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UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
AIR FORCE
AIR TASK GROUP TWO

FF12/A16-3
ATG-2:ffc
Serial: 016

26 November 1952

[redacted]

From: Commander Air Task Group TWO
To: Commanding Officer, USS ESSEX (CVA-9)

Subj: Action Report of Air Task Group TWO for period of 1 November 1952 to 24 November 1952

Ref: (a) OPNAV INST. 3480.4 of 1 July 1951

Encl: (1) Subject Action Report

1. This report is forwarded as enclosure (1) for inclusion in the action report of the USS ESSEX (CVA-9) as required by reference (a)

J. G. Daniels
J. G. DANIELS

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CHRONOLOGY

1 to 12 November restricted availability Yokosuka Japan
13 November underway to operating area
14 November Total Sorties - 42 - Operational refresher flights.

15 November Total Sorties - 79 - operational refresher flights.

16 November Total Sorties - 80 - joined CTF-77.

17 November Total Sorties - 96

18 November Total Sorties - 43

19 November Replenishment - No air operations.

20 November Total Sorties - 91 - lost one F2H-2P due to malfunctioning of the catapult, pilot rescued.

21 November Total Sorties - 108 - F9F-2 crashed in water following catapult launch - pilot killed.

22 November Total Sorties - 97 - F9F-2 disappeared over enemy territory - pilot missing in action

23 November Total Sorties - 102 - AD-4 crashed as result of AA fire while on search for a missing pilot. Pilot killed in action.

24 November replenishment - No air operations.

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1 ENCLOSURE (1)

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COMPOSITION OF FORCES

UNIT	TYPE A/C	OPERATIONAL A/C 11-1	OPERATIONAL A/C 11-24	PILOTS 11-1	PILOTS 11-24
VF-23 LCDR. C. C. AIKINS	F9F-2	15	13	23	21
VF-821 CDR. D. W. COOPER	F9F-2	14	13	24*	24*
VF-871 LCDR. F.C. HEARRELL	F4U-4	14	13	24**	24**
VA-55 CDR. L. W. CHICK	AD-4	14	12	22	21
VC-3 (DET I) LT. C.W. CHAPMAN	F4U-5N	4	4	5	5
VC-11 (DET I) LCDR. D.W. KNIGHT	AD-4W	3	3	5	5
VC-35 (DET I) LCDR. E.H. POTTER	AD-4N	4	4	6	6
VC-61 (DET I) LT. T.L. NEILSON	F2H-2P	3	2	4	4

*Includes Commander Air Task Group TWO
**Includes Operations Officer Air Task Group TWO

MISSION

The mission of Air Task Group TWO is that set forth in CTF-77 OP Order NR. 2-52. The mission of this Air Group is to perform close air support, reconnaissance interdiction and air bombardment missions in order to destroy enemy forces, communications, and installations in support of United Nations forces.

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OPERATIONS

Flight Summary by Sorties.

	F9F	F4U	AD-4	F4U-5N	ADW	ADN	F2H-2P	TOTAL
Strike	105	67	89	--	--	1	--	262
Recco	56	--	--	--	--	--	--	56
ASP (Day)	--	--	--	--	9	--	--	9
ASP (Night)	--	--	--	--	2	--	--	2
Night Heckler	--	--	--	11	--	14	--	25
NGF Spot	--	13	--	--	--	--	--	13
Photo	--	--	--	--	--	--	22	22
Photo Escort	22	--	--	--	--	--	--	22
ASP (Escort (Day)	--	1	4	--	--	2	--	7
ASP Escort (Night)	--	--	--	2	--	2	--	4
CAP	90	--	--	--	--	--	--	90
TARCAP	19	2	2	--	--	--	--	23
CAS	--	24	16	--	--	--	--	40
Pilot Search	--	4	4	--	--	--	--	8
ECM	--	--	--	--	--	8	--	8
ECM Escort	--	6	--	--	--	--	--	6
AEW	--	--	1	--	1	--	--	2
Other	47	32	40	11	7	7	--	144
Total	339	149	156	24	19	34	22	743

Grand Total: 743

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Per Pilot Data.

