

VTL7/jjf

TORPEDO SQUADRON SEVENTEEN  
c/o Fleet Post Office  
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27 June 1945

From: The Commanding Officer.  
To: The Officer of Naval Operations, Aviation History Unit  
(OP-33-J-6).  
Via: Commander, Carrier Air Group SEVENTEEN.  
Subject: SQUADRON HISTORY, transmittal of.  
Reference: (a) Aviation Circular Letter No. 74-44, OP-33-J-6-JEJ,  
serial 356333, dated 25 July 1944.  
(b) Manual for Historical Officers, NavAer 00-250-26.  
(c) Aviation Circular Letter No. 23-45, OP-33-J-6-JEJ,  
serial 89133 of 27 February 1945.  
(d) OPNAV Letter OP-33-J-6-JEJ, serial 118433, dated  
14 March 1945.  
Enclosure: (A) HISTORY OF TORPEDO SQUADRON SEVENTEEN.

1. In accordance with references (a) through (d), the HISTORY  
of TORPEDO SQUADRON SEVENTEEN is herewith submitted.

  
W. M. ROMBERGER.

VT-17

HISTORICAL DATA

PART ONE

\* \* \*

CHRONOLOGY

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## CHRONOLOGY

- Jan. 1, 1943 - Torpedo Squadron SEVENTEEN commissioned at NAS, Norfolk, Va., under ComAirLant, by authority of Chief of Naval Operations.
- July 13, 1943 - Assumed ship-based status aboard USS Bunker Hill.
- Sept. 26, 1943 - Arrived San Diego. Came under authority of ComAirPac.
- Sept. 28, 1943 - Left San Diego for Pearl Harbor.
- Oct. 2, 1943 - Arrived Pearl Harbor.
- Oct. 3, 1943 - Shore-based at Kaneohe, Oahu.
- Oct. 17, 1943 - Departed Pearl Harbor.
- Nov. 5, 1943 - Arrived Espiritu Santo Island.
- Nov. 7, 1943 - Underway as part of Task Group 50.3

## Combat

- Nov. 11, 1943 - Raubaul.
- Nov. 25, 1943 - Kavieng.
- Jan. 1, 1944 - Kavieng.
- Jan. 4, 1944 - Kavieng.
- Jan. 29, 1944 - Kiwajalein.
- Feb. 1, 1944 - Eniwetok.
- Feb. 2, 1944 - Eniwetok.
- Feb. 16, 1944 - Truk.
- Feb. 22, 1944 - Tinian.
  
- Feb. 25, 1944 - Enroute to U.S. (Quit U.S.S. BUNKER HILL at Pearl Harbor).
- March 10, 1944 - Arrived NAS, Alameda, on USS ESSEX.

\* \* \*

Commanding Officer of VT-17 was Lieut.Comdr. Frank M. Whitaker, San Diego, Cal., who was lost in a mid-air collision over Eniwetok. He was succeeded by Lieut. G.N.Owens.

The purpose of the squadron since its origin has been to operate as a torpedo bomber carrier-based squadron in Air Group SEVENTEEN.

\* \* \*

### Note:

A list of citations and awards for personnel in VT-17 from the time of commissioning until the squadron was re-formed 18 April 1944 is not available to this command. What information could be obtained with current records on hand would be inadequate and inaccurate. The same is true in connection with narrative material of the squadron during the period from 1 January 1943 to 18 April 1944. Complete records of the squadron during that period were not inherited by the command which took over on 18 April 1944.

CHRONOLOGY

VT-17 LOG

Reformed NAS, Alameda  
4-18-44

NAS Alameda  
4-18-44 to 5-29-44

NAAS Monterey  
5-29-44 to 7-17-44

NAAS Vernalis  
7-17-44 to 7-24-44

NAAS Monterey  
7-24-44 to 8-14-44

NAS Alameda  
8-14-44 to 8-16-44

USS Takanis Bay (Qualification)  
8-16-44 to 8-18-44

NAS Alameda  
8-18-44 to 8-27-44

NAAS Vernalis  
8-27-44 to 8-31-44

NAS Alameda  
8-31-44 to 10-2-44

NAAS Arcata  
10-2-44 to 10-19-44

NAS Alameda  
10-19-44 to 10-27-44

USS Ranger (Qualification)  
10-27-44 to 10-29-44

NAS Alameda  
10-29-44 to 11-2-44

Aboard Train to San Diego  
11-2-44 to 11-3-44

San Diego  
11-3-44 to 11-3-44

USS Hollandia  
11-3-44 to 11-10-44

Pearl Harbor  
11-10-44 to 11-10-44

USS Cumberland Sound  
11-10-44 to 11-12-44

NAS Hilo, Hawaii  
11-12-44 to 12-15-44

Transport to Pearl  
12-15-44 to 12-16-44

Pearl Harbor  
12-16-44 to 12-16-44

USS Nassau  
12-16-44 to 12-28-44

NAB Agana, Guam  
12-28-44 to 1-28-45

USS Kasaan Bay  
1-28-45 to 1-29-45

Ulithi  
1-29-45 to 2-1-45

USS Hornet (Ulithi)  
2-1-45 to 2-10-45

At Sea  
2-10-45 to 3-4-45

Ulithi  
3-4-45 to 3-14-45

At Sea  
3-14-45 to 4-30-45

CHRONOLOGY

VT-17 LOG

Ulithi

4-30-45 to 5-9-45

At Sea

5-9-45 to 6-13-45

Leyte

6-13-45 to 6-19-45

At Sea

Enroute to U.S. via  
Pearl Harbor.

\* \* \*

CHRONOLOGY

VT-17

ROSTER OF OFFICERS

Lt.Cdr. William M. Romberger  
610 First Street  
Coronado, California.

Lt. Charles D. Livengood  
P.O. Box 470  
Powell, Wyoming.

Lt. Henry E. Clark  
1127 N.25th. Street  
Billings. Montana

Lt. Raymond M. Roland, Jr.  
16565 Kentfield Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan.

Lt. Richard C. Reed  
16 34th Street  
Des Moines, Iowa.

Lt.(jg). George A. Hill, Jr.  
40 Elm Street  
Concord, Massachusetts.

Lt.(jg). Arnold C. Traxler  
2012 Tiffin Road  
Oakland, California.

Lt.(jg). Francis M. Smith  
305 S.15th. Street  
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Lt.(jg). Ivan R. Beisel  
P.O.Box 168  
Inglewood, California.

Lt.(jg). Walter D. Nielsen  
1523 N.McCadden Place  
Hollywood, California.

Lt.(jg). Hugh C. Johnson  
201 E. Lake Street  
Waupaca, Wisconsin.

Lt. Thomas C. Durkin  
67 Wall St.  
New York City, N.Y.

Lt. James A. Tew  
200 Avacado Avenue  
Sanford, Florida

Lt. John A. Martin  
5043 W.Adams Street  
Chicago, Illinois

Lt. Steven G. Sullivan  
Rt. #2, Box 234  
Tulare, California

Lt. John E. Murphy  
217 Scenic Avenue, Mt.Allen  
Covington, Kentucky.

Lt.(jg). William H. Morrissey  
314 E. Arrellaga Street  
Santa Barbara, California.

Lt.(jg). Harlan W. Foote  
772 Poli Street, Apt. D.  
Ventura, California.

Lt.(jg). Thomas J. Coghlan  
669 S.Poplar Avenue  
Kankakee, Illinois.

Lt.(jg). John S. Cooke  
60 Douglas Road  
Glen Ridge, New Jersey.

Lt.(jg). Kenneth B.C. McCubbins  
Rt. #1, Box 135  
Dallas, Oregon.

Lt.(jg). Ralph V. Johnson  
Benton City, Missouri.

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VT-17

ROSTER OF OFFICERS

Lt.(jg). Jules J. Bundgus  
145 W.55th Street  
New York, New York.

Lt.(jg). James F. Monaghan  
18-11 Murray Street  
Whitestone, Long Island, New York.

Lt.(jg). John E. Strickland  
Warsaw, North Carolina.

Ensign Joseph Behl  
442 E.Mt. Airy Avenue  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Ensign Harry D. Jones  
1500 Fallowfield Avenue, Apt. F  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Ensign Walter F. Nickel  
428 N. "J" Street  
Dinuba, California.

Ensign Harold J. Rogers  
Box 94  
Bonners Ferry, Idaho.

Ensign Robert S. Hanlon  
14625 Forrer  
Detroit, Michigan.

Ensign Frederick B. Tschudin  
4487 Laclede  
St.Louis, Missouri.

\* \* \*

VT-17

ROSTER OF ENLISTED MEN

AKERS, Charles N., ARM2c(T)  
2312 Avenue "U"  
Lubbock, Texas.

BARCLAY, Budd N., AOM2c(T)  
125 Massachusetts Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan.

BELL, Vern K., ACMM(AA)(T)  
Route #1, Box 138  
Reno, Nevada.

BERRYHILL, James H., ARMLc(T)  
1706 30th Street  
Sheffield, Alabama.

BOBBITT, Paul M., AMMLc  
Route #6, Box 511-A  
Ft.Worth, Texas.

BRAUCH, Paul (n)., AOM1c  
1922 E. 22nd Street.  
Wichita, Kansas.

BREZOVSKY, Philip S., AMMLc  
6431 N. Greenview Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois.

CANADA, Herman R., ARM3c  
Elbridge, Tennessee.

CHRONOLOGY

VT-17

ROSTER OF ENLISTED MEN

CHASE, LeRoy C., AMM2c(T)  
53 B Central Lane  
N. Tonawanda, New York.

COLOMBINI, William (n)., Slc  
P.O.Box 434  
Castroville, California.

CONSTANTINE, Pete (n)., ARM3c  
6924 Fulton Street  
San Francisco, California.

FEURT, Donald R., AOMlc(T)  
Hereford, Colorado.

FITZGERALD, Fred J., AMMlc(T)  
2 Earl Avenue  
San Jose, California.

FRIEZE, Robert A., ARM2c(T)  
4007 E. Sixth Street  
Los Angeles, California.

GEORGE, Philip W., AOMlc(T)  
Lebo, Kansas.

HAND, George C., ARTlc  
45 N. Corona Avenue  
Valley Stream, New York.

HERZING, Ivan J., ACOM(AA)(T)  
340 Washington Street  
St.Mary's, Pennsylvania.

JENSEN, Norman C., AOMlc(T)  
1048 Chicago Avenue  
Oak Park, Illinois.

KEENER, Frank W., AOM3c  
Rt.#1, Box 1-B  
Sanger, California.

CIMINSKI, Frank (n)., ARM3c(T)  
266 Twickenham  
Los Angeles, California.

COLP, William E., ARM3c  
2209 Maryland Avenue  
St.Louis, Missouri.

CROPP, Fred R., ARM2c(T)  
E. 18 Fourth Avenue  
Spokane, Washington.

FIELD, James J., Ylc(T)  
441 So. Jefferson Davis Parkway  
New Orleans, Louisiana.

FORBES, Ray D., AOMlc(T)  
3416 9th. Avenue  
Tampa, Florida.

FUCHS, Ernest P., AOMlc  
3023 Feasler Avenue  
Erie, Pennsylvania.

GEYER, Jack L., AOMlc(T)  
2039 Termon Avenue  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

HELGESON, Helge L., ARM3c  
Box 259  
Nashua, Montana.

HILBERT, Bruce M., AMM3c  
126 N.4th. Street  
Emmaus, Pennsylvania.

JONES, Robert J., Slc  
2222 W. 13th Street  
Chicago, Illinois.

KEFFER, Theodore (n)., AOMlc(T)  
Cheswick, Pennsylvania.

CHRONOLOGY

VT-17

ROSTER OF ENLISTED MEN

KELLETTTE, Walter B., ACEM(AA)(T)  
1291 58th. Avenue  
Oakland, California.

