U.S.S. BON HOMME RICHARD (CVA31)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS BON HOMME RICHARD (CVA31)
To: Chief of Naval Operations
Via: (1) Commander Task Force Seventy Seven
(2) Commander Seventh Fleet
(3) Commander Naval Forces Far East
(4) Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: Action Report for the period 8 November 1952 to 18 December 1952 (Final Report)

Ref: (a) OPNAV INSTRUCTION 3480.4 of 1 Jul 1951
(b) CINCPACFLT INSTRUCTION 3480.1A of 2 Jul 1952

1. In compliance with references (a) and (b), the Action Report for the period 8 November 1952 to 18 December 1952 is submitted.

PART I

COMPOSITION OF OWN FORCES AND MISSION

Upon arrival in Yokosuka at 0646I on 8 November 1952, the USS BON HOMME RICHARD entered a period of upkeep, repair, rest and recreation.

In accordance with CTF 77 Confidential dispatch 181222Z of November 1952, the USS BON HOMME RICHARD, Captain Paul W. WATSON, USN, Commanding, with CARDIV ONE Staff, and Carrier Air Group Seven embarked, departed Yokosuka, Japan, for the operating area via Tsugaru Straits at 1449I on 21 November 1952.

In the vicinity of Tsugaru Straits, on 23 November 1952, the BON HOMME RICHARD participated in joint training exercises with the 39th Air Division Defense, U.S. Air Force. At 0915 on 24 November 1952, the USS BON HOMME RICHARD joined Task Force Seventy Seven in area SUGAR. At 1620I on 24 November 1952, Rear Admiral W. D. JOHNSON, USN, COMCARDDIV ONE arrived on board. The Task Force was then commanded by COMCARDIV FIVE, Rear Admiral Robert F. HICKEY, USN, aboard the USS KEARSARGE (CVA33). In addition to the USS KEARSARGE, the Task Force was composed of the USS ESSEX (CVA9), the USS BON HOMME RICHARD and various heavy support and screening ships.

COMCARDIV ONE, Rear Admiral W. D. JOHNSON, USN, assumed command of Task Force Seventy Seven at 1725I, 25 November 1952, and shortly thereafter the USS KEARSARGE with COMCARDIV FIVE embarked departed the Force.

The USS KEARSARGE rejoined the force and at 1320I, on 18 December 1952 the command of Task Force SEVENTY SEVEN passed to COMCARDIV FIVE, Rear Admiral Robert F. HICKEY, USN, aboard the KEARSARGE.

The composition of Carrier Air Group SEVEN during this period was as follows:

UNIT & C.O.	ALLOW. & TYPE A/C	OPERATIONAL A/C 11/24	11/30	12/17	PILOTS 11/24	11/30	12/17
COMCVG-7 CDR G.B. Brown					5*	5	5
VF-71 CDR J.S. Hill	16 F9F2	16	16	16	23	23	23
VF-72 LCDR A.W. Curtis	16 F9F2	16	16	16	22	22	22
VF-74 CDR C.D. Fonvielle Jr.	16 F4U4	16	16	16	23	23	23
VA-75 CDR H.K. Evans	16 AD4	16	16	15	24	24	23
VC-4 Det LCDR E.S. Ogle OinC	4 F4U5N	4	4	4	4	4	4
VC-12 Det 41 LCDR C.H. Blanchard OinC	3 AD4W	3	3	3	6	6	6
VC-33 Det 41 LCDR R. Hoffmeister OinC	4 AD4NL 1 AD3Q	5	5	5	6	6	6
VC-61 Det Nan LT. B.R. Smith OinC	3 F9F5P	3	3	2	4	4	4

The mission of Task Force SEVENTY SEVEN was in accordance with CTF 77 Operation Order 2-52.

In accordance with CTF 77 Confidential dispatch 140056Z, December the U.S.S. BON HOMME RICHARD departed Task Force SEVENTY SEVEN at 1322I, 18 December 1952 for Yokosuka, Japan via Van Diemen Straits to arrive 20 December 1952 for final preparation for the ship's return to the United States.

PART II

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF EVENTS

11/8/52 - 11/21/52: The ship was moored to buoy 11, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan for four days, after which it moved to Piedmont Pier for a period of upkeep and repair. The F9F-2P's of VC-61 Photo Unit NAN were off-loaded and were replaced by F9F-5P's. VC-61 Photo Unit NAN operated from NAS Atsugi, accepting and field-qualifying in the new aircraft.

11/22/52: Enroute to the combat area. Anti-aircraft firing and general drills were held.

11/23/52: Enroute to combat area. In the vicinity of Misawa AFB near Tsugaru Straits, the BON HOMME RICHARD participated in joint training exercises with the 39th Air Division Defense of the U.S. Air Force, Japan Air Defense Force. In addition to flight operations, General Quarters drill and anti-aircraft tracking exercises were held. The following dispatches relative to the Misawa exercises were received:

From CG Japan Air Defense Force:

YOUR EXERCISE ON 23 NOV WITH NORTHERN AREA AIR DEFENSE WAS OUTSTANDING FOR THOUGHTFUL PLANNING AND PRECISE EXECUTION X SPIRIT OF COOPERATION THROUGHOUT WAS SPLENDID X WELL DONE X GENERAL SPIVEY SENDS

CG JAPAIR DEF FOR 240658Z NICE WORK X CTF 77 SENDS

I HAVE NOTED WITH PLEASURE CG JAPAIR DEF FOR 240658Z X THE OUTSTANDING EXECUTION OF THIS EXERCISE IS TYPICAL EXAMPLE OF PERFORMANCE BY THE BON HOMME RICHARD X COMCARDIV ONE SENDS

11/24/52: The ship joined Task Force 77 in area SUGAR at 0915I. The Task Force replenished and no air operations were held. COMCARDIV ONE Rear Admiral W.D. Johnson arrived on board.

