

VMF-112 ACTION

The following document was recently sent to me and because the type/print was most difficult to read, I had to re-type it in its entirety.

The article was typed on an old Royal typewriter, double spaced, so that it was easy to read by those having to put the article into print for newspapers.

This piece was originally done by Norman Page who was a Blue Network War Correspondent during World War II (its dated 1945). Mr. Norman Page was Professor Emeritus of Modern English Literature, University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom.

His article:

A good percentage of the 450,000 civilians who live on Japan's strategically important island of Okinawa are going to be angry the next time radio Tokyo tells them, "Our Air Force controls the skies and our Navy is invincible." They will know that propaganda isn't true and, as far as they're concerned, they will have scars to prove their assertions. Proof of the Jap radio's untruthfulness was furnished the bandy-legged little people during the early hours of March 1945 and it was probably more proof than they wanted.

The carrier-based Marine WOLFPACK Squadron did the convincing when their just-after dawn attacks must have aroused many a Jap sleepy eyed civilian and military man, and sent him hurrying for cover. Major Herman Hansen, Squadron Commander, found the reception that awaited his attacks a decided anti-climax. Only a few AA guns puffed away and none even came close as he led his squadron in for pass after pass on Katana Airfield and shipping off the west central coast.

"Can you imagine that", said the Major, "those Japs were surprised again." Taking off just as the first streaks of dawn colored the sky, Major Hansen and his men went roaring along over Okinawa at around 0800 hours. Assigned to the Katana Airfield, the squadron pushed over at 8,000 feet and went into a 45-degree angle dive. The rockets were fired at 1,500 feet with the pullout at below 800 feet. Coming in with 12 planes in line abreast, the Marines gave the airfield an efficient rocketing and strafing. Major Hansen destroyed one single-engine plane on the ground, while the divisions led by 1st LT. Stonebraker and Captain Owen strafed and destroyed four single-engine planes parked on the West End of the field. Jim Hamilton strafed four Kiska-type barracks while George Murray damaged a radio tower.

“The first pass”, explained Major Hansen, “was strictly on the house – a free ride.” In the second pass Owen noted AA bursts at Katena at 11,000 feet and other bursts at 6,000 feet at the cloud top. The fire came from the north side of the field and was directed through scattered clouds. Small weapons fire was also seen. Owen said it was barrage type fire. The Marine rockets were fired at the runway, the planes were strafed again and other installations damaged. On the third pass, more damage resulted. Murray saw shipping one-quarter mile off the west shore. A tug was towing three Sugar Dogs and the Corsairs gave them a thorough pasting with bullets and rockets. The tug was left in 50-foot high flames and probably sank, while two other luggers were sunk. Another lugger nearby was damaged and grounded while three others were damaged. Returning from the shipping attacks, the Corsairs raced across the island and concentrated on Ichi Banare Island about 8,000 yards off the east coast.

Strafing attacks set the town of about 50 houses afire. As he roared across the island at practically tree top level, Huntington could see two Japs dashing for cover around the corner of a house, while Sankey could get an excellent look at a Jap shrine.

A lot of Japs got a good look at the droves of white-starred American planes – aircraft which no smooth talking Tokyo commentator can ever convince him were, “Japan’s own.”

(With the information provided, it’s quite apparent that this event was in March of 1945. I’ve made contact with the University and I’m awaiting further information on the Professor.) The document I hold is the “original”...

**Joseph L. Pires
USS BENNINGTON
Ship & Website Historian**