MANNING, Victor (n)., AMM2c(T)  
2505 Humphrey Street  
E.Elmhurst, New York.

McFARLAND, Carl W., AMM3c  
1833 Vinton Avenue  
Portsmouth, Ohio.

MULLIS, William B., Slc  
R.F.D. #4  
Xenia, Ohio.

NICHOLSON, James N., ARMLc(T)  
c/o General Delivery  
Harrison, Arkansas.

PARKER, Frank G., ARMLc(T)  
1705 30th Avenue  
San Francisco, California.

REDMON, Joseph H., ARMLc(T)  
5827 S. Artesian  
Chicago, Illinois.

ROBSON, Donald W., ARM3c  
329 1/2 Gladay Avenue  
Long Beach, California

ROUSH, Randall C., ACEM(PA)  
21 Valley Lane, Skyway Park,  
Osborne, Ohio.

SCHNELL, Frederick P., AMM2c(T)  
301 Highland Avenue  
Madison, Wisconsin.

SHUTTLEWORTH, Frank (n)., ARM3c  
9627 Traverse Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan.

KLUNDER, Robert "E"., ARMLc(T)  
8 Denman Place  
Cranford, New Jersey.

MAZUR, Walter (n)., ACMM(T)  
130 Hale Avenue  
Brooklyn, New York.

MEYER, Jack T., AOM2c(T)  
310 Logan Boulevard  
Altoona, Pennsylvania.

NELSON, Glenn L., ARM3c  
301 11th. Street  
Sheldon, Iowa.

NIEDZWICK, Theodore J., AOMlc(T)  
225 S. Ann Street  
Baltimore, Maryland.

PODOLAK, Paul G., ARM2c(T)  
5619 Damen Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois.

REIGER, Robert E., ARM  
Wauzeka, Wisconsin.

ROELFSON, Roy O., ARM2c  
3740 Warwick Blvd.  
Kansas City, Mo.

SARTORY, Joseph G., AMLc  
111 Meade Avenue  
Bellview, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

SENNETT, Walter M., AOM2c(T)  
9121 Falcon Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan.

SIMONS, Paul E., ARM2c(T)  
1271 Bosworth Street  
San Francisco, California.

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ROSTER OF ENLISTED MEN

SMITH, Blair N., ARMLc(T)  
519 Notre Dame Avenue  
Dayton, Ohio.

STRAW, William (n.), AOM3c(T)  
176 E. 81st., Street  
New York, New York.

THOMPSON, LeRoy S., PE1c(T)  
4528 Wilkshire Avenue S.W.  
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

TOERNER, Joseph E., ARM2c(T)  
1054 Winfield Avenue  
Cincinnati, Ohio.

TULLY, William L., AMM2c(T)  
7 Miles Avenue  
Olyphant, Pennsylvania.

WALTER, George H., ACRT(AA)(T)  
Willard, Colorado.

YOUNG, Leonard R., ARM3c  
3816 Ridge View Drive,  
Indianapolis, Indiana.

SPRING, Richard A., ARM3c  
Main St.,  
Perry, Ohio.

STRIBLING, Samuel L., ARM2c(T)  
127 N. Monroe Avenue  
Arcadia, Florida.

TIKKA, Carlo J., AMM2c(T)  
302 W. Buena Vista  
Highland Park, Michigan.

TRABOLD, William O., ARM2c(T)  
141-12 Coolidge Avenue  
Jamaica, Long Island, New York.

VERNON, Edward F., Jr., ARMLc(T)  
1425 Third Avenue South  
Denison, Iowa.

WOOD, James C., AOM2c(T).  
Route #4, Box 196  
Bessemer, Alabama.

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CHRONOLOGY

COMBAT

PERSONNEL LOSSES

Lieut. Thomas C. Durkin		67 Wall St., New York, New York.
Thomas J. Tindall, ARMLc	#224 93 33	540 E.Washington St., Trenton, N.J.
Cecil W. Stewart, AOM2c	#657 16 21	106 N.12th Street, North Carolina.

Missing in Action following a strike on Kanoya Airfield, Kyushu 13 May 1945. The plane was last seen gliding toward Kagoshima Bay. Radio transmissions from Lt. Durkin indicated that enemy AA fire rendered the plane's engine useless. Some witnesses said they saw a plane crash on the shore of Kagoshima Bay. It was not established however, that the plane was Lieut. Durkin's or that the crash had been fatal to the pilot or crew.

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Lt.(jg). Talmadge Westmoreland		2600 Piedmont Ave., Berkeley Calif..
Harold W. West, AOM3c	#733 71 81	520 Grand Avenue, Hoquiam, Wash.
Robert H. Williams, ARM3c	#828 01 17	2602 Russell Road, Portsmouth, Ohio.

Missing in Action following the Kure Attack on 19 March 1945. The plane was last seen in a glide over Kure Ko and headed northwest toward the beach. Some of the VT pilots had heard a transmission from Lt.(jg).Westmoreland that his plane had been hit and that he was going down. The plane was apparently still under control, and could have made a safe emergency landing, if additional AA fire had not further disabled the plane or wounded the pilot.

\* \* \*

Ens. William E. Hooton		1001 N.W. 16th Strret, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
Robert A. Warren, ANM3c	#576 99 06	4415 Avenue R., Galveston, Texas.
Richard W. Gere, ANM3c	#225 44 19	46 Chetwood Terrace, Fanwood, N.J.

Missing in Action following an attack on a Jap Convoy in the East China Sea on 24 March 1945. Ensign Hooton's plane was last seen making a torpedo attack on a merchant vessel in the convoy. Two TBM's were seen to crash during the attack. It is believed one of these was piloted by Ensign Hooton. Subsequent searches of the area disclose no evidence of survivors.

\* \* \*

CHRONOLOGY

COMBAT

PERSONNEL LOSSES

Ens. Leo O'Brien	Louisville, Nebraska.
Jacob E. Ricketson, AMM3c #893 25 05	719 N. Madison, Douglas, Ga.
James L. Opheim, ARM3c #322 01 89	205 S. Hyland St., Ames, Iowa.

Missing in Action following an attack against the Yamato in the East China Sea on 7 April 1945. The plane was last seen making a torpedo attack on the Yamato's port bow. AA fire was intense, and a TBM was seen to splash in the plane's vicinity. Subsequent search showed no evidence of survivors.

\* \* \*

Russell L. Miller, AOM3c #869 36 03	Ringle, Wisconsin.
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Dead At Sea. Miller died as a result of exposure and illness contracted during nine days at sea in a life raft. The plane of which he was gunner had an emergency water landing about 150 miles northwest of Okinawa Shima on 24 March 1945. Nine days later the three-man crew was picked up seventy miles south of Kyushu. Miller was in a critical condition when rescued on 2 April 1945. He died the same day aboard the USS CHANDLER. His body was removed to Zamami Shima in the Kerama Retto, about 20 miles west of Okinawa, and was buried with military honors.

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PERSONNEL INJURED

Lt. James A. Tew	200 Avacado Ave., Sanford, Fla.
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Face and head cuts during the attack at Kure on 19 March 1945.

Lt.(jg). John E. Strickland	Warsaw, North Carolina
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Minor left arm injuries during the attack on Kure on 19 March 1945.

Blair N. Smith, ARMLc(T) #612 45 64	519 Notre Dame, Dayton, Ohio.
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Head injuries during the attack on Kure on 19 March 1945.

CHRONOLOGY

SHIPS VT-17 WAS ABOARD

<u>USS TAKANIS BAY</u>	Qualifications	8-16-44 to 8-18-44
<u>USS RANGER</u>	Qualifications	10-27-44 to 10-29-44
<u>USS HOLLANDIA</u>	Transportation from San Diego to Pearl Harbor	11-3-44 to 11-10-44
<u>USS NASSAU</u>	Transportation from Pearl Harbor to Guam	12-16-44 to 12-28-44
<u>USS KASAAN BAY</u>	Transportation from Guam to USS HORNET	1-28-45 to 2-1-45
<u>USS HORNET</u>	Combat - Transportation to the United States	2-1-45

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Notes: This Squadron was based on board the above carriers as Torpedo Squadron SEVENTEEN of Air Group SEVENTEEN.

VT-17

HISTORICAL DATA

PART TWO

\* \* \*

NARRATIVE

NARRATIVE

SECTION A

Section A of this narrative will cover the period from the time of origin of VT-17 (1 January 1943) to the time of return of this unit to the United States (10 March 1944).

Unfortunately, records of the squadron covering this period are scant. The re-formed squadron command is able to compile only inadequate historical data covering the above-mentioned period. This report is being prepared at sea, a fact that adds to the limitation of information sources insofar as the "original" VT-17 is concerned.

Chronological material on the "original" VT-17 squadron is contained in the Chronology of this report, however, and lists the required date of origin, names of commanding Officers, movements of the unit and actions in which it engaged. Personnel losses are, again, not available to this command, except in the instance of Lieut. Comdr. Frank M. Whitaker, San Diego, who was the squadron Commanding Officer.

Briefly, the original VT-17 was commissioned at NAS, Norfolk, was trained on the East Coast, took a shake-down cruise to Trinidad, and ultimately came through the Panama Canal aboard the USS BUNKER HILL for action in the Pacific. (See Chronology).

VT-17 was organized as the torpedo bombing squadron of Carrier Air Group 17, and was commissioned under the authority of the Chief of Naval Operations. The squadron was under the command of ComAirLant during its period on the East Coast, and was transferred to the Command of ComAirPac while in the

NARRATIVE

in the Pacific theater.

SECTION B

Section B of this Historical Data narrative of TORPEDO SQUADRON SEVENTEEN covers the period from 18 April 1944, when the unit was re-formed, until the squadron returned to the United States, after combat, in July, 1945.

\* \* \*

1. General:

TORPEDO SQUADRON SEVENTEEN was re-formed 18 April 1944 at NAS, Alameda, California. Lieut. Comdr. William Melvin Romberger, 36 S. 11th. Street, Sunbury, Pennsylvania, served as commanding officer through training and combat.

VT-17 was organized under the authority of the Chief of Naval Operations, as torpedo bombing squadron of Carrier Air Group SEVENTEEN. Average complement during training and combat has been 27 pilots (reduced to 23 just before embarking from NAS, HILO and the combat zone), three (A)L officers, one (A-T) officer, 54 aircrewmen (reduced to 46 when the pilot reduction was put into effect. This figure includes one ACOM), one ACMM, one ACEM, one Ylc and 20 non-flying enlisted personnel.

The duties of the nonflying officers included administration, intelligence, radar and ordnance, and the duties of the nonflying enlisted personnel included the office work and aircraft maintenance.

NARRATIVE

2. NAS, ALAMEDA 18 April 1944 to 29 May 1944:

This period was one of squadron organization. Departments were set up, and responsibilities assigned. Ground School, division and section flying, navigation, aerial gunnery, and glide bombing tactics were emphasized.

During the period the squadron personnel became "acquainted," and acquired the habit of working together as an efficient unit organization.

One pilot and two aircrewmembers were lost during a training glide bombing attack in San Francisco Bay.

The usual social functions were held to secure the spirit and fellowship of the squadron.

3. NAAS, Monterey, Cal., 29 May 1944 to 17 July 1944:

The squadron came into its primary element during this period by concentrating on torpedo attacks and tactics. Combat conditions were simulated by dud runs on towed surface targets and destroyers in Monterey Bay. Over-water navigation flights were extended to increase the proficiency of VT-17 in the use of instruments. Squadron bombing tactics also were designed by Lieut. Comdr. Benberger and became squadron doctrine during this period along with new, improved squadron torpedo tactics (see Appendix .13).

Squadron flight doctrine was practiced to insure efficient formations to and from the target areas and to assure proper rendezvous.

## NARRATIVE

Simulated searches were conducted, and the squadron was instructed in air-sea rescue. Squadron cross country flights gave the divisions the "feel" of the unit in the air.

