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UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
AIR FORCE
CARRIER AIR GROUP FIVE

CVG5/A16-13
Serial: 065-51

22 September 19

[redacted]

From: Commander Carrier Air Group FIVE
To: Commanding Officer, USS ESSEX (CV-9)

Subj: Action Report of Carrier Air Group FIVE (18 August 1951 - 19 September 1951)

Ref: (a) OpNav Instruction 348.1

1. This report is submitted in compliance with reference (a) for inclusion in the action report of USS ESSEX (CV-9).

PART I: COMPOSITION OF OWN FORCES AND MISSION

a. The composition of the group follows:

UNIT	TYPE A/C	OPERATIONAL A/C 8/18	OPERATIONAL A/C 9/19	PILOTS 8/18	PILOTS 9/19
CVG-5 CDR M.U. BEEBE	None	None	None	1 Note #1	1 Note #1
VF-51 LCDR E.M. BEAUCHAMP	F9F-2	16	9	24	22
VF-172 CDR M.E. BARNETT	F2H-2	19	14	27	26
VF-53 CDR H.J. TRUM, III	F4U-4B	16	16 3 Rep.	24	23
VF-54 CDR P.N. GRAY	AD-4 AD-4L	5 13	4 6	30 Note #2	28 Note #2
VC-3 (Det) LT J.S. LAKE	F4U-5NL	3	3 1 Rep.	6	6
VC-11 (Det) LT M.R. MILLER	AD-4W	3	2	5	5
VC-35 (Det) LCDR F.F. BERTAGNA	AD-3N AD-4Q	1 2	1 1	6	5
VC-61 (Det) LT S.L. JAYNES	F9F-2P	3	3	4	4
		81(Note 3)	59	127	120

Note #1: The Air Group Commander flies regularly with VF-51 and VF-54. 2 LSOs, Admin., & Comm. Off not included.
Note #2: Includes Air Group Operations Officer.
Note #3: CVG-5 entered Combat Area with 75 aircraft.

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b. Mission

The primary mission of Air Group FIVE during this reporting period was the support of United Nations ground forces. This mission was divided into two parts; i.e. the interdiction of the enemy's lines of communication and close air support of United Nations forces on the front lines. Whenever indicated by sightings or photographs sorties were sent against the enemy's supply build-up points. Corsairs were employed as spotters for Naval Gun Fire support along the east coast of Korea. The AEW Team was assigned to ASP coverage for the force. The night hecklers found a great number of transportation targets, as daylight movement was kept to a minimum by the enemy. The Photo Team performed daily missions of covering attacked targets for damage assessment and prospective targets for evaluation plus special photo coverage missions. One assignment of 12 F9F-2 and 12 F2H-2 fighter planes provided cover for a Fifth Air Force bombing marshaling yards in RASHIN which is located on the Korean coast about eighteen miles south of the Russian border.

The combat evaluation of the F2H aircraft has been assigned to Air Group FIVE. The only special mention considered necessary in this report is that the airplane is doing an admirable job under the capable direction of VF-172. An interim evaluation report has been submitted separately and repetition is not considered necessary. Further evaluation reports will be submitted separately as warranted.

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PART II: CHRONOLOGY

The short period in Yokosuka, Japan between 16 August and 18 Augus during which the ESSEX relieved the PRINCETON, was employed by the Ai Group in last minute preparations for its entry into combat. The war had changed considerably since Air Group FIVE left in November last year. Conferences with pilots from Air Group NINETEEN proved very beneficial in providing last minute information on force dispositions operating techniques and intelligence. The complement of aircraft to be operated on board dictated that the excess allowance in aircraft b left at Kisarazu airfield and kept in a standby status. Pilots were detached on Temporary Additional Duty orders and were available to fl aboard as needed. The departure of Air Group FIVE in USS ESSEX was as scheduled except for the threat of Hurricane "MARGE", which was reported heading north towards the Japanese Homeland. The course of the hurricane for the next three days was erratic and evasive maneuve were required to avoid it.

It had been almost two weeks since the pilots had flown and refres er operations on 21 August and 22 August were welcome. A full day's offensive operations were scheduled for 22 August but due to bad weather the operations were cancelled and the only flights launched were for Combat Air Patrol and Anti-Submarine Patrol.

On 21 August and 22 August conferences were held with pilots of Air Group ONE HUNDRED TWO. On 23 August planes from Air Group FIVE made sorties against the Communists in Korea for the first time in over nine months. The flights were escorted by pilots from Air Group ONE HUNDRED TWO to familiarize Air Group FIVE with the terrain and target disposition. This first day of combat marked the first aircraft and pilot loss. LTJG Leo FRANZ, USN of VF-53 was flying to the beach as the third plane of a three plane element. The flight proceeded under an overcast of about 1500'. As they approached the shor line the leader climbed his section through the overcast, but on brea ing out at 6000' LTJG FRANZ' Corsair was nowhere in sight. No trace has been found of the aircraft and the pilot is missing in action. Weather throughout the day was marginal to poor.

