USS ESSEX (CVA9)
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

CVA9/A16-13
Ser 0175
1 November 1952

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DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS:
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 5200.10

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

Subj: Action Report for the period 5 September to 1 November 1952

Ref: (a) OpNav Instruction 3480.4

Encl: (1) Air Task Group TWO Action Report for period 5 September to 1 November 1952

1. In accordance with reference (a), the Action Report for the period 5 September to 1 November 1952 is hereby submitted.

PART I COMPOSITION OF OWN FORCES AND MISSION

a. During the period 5 September to 1 November, U.S.S. ESSEX (CVA9) was a unit of Task Force 77 at various times composed of the following units: U.S.S. ESSEX (CVA9), U.S.S. BON HOMME RICHARD (CVA31), ComCarDiv ONE, RADM H. E. REGAN, USN, embarked, U.S.S. PRINCETON (CVA37), U.S.S. KEARSARGE (CVA33), ComCarDiv FIVE, RADM R. F. HICKEY, USN, embarked, U.S.S. IOWA (BB61), and U.S.S. MISSOURI (BB63), ComSEVENTHFlt, VADM J. J. CLARK, USN, embarked, and various other heavy support and screening ships.

b. During the subject period, U.S.S. ESSEX (CVA9) operated off the East Coast of Korea in accordance with CTF 77 Operations Order 22-51 (2nd revision), plus supplemental plans and orders issued during the period.

c. The mission of TF 77 was primarily to support United Nations ground forces in Korea. The support missions included close and deep support, armed and photographic reconnaissance, interdiction of enemy supply lines and strikes against enemy installations.

d. The ESSEX Air Group on three occasions joined with the Air Forces in coordinated strikes against Korean targets; the first of these on 5 October was against vehicle, supply and personnel shelters in the vicinity of HOEYANG; the second on 7 October against supply and storage areas at YONGPYONG-NI and the third on 8 October against the railway and highway bridges at KOWON. From 12 October through 16 October the ESSEX Air Group joined with those of the carriers PRINCETON, BON HOMME RICHARD, and KEARSARGE in support of forces under Commander

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Amphibious Group THREE in training manuevers in the vicinity of KOJO in accordance with CTF 77 Operations Order 25A-52.

e. On 24 October the ESSEX and BON HOMME RICHARD joined in strikes on mining, railroad and other facilities at HYESANJIN, a stone's throw from Manchuria. Throughout the period strikes were made against personnel, vehicle and supply areas at the bombline. Assessment of damage can be evaluated only against the ability of the enemy to mount future offensives.

PART II ORDNANCE

1. Expenditure of Air Ordnance.

a. See enclosure (1)

2. Expenditure of Ship's Ordnance for Training.

	5-30 Sept	1-31 Oct
5"/38 AAC	192	191
5"/38 (VT) Non-frag	0	85
5"/38 BL & T	0	83
3"/50 FCL (VT)	98	45
3"/50 FCL (VT) Non-frag	477	597
3"/50 BL & T	12	0

3. The performance of ship's ordnance equipment was satisfactory.

PART III BATTLE DAMAGE

1. The ship received no battle damage. Enclosure (1) contains damage to ATG-2 aircraft and damage inflicted on the enemy.

PART IV PERSONNEL PERFORMANCE AND CASUALTIES

1. The performance of all personnel has been excellent. There were no casualties to personnel of ship's company. Personnel casualties sustained by ATG-2 are listed in enclosure (1).

PART IV COMMENTS:

1. Air Department.

a. Catapult

(1) On 16 September 1952, while firing test no load shots, the port catapult failed to retract. Subsequent investigation revealed the cause to be an expansion of the braking cylinder which prevented the passage of the crosshead over that area.

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(2) On 18 September following the ordering of a new cylinder, the ESSEX sailed to rejoin Task Force 77, operating with the starboard catapult alone. After three (3) days of successful operations, on 21 September, CTF 77 ordered the ESSEX to proceed to Sasebo, Japan, arriving there 24 September. The new braking cylinder awaited the ship's arrival and necessary material and personnel were made available there.