11/25/52: Bad weather hampered operations but in the afternoon jets were launched to hit targets in CHEROKEE Strip. Their results were assessed at 90 percent coverage and 75 percent effectiveness. At the same time, prop aircraft hit a troop training area near Wonsan, dropping nine out of ten bombs in the target area and starting two large fires. Smoke, dust, and shadows prevented further damage assessment. Night hecklers destroyed 14 trucks and damaged 12, destroyed or damaged 7 buildings and made several road and rail cuts. COMCARDIV ONE, Rear Admiral W.D. Johnson assumed command of Task Force 77 at 1725I.

11/26/52: In the morning Corsairs and Skyraiders hit troop and supply areas at Hamhung. With the aid of excellent flak suppression from the jets, these aircraft started a total of 11 fires in the area, some of which were

still burning in the afternoon. An accurate estimate of destruction was impossible due to huge clouds of dust and smoke. One of the jet recco flights during the day jumped an enemy tank and destroyed it with bombs and rockets.

11/27/52: Flight operations were prevented by inclement weather. Steering casualty drills were held in the afternoon.

11/28/52: The Task Force replenished. No air operations were conducted.

11/29/52: Dawn hecklers led off the day's attacks by destroying 6 and damaging 13 or more trucks. Bad weather at both the primary target and the weather alternate forced one of the morning prop strike groups to attack targets of opportunity. The pilots destroyed one and damaged three factory buildings, made four bridge cuts and one rail cut, and damaged one boat. The other prop aircraft strike group attacked a supply and building area, blanketing it with bombs and starting three fires. A CAS flight received a score of 100 percent coverage from the controller and the afternoon prop strike hit troop targets in the CHEROKEE Strip, rating 80 percent coverage and 80 percent effectiveness.

11/30/52: Dawn hecklers operations were hampered by poor visibility and radar bombing runs on industrial areas were necessitated. Two search mission were flown for an Air Force C-47, missing since the previous night. Further flight operations were canceled due to weather.

12/1/52: Inclement weather prevented flight operations this date.

12/2/52: Replenishment scheduled for this day was canceled due to heavy weather.

12/3/52: The Task Force replenished. Special search missions were unsuccessful in their effort to find an Air Force C-47 which was missing since 29 November.

12/4/52: In the morning, prop aircraft were launched against rail targets near Songjin and a mining area near Hyesanjin. Extensive damage was inflicted on all targets. A jet recco jumped three tanks or self-propelled guns and succeeded in destroying or heavily damaging one. Later in the day, a major strike hit a strong point in CHEROKEE Strip, destroying 200 yards of trenches and several gun positions. In addition six bunkers were damaged.

12/5/52: Hecklers resumed operations early in the morning and attacked twenty-three trucks along the main supply routes. Of these, six were destroyed and eleven were damaged. Prop aircraft on the early strikes applied heavy pressure to the snow-hampered rail net by knocking out two rail bridges, ripping up 300 yards of track, and cutting rails in eight places. In the afternoon, a full-scale strike of Panthers, Skyraiders, and Corsairs hit troop targets in CHEROKEE Strip. Results were not assessed. On this attack, an AD-4, piloted by CDR H. K. Evans, Commanding Officer of VA-75, was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed behind friendly lines. The pilot was lost due to his apparent inability to bail out.

12/6/52: The main strike of the day, a coordinated effort of jets and props hit a supply area in CHEROKEE Strip. Damage could not be assessed. Other strikes throughout the day continued the recent emphasis on rail targets. Two locomotives were badly battered, several bridges were knocked out, and rails were cut in fourteen places.

12/7/52: The Task Force replenished and no air operations were conducted. Anti-aircraft gunnery practice was held.

12/8/52: The two principle strikes of the day hit targets in CHEROKEE Strip. The morning strike started three fires and caused one secondary explosion in enemy positions across from the I U. S. Corps. Later in the day, prop and jet aircraft struck at troop targets in front of the II ROK Corps, destroying at least five buildings and causing one fire and one secondary explosion. Jet reccos attacked a large concentration of boats in the Wonsan area and destroyed a total of fifty. The night hecklers found the highways crowded with Communist trucks, and before their bombs and ammunition ran out they set a record for the cruise. At least 46 trucks were destroyed and 19 damaged.

12/9/52: In an effort to smash railroad repair facilities which the enemy had developed in border areas hitherto protected by attack restrictions the Task Force unleashed maximum effort air assaults against selected targets in Northeast Korea. The BON HOMME RICHARD was assigned a large and active railroad center near Wusan, and two full-scale coordinated attacks inflicted the following destruction: a roundhouse with a capacity of twenty locomotives was ninety percent demolished, three important repair shops were obliterated, a powerhouse was badly damaged, seven to fourteen locomotives were destroyed or damaged, several smaller shops, barracks, and miscellaneous buildings were smashed, and extensive stretches of track were ripped up. This was one of the most effective and important missions of the entire cruise. At the end of the day's operations the following dispatches were received:

From: COM7THFLEET
CONGRATULATIONS FOR DELIVERING MANY DAMAGING BLOWS TO THE ENEMY ON DEC 9TH X WELL DONE X VADM CLARK SENDS

From: CTF 77
A HEAVY SUSTAINED SCHEDULE WAS GIVEN YOU TODAY AND YOUR RESPONSE WAS MAGNIFICENT X THE ENEMY HAS SUFFERED HEAVY DAMAGE X WELL DONE X RADM JOHNSON SENDS

12/10/52: Another important and appealing target in Northeast Korea was hit by BON HOMME RICHARD aircraft. A maximum effort attack struck a large munitions factory near Rashin. At least twelve buildings were destroyed and an additional five heavily damaged. During the time of the attack, a TARCAP patrolling just south of the Soviet border squared off against several MIG's on patrol just north of the border. The MIG's made threatening maneuvers in an apparent but unsuccessful effort to draw the TARCAP across the border. Neither side violated the frontier, however.