On 24 August Air Group FIVE launched their first major effort comprised of a total of 76 sorties the majority of which were assigned missions of reconnaissance. Targets of opportunity were hit along all roads in the assigned area. Five sorties were aborted, one of which was an AD-4 piloted by Ensign STRICKLAND, USN of VF-54. He experienc an engine failure immediately after take off and effected a safe wate landing. He was picked up by the ESSEX' helicopter and set down on the flight deck in less than five minutes, sustaining no injuries. At the end of the second day all pilots in the Air Group had their first combat behind them and the qualms of anticipation were considerably lessened. The photo missions returned with evidence that ther were good bridge targets on all of the major highways.

On 25 August 71 sorties were launched 30 of which were assigned bridges as their primary targets. The talley for the day was three bridges knocked out and four severely damaged. The excellence of the bombing heartened everyone and the spaces were rife with tales of the day's experiences.

On 26 August a shocking accident occurred before sunrise. An AD-3 piloted by LTJG SMITH of VC-35 was seen to burn in mid-air and then crash into the water about five minutes after being launched. The cause of the accident was undetermined. The aircraft sank immediatel and both LTJG SMITH and his aircrewman P. R. BALCH, ATAN presumably were killed. The day's operations continued and the sortie count after the last recovery was 94. For the first time contact was made with the TACC at the front and the Close Air Support missions comple their assignments receiving a well done from the controller for thei accuracy. A marked increase in daylight traffic of the enemy was not throughout the area. There was a general feeling of disappointment among the pilots because the ESSEX was scheduled to replenish on the following morning.

On 27 August the greatest single interest within the ship was mail from home. The first few days of combat had dragged, and it seemed as though the Air Group had been on the line for months. On the 28th all flights except one ASP flight of four aircraft were cancelled because of weather.

On 29 August, expecting targets to be plentiful, over a hundred sorties were launched. The results were not impressive. The Reds had gone back to moving during the hours of darkness. Early in the afternoon three representatives of the Joint Operations Center, Korea came aboard to brief the Air Group on liaison organization, ground forces general employment and disposition, and escape and evasion techniques.

On 30 August the capability of the enemy to rebuild and improvise bridges along the transportation lines was clear to every pilot. Each flight returned with reports that targets, notably bridges and by-passes, which had been crippled or destroyed three days previous were back in operation and passing considerable traffic. During the recovery of the night heckler flight Ensign B.J. KNOX, USNR, of VC-3 misjudged his altitude and inadvertantly ditched his F4U-5N on the down wind leg of his landing pattern. He was recovered shortly by USS ROGERS.

On 31 August targets were meager and scattered, and although 92 sorties were flown it seemed just a routine day of war. 1 September was spent in replenishing.

On 2 September 102 sorties were flown against bridges, transportation supply points, and in Close Air Support. LTJG R.A. BATEMAN had engine trouble on his way to the target. His aircraft caught fire an he was forced to bail out. He was not injured and was picked up near the coast by helicopter and taken to the USS PARKS (DD-884). By this time the pilots were getting more cagey in their assessment of the important features of the work and the risks involved. Not a day had gone by but what at least one plane had been hit by AA. The first tiger like approach was rapidly maturing. Several pilots had flown through their own bomb blasts and a more pronounced outlook on the point of survival was becoming prevalent.

On 3 September the fourth loss occurred when LT Frank SISTRUNK, USN, the Operations Officer of VF-54 was hit by AA while bombing a bridge. His plane was smoking as he pulled out of his run, and he headed toward the east coast and safety which lay about thirty miles away. Half way to the beach, at an altitude of about two thousand feet above the terrain his aircraft was seen to nose down in a steep dive and crash into the ground. The aircraft exploded on impact.

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There was no evidence of his having parachuted to safety, and there had been no radio transmissions following the damage. He was therefore presumed dead and reported as killed in action. At approximately the same time Ensign Neil ARMSTRONG, of VF-51 saved his own life with a piece of exceptionally fast headwork. He had been attacking a target in very hilly country. While he was in his run he was hit by AA. He lost elevator control, but in a fraction of a second he rolled in all the back tab he could get. His aircraft, well loaded with ordnance, came so close to the ground that he sheared off two feet of his starboard wing on a power pole. By babying the stick and the trim tabs he was able to fly to friendly territory and to safety. The spin characteristics of the plane were such that a landing speed of over 170 knots would be necessary without positive elevator control which dictated a bail out. This was the first ejection seat bail out made by an Air Group FIVE pilot. ARMSTRONG ejected himself, cleared the seat, opened his chute and landed near K-3 without further incident.

Up until the second of September the Banshees had performed all assigned missions admirably, however, due to the catapult launchings with heavy loads, the supports for the catapult hooks began to crack. For this reason the aircraft were grounded for all flights except Combat Air Patrols for which they were launched without external ordnance or fuel in the tip tanks.

On 4 September death struck twice taking two pilots from one squadron. LTJG R.K. BRAMWELL, USN of VF-51 was hit by flak, the first burst seen in the area, and crashed immediately thereafter. This was considered strong indication that the gun emplacements in the area were automatically or electronically controlled. LTJG J. J. ASHFORD, USN, also of VF-51 on another flight failed to pull out from a rocket run on a truck. Both these aircraft exploded on impact and the pilots were reported as killed in action. The statistics were piling up on both sides of the ledger. The Air Group had destroyed seven bridges, ninety railroad cars, twenty five trucks, twenty five ox-carts, two hundred and fifty troops, and damaged about twice as many of each, the price being the lives of five pilots, one aircrewman and ten aircraft.

