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U.S.S. BATAAN (CVL 29)
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From: Commanding Officer and Commander Task Element 95.11
To: Chief of Naval Operations
Via: (1) Commander Task Group 95.1
(2) Commander Task Force 95
(3) Commander SEVENTH Fleet
(4) Commander Naval Forces, Far East
(5) Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet

Subj: Action Report 18 May through 30 May 1952

Ref: (a) Article 0705 Navy Regulations
(b) OPNAV INSTRUCTION 3480.4
(c) CINCPACFLT INSTRUCTION 3480.1
(d) CTG 95.1 OpOrder 2-52
(e) CTE 95.11 OpOrder 2-52

Encl: (1) Sample Air Schedule

1. In accordance with reference (a), (b), (c) and (d), the action report of Task Element 95.11 for the period 18 May through 30 May 1952 is submitted herewith.

PART I - GENERAL NARRATIVE

1. During the period 18 May through 30 May 1952, the USS BATAAN (CVL-29), under the command of Captain H. R. HORNEY, 61175/1310, USN, with the Marine Attack Squadron (VMA 312) embarked, operated as a part of the U.S. SEVENTH FLEET in Task Force 95, under the operational control of the Commander Task Group 95.1.

2. The Commanding Officer, USS BATAAN (CVL-29), was OTC, West Coast of Korea, from 19 May 1952 until RADM SCOTT-MONCRIEFF, RN, CTE 95.19 entered the area on 21 May 1952. The Commanding Officer, USS BATAAN (CVL-29), was Commander Task Element 95.11 throughout the period 2100I 19 May 1952 to 2100I 28 May 1952 at which time the command of the Task Element shifted to the Commanding Officer, HMS OCEAN. During the reporting period, TE 95.11 consisted of the USS BATAAN and a maximum of three screening vessels, HMS CONUS (DD-20), HMMS PIET HEIN (DD-805), and USS MARSH (DE-699). The screen was reduced to less than three ships when required by operational demands. Each night one vessel was ordered to CTE 95.12 to make a patrol of the islands south of Haeju. The code name for this patrol is Worthington. Ships were detached late in the afternoon to proceed on this patrol returning the following morning after fueling from a tanker located near Taechon-Do.

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SECURITY INFORMATION

a. The mission of the Task Element is as follows:

(1) Assist in enforcing the United Nations Blockade and in the defense of friendly islands of the West Coast of Korea.

(2) Assist in protecting sea communication in the Yellow Sea.

(3) Provide air spotting services for control of naval gunfire in order to support the United Nations effort in Korea.

(4) Conduct air strikes against selected targets.

(5) Conduct air reconnaissance.

(6) Render close air support services to ground forces.

(7) Act in accordance with current directives of CTG 95.1.

b. The mission of the Carrier Unit is as follows:

(1) Conduct armed air reconnaissance of the West Coast of Korea from the United Nations front lines northward to Lat. 39-15N.

(2) Attack enemy shipping and destroy mines.

(3) Maintain surveillance of enemy airfields in the Haeju-Chinnampo region (ONGJIN, HAEJU, and ONJONG-NI).

(4) Provide airspot services to naval units on request.

(5) Provide close air support and armed air reconnaissance services as requested by Joint Operations Center, Korea (JOC KOREA).

(6) Conduct air strikes against coastal and inland targets of opportunity at discretion.

(7) Be prepared to provide Combat Air Patrol to friendly naval forces operating off the West Coast of Korea.

(8) Render SAR assistance.

3. No enemy surface or air forces were encountered by this Task Element, and therefore, no surface or air action is related. However, enemy small craft operating in the rivers, estuaries, and along the West Coast of Korea were attacked and destroyed by aircraft of the Element when directed or as targets of opportunity. Action of TE 95.11 on Worthington Patrol is reported by CTE 95.12.

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SECURITY INFORMATION

0531I Commenced launching aircraft.

1025I HNMS PIET HEIN returned from patrol.

1219I One VMA-312 aircraft landed aboard with a rough running engine.

