

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
AIR FORCE
PATROL BOMBING SQUADRON 139

ENCLOSURE (A)

CHRONOLOGY

- 6 April Four Harpoons (VPB-139) attacked Kokutan Zaki lighthouse on the northern tip of Shimusu in the first rocket attack by this squadron. Three hits were observed out of a total of 32 expended rockets. Photographs showed slight damage to installations.
- 10 April Four Harpoons attacked Hayaka Gawa Cannery. Photographs show definite hits on buildings, leaving at least three burning. Shortly after leaving the target Lieutenant R. "E" JARNETT noticed an oil leak in his port engine. When 400 miles from base (Attu) he was forced to cut the port engine, and decide whether to proceed to base or to the alternate, Petropavlosk, which was closer. Choosing the former, he proceeded to base without further trouble, landing with one engine.
- 15 April Four Harpoons attacked Tomari Zaki Cannery, scoring a total of six to eight hits on buildings. One of the planes attacked a trawler with machine gun fire, expending 350 rounds of .50 caliber. The trawler attack was disrupted by three fighters, sighted by the first plane leaving the target. The fighters did not press their attack.
- 22 April A PV-2 failed to return from a search of sector five. Outbound the plane had been tracked by radar for

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ENCLOSURE (A)

CHRONOLOGY (Con't)

a distance of 90 miles, after which there was no further contact, either radar, radio, or visual. Further efforts to establish radio contact failed. The pilot and crew missing are:

Lieut. William Duncan SEE, (A1), USNR, 130238.
Ensign Jack Helton HAWLEY, (A1), USNR, 351041.
Ensign Russell Fairfax MILLER, (A1)L, USNR, 407176.
John Pickney CARR, 667 40 60, AMM2c, USNR.
Randolph Carlos KRISTER, 634 74 35, AOM2c, USNR.
Richard Donald CALLECOD, 627 74 18, AMM2c, USNR.

23 & 24 April Special searches were organized in sectors 4, 5, and 6 to look for PV-2 that failed to return from search on 22 April. Only two PBX-5A's were able to take off on the 23rd due to unfavorable weather - they were forced to return early. On the 24th two Harpoons of 139, two Ventures of 131, and four PBX-5A's of Headquarters Squadron carried out special searches in sectors 4 and 5. Results of all searches were negative.

28 April Four Harpoons attacked Minami Zaki radar installations. Eleven of the rockets hit within the target area. Approximately 2,000 rounds of .50 caliber machine gun fire was expended into the targets. Two of the planes were hit by AA, the damage, however, was minor.

29 April Two Harpoons were sent on a special search off the west coast of Shimushu and Paramushiro, with Kokutan

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Zaki as an alternate. Search of the Okhotsk Sea was negative. Ceiling and visibility were such so as to prevent the planes from firing their rockets. This was the first mission of this kind.

10 May

Eight Harpoons attacked radar installations at Ninami Zaki, in two sections of four planes each, at two hour intervals. Both sections were greeted by AA fire before reaching the immediate target area, necessitating a flat attack. The rockets were observed to be heading west-south west, resulting in but a few rocket hits. Close observation, however, was prevented due to intense AA fire. A total of 3,000 rounds of machine gun fire was expended. The first section set one building on fire and personnel were attempting to extinguish it when the section arrived. Five of the eight attacking aircraft were hit by AA causing major damage to three. Two crew members were injured, neither, required hospitalization.

18 May

Two Harpoons were scheduled for a anti-shipping sweep and reconnaissance of the west coast of Shimushu and Paramushiro in the Sea of Okhotsk. The entire target area was closed in by a solid overcast. Shimushu was crossed twice, the Okhotsk Sea was searched by radar, and after further efforts to descent to contact all

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CHRONOLOGY (Con't)

rockets were fired into Hinani Zaki area on radar.

14 May

Two Harpoons on an anti-shipping strike, searched the west coast of Shikoku and northern Parau-shiro and a large area in the Sea of Okhotsk north of Arnido. The search was negative until the two planes were about seven miles northwest of Katakaka Harbor, Shikoku, where one possible Fox Baker type freighter, one possible destroyer or freighter, and one probable trawler were sighted in the harbor. Two armed trawlers were sighted and attacked about two miles west of Kokutan Zaki, Shikoku. One rocket was seen striking near one trawler. Return fire was observed, no hits were scored.