On 5 September the force retired to replenish, the BOXER relieved the BON HOMME RICHARD and the pilots of Air Group ONE HUNDRED ONE had an opportunity to discuss the immediate operational problems.

On 6 September the Air Group was back over Korea with bridges as the primary targets. Of the thirty three bridge sorties flown four direct hits and nine near misses were scored leaving gratifying damage and destruction to the enemy supply lanes. For the second consecutive day troop concentrations of over two thousand men each were sighted and attacked.

On 7 September 91 sorties were flown. Transportation was hit hard, in the form of trucks rail cars and carts. On one of the bridge hops Commander P.N. GRAY, skipper of VF-54 was hit by flak while making his run on a group of trucks surrounded by gun emplacements sending out intense and accurate AA. He managed to "nurse" his plane to the coast ditched and was picked up by the USS PC-703 and transferred to the USS PORTERFIELD (DD-682) without injury. Late in a strike hop Ensign E.R. HARRIS, of VF-53 was hit by small arms fire. His knee pad deflected the bullet, but shrapnel particles opened his hand, knee and neck. He returned to the force and landed on board, was immediately given treatment by DR BENNETT, the Air Group Flight Surgeon. The

wounds were not serious however and he was back to flight duty in a few days.

On 8 September the Banshees had part of the answer on the catapult hook trouble and were scheduled for armed reconnaissance, finding many targets of gun emplacements, troop bivouacs and transportation. Successful drops were made on two trains, one with eight cars and the other with twenty seven cars, all heavily loaded. The latter was left with its engine and ten of the cars destroyed. The Air Group lost one pilot LTJG J.B. PARSE, USN of VF-54. He had been napalming troops and machine gun nests. He left these targets, flew on to a bridge, and was making his first bombing run when his plane burst into flames, crashed and exploded. There was no indication that he had escaped the crash and was reported as killed in action. On the same hop LTJG P.L. WORKING of VF-53 was hit by flak and had to ditch his plane. The ditching was successful. When asked if anyone was on the way to his rescue the USS WEDDERBURN (DD-684) reported: "The ship is steaming, the helicopter is launched, the whaleboat is over the side, and supper is hot on the table".

On 9 September the force retired to replenish.

On 10 September 101 sorties were flown. During the launch of one of the Night Hecklers a flare dropped on the deck and ignited. The wind blew the flare toward the parked planes which were fully loaded and fueled. LTJG A. G. SZYMANSKI of VF-54 grabbed the flare by the chute shouds and threw it over the side, thus avoiding a possible disaster. The Night Hecklers found more targets than they could destroy. These consisted mostly of vehicles and supply points however. They dropped spans on two highway bridges in addition to attacking the vehicles. In the afternoon LTJG P. L. WORKING and his wingman attacked gun emplacements on the HODO PANAO peninsula which were shelling UN destroyers off the coast. They put the guns out of action and eased the destroyers' situation.

On 11 September 99 sorties were flown. The most lucrative targets of the day were trains, of which a total of five were attacked and destroyed, including 3 locomotives. After returning from a recco hop LTJG TREADWELL of VF-172 lost all brake-action while taxiing up the flight deck. Unable to maintain control, the aircraft eased into the catwalk and over the side. The pilot was recovered immediately.

On 12 September 99 sorties were flown. Several runs were made on trains but aborted at the last minute. The Reds are using trains and tunnel entrances as flak traps. The train waits just outside the tunnel. When the plane makes his run the train scoots into the tunnel for protection and AA batteries near the mouth of the tunnel get an excellent shot at the aircraft. LT F. J. PRENDERGAST of VF-54 was hit by small arms fire and wounded in the left knee. He returned to the ship and landed on board.

On 13 September the force retired to replenish. About 1000 orders were received to launch strikes and recco hops in the afternoon. In complying with this order a precedent was set because for the 1st time a carrier had completed full replenishment and also launched a major effort against the enemy on the same day. It was hoped that the enemy might be surprised and caught napping, but they were not. The strikes were only moderately successful and the precedent is not considered practical unless conditions on the beach urgently require support by Naval Air.

On 14 September 88 sorties were flown. The primary targets of the day were buildings and railroad cars. Twenty buildings, apparently filled with inflammable material were destroyed. A string of 50 box cars were rocketed and all but 15 of them were destroyed. During a catapult launch an AD-4W was damaged. The tail hook extended upon initial accelteration of the catapult. The launching bridle fouled on the arresting hook and wrapped around the horizontal stabilizer and elevator causing severe damage to the empennage. The aircraft vibrate so violently that it was impossible for LT B.E. O'BRIEN to maintain control and he was forced to ditch. Both he and his two crewman were rescued successfully.

On 15 September flight operations were curtailed by bad weather. 10 sorties were flown of which 8 were CAP and ASP and two were weather recco hops.