(3) By the morning of 26 September, installations and necessary parts had been restored to operational condition and test no load shots were conducted throughout the afternoon. A runway shot resulting from a parted towing bridle prevented completion of the tests until the morning of the 27th after which the ESSEX got underway to rejoin Task Force 77 again. Following these repairs, both catapults were in operational condition throughout the remainder of the cruise, except for short periods when minor repairs were necessary.

b. ARRESTING GEAR

(1) Operations:

Arresting Gear operations have been routine with the exception of the re-reeving job that was required on the number one (1) arresting engine, following the discovery of breaks on the purchase cable on 30 September. On 8 October, the 50,000 th arrested landing aboard the ESSEX was made by LT. Robert BERGNER, in his AD-4N Night Fighter.

(2) Barricade and Davis Barrier Rerigging:

The ESSEX left CONUS on 16 June 1952 for the Far East. Since that date there have been approximately seven barrier engagements by jet type aircraft. After each of the first three engagements it took in excess of ten minutes to set a ready deck. It became apparent that this was unacceptable because of critical fuel supply of the F9F. An intensive program of drills was initiated utilizing all arresting gear and flight deck personnel. Drills are held just prior to returning to the operating area and at two week intervals during an extended operating period. The result of this program was a reduction of 50% in rerigging time over previous times. The time required to set a ready deck after each of the last three engagements have been six, five and seven minutes respectively. After each of these engagements the barricade was rerigged in five minutes or less. It is felt that the maximum acceptable time for rerigging the barricade and barriers should not be over six minutes after a normal engagement.

(3) Value of Barricade:

Since the barricade has been installed there has been one barricade engagement during which the Davis Barriers were not engaged. The barricade had a runout of approximately 65-70 feet. If the barricade had not been installed, there would have been a flight deck crash similar to the one that took place in September 1951 when an F2H jumped over the Davis Barriers and crashed into the planes parked forward on the flight deck.

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c. AIRCRAFT ORDNANCE

(1) The Air Department Ordnance Division shortage of personnel still continues to be a problem in that personnel have been transferred without replacements. This situation will become more serious as the operating schedule becomes more difficult to meet due to cold weather conditions.

(2) Difficulty has been experienced in procuring 20mm aircraft cannon driving springs. This item was ordered in quantities to replenish the ships allowance, but instead of receiving the items requested, aircraft gun charger inner and outer springs were issued as substitutes for driving springs. These springs could not be utilized and are now in excess. To alleviate a critical situation of having aircraft guns out of commission, fifty (50) driving springs were procured from the U.S.S. PRINCETON prior to her departure from the operating area.

d. MAINTENANCE

(1) Equipment:

A new type of engine build up stand for reciprocating engines has been developed and is in use, permitting off loading of the conventional allowance type. Briefly described; the stand consists of three vertical legs, one under each side of the engine mount and one under the propeller shaft.

On completion of the build up; the engine is stored vertically on the same stand.

Hangar deck space for an additional aircraft has been gained and three tons of topside weight subtracted.

Tool box racks have been installed on certain areas of the hangar deck not accessable for parking aircraft. General appearances are greatly improved and they have proven a real convenience for the mechanics.

Radio "gripes" often prove, after investigation, to be headset and microphone discrepancies. To alleviate this condition; test sets (TS 387/U) have been installed in each ready room in order that pilots may positively determine the condition of headsets and microphones prior to manning planes.

Proper marking of flight clothing can now be performed with a newly obtained gold print machine, a popular addition to the ship's equipage.

Difficulties in moving oxygen trailers to filling locations among closely parked aircraft have been alleviated by installing 50' filler hoses, fabricated from 3000 P.S.I. hydraulic hose.

Contrary to the reports of other carriers, the oxygen trailers have been used during two Korean tours and have proven satisfactory.

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A simple effective tester for the batteries of CRC-7, VHF, search and rescue transceiver, carried in pararafts has been fabricated on board. Both the "A" and "B" sides may be checked under load with one instrument and one plug in.

The much needed, long awaited preservation machine finally arrived and is considered an excellent piece of equipment.

