U.S.S. VALLEY FORGE (CV-45)
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CONFIDENTIAL SECURITY INFORMATION

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NAVHISTDIVINST 5500.1
By: OP-09B92C

From: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. VALLEY FORGE (CV-45)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (Op-55)
Via: (1) Commander Carrier Division FIVE
(2) Commander Task Force SEVENTY SEVEN
(3) Commander SEVENTH Fleet
(4) Commander Naval Forces, FAR EAST
(5) Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: Action Report for the period 14 April thru 16 May 1952

Ref: (a) OPNAV Instruction 3480.5 dated 1 July 1951

Encl: (1) Commander, CATG ONE conf ltr ser 08 of 19 May 1952 p. 9

1. In accordance with reference (a), the Action Report for the period of 14 April through 16 May 1952 is hereby submitted:

PART I

COMPOSITION OF OWN FORCES AND MISSION

In compliance with CTF 77 confidential dispatch 280236Z of March 1952, the USS VALLEY FORGE (CV-45), CAPTAIN OSCAR PEDERSON commanding, with ComCarDiv FIVE (REAR ADMIRAL F. W. MC MAHON) embarked departed Yokosuka, Japan for the operating area on 14 April 1952.

On 16 April 1952 the USS VALLEY FORGE (CV-45) joined Task Force 77 close to the 38th Parallel on the east coast of Korea. The Task Force was commanded by REAR ADMIRAL A. SOUCEK, ComCarDiv THREE, aboard the USS PHILIPPINE SEA (CV-47) and operating under Task Force 77 Operation Order 22-51 (2nd Revision) dated 6 December 1951. It was composed of USS PHILIPPINE SEA (CV-47), USS VALLEY FORGE (CV-45), USS MANCHESTER (CL-83), USS BOXER (CV-21), and various DD's of the screen.

On 23 April 1952, REAR ADMIRAL F. W. MC MAHON, USN was relieved as ComCarDiv FIVE and Commander, Task Force SEVENTY SEVEN by REAR ADMIRAL JOHN PERRY, USN.

On 14 May 1952 the USS VALLEY FORGE (CV-45) departed Task Force 77 in accordance with CTF 77 confidential dispatch 122350Z of May 1952 and arrived in Yokosuka, Japan 16 May 1952 for a period of maintenance and upkeep.

The mission of Task Force 77 was in accordance with CTF 77 OpOrd No. 22-51 (2nd Revision).

Commander Carrier Air Task Group ONE is CDR C. H. GRABILL, Jr., USN. See enclosure (1) for the on-board count of pilots and aircraft at the beginning of flight operations on 14 April 1952.

PART II

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4-16-52: Joined Task Force 77. Completed air group refresher training.

4-17-52: Conducted combat air operations. The aircraft of CDR C. H. CRABILL, Jr., CATG-1 was hit by AA fire causing him to ditch his AD off the coast near Songjin. CDR CRABILL was recovered in good condition by an AMS.

4-18-52: Conducted combat air operations.

4-19-52: Conducted combat air operations.

4-20-52: Conducted combat air operations. LT J. C. WORKMAN, VF 194, while flying an AD was hit by small arms fire near Wonsan. A fire in the cockpit forced him to bail out. His parachute did not open. LT WORKMAN is listed as killed in action.

4-21-52: Replenished at sea.

4-22-52: Conducted combat air operations.

4-23-52: Conducted combat air operations. LCDR D. E. BRUBAKER, VF 194, received minor head injuries when a bullet penetrated his cockpit, grazing his left temple. LCDR BRUBAKER received medical treatment upon return from mission.

4-24-52: Conducted combat air operations.

4-25-52: Replenished at sea.

4-26-52: Conducted combat air operations. LT G. N. WILSON, VF 653, lost control of his F4U on take-off and crashed at sea. The pilot was recovered in good condition.

4-27-52: Conducted combat air operations. LT W. C. SHEPARD, VC 35, ditched his AD-4NL in Wonsan Harbor after being struck by AA fire. The pilot and crewman, LOVELL, E. F., AD3, were recovered in good condition.

4-28-52: Conducted combat air operations.

4-29-52: Conducted combat air operations.

4-30-52: Replenished at sea.

5-1-52: Conducted combat air operations.