On 16 September 83 sorties were flown. These sorties inflicted the greatest damage to date, including a hangar full of ammunition, four locomotives damaged, three bridge spans dropped and over 200 troops killed. After completion of runs on a bridge target LTJG J.K. KELLER and LCDR I.B. OXLEY of VF-172 had a mid-air collision which damaged both aircraft but both returned to the force. KELLER's aircraft had limited aileron control and no flaps. He landed hook up, bounced over the barriers and crashed into the parked planes on the starboard bow. A gasoline fire ensued. Heroic performances of duty were the predominant factors in the fighting of the fire. The flight deck personnel and squadron personnel nearest the crash made courageou efforts to aid the people injured by the initial explosion. Taking no heed of personal safety they disarmed and removed ordnance loads and moved aircraft out of the danger zone. In spite of all efforts the toll of the crash was 3 dead, 2 missing and 14 injured. Four aircraft were destroyed and four received damage requiring overhaul.

On 17 September 63 sorties were flown. Only one catapult was used since the other was subjected to an undetermined amount of heat in the fire of the previous evening. The targets were not plentiful and attacks were limited to vehicular equipment and the usual bridges.

On 18 September the force retired to replenish. 29 sorties were flown most of which were bridge strikes.

On 19 September the final 84 sorties for this period were flown. Bridges, highway transportation and supply points were the primary targets. One AD-4L was lost after launching when the engine failed. The pilot LT A.W. BRYANT of VF-54 was rescued by helicopter. Following the last recovery the ESSEX retired from the force and steamed for Japan.

20 September: No flight operations.

21 September: Arrived Yokosuka, Japan for the first availability period.

III ORDNANCE

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a. Machine Guns

There is a material shortage in Oldsmobile Feed Mechanisms for the Corsair and AD wing guns. At present there are no spares on the ship and the damaged or defective mechanisms are being repaired. This constitutes a drain on maintenance with an unsatisfactory performance of the guns in the air. The defective mechanisms are almost exclusively left hand feeds. There are a few of the old type Davis Feed Mechanisms on board but they were ordered unserviceable by OML-GV-8-51. Further shortage exists in spare parts kits for these guns. At present it is necessary to draw a new gun and cannibalize for parts. This is another sap on manpower since guns must be de-preserved prior to the use of the parts.

The cleaning facilities on the ESSEX are designed for .50 calibre weapons which makes gun cleaning a laborious process. The spare guns carried on board are for the F9F and the AD, and have no mount adaptors for the F4U-4B. As a result the gun mounts for the F4U-4B must be removed from the old guns and used on the new.

The firing circuits in the AD-4L have malfunctioned frequently, resulting in a five to fifteen second delay between the time the trigger is pulled and the time the gun fires. After exhaustive trouble shooting the cause of this malfunctioning has not been determined. The rear mounting brackets and charger retaining brackets in the outboard guns of the AD-4Ls have failed. RUDM's have been submitted on these defects and the brackets have been removed. This reduces the strafing effectiveness by two 20MM guns.

Gun jamming and faulty machine gun ammunition have not been a problem.

This ship does not have adequate ready service stowage space for 20MM belted ammunition. The spaces available are designed for .50 calibre which does not satisfy 20MM requirements.

The present rear charger mount on the F4U-4B is unsatisfactory. Many mounts can be moved so that the bolt stud will pass the charging lug. RUDAOs are being submitted.

b. Bombs

The hard tire trucks give their loads a rough ride over the arresting wires and barriers on the flight deck. They should be replaced by pneumatic tires.

The Aero-14 Bomb Rack is considered unsatisfactory. The rack will not stand the strain of 250# bombs when the wings are folded and are working in the wind. The Mark 55 Bomb Rack is recommended. It has proved entirely satisfactory on the five AD-4Ls on which installed.

A total 12 500# GP, 16 260# fragmentation and 10 napalm bombs have proved duds. No conclusive reason has been determined but the fact that the failures all occurred during a short period indicates a bad group of fuzes. During these t days several bombs were jettisoned on safe but exploded on impact. The arming wires were not brought back by the aircraft. Several VT fuzed bombs have exploded prematurely. Af release the bombs fell approximately 1000 feet and then exploded.

In three instances the Mark 51 Bomb Rack tail arming solonoid plunger has burred with use thus postively arming the tail fuzes of bombs prior to being armed by the pilot.

c. Rockets

Rocket difficulties in the F2H-2 and F9F-2 consisted of breaking of the pig tail connections at high speeds. The present pig tail will not stand the whipping caused at speed required in regular strafing or rocket runs. The best on th spot correction for this fault has been the taping of the pi tail to the fins of the rockets keeping them taut and preventing any movement due to air flow. This, however, is not a satisfactory fix for the problem. It is recommended that direct plug in electrical circuit in conjunction with the rocket launcher be considered.

d. Ordance expenditures for the operating period are as follows:

