U.S.S. BOXER (CV-21)
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RS 010112

From: Commanding Officer
To: Chief of Naval Operations
Via: (1) Commander Carrier Division ONE
(2) Commander SEVENTH Fleet
(3) Commander Naval Forces Far East
(4) Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet

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Subj: Action Report for the period 11 Oct through 25 Oct 1950

Ref: (a) CNO restr ltr Op-345 Ser 1196P34 dtd 3 Aug 1950

Encl: (1) CVG-2 conf ltr ser 015 dtd 1 Nov 1950: Action Report of Carrier Air Group TWO (15 October 1950 - 22 October 1950) with enclosures thereto. P.134

1. In compliance with reference (a), the action report for the period 11 October through 25 October 1950 is hereby submitted.

PART I Composition of Own Forces and Missions

A. U.S.S. BOXER (CV-21), with Carrier Air Group TWO embarked, departed YOKOSUKA, Japan, 11 October 1950 in company with the U.S.S. HANK (DD-702) and the U.S.S. BORIE (DD-704) in accordance with dispatch orders from Commander Naval Forces Far East and Commander Task Force SEVENTY-SEVEN. OTC was the Commanding Officer, U.S.S. BOXER. This group of three vessels proceeded to the Sea of Japan where it rendezvoused with Task Force 77 on 14 October, reporting for duty to Commander Task Force 77, who was ComCarDiv ONE, Rear Admiral E. C. EWEN in the U.S.S. PHILIPPINE SEA (CV-47). Rear Admiral J. M. HOSKINS, ComCarDiv THREE in the U.S.S. VALLEY FORGE (CV-45), was second in command. Task Force 77 consisted of four aircraft carriers, one cruiser and twenty-eight destroyers.

The Task Force was operating in accordance with ComCarDiv ONE Operation Order 3-50.

B. The missions of the Task Force were: (1) To conduct countermining operations, reconnaissance, gunfire spotting, and air bombardment of shore defense in the Wonsan area of Korea in order to prepare that area for an amphibious assault scheduled to commence on 20 October and (2) To conduct air operations in support of the above landing.

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PART II Chronological Order of Events

A. This operation was noteworthy in that as the plan was being put in effect the ground situation improved so rapidly that an appreciable part of the original mission became unnecessary. The scheduled amphibious assault was changed by dispatch to an administrative landing. Moreover, the bomb line moved so rapidly northward that the area where targets could be attacked was so small in relation to the number of aircraft involved that carrier-based aircraft in some instances were assigned the same targets as the Air Force.

B. The following is an outline of the BOXER's employment during the period of this action report:

1. Period 11 October to 14 October - At 1330I the BOXER, accompanied by the USS HANK (DD-702) and USS BORIE (DD-704), sortied from Yokosuka to join Task Force SEVENTY-SEVEN off the east coast of Korea. On 12 October the BOXER conducted a speed run of approximately one and one-half hours duration to obtain new data on the high speed capabilities of the ship resulting from the recent removal of the number four propeller. Additional tactical data, including acceleration and turning charactistics, were obtained in the course of the subsequent operation. On 13 October, off the northwest coast of Kyushu, the BOXER fired its first gunnery practice since 1 September. Results were quite gratifying in that two sleeves were shot down and the practice as a whole disclosed an effective gunnery organization. Other drills and exercises were conducted throughout the day and the USS HANK was refueled. At dawn on 14 October the BOXER rendezvoused with the replenishment group, the USS VALLEY FORGE, and screening destroyers. The day was spent in receiving ammunition, fuel oil, and freight from the replenishment group. At 1825I the BOXER reported to Commander Task Force SEVENTY-SEVEN.

2. Period 15 October to 22 October - At 0800I on 15 October aircraft were launched to conduct strikes against North Korean targets in the Wonsan area. One mission attacked defense positions on Sin Do Island in Wonsan Harbor. Others searched for lines of communication and military targets. All aircraft were recovered at 1724I. Pilots reported no enemy air opposition and virtually no flak. Targets were even fewer than in the previous operation and were more difficult to find. An F4U was damaged by small arms fire and made a deferred emergency landing at Wonsan airfield, thus making this operation probably the first instance in an amphibious assault in which the attacking force had utilized air facilities located within the objective area five days prior to scheduled D-Day. On 16 October air operations against Korean targets were attempted but poor flying conditions resulted in cancellation or abortion of all strikes. Lt(jg) R.R. MEAGHERTY, USN, made a forced water landing when the engine of his F4U lost power during the landing approach; he was recovered by the USS HIGBEE (DDR-806). 17 October was spent in replenishing and conducting anti-aircraft gunnery practice. On 18 October air operations against Korean targets were continued and the 19th was again devoted to replenishment and anti-aircraft gunnery practice. On 20 and 21 October adverse weather conditions and the presence of extensive minefields in the Wonsan area caused postponement of D-Day.