18 May

Two Harpoons attacked Kokutan Zaki under poor visibility conditions. Enemy fighters were known to be airborne. Reconnaissance of Parau-shiro Strait was conducted from the west coast side of Shikoku. Both planes sought cloud cover in the low overcast when the fighters were sighted headed for Kokutan Zaki, and dropped below for the rocket and bomb runs. Each plane carried four rockets and three 250 lb. bombs. Results of the rockets fired and bombs dropped were negative. Hits were scored with .50 caliber machine guns on all trenches near the target. One Harpoon was hit in the starboard chin-gun by a probable 80 mm projectile. The

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ORONOLOGY (Cont'd)

Fighters were lost when the Harpoons took cloud cover after leaving the target area.

19 May

Two Harpoons on an anti-shipping strike searched the Sea of Okhotsk off the west coast of Shimushu and northern Paramushiro with negative results. Koteoka Harbor was closed in. Shortly after turning for the shore - line search, a single enemy fighter was sighted paralleling their course. The fighter was able to close easily and made one run on the trailing Harpoon, to a 1,000 feet at five o'clock where the attack was broken off.

20 May

Two Harpoons on anti-shipping strikes searched the Sea of Okhotsk and conducted reconnaissance of Paramushiro Strait, where three merchant vessels were sighted in Kashirvabara Harbor. Departing from the area both planes fired their rockets at Kokutan Zaki installations on Shimushu. Results were not observed due to extremely poor visibility. The Russian ship Mariupol, grounded on Shimushu to have what appeared to be construction around the forecast.

25 May

Four Harpoons on anti-shipping strike were to search the east and west coasts of Shimushu and Paramushiro, splitting into two sections of two planes each at the target. One section of two planes was delayed on take-

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CHRONOLOGY (Cont'd)

off, the other proceeded on its mission. The first section reaching the target proceeded under restricted visibility to examine the Russian grounded freighter, Mariupol, on which activity had been recently reported. Upon approaching this area one aircraft observed an open fishing boat and attacked with bow guns. Hits were observed in and near the craft and personnel were seen crouching on the deck. The attack was broken due to heavy anti-aircraft fire from the Shimushu shore; however, the pilot proceeded to examine the Mariupol. Rendezvous was made when four fighters were sighted proceeding on a parallel course eastward - they did not close and gradually dropped back, finally turning and disappearing from sight. The second section, then proceeding to the target was contacted and informed of the fighters, anti-aircraft fire, and the state of the weather. Course was then set for base by both sections.

3 June

Two Harpoons went on an anti-shipping sweep of sector 5 and search of the west coast of Paramushiro, Shimushu, which was found to be closed in. Bombs were dropped through the overcast in Kataoka. Because of the cloud cover it was impossible to observe the result of the bomb drops.

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CHRONOLOGY (Gen's)

- 4 June Two Harpoons took off on anti-shipping sweep. Bombs were dropped on Hayaka Cawa in unfavorable weather conditions. Hits were believed to be scored.
- 6 June Two Harpoons were assigned reconnaissance and search of the east coast of Paramushiro. The planes became separated enroute. Lieutenant GEORGEFF sighted an Oscar and immediately altered heading and increasing his speed to 240 knots. The Oscar remained parallel for approximately 7 minutes, then made a flat turn on the Harpoon - no hits were scored. Soon after the Oscar was lost in cloud cover. Lieut. (jg) DANIEL intercepting Shimushu somewhat later was unopposed. He was able to make several runs on Masugawa. Bombs were observed to explode in the target area.
- 8 June Two two-plane sections of Harpoons were scheduled for anti-shipping sweep of sector # and reconnaissance of the east or west coast of Paramushiro, pending weather. Flight Able, led by Lieutenant Mas GREGOR completed search of east coast and dropped bombs on Katoaka through the overcast. Flight Baker, headed by Lieut-Comdr. DAVID received AA damage from an unidentified source between Cape Lopatka and Shimushu - returned because of this.
- 9 June Four Harpoons went out on anti-shipping sweep. Four trawlers in a cove south of Masugawa were bombed

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CHRONOLOGY (Cont'd)

and strafed. During the attacks moderate anti-aircraft fire was received, and as many as 50 parachutes were observed at altitudes between 100 and 600 feet. All planes returned safely, two of which received but minor damage.