(2) Material:

The 180 hour RB 19R-2 spark plugs are only averaging 69 hours. Cause of the difficulty has not been determined.

J42 engines are being received minus the TJC's and high pressure pumps. This situation is not critical as long as the Supply Officer can furnish the "missing" quantity above the normal usage.

Spare F4U wings are still being received without F4U Change No. 432 incorporated. Because it is impractical for carriers to make this change, the wing must be off-loaded.

(3) Personnel:

The personnel situation has been satisfactory. A training program, underway since deployment, recently paid off with fifteen (15) men, out of sixty four assigned, being advanced in rate on 16 October.

2. Supply Department.

a. Aviation Stores

(1) Installed cargo nets in the overhead of aviation engine storeroom C-419-A for the storage of damaged aircraft surfaces, thereby reducing additional damage and providing additional deck storage space.

b. General Stores.

(1) Replenishment while in port from the USS POLLUX (AKS-4) and the USS CASTOR (AKS-1) was considered highly satisfactory, about 85% of items requested being supplied.

(2) The most critical items in the area are:

lumber
metal (bar and plate)
standard forms
bottled gases

(3) Electronics spare parts have been supplied in an excellent manner - 90% of requests have been filled.

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(4) Ordance and BuShips spare parts are in short supply, resulting in high priority requisitions for stateside supply action.

3. Administration

a. Personnel Count

During the period of operation the average on-board count was as follow

	Officer	Enlisted	Total
Ship's Company	127	2054	2181
Marine Detachment	2	62	64
Air Group	130	624	754

	E-7	E-6	E-5	E-4	E-3	E-2	E-1
Transfers:	5	6	5	25	7	0	0
Receipts:	0	3	2	6	1	22	1

	Pay Grade	Allowed	On-Board	Per Cent
Petty Officers:	E-7	74	73	99
	E-6	171	72	43
	E-5	265	132	50
	E-4	374	483	129

Three officers and nineteen (19) enlisted men are on emergency leave.

The on-board count is considered adequate for the mission assigned and type of operations conducted. There continues to be a shortage of petty officers in the following ratings: QM, FC, MM, BT, EM, IC, AO, and YN.

b. Morale

Despite an extended tour of operations on-the-line, the morale of personnel continued to be high. During the latter part of the period there were indications of fatigue of pilots, loading and flight deck crews and watch-standers. The delivery of mail during this period was below average in comparison to previous periods. This was due to an extension of the operating period. As a result, this vessel received no mail at the last three consecutive replenishments.

4. Operations Department

a. Air Operations

No comment

b. Aerology

(1) Weather in the Korean Operating area was normal.

(2) One and one half days of flight operations were cancelled due to weather. This was caused by active cold fronts passing through the area.

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(3) One replenishment day was cancelled due to heavy weather when a deep low pressure area developed in the Sea of Japan.

c. Communication

(1) Since the first period traffic has continued to increase, putting an added load on the already overburdened circuits. During the second period the ship handled a total of 28,858 dispatches, an average of 411 per day. Of this number 1394 were originated by the ship and 2546 were addressed to the ship. The rest were relays, transmitted and received, over the circuits guarded for CTF 77, George FOX and NDT FOX messages.

(2) During the second period the rigid training program has been continued. Close supervision, on the job training and classroom instruction for the enlisted men and an afternoon communications class for officers has improved the communication section considerably.

(3) The slowing down of the NPN FOX to approximately 22 WPM no longer necessitates placing the best available operators on this circuit. This indicates that complete reception of first transmissions, although slower, is far better than requesting the already overburdened transmitting station to repeat messages or sections of messages missed.

d. CIC

During the period of this report CIC operated with an average of 53 men and 10 officers. This complement is considered to be adequate.

Three significant programs were undertaken during this period as follows

(1) O.O.D. Training Syllabus.