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Air operations consisted of defensive, reconnaissance and courier sorties. On 22 October the first scheduled flight of the day was launched against North Korean targets. The completion of this flight marked the end of the BOXER's offensive action against Korean Communist forces. At 1341I the PHILIPPINE SEA, BOXER, and escorting destroyers were detached from Task Force 77 and proceeded to Japanese ports. As the BOXER was scheduled to return to the United States for overhaul, twelve BOXER aircraft were transferred to the remaining three carriers in order to fulfill their requirements.

3. Period 23 October to 25 October - During this period the BOXER was enroute to Yokosuka where she arrived at 0810I on the 25th. Prior to arrival, an additional 38 aircraft were launched for transfer to Fasron ELEVEN, Kisarazu AFB, Japan.

PART III Performance of Ordnance Material and Equipment

See enclosure (1).

PART IV Battle Damage

No battle damage was sustained by the ship. See enclosure (1) for damage inflicted on the enemy and for that suffered by BOXER aircraft.

PART V. Personnel

A. Casualties.

1. There were no personnel casualties during this operation.

B. Performance.

1. By the time this operation commenced the large number of new men received on board prior to our departure from the United States had developed into integrated teams which were operating smoothly. Composition of these teams was not destroyed by the few personnel transfers that took place, although the filling of quotas for the enlisted photo interpretation school did add to the difficulty of photo laboratory operations.

PART VI Comments

A. Operations.

1. Air Operations and CIC.

a. CIC was able to track jet aircraft out to sixty or seventy miles on the SX radar when the jets were below 15,000 feet. This was accomplished on many occasions using a rotation rate of one, two or three RPM. No evaluation has been made on the effectiveness of the SPS-6B because no jets were flown in the area at altitudes over 30,000 feet.

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b. In several instances aircraft were not assigned proper calls as generated in section 733.5 of Janap 119(A). This was particularly true of [redacted] calls. Many unnecessary transmissions are required to clarify the misunderstanding caused, for example, when a V.N was assigned an [redacted] call.

c. It is felt that greater stress could have been placed upon aircraft anti-submarine defense. Even though all bogies turned out to be friendly it was possible to maintain a reasonable amount of interest in defense against an air attack simply by carrying intercepts to completion. Lack of adequate equipment for anti-submarine warfare made it difficult for the ASP to perform in a similar manner. Lack of sonobuoys made it impossible for aircraft to verify a submarine contact by that means, while lack of searchlights deprived the night ASP of means of visual identification. In short, suitably equipped anti-submarine aircraft were not embarked. This fact made it impossible to prevent a feeling of laxity toward the submarine threat and, at best, led to the feeling that aircraft anti-submarine measures were inadequate during the day and practically futile at night.

d. There was insufficient information available on shore-based ASP. Calls and control channels were obtained from these ASP aircraft upon request after the aircraft were in the area. No information was made available to us on shore-based ASP flights with the result that either the C.I.C. was kept busy making intercepts on the ASP or CIC had a tendency to follow the dangerous practice of considering an unidentified aircraft as "just another ASP".

e. The VHF homing device paid its way in each of the last two operations. Several aircraft were probably saved and many additional jet aircraft were assisted by this equipment.

f. It is recommended that the "ready deck", rather than being a function of the duty carrier, be coordinated with the flight schedule to provide maximum ready deck coverage and ease in respotting.

g. The change of control from an objective area controller to a Task Group controller was poor. Intercepts on returning strikes which did not call in to the ship occurred in such numbers that a simultaneously converging air attack could have come in virtually unopposed.

2. Communications.

a. More care should be exercised in sending traffic over designated circuits. Messages of an information nature, administrative traffic, and tactical messages were at times sent indiscriminately over various circuits. It is felt that if traffic could be transmitted over assigned circuits it would result in more effective use of the circuits as well as improved communications generally.

b. It is recommended that consideration be given to establishing a VHF administrative circuit separate from any other assigned frequency.

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3. Navigation.

a. The use of night adaptation glasses by the officer-of-the-deck is to be recommended. Carried about the neck for ready availability, these glasses were useful in permitting the ODD to enter the chart house without loss of night vision.

b. The removal of the number four propeller just prior to this operation renewed the tactical problems almost solved in the preceding operation during which the number four propeller was locked. Wind and sea conditions affected the turning circle in a manner that was noticeably different from that when the number four propeller was dragging. Acceleration characteristics were also appreciably changed.

c. The use of flight deck aircraft in a "pinwheel" spot was of inestimable value in docking and undocking operation particularly as adequate tugs could not be made available.

