

### VMO-251 Grumman F4F-3, -3P, -4, -7 and SNJ Losses

July 1942 - May 1943

Date	Type	BuNo	Base	Lost	Area	Pilot	Status/Notes
22/7/1942	F4F-3	1890	Tontouta, New Caledonia	New Caledonia	South Pacific	2Lt. George S. Kobler	S
6/9/1942	F4F-7	5265	Bomber Field #1, Espiritu Santo	Off Espiritu Santo	New Hebrides	TSGT Wendell P. Garton	S
10/9/1942	F4F-3?	2516?	Bomber Field #1, Espiritu Santo	Off Espiritu Santo	New Hebrides	Lt. Kenneth Kirk	S/Mid-air collision with Anderson <sup>1</sup>
10/9/1942	F4F-?	Unk	Bomber Field #1, Espiritu Santo	Off Espiritu Santo	New Hebrides	SSGT Emmett L. Anderson	S/Mid-air collision with Kirk <sup>2</sup>
21/10/1942	F4F-4	02085	Henderson Field, Guadalcanal	Off Guadalcanal	Solomon Islands	SSGT Emmett L. Anderson	D/temporarily attached to VMF-121, not clear if VMO-251 Wildcat. Squadron AAR for 10/1942 is missing. BuNo and A/C type obtained from casualty card.
1/11/1942	F4F-4	03448	Henderson Field, Guadalcanal	Off Santa Isabel Island	Solomon Islands	Lt. Michael Yunck	S/Squadron records do not indicate BuNo nor is it clear if the A/C was assigned to VMO-251. <sup>3</sup>
15/11/1942	SBD-3	03338					This may be an error. The squadron was never assigned SBD Dauntless dive bombers. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Existing squadron records do not indicate Bureau Number or aircraft type. BuNo and A/C type from Source: Volume II: US Navy, USMC, and USCG Aircraft Lost During World War II – Listed by Squadron. Douglas E. Campbell, Ph.D.

<sup>2</sup> Existing squadron records do not indicate Bureau Number or aircraft type. Campbell does not list this loss.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Campbell

Date	Type	BuNo	Base	Lost	Area	Pilot	Status/Notes
17/11/1942	F4F-3P	1850	Turtle Bay Fighter Strip, Espiritu Santo	Espiritu Santo	New Hebrides	2Lt. Kenneth L. Reusser	S/Campbell notes pilot killed. This is an error. Reusser was officially transferred to the squadron in January 1943. At time of accident he was TDY to 251 from another squadron.
17/11/1942	F4F-4	03434	Turtle Bay Fighter Strip, Espiritu Santo	Off Espiritu Santo	New Hebrides	2Lt. G.B. Doyle	S
8/12/1942	SBD-3	06695	Henderson Field, Guadalcanal	Henderson Field, Guadalcanal	Solomon Islands	1Lt. George S. Kobler	D/plane was not an SBD. <sup>4</sup> Kobler was part of a division of 4 Wildcats taking off. Kobler crashed on takeoff. SBD may have been plane he ran into after the crash. Weiland eyewitness account.
16/12/1942	F4F-4	03497	Espiritu Santo				Source Campbell: Squadron records indicate no losses.
21/12/1942	SBD-3	06661					This may be an error. The squadron was never assigned SBD Dauntless dive bombers. <sup>3</sup>
21/12/1942	F4F-3	3998	Turtle Bay	Off Espiritu	New	2Lt. Roy	D/Booth was

<sup>4</sup> Campbell has SBD as loss. This is incorrect.

			Fighter Strip, Espiritu Santo	Santo	Hebrides	Booth	transferred from VMSB-142 along with several others to learn fighter tactics in order to fly the Wildcat. Plane crashed in water during practice gunnery run.
23/12/1942	F4F-4	03534	Henderson Field, Guadalcanal	New Georgia area	Solomon Islands	Capt. David Andre	S/pilot was with VMF-121
9/1/1943	F4F-4	03455	Turtle Bay Fighter Strip, Espiritu Santo	Espiritu Santo	New Hebrides		Source: Campbell. Squadron records make no mention of this loss.
15/1/1943	F4F-3	1852	Henderson Field, Guadalcanal	New Georgia	Solomon Islands	1Lt. Jack R. Moore	S/Like Booth, Moore was a product of the Fighter School. He was a transfer from VMO-151
7/3/1943	F4F-4	11752	Noumea				Source: Campbell. Squadron records do not indicate any A/C losses after 15/1/43 (see Notes)
7/3/1943	F4F-4	11848	Noumea				“
7/3/1943	F4F-4	11891	Noumea				“
7/3/1943	F4F-4	12036	Noumea				“
7/3/1943	F4F-4	12117	Noumea				“
7/3/1943	F4F-4	12132	Noumea				“
7/3/1943	F4F-4	12141	Noumea				“
26/4/1943	F4F-4	11686	Noumea				“
30/4/1943	SNJ-3	01853					“
30/4/1943	F4F-4	4069	Noumea				“
30/4/1943	F4F-4	5059	Noumea				“
30/4/1943	F4F-4	5252	Noumea				“
20/5/1943	F4F-4	11881	Noumea				“
31/5/1943	F4F-4	11777	Noumea				“

NOTES:

There is no record of VMO-251 pilots or planes flying combat missions after 1 February 1943. Within a week, most of the pilots had been transferred to other squadrons or sent home. The ground echelon, until it left Guadalcanal on 12 May, maintained Cactus Air Force aircraft. What happened to the squadron's aircraft is not known, but it appears all stayed on Guadalcanal. The squadron did not return to the US with its aircraft.

The entries for 3 March through 31 May are from Campbell's book. If indeed the planes ended up at Noumea, New Caledonia it is not known how. Even with fuel tanks, the Wildcats would have been taxed to make it: from Guadalcanal to New Caledonia was 840 miles.

The SNJ-3 loss is not mentioned in squadron records. However a photo in the Madden collection (sent to me by his granddaughter) appears to show what's left of an SNJ. It looks to have been stripped for parts. There was no notation on the photo.



Key to Status/Notes:

S=Saved

D=Died