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UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
AIR FORCE
CARRIER AIR GROUP FIVE

CVG5/A16-13/(cfc)
Serial 08-52

12 March 1952

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

Subj: Action Report of Carrier Air Group FIVE (21 February 1952 - 5 March 1952)

Ref: (a) OpNav Instruction 3480.1
(b) CinCPacFlt Instruction 3480.1

1. This report is submitted in compliance with reference (a) for inclusion in the Action Report of U.S.S. ESSEX (CV-9) and the division of data between calendar months is shown in compliance with reference (b).

PART I: COMPOSITION OF OWN FORCES AND MISSION

a. The composition of the group follows:

UNIT	TYPE A/C	OPERATIONAL A/C 2/21	OPERATIONAL A/C 3/4	PILOTS 2/21	PILOTS 3/4
CVG-5	None	None	None	1*	1*
CDR M. U. BEEBE VF-51	F9F-2	13	13	18	18
CDR E. M. BEAUCHAMP VF-172	F2H-2	15	15	20	20
CDR M. E. BARNETT VF-53	F4U-4B	14	14	19	18
CDR H. J. TRUM, III VF-54	AD-2	1	1	24**	24**
CDR P. N. GRAY	AD-3	3	9		
	AD-4	3	1		
	AD-4L	1	1		
	AD-4Q	1	1		
VC-3 (Unit "B")	F4U-5NL	3	3	4	4
LCDR J. F. DOHERTY VC-11 (Unit "B")	AD-4W	2	2	5	5
LCDR M. R. MILLER VC-35 (Unit "B")	AD-4NL	3	3	5	5
LCDR F. F. BERTAGNA VC-61 (Unit "B")	F9F-2P	2	2	4	4
LT S. L. JAYNES	F2H-2P	2	-	—	—
	TOTAL	63	65	100	99

* The Air Group Commander flies regularly with VF-51 and VF-54.
** Includes the Air Group Operations Officer.

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b. MISSION

The primary mission of Air Group FIVE during the reporting period was the support of United Nations ground forces in Korea. This support was primarily an interdiction program for the destruction of enemy lines of communication.

Anti-Submarine and Combat Air Patrols were maintained during all daylight hours over our own forces when weather conditions permitted.

PART II: CHRONOLOGY

While in port personnel were encouraged to utilize the facilities at the various rest-camps, and over fifty percent of the enlisted men and officers were able to take advantage of these camps.

On 18 February, departed Yokosuka for the operating area.

On 19 February, the Air Group conducted refresher training operations. Thirty-three (33) sorties were flown.

On 20 February, forty-five (45) training sorties were flown.

On 21 February, the Air Group flew eighty-five (85) combat sorties. LTJG F. S. JUTRAS, VF-54, was shot down by anti-aircraft fire while making a bombing run in an AD-4. He was able to make a controlled water landing and was picked up by a destroyer almost immediately. LTJG JUTRAS received a strained back. LTJG F. G. GERGEN, VF-53, was killed when his F4U crashed into the sea shortly after entering a snow storm while escorting a battle damaged AD. During the day, the Air Group cut railroad tracks in 33 places, 6 trucks were destroyed, 11 buildings destroyed, 1 barracks area burned, 25 railroad cars destroyed and 25 were damaged.

On 22 February, the group flew eight-one (81) sorties and lost one aircraft. LT W. B. MUNCIE, VF-54, lost oil pressure shortly after take-off and was unable to return to the ship. The plane lost power and LT MUNCIE made a water landing. He was recovered uninjured by a helicopter within 3 minutes after entering the water. During the day, 52 rail cuts were made, 6 buildings destroyed and 1 bridge badly damaged.

On 23 February, seventy-one (71) sorties were flown. Thirty (30) small boats were destroyed and 3 damaged, 5 trucks and 8 oxcarts were reported as destroyed, 17 rail cuts were made and 2 bridges were inoperative.

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On 24 February, the force retired to replenish.

On 25 February, the group flew seventy-seven (77) sorties. The early morning hecklers located a train of 45 cars and 2 locomotives. Morning strike groups were diverted to the train and the final report read: 40 cars destroyed, 2 locomotives destroyed and 5 cars heavily damaged. Railroad tracks were cut in 15 places, 2 trucks were set on fire, 13 buildings were left burning and 1 warehouse was set on fire.

On 26 February, foul weather was encountered and the force retired to replenish.

On 27 February, the group flew eighty-seven (87) sorties. The days' tally showed 82 small boats destroyed and 63 damaged, 24 boats ranging from 40 feet to 80 feet were destroyed and 3 damaged. Seven (7) trucks received heavy damage, 18 buildings were set on fire, 4 bridges were knocked out and railroad tracks were cut in 27 places.