12/11/52: The Task Force replenished and no air operations were conducted.

12/12/52: The morning hecklers found the highways crowded with trucks and their attacks accounted for more than forty damaged or destroyed. The principle strike efforts of the day were directed against tactical targets near the western end of the battlefront. Both close air support and CHEROKEE strikes were flown. Among the assessed results were 75 yards of trenches destroyed, several caves and bunkers destroyed and two secondary explosions set off. One of the latter was the largest and most violent yet seen by Air Group SEVEN pilots.

12/13/52: After many weeks of recuperating from the effects of last summer's heavy attacks, some of the hydro-electric plants were showing signs of partial recovery. To keep pressure on the enemy's electric power supply, Corsairs and Skyraiders of the BON HOMME RICHARD smashed at Kyosen, one of the plants whose reconstruction was most advanced. When the attack was over, internal explosions had bulged the walls and knocked out large sections, all penstocks were cut, the transformer yard was heavily damaged, and the plant was in worse shape than ever. A morning CAS strike hitting enemy front line positions on Big and Little Nory achieved an assessment of 95 percent coverage and 95 percent effectiveness in one area and 100 percent coverage and effectiveness in the other. After the attacks, the controller made a low pass over the target and announced dramatically, "There is the smell of death down there."

12/14/52: Once again hecklers found good hunting on the East Coast highways. In attacks from the bombline to the Hamhung area, they destroyed or damaged forty-five trucks. Later in the day, propeller aircraft and jets teamed up to hit supply and billeting areas at Chuuronjang, near Chongjin. Accurate bombing destroyed or damaged a total of fifty-eight buildings.

12/15/52: The Task Force replenished and no air operations were conducted.

12/16/52: In a day cut short by bad weather over most parts of Korea, the BHR sent prop and jet aircraft to the vicinity of the Manchurian border to hit a large and busy factory engaged in the manufacture of construction materials. The main buildings of the plant were heavily damaged and several fires and secondary explosions were observed in neighboring target areas. A full assessment of damage was impossible due to heavy smoke.

12/17/52: Commencing the final day of operations, hecklers sighted and fired upon an enemy light plane near Wonsan. Visible only by the glow of its exhaust, the bandit flew at an extremely low altitude in an area of rough terrain, making attack difficult and hazardous. Nevertheless, one night Corsair pressed home a firing run before losing contact. The result was impossible to assess. Later in the day, a coordinated strike of jets and props hit the large munitions plant at Taeyu-dong. Heavily damaged in a previous BHR attack, the factory was virtually wiped out as the pilots blasted nearly all of the remaining buildings and set off at least four violent secondary explosions.

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12/18/52: Vice Admiral J. J. CLARK, Commander, SEVENTH Fleet, presented decorations and awards in special ceremonies on the hangar deck. COMCARDIV FIVE relieved COMCARDIV ONE of command of the Task Force. The BHR was relieved and departed the force at 1320I enroute for Yokosuka.

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PART III

ORDNANCE MATERIAL AND EQUIPMENT

1. Ordnance Material

The only ship ordnance material failure occuring was the firing motor field winding burned out in the 40MM Mount No. 13. This unit was rewound and reinstalled by ship's force.

2. Aviation Ordnance Material

See Air Group comments in Part VI

PART IV

OWN AND ENEMY BATTLE DAMAGE

1. Damage to Ship

None

2. Damage to Aircraft

A total of 5 aircraft were damaged by flak during this period. Ten planes received minor damage from bomb blast and falling debris. Three planes were damaged in operational accidents.

3. Loss of Aircraft

On 5 December, one AD-4, Bureau Number 128965, was hit by automatic weapons fire and crashed, killing the pilot and destroying the plane. This was the only aircraft lost and fatality that occurred during this reporting period.

4. Damage Inflicted on the Enemy

Targets	Destroyed	Damaged	Other
Buildings	101	309	
Warehouses	10	10	
Powerhouses	1	2	
Locomotives	4	3	
Factories	0	2	
Railroad Cars	15	69	
Boats	82	104	
Bridges (Highway)	1	21	
Bridges (Railroad)	1	11	
Oxcarts	15	2	
Vehicles	142	205	
Tunnels	0	2	
Gun Positions	8	17	
Transformer Stations	1	2	
Roundhouse	1	0	
Turntable	1	0	
Radar and/or Radio Stations	1	1	
Radar Towers	3	2	
Tanks	4	5	
Bunkers	1	13	
Hangar	0	1	
Railroad Repair Building	0	1	
Lighthouses	0	2	
Power Lines	1	2	
Penstocks	0	4	

Damage inflicted on the Enemy (Cont'd)

Target	Destroyed	Damaged	Other
Ammunition Storage	0	1	
Fish Trap	0	1	
Road Cuts			30
Rail Cuts			79
Track Destroyed			1,200 yards
Trench Destroyed			425 yards
Troops Killed			5

5. The foregoing represents a conservative estimate of the damage inflicte on the enemy. Only when photographic interpretation clearly showed the damage to the target, or in those instances when the pilots could definitely assess the damage, is it reflected in this tabulation. In many attacks, weather, smoke, flak or time prevented pilots from inspecting the damage. Damage inflicted by Close Air Support missions could rarely be assessed, and results can only be reported in terms of coverage and effectiveness. The specific effects of these CAS missions may never be known.