### 4. NAAS Vernalis, Cal., 17 July to 24 July, 1944:

This was a period of night landings and field landings, and additional Landing Signal Officer training for all pilots, especially those without previous combat experience. The squadron spent a week at Vernalis, then returned to Monterey and continued torpedo and bombing training. On 14 August the squadron had returned to NAS, Alameda, for inter-squadron tactics and air group training.

### 5. NAS, Alameda, 14 August 1944 to 2 November 1944:

This period covered air group tactics and "attacks", long range flights, inter-air group training attacks, carrier qualifications on the USS Takamis Bay and USS Ranger, rocket training at NAAS Arcata, Calif., and additional night flying and field carrier landings at NAAS, Vernalis.

Arrangements were made also with Army officials at Camp Cooke, Cal., to engage in close air support exercise with ground units at the camp. Weather interfered with the proposed plane, however, and the scene of close air support training for the air group was changed to Petaluma Marsh, an area about 30 miles north of NAS, Alameda.

Considerable time was devoted to this close air support training. Mobile radio units were used by the air group ACI officers, who acted as Com-

## NARRATIVE

manders Air Support Control Unit. Pilots were assigned in divisions so that each pilot learned the mechanics of locating assigned targets from gridded maps or photos and became indoctrinated in pin pointed bombing. (The exhaustive training proved fruitful during the combat air support of Iwo Jima and Okinawa Shima).

Long range inter-air group attacks on target areas 250 miles from base were made during this period.

The squadron boarded the USS TAKANIS BAY, 16 August for a two-day qualification cruise, and qualified without incident or blowing out a tire. The rocket training period at NAAS, ARCATA, was from 2 October to 10 October. On 27 October the squadron, despite bad weather, completed its live-rocket syllabus. Carrier qualification landings and take-offs were made from the USS RANGER during the period of 27 October to 29 October 1944.

After considerable "boxin' up," the squadron boarded a train from Oakland to San Diego, where it embarked on the USS HOLLANDIA for Pearl Harbor.

6. NAS, HILO, HAWAII, 12 November 1944 to 16 December 1944:

VT-17, with other squadron of the AIR GROUP were assigned NAS, HILO, for advanced base training and air group tactics. A portion of the pilots flew planes from Oahu, other pilots and officers were flown in transports, and some officers and enlisted personnel were transported to HILO on the USS CUMBERLAND SOUND.

## NARRATIVE

HILO was the squadron's first brush with the semi-tropics and living conditions at an advanced station (not having yet reached GUAM). Gunnery, searches, inter island hops, squadron and air group tactics, co-ordinated air group and inter-air group tactics and simulated torpedo attacks on blue shipping were included in the training during this period.

Living conditions at HILO were satisfactory. The officers' and mens quarters were clean and sanitary despite the indigenous dampness due to heavy rainfall.

Pre-Dawn simulated attacks on friendly shipping in the Hawaiian area were valuable, if dangerous, to VT-17 pilots during this period. Because of widespread cloud cover a great portion of the time in this area during the winter season, the pilots were able to utilize this important combat advantage in simulated shipping attacks. Horizontal bombing tactics were perfected here.

The squadron left HILO 15 December 1944, went to Pearl Harbor on an inter-island steamer, the name of which is difficult and happily forgotten. On 16 December the USS NASSAU left Pearl Harbor with the squadron enroute to GUAM.

### 7. NAB AGANA, GUAM, 28 December 1944 to 29 January 1945:

GUAM became immediately more "advanced" than HILO. The squadron officers and men lived in Quonset huts, and ate canned food, bathed in public and cold water and washed their clothes in all types of ingenious contrivances.

## NARRATIVE

Some refresher carrier landings were made during this period, and some division gunnery runs were made.

One two-plane strike was made on AGUIJAN, from GUAM during which VT-17's "combat bombing" was initiated. (The crossroads of the by-passed island's village was hit).

After one month on GUAM, the air group embarked for ULITHI on the USS KASAAN BAY, arriving there 1 February 1945.

## COMBAT

8. Aboard the USS HORNET 1 February 1945 to 13 June 1945:

The HORNET sortied from ULITHI 10 February 1945 with Air Group SEVENTEEN aboard. Training exercises had been conducted on a pre-operation shake-down cruise 4, 5, and 6 February, and continued on 11 and 12 February. Pilots were briefed on the first operation, "Tokio," on 13 and 14 and 15 February.

Tokio was a big name. The war looked big and important to VT-17 at this moment, and in the squadron ready rooms smiles passed rakishly and nervously before the first take offs. VT's first target was HACHIJO Jima, only an island very close to Japan and Tokio, but a test, and unknown nevertheless. The airfield, installations and small craft in the harbor were hit, 16 February. The pilots came back with enthusiasm. This was the squadron's first real attack on the enemy. Following this hop, the same day, a mission was

## NARRATIVE

sent over HAMAMATSU Airfield -- the Honshu homeland! The AA was "disappointing." Strafing by the squadron was rampant. Extensive damage was inflicted on the airfield installations and parked planes.

For three days the Task Force haunted Honshu, VT hit other airfields (TOYAHASHI and KANOYA), and CHICHI Jima, a hot spot of anti-aircraft, which tucked in their confident ears somewhat but hardly affected their aggressiveness.

The force steamed then for the primary operations objective, IWO Jima. The squadron was told "TOKIO" had been "diversionary," and a feint to keep Empire aircraft aground watching the home fires burn while the amphibious units prepared to take the little island in the Volcano Retto.

IWO was PETALUMA MARSH in the real. What the squadron had practiced 30 miles north of ALAMEDA, they were repeating 650 miles south of TOKIO. Five support missions were launched to support the IWO ground forces, and the "well done's" were adequate payment for the long hours on and over PETALUMA MARSH.

VT was given its first crack at Jap shipping in MIYAKO Hakuchi. Search disclosed two merchantmen and a DE there. Five torpedo-bearing TBM's were launched 1 March 1945. Three of the pilots shared two hits on an SB, which exploded spectacularly and sank, and two other VT pilots shared in the sinking of a FTC. The fifth pilot, a veteran, returned shamefacedly and admitted he had scored but a near miss on the DE.

## NARRATIVE

This strike completed the first phrase of the cruise of VT-17. The Task Force returned to ULITHI 4 March.

In 11 days the force was at sea again, this time for an extended prowl, one which took the squadron in forty-seven (47) days to such targets as KURE on the INLAND SEA, the KERAMA RETTO, which was a pre-invasion operations for OKINAWA; shipping in the EAST CHINA SEA, OKINAWA, AMAMI GUNTO islands, AMAMI GUNTO shipping, KANOYA, SAKISHIMA GUNTO, and the JAP FLEET, spearheaded by the late YAMATO.

KURE, 19 March, will remain a nightmare of multi-colored flak as long as the squadron lives. Piercing this lethal pyro-technic display with a torpedo bomber was akin to sticking one's fingers into a bowl of hot colored marbles. Still the ships were below it -- waiting but angry ducks on the harbor pond. VT-17 poked "12 fingers" into the marble bowl, and pulled back eight whole ones. Three were injured, one was missing. But in those weary fingers was adequate feel of contact and accomplishment. VT-17 scored 14 X 500-pound bomb hits on eight ships.

The KERAMA RETTO reminded many of the pilots of home, It was a sleepy group of hilly islands breeding people apparently of the soil. Even so, the little islands were obstacles to the goal OKINAWA. VT-17 bombed and burned them three times 23 March.

## NARRATIVE

An eight-ship enemy convoy, apparently enroute to succor OKINAWA, was spotted too far from their home shore in the EAST CHINA SEA 24 March. Twelve VT-17 planes, with others of the Task Group, were launched. Three of the squadron's planes failed to reach the target due to the emergency water landing of one and rescue procedure of the two planes standing by. (See Air Sea Rescue Appendix 10). The nine planes carrying their torpedoes to the target, however, scored six hits on four ships, all of which sank during the Task Group attack.

Pre-Invasion OKINAWA support began for VT-17 25 March. Including these and the numerous post-invasion missions, VT-17 flew a total of 24 without losing a plane or crew. Targets included practically everything stationary and moving on the ground from aircraft revetments to truck convoys and galloping horses (the last-mentioned galloped unmolested).

OKINAWA, despite occasional flurries of AA, ultimately became the convenient route to an Air Medal, but it was still tedious, technical business over the target with the ever-present potential threat of being destroyed at low altitude.

AMAMI GUNTO held out to VT-17 pilots airfield and shipping targets mostly, and occasionally a barracks area or a concentration of aircraft revetments.

Ordinarily camouflage played its theatrical role in the Gunto. Shipping, when found, was often close against the ponderous shorelines under nets or

## NARRATIVE

or tree limbs, and the aircraft, too, were hidden in groves. During two shipping strikes, though, VT-17 damaged eight ships, destroyed two luggers and damaged other small craft.

MIYAKO Shima was an excellent airfield target. It was more circular, like a bull's-eye, than were most of the oddly-shaped NANSEI SHOTO airfields. This shima was hit twice by VT-17. Its bombs were dropped on the airfield and installations principally.

On 7 April, a portion of the Jap Fleet, including the YAMATO, was attacked in the EAST CHINA SEA. Thirteen planes of VT-17 were in on the kill, and were the first torpedo planes to attack the principal units, including the prized 45,000-ton YAMATO. Four of the eight VT-17 torpedoes fired at the YAMATO scored hits on the port side of the big ship. The ship listed to the port, wounded painfully. Three other VT-17 pilots dropped their torpedoes on the TERUTSUKI class DD in the force, scoring one hit. The DD sank. One torpedo hung up, and one missed a DD in the screen. One pilot and crew were lost attacking the port bow of the YAMATO. All of the ships in the convoy seemed to be underway and maneuvering when the squadron attacked. Torpedoes were dropped against the YAMATO from an altitude of 600-700 feet and from an average range of 1500 yards. Torpedoes were set at 20 feet depth setting for the YAMATO, (see comments of CO), and at 10 feet depth setting on the smaller ships in this force.

## NARRATIVE

Colored puffs of AA, like those observed at KURE, were seen also during this attack. The shipborne AA was intense, destroying one VT-17 plane and damaging five others. Wing tanks were carried by the VT-17 planes for the 263-mile leg out mission. The planes were in the air five hours.

The target was hazy, and the ceiling during the squadron's attack was from 1200 to 2000 feet with seven tenths clouds and intermittent rain.

Returning pilots said the YAMATO assumed tremendous proportions as their attacking planes drew within dropping range. She was underway at high speed

Following the excitement---and rejoicing---over the YAMATO attack, VT-17 "steamed down" to a series of support attacks on OKINAWA and airfield and installations attacks on KIKAI in AMAMI Gunto.

Although the support strikes were not of a spectacular nature, their effectiveness was essential to the advancement of ground troops and the ultimate security of OKINAWA Shima and the satellite islands intended to establish the base from which to hit Japan's homeland and/or China.

After the support strike on OKINAWA 27 April the Task Group left the operation area, and steamed to ULITHI, arriving there 30 April. The group sortied 9 May and on 12 May VT-17 was again flying in support of OKINAWA, striking the now familiar KANOYA Airfield and other KYUSHU airfields and installations. One SHIKOKU Airfield, shipping in the EAST CHINA SEA, additional strikes against AMAMI Gunto and ended this final phrase of combat by flying supply paradrop

## NARRATIVE

missions for the advanced front line troops on OKINAWA's hard-fought southern sector.

Damage inflicted on KYUSHU's airfields and installations by VT-17 was difficult to assess. Most attacks against this type of target were glide bombing attacks, and bombs were released at altitudes ranging from 1500 to 3500 feet. Observation by the pilots was difficult also since their planes were in pull-outs usually when the bombs hit the targets. Over-all, however, the bombing accuracy was estimated at 80-90 per cent, and the damage extensive to airfields, revetments, more than a dozen hangars, scores of plane revetments, warehouses, workshops, barracks, one gunpowder plant and a dozen aircraft factory buildings.