On 28 February, weather conditions caused diversion of the planes from primary targets; however, eighty-five (85) sorties were flown. Railroad tracks were cut in 25 places, 11 trucks were destroyed and 4 damaged. Thirty-two (32) small boats were destroyed and 25 were badly damaged. Thirty-eight (38) buildings were set on fire.

On 29 February, the group flew eighty-six (86) sorties. The early morning hecklers stopped a train of 14 cars and 2 locomotives and the morning strike groups were diverted to this target. Both locomotives and 14 cars were listed as destroyed. A third locomotive was stopped in a different area and received heavy damage. Two (2) trucks and one (1) 100 foot power schooner were destroyed. Fourteen (14) small boats were destroyed and 49 were listed as heavily damaged. Railroad tracks were cut in 15 places and one (1) by-pass was made inoperative.

On 1 March, the force retired to replenish.

On 2 March, the group flew eighty-nine (89) sorties. One railroad bridge was knocked down, one locomotive was heavily damaged and 7 buidlings were set on fire. Eight (8) trucks and 19 boats were destroyed. One (1) supply dump was attacked and left burning.

On 3 March, foul weather conditions prevented operations.

On 4 March, the pilots of Air Group FIVE flew their last day of combat for the cruise with a total of 71 sorties. Fifty-seven (57) cuts were made in railroad tracks, 20 small boats were destroyed and 52 damaged. One (1) locomotive was attacked and left heavily damaged and one railroad by-pass was made inoperative.

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On 5 March, the force retired to replenish and aircraft were transferred to the USS VALLEY FORGE and USS ANTIETAM. USS ESSEX headed south out of the Sea of Japan for the United States via Yokosuka.

PART III: ORDNANCE

a. 20MM GUNS

During the past operating period, functioning of all ordnance equipment has been satisfactory. Some erratic firing in a few instances is believed to be caused by weakened feeder mechanisms. A tentative remedy for this defect is the checking of the feeder mechanisms with a torque wrench after 2500 rounds of firing and at any other time when a weakness is suspected. If a feeder mechanism will not give at least 85% of the required tension, it is replaced.

b. BOMBS

In compliance with CTF-77's restricted dispatch Ø1133ØZ of January 1952, a thorough winterization treatment was given all MK 55 bomb racks. A policy of heating solenoids for one and one-half to two minutes during each flight was adopted in the F9F squadron.

c. ROCKETS

Rocket pigtails continue to break on jet type aircraft.

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d. ORDNANCE EXPENDITURES

MUNITIONS	F9F-2 FEB	F9F-2 MAR	F9F-2 TOTAL	F2H-2 FEB	F2H-2 MAR	F2H-2 TOTAL
2000# GP						
1000# GP						
500# GP	8		8	40	-	40
250# GP	250	80	330	208	96	304
100# GP	116	70	186	111	48	159
260# FRAG.	28		28			
350 DB						
5" HVAR				32	16	48
5" ATAR				126	36	162
3.25 SH						
NAPALM #						
20MM AMMO	24340	12420	36760	37330	11700	49030
FLARES MK6						

MUNITIONS	F4U-4B & F4U-5NL FEB	F4U-4B & F4U-5NL MAR	F4U-4B & F4U-5NL TOTAL	AD-4 & AD-4NL FEB	AD-4 & AD-4NL MAR	AD-4 & AD-4NL TOTAL
2000# GP				9	25	34
1000# GP	30	24	54	299	29	328
500# GP	73	2	75			
250# GP	453	152	605	846	150	996
100# GP	202	63	265	290	100	390
260# FRAG	60		60			
350 DB	4	1	5	11	2	13
5" HVAR						
5" ATAR						
3.25 SH	15	14	29	37	6	43
NAPALM #	420	230	650	1300	1050	2350
20MM AMMO	28480	13605	42085	20220	5975	26195
FLARES MK6				4	4	8

MUNITIONS	TOTALS FEB	TOTALS MAR	TOTALS TOTAL
2000# GP	9	25	34
1000# GP	329	53	382
500# GP	121	2	123
250# GP	1757	478	2235
100# GP	719	281	1000
260# FRAG	88		88
350 DB	15	3	18
5" HVAR	32	16	48
5" ATAR	126	36	162
3.25 SH	52	20	72
NAPALM #	1720#	1280#	3000#
20MM AMMO	110370	43700	154070
FLARES MK6	4	4	8