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PART V

PERFORMANCE OF PERSONNEL AND CASUALTIES

1. Performance

In spite of the relatively low number of combat experienced personnel in both the Air Group and the ship's company at the beginning of the cruise and the necessity for replacement of many trained persons during the cruise, the overall personnel performance of the ship and Air Group began on a high level, continuously improved throughout the tour, and ended in an extremely high state of efficiency. The extent of damages inflicted upon the enemy, the low number of battle casualties, the almost total absence of serious operational accidents, and the degree of efficiency with which flight operations were conducted combine to form a record that should compare favorably with the best in the Navy.

2. Casualties (Enemy Inflicted)

COMMANDER HALFORD K. EVANS, 086236/1310

On 5 December 1952, while Commander Evans was leading his squadron, VA-75, in an attack against troop targets in CHEROKEE Strip, his aircraft was struck by automatic weapons fire and heavily damaged. Commander Evans attempted to fly the plane to a nearby friendly field, but shortly after reaching friendly lines the plane burst into flames. He announced to his wingman that he was going to bail out but for some unaccountable reason was unable to do so and crashed with his plane.

3. Casualties (Operational)

KENNETH A. BEANE, AO2, 807 07 42

On 23 November 1952, a jet blast caused a starting jeep to skid, pinning Beane against the outboard railing of No. 2 elevator. An emergency operation for multiple fracture of the pelvis and a ruptured bladder was immediately performed. He was later transferred to, USNH, Yokosuka, Japan. The last report received by the ship indicated Beane's chances of recovery were good.

THOMAS NICKENS, AA, 297 41 78

On 8 December 1952, a loose tow bar, which had been whipped from the control of the handler, hit and fractured Nickens' leg. The man was treated by the ship's medical department.

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PART VI

GENERAL COMMENTS

A. OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

1. Intelligence

a. Flak and Target Intelligence

The final period of operations continued the development and refinement of flak and target intelligence techniques. Perhaps the most noteworthy of the methods initiated during the last phase of the cruise was the frequent use of stereo mosaics in familiarizing pilots with flak defenses and target details. Stereo pairs had been used intermittently since the beginning of the cruise, but at the last, efforts were being made to establish their use as a regular procedure in briefing important missions. Since the duration of the program was too short to give any clear-cut indication of results, no recommendations can be made, but it is suggested that the method be given a further trial aboard other aircraft carriers in the Korean area.

During the past six months of combat operations, the scope and effectiveness of flak intelligence increased remarkably. Photo interpretation reports and pilot reports were at first often not distinguished from one another in the plotting of flak; revisions of flak summaries were neither frequent nor comprehensive; an excessive degree of emphasis was placed upon machine guns; the expensive and time consuming touraid program encumbered the whole system. Changes in the pattern of the war afforded opportunities to discard outworn methods, and improvements were seen to follow. Flak summaries followed one another at frequent intervals and revisions were made daily. The touraid program was discontinued. More rational methods of plotting were adopted. In the latter part of the cruise, it was unusual for BHR aircraft to receive anti-aircraft fire from unplotted positions. The effectiveness of the flak intelligence program of this ship is reflected directly in the low number of casualties and aircraft losses suffered by Air Group Seven.

b. Personnel

At the commencement of the cruise, every officer and most of the rated men assigned to the Air Intelligence Office was experienced combat phases of Air Intelligence. The office was thereby enabled to rise quickly to a high level of operating efficiency. As the cruise progressed, each of the original officers and all except one of the vetern enlisted men were replaced. A continuing process of training and frequent changes of individual duties and responsibilities were necessitated. Contrary to expectations the quality of performance did not decline, but instead rose as a result of a constant infusion of new ideas and personalities. There was never any tendency for the rigor mortis of fixed routine to set in.

Early in the cruise, the Air Group AIO was assigned to the Ship's Intelligence Office as Senior Assistant Air Intelligence Officer.

In addition to augmenting the complement of the Office, he was able to gain valuable experience for higher intelligence duties. At the beginning of the final tour on the line he was able to take over the billet of Ship's Air Intelligence Officer with no impairment in the performance of the Intelligence organization. The arrangement has been completely satisfactory, and had it not been made, his replacement of the former Ship's AIO at a crucial time might have caused serious consequences. This integration of Group AIO into the Ship's Organization is highly recommended for carriers deploying to WESPAC.

It is recommended that whenever possible every Air Intelligence Officer, regardless of rank, begin his Air Intelligence career in a squadron billet. Since the squadron is the spearhead of air operation, it is essential that every officer in Air Intelligence have a thorough knowledge of the scope, nature, techniques, and requirements of both Air Intelligence and combat operations at that level. The only good opportunity to gain that knowledge is afforded by service in the billet itself. Past experience as a combat aviator is not a complete substitute.

The need for the creation of an Intelligence Specialist or Intelligence Yeoman rate, often recommended in the past by persons familiar with the problem was apparent aboard this ship during the cruise. Yeomen assigned to Air Intelligence found little opportunity to develop proficiency in rate.

c. Facilities and Equipment

In order to satisfy security requirements, Intelligence offices should be equipped with heavy gage steel doors with strong locks, preferably of the three tumbler combination type. The doors of the Intelligence Office of this ship could have been opened with a crow bar in less than thirty seconds. In port the ship often swarms with civilian laborers who not only have the tools and the time, but also repeated opportunities and possibly the desire to break into the office. To insure that security was preserved while at Fleet Activities Yokosuka, it was necessary at all times to have a watch in the office, a situation which has sometimes caused considerable inconvenience. A further improvement in security could be brought about by equipping Intelligence offices with large file safes and other lockable storage facilities.