After a series of attacks on KANOYA, IZUMI Airfield and SAEKI Naval Air Base, on 14 May VT-17 was assigned its first strictly industrial target, the KUMAMOTO Aircraft Plant. (The strike was reported as the first by U.S. Planes against the factory). Fifteen of the squadron's planes in two flights dropped a total of 52 X 500-pound bombs on the factory area seriously damaging three large camouflaged buildings, a large "U"-shaped building, four large buildings, several smaller buildings, and a gas tank. During the second of the two KUMAMOTO strikes 4 X 500-pound bombs in one of the planes hung up over the target, and were dropped returning to base on the gunpowder plant north of NOBEOKA on the east coast of KYUSHU. The four-bomb salvo made a direct hit on the four large adjoining buildings. An explosion followed, and the plant was probably destroyed.

## NARRATIVE

TACHIARAI Airfield was hit 14 May for the first time by VT-17 planes during this period of operations. MATSUYAMA West, the only SHIKOKU Airfield to be attacked by VT-17 planes during the entire combat cruise, received one mission. IMAUNA Airfield also was a new target for VT-17.

Two VT-17 planes were launched with fighter planes to intercept a three-ship convoy in the EAST CHINA SEA 22 May. One of the planes scored a direct 500-pound bomb hit on a PC-13 sinking it.

Among the most successful missions of VT-17 over OKINAWA were the two supply paradrop flights during which 12 planes flew a total of 42 sorties from NABENA Airfield to the advanced lines in the southern sector of the island. At that time mud and blocked roads were hampering ground movements of supplies. The planes dropped, food, water, ammunition and medical supplies, received thanks and "well dones".

Combat missions for VT-17 ended 3 June 1945.

There followed, however, one of the more harassing experiences. On 5 June the squadron's base ship, USS HORNET, with other ships of the Task Group encountered a typhoon. Steady winds reached a velocity of 80-100 knots, with gusts up to 120 knots. The seas were mountainous. No one was injured or lost, however, aboard the ship.

NARRATIVE

The Task Group reached Leyte 13 June and anchored in SAN PEDRO Bay.

After a partial ship-stripping, the HORNET sailed eastward 19 June to the U.S. Via PEARL HARBOR.

\* \* \*

(See Appendices for combat figures and details).

(See Chronology for Squadron Log, Personnel Losses, etc.).

VI-17

HISTORICAL DATA

PART THREE

\* \* \*

APPENDICES

VT-17 COMBAT SUMMARY

Days at Sea in Combat	105
Combat Missions	69
Combat Miles Flown	134,346
Targets	23
Bombs Dropped on Enemy Targets	3,885
Rounds of Ammunition Expended at Enemy Targets	108,680
Ships Sunk	14
Ships Probably Sunk	2
Ships Damaged by Bombs	18
Ships Damaged by Strafing	18
Airfields Hit	13
Islands Attacked	12
Empire Islands Attacked (Honshu, Kyushu, Shikoku).	3
Aircraft Destroyed	9
Aircraft Probably Destroyed on Ground	28
Total Sorties	949
Personnel Lost or Missing	13
Personnel Wounded	3
Personnel Rescued	13
Okinawa Support Strikes	24
Iwo Support Strikes	5
Own Planes Shot Down	5
Own Planes damaged by enemy AA & Jettisoned	3
Own Planes Damaged by Enemy AA	21
Own Planes Lost in Emergency Water Landings	4

APPENDIX I

VT-17 COMBAT CALENDAR

2/16/45	Hachijo Jima Airfield & Installations
2/16/45	Hamamatsu Airfield & Installations
2/17/45	Toyahashi Airfield & Installations
2/18/45	Chichi Jima Airfield, Naval Base and Installations
2/20/45	Iwo Jima Support (3)
2/21/45	Iwo Jima Support
2/22/45	Iwo Jima Support
3/1/45	Miyako Hakuchi (Shipping)
3/18/45	Kanoya Airfield & Installations (2)
3/19/45	Kure (Inland Sea) Jap Fleet
3/23/45	Kerama Retto Pre-Invasion Strikes (3)
3/24/45	Shipping in the East China Sea
3/25/45	Okinawa Support (3)
3/28/45	Okinawa Support
3/28/45	Jap Fleet in East China Sea (Fleet not found).
3/31/45	Amami Gunto Shipping
4/1/45	Okinawa Support (2)
4/2/45	Amami Gunto Shipping (2)
4/2/45	Okinawa Support
4/3/45	Miyako Shima Airfields & Installations
4/5/45	Kikai Airfields & Installations
4/7/45	Jap Fleet in East China Sea (Yamato)
4/14/45	Okinawa Support
4/15/45	Okinawa Support
4/18/45	Okinawa Support
4/19/45	Okinawa Support (2)
4/20/45	Kikai Airfields & Installations (3)
4/21/45	Okinawa Support
4/23/45	Okinawa Support
4/25/45	Okinawa Support
4/27/45	Okinawa Support
5/12/45	Okinawa Support
5/13/45	Kanoya Airfield & Installations (3)
5/13/45	Izumi Airfield & Installations
5/13/45	Saeki Naval Air Base
5/14/45	Kumamoto Aircraft Factories (2)
5/14/45	Tachiari Airfield & Installations
5/14/45	Matsuyama West Airfield & Installations
5/14/45	Kanoya Airfield & Installations
5/17/45	Okinawa Support (2)
5/18/45	Okinawa Support (2)
5/21/45	Kikai Airfields & Installations
5/21/45	Tokuna Airfield & Installations
5/22/45	Shipping East China Sea
5/22/45	Kikai Airfields & Installations (2)
5/26/45	Okinawa Support

VT-17 COMBAT CALENDAR

5/28/45 Okinawa Support  
6/1/45 Okinawa Supply Paradrops  
6/3/45 Okinawa Supply Paradrops

\* \* \*

Targets - - - - - 23  
Missions - - - - - 69

\* \* \*

Note: Where a specific target was hit more than **once** in a single day there is but one entry.  
Numbers in parentheses designate the number of missions.

APPENDIX II (B)

BOXSCORE - PRINCIPAL VT-17 STRIKES

MIYAKO Shima Hakuchi - 1 March 1945

6 planes attacked.  
6 torpedo dropped.  
2 hits on SB - Sunk  
2 hits on FTC - Sunk

\* \* \*

KURE - 19 March 1945

(14 hits on 8 ships)  
12 planes attacked.  
1 pilot & crew lost.  
14 hits on 8 ships - Damaged.

\* \* \*

JAP CONVOY - E.China Sea - 24 March 1945

12 T.O.  
9 reached target  
1 pilot & crew landed in water  
1 pilot & crew shot down  
3 torpedo hits on FB - Sunk  
3 torpedo hits on FB - Sunk  
2 torpedo hits on 2 DE - Sunk

\* \* \*

SHIPPING AMAMI GUNTO - 2 April 1945

8 planes attacking.  
PF - Damaged  
LST - Damaged  
APD - Damaged  
3 Luggers (2 dest. - 1 Prob.dest.)

\* \* \*

AMAMI GUNTO - (Kakeroma Anchorage)

12 planes attacked.  
7 hits on 6 SD's & 1 APD (All damaged).

\* \* \*

YAMATO - 7 April 1945

13 planes attacked.  
1 plane & crew lost  
5 planes damaged by AA  
8 torpedoes fired at YAMATO  
4 torpedoes hits YAMATO (Sunk)  
3 torpedoes fired at TERUTSUKI  
(DD).  
1 torpedo hit TERUTSUKI (DD).

\* \* \*

KANOYA A/F - 13 May 1945

8 planes attacked  
1 plane hit by Heavy AA  
1 pilot & crew lost  
6 Enemy planes destroyed.  
5 Enemy planes probably destroyed.

\* \* \*

KUMAMOTO Aircraft Plant

15 planes attacked (2 flights)  
52 X 500-pound bomb hits on at  
least 11 large factory build-  
ings, one "U"-shaped buildings,  
several small buildings, one  
gas tank. (A gunpowder plant  
north of NOBEOKA was probably  
destroyed during the Second  
mission).

\* \* \*

PILOTS' PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Lt. Comdr. ROMBERGER, William M.

- 1 - 500-pound bomb hit on DD 19 March 1945 in KURE KO - Damaged.
- 2 planes probably destroyed on ground KANOYA A/F - 13 May 1945.

Lieut. DURKIN, Thomas C.

- 1 torpedo hit on 1 SB - 1 March 1945 - MIYAKO Hakuchi - Sunk
- 1 T/E plane destroyed on ground KANOYA A/F - 18 March 1945.
- 1 500-pound bomb hit on SD in AMAMI O Shima on 2 April 1945 - Damaged
- 1 torpedo hit on YAMATO in E. CHINA SEA on 7 April 1945 - Sunk.

Lieut. LIVENGOOD, Charles D.

- 6 T/E probably destroyed on ground at A/F 75 HAMAMATSU on 16 February 1945.
- 1 torpedo hit on Torpedo Boat (DE) in E. CHINA SEA - 34 March 1945 - Sunk

Lieut. TEW, James A.

- 3 500-pound bomb hit on Luggers in AMAMI O Shima on 2 April 1945 - 2 dest.  
1 prob. dest.

Lieut. CLARK, Henry E.

- 1 500-pound bomb hit on CA in KURE KO - 19 March 1945 - Damaged
- 1 torpedo hit on Torpedo Boat (DE) in E. CHINA SEA - 24 March 1945 - Sunk.
- 1 torpedo hit on Terutsuki Class DD in E. CHINA SEA on 7 April 1945 - Sunk
- 1 plane probably destroyed on ground KANOYA A/F - 13 May 1945.

Lieut. SULLIVAN, Steven G.

- 1 torpedo hit on FB in E. CHINA SEA - 24 March 1945 - Sunk
- 1 500-pound bomb hit on SD in KAKEROMA Shima Anchorage in AMAMI O Shima Gunto on 2 April 1945 - Damaged.
- 1 torpedo hit on YAMATO in E. CHINA SEA on 7 April 1945 - Sunk.

Lt.(jg). HILL, George A., Jr.

- 5 T/E probably destroyed on ground at A/F 75 HAMAMATSU on 16 February 1945.
- 1 torpedo hit - 1 March 1945 - on FTC in MIYAKO Hakuchi - Sunk
- 1 torpedo hit on FB in E. CHINA SEA - 24 March 1945 - Sunk.

Lt.(jg). TRAXLER, Arnold C.

- 3 T/E planes probably destroyed on ground at TOYAHASHI A/F, 17 February 1945.
- 3 500-pound bomb hits on ISE Class BB in KURE KO - 19 March 1945 - Damaged
- 2 500-ound bomb hits on LST in AMAMI O Shima on 2 April 1945 - Damaged
- 1 plane probably destroyed on ground KANOYA A/F - 13 May 1945.

Lt.(jg). FOOTE, Harlan W.

