGHT CLOTHING**

**MAINTENANCE**

**BASE FACILITIES**

- Plane Servicing Equipment
- Personnel Facilities

One TBM-3, Bureau No. 68526, lost all or part of the left wing at the target between 6000 and 8000 feet. This plane had only 59.2 hours of flying prior to the strike on which it crashed. Loss of the wing might have been due to either anti-aircraft fire or structural failure. No anti-aircraft fire was seen at the time that the plane lost its wing.

Another TBM-3, Bureau No. 68584, was damaged by concussion and debris from a ground explosion which tore off the right horizontal stabilizer. The explosion damaged both wings, putting a small hole on the leading edge of each and seriously weakening the main strut of the left wing.

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SIGNATURE

APPROVED BY:

*1st Lt. A. J. Feldner*

RANK AND DUTY

USMC.

SIGNATURE

*Major. C.*

RANK AND DUTY

USMC.

19 March 1945

DATE

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