

# AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT

RESTRICTED  
(Reclassify when filled out)

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
VT-63  
VT-49

## I. GENERAL

(a) Unit Reporting VT-31 and VF-31 (b) Based on or at U.S.S. CABOT at sea (c) Report No. VT-49  
 (d) Take off: Date 26 July 1944 Time (LZT) 1300 (-10K) (Zone); Lat. 8° 30' N Long. 139° 30' E  
 (e) Mission Bomb Yap Town (f) Time of Return 1600(-10K)(Zone)

## 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)		
TBM-1c	VT-31	4	0	4	2 with 12 x 100# fragmentation 2 with 6 incendiary clusters and 6 x 100# G.P.	instantaneous
F6F-3	VF-31	8	0	8	Normal load .50 cal. 4 with 1 x 500# SAP	"

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

TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE	TYPE	SQUADRON	NUMBER	BASE
<b>Other aircraft of T.G. 58.1</b>							

## 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
<b>NONE</b>			(ZONE)			
			(ZONE)			
			(ZONE)			

(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 \_\_\_\_\_ (k) Visibility \_\_\_\_\_  
(NIGHT, BRIGHT MOON; DAY, OVERCAST; ETC.) (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		
<b>NONE</b>						

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(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).

(-10K)

(a) Target(s) and Location(s) 1 x 2500 ton AK, Yap Town buildings  
YAP island. (b) Time Over Target(s) 1400-1500 (Zone)  
(FOR SHIPS INCLUDE ALL IN AREA UNDER ATTACK)

(c) Clouds Over Target Cumulus clouds 2000' .5  
(BASE IN FEET, TYPE AND TENTHS OF COVER)

(d) Visibility of Target Clear (e) Visibility 20 miles  
(CLEAR, HAZY, PARTIALLY OBSCURED BY CLOUDS, ETC.) (MILES)

(f) Bombing Tactics: Type Glide Bomb Sight Used Mk VIII, Mod. 5, illuminated  
(LEVEL, GLIDE OR DIVE) (TYPE)

Bombs Dropped per Run one to 12 Spacing 50', 150 knots Altitude of Bomb Release 2500'-3500'  
(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 Radio Building Yap Town		1 x F6F-3 VF-31	1 x 500# SAP	0	None
2 Buildings, Yap Town		2 x F6F-3 VF-31	2 x 500# SAP	1	Unobserved
3 Warehouse, Yap Town		1 x F6F-3 VF-31	1 x 500# SAP	0	None
4 Building area Yap Town		3 x TBM-1c's VT-31	24 x 100# frags. 8 x 100# G.P. 9 x incendiary clusters	36 in area	Small fires started
5 AK in cove north of Yap Town	2500 tons	1 x TBM-1c VT-31	2 x 100# G.P. 1 x incendiary cluster	3	Fire started
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).

1. Near miss.

2. Unobserved

3. Near miss.

4. Small fires were started in the warehouse district along the southern side of the inlet.

5. A 2500-ton AK, well camouflaged and smoking slightly, was sighted in a cove north of Yap Town. Three bombs were dropped and a small fire started.

(p) Were Photographs Taken? Yes. 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

After take-off, the CABOT flight, led by Lieut. A. Mencin, who also led one division of fighters, rendezvoused in the sector assigned to the CABOT at 2000'. The four VT were led by Lt.(jg) J. B. Russell, while Lieut. C. H. Turner led the other division of fighters. A running rendezvous was made with the planes from the U.S.S. YORKTOWN and U.S.S. HORNET. True course to the target was 330°, speed 130 knots (indicated), climbing to 10,000'. The VT were flying in a four-plane diamond division, with the VT flying close and intermediate normal cover. The entire CABOT flight was behind and slightly below the other two air groups.

Yap Island was approached from the southeast, from which bearing YORKTOWN and HORNET planes immediately went into their attack. CABOT planes proceeded to a point northeast of the island and circled waiting for the target area to clear. When the first attack was completed, Air Group 31 flew south to a point almost opposite Yap Town and then turned to the northwest, crossing to the western side of Yap Island over Gagil-Tomil Island and arriving at a point northwest of Yap Town. Attacks were initiated from this point, push-over being from 10,000'. Lieut. Mencin's division went in first in a strafing run on gun position in the portion of Yap Town south of the inlet. Lieut. Turner's division followed the bombing with a strafing attack on the same positions.