- 1 500-pound bomb hit on CA in KURE KO - 19 March 1945 - Damaged
- 1 plane probably destroyed on ground KANOYA A/F - 13 May 1945

APPENDIX IV (A)

PILOTS' PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

- Lt.(jg). SMITH, Francis M.  
1 torpedo hit on FB in E. CHINA SEA - 24 March 1945 - Sunk  
4 bomb hits on 4 T/E planes at 314 KANOYA on 13 May 1945 - Probable destroyed on ground.
- Lt.(jg). COGHLAN, Thomas J.  
1 500-pound bomb hit on ISE Class BB in KURE KO - 19 March 1945 - Damaged  
1 torpedo hit on Terutsuki Class DD in E. CHINA SEA on 7 April 1945 - Sunk  
1 500-pound bomb hit on Submarine Chaser (PC-13) - 600 tons in the E. CHINA SEA on 22 May 1945 - Sunk.  
1 plane probably destroyed on ground KANOYA A/F - 13 May 1945.
- Lt.(jg). COOKE, John S.  
1 torpedo hit - 1 March 1945 - on FTC in MIYAKO Hakuchi - Sunk  
1 torpedo hit - 24 March 1945 - on FB in E. CHINA SEA - Sunk
- Lt.(jg). MC CUBBINS, Kenneth B.C.  
2 bomb hits on 2 T/E planes at 314 KANOYA on 13 May 1945 - planes destroyed on ground.  
1 bomb hit on one (1) T/E plane at 314 KANOYA on 13 May 1945 - Probably destroyed on ground.
- Lt.(jg). NIELSEN, Walter D.  
1 torpedo hit on SB in MIYAKO Hakuchi - 1 March 1945 - Sunk
- Lt.(jg). JOHNSON, Ralph V.  
Strafed S/E on WAN A/F KIKAI Jima on 20 April 1945 - Damaged planes.  
1 plane probably destroyed on ground KANOYA A/F - 13 May 1945.
- Lt.(jg). JOHNSON, Hugh "C".  
2 500 pound bomb hits on CV in KURE KO - 19 March 1945 - Damaged  
1 500-pound bomb hit on PF in AMAMI O Shima on 2 April 1945 - Damaged  
1 plane probably destroyed on ground KANOYA A/F - 13 May 1945.
- Lt.(jg). MONAGHAN, James F.  
1 torpedo hit on YAMATO in E. CHINA SEA 7 April 1945 - Sunk
- Lt.(jg). STRICKLAND, John E.  
1 500-pound bomb hit on AK in KURE KO - 19 March 1945 - Damaged  
1 500-pound bomb hit on APD in AMAMI O Shima on 2 April 1945 - Damaged  
1 plane probably destroyed on ground KANOYA A/F - 13 May 1945.

PILOTS' PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Ensign BEHL, Joseph (n).

- 2 500-pound bomb hits on CVL in KURE KO - 19 March 1945 - Damaged
- 1 500-pound bomb hit on LST in AMAMI O Shima on 2 April 1945 - Damaged
- 2 500-pound bomb hits on 3 SD's in AMAMI O Shima on 2 April 1945 - Damaged
- 4 bomb hits on 4 T/E planes at 314 KANOYA on 13 May 1945 - Destroyed on ground.

Ensign NICKEL, Walter F.

- 1 500-pound bomb hit on APD in KAKEROMA Shima Anchorage in AMAMI O Shima on 2 April 1945 - Damaged.
- 1 torpedo hit on YAMATO in E. CHINA SEA on 7 April 1945 - Sunk

Ensign HANLON, Robert S.

- 1 4/E plane destroyed on ground on SUSAKI A/F at CHICHI Jima - 18 February.
- 1 T/E plane destroyed on ground on SUSAKI A/F at CHICHI Jima - 18 February.
- 2 500-pound bomb hits on 2 DD's in KURE KO - 19 March 1945 - Damaged
- 1 torpedo hit - 24 March 1945 - on FB in E. CHINA SEA - Sunk
- 1 torpedo hit on Terutsuki Class DD in E. CHINA SEA on 7 April 1945 - Sunk
- 5 100-pound bomb hits on 5 enemy crafts in UCHI-NO-URA Wan on 13 May 1945 -
  - 2 200' fishing schooners - Sunk
  - 1 Small fishing craft - Sunk
  - 2 " " " - Damaged
- 1 plane probably destroyed on ground KANOYA A/F - 13 May 1945.

Ensign O'BRIEN, Leo (n).

- 1 500-pound bomb hit on SD in KAKEROMA Shima Anchorage, AMAMI O Shima on 2 April 1945 - Damaged.

APPENDIX IV (C)

SHIPPING & AIRCRAFT DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

COMBAT VESSELS

<u>SUNK</u>		<u>PROBABLY SUNK</u>		<u>DAMAGED</u>	
<u>Type</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Tons</u>
1 BB* (YAMATO)	45,000			1 BB	32,000
1 DD (TERUTSUKI CLASS)	2,300			1 CV	28,000
1 DE	700			1 CA	12,500
1 DE	700			1 CVL	10,000
1 PC-13	600			1 DD	2,000
<u>Total</u>	<u>49,300</u>			1 DD	1,000
				1 APD	1,200
				1 LST	1,000
				<u>1 PF</u>	<u>150</u>
				<u>Total</u>	<u>88,750</u>

MERCHANT VESSELS

<u>Type</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Tons</u>
1 SB	6,600	1 Sampan	50	1 FTD	1,000
1 FTC	3,500	1 Lugger	50	1 SD	150
1 FB*	5,000			1 SD	150
1 FB*	5,000			1 SD	150
1 Fishing Craft	150			1 SD	150
1 Fishing Craft	150			1 SD	150
1 Small Craft	75			1 SD	150
1 Lugger	100			1 Small Craft	50
<u>1 Lugger</u>	<u>100</u>			<u>1 Sampan</u>	<u>50</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>20,785</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>2,000</u>
Grand Total	70,085	Grand Total	100	Grand Total	90,750

\* Assisted

AIRCRAFT

APPENDIX V      Destroyed on Ground - 9      Probably Destroyed on Ground - 28      Damaged on Ground - 1

SORTIES ABOARD HORNET

COMBAT

Airfield & Installations	292
Air Support	227
Shipping	80
Supply Paradrops	43
Industrial Targets	29
SNASP	<u>16</u>
Total	687

NONCOMBAT

Practice Attacks	151
Ferry, Mai, Other Misc.	69
Tow	<u>42</u>
Total	262

Grand Total 949

\* \* \*

Total Combat Miles	134,346
Total Combat Strike Hours	1,862
Total Cruise Flying Time	3,302
Hours Flown in training	7,613
Average Mission Miles	247
Average Mission Hours	3.6
Total squadron hours (training & combat)	10,915

APPENDIX VI

BOMBS & TORPEDOES DROPPED ON ENEMY TARGETS

Bomb Load	4 X 500 GP	10 X 100 GP	1 X 200 GP	10 X 100 GP Incend.	250 GP	Torp	Total
Number Dropped	1072	1888	34	<u>60</u> 840	24	27	3885
Tonnage	268	94.4	34	3.13	3	27	429.5
Missions	35	28	3	1	1	3	
Per Cent. Used	49	40	4.3	1.5	1.5	1.5	
Sorties	272	229	36	6	6	27	576
Type of Mission	(Support	21	18	2	1	1	43
	(A/F-Inst.	7	8	1			16
	(Industry	2					2
	(Ships	5				3	8

Bomb Hit Percentage - - - - - 85 (App.)

Torpedo Hits Percentage - - - 55.5

\* \* \*

GUNNERY

Ammunition Expended During Combat:

.30 caliber - - - - - 35,880

.50 caliber - - - - - 72,800

Total 108,680

Ships Damaged by Strafing - - - - - 18

Memo:

From: Lt.(jg). W.H.Morrissey, Ordnance Officer, Torpedo Squadron SEVENTEEN.  
 To: Commanding Officer, Torpedo Squadron SEVEN.

ORDNANCE RECAP

There follows by date a recapitulation of the number and type of bombs, torpedoes and incendiaries carried and dropped by VT-17 while aboard the USS HORNET for the period of February 1, 1945 to May 28, 1945. There is also indicated the mission and the available fuzing.

Date	No. Sorties	Mission	325							No. Dropped:	
			: 100 :	Incend :	250's:	D.C. :	500:	2000:	Torp:		Fuzing-
2/4/45	21	Spar	21	:	:	:	:	:	:	Inst.	21
2/5/45	18	Spar	18	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	18
2/5/45	8	ASP	:	:	:	16	:	:	:	:	None
2/6/45	14	Spar	14	:	:	:	:	:	:	Inst.	14
2/11/45	17	Spar	17	:	:	:	:	:	:	Inst.	17
2/12/45	18	Spar	18	:	:	:	:	:	:	Inst.	18
2/16/45	8	Hachijo Jima	80	:	:	:	:	:	:	Inst..025:	70
2/16/45	8	Hamamatsu	80	:	:	:	:	:	:	Inst..025:	80
2/17/45	12	Toyahashi	:	:	:	:	:	12	:	:	12
2/18/45	12	Chichi Jima	:	:	:	:	48	:	:	Inst..025:	48
2/19/45	4	SNASP	:	:	:	8	:	:	:	Inst..025:	None
2/20/45	22	Iwo Jima	70	:	:	:	60	:	:	Inst..025:	130
2/21/45	8	Iwo Jima	:	:	:	:	32	:	:	Inst..025:	32
2/25/45	14	Tokyo	:	140	bdl.:	:	:	:	:	Inst.	140
Totals	192	:	258	140	:	24	156	12	:	:	556
3/1/45	6	Miyaka Shima	:	:	:	:	:	:	6	10 feet	6
3/14/45	12	Spar	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Water Filled
3/15/45	16	Spar	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	" "
3/15/45	4	SNASP	:	:	:	8	:	:	:	50 feet	None
3/18/45	27	Kanoya	270	:	:	:	:	:	:	Inst..025:	270
3/19/45	12	Kure	:	:	:	:	48	:	:	Inst..025:	48
3/23/45	27	Tokashiki Shima	270	:	:	:	:	:	:	Inst..025:	270
3/24/45	12	" "	60	60	bdl.:	:	:	:	:	Inst.	:
3/25/45	12	China Sea	:	:	:	:	:	:	12	10 feet	11
3/25/45	11	Okinawa	:	:	:	:	44	:	:	Inst..025:	44
3/28/45	9	"	90	:	:	:	:	:	:	Inst..025:	90
3/28/45	14	Jap Fleet	:	:	:	:	:	:	14	15 feet	14
3/31/45	6	Kakeroma Shima	:	:	:	:	24	:	:	Inst..025:	24
Totals	168	:	690	60	:	8	116	32	:	:	737

APPENDIX VIII (A)

Date	NO Sorties	Mission	100	Incend.	250's	D.C.	500	2000	Torp.	Fuzing	No.Dropped.
4/1/45	22	Okinawa	140		24					.025	164
4/2/45	26	Okinawa-Kakeroma	60				60			.025	120
4/3/45	21	Miyaka Shima					84			24hrs.dly.	84
4/5/45	24	Kikai Shima	120				48			Inst..025	168
4/7/45	14	Jap Fleet							14	20 feet	14
4/14/45	7	Okinawa					28			24hrs. dly.	28
4/15/45	8	"					32			" "	32
4/18/45	11	"					44			Inst..025	44
4/19/45	24	"						24		Inst..01	24
4/20/45	31	Okinawa-Kikai	90				92			Inst..025	182
4/21/45	10	Okinawa					40			Inst..025	40
4/23/45	11	"					55			Inst..01	55
4/25/45	12	"					48			Inst..01	48
4/27/45	12	"					48			Inst..01	48
Totals	233		386		24		579	24	14		1049
5/9/45	6	Spar	12							Inst..025	12
5/10/45	5	Spar	10							Inst..025	10
5/11/45	8	Spar	16							Inst..025	16
5/12/45	8	Okinawa					32			Inst..025	31
5/13/45	34	Kanoya	340							Inst..025	340
5/14/45	33	Kyushu	170				45			.01-.025	
										Inst..025	215
5/17/45	16	Okinawa					64			Inst..025	64
5/18/45	16	"					64			Inst..025	64
5/21/45	23	Kikai Jima					92			Inst..025	92
5/22/45	12	" "					48			Inst..025	47
5/26/45	4	Okinawa					20			Inst..025	20
5/28/45	10	"					40			Inst..025	40
Totals	171		548				405				951
Grand Total	764		1906	200	24	32	1256	36	46		3294

1. Total weight of bombs (all types) and torpedoes carried 1,106,200 pounds or 553 plus tons requiring 6796 fuzes of various types.
2. The 32 depth charges carried on SNASP were not dropped and are not included in total.
3. There were in addition 44 tow hops for the indicated period.
4. Not included are numerous supply drops, ferry, X-country and guard mail flights.