5-2-52: Conducted combat air operations. LT J. Z. CARROS, VF 52, crashed near the Choshin Reservoir having been hit by small arms fire. The pilot is listed as killed in action. LTJG W. S. PARR, Jr. and LTJG R. J. LEAR ditched their planes at sea. LTJG PARR and LTJG LEAR were recovered in good condition by a crash boat from King 18 and helicopter from USS VALLEY FORGE (CV-45).

5-3-52: Replenished at sea in the morning. Conducted combat air operations in the afternoon.

5-4-52: Conducted combat air operations.

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5-9-52: Conducted combat air operations.

5-10-52: Conducted combat air operations.

5-11-52: Replenished at sea.

5-12-52: Conducted combat air operations. ENS R. G. BUSH, VF 653, received a small arms bullet in the cockpit which started a flash fire. ENS BUSH received second degree burns about the face, however, the fire soon extinguished itself and ENS BUSH returned aboard without further incident.

5-13-52: Conducted combat air operations. LT J. D. SANKO, VF 653 received a direct hit by 37mm fire just north of Munchon. His plane crashed and burned. LT SANKO is listed as killed in action.

5-14-52: Replenished at sea.

5-15-52: Departed Task Force 77. Enroute to Yokosuka, Japan for maintenance and upkeep.

5-16-52: Arrived in Yokosuka, Japan.

PART III

PERFORMANCE OF ORDNANCE MATERIAL AND EQUIPMENT

A. Ammunition Expended:

See enclosure (1).

PART IV

BATTLE DAMAGE

A. Damage to Ship:

On 7 May 1952, while alongside USS FIREDRAKE (AE-14) for rearming, the following damage was incurred when USS FIREDRAKE lost all electrical power, cuasing her to sheer out of control to port striking the VALLEY FORGE.

a. A hole was torn in the hull plating between main deck and 01 deck levels, frames 33-37 starboard. The forecastle deck in the same area was torn and buckled, and frames were slightly warped as far down as the first platform deck. The hole has been temporaily patched by ship's force, and it is expected that permanent repairs will be accomplished prior to return to the states.

b. Starboard accommodation ladder and platform were buckled. This damage has been repaired by ship's force.

c. The loading platform at the forward replenishment station was buckled and the supporting brackets were twisted and bent. This damage has been repaired by ship's force.

B. Damage to Aircraft:

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PART V

PERSONNEL

A. Performance:

Personnel performance continued to be excellent.

During this operating period the on-board count of personnel averaged a satisfactory total of 1996. The total losses for various reasons was 46, but these were numerically offset by 64 gains. There were 18 men absent on temporary additional duty and 10 absent on emergency leave. The petty office shortages were somewhat alleviated by 42 advancements from PO2 to PO1, 77 advancements from PO3 to PO2, and 168 advancements from non-rated grades to PO.

Despite the recent advancements in rating, there remain critical shortages of petty officers in gunnery, communications and engineering ratings. The vigorous training program, which resulted in the aforementioned large number of advancements, continued unabated, integrated with the ship's work.

B. Morale:

a. Although Air Task Group ONE continued to augment its distinguished combat record, some evidence of pilot fatigue was noted during this period on the line due to the nature of operations and the substantital number of operating days since the ship's arrival in the Western Pacific last December 4th. This fatigue was accentuated by the lack of replacement pilots to offset pilot losses in combat. The average number of pilots available during this period was 95, which frequently required each pilot to fly at least once each operating day, and in some cases, two missions per operating day per pilot were necessary. Once the pilot per plane ratio drops below 1.5 for props and 1.2 for jets the law of diminishing returns becomes evident, as some of the pilots became grounded for various medical reasons requiring the remainder to fly more, thereby heightening in turn their fatigue level.

Replacement pilots should be on their way automatically as soon as casualty reports are received. It was noted that replacement pilots after being requested were delayed because of inoculations. It is recommended that replacement pool pilots receive required immunization well in advance of any expected deployment, and that they have their personal affairs adjusted in order to permit prompt transfer when required. It is also recommended that the practicability of establishing a replacement pilot pool under ComFairJapan be studied. Their carrier landing proficiency could be maintained by the ready carrier stationed at Yokosuka.

b. The morale of the crew continued high, fostered by pride in the accomplishments of the ship and Air Group, and by the following factors:

(1) Excellent mail service contributed substantially.