Per Pilot	F9F	F2H-2P	F4U-4	F4U-5N	AD-4	AD-4N	AD-4W
Sorties	7.7	5.5	6.2	4.8	7.0	5.7	4.0
Flight Hrs.	11.9	9.5	16.4	10.7	19.3	15.0	8.1
Carrier Landings	7.7	5.3	6.1	4.4	7.0	5.7	4.0

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Damage Inflicted by Enemy.

DATE NOV	SQDN	TYPE	BUNR	CAUSE	POSITION OF DAMAGE	CODE
16	VF-23	F9F-2	127194	AA	Port stub wing	D-3
17	VA-55	AD-4	129016	AA Med	Propeller & Fuselage	D-2
20	VF-821	F9F-2	123054	AA Med	Port stabilizer	D-3
21	VF-821	F9F-2	123425	AA Med	Nose cone	D-3
21	VA-55	AD-4	129013	AA Med	Empanage	D-3
22	VA-55	AD-4	128920	AA Med	Stbd wing stub	D-2
22	VF-23	F9F-2	123033	Undt	Aircraft disappeared over enemy territory	L
23	VA-55	AD-4	129012	AA	Aircraft crashed in enemy territory	L
23	VF-821	F9F-2	125106	AA	Empanage fuselage	D-2

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Damage Inflicted on Enemy.

	DESTROYED	PROBABLY DESTROYED	DAMAGED
Trucks	22	7	33
Troops	15	50	--
RR Cars	8	--	4
Boat	13	--	3
Bldgs (Small)	32	10	31
RR Bridges	1	1	4
Hwy Bridges	2	--	6
Warehouses	50	33	22
Gun Positions	12	24	3
Supply Dumps	4	--	3
RR Cuts	15	--	--
Locomotive	--	--	2
Barracks	12	---	8
Factory	3	--	1
Saw Mill	--	--	1
Bunkers	12	3	--
Ammo Dumps	1	--	--
Vehicle Shelters	2	--	--
Transformer Station	1	--	--

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OPERATIONS

The development of semi-coordinated strikes (those of two or more groups by carriers on targets within 3 to 5 miles of each other) have eliminated the mandatory requirement of conferences between strike leaders and further eliminates the all to frequent "briefing in the Air". On this type of strike the land-launch frequency must be utilized by individual groups, making the strike more efficient and less complicated. A common channel, for "time of strike coordination" between strike leaders, can be assigned at the Staff level.

Proper radio channelization of flights between operating units is assuming more importance as the targets shift from the strategic to the tactical.

JET OPERATIONS

On missions involving an Air Controller, within the immediate vicinity of the main line of resistance, it is extremely important that the "time on target" be specified and that the controller is on station, on time. Any delay forces jet aircraft to orbit and can only be accomplished at the expense of the mission involved and in many instances has forced jets to completely abort the flight and dump ordnance on relatively unimportant targets.

MAINTENANCE

Average availability for Squadrons attached to Air Task Group TWO were as follows:

VF-23	92.4%
VF-821	93.7%
VF-871	99.3%
VA-55	90.0

Composite Detachments are included in squadron aircraft availability.

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ORDNANCE

ORDNANCE EXPENDITURES

Type Ordnance	AD4	F4U4	F9F2	AD4N	F4U5N	TOTAL
2000 #GP	34					34
1000 #GP	155	29				184
500 #GP	141	73		14	10	238
250 #GP	244	236	352	42		874
100 #GP			283	84	54	421
350 #Depth Bomb	2				1	3
260 #FRAG	102	64	320		38	524
3".25 ASAR	12			14	12	38
5" ATAR	86	136	56			278
MK 6 Flares				76		76
20MM	16,228		22,485	5,900	4,500	49,113
.50 CAL.		33,000				33,000
TOTAL LBS	438,899	181,680	238,226	37,397	26,945	923,129
TOTAL TONS	219,449	90.84	119.113	18.689	13.474	461.565