AWARDS

VT-17 OFFICERS

Lt. Comdr. ROMBERGER, William M. Navy Cross. Distinguished Flying Cross. Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal, Air Medal.	610 First St. Coronado, California.
Lieut. DURKIN, Thomas C. Navy Cross Distinguished Flying Cross Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal. Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal. Air Medal.	67 Wall St. New York, N.Y.
Lieut. LIVENGOOD, Charles D. Distinguished Flying Cross. Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal. Air Medal.	P.O. Box 470 Powell, Wyoming.
Lieut. CLARK, Henry E. Navy Cross Silver Star Medal Distinguished Flying Cross Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	4514 $\frac{1}{2}$ Lomita Ave. Los Angeles, Calif..
Lieut. TEW, James A. Silver Star Medal Gold Star in lieu of Thrid Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	200 Avocado Ave, Sanford, Fla..
Lieut. SULLIVAN, Steven G. Navy Cross Distinguished Flying Cross Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	Rt. #2, Box 234 Tulare, California.
Lieut.(jg). HILL, George A., Jr. Distinguished Flying Cross Gold Star in lieu of Second Distinguished Flying Cross Gold Star in lieu of Fourth Air Medal. Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal. Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal. Air Medal.	40 Elm St. Concord, Mass.



AWARDS

VT-17 OFFICERS

Lieut.(jg). JOHNSON, Ralph V.. Distinguished Flying Cross Air Medal	Benton City, Mo.
Lieut.(jg). MONAGHAN, James F. Navy Cross Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	18-11 Murray St., Whitestone, L.I.
Lieut.(jg). STRICKLAND, John E. Distinguished Flying Cross Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	Warsaw N.C.
Ensign BEHL, Joseph (n). Navy Cross Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	7440 Teasdale Ave., St.Louis, Mo.
Ensign JONES, Harry D. Distinguished Flying Cross Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	275 Sebring St., Pittsburg, Pa..
Ensign NICKEL, Walter F. Navy Cross Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	428 N. "J" St., Dinuba, California
Ensign ROGERS, Harold J. Distinguished Flying Cross Air Medal.	918 W.Grace Spokane, Washington.
Ensign HANLON, Robert S. Silver Star Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Distinguished Flying Cross. Distinguished Flying Cross Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal.	722 Military, Detroit, Mich.

\* \* \*

APPENDIX IX (C)

AWARDS

VT-17 ENLISTED MEN

AKERS, Charles N., ARM3c(T), 559 50 20, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	2312 Avenue U., Lubbock, Texas.
BARCLAY, Budd N., AOM3c, 860 90 41, USNR Air Medal.	125 Massachusetts Highland Park, Mich.
BERRYHILL, James H., ARMLc(T), 604 65 25, USNR Gold Star in lieu of second Air Medal. Air Medal.	117 E.Circle Plant #1, Sheffield, Ala.
CANADA, Herman R., ARM3c, 724 28 30, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal. Air Medal.	Elbridge, Tenn.
CHASE, Leroy C., AMM2c(T), 805 20 80, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal. Air Medal	353 B Central Lane, N.Tonawanda, N.Y.
CIMINSKI, Frank (n)., ARM3c(T), 565 56 16, USNR Air Medal.	266 Twinkenham Ave., Los Angeles, California.
COLOMBINI, William (n)., Slc(ARM), 886 40 72, USNR Air Medal.	Castroville, California.
COLP, William E., ARM3c, 669 71 21, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	4207 Maryland St.Louis, Mo.
CROPP, Fred R., ARM2c(T), 891 09 62, USNR Air Medal.	E.18 4th Ave., Spokane, Washington.
FITZGERALD, Fred J., AMMLc(T), 662 42 01, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal. Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal. Air Medal.	2 Earl Avenue, San Jose, California.
FORBES, Ray D., AOMlc(T), 268 34 70, USN Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal.	34-16 9th Avenue, Tampa, Fla.

APPENDIX IX (D)

AWARDS

VT-17 ENLISTED MEN

FRIEZE, Robert A., ARM2c(T), 878 C9 47, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	4007 E. 6 St., Los Angeles, California.
FUCHS, Ernest P., AOMlc, 234 32 68, USN Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	1240 E. 27th St., Erie, Pa.
GEORGE, Philip W., AOMlc(T), 628 85 60, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal	Lebo, Kansas.
GEYER, Jack L., AOMlc(T), 653 12 11, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	2039 Termon Avenue, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.
HELGESON, Helge L., ARM3c, 877 61 30, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	Nassua, Montana.
HERZING, Ivan J., ACOM(AA)(T), 652 15 42, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	St. Mary's, Pa.
HILBERT, Bruce M., AMM3c(T), 249 74 12, USNR Air Medal	126 N. 4th St., Emmaus, Pa.
JENSEN, Norman C., AOMlc(T), 300 80 96, USN Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	1048 Chicago Avenue Oak Park, Illinois
KEENER, Frank W., AOM3c, 379 19 59, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	1101 Greenwood Ave., Fresno, California.
KEFFER, Theodore (n)., AOMlc(T), 652 09 01, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal.	Cheswick, Pa.
KLUNDER, Robert "E"., ARMLc(T), 225 04 68, USN Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	8 Deman Place, Cranford, N.J.

AWARDS

VT-17 ENLISTED MEN

McFARLAND, Carl W., AMM3c, 828 37 80, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	1611 High St., Portsmouth, Ohio.
MEYER, Jack T., AOM2c(T), 250 98 43, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	310 Logan Blvd., Altoona, Pa.
NELSON, Glenn L., ARM3c, 859 19 87, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	301 11th St., Sheldon, Iowa.
NICHOLSON, James N., ARMLc(T), 603 36 02, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	206 1/2 General Delivery Harrison, Arkansas.
NIEDZWICK, Theodore J., AOM1c(T), 602 43 88, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal	225 S. Ann St., Baltimore, Maryland.
PODOLAK, Paul G., ARM2c(T), 851 77 88, USNR Air Medal	5619 S. Denmon Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.
REDMON, Joseph H., ARMLc(T), 611 79 28, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Fourth Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	5733 S. Claremont, Chicago, Illinois.
REED, William H., ARM3c, 671 63 76, USNR Air Medal	317 So. 18th Street, Clinton, Okla.
REIGER, Robert E., ARM2c, 868 37 18, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	Box 75, Wauzeka, Wisconsin.
ROBSON, Donald W., ARM3c, 378 29 99, USNR Air Medal	329 1/2 Gladys Long Beach, California.
ROELFSON, Roy O., ARM2c, 628 61 02, USNR Air Medal	2616 Mountgall, Kansas City, Mo.

APPENDIX IX (F)

AWARDS

VT-17 ENLISTED MEN

SCHNELL, Frederick P., AMM2c(T), 868 32 76, USN-I Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	301 Island Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin.
SENNETT, Walter M., AOM2c(T), 313 32 81, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	9121 Falcon, Detroit, Mich.
SHUTTLEWORTH, Frank (n)., ARM3c, 313 32 77, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	9627 Traverse Detroit, Mich.
SIMONS, Paul E., ARM2c(T), 680 61 62, USNR Air Medal	1271 Bosworth Street San Francisco, California.
SMITH, Blair N., ARMLc(T), 612 45 64, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	519 Notre Dame Dayton, Ohio.
SPRING, Richard A., ARM3c, 285 24 11, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	Main St., Perry, Ohio.
STEWART, Cecil W., AOM2c, 657 16 21, USNR Distinguished Flying Cross Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal.	106 N.12th St., Erwin, N.C.
STRIBLING, Samuel L., ARM2c(T), 636 01 87, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal.	127 N. Monroe Avenue, Arcadia, Fla.
TIKKA, Carlo J., AMM2c(T), 312 92 46, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal.	302 Buena Vista, Highland Park, Mich.

APPENDIX IX (G)

AWARDS

VT-17 ENLISTED MEN

TINDALL, Thomas J., ARMLc 224 93 33, USNR Distinguished Flying Cross Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	540 E. Washington St., Trenton, N.J.
TOERNER, Joseph E., ARM2c(T), 613 07 07, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	1054 Winnfield Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio.
TULLY, William L., Jr., AMM2c(T), 821 25 49, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	7 Miles Avenue, Dixon City, Pa.
VERNON, Edward F., Jr., ARMLc(T), 620 27 71, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal.	303 So. 15 Street, Dennison, Iowa.
WOOD, James C., AOM2c(T), 605 33 54, USNR Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal Air Medal	Route 4, Box 196, Bessemer, Ala.
YOUNG, Leonard R., ARM3c, 627 94 84, USNR Air Medal	R.R. #15, Box 198, Indianapolis, Ind.
TRABOLD, William O., ARM2c(T), 810 55 20, USNR Air Medal	57 E. 121st. Street, New York City, N.Y.

APPENDIX IX (H)

## RESCUE

Five officers and nine combat aircrewmen were forced down at sea during the combat cruise. All were rescued. One died as a result of illness contracted during a prolonged period in a life raft.

Four of the five emergency water landings were made, fortunately, in the vicinity of friendly surface forces, and rescues were effected in less than 25 minutes. One emergency landing, however, was made during a strike in the EAST CHINA SEA, approximately 150 miles northwest of OKINAWA, and the pilot and two crewmen were afloat in a life raft nine days.

Except for the loss of the one aircrewmen, personnel suffered no serious injuries (except from exposure) in the water landings and rescues.

Four pilots and seven aircrewmen were rescued by destroyers of the Task Group in which the squadron's base carrier was operating. One pilot and two aircrewmen were rescued by a PBM dumbo-search plane.

The rescues will be considered briefly in chronological order:

1. Lt.(jg). Kenneth B.C. McCubbins, Box 134, Dallas, Oregon, splashed off the starboard bow of the HORNET the morning of 16 February 1945. Riding in the plane were Williams, Robert H., ARM3c, 828 01 17, 2602 Russell Road, Portsmouth, Ohio, and Tikka, Carlo J., AMM2c(T), 312 92 46, 302 Buena Vista, Highland Park, Michigan. The plane made a satisfactory landing, and the pilot and crew climbed out. The plane sank almost immediately. No attempt was made to break out the life. A DD came alongside the men and picked them up uninjured within 15 minutes.

2. Lt.(jg). Arnold C. Traxler, 2012 Tiffin Road, Oakland, California, was piloting a TBM which was knocked down by enemy AA fire over IWO Jima. Despite the fact that the plane's control cable was useless, Lt.(jg). Traxler, through ingenious use of the elevator tab and engine power made an excellent landing about eight miles off shore. The two aircrewmen, Colp, William E., ARM3c, #669 61 21, USNR, 4207 Maryland, St. Louis, Mo., and Klunder, Robert E., ARMLc, #225 04 68, USN, 8 Denman Place, Cranford, N.J., were stationed in the center cockpit for the emergency landing. The three climbed out, after only minor injuries had been sustained. The life-raft was inflated before the plane sank. The safety equipment was in excellent condition. A destroyer picked up the trio in about five minutes.

Except for the loss of the one aircrewman, personnel suffered no serious injuries (except from exposure) in the water landings and rescues.

APPENDIX X (A) Four pilots and seven aircrewmen were rescued by destroyers of the Task Group in which the squadron's base carrier was operating. One pilot and two aircrewmen were rescued by a PBM dumbo-search plane.