(2) Recreational opportunities were improved. Milder weather encouraged more hangar deck and shore-side athletics.

(3) The Hobby Shop was very busy. In April, $1200 worth of materials were sold to hobbyists.

(4) An excellent "

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(6) The Air Intelligence Office continued effective use of the IMC circuit to present summaries of each day's combat activities.

(7) A "Happy Hour" held on the eve of a mid-tour replenishment was highly successful. The Navy Relief Society drive was furnished unusual impetus by this kick-off.

(8) The band performed at the in-port show and at the "Happy Hour". On replenishment days, the band's performances from the hangar deck were enthusiastically received, both by VALLEY FORGE personnel and by ships alongside. An orchestra made up from the band played once a week during the evening meal in the wardroom, the CPO Mess and the First Class Petty Officer's Mess.

C. Chaplain:

Religious activities were numerous, and they were well supported. Protestant, Catholic, and Latter Day Saints services were held on Sundays. There were daily Roman Catholic Mass and Rosary services, and evening prayer over the IMC circuit by the Protestant Chaplain.

Three memorial services were held for pilots who were lost during this period.

The daily mimeographed news sheet was supplemented by a "Sunday Supplement", consisting of shipboard feature news. This supplement is suitable for scrap book use or for sending home.

Bus tours arranged for the last period in port were successful. An effort will be made to conduct these again, adding trips around Tokyo.

The number of reservations for officer and enlisted rest hotels was curtailed because of release of hotels to Japanese owners. Only Air Group pilots and less than three percent of all enlisted personnel on board will be able to enjoy rest hotel facilities for the next in-port period.

D. Public Information Office:

The Public Information Office covered, home-town news releases, awards presented to personnel of the embarked Air Group, advancement in rating of enlisted personnel attached to the ship; and, in news releases, pictures, Talent Show and Happy Hour held on board. Lack of rated journalists to assist the officer assigned collateral duty as PIO continues to prevent full news coverage of shipboard events.

F. Casualties:

LT John Charles WORKMAN, 433757/1315, USNR, VF 194. On 20 April 1952, while flying an AD, purpose 1T1, cause TARE, bailed out of his burning plane too low over the water for his parachute to open. His body was recovered by the USS ST. PAUL (CA-73). LT WORKMAN was reported killed in action.

LT John Zaphyr CARROS, 424278/1310, USN, VF 52. On 2 May 1952, while flying a F9F-2, purpose 1T1, cause TARE, was hit by AA fire and crashed into a hilltop while making a strafing attack. The plane exploded and burned on impact. LT CARROS was reported killed in action.

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PART VI

GENERAL COMMENTS

1. Operations:

a. Aerology:

During the period 16 April to 13 May 1952, normal weather prevailed. The air flow was divided between the northwesterly continental polar and the southwesterly maritime polar.

b. Air Intelligence:

Rail interdiction continued as the primary mission. Assigned target areas ranged over the entire eastern rail system. Little change was observed in the number of 37mm AA guns along the heavily defended rail lines between Hamhung and Wonsan. The placement of these positions however, are in constant change as indicated on each new flak analysis. The enemy's tactics of shifting or repositioning the 37mm guns, points up the importance of constant photo surveillance for flak studies if this section of rails is to remain under attack. The number of active machine gun positions and small arms fire has increased along the rail lines, particularly north of Hamhung.

c. Combat Information Center:

Failures of gears in both the SPS-6B and SX radars resulted in outages of several days in each instance. The necessary repair parts were Tender spares and not carried aboard this ship. Restoration of service was delayed until these parts were manufactured in the ship's machine shop. The loss of these two radars was not concurrent, but failure of a tube in the SPS-6B while the SX was inoperative did result in the loss of both for a short time during an SAR.

Lack of spare sealed mercury relays for the drive unit of the Mark V slave antenna necessitated placing the unit in an emergency use status. Therefore the SPS-6B set was used almost exclusively.

Bureau of Ships has advised that no additional Mark V parts will be procured when present stocks are exhausted.

Unusual propagation was observed frequently during this period. In many instances it was impossible to pick up air targets beyond twenty five to thirty miles while surface contacts were tracked at ranges up to ninety miles and land return out to two hundred and ten miles. On one occasion there was an unusual presentation through 360° at an average range of twenty miles extending out to twenty five to thirty miles. It resembled the return presented by weather and formed an irregular ring, remaining on the scope for several hours. It was not believed to be jamming or interference from other radars. Photographs were made at various intervals for future reference and study.