An O.O.D. training syllabus for all line officers on board who desired to qualify as O.O.D. underway, with particular emphasis on the qualifying of CIC officers,,was established. Lectures were given by the Navigator, the Engineering Officer, and other department heads at specified times. All CIC officers were required to attend these lectures. To date two (2) CIC officers have qualified and another will be qualified in the near future. All O.O.Ds and J.O.O.Ds were required to stand observation watches in CIC to better familiarize themselves with the functions of CIC, Gunnery Liaison, and Air Operations. This program proved very effective in a better co-operation and understanding between combat and the bridge.

(2) CTF 77 Air Control Training and Qualification Program.

CTF 77 has recently commenced a program for the training and qualifying of officers from destroyers as "Air Controllers, Day", by having these officers report to TF 77 carriers on TAD orders for training. This is considered to be an excellent program however, it should be realized that the training and

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qualifying of an officer who has never been to CIC School, Air Controller School or has never been in control of an aircraft before is a long process. Concentrating on these trainees in order to get them back to their ships is a serious hindrance to the training of the officers permanently attached to the carriers. Proficiency of the carrier personnel must be kept up. CIC qualified one (1) officer and two (2) more were far enough along so that another three days of air control work would have qualified them also. On the recommendations of VC-11, the trainees are also given a short course in ASP Air Control work. The pilots of VC-11 felt the ASP Controllers of the [illegible] destroyers were not using proper techniques and did not know the capabilities of the planes or the equipment installed. The instructions given to trainees thus far has already improved ASP Air Control.

(3) AEW/ASW/CIC Training Program

On 26 October 1952 CIC and VC-11 Unit ITEM established a co-operative training program. The object of the program was:

(a) To acquaint certain CIC personnel with (1) the capabilities and limitations of the AD4W, the AN/APS-20A, and other airborne equipment used for AEW and ASW: (2) Techniques of airborne air control; and (3) the problems of the airborne controller and technicians.

(b) To acquaint VC-11 Airborne controllers, technicians, and pilots with CIC, its problems, techniques, and the capabilities and limitations of its equipment. It is intended that the above objectives be carried out by a series of AEW/ASW training flights, CIC instructions watches, and lectures. The proposed program met with a great deal of enthusiasm. A total of 24 persons (including two (2) officers, twenty (20) rated men, and two (2) non-rated men) volunteered to participate. Most of these people have put in a good number of hours as shipboard ASP Controller using both the PO presentation and regular shipboard radars. In the four (4) operating days during which this program has been in effect twelve (12) people participated in ASW training flights totaling 25.4 hours. The schedule for these flights were arranged on a non-interference basis with VC-11 Unit ITEM. Also, during this period thirteen (13) VC-11 personnel were scheduled for a total of 96 hours of instruction watch in CIC. Both the instruction watches and the training flights have proven to be very effective. Personnel who have participated have learned much which will benefit them in performance of their normal duties. Enthusiastic response to the training program and a new interest in AEW and airborne ASW has been demonstrated by CIC personnel in personal interviews. It is felt that this program will be of immeasurable benefit to the men and units involved.

e. Photographic Interperetation

Photographic Interpretation during this period continued to be primarily target search and damage assessment. The "touraid" of a rail route is practically a thing of the past. Flak studies continued to be made but were

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most often centralized to a specific target area rather than a general route as had been the practice in the past. Flak studies point up the need for greater emphasis on flak interpretation. Photo interpreters do not agree among themselves in the interpretion of various types of gun positions. The need for a symposium on the subject of flak in the Korean theatre is indicated.

Towards the latter portion of this operating period the hours of daylight and, thus the hours for acceptable photography diminished. Several schedulings of late afternoon or early morning flights in mountainous areas produced photographic results difficult if not impossible to interpret. All such missions should be scheduled closer to midday when the sun is near its zenith.

An attempt was made to coordinate photographic interpretation with ECM reports in the search for enemy radar; however, no positive results were obtained. An expansion of this work during the next operating period is anticipated.

The F-56 20" camera capsule was continued in use on the AD aircraft in place of the K-25 for strike photography. Continued excellent results were obtained.

The interest of the Air Group pilots in photography and photographic interpretation was aroused by a demonstration of stereoscopy involving the various types of targets peculiar to Korea. For the first time many pilots were able to see some of the camouflaged supply areas they had been attacking nearly in the blind. This aroused interest led to a steady stream of jet recco leaders perusing photographs of a scheduled mission so they might be better prepared for lucrative targets along the route.