The rescues will be considered briefly in chronological order:

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## RESCUE

3. Lt.(jg)., Walter D. Nielsen, 1523 McCadden Place, Hollywood, California, was piloting a TBM which developed engine trouble about 150 miles northwest of Okinawa on 24 March 1945. An emergency water landing was made. The pilot, and his aircrewmembers, Young, Leonard R., ARM3c, #627 94 84, R.R.#15, Box 198, Indianapolis, Ind., and Miller, Russel L., AOM3c, #869 36 03, Ringle, Wisconsin, climbed out uninjured and inflated the three-man life raft. Two VT-17 planes on the same mission, which was to intercept a Jap merchantman convoy in the EAST CHINA SEA, carried out the necessary rescue procedure and were instructed to return to base. Nielsen, Young and Miller floated in the raft for nine days and were drifted to within 70 miles of KYUSHU before they were spotted (through the wake of a life jacket trailed behind the life raft) by a PBM dumbo-search plane, which picked them up. Miller died aboard ship shortly after being rescued 2 April. Nielsen and Young, after a convalescent period on a hospital ship and at a hospital on Guam, returned to squadron duty.

4. Lieut. Charles D. Livengood, P.O. Box 470, Powell, Wyoming, made an emergency water landing inside the destroyer screen on 25 March 1945. The landing was satisfactory, and was made after the plane developed engine trouble enroute to a strike on OKINAWA. Neither Lieut. Livengood, nor his crew, Berryhill, James H., ARMLc, #604 65 25, 117 E. Circle Plant No. #1, Sheffield, Ala., and Keffer, Theodore, AOMlc, #652 09 01, Cheswick, Pa., was injured. They were picked up by a destroyer near which the landing was made. Time in the water was less than 25 minutes.

5. Ensign Joseph Behl, 1440 Teasdale Avenue, St.Louis, Mo., made an emergency water landing while flying a replacement plane from the USS ATTU to the HORNET 15 May 1945. He and his aircrewman, Akers, Charles N., ARM3c, #559 50 20, USNR, 2313 Avenue "U", Lubbock, Texas, was injured in the landing. The life raft was broken out and occupied. The two dunked airmen were just a few hundred yards from the HORNET. A near-by DD picked them up in five minutes.

APPENDIX X (B).

Memo from Lieut. R.C. Reed, (A-T), USNR, Radar Officer to Commanding Officer  
Torpedo Squadron SEVENTEEN.

## RADAR

### AIRBORNE RADAR

The frequent poor visibility encountered by the present squadron as compared to the generally good flying weather experienced by the former VT-17, plus the addition of Racons to the Carriers added considerably to the importance of airborne radar. Each radioman tuned for the racon on the return from a mission, and although at times the only Racon available to our task force was more like a jamming signal than a beacon, over a period of time it was of considerable value.

As an example of the search utility of this radar, on the 7 April engagement with the Jap Fleet visibility was under five miles. When the navigational point of interception was reached radar contact was immediately made with ASB radar at twenty-three miles. It was the opinion of the leader of the VT that if the break-up had been made and the attack begun by radar information rather than waiting for visible contact, a major portion of the AA could have been avoided.

After 11 April all our replacement planes were TBM-3E's with APS-4 radar. By 27 May we had seven TBM-3E's. The pilots were enthusiastic about the remote indicators after their awkward position was relieved by tilting the hoods. Most operators were immediately able to read more from the class B presentation of the APS-4 and at considerably greater range than with the ASB equipment. But the new equipment had the disadvantage of being frequently out of commission owing to lack of spares. This resulted in several of our newest planes being without radar. The APS-4, when operating normally, generally picked up the YM beacon at maximum range.

### RADAR COUNTERMEASURES

Upon coming aboard the HORNET the squadron was assigned three specially-trained RCM operators, and RCM installations in the aircraft were made aboard ship, consisting of an intercept receiver, a pulse analyser, and a jamming transmitter. From the beginning the RCM planes absorbed most of the squadron's misfortunes. On the first operation an RCM plane spun in on take off and in

### APPENDIX XI (A)

## RADAR COUNTERMEASURES

the following six weeks one made a water landing off IWO Jima because of AA damage (this was not an RCM mission) and two were shot down, presumably while using the equipment. The only other losses during this period were two ditchings caused by engine failure. No further installations were made during the next six weeks which involved mostly air support strikes.

One installation was made the first part of May for strikes against Kyushu. By this time the pilots showed a definite dislike of lying this type of plane. This was overcome to some extent by checking out two of the regular aircrewmembers in the operation of this equipment. Our experience indicated that any ARMC aircrewman can learn the operation of the gear in a couple of hours, for our requirements in spot-jamming fire-control radar, and will immediately become more proficient than the specially-trained man because of his experience in the air and with his pilot. The additional information possessed by the specially trained personnel runs mostly to maintenance problems.

The RCM gear available was carried and manned on all strikes where radar controlled AA was anticipated, window was also carried in each VT. In general the results indicated interceptions at 195-210 MC. And when a frequency was spot-jammed it usually secured soon after. The overall impression of pilots and aircrewmembers on the use of window was that the fire had a tendency to follow the window. We had no RCM planes at the time of the 7 April engagement with the enemy fleet but 10 cm. window was used as well as that cut for 200 Mc. One plane was shot down in an attack on a DD escorted convoy 24 March, the other at Kure Harbor 19 March where the opposing AA fire came from both ship and shore batteries.

## APPENDIX XI (B)

Memo from Lieut. Henry E. Clark, (A1), USNR, Engineering Officer to Commanding Officer Torpedo Squadron SEVENTEEN

### ENGINEERING

Coming aboard the HORNET February 1, 1945 we experience a different engineering situation than we had been accustomed to throughout our training in that the ship owned and controlled the aircraft. Previously they had been assigned directly to the squadron.

Due to prior experience with air groups, this ship set up its own engineering department to handle maintenance and replacement without squadron aid.

Because of possible aircrewmens combat losses, the ships engineering department couldn't always count on the aid from squadron personnel when it was needed most. The replacement policy, bringing crew with the pilot has removed that condition. Nevertheless, the ships policy still remains in effect.

The seven ground personnel in our squadron were kept on the flight deck doing the necessary trouble shooting and continually acting as a liaison between the pilot and ships engineers. The smooth cooperation between these two groups gave us the availability of fourteen out of fifteen planes for our cruise aboard this ship.

The ship handled all transfers for plane replacement, but requested recommendations from the squadron before affecting such. The replacement situation was very good. We had thirty-four planes throughout our cruise starting with four TBM-1C's and eleven TBM-3's, ending with eight TBM-3's and seven TBM-3E's. We actually lost only twelve aircraft. Of these, five were shot down by AA, three were badly damaged and jettisoned, and four were lost to water landings due to engine failure, lack of fuel, and one spun in on take-off. We had eight transferred as flyable duds, due to excessive engine time or defects in structure.

Our TBMs were operated at a fast, but comfortable speed using enough power to make the other aircraft of our group comfortable. Our gas consumption averaged fifty-five gallons per hour. Only on three occasions were we called upon to use wing tanks and then only one usually under the starboard wing. This was jettisoned as soon as the fuel was exhausted.

We flew 1862 hours with over thirty-four aircraft for a total of 949 sorties — 687 combat and 262 non combat. This covers a period of four months.

Our planes were used for tow a great deal and the TBM-3E proved to be a great time-saver in rigging for this purpose. We feel well satisfied with the TBM and its ability to take the punishment we gave it on several of our strikes.

### APPENDIX XII

Action Report Comments by the Commanding Officer  
Torpedo Squadron SEVENTEEN

1. AIR SUPPORT MISSIONS:

(a) It is of definite value and assistance to have the target air co-ordinator pin point assigned targets for large air group strike planes. Grid co-ordinates and the true position of assigned targets are often at variance through no fault of the Commander Aircraft Support Control Unit, who is in no physical position to accurately locate pin point targets. In instances where air co-ordinators have either marked the assigned targets or led the strike force into the target, results have improved. This was particularly true doing low ceilings and poor visibility.

(b) For the purpose of pin pointing targets, air co-ordinators should use smoke rockets rather than explosive surface rockets.

(c) Communications between CASCU and air observers in planes other than strike planes should be maintained to clear target areas during attack by strike planes and thus minimize confusion and the possibility of mid-air collisions.

2. BOMB LOADING:

(a) In order that the spacious bomb bay of the TBM be used to the greatest striking advantage, it is recommended whenever practicable to carry a capacity load of 250-pound and 100-pound bombs. During operational training, this squadron carried successfully and with satisfactory results 8 X 100 and 4 X 250, and during air support missions carried 4 X 250 and 6 X 100. The fore-mentioned loading is an increase of 800 or 600 pounds respectively over the normal and customary loading of 10-100 lb. bombs. The closely-timed schedule under which carrier ordnancemen are required to perform, places an added burden on them insofar as the loading of the planes is concerned. A capacity combination load of bombs, such as was mentioned above, necessitates a few minutes additional work in each plane because torpedo sway braces reduces the carrying capacity of the bomb bay only two bombs, whether they are of 100 or 250 pounds weight. Despite this additional time required, however, every possible effort should be made to the end that torpedo planes take off with capacity loading. A load of 4 X 250 and 6 X 100 was dropped with good results during early air support strikes over OKINAWA Shima. (See VT-17 ACA-1 Report No.24).

3. ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE:

(a) This squadron has operated on the theory that AA fire is always potentially present and should never be underestimated even though a particular target area has been hit repeatedly. Pilots have a tendency to become careless in this regard in localities where landing operations are underway and during the final stages of the occupation campaign.

APPENDIX XIII (A)

#### 4. STRAFING:

(a) Present armament, speed and maneuverability of the TBM-3 make it principally a "defensive" aircraft except for its power as a torpedo plane or bomber. What limited damage can be done by strafing with its forward firing wing .50's is not in proportion to the danger from ground fire and the possible loss of air discipline during attacks. Strafing by aircrewmembers manning the turret and tail guns, while discouraged save in defense, should not be encouraged unless a valuable target of opportunity is presented, or unless such strafing is being done to keep down AA fire.

#### 5. NON FLYING PERSONNEL ATTACHED TO THE SQUADRON:

(a) This command feels that a radar officer and an aviation ordnance-gunnery officer of nonflying status are in excess of essential squadron personnel. It is not necessary to have an ordnance-gunnery officer attached to the squadron at any time of its training or combat operations. It is more desirable to have an aviator as a gunnery officer. A radar technician officer can be used to advantage during stages of training, but the services are not deemed necessary in forward areas or in combat. These opinions are expressed in the interest of suggestions to reduce squadron personnel and streamline the unit for mobility.

(b) The non-flying enlisted personnel in a squadron is consistently a matter of concern. During stages of training in the states while operating at the sanction of a CASU, the squadron commander is always compelled to promote some harmonious arrangement between the squadron and the CASU so that the squadron commander can have his men busy. There are always differences arising. To that end, it is felt that a squadron could be operated and trained satisfactorily without an increase of accidents by placing those non-flying personnel (mechanics, ordnancemen, electricians, etc.) in a CASU directly. It has been known that the squadron always acquire the best maintenance men primarily because the duty and the possibilities for advancement in rating are more attractive. Once a squadron arrives aboard ship in the forward area, the squadron commander is confronted with the CASD as the CASU. Therefore, this command feels that in the interest of mobility and to provide the CASU's and CASD's with the excellent talent the squadron usually has, all maintenance men should be relegated to them. However, it is recommended that a Chief Petty Officer of either radio or ordnance rating be included in the squadron complement to act as leading chief for the combat aircrewmembers. Consequently the present squadron complement of fifty-five (55) enlisted men could be reduced to twenty-three (23) combat aircrewmembers, i.e., one for each pilot in a 15-plane squadron, and one leading Chief Petty Officer.

(c) In the interest of lessening potential loss of life, it is recommended that the crew of a TBM be reduced from a pilot, radioman and gunner (three personnel), to a pilot and radioman-gunner (two personnel). Properly trained, one air combat crewman can perform the duties of radioman and gunner satisfactorily in a torpedo plane.