# Denotes pounds of Napalm Powder

FEB COLUMN 23 FEB - 29 FEB
MAR COLUMN 1 MAR - 5 MAR

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PART IV. DAMAGE

a. DAMAGE TO ENEMY

	DAMAGED			DESTROYED		
	FEB	MAR	TOTAL	FEB	MAR	TOTAL
TANKS	-	4	4	1	-	1
TRUCKS	17	9	26	30	5	35
CARS	2		2	-	-	-
LOCOMOTIVES	10	2	12	3	1	4
OXCARTS	8	23	31	14	3	17
HIGHWAY BRIDGES	3	-	3	-	-	-
SUPPLY DUMPS	4	4	8	6	1	7
FACTORIES	2	-	2	-	-	-
WAREHOUSES	-	-	-	3	-	3
BARRACKS & BUILDINGS	74	20	94	98	59	157
GUN EMPLACEMENTS	3	-	3	5	2	7
OXEN	-	-	-	3	3	6
VILLAGES	1	-	1	-	-	-
BOATS & SAMPANS	209	90	299	239	40	279
POWER INSTALLATIONS	-	-	-	1	-	1
BUNKERS & REVETMENTS	-	-	-	24	-	24
RAILROAD YARDS	1	-	1	1	-	1
RAILROAD TRACKS	14	bends 9	23	208	cuts 79	287
RAILROAD CARS	46	4	50	45	4	49
RAILROAD BRIDGES	6	2	8	2	-	2
TROOPS KILLED	-	-	-	83	70	153
RAILROAD BY-PASSES	1	1	2	1	-	1
COMMAND POST	1	-	1	-	-	-
TRANSFORMER STATION	-	1	1	-	1	1

NOTE: FEB COLUMN 23 FEB - 29 FEB
MAR COLUMN 1 MAR - 5 MAR

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PART IV: DAMAGE

b. DAMAGE TO OWN AIRCRAFT

VF-51

DATE	TYPE A/C	DAMAGE	INFLICTED BY
2-22-52	F9F-2	Flak Holes	12.7MM A-T
2-28-52	F9F-2	Flak Holes	12.7MM D
2-28-52	F9F-2	Flak Holes	7MM
2-28-52	F9F-2	Flak Holes	7MM
2-28-52	F9F-2	Flak Holes	12.7 & 7MM
3-2-52	F9F-2	Flak Holes	20MM D
3-2-52	F9F-2	Flak Holes	7MM
3-4-52	F9F-2	Bullet Holes	30 cal. D

VF-53

2-21-52	F4U-4B	Plane plunged into sea, pilot lost.	
2-22-52	F4U-4B	Bullet Holes	30 cal.
2-28-52	F4U-4B	Bullet Holes	30 cal.

VF-54

2-21-52	AD-4	Bullet Holes	30 cal. A
2-21-52	AD-2	Flak Holes	37MM E
2-21-52	AD-4L	Flak Holes	20MM I
2-21-52	AD-3	Flak Holes	20MM E
2-22-52	AD-4	Plane lost at sea, pilot rescued. Plane ditched in water due to loss of oil pressure.	
2-22-52	AD-2	Bullet Holes	30 cal. A
2-25-52	AD-4NL	Bullet Holes	30 cal. A
2-25-52	AD-3	Bullet Holes	30 cal. A
2-27-52	AD-4NL	Bullet Holes	30 cal. A
2-27-52	AD-3	Bullet Holes	30 cal. A
2-27-52	AD-3	Bullet Holes	30 cal. A
2-27-52	AD-4	Bullet Holes	30 cal. A
2-28-52	AD-3	Bullet Holes	30 cal. A
2-28-52	AD-3	Flak Holes	20MM
2-28-52	AD-4NL	Bullet Holes	30 cal. A
2-28-52	AD-4NL	Bullet Holes	30 cal. A
2-29-52	AD-3	Bullet Holes	30 cal. A
2-29-52	AD-3	Bullet Holes	30 cal. A
3-2-52	AD-3	Bullet Holes	30 cal. A

VF-172

2-21-52	F2H-2	Bullet Holes	30 cal. A
2-27-52	F2H-2	Bullet Holes	30 cal. A

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PART V: PERSONNEL

a. GENERAL

In February, there was an outbreak of an apparently virus type respiratory, upper respiratory, and gastro-intestinal epidemic. A considerable number of the pilots were grounded and many enlisted men were admitted to the sick list or were turned-in to their own bunk. This was probably due in part to the fatigue of the entire Air Group after having worked long hours for six (6) months.

The venereal disease rate has been about 1/3 for this group and cruise as compared to previous ships and cruises. This is particularly due to an all-out effort to get the "word" to the crew and officers.