1228I RADM SCOTT-MONCRIEFF, RN, CTE 95.19, in the HMS CONSTANCE (DD-71) assumed OTC of the West Coast of Korea.

1526I Landed one aircraft of VMA-312 from K-6.

1722I Landed two aircraft for VMA-312 from Itazuke, Japan.

1723I HMS COMUS was detached on Worthington Patrol.

1900I Recovered final flight.

22 May VMA-312 aircraft flew a total of 34 flights this date.

ORDNANCE EXPENDITURE	MISSIONS
1 - 1000# GP	12 - CAP
6 - 500# GP	12 - TARCAP
26 - 260# Frag.	8 - Recco
24 - 100# GP	1 - Photo
52 - HVAR	1 - Other
16 - WP	
8 - Napalm	
19,140 - Rounds .50 Cal. Ammo.	

0519I Commenced launching aircraft.

0751I One F4U-4 piloted by Captain William J. BARBANES, 037785, USMC, was shot down near Sukch'on, Korea, while on armed reconnaissance. Captain BARBANES landed his plane in a rice paddy and took cover nearby. His wingmates protected him from the enemy by strafing and directed an Air Force helicopter to the scene for the pickup which was made under heavy fire. Captain BARBANES returned aboard for duty the following day.

0855I One VMA-312 aircraft, BUNO 81955, landed aboard with three hung rockets one of which was dangling by an attaching lug. Upon landing all three rockets continued up the deck. One came to rest in the cargo net rocket barrier, the second hit a cross deck pendant and was deflected aft to a position near the LSO platform. The third continued up the deck bouncing

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SECURITY INFORMATION

ORDNANCE EXPENDITURE	MISSIONS
7 - 1000# GP	13 - CAP
26 - 500# GP	14 - TARCAP
8 - 260# Frag.	13 - Recco
16 - 100# GP	
220 - HVAR	
2 - Napalm	
13,450 - Rounds .50 Cal. Ammo	

0532I Commenced launching aircraft.

0937I One aircraft of VMA-312 made an emergency landing aboard. The aircraft approached a stall immediately after catapult shot. Pilot dropped load and landed aboard. Cause of incident was due to exceeding the maximum catapult weight of 15,800 lbs. This was caused by new rocket launcher, MK 14 Mod 5 replacing the old types MK 4 and 5 which added excess weight. Subsequent rocket and bomb loads were reduced to stay within maximum catapult limits.

1005I USS MARSH joined formation.

1214I One aircraft of VMA-312 made deferred emergency landing aboard with oil leak.

1400I Detached three aircraft of VMA-312 for K-6, one of which had hung bridle. Bridle was removed at K-6 and planes continued on assigned missions, landing aboard at a subsequent recovery.

1713I Detached HNMS PIET HEIN to proceed on Worthington Patrol.

1857I Recovered final flight.

21 May VMA-312 aircraft flew a total of 43 flights this date.

ORDNANCE EXPENDITURE	MISSIONS
6 - 1000# GP	14 - CAP
17 - 500# GP	14 - TARCAP
52 - 100# GP	11 - Recco
136 - HVAR	4 - Others
16 - WP	
3 - Napalm	
18,480 - Rounds .50 Cal. Ammo.	

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SECURITY INFORMATION

4. During this operating period VMA-312 aircraft flew Armed Reconnaissance, Target Combat Air Patrol, Combat Air Patrol, Pre-briefed Strikes, Photo and Air Spot for Naval gunfire missions, most of which are illustrated by schedule, enclosure (1). Flight operations were carried out for the entire nine days scheduled, although somewhat curtailed by the following:

a. Weather held two aircraft at Itami, Japan for two days.

b. An engine change held one aircraft at Itazuke, Japan for two days.

c. Two aircraft, unfit for combat, were flown to Itami, Japan on 23 May 1952.

d. On 23 May twelve flights were cancelled due to weather.

e. 27 May sixteen flights were cancelled due to weather.

f. 28 May sixteen flights were cancelled due to weather.