4. Air Intelligence.

a. The Naval Air Combat Reporting System covered by OpNav P55-100 was put into use for the first time during this operation. It is felt that these reports, if the mailing list is kept to a reasonable figure, will require a minimum of effort to obtain a maximum of information. While it is realized that the primary function of these reports is to provide data for statistical studies, they have also proven useful as a source of information at ship level. Effort expended in making these reports is considerably less than is required for the usual narrative report, such as the daily preliminary action report previously required.

b. Since the ship's Action Report and War Diary are parallel reports which overlap and duplicate each other on the majority of information contained in each, it is recommended that they be combined. It is felt that an appreciable saving of man-hours can thus be effected and that the quality of each report would be improved. For the same reasons it is recommended that submission of the ship's Historical Report not be required for any period covered by the above report(s).

B. Air

1. While at Yokosuka, 5-11 October, dud aircraft were offloaded and 12 replacement aircraft were received from FasRon 11. Eight aircraft in excess of the determined optimum number for sustained anticipated operations were accepted for the previously stated reasons of (1) desired maximum fire power, (2) anticipated low availability of F4U-4 type due service age, (3) replacement difficulties, and (4) reported shortages existing in VALLEY FORGE and PHILIPPINE SEA coupled with delivery replacement difficulties.

2. Commencing 20 October, in accordance desires of CTF77 to reduce formation time on wind line, BOXER scheduled smaller launches with ninety-minute instead of previously established three-hour intervals. This interval appeared feasible although it involved both less flexibility until two launches were off the deck and considerable additional respotting, which limited available time for reservicing and rearming. Unfavorable weather on 20 and 21 October and departure of the BOXER from the operating area on 22 October after launching only one strike precluded an evaluation of this plan.

3. On 22 October, prior to departing, BOXER transferred 12 replacement aircraft to remaining carriers, receiving 2 high service age planes for transport to overland base.

C. Gunnery

1. Training, non-firing.

a. Gun crews were exercised during condition watches and dawn general quarters in tracking aircraft in the vicinity of the formation. Loading drill was stressed for men off watch. Even though no actual firing was done from 1 September until mid-October, it was noted that gun and tracking crews were able to maintain proficiency. This fact emphasizes the benefits gained from having targets available for deliberate tracking drill in maintaining and improving the crews' manual proficiency.

2. Firing exercises.

Actual firing was made available to ships enroute to and from operating areas and while in the replenishment area. This served to tie together all the loading and tracking drill and to get the entire team working smoothly and effectively. It is considered that the ammunition used was well expended; effectiveness of gunfire was materially improved. It is believed that the practice of conducting AA sleeve firing when in the replenishment area is excellent.

D. Supply

1. Upon leaving Yokosuka stock levels were in some cases below the 180 day limit due to the limited replenishment facilities at Yokosuka. Aviation Supplies were still about 90% complete and G.S.K. 95%. Ship's Store Stock, howeve was completely depleted in some items and there was little available to substitute. In provisions the situation was generally good, especially in fresh frozen, but a few items such as eggs and fresh milk were in short supply.

2. The shortage of Mark 12 drop tanks experienced during the last operation was temporarily met by loading eighty-two of these tanks during the first replenishment at sea. This would have been insufficient, however, if full operations had continued.

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E. Engineering

1. The removal of number four propeller increased the maximum speed of the ship on three engines from 28 to 29½ knots. Before removal of the propeller, maximum power output was reached at about 28 knots at which point the after four boilers began to be overloaded. The drag of the locked propeller caused excessive vibration which introduced the continuing possibility of crystallization and fatigue failure of machinery located in the after part of the ship where vibration was most noticeable. After removal of the propeller sufficient power was available to permit completely opening number two and number three main engine throttles without putting undue strain on the after four boilers. The maximum speed attained with three throttles open wide was approximately 29½ knots. At this speed vibration was no more than normal.

F. Recapitulation of recommendations

1. Personnel.

a. That mandatory quotas for training schools be kept to a minimum while a ship is in the forward area.

b. That every effort be made to permit personnel to serve out a full rotational tour of duty on one vessel.

2. Air Operations and CIC.

a. That aircraft be assigned calls in accordance with section 733.5 of Janap 119(A).

b. That carriers operating in possible submarine waters be provided with suitably equipped anti-submarine aircraft.

c. That ships of the Task Force be kept fully advised of all aircraft operating in the area.

d. That the "ready deck", rather than being a function of the duty carrier, be coordinated with the flight schedule to provide maximum ready deck coverage and ease in respotting.

e. That returning strikes keep the Task Group controller fully advised of their positions.

3. Communications.

a. That more care be exercised in sending traffic over prescribed circuits.

b. That consideration be given to establishing a VHF administrative circuit separate from any other assigned frequency.

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4. Air Intelligence.

a. That the Action Report and War Diary be combined to form one report.

b. That the submission of the ship's Historical Report not be required for the period covered by the above report(s).

5. Gunnery.

That the practice of conducting anti-aircraft sleeve firing when in the replenishment area be continued.

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