2. Photo Interpretation

a. General

Photo missions have consisted of railroad reconnaissance, target search, damage assessment, airfield surveillance, coastal search, and mapping for surface bombardment forces.

Almost all camouflage observed in North Korea has been directed towards deceiving pilots, not photo interpreters. Storage and barracks buildings

are placed so that they blend into the surrounding terrain and are not seen by aviators. Pill boxes, ammo storage dumps, gun emplacements are cleverly planted with bushes and grass. Shelters are built over machinery within gutted factory buildings. Of course, this is to delude the pilots into believing that the building has been demolished and is not worth attacking. Much activity was noted around buildings of this kind. It is suggested that in the future, sample stereo pairs of camouflaged targets be made up for distribution to the air group by the photo interpreters prior to departure from CONUS to WESPAC. Not only will pilots derive a better conception of the terrain, but they will be able to actually see a camouflaged target. Such instruction would also show the aviators how much can actually be seen in photographs, thereby increasing their confidence in photo interpretation.

Because of the recent build-up in flak around many target areas, complete flak studies are being made, not only of each target area but also of its environs, so that a comprehensive flak picture may be obtained for briefing and flak suppression.

Several photo searches have been made for radar positions. Two positions previously located by ECM were verified in this manner. However, lack of greater success is attributed to the fact that these positions are easy to conceal and are very difficult to see. A scale of 1:2500 should be employed for this purpose.

The use of wing-mounted camera strike photography as a source of intelligence material has almost been abandoned. Smoke and dust from bomb explosions generally prevent accurate assessment of damage and frequently give false impressions leading to erroneous reports. Only occasionally can good photographs, useful to Intelligence, be obtained by this manner. Normally it is considered good for combat recording only.

COMAIRPAC letter serial 10/02314 of 29 October 1952 stated that the Photo Interpretation Unit, Atsugi, Japan, is expected to be of "great benefit to carrier Photo Interpreters and will increase the capacity of the operating forces to produce photographic intelligence." To date however, the Atsugi Interpretation Unit has been of little benefit to the photo interpreters of this ship. Although nothing has been requested, officially, from Atsugi, no material has been received from there. Since carrier photo interpreters are occupied solely with producing P.I. Flash reports and since the distance separating the Unit from the operating forces is so great, this Unit is not considered, at present, at least, to be of any real benefit to carrier photo interpreters in the operating area.

Early in December, for the first time during this cruise in the Far East, the photo interpreters had an opportunity to study photographs of snow covered terrain. Trackage in the snow disclosed numerous activities

around buildings, caves, truck parking buildings, and other objects which, heretofore, had not been considered to be, militarily, very active. It is recommended that the Interim Photo Interpretation Unit, Atsugi, Japan make an extensive study of such photography and furnish fleet photo interpreters with stereo pairs of the more unusual types of facilities being utilized by enemy forces.

On 9 and 10 December aerial photographic operations almost reached the ultimate which could be desired during any carrier strike. On the two occasions, a strike on the Musan railroad facilities and on the ammunition plant located on the northeast border of Korea, complete photographic coverage was obtained which provided sufficient combat records (except motion pictures) and intelligence photographs for press releases and detailed damage assessment. Large scale oblique and vertical 9 x 18 inch photographs as well as K-25 pictures of excellent quality were taken of both installations. The 9 x 18 inch photographs were taken prior to, during, and after the strike. This provided the photo interpreters with adequate material to produce an excellent pre-strike analysis and post-strike damage assessment. One of the most interesting features of the damage assessment photographs taken by the K-25 camera (carried on the wing of the attacking aircraft) was that buildings were shown receiving extensive machine gun hits. Vertical photographs did not show any. The buildings receiving the machine gun hits would not have been assessed as damaged without strike photographs.

During seventy photographic operating days, 30,759 photographs (20,248 9 x 9 inch and 10,511 9 x 18 inch) were interpreted. An average of 439 photographs were interpreted per day, with the maximum for any one day being 900. On forty-six of these operating days two photo interpretation officers were used for this work. It is considered highly desirable that either two photo interpretation officers and two photo readers or one officer and three photo readers be allowed for each CVA in WESPAC.

3. Communications

a. General

(1) Radio communications continued to be satisfactory for the current operating period. No new problems were encountered. An effective preventative maintenance program is the answer to communications equipment operating problems.

(2) Training - The results of the vigorous training program, both formal and on the job, were encouraging. Over the entire operating period the following were accomplished:

14 Men were qualified as Fox operators
16 Men were qualified as CW circuit operators
7 Men were qualified as Classified write-up men
2 Telemen were qualified as Navy Mail Clerks
21 Men were advanced in rating

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(3) Visual Communications - Visual methods were used extensively for administrative traffic. Good liaison between Main Communications and the Signal Bridge proved effective in utilizing visual communications to a great extent without exceeding the limitations of equipment and personnel.

4. Photography

a. General

OPNAV INSTRUCTION 3150.6 requires the use of geographical coordinates in the titling of all aerial film. It has been common practice for activities in the Far East area to use the UTM grid system which is considered to be superior to the geographical system. It is therefore recommended that the instructions be revised to permit use of the UTM grid system in titling aerial film.