During these nine days VMA-312 aircraft flew 296 combat sorties and 1 photo sortie. Three flights aborted. There was a total of 645.9 combat hours flown for an over all average of 71.9 hours and 33.0 sorties per day. The squadron aircraft allowance was 20, the average on board 18, and the total average aircraft availability 13.

5. During this operating period ships of Task Element 95.11 operated in the Korean Coastal Area Nan in the vicinity of Latitude 37° 30'N, and 124° 30'E.

PART II - CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF EVENTS

18 May	Twelve VMA-312 aircraft were flown aboard after carrier qualification flights this date. Pilots were qualified without major damage to aircraft. The ship returned to Sasebo to top off fuel and Avgas.
1800I	Moored to Bouy 18, Sasebo, Japan.
19 May	Enroute Korean Operating Area NAN.
0615I	Underway for Operating Area NAN in company with HNMS PIET HEIN and HMS COMUS.
2100I	Captain H. R. HORNEY, USN, assumed command of TE 95.11 and OTC West Coast of Korea.
20 May	VMA-312 aircraft flew a total of 40 flights this date.

end over end and striking on the nose directly above #5 landing gear engine and exploded. Damage included plane towing tractors set afire, a three foot hole in the flight deck and major damage to the #5 arresting gear engine. Three men were injured by rocket fragments and one man received injuries taking cover.

1108I HMS COMUS returned from patrol.

1550I USS MARSH reported an unidentified sonar contact bearing 013° (T) 1600 yards from her.

1550I USS MARSH and HNMS PIET HEIN detached to investigate.

1603I Contact evaluated as non-submarine.

1644I USS MARSH detached to proceed on Worthington Patrol.

1859I Recovered final flight.

23 May VMA-312 aircraft flew a total of 32 flights this date.

ORDNANCE EXPENDITURE	MISSIONS
3 - 1000# GP	10 - CAP
6 - 500# GP	12 - TARCAP
24 - 260# Frag.	8 - Recce
50 - 100# GP	2 - Other
23 - HVAR	
2 - Napalm	
20,790 - Rounds .50 Cal. Ammo.	

0532I Commenced launching aircraft.

0744I Two VMA -312 aircraft detached to Itami via K-6. Aircraft unfit for combat.

1000I Landed helicopter from Marine Air Wing One at K-6 for transfer of officer injured in rocket explosion of previous day.

1010I LT Hollis (n) GODDARD, 305978/1310, USN, was transferred by helicopter to USS CONSOLATION at Inchon, Korea for observation and treatment. Diagnosis, DU (rupture traumatic liver).

1035I USS MARSH returned from patrol.

1353I One VMA-312 aircraft proceeded to K-6 with inoperative tail hook.

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SECURITY INFORMATION

1406I Landed two TBM's from Itazuke. Captain William J. BARBANES, 037785, USMC, returned on board.

1458I HNMS PIET HEIN was detached to proceed on Worthington Patrol.

1554I Launched two TBM aircraft for Itazuke, Japan.

1631I Recovered final flight.

24 May VMA-312 aircraft flew a total of 43 flights this date.

ORDNANCE EXPENDITURE	MISSIONS
2 - 1000# GP	14 - CAP
15 - 500# GP	20 - TARCAP
18 - 260# Frag.	8 - Recco
74 - 100# GP	1 - Other
74 - HVAR	
7 - Napalm	
28,050 - Rounds .50 Cal. Ammo.	

0532I Commenced launching aircraft.

0738I One VMA-312 aircraft returned from K-6.

0755I HNMS PIET HEIN returned from patrol.

0938I Two VMA-312 aircraft proceeded to K-13. One F4U-4 had a hung 100 pound bomb. The two planes returned aboard at a later recovery.

1522I HMS COMUS was detached to proceed on Worthington Patrol.

1902I Recovered final flight.