(d) Efficient office personnel and ACI officers are considered indispensable.

#### APPENDIX XIII (B)

## 6. AIR-SEA RESCUE:

(a) The VT-17 Air-Sea Rescue Kit: The VT-17 Air-Sea Rescue Kit has met with favor in the combat area because of the inclusion of the SCR-578B (Gibson Girl). AG-17 has approved the kit, and the USS HORNET (CV-12) has expressed approval. In a letter from Chief BuAer, Aer-E-255-RJW dated 1 February 1945, this apparent advantage of the VT-17 kit over the AR-10 Rescue Assembly was indicated. It is hoped that measures have been taken to include the SCR-578B in later developments of Air-Sea Rescue equipment. Combat experience of VT-17 has emphasized the vital necessity of radio transmission equipment for downed pilots and crewmen in life rafts. Such experiences also have been shown definite advantages of the VT-17 Air-Sea Rescue Kit over any other similar equipment now available. It was impractical, of course, to carry the kit on all combat missions. A Gibson Girl, however, was carried on combat missions by one VT-17 plane. Value of the Gibson Girl in air-sea rescue (see VT-17 Air-Sea Rescue report of 27 March 1945) cannot be over emphasized. It is essential supplementary life-saving equipment to survivors in life rafts. Drops were made by VT-17 to supplement life rafts dropped to survivors by VF-17 and VB-17 planes. The Gibson Girl drops were made with the aid of an air combatcrewman chest pack parachute. It should be cited, however, that the parachute will tend to remain blossomed and will be carried by the wind at a rate more rapid than the life raft drift. It is difficult, sometimes impossible, for survivors to "catch" the gear. Therefore, the pilot who drops the Gibson Girl must be aware of this element of possible failure and be ready to zoom the parachute thus spilling the air and collapsing it. This procedure was accomplished under combat conditions during strikes on AMAMI O Shima. (See VT-17 ACA-1 No.32).

(b) A line thrown to survivors in a life raft should always be secured to the life raft. (See VT-17 ACA-1 Report No. 6 of 28 February 1945). This information was given a downed VT-17 pilot and crew who were picked up by the USS COTTEN (DD 669), and was included in the VT-17 Air-Sea rescue report of 27 February 1945.

(c) It is suggested that dye-marker released by survivors in a life raft be secured to the raft or a sea anchor to prevent the raft's drifting out of the sea marker. (See references in (b) above).

## 7. TORPEDO DEPTH SETTING:

(a) This command re-iterates that it is essential that every torpedo squadron aircrewman be capable of setting the torpedo depth setting in flight. This factor was brought to light, and bore results, in this squadron's attack on the YAMATO. (See VT-17 ACA-1 No. 33 Supplementary Report of 7 April 1945).

## 8. REPLACEMENT PILOTS AND CREWS:

(a) Replacements to this squadron have been satisfactory, and have reflected excellent operational training. Replacement pilots and crews assigned to this squadron during its combat cruise have fitted well into the organization's efficiency despite the lack of previous combat experience.

## APPENDIX XIII (C)

## 9. UNORTHODOX JAP AA:

(a) Parachute Bombs: Parachute bombs were observed on 24 March 1945 in the EAST CHINA SEA by VT-17 pilots during an attack on an enemy convoy. (See VT-17 ACA-1 No.16).

(b) Colored AA Puffs: Colored AA puffs were observed at KURE KO. (See VT-17 ACA-1 Report of 19 March 1945).

## 10. PROPAGANDA LEAFLETS:

(a) Propaganda leaflets were dropped by this squadron over the Japanese Empire Islands, but at best the effectiveness was believed to be "hit-miss" since the pilots and crewmen were primarily occupied with the success of the attack mission and considered the leaflets of secondary importance. Special arrangements should be made to drop propaganda leaflets.

## 11. RCM:

(a) RCM equipment was flown in VT-17 planes on several strikes. There was some indication, in the reports of RCM crewmen, that the equipment was used to advantage to jam enemy ground radar. Whether the RCM equipment actually deterred the aim of the enemy AA is unknown of this command. (See VT-17 ACA-1 Report No. 4 of 18 February 1945 and VT-17 ACA-1 report No. 12 of 19 March 1945).

## 12. TORPEDO TACTICS:

The excellent torpedo training this squadron had during its stages of training has shown results in combat - 55% hits. This percentage is obtained from twenty-seven (27) torpedoes expended on the accumulation of targets such as the Japanese battleship, YAMATO, a merchant ship convoy with escorts under way at sea, and two tankers at anchor in shallow water. This performance was conducted since the squadron has been aboard the USS HORNET. All planes carried torpedo cameras so that photographs substantiate all claims.

During training it was always impressed upon the pilots that it was necessary to lay a spread of torpedoes in the water at the target in order to conduct a successful torpedo mission and with the understanding that some torpedoes would miss the target. In order to accomplish the desired results the squadron used tactics that have been a departure from the echelon type of attack. The torpedoes should be dropped so that a spread of 180° is effected about the target. A discussion of the attack plane is as follows:

1. (a) The 180° is determined by considering the basic approach direction as a perpendicular through the target at the breaking point of the squadron.

## APPENDIX XIII (D)

- (b) Attack is initiated in conjunction and coordination with a dive bombing attack.
- (c) Upon receipt of attack signal (wing rocking) two (2) VT divisions of four (4) planes each branch away from the basic course at high speed to positions determined as follows:

(A) FIRST DIVISION: Right 45° bearing from basic approach direction - range 12,000 yds. from target, altitude 5000 - 6000 feet.

SECOND DIVISION: Left 45° bearing from basic approach direction, range and altitude same as (A).

THIRD DIVISION: (Assuming 12 planes attack target). May elect to delay approach and attack immediately after first two divisions in the direction of approach, or, follow either the first or second division effecting a wave from either side as elected.

FOURTH DIVISION: (Assuming 15 planes attacking target). Attack as second wave after Second Division while the Third Division attacks as second wave after First Division.

- (B) Divisions will maneuver to arrive at the 12,000 yd. range and 5000 to 6000 feet station simultaneously.
- (C) Upon reaching position (B) divisions will break formation and maneuver so that the first wave (first and Second Divisions) will arrive and drop at the target simultaneously.
- (D) The break-up of individual divisions is accomplished as follows:
  - (a) Upon arrival at the 12,000 yd. range and 5000 to 6000 feet altitude position, the leader turns sharply reversing his course so that his final approach may be made within a few degrees of the perpendicular as mentioned in 1 (a). The inside plane flies straight ahead, initiating his turn toward the target when he feels that he will be flying on his final approach which will be approximately perpendicular to the leader when he is closing on the target. The outside plane and the plane closing the "Vee" will deploy to fill the area between the leader and the inside plane and will close on the target as the other two planes do.

2. Success of the torpedo attack mentioned on a high speed maneuvering target is certain due to the following:

- (a) The break up was primarily developed so that it forces each pilot to effect an over-all squadron spread of running torpedoes.
- (b) Each pilot can jink with freedom on his approach to the target.
- (c) No communications are involved.

During unfavorable attack conditions due to poor visibility and low ceiling the squadron has deployed for attack as described but it was difficult to obtain the spread as could be expected under ideal conditions. However, by the pilots knowing the value of the running spread of torpedoes and knowing how to maneuver to place themselves in position to make a satisfactory drop, it has definitely been demonstrated that the squadrons training was in the right direction.

### 13. COMBAT USE OF THE TBM-3:

1. There appears to be a general trend to employ other planes of a carrier air group than bombers for neutralizing an enemy airfield and enemy held installations. Such tactics have been used with the assumption that a bomber fighter will deliver a greater tonnage of bombs over a period of time to a target due to the fighter type plane having greater speed and range than bombers.

2. This command assumes that the above bomber fighter tactics were developed because the TBF-1 or TBM-1 was underpowered and possibly was slow in comparison with the F6F type plane. This is not the case with TBM-3.

3. This squadron has made attacks where the average speed to the target was 150 knots. Four 500-pound bombs were carried to the target by each plane. The returning speed was 165 knots. Specific examples may be cited:

- (a) On April 20, 1945, this squadron delivered an attack on Kikai Shima, in conjunction with VF and VB, flying 176 miles to the target in poor visibility and returned the same distance in the total time of two hours and ten minutes. Fifteen minutes of that time was spent at the target, most of which was consumed in orbiting while photographic planes completed their mission.

ASH Radar in the TBM-3 located the target. A direct approach was made which further tended to expedite the attack. To that end, radar has always been useful.

- (b) On the Kure attack the TBMs carried four 500-pound bombs. One TBM was shot down by anti-aircraft fire. In order that an equivalent tonnage of bombs could have been dropped on this heavily defended target it would have been necessary to use at least twice the number of fighter type planes thus exposing twice the number of pilots. It is believed that if bomber fighters had been used alone on this target, the pilots casualty rate would have been higher by comparing number of pilots versus tonnage of bombs. It is also pointed out that the intervalometer feature of the TBM bomb bay tends to gather hits which might otherwise be dispersed by pilot aiming error.

4. The TBM bomb bay lends itself to good advantage for the destruction of revetted aircraft such as these seen at Kanoya Airfield, Kyushu, since it is possible to load six 260-pound fragmentation bombs on bomb stations No.'s 1 through 6, and at the same time load six 100-pound bombs on the other stations of the bomb bay. This is a total bomb weight of 2160 pounds in comparison with 520 pounds that a bomber fighter can carry, using the 260-pound fragmentation bombs.

5. It has been the policy of this squadron to use a high speed approach on heavily defended targets in order to minimize AA casualties. On heavily defended targets speeds of 340-350 knots have been reached in an effort to avoid AA. It is believed that such tactics have been extremely successful. The present bomber fighter attains a speed of only 30 to 35 knots greater, as a maximum.

6. While this squadron has been aboard the U.S.S. HORNET it has dropped a total of 3398 bombs on enemy held targets and while conducting practice training exercises. This was accomplished by 702 sorties. The present fighter bomber wing racks available would have taken a minimum of 1699 sorties to accomplish the same results. It might also be pointed out that if a 2000-pound bomb load was carried to the target by a bomber fighter, the range of that bomber fighter would not be satisfactory since the 150-gallon belly tank could not be used. It might be noted that, for that reason, the present bomber fighter has been unsatisfactory as a torpedo plane, yet it can carry a torpedo without difficulty.

7. The present torpedo is an excellent weapon. It is the most certain weapon to sink shipping. Better torpedo tactics will be achieved if a squadron is designated as a torpedo bomber squadron and receives a certain amount of specialized training as such.

#### APPENDIX XIII (G)

8. Today, the United States has undisputed control of the air over the Japanese Empire. By far the largest part of our future efforts in the air will be devoted to bombing since Japanese air opposition is diminishing rapidly and the problem of defense against enemy fighters is becoming steadily less important. Therefore it seems apparent that the most effective type of carrier aircraft is the plane that can deliver the largest bomb tonnage with greatest efficiency.

APPENDIX XIII (2)

VT-17

Serial: 4-45

VT 17

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET  
AIR FORCE PACIFIC FLEET  
TORPEDO SQUADRON SEVENTEEN



6 November 1945

**CONFIDENTIAL**

From: The Commanding Officer.  
To: Chief of Naval Operations, Op-03-6B.  
Subject: War History, 16 August 1945 to 2 September 1945.  
Reference: (a) Aviation Circular ltr. No.101-45, dated 11 September 1945.

1. This squadron was reformed on 18 August 1945 at the Naval Air Station, Alameda, California. Lieutenant Arnold C. TRAYLER (A1), USNR (240486) was senior naval aviator present until 25 August 1945, when Lieutenant William M. JAMES, (A1), USNR (103311), reported aboard. He was then the senior naval aviator aboard.

2. No aircraft were assigned to this squadron during the subject period.

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