The problem of combat fatigue has been a reality in this Air Group in the last two months of operation and, at the end of the fourth period which lasted for forty (40) days, about 90% of the pilots were showing varying degrees of combat fatigue. Three (3) pilots were admitted and sedated heavily for 3 days while 4 others were grounded for 2 to 4 days and mildly sedated. Numerous other pilots were under close observation because of symptoms of combat fatigue, but were able to keep flying. Several of the enlisted men were admitted with anxiety reaction and others were assigned to less dangerous jobs and mildly sedated during the fourth tour.

b. CASUALTIES

The following casualties were suffered by the Air Group during this reporting period:

LTJG Francis Gene GERGEN, 496802/1315, USNR, VF-53. While escorting flak damaged aircraft to friendly field, entered snow storm suddenly at an altitude of about 500 ft. Commenced 180° reversal, and went into steep bank and crashed into the sea in an inverted position. Killed on 21 February 1952.

LTJG Francis S. JUTRAS, 505293/1315, USN, VF-54. Received strained back after ditching an AD which was hit by anti-aircraft fire on 21 February 1952.

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FLIGHT SUMMARY BY COMBAT SORTIES

SQUADRON	VF-51		VC-61		VF-172		VF-53		VC-3		VF-54		VC-11		VC-35		TOTALS		
A/C TYPE	F9F-2		F2H-2P F9F-2P		F2H-2		F4U-4B		F4U-5NL		AD-4		AD-4W		AD-4NL				
MONTH	FEB	MAR	FEB	MAR	FEB	MAR	FEB	MAR	FEB	MAR	FEB	MAR	FEB	MAR	FEB	MAR	FEB	MAR	TOTAL
CAP	49	15			47	17											96	32	128
RECCO	55	23			61	22											116	45	161
PHOTO			28	6													28	6	34
PHOTO																			
ESCORT	12	2			16	4											28	6	34
STRIKE	14						109	32			107	25					230	57	287
ASP													17	4			17	4	21
ASP																			
ESCORT							1		2		2	1			12	3	17	4	21
HECKLER									10	2					12	2	22	4	26
NGF							2										2		2
TOTAL	130	40	28	6	124	43	112	32	12	2	109	26	17	4	24	5	556	158	714
TOTALS FOR COMBAT PER.	170		34		167		144		14		135		21		29		714		

NOTE: COMBAT PERIOD COVERED 23 FEB 1952 - 5 MAR 1952

FEB COLUMN FOR PERIOD 23 FEB - 29 FEB 1952
MAR COLUMN FOR PERIOD 1 MAR - 5 MAR 1952

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SQUADRON	TOTAL COMBAT HOURS FEB	TOTAL COMBAT HOURS MAR	TOTAL COMBAT HOURS TOTAL	AVERAGE COMBAT HOUR PER PILOT FEB	AVERAGE COMBAT HOUR PER PILOT MAR	AVERAGE COMBAT HOUR PER PILOT TOTAL	AVERAGE COMBAT SORTIE PER PILOT FEB	AVERAGE COMBAT SORTIE PER PILOT MAR	AVERAGE COMBAT SORTIE PER PILOT TOTAL
VF-51	201.0	62.0	263.0	11.1	3.4	13.8	6.7	2.2	8.9
VF-172	213.4	64.7	278.1	10.7	3.2	13.9	7.0	2.2	9.2
VF-53	331.8	94.7	426.5	18.4	5.2	23.6	6.2	1.8	8.0
VF-54	313.4	79.3	392.7	13.1	3.1	16.2	4.6	1.1	5.7
VC-35	60.0	12.7	72.7	12.0	2.5	14.5	4.4	1.0	5.4
VC-3	36.6	6.0	42.6	12.7	1.5	14.2	3.3	.5	3.8
VC-11	44.1	14.8	58.9	8.8	3.0	11.8	3.4	1.0	4.4
VC-61	22.3	8.4	30.7	5.5	2.1	7.6	4.0	1.5	5.5
TOTAL AVER	1222.6	342.6	1565.2	11.5	3.0	14.5	4.9	1.4	6.3

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PART VI: OPERATIONS

The fifth combat period for Carrier Air Group FIVE in the Korean operating area has just been completed. The group flew 9 combat operating days during this period with a total of 544 offensive and 170 defensive missions.

Operating procedures of the Air Group have not changed since the last report was submitted.

To summarize the Air Group operations for the combat tour commencing 23 August 1951 until 5 March 1952 the following figures are given:

Total Combat Operating Days	94
Average Combat Sortie per pilot for Air Group	66.8
Average Combat Flight Hour per prop pilot	178.4
Average Combat Flight Hour per jet pilot	116.4
Total Pilot Casualties	24
Combat Casualties	13
Operational Casualties	5
Injured	6

PART VII: MAINTENANCE

a. No comments.

PART VIII: MATERIAL

a. No comments.

H.J. TRUM, III,
Acting.

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