25 May VMA-312 aircraft flew a total of 41 flights this date.

ORDNANCE EXPENDITURE	MISSIONS
4 - 1000# GP	12 - CAP
16 - 500# GP	24 - TARCAP
8 - 260# Frag.	4 - Recco
154 - 100# GP	1 - Other
24 - HVAR	
8 - WP	
8 - Napalm	
30,360 - Rounds .50 Cal. Ammo.	

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SECURITY INFORMATION

0318I HMMS PIET HEIN left station to investigate flares about 5 miles off starboard bow.

0338I HMMS PIET HEIN returned to formation having identified the lights as those of fishing craft.

0504I Commenced launching aircraft.

1008I HMS CONUS returned from patrol.

1138I One F4U-4 replacement aircraft, BUNO 81558, piloted by Captain J. D. JOHNSON, Jr., 031873, USMC, landed on board from Itami, Japan.

1435I One F4U-4, BUNO 97116, piloted by Captain Baylor P. GIBSON, Jr., 022643, USMC, made an emergency landing at Chodo with engine trouble. No damage to aircraft but was unable to fly back during operating period.

1458I USS MARSH was detached to proceed on Worthington Patrol.

1545I Helicopter UP 35 landed aboard from CTE 95.15 located at Paegangyong Do with 1st LT EVANS, USMC for the purpose of discussing close air support training exercises with the guerrilla forces which are in training on the island.

1814I Navy Helicopter UP 35 left the ship for its base with SHARPE, M.T., 387452, SGT, USMC embarked for temporary additional duty in connection with repairs to F4U-4, BUNO 97116, at Chodo, Korea.

1910I Recovered final flight.

26 May VMA-312 aircraft flew a total of 39 flights this date.

ORDNANCE EXPENDITURE	MISSIONS
8 - 1000# GP	14 - CAP
14 - 500# GP	15 - TARCAP
16 - 260# Frag.	7 - Recce
74 - 100# GP	3 - Strike
14 - HVAR	
8 - WP	
4 - Napalm	
21,120 - Rounds .50 Cal. Ammo.	

0532I Commenced launching aircraft.

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SECURITY INFORMATION

0915I One aircraft of VMA-312 made deferred emergency landing aboard with oil leak.

1046I USS MARSH returned from patrol.

1334I One aircraft of VMA-312 made deferred emergency landing aboard with oil leak.

1342I One aircraft of VMA-312 launched as replacement.

1428I HNMS PIET HEIN detached to proceed on Worthington Patrol.

1856I Recovered final flight.

27 May VMA-312 aircraft flew a total of 12 flights this date.

ORDNANCE EXPENDITURE	MISSIONS
2 - 1000# GP	6 - CAP
4 - 260# Frag.	6 - TARCAP
27 - 100# GP	
6 - Napalm	
3,890 - Rounds .50 Cal. Ammo.	

0530I Air Operations delayed due to weather.

0845I HMS BELFAST (CA-35) and HNMS PIET HEIN joined formation.

1101I Commenced launching aircraft.

1105I HMS BELFAST was detached to relieve HMS CEYLON as CTE 95.12.

1501I HMS COMUS detached to investigate floating object.

1517I HMS COMUS joined formation. Reported recovery of standard U.S. kapok-type life jacket.

1700I HMS COMUS was detached to proceed on Worthington patrol.

1848I Recovered final flight.

28 May VMA-312 aircraft flew a total of 16 flights this date.

CONFIDENTIAL
SECURITY INFORMATION

ORDNANCE EXPENDITURE	MISSIONS
6 - 1000# GP	6 - CAP
2 - 500# GP	6 - TARCAP
4 - 260# Frag.	4 - Recce
16 - 100# GP	
8 - HVAR	
2 - Napalm	
10,230 - Rounds .50 Cal. Ammo.	

0530I Commenced launching aircraft.

1016I HMS COMUS returned from patrol.

1446I Detached HMS COMUS to proceed on Worthington Patrol.

1558I Recovered final flight.

1601I Detached USS MARSH to proceed to COMCORTDIV 92.