The primary target for the VT were the building areas of Yap Town and a total of 17 fragmentation clusters, eight 100# G.P.'s and 9 incendiary clusters were dropped in this area. After the first run, three of the torpedo planes and one division of fighters joined up east of the island, while the other division of fighters withdrew to the northeast preparatory to making other strafing runs. At the rendezvous, Lt.(jg) D. L. Hornberger reported hung bombs, and two fighters of Lieut. Mencin's division were directed to escort him in another run over the target, while the other two made photographic runs on the target area for damage assessment.

Lt.(jg) Hornberger had noticed a smoking camouflaged ship in a small cove north of Yap Town, and coming in again from the northwest, he dropped two 100# G.P.'s and an incendiary cluster on the ship, causing another fire. His other bombs dropped without damage on the southern portion of Gagil-Tomil Island during his withdrawal.

Lieut. Turner's division, carrying one 500# SAP each, bombed the buildings on the north side of the inlet, strafing at the same time. Their run was made after the VT attack, and was also from northwest to southeast. Releases were between 2500' - 3000'.

On the recovery, all planes were directed to the rendezvous point, with the exception of one TBM, piloted by Lt.(jg) J. B. Russell, who had been ordered to make photographic runs for obliques. After making two runs on Yap Town at 1500' and 500', from south to north and north to south, respectively, Lt. (jg)

XII. Tactical and Operational Data. (continued)

Russell proceeded southwest past the airfield taking photographs as he went. After passing over the southern tip of Yap, Lt. (jg) Russell turned north again, having noticed some apparently undamaged aircraft on the field and wanting to get pictures of them. He had made this run from southwest to northeast and had just passed the northern end of the field at 1600' and was turning toward the sea when his plane was hit with what is believed to be 3" anti-aircraft fire. The entire plane almost immediately burst into flames fore and aft. The cockpit was so filled with smoke and flame that the instrument panel was invisible. Lt. (jg) Russell immediately prepared to abandon ship, but before doing so, he tried to notify his radioman and gunner to jump. The ICS was apparently damaged for although the crew heard Russell, he was unable to get an acknowledgment from them. He remained in his cockpit to give them the maximum time to jump. By this time flames were enveloping his feet and the stick itself so that he was unable to hold it for more than a few seconds at a time, even with gloves. Finally, when the cockpit was completely unendurable, one of the crewmen got through with the word that they were bailing out and Lt. (jg) Russell jumped. All three parachutes were shot at during the descent but landed safely in the water about one mile off the northeast of the southern tip of the island.

Webster, the radioman, was about 40 yards from Russell, while Bennett, the gunner, was about a city block away. Russell had his seat pack life raft, but due to the severe burns on his hands, he was unable to open it. He called to Webster who immediately swam to his side, opened the raft and helped Russell into it. By this time, Russell had gone blind from the smoke and fire. Shore batteries were firing, several of the shells landing close to Webster and Russell. Bennett, in the meantime was swimming in his life jacket, and shortly after Webster and Russell had got into their life raft, another torpedo plane came by and dropped a raft to Bennett. Lieut. Mancin's division of fighters covered the downed pilot and crew until they were forced to depart for base. Meanwhile a rescue call had been sent in and two hours after the parachutes had landed in the water, two OS2U's from the U.S.S. MOBILE arrived at the scene. The rescue submarine had also been notified, had surfaced and was proceeding to the rescue but the MOBILE planes arrived first.

All during this time, Webster and Russell had been trying to paddle out of range of the shore batteries. They had no oars and used their bare hands, Webster directing Russell, who could not see. When the Kingfisher landed, Webster was able to get aboard into the rear cockpit, while Russell crawled up to the forward part of the main pontoon and held onto the strut while the plane taxied out of range of the shore batteries which were by this time firing again. Webster then assisted Russell into the rear cockpit and the plane, after considerable difficulty because of overloading, took off. In the meantime the other Kingfisher had been circling and when the first one was airborne, Russell indicated to the pilot the presence of Bennett, his gunner. The second Kingfisher landed near Bennett and picked him up. Both planes then returned to their base with all passengers safe. All three survivors were burned, Russell worse

XII. Tactical and Operational Data. (continued)

than either of the others.

The remaining planes of the original flight, in the meantime, had returned to base without further incident.