MUNITIONS	F9F	F2H	F4U	AD	TOTAL
2000# GP	0	0	0	47	47
1000# GP	0	0	35	423	458
500# GP	0	0	198	271	469
250# GP	34	0	464	1439	1937
100# GP	362	92	896	1021	2371
260# Frag	6	0	552	675	1233
350# DB	0	0	1	7	8
6.5" ATAR	288	181	10	20	499
5.0" HVAR	338	0	168	0	506
3.25" SH	0	0	6	30	36
NAPALM	0	0	133	289	422
20MM	96,417	53,990	113,020	61,565	324,993
Flares Mk 6	0	0	0	0	0
AN M12-INC	0	0	0	0	0
M-29 Clusters	0	0	12	19	31

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IV DAMAGE *

a. Damage to Enemy

	Damaged	Destroyed
TANKS	1	2
TRUCKS	96	48
CARS	5	6
LOCOS	11	3
OXCARTS	40	60
HY BRIDGES	29	10#
SUPPLY DUMPS	8	1
FACTORY	1	
WAREHOUSES	8	5
BKS & BUILDINGS	107	70
GUN EMPLACEMENTS	13	28
MORTAR EMPLACEMENTS		3
LUMBER PILES	2	
HORSES		1
VILLAGES	1	
BOATS		5
POWER INSTALLATION		1
BUNKERS		1
RR YARDS	6	4
RR TUNNELS		1
RR TRACKS	8	15%
RR CARS	367	245
RR BRIDGES	52	21#
TROOPS KILLED		1072##
RR BYPASS	11	2**
HWY BYPASS	5	6**
HANGARS		3
FUEL DUMPS	2	2
DAMS		3
VAN	1	
COMMAND POST	1	

* These figures include only targets positively identified and the actual damage observed. Unobserved damage or unidentified targets were not tabulated.

\# Bridges with at least one complete break are counted as destroyed.

% Damages where tracks are broken or cratered including bridge ramps and approaches.

** Includes river beds where fords have been built up.

530 observed troop casualties 542 estimated casualties.

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VF-51

DATE	TYPE A/C	DAMAGE	INFLICTED BY
8-24-51	F9F-2	Frag Holes	Unknown
8-29-51	"	Bullet Holes	30 Calibre
8-29-51	"	Bullet Holes	30 Calibre
9-2-51	"	Bullet Holes	20MM
9-2-51	"	Bullet Holes	30 Calibre
9-2-51	"	Shrapnel Holes	Shrapnel
9-3-51	"	Elevator Cont. By Stick Rendered Inoperative	Unknown
9-3-51	"	A/C Burned Completely	
9-4-51	"	Bullet Holes	50 Calibre (Approx)
9-4-51	"	Bullet Holes	30 Calibre
9-4-51	"	Presumed Fuel Sustem Ruptured Causing Fire	40 MM (presumed)
9-4-51	"	Bullet Holes	30 Calibre
9-4-51	"	A/C Exploded with Pilot When it hit Earth	
9-4-51	"	A/C Exploded with Pilot When it hit Earth	
9-7-51	"	Bullet Holes	50 Calibre, A
9-16-51	"	Bullet Holes	30 Calibre

VF-172

8-21-51	F2H-2	Bullet Holes	20MM-E
8-30-51	"	Frag Holes	Unknown
8-30-51	"	Bullet Holes	30 Calibre
9-11-51	"	Bullet Holes	Small Arms

VF-53

8-23-51	F4U-4B	Bomb Frag Holes	250# G.P.
8-24-51	"	Bullet Holes	30 Calibre
8-25-51	"	Speed Ring Leading Edge	Ammo Link
8-25-51	"	Bullet Holes	Small Arms
8-29-51	"	Bullet Holes	27 Calibre
8-31-51	"	Flak & Bullet Holes	37MM 50 Calibre
8-31-51	"	Flak Holes	37MM
8-31-51	"	Bullet Holes	50 Calibre
9-2-51	"	A/C Burned After Losing Oil	
9-7-51	"	Bullet Holes	30 Calibre, A
9-8-51	"	Bomb Frag & Bullet Holes	30 Calibre
9-8-51	"	Bullet Holes	50 Calibre
9-8-51	"	Bullet Holes	30 Calibre
9-8-51	"	A/C Ditched in Water	50 Calibre (Presumed)
9-10-51	"	Bullet Holes	50 & 30 Calibre

VF-54

8-21-51	AD-4	Bullet Holes	20MM-E
8-23-51	AD-4L	Bomb Frag Holes	250# G.P.