1800I Left Area NAN for Yokosuka with HNMS PIET HEIN in company.

2100I HMS OCEAN (CVL-68) assumed CTE 95.11.

29 May Steaming enroute from Korean Operating Area NAN via Van Diemen Strait to Yokosuda, Japan.

0629I HNMS PIET HEIN was detached to proceed independently to Sasebo, Japan.

30 May Steaming enroute from Korean Operating Area NAN via Van Diemen Strait to Yokosuka, Japan.

1736I Anchored in Berth BAKER 136 Yokosuka, Japan.

PART III - PERFORMANCE OF ORDNANCE MATERIAL AND EQUIPMENT INCLUDING AMMUNITION EXPENDITURES

1. Performance of Ordnance Material and Equipment:

a. The rocket which exploded on the flight deck on 22 May was a standard 5.0-Inch Fin Stablized HVAR Rocket. The rocket assembly consisted of a MK 6 MOD 1 Rocket Head, fitted with a MK 165 MOD 0 Base Fuze and with a MK 149 MOD 0 Nose Fuze installed, and a MK 10 MOD 5 Rocket Body with tail fin assembly installed.

b. The rocket was noted to be hanging from one lug before the plane landed. It has not been definitely established whether this was the forward or after lug since accounts of eye witnesses conflict on this

point. The rocket broke free when the plane was arrested by the cross-deck pendant and began tumbling up the deck with considerable velocity. It struck heavily against the deck in a nose down position, bounced and landed on the motor tail, bounced again, landed a second time in a nose down position and then exploded.

c. When the head exploded, the force of the explosion shattered the rocket motor into many fragments, most of which were blown over the side. Some pieces of the propellant grain were scattered about the flight deck. A few of these fragments burned as a result of the heat of the explosion but caused no appreciable damage. Fragments of the head or body casing were found after the explosion. These, however, were too small and distorted to permit identification of their source.

2. Thirty-two rockets (5.5%) failed to fire. All circuits were checked and found satisfactory. Since most hung rockets came off the planes during landing, it was not possible to determine whether pigtail had been severed prior to landing, but that is assumed to be the case.

3. Two 1000 lb. GP, three 500 lb. GP and one 260 lb. Fragmentation bomb failed to explode. Electrical failure was found in one third of the cases. It is estimated that the remaining two thirds were released too low to allow sufficient time for arming.

4. Four napalm duds were reported. The reason for their failure to explode is unknown.

5. Fusing on bombs:

BOMBS	NOSE FUSE	TAIL FUSE	DELAY
2 - 1000# GP	VT - T91	AN - M102A2	.01
2 - 500# GP	AN - M139A1	AN - M101A2	.025
1 - 500# GP	AN - M139A1	AN - M101A2	.01
1 - 260# Frag.	AN - MK219DC	None	Inst.

4 - Napalm

2 - M157 Fuse
1 - M15 Igniters, WP
1 - M16 Igniter, WP

6. Ammunition Expenditure:

a. During the operating period covered by this report the following ordnance was expended by VMA-312 aircraft:

39 - 1000# GP	535 - HVAR
98 - 500# GP	48 - WP 3.25" Rockets
108 - 260# Frag.	32 - Napalm
487 - 100# GP	93,650 - Rounds .50 Cal. Ammo.

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SECURITY INFORMATION

PART IV - SUMMARY OF OWN AND ENEMY BATTLE DAMAGE

1. Own Battle Damage:

a. None of the ships of Task Element 95.11 sustained battle damage.

b. For damage sustained by aircraft see Naval Air Warfare Aircraft Vulnerability Report.

