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372ND BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF  
Office of the Intelligence Officer

6 October 1944.  
A.P.O. # 718.

NARRATIVE COMBAT REPORT OF PRACTICE MISSION

- A. MISSION NO. : Practice Mission, 6 October, 372nd Bomb Sq. (H) AAF, four of four scheduled B-24's engaged in a practice bombing mission.
- B. TARGET : Mamari Airstrip.
- C. TIME OF ATTACK AND ALTITUDE : 1806 I  
: 19,500 feet trde.
- D. RESULTS OF BOMBING : Nil. No damage to our planes or personnel.
- E. INTERCEPTION : 25 to 30 P47's intercepted at 1251 I and stayed with the formation until 1820 I.
- F. BRIEF DETAILS OF COMBAT : The 1st attack of 8 planes came as a surprise out of the sun-- the 47's dove and came in level. The rate of closure was so great that our gunners felt their fire would have been ineffective. 3 coordinated attacks were made between 10 and 2 o'clock with 4 A/C in trail coming in from 10 and 2 o'clock at the same time-- orce crossing the formation. 3 similar coordinated attacks were made on 5 and 9 o'clock positions. All six of these passes started high but leveled off for the attack. One attack of 8 planes in trail came from 12 o'clock high. Six individual attacks came in from 10 o'clock then as the formation slid by they turned in to attack from 5 to 7 o'clock. A number of attacks were made by 2 A/C along with many individual passes.
- G. ANTI-AIRCRAFT ENCOUNTERED : Nil.
- H. PHOTOS : Nil.
- I. ROUTE AND SIGHTINGS : Route: Mearfoor to Waks, Waks to 09°55'S-135°20'E (Mami Is.) to IP to target.  
Sightings: Nil.
- J. WEATHER ENROUTE : Base to Waks--CS .5 base 22,000 feet, CE .4 tops 9,000 feet, FC .5 tops 4,000 to 5,000 feet. Winds 120° to 130° at from 14 to 16 knots, visibility 25 to 35 miles.  
Waks to Base--CS .5 base 22,000 feet, CE .4 tops 9,000 to 10,000 feet. Winds and visibility were the same as above.

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NARRATIVE COMBAT REPORT OF PRACTICE MISSION, 372ND BOMB SQ (H) AAF, CONT'D ----- 2

L. TYPE & NUMBER OF: No bomb load.  
BOMBS DROPPED :  
OVER TARGET :

K. GENERAL REMARKS : The consensus of our crews was that the formation was too tight. Our pilots report that our flights at all times was within the 300 foot altitude spread. Nose, ball turret, and waist gunners found their fields of fire restricted by other planes. The gunners also reported that the fighters did not simulate true combat tactics in as much as they were within range of our guns at all times when breaking off one attack and reforming for another. The general comments were that they would prefer the old Group Box formation which worked satisfactorily over Yap and Truk wherein the fields of fire were not restricted and the A/C had room to take evasive action from phosphorous bombs and spraying tactics. They all felt that if one plane were hit and lost control that it was certain to take other planes with them. In one case when the #3 squadron slowed up and fell behind 8 P47's concentrated on them by peeling off at 10 o'clock and attacking from 6 o'clock which indicated the vulnerability of any squadron that for any reason couldn't keep up. Our squadron which was #2 in the formation had no difficulty in maintaining position on left turns--A/C 567 flying A-2 feathered #4 engine between 1307 I and 1330 I during which time the formation made several left turns--he was able to keep up by pulling not over 48 inches. There is considerable concern over the extreme vulnerability of this formation to A/A fire. Some of the men felt that the strain of 8 or 9 hours of night flight would increase the hazards of flying this close formation over the targets.

LARK K. SOUTER,  
Capt., Air Corps,  
Intelligence Officer.

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NARRATIVE COMBAT REPORT OF PRACTICE MISSION

LOADING LIST

AP. 586

F Lt. Mc Kensie  
CP Lt. Bailey  
M Lt. Olson  
B Lt. Zeller  
M T/Sgt. Smith, A.H.  
R S/Sgt. Fields  
B T/Sgt. Marfoe  
L S/Sgt. Lightle  
T S/Sgt. Dalock  
N S/Sgt. Pomrening

AP. 616

P Lt. May  
CP Lt. Teon  
N Lt. Melnick  
B Lt. Suchma  
M T/Sgt. Bouchin  
R S/Sgt. Foley  
B T/Sgt. Ottinger  
N S/Sgt. Carson  
T S/Sgt. Collins  
L S/Sgt. Lay

AP. 567

F Lt. Bowles  
CP Lt. French  
N Lt. Qualls  
B Lt. Scott, C.A.  
M T/Sgt. Minna  
B S/Sgt. Caputo  
M T/Sgt. Connelly  
L S/Sgt. Tabor  
T S/Sgt. Rennert  
R S/Sgt. Geris

AP. 954

F Lt. Harris  
CP Lt. Patrick  
N Lt. Burns  
B Lt. St. John  
M T/Sgt. Mc Hally  
R S/Sgt. Westlund  
L T/Sgt. Kendall  
B S/Sgt. Gillum  
N S/Sgt. Simmons  
T S/Sgt. Bissell

AP.