10 June

Two two-plane sections of Harpoons completed an anti-shipping sweep of sector 5, searching the east coast of Paramushiro and Shimushu with Maugawa as a secondary target for flight Able and Hayaka Gawa as a secondary target for flight Baker. Off-shore Lieut. TORRY and Lieut.(jg) HEIKKINEN observed a "sugar dog" type vessel. Soon thereafter there were joined by Lieut. BUMPUS and Lieut.(jg) BRADBURY at which time strafing and bombing runs were commenced. Two of the bombs were seen to straddle the vessels - it was left burning and apparently out of control.

17 June

Two flights of two Harpoons each went on an anti-shipping sweep of sector 5, Flight Able searching the Okhotsk Sea and Flight Baker searching the east coast of Paramushiro and Shimushu. Lieutenant ROWELL of Flight Able bombed the Kataoka dock area through the overcast. Flight Baker sighted what appeared to be three Fox Bakers and three trawlers in Paramushiro Strait on radar. Both planes bombed Suribacki by radar.

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- 18 June Two two-plane sections took off on an anti-shipping sweep of sector 5, Flight Able to search the Okhotsk Sea and Flight Baker to search the east coast. Due to unfavorable weather the west coast was not searched. Flight Baker, led by Lieutenant Mac GREGOR completed the search of the east coast and bombed Tomari Zaki.
- 22 June Four Harpoons searched the east coast of Shimushu and the northern portion of Paramushiro. The search was interrupted by three Oscars which were sighted dead ahead, coming out of the sun. Tight 15° turns were executed and after a period of about five minutes the two Harpoons were able to take refuge in scattered cloud cover. Both planes returned safely.
- 24 July A detachment of twenty of 20 officers and 20 enlisted men departed Attu in six planes for duty at Anchitka.
- 26 July The Anchitka detachment scheduled searches in sectors 5, 6, and 7 on the Jig Plan for a total of 18 searches to the end of the month. All were cancelled due to low ceiling and visibility at terminal or adverse take-off weather and expected terminal conditions.
- 8 August Seven planes of VFB-135 landed at Attu to relieve our Squadron. On 10 August five more planes of VFB-135 landed at Attu completing their squadron strength of twelve planes.

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- 19 August After a five day indoctrinational period, VPB-135 officially relieved VPB-139 of all duties in the Aleutian area.
- 20 August The Commanding Officer and twelve planes departed Attu for Seattle, arriving at Whidbey Island, Washington on 22 and 23 August, with the exception of Lieutenant Mac GREGOR who was delayed due mechanical at Kodiak, arriving at Whidbey on 28 August 1945.
- 31 August All officers and enlisted men were detached and transferred, with the exception of the Acting Commanding Officer and two yeomen who await the arrival of our files from Attu for the decommissioning of the Squadron.
- 7 September Lieut-Comdr. ROY B. ANDERSON, Acting Commanding Officer, was detached from this command thus leaving the two yeomen who await the arrival of our files from Attu for the decommissioning of the Squadron.
- 10 September Lieutenant L. C. MORRISSE, USNR was temporarily assigned to the squadron for duties as Acting Commanding Officer. Such duties to be completed on the decommissioning of the squadron.
- 11 September The files of the squadron finally arrived from Attu. During the period 10 September to 13 September 1945 the squadron was in the process of decommissioning.
- 13 September Patrol Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-NINE is

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STATISTICAL DATA

MARCH

Thus far, the squadron has sustained but one crash, which occurred on 27 March. There were no personnel losses; the plane, however, was totally destroyed by fire, in attempting to land at Sheya, an alternate field.

APRIL

The period 7 April to 30 April forty-two searches were scheduled and twenty-six were flown; fifty-eight strikes scheduled, eighteen were completed, twelve returned due to mechanical trouble or weather. Weather was responsible for all cancellations.

MAY

During the period 1 May to 31 May, sixty-two missions were scheduled, twenty-two were flown, and twenty-five missions returned because of weather, fifteen were cancelled for the same reason.

JUNE

During the period 1 June to 30 June, eighty-one sweeps were schedule, fifty-three completed. Fifteen turned back because of weather, and thirteen were cancelled due to weather.

In the same period thirty-six sector searches were scheduled, seventeen completed. Weather caused three flights to return and cancelled thirteen of those scheduled.

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STATISTICAL DATA (Gen's)

JULY

During the period 24 July to 31 July inclusive, twenty-one flights were scheduled. Adverse weather conditions resulted in the cancellation of nineteen flights and two were recalled after sixteen hours duration.

AUGUST

During the period 1 August to 17 August inclusive, forty-eight sector searches were scheduled, twelve of which were completed, five returned due to frontal conditions, and thirty-one were cancelled because of base weather conditions.