Considerable difficulty has been experienced by this Command in obtaining either camera repair services or replacement cameras for those in need of repair. Previously it was possible to turn aerial cameras in to an Air Force repair facility in Tokyo via NSD, Yokosuka, for repair. However, during the period 8 to 20 November 1952 attempts were made to follow this system and, also, to turn them in to the Navy Supply Depot, Yokosuka, in accordance with OPNAV INSTRUCTION 3150.6, and draw replacements. Both attempts were fruitless due to current negotiations for a new contract by the Air Force; and NSD, Yokosuka, advised that that activity had no authority for issuing replacement cameras for those turned in for repair as required by OPNAV INSTRUCTION 3150.6. It is understood that a Navy camera repair facility is being established at Atsugi, Japan. It is strongly recommended that NAS, Atsugi, be furnished sufficient cameras to permit the immediate issue of replacement cameras to the fleet via COD when necessary.

Throughout the cruise in the Far East this ship has experienced a considerable number of camera failures which required immediate camera repair in order to meet operational requirements. It is strongly recommended that all CVAs departing for the Far East have on board a well-trained camera repairman with tools and adequate space for repairing large aerial cameras.

One print each of all aerial photography has been furnished to each carrier operating under CTF 77, in addition to prints supplied to other activities. Such photography received from other carriers by this ship has only been useful for the preparation of strike target photos. Recently Commander Carrier Division ONE has been furnishing carriers with all target photos. If this procedure is adopted as standard practice by CTF 77, it is recommended that the furnishing of aerial photographic prints to all carriers be discontinued, thereby conserving considerable photographic material and reducing the work load of the carrier photographic laboratories.

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b. Photographic Planes.

It is recommended that the F9F-5P photo plane be modified to facilitate rotation of the forward camera in a similar manner to the after camera. This would provide a much more versatile aircraft, permitting oblique photography after all film in the after camera has been expended. The K-17, 12 inch, rotating camera in the middle bay of the F2H-2P aircraft was used on numerous occasions for oblique photography.

A RUDM has been submitted on the plastic meter roller drive gear and the metering roller gear contained in the two new A8 Baker magazines received from ComFairJap on 17 November 1952. On the first flight which an A8B magazine was used, both plastic gears broke. It is not considered that these gears are strong enough for the magazines, particularly when 390 foot rolls of film are used.

Since 2 September 1952, a period of three and a half months including three tours on the line, Unit NAN of VC-61 has been required to operate with different aircraft each tour (F2H-2P, F9F-2P and F9F-5P). Of the three types of aircraft, the F2H-2P is considered to be, photographically, highly superior for the following reasons:

(1) An additional camera (K-17, 6 inch) can be carried for use in obtaining small scale verticals thereby facilitating the laying of small scale mosaics.

(2) Both the 12 inch and the 36 inch cameras rotate permitting obliques from either camera.

(3) Cameras and magazines can be removed and replaced in the F2H-2P with much greater ease because of the side openings, rather than the top opening which necessitates a ladder on the F9F-5P. Two men have been required to load and unload cameras in the F9F-5P whereas only one is required on the F2H-2P.

On several occassions during December ice formed on K-25 camera capsule lens windows while in flight, thereby obscuring the photographic subjects. It is recommended that a heating element be installed in all camera capsules.

During the final period mid-flight malfunctions occurred in the A8B magazines. The difficulty was traced to the use of slightly bent flanges on the 400 foot film spools which was preventing the take-up spool from functioning properly, allowing the film to pile up on the take-up side of the magazine. It is recommended that all activities be cautioned to check for bent 400 foot film spools prior to their use and that action be taken to provide future 400 foot spools with stronger flanges.

On numerous occasions between 25 November and 17 December, film from the A8B magazines was exposed to light. Light leaks were traced to the areas around the locking bolt and where the magazine connects with the K-38 camera. The light leaks were intermittent and usually occurred when the camera was in an oblique position. In the F9F-5P aircraft this would be the position where the sun would strike directly on the magazine.

Unavailability of the following items were considered to be major deficiencies in photographic operations during the period of this cruise in the Far East.

(1) 24 and 36 inch 9 x 18 inch cameras, or their equivalents with image motion compensation. The current jet photo planes are too fast for the presently available K-17 and K-38 cameras.

(2) A small (4 x 5 inch or 7 x 7 inch) camera with a long focal length for bomb rack mounting on the wings of attack type aircraft.

(3) A small compact 35mm motion picture camera with a long focal length for bomb rack mounting on the wings of attack type aircraft for combat recording. This camera should be compact enough for mounting on outboard bomb racks of this type aircraft. The K-C4AZ motion picture camera capsule is too large and requires the use of center station bomb racks.

(4) Equipment suitable for more rapid processing of aerial film and Sonne paper. This equipment should be of the continuous strip type and suitable for use with rapid developers such as Navy Rapid Developer No. 7.

(5) A more effective camera repair system. This to include a well-trained aerial camera repairman on board each CVA, and adequate supply of spare parts, and replacement cameras readily available to forces afloat.

5. Combat Information Center

a. Radar Performance

CIC was plagued with more failures and breakdowns of radar equipment during the last period on the line than it had experienced during the entire preceeding five months. In all instances, the cause was attributed directly to the failure of various component parts. The power transformer of the automatic frequency control unit of the AN/SPS-6B radar failed and a thorough search of the Yokosuka area revealed that no such replacement part was available locally. On 18 November, a dispatch requisition was sent to NSC, Oakland, California, requesting the vital part. Two days later it was air mailed from the States and was received aboard via COD aircraft on 3 December. After installation the radar was back in full operation the following day. The AN/SPS-6B was out of commission in the operating area for eleven days of the operating period due to unavailability of a power transformer in the forward area.