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8-24-51	AD-4L	Controlled Land. In Water	
8-24-51	"	Bullet Holes	30 Calibre, A
8-25-51	"	Bullet Holes	50 Calibre, A
8-25-51	"	Bullet Holes	50 Calibre, A
8-25-51	"	Frag Holes	250# G.P.
8-26-51	AD-4Q	Plane Completely Disintegrated	
8-26-51	AD-4Q	Plane Exploded in Air	
8-26-51	AD-4L	Bullet Holes	30 Calibre, A
8-29-51	AD-4	Bullet Holes	40MM-E
8-29-51	AD-4L	Bullet Holes	27 Calibre, K
8-29-51	"	Bullet Holes	40MM-E
8-29-51	"	Bullet Holes	27 Calibre, A
8-30-51	"	Bullet Holes	37 Calibre, E
8-30-51	"	Bullet Holes	27 Calibre
8-30-51	"	Bullet Holes	27 Calibre
8-39-51	"	Frag Holes	260# G.P.
8-30-51	"	Flak Holes	37MM-E
9-2-51	AD-4	Bullet Holes	30 Calibre
9-3-51	AD-4L	A/C Completely Destroyed	Small Arms
9-3-51	"	Bullet Holes	50 Calibre
9-3-51	AD-4	Flak Holes	37MM
9-3-51	"	Frag Holes	260# G.P.
9-4-51	"	Flak Holes	37MM
9-4-51	AD-4L	Flak & Bullet Holes	37MM & 30 Cal.
9-6-51	AD-4	Bullet Holes	50 & 22 Calibre, A
9-7-51	AD-4L	Bullet Holes	20MM-E
9-7-51	"	Frag Holes	37MM
9-7-51	"	Oil Leak thur small hole in Engine Cowling	50 Calibre
9-8-51	"	A/C Exploded in Air	Ground Fire
9-11-51	"	Bullet Holes	20MM-E
9-11-51	"	Bullet Holes & Flak Holes	20 & 37MM-E
9-11-51	"	Bullet Holes	20MM-E
9-12-51	"	Bullet Holes	20MM-E
9-12-51	"	Bullet Holes	20MM-E
9-12-51	"	Bullet Holes	20MM & 27 Calibre
9-12-51	AD-4Q	Bullet Holes	50 Calibre
9-16-51	AD-4L	Bullet Holes	50 Calibre
9-16-51	AD-3N	Bullet Holes	20MM
9-16-51	AD-4L	Bullet Holes	20MM
9-16-51	AD-4	Frag Holes	250# G.P.-E, E
9-17-51	AD-4L	Bullet Holes	20MM-E

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V PERSONNEL

a. Officer

With the present allowance of aircraft, the number of pilo assigned to each squadron is considered adequate for current operations. A firm requirement exists for a qualified ground ordnance officer capable of instructing pilots in bomb and f selection, competent in armament maintenance and qualified in supervision, direction and installation of ordnance. This re commendation was previously submitted and concurred with by Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet.

b. Enlisted

This Air Group deployed to WesPac with allowance of 606 enlisted personnel. This allowance includes the basic squad- ron's allowance and the composite squadron detachments. Reco mendations were previously made to increase the enlisted ordn rates after the Air Group's first cruise. This recommendatio was given consideration and the complement increased, however the requirement has been further increased by current operati

c. Casualties

The Air Group lost seven (7) pilots, one (1) aircrewman an four (4) flight deck crewman during the reporting period.

LTJG Eugene Leo FRANZ, 504418/1315, USNR, VF-53 Separated from flight leader in instrument weather; no further con- tact. Missing in Action.

LTJG Lorea Dickerson SMITH, 496608/1315, USNR, VC-35, BALCH, Phillip Wendall, ATAN, 325 36 20, USN, VC-35 Aircraft observed to burn and crash into sea approximately five minutes after take-off. Listed as dead.

LT Frank (n) SISTRUNK, 223752/1315, USNR, VF-54 Aircraft hit by anit-aircraft fire; crashed. Killed in Action.

LTJG Ross Kay BRAMWELL, 498061/1310. USN, VF-51 Aircraft hit by anit-aircraft fire; crashed. Killed in Action.

LTJG James Joseph ASHFORD, 447202/1310, USN, VF-51 Crashed while making run on truck; cause unknown. Killed in Actio

LTJG Joseph Buford PARSE, Jr., 506396/1315. USNR, VF-54 Aircraft hit by anti-aircraft fire; crashed. Killed in Action

[redacted]

During the recovery of aircraft, F2H Banshee bounced over the barriers and crashed into a group of planes spotted forward on the flight deck. The following casualties occurred:

LTJG John Kemp KELLER, 491960/1310, USN, VF-172, Listed as Dead.

STEWART, William James, ADC, 382 42 50, USNR, VF-54, Listed as Dead.

BARFIELD, Wade Hilton, AD3, 575 40 12, USN, VF-51. Listed as Dead.

NEIFER, Earl Kenneth, AOC, 311 70 90, USN, VF-51. Listed as Missing.

HARRELL, Charles Lamar, AA, 335 56 65, USN, VF-51. Listed as Missing.

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VI OPERATIONS

a. Operations

This ends the first period for this Air Group in the operating area, which was characterized by the successful utilization of techniques developed prior to entering the operating area and the development of new techniques gathered from combat experience.

The F9F-2 and the F2H-2 jet aircraft were used exclusively on armed reconnaissance flights and day CAP. On August 25, 1951, 23 jet aircraft escorted Air Force heavy bombers on a high altitude bombing mission. This is believed to be the first time that naval jet aircraft have escorted Air Force planes over enemy territory during the Korean Campaign. A proposed jet escort doctrine with diagrams is submitted as enclosure (1) to this report. The jet photo unit from VC-61 has done an excellent job of Photo Reconnaissance and mapping. The F4U and AD, propellor aircraft were used for Close Air Support, interdiction strikes, Naval Gun Spot, and Anti-submarine Patrol.