Communications during this period were satisfactory.

CIC again operated as Force CIC during this period.

d. Communications:

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The wear and tear on equipment from constant usage continued to be manifested in more frequent breakdowns and failures of equipment.

The training of personnel was intensified. Additional training and experience have resulted in an overall improvement in the speed and efficiency of operating personnel in all job assignments.

e. Photographic Interpretation:

A total of 81 photographic reconnaissance missions were flown during the operating period. The photography was flown for flak analysis along routes, damage assessment, route survelliance, target search and call photography.

An extremely large amount of interpretation work was produced during this period. A flash interpretation report was made on all photographic coverage and sent out by dispatch. Thirty flak studies of routes or the commonly called "Touraids" were produced; the largest number distributed by a carrier during any period on the line. This represents the production of approximately 1600 booklets requiring 7300 8x10 prints from the photo lab. By far the largest amount of time required of the interpretation unit was in the interpretation, preparation and assemblying of the route flak studies.

In addition to the flak studies, detailed target overlays were prepared of Wonsan and Chongjin and reproduced by the ozalid method in quantity for distribution. Additional target studies with overlays were prepared, reproduced and given distribution. Continued services were rendered to the Air Intelligence Office.

The melting of snow introduced new problems in detection of enemy military installations. Track activity remained a prime method of identification. A definite increase in enemy efforts at camouflage of anti-aircraft positions was noted particularly in regards to 37mm positions. Brush was planted about the gun revetment and apparently used to cover the gun in an effort to blend the position in with the surrounding vegetation. However, the brush is usually of the same size and will present a vegetation pattern which differes from the surrounding area. All 37mm positions are characteristically composed of two or four guns in the east coast area unless a gun has been destroyed. While the effort is toward a box or diamond arrangement of guns, the terrain and target location will modify the pattern. The location of all 37mm positions are accessible to motor vehicles; in several cases a road having been constructed to the position located on a small ridge. After the guns were moved into position the road was replanted in brush to hide it.

While the number of 37mm guns on the routes studies have remained relatively constant, a shift of guns is continually being carried out.

Most of the 37mm positions are placed to protect important bridges, marshalling yards and sections of track which have been subject to a heavy rail cutting effort. Continuous operation against a particular bridge, marshalling yard, or track will result in the addition of guns to protect the target area but necessarily meaning a reduction of guns elsewhere. Obviously, prompt location of such addition or subtaction of guns is of prime importance to safety and planning or operations.

Location of machine gun positions is much more diffi

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3. The following dispatch was received from CTF 77 on 13 May 1952:

"TODAYS LOCOMOTIVE ROUNDUP WAS A FITTING CLIMAX TO THE FINE PERFORMANCE VALLEY FORGE AND AIR TASK GROUP ONE HAVE BEEN STAGING DAILY DURING THE THREE WEEKS I HAVE BEEN ABOARD X WELL DONE X PERRY".

Oscar Pederson
OSCAR PEDERSON

Copies to:
CNO (2 advance)
CINCPACFLT (2 advance)
CINCPACFLT EVALUATION GROUP (1)
COMNAVFE (1 advance)
COMNAVFE EVALUATION GROUP (1)
COMSEVENTHFLT (1 advance)
CTF 77 (1 advance)
COMAIRPAC (5)
COMSERVPAC (1)
COMFAIRALAMEDA (1)
COMFAIRJAPAN (1)
NAVAL WAR COLLEGE (1)
COMCARDIV ONE (1)
COMCARDIV THREE (1)
COMCARDIV FIVE (1)
CO, FAIRBETUPAC (2)
CO, USS ESSEX (CV-9)(1)
CO, USS BON HOMME RICHARD (CV-31)(1)
CO, USS ANTIETAM (CV-36)(1)
CO, USS PHILIPPINE SEA (CV-47)(1)
CO, USS PRINCETON (CV-37)(1)
CO, USS BOXER (CV-21)(1)
CO, USS KEARSARGE (CV-33)(1)
CVG 2
CVG 5
CVG 11
CVG 15
CVG 19
CVG 101
CVG 102
ATG 1
ATG 2
VC 3
VC 11
VC 35
VC 61