The photographic pilots many times returned from an incomplete mission with a sense of frustration because their time had run out. Time has proved to be a much more critical item on photographic missions than either aircraft endurance or film capacity. This is particularly true in the case of targets at a considerable distance in from the coast.

f. Air Intelligence

(1) Comments on Services of Air Navigation Offices

(a) Air Navigation Office, San Diego

The cooperation of the COMAIRPAC Intelligence Officer and the Air Navigation Officer was outstanding in all respects. After consulting the Air Navigation Officer all maps and charts remaining from the first Korean tour were off loaded. After the necessary inventory was taken by the Air Navigation Office, approximately half the maps had to be destroyed due to obsolescence. The ship was then provided with a new allowance of maps and charts.

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On one occasion, maps were requested from the Air Navigation Office in the morning and the charts were loaded aboard ship that same afternoon. This particular order was placed on a Saturday morning, and yet the Air Navigation Office needed only five hours to deliver some 15,000 maps aboard neatly boxed and indexed. Their services could not have been more outstanding.

(b) Air Navigation Office, NAS Barbers' Point

The Air Navigation Office at Barbers' Point was requested to supply certain items in which the ship was deficient. Subsequently, the ship was notified that all the items had been delivered. However it was learned after the ship had gotten underway for WESPAC that some of the items were not aboard. This oversight was undoubtedly inadvertent, but nevertheless the ship relied upon the inventory sheets received from the Air Navigation Office until the material itself could be unpacked and inventoried. Hence the shortages were not disclosed until after the ship had departed Pearl Harbor, and then it was too late to notify either Barbers' Point or forward a speedletter requesting delivery of the missing items in Japan. Except for this incident, the cooperation and services of the Air Navigation Office at Barbers' Point was satisfactory.

(c) Air Navigation Office, NAS Atsugi

Although most of the intelligence material required was aboard prior to arrival in Japan, members of COMFAIRJAP staff rendered the ship invaluable service. The major deficiencies concerned various types of survival gear and AMS L-751 series 1:50,000 scale maps. The urgently needed survival gear was requested both by dispatch and by a speedletter delivered by the first aircraft flown into Atsugi on 26 July. The ship arrived in Yokosuka on a Saturday afternoon and the survival gear was delivered on board Sunday afternoon. A scant thirty six hours elapsed between the receipt of the request by COMFAIRJAP and the delivery of the items to the ship. Such prompt action is no small tribute to the coordination and efficiency of the Air Navigation Officer and the COMFAIRJAP Intelligence, Material, and Supply Officers. Their efforts were somewhat hindered by the fact that the items were obtained over a weekend period, and where certain items could not be readily obtained, acceptable substitutes were provided. The timely delivery of the survival material alleviated a critical shortage and provided an immeasurable boost to the morale of the pilots in general. Prompt action by COMFAIRJAP in the matter is deeply appreciated.

(2) The high consumption of 1:50,000 scale maps in the Navy area of responsibility has continued throughout the second period on the line. The estimated attrition rate has been about twelve percent, but the primary difficulty has been caused by the fact that any sector of the Navy area may be selected for concentrated strikes.

Hence, the supply of maps available on any particular area is soon exhausted, and on one occasion depleted stocks were partially replaced by maps

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received from another carrier which had just returned to the line from Yokosuka. Consequently, a minimum stock of 60 copies of each 1:50,000 map in the Navy area will be carried aboard in the hope that this will eliminate the exhaustion of the supply of particular maps during one operating period.

B B C Lovett.

B. B. C. LOVETT

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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
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USS BON HOMME RICHARD (CVA31)
USS VALLEY FORGE (CVA45)
USS PHILLIPINE SEA (CVA47)
USS PRINCETON (CVA37)
USS ORISKANY (CVA34)
USS KEARSARGE (CVA33)
CVG-2
CVG-5
CVG-7
CVG-9
CVG-11
CVG-15
CVG-19
CVG-101
CVG-102
ATG-2 (5)

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