2. Battle Damage Inflicted on the Enemy:

a. Ships of Task Element 95.11 inflicted no damage on the enemy while operating as part of the task element during the period covered by this report.

b. For detailed battle damage inflicted on the enemy by the aircraft of Task Element 95.11, see Naval Air Warfare Attack Report. A summary follows:

TARGET	DESTROYED		DAMAGED
Railroad Tunnel			1
Railroad Bridges			3
Road Bridges	2		4
Vehicles			3
Railroad Cars	2		7
Pack Animals	1		
Oxen	97		
Oxcarts	2		7
Boats	7		52
Supply Stacks	16		13
Buildings	297		126
Supply Dumps	3		5
Troops	212		
Warehouses	13		25
Rail Cuts		2	
Road Cuts		4	
Bunkers	1		13

PART V - PERSONNEL PERFORMANCE AND CASUALTIES

1. Personnel performance was considered to be excellent, fire fighting personnel were outstanding.

2. Casualties:

a. On the morning of 22 May 1952, Major Neal E. BRENDESEN, 020285, USMC was injured when a rocket was shaken loose from the wing rack of a

returning aircraft and exploded. Nature of injury: Wound lacerated, right side of chest.

b. LT Hollis (n) GODDARD, 305978/1310, USN was also injured in the rocket explosion. Nature of injury: Contusions, back and fracture of 10th rib.

c. HARGRAVES, Richard B., 412 13 01, AFC, USN was also injured in the rocket explosion. Nature of injury: Wound, lacerated left arm and chest.

d. BOVINO, Vito (n), Jr., 233 25 55, QMSN, USN, was injured while attempting to avoid the exploding rocket. Nature of injury: Wound, lacerated left forehead.

PART VI - SPECIAL COMMENTS

1. COMMENT: Examination of Part II will reveal that emergency landings and aborts started on the first day of operations and continued throughout the period. Three aircraft could not be flown aboard on departure from Sasebo due to material condition. In addition three suffered major damage from hard landings. Another three failed structurally from apparently normal landings immediately preceding the discovery of the failures. Another had a forced landing at Chodo and was not available for the remainder of the period.

This condition is attributed directly to the rotation of personnel in the squadron. The preceding inport maintenance period was used for carrier qualification of new pilots. The aircraft were subjected to field carrier landing practice instead of getting the required maintenance. They were then subjected to carrier qualification landings off Sasebo in a flat calm with minimum wind the day before going to the operating area.

This continued turnover of personnel is reflected in other ways adversely affecting the over-all performance of the squadron.

RECOMMENDATION: That a plane-pilot ratio be established and that this group operate as a unit for a six month's period as is done in other carrier squadrons.

2. COMMENT: Three H-4 Catapult Bridles were carried away by the tail wheels of F4U-4 aircraft during catapult shots during this period. One dropped clear in flight; the other two were so entangled that the planes were sent to an airfield ashore. The one that dropped clear of the aircraft nearly caused a crash on take-off when one eye of the bridle fouled the tailwheel and the other eye fell over the bronze arrester

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SECURITY INFORMATION

severely jerking the aircraft before clearing the arrester. Following this near accident, use of the H-4 bridle arrester was discontinued and the H-4 bridle catcher, using the air cylinder, was substituted.

3. COMMENT: Under the circumstances discussed in Part III, Section 1, it is impossible to definitely determine the exact cause of the rocket explosion. However, several witnesses observed that the weather cap of the MK 149 Nose Fuze was still in place as the rocket traveled up the deck. This would tend to indicate that the nose fuze could not have been armed and consequently could not have contributed to the explosion. The most plausible explanation would be that the explosion was due to action of the Mk 165 Base Fuze. The rocket struck nose down on the flight deck with considerable force. It is believed possible that this force was great enough to cause the inertia of the arming plunger to permit the plunger to part the shear wire and move forward, permitting the firing pin body locking ball to be released. This would have permitted the firing pin spring to force the firing pin body back, extracting the firing pin from the shutter. Since there would have been no set-back action, the shutter lock pin would not have been effective. The shutter spring could have then rotated the shutter, aligning the detonator between the firing pin and the booster, thus putting the fuze in a fully armed condition. When the rocket struck the deck nose down the second time, again with considerable force, the inertia of the firing pin would have moved the firing pin forward to strike the detonator and set off the explosive train.

H. R. HORNEY

5 JUL 1952
FAR EAST STATION

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