b. Air Intercepts

Unidentified swept-wing jets and "contrails" were sighted over North Korea by our aircraft on at least four occasions. These were later evaluated as enemy MIG's but were never within range to vector CAP to effect an air intercept. The nearest reported "bandits" were over Wonsan, at the time 75 miles from Task Force 77, but were never held by our radar. Practice intercepts were constantly run using CAP to intercept returning strike and photo flights but there was frequently a lack of accurate altitude information which is a prerequisite for running any sort of successful intercept. The SM radar used by this ship has an error of about 1,000 feet on air targets from 5,000 to 20,000 feet altitude and its maximum detection range is 30 miles on a section of jets. Altitude radar guard has usually been assigned to another carrier in the force having an SX height finder but even with this more advanced radar the altitude information is frequently erroneous and usually not obtainable on targets beyond 35 miles from the force. There is a definite need for some radar equipment capable of producing rapid and accurate altitude on air contacts at a greater range than is presently possible if the Combat Air Patrol is to be utilized to its maximum degree of effectiveness as a defensive weapon.

c. Inter-Ship CIC Officer Training

A total of seven junior officers from other ships in Task Force 77 have been assigned temporary duty under instruction in CIC duties and in control of aircraft during the entire period in the operating area.

6. Aerology

a. Facsimile Reception

Facsimile reception ranged from poor to good, good being the exception. Observation shows that reception is poor when the ship is in a storm area and when there is a front between the operating area and Tokyo. About seventy percent of the facsimile maps received were unreadable and very little advantage could be taken of the information transmitted.

b. Weather

On 2 December this ship encountered the so-called snow line for the first time.

During the morning, the following conditions were noted: Overcast skies with a 1500 to 2000 foot ceiling, visibility two to five miles in light snow showers, winds northeast 20 to 25 knots. Radar and ASP reports showed the line to be oriented north-northwest and south-southeast over the Task Force and extending inland over Korea at Songjin.

While steaming in a southerly direction, the force slowly passed under the line in an east-west direction, about 1300I. During passage, a light

snowfall and a brief but intense hail storm was experienced. Sea smoke prevailed furing the passage and persisted for a period of about twenty-four hours. Very soon after passage, sky conditions became scattered to clear with unlimited visibility. The wind backed to the northwest and increased to thirty knots, remaining so for two hours.

B. AIR DEPARTMENT

1. Catapults

a. With two jet squadrons embarked during this six months operating period in Korean waters, catapult operations have been extensive. Until September when the new forged-eye pendants were received, launching pressures could not exceed 3500 psi due to limitation of the old type pendants. This often forced the removal of some external ordnance from jet aircraft during days of low wind conditions. However, since September, launching pressures up to 4000 psi have been utilized and removal of external ordnance has been held to a minimum. Only when 30 knots of relative wind could not be maintained, were external ordnance loads reduced. [The minimum wind over the deck required to catapult an F9F-2 with 1100 lbs of external ordnance at 4000 psi pressure at 60° F has been determined to be 30 knots.]

b. The bungee arrester for the forged-eye pendant, manufactured locally in accordance with Catapult Bulletin #93, did not prove satisfactory. Four pendants were lost overboard due to parting of the seizing wire and bungee. After some experimentation it was found that bungee strands seized individually provided a more secure and dependable arrester. This method has been employed ever since. Over 100 shots were fired using one arrester constructed in this manner and none has been lost over the side. However, out of a total of over 600 catapult launchings, 18 forged-eye pendants were deformed (developed permanent kinks) which prevented further use. The track cover plates at the forward end of the catapult and the shuttle hook have been struck and dented to some extent by the pendant as it rebounds after the shot. It is evident the forged-eye is causing this damage. Use of the forged-eye pendants along with Catapult Change Number 36 should greatly increase the war making potential of carriers having H4B catapults by permitting the catapulting of heavier jet aircraft.

c. With the utilization of higher launching pressures, failure of the aluminum liners in the towing and retrieving fairlead sheaves has been more frequent. Eight 38" P.D. towing sheaves and four 48" P.D. retrieving sheaves were replaced because of broken liners or loosened rivets during the first five months of the tour. During the last in-port period the new cast aluminum sheaves were received and installed throughout the fairlead system. This has been a most welcome change as delay in operations due to sheave liner failures can now be forgotten. More man hours were expended in replacing damaged sheaves than in performing any other catapult maintenance. These higher launching pressures create greater vibration of the catapult machinery, which tends to cause some leakage in various pipe fittings and failure of oil line brackets.

d. Shuttles were removed during in-port periods and inspected. Replacement of the Phenolic shuttle slippers was required periodically.

e. Two oil gear hydraulic pumps were replaced because of internal failure and one pump was replaced for not meeting the minimum volume requirement. The new pumps were installed by SRF, Yokosuka, in August and have required no maintenance since installation. The hot temperatures experienced during the warmer months and the light viscosity of the hydraulic oil are believed contributing factors to pump failures.

2. Aircraft Handling

a. Flight Deck

(1) During the last Navy Yard availability in CONUS, the majority of the Douglas fir planking in the landing area was replaced with teak, while three sections on the port side by number 2 cross-deck pendant had Enrup installed for evaluation. The Enrup has held up exceptionally well, much better than either the fir or teak. Tail hooks have no effect on the Enrup, whereas they dig into the fir and teak.

(2) The standard flight deck spot used for launching was AD's, four to a row, across the deck aft with the F4U's, five to a row, forward of the AD's. In order to expedite the jet spotting for launch, aluminum plates were secured to the flight deck for positioning the right and nose wheels of each jet which permitted proper clearance for the jet blast and possible wing unfolding when the jury struts were removed. On recoveries the jets and/or F4U's were spotted forward to starboard of the center line and the AD's forward to port.

b. Hangar Deck

(1) Previously, it was the opinion that No. 1 elevator was of little or no use during flight operations; hence, it was secured to enable the spotting of sixteen F9F aircraft in Bay one (frame 40-79). With the advent of flak suppression jet launches, following immediately after the piston strikes, this elevator was required to expedite the movement of jets to the flight deck. This reduced the number of jets that could be parked in Bay one to fourteen, but permitted a much faster respot to be made by using the Deck Edge and No. 1 elevators.