The night fighters and night attack pilots have been scheduled for day missions so they can become familiar with the operating area over which they must operate at night.

With a large amount of North Korean supply movements being done at night because of the day interdiction mission it is felt that a night carrier operating in this area would be very effective.

The lack of adequate communication channels is definitely a handicap while conducting armed reconnaissance and interdiction strike missions. On these flights a large number of transmissions are necessary and assigned channels are over crowded.

On armed reconnaissance flights this Air Group has had the opportunity to use and evaluate three armed reconnaissance tactical dispositions consisting of two, three and four plane formations. The two plane section had been used most exclusively by the jet squadrons of Task Force 77 prior to arrival. Over a familiar route the two plane section is satisfactory. The low man weaves across the road and the adjacent area at 1000 to 1500 feet above the terrain and from 250 to 350 knots. The low man cannot navigate accurately or take notes if he maintains proper surveillance of the area for camouflaged targets. The number two man must therefore keep the low man in sight, navigate, take notes, be in a position to make attacks on targets pointed out by the low man and to supress AA positions. The two plane section could not be used of air opposi-

[redacted]

tion were present. The three plane armed reconnaissance is considered optimum if air opposition is not expected. The number one man functions exactly as in the two plane flight. The number two man's only responsibility is to keep the low man in sight and attack targets. The number three man flys slightly below and 45 degrees behind the number two man so he can easily keep both planes in sight. He navigates, takes notes and coordinates his attacks with the other two planes.

The four plane armed reconnaissance is slightly cumbersome but will be required when and if aerial opposition is imminen In this formation the duties of the one, two, and three man are the same as in a 3 plane flight. The four man acts as a lookout and takes station abreast the number three man and weaves to maintain position.

The Air Group RESCAP Doctrine is especially fitted to the current conditions under which the sorties are flown. It is assumed that the possibility of capture of a downed pilot in the ocean is extremely remote and his capture if downed over enemy territory is very probable. Air opposition is not an actual problem but must be considered as an imminent threat. On these assumptions the RESCAP Doctrine is best described by example:

(1) With a flight composition of eight aircraft one of which has been downed the flight leader maintains sufficient altitude to establish communications with a rescue agency. The remaining six aircraft are directed to orbit by section in three orbits each of which allows complete surveillance of a 120 degree sector from the position of the downed pilot. These circles are flown close enough to the downed pilot to keep him in sight, but not so close as to draw the attention of enemy ground forces to his position. From these circles enemy threats from any direction can be attacked and suppressed with a minimum loss of time. The position of the sections of planes in the circles are maintained so that one section keeps the downed pilot in sight at all times.

(2) With a flight composition of two aircraft one of which has been downed the airborne pilot has no choice but to alternately climb to altitude to establish communications with a rescue agency and dive to offer attack cover for the downed pilot. The individual situation must dicate the relative importance of the two needs in every case. As a rule of thimb it is believed more practical to get help as quickly as possible unless an immediate threat to the downed pilots safety is observed.

[redacted]

(3) For flights composed of three to seven aircraft the RECAP is flown to give maximum protection and minimum indication of the downed pilot's position. Terrain and enemy troop disposition must be considered in affording this protection.

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VII MAINTENANCE

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a. Conventional Maintenance

The low overhead on the hangar deck limits the areas where wing spreading and drop checks are possible to two areas, #3 Elevator and the after half of Bay 3.

The ship is not equipped to stow the volume of spare parts needed to conduct combat operations. The modification of the ship resulting in limited hangar space makes it difficult to get downed aircraft to the maintenance area quickly. Such delays result in reduced aircraft availability.

Support of the propellor squadron's maintenance program has been excellent. No outstanding supply shortages exist at this time.

b. Jet Maintenance

Considerable concern has arisen in the past over occasional surges in engine RPM during flight. These surges are frequently accompanied by momentary indications of fuel pump cutout, i.e., intermittent blinking of the fuel pump warning light. It has also been observed that the fuel pump warning light will come on momentarily with rapid advancing of the throttle control. Inasmuch as there is little or no information available to the squadrons on the routine maintenance of the Turbo Jet Control or the main fuel pumps, difficulty has been experienced in trouble shooting this type of discrepancy. Removal and cleaning of the high pressure fuel filter in the control seemed to help, but it did not eliminate the power surges at high power settings.

Operational and combat damage account for the major portion of the work load of the structures section. However, the presence of very capable and skilled personnel make loss of flight hours a minor problem.

The Banshee has proven satisfactory for operations from the CV-27A class carrier, but highly skilled airmanship must be used in landing with a pitching deck. There have been two instances of landing struts being pushed up through the wing sections. The Banshee has proven that it can absorb flak damage with the best of the fleet's aircraft, and it has an extremely tough engine. In two cases particles have passed through the engines doing considerable damage to the blades,

[redacted]

but not causing undue vibration or engine stoppage. Failure of the fuselage supports of the catapult hook under stress of catapult launches with high loading have occurred in some of the aircraft. The Banshee tailhook has a tendency to hang on to the arresting gear when retracted. F2H service change #84 is considered the answer to this difficulty and recommended as a requirement for all F2H-2s working from carriers. The J34 engine is an easy power plant to replace. Working at a normal rate, a good crew can change an engine, turn it up and calibrate it in less than two hours. A serious hazard to flight deck personnel exists in flying parts of the catapult hold back rings at the time of launch. Occasionally they are picked up by jet blast and hurled with great force about the deck. It is recommended that a suitable retainer cover for these hold back rings be designed and issued to the fleet.