HUNG ORDNANCE REPORT

Type Ordnance	AERO 14A	MK 55-1	MK 9 LAUNCHERS	TOTAL
100 #GP		1		1
250 #GP	2	1		3
260 #FRAG		3		3
ATAR	14		5	19
TOTAL	16	5	5	26

DISPOSITION OF HUNG ORDNANCE

Ordnance	Remained on rack	Dropped off at Landing	TOTAL
100 #GP	1		1
250 #GP	3		3
260 # FRAG	3		3
ATAR	18	1	19
TOTAL	25	1	26

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ORDNANCE

1. 20MM and .50 Caliber Guns

The performance of all guns installed in aircraft was excellent. Very few stoppages and only two malfunctions have occurred. The barrel of one 20MM gun installed in an AD4 aircraft exploded about four inches from muzzle causing minor damage to wing of aircraft. Another [illegible] barrel was found to have a slight bulge about 4 inches from [illegible] end. 49.113 rounds of 20MM and 33,000 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition were fired during this period. In only two cases were stoppages reported that might have been caused by cold weather.

2. Bombs and Bomb Racks

A total of 2,273 bombs of all types were dropped during this period. Only five bombs failed to release properly. These were returned aboard and all remained on racks during recovery. The overall performance of all types of bomb racks was considered excellent.

3. Rockets

A total of 316 rockets of all types were carried by aircraft during the operating period. Of this number carried, nineteen rockets failed to fire and were returned aboard, all except one remaining on launchers during recovery. Broken pigtails attributed to the return of nine rockets, six rockets came unplugged and the remainder failed for various causes. The overall performance of rockets and launchers was considered to be good.

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MEDICAL

1. Performance

a. Performance has been excellent and morale outstanding during this period of operation. However the loss of three pilots in a very short period of time during the latter part of the period severely impaired the motivation of the air group personnel in general. This drop was noted with the loss of the third pilot on the last hop of the period, and it is believed that the effect will be only temporary.

2. Illness

a. There have been 23 pilots grounded during this period; 14 for short periods of time, 9 for longer periods. Upper respiratory infections were the predominant causes for grounding the various personnel. Of the 9 grounded for longer periods of time, 2 were grounded for Thrombosed Hemorrhoids, 1 for severe burns, 1 for a fractured arm, 1 for a generalized Pruritis of undetermined origin, 1 for respiratory illness. No pilots have been grounded more than once for this period.

3. Casualties

a. Wounded in action.

1. There were no personnel wounded in action during this period of operation.

b. Missing in action.

1. LTJG Daniel Lorenz MUSETTI, 507308/1315, USNR was reported as missing in action following a strafing run over communist territory, North Korea, 22 November 1952, in which he was flying "tail end Charlie" position. Last radio contact with him was made just prior to commencing the run, and upon pulling out, it was noted that he was no longer with the flight group. Repeated searches for evidence of the pilot and the aircraft proved unsuccessful.

4. Psychiatric Disorder.

a. There were no man hours lost due to psychiatric disorders.

5. Venereal Disease.

a. There were 10 cases of veneral disease; 8 of which were gonorrhea, 2 of which were chancroid.

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6. Deaths.

a. LTJG Leo Thomas FREITAS, 508154/1315, USNR, was declared dead on 21 November 1952 when the F9F-2 he was flying was seen to strike the water about 250 yards off the port bow following a normal catapult shot. The plane disintegrated instantly, and no trace of the pilot was found.

b. LTJG John William HEALY, 486199/1310, USN was declared dead on 23 November 1952 following a search mission over communist territory, North Korea. His plane was seen to explode into flames, the tail section break off, and the aircraft go into a spin prior to crashing and exploding on the ground. His wingman followed him down and did not notice any evidence of a parachute opening. He reported that there was no chance for survival.

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16