3. Arresting Gear

a. During this combat tour, operation and maintenance of the arresting gear has been normal. Four double pendant engagements by F9F aircraft resulted in hook failures with attendant barrier engagements. The Davis barriers have worked well in stopping these aircraft, and only on two occasions was the barricade partly engaged. In every case the Davis barriers arrested the aircraft. Only one full barricade engagement has been experienced since installed. This occurred when the fuel control unit of an F9F-5P stuck and restricted the deceleration of the power to 70% at the "cut". The aircraft bounced over the first Davis barrier, nosed under the second and was fully engaged by the barricade.

b. During the training period in the Hawaiian area, F9F tail hooks on numerous occasions dropped to the deck from the stinger position and tore up the Davis barrier and barricade webbing as the planes taxied forward out of the gear. This was corrected by housing the hooks while in the gear. Although a few additional seconds were required for this operation, the time saved in not having to replace barrier webbing assemblies and barricade shear pins more than made up for the time required to house the hooks.

4. Aircraft Maintenance (Ship's)

a. General

(1) The overall aircraft maintenance during this combat tour has been highly satisfactory. The cooperation between the ship and Air Group SEVEN maintenance personnel was outstanding. The V-4 division was handicapped initially, due to the lack of experienced engine build-up personnel, but the cooperation of the Air Group maintenance personnel soon overcame this deficiency.

(2) The shortage of critical spares in Aviation Ready Issue resulted in numerous AOG's during the first period on the line. This was overcome by closer adherence to the allowance lists and follow-ups on requisitions by the Supply Department.

b. All jet engines were changed with the crane attachment for Clark Utility Lift (BuShips stock No. S-69-T-9500-10 Model No. 609040). This attachment has proved invaluable because of its maneuverability, and the platform makes it usable for any work that has to be accomplished in the overhead of the hangar deck, e.g. painting, replacing light bulbs, and the stowage of gear.

c. The crane attachment on the Clark Lift was utilized to change propellers, thereby completely eliminating the need of chain hoists for this work.

d. A total of 5472 RB-19-R2 (1054 overhauled and 4018 new) spark plugs were issued. For a period of about six weeks from early September to the middle of October, a high usage of RB-19-R2 spark plugs occurred. During this 6 week period, the average life of plugs in the AD type aircraft was approximately 50 hours for new plugs and 40 hours for overhauled plugs. In the F4U type aircraft, only new plugs were used and the average life was 66 hours. Inspection of the used plugs revealed heavy deposits of carbon and lead on the electrodes. It is believed that the aviation gasoline in use had an exceptionally high lead content. However, to insure the maximum life possible, all pilots reviewed the proper engine idling techniques and COMAIRPAC GEB #13. Since this one period of high usage, the average life of new spark plugs has returned to approximately 80 hours in the AD and 120 hours in the F4U aircraft.

e. Aviation Electronics

(1) Throughout this period the ship's aviation electronics personnel generally maintained test equipment, shop arrangements, and handled supplies while the Air Group personnel performed maintenance and repair work on all aircraft electronic equipment. This arrangement worked very well and few difficulties were encountered.

(2) Test equipment was adequate with the exception of two items.

(a) The UPM-8 portable IFF MK-X test equipment had very little operational use, primarily because of a short in one of the windings of the pulse transformer, T-102. The pulse transformer T-102 could not be replaced since there was no QR allowance for such a replacement part. An additional UPM-8 was obtained in Yokosuka. Shortly after this UPM-8 was delivered on board the same malfunction of the pulse transformer T-102 occurred. Consequently, the second UPM-8 was off-loaded in Japan. Neither UPM-8 test equipment has been replaced since.

(b) It is recommended that the Hickock Model 540 tube tester be replaced with the Hickock Model 547A tube tester. The model 547A checks a greater variety of tubes currently supporting electronics equipment for carrier aircraft. The model 547A design is also favored because of the speed and ease of checking tubes.

5. Aircraft Service

a. Aviation Ordnance

(1) Munitions assembly and Delivery

The upper stage bomb elevators B1B, B2B, and B3B on this vessel are of limited size and capacity. Dimensions are 8 x 2½ ft. and the load limit is 2500 pounds. A typical strike of 24 piston and 12 jet aircraft requires 208 bombs of various sizes and 42 5" ATAR's. Careful planning and maximum utilization of all three upper stage bomb elevators is required to get these bombs and rockets from the 3rd deck to the flight deck so that all the squadron ordnance loading crews are furnished bombs as rapidly as they can load aircraft. Briefly the following procedure was used: An ammunition breakout list is made up from the daily air plan, and the petty officer in charge of the 3rd deck bomb supply follows this list in assembling bombs, rockets and fuzes for the day's operations. Fuzes are assembled by types and delays, as required, and sent to the flight deck in a MK-5 adaptor mounted on a MK-1 bomb skid, one to each squadron. This system has the advantage of having each squadron's fuzes available to be moved to any part of the flight deck where fuzing operations are being conducted.

b. Aviation Gasoline and Lube Oil

(1) The ship's lube oil pumps were unable to supply oil to the flight deck at a pressure sufficient to insure maximum output from the gasoline/oil proportioners. This difficulty was completely overcome by installing a