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Captain  
RICHARD H. LAUNDER

NINETEETH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (D)  
THIRD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (D)

Tactical report of attack on convoy near Lae, New Guinea.

By Captain Richard H. Launder

Pilot - Captain Richard H. Launder  
Co-pilot - Lieut J. W. Pryor  
Observer - Lieut Ivan P. Head  
Upper Gunner - S/Sgt J. W. Rowland  
Radio Gunner - S/Sgt B. Estep

1. Attack of March 4, 1943, at 1500/L. The target located  
148° 30' E. 07° 35' S.

2. The target was a crippled destroyer and Japanese troops in the water within the area. This was alone and stationary, keeled over 30° on its starboard side when sighted. Within an area two miles square about the ship an estimated 200 Japanese troops were in the water. They were clinging to the debris. A quarter attack from the stern was made, dropping from 1000 feet to ten feet and attaining a speed of 250 MPH, strafing from 1500 yards to 300 yards in 3 second bursts. Bullets appeared to ricochet off the side of the ship. A 500 lb demolition 5 sec delay bomb was delivered to the side of the ship at the water line. It glanced off at a 30° angle, skipped on the water and exploded 100 feet in front of the bow. No evasive tactics were used as no enemy fire was noted. No personnel were observed on the ship. One direct hit from a B-25C-1 in withdrawal from the target. No enemy aircraft were observed during the mission. After run on destroyer we strafed three groups of Japanese troops in the water expending 2500 rounds of 50 caliber amour piercing, incendiary and tracer. In my opinion a broadside attack is the most sure of effective results as it minimizes the possibility of bomb ricocheting away from the ship.

RICHARD H. LAUNDER,  
Captain, Air Corps.