In the F9F faulty flapper valves in the hydraulic system were allowing hook bounce on landing. The redesigned valve and dashpot have eliminated this trouble. There is a shortage of parts for the installation of the AN/APG-30. VF-51 is experiencing considerable trouble with hook drops from the stinger position. This is attributed to the electrical circuits which are considered too complex and erratic to be practical. When the hook drops as the aircraft taxis forward, after landing, the Davis Barrier is usally engaged and damaged. This necessitates long delays in landing operations while the Davis Barrier tapes are re-rigged. To eliminate the problem of untimely hook drops VF-51 is grounding the hook raising circuit immediately below the holding relay. This is not a satisfactory answer, however, and a redesign of the control circuits is recommended.

Amplified reports of the details of jet maintenance problems and their present corrections are entered in the monthly Jet Information Bulletin.

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SQUADRON	TOTAL COMBAT HOURS	AVERAGE COMBAT HOUR PER PILOT	AVERAGE PER PILOT COMBAT FLIGHT
VF-51	624.5	28.2	17.5
VF-172	581.0	22.3	12.0
VF-53	1261.4	54.4	17.4
VF-54	1539.3	53.1	14.5
VC-3	220.9	44.2	13.4
VC-11	190.5	47.6	16.7
VC-35	217.7	43.5	14.2
VC-61	130.6	32.4	20.7
TOTALS	4760.9	41.9	17.0

FLIGHT SUMMARY BY SORTIES

A/C	F9F-2	F9F-2P	F2H-2	F4U-4B	F4U-5N	AD-4	AD-4N	AD-4W	TOTALS
SQD.	VF-51	VC-61	VF172	VF-53	VC-3	VF54	VC-35	VC-11	
CAS	---	----	---	124	2	123	4	---	253
NGF	---	----	---	6	2	---	---	---	8
STRIKE	---	----	---	256	27	253	12	---	548
CAP	72	----	126	11	2	---	---	---	211
RECCO	246	----	132	---	---	---	---	---	378
PHOTO	---	92	---	---	---	---	---	---	92
PHOTO ESCORT	58	----	39	---	---	---	---	---	97
ASP	---	----	---	6	4	50	25	67	152
NIGHT HECKLER	---	----	---	---	35	---	29	---	64
FLIGHT ESCORT	11	----	12	---	---	---	---	---	23
TOTAL	387	92	309	403	72	426	70	67	1826

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PROPOSED NAVY JET ESCORT OF AIR FORCE BOMBERS

1. The Navy Jet Tactics proposed for cover of Air Force Bomber aircraft is set forth below.

A. Enemy

(a) Superiority in number of aircraft.

(b) MIG-15 superior performance characteristics over F9F and F2H.

(c) Anticipate MIG-15 interception in strength over any target in North Korea.

(d) G.C.I. operational and effective.

(e) Air contact will be made over enemy territory.

(f) Enemy jet fighters will attack bombers as primary target.

(g) Jet attacks will be made abaft the beam and generally within 045 degrees of line of flight.

(h) AA will be encountered enroute and over target effective to 25,000 feet.

B. Friendly Forces

(a) Superior tactics and teamwork.

(b) Bombers provide mutual air defense support with own armament.

(c) Effective range of bomber guns is 2500 feet.

(d) Tactical coordination impossible unless direct liaison between bomber and escort units possible.

2. Based on the above assumptions the following items should be considered in the planning and operational conduct of escort missions of Naval aircraft.

(a) Provide maximum available jet aircraft up to a factor of 1.5 escort plane per bomber.

(b) No escort missions be assigned unless a factor of 75% escort plane per bomber can be assigned and then only when known enemy aircraft defense and the target priority requires the calculated risk.

[redacted]

ENCLOSURE (1)

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(c) Bomber aircraft provide simplified rendezvous with jet aircraft. If at all practicable bombers should rendezvous with jets over or in the vicinity of the jet parent carrier/carrie G.C.I. will be of material assistance in effecting rendezvous particularly in bad weather.

(d) Bomber command provide Navy escort with detailed mission plan, i.e., rendezvous, approach course, evasive action, release altitude, retirement course etc. Close cover will remain with bombers throughout mission. Roving cover will be allowed tactical maneuverability within visual contact of base element unless engagement dictates otherwise.

(e) Operational limitations of jet escort dictates that safety of flight responsibility rests with the jet tactical coordinator.

3. Air Group FIVE escort tactics for the proposed type missions are derived basically from USF-73. There are many variations required due to the use of jet interceptors, however these variations do not deviate to the point that integration between Air Groups would cause complication. In order that the variations anticipated for escort missions be known the following escort tactics are set forth:

Base Element	30 Bombers
Escort (Low Cover)	12 Jets
Escort (Roving Cover)	12 Jets