MARINE FIGHTING SQUADRON TWO FIFTY ONE,
MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP FOURTEEN, FIRST MARINE AIRCRAFT WING, FMF,
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.

COMBAT TOUR

OF

DUTY

OF

MARINE FIGHTING SQUADRON TWO FIFTY ONE,

From

1 February, 1945,

to

28 February, 1945.

DISTRIBUTION:

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1 - The Commanding Officer, M.A.G. - 14.
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War Diary for VMF-251. February, 1945.

Geographical location of VMF-251:

SAMAR, PHILIPPINES

Name of the Commanding Officer:

WILLIAM L. BACHELER, Major, USMCR, (NA).
(Assumed command on 10 February, 1945).

Name of Next Higher Echelon:

MARINE AIR GROUP FOURTEEN.

Composition as of 1 February, 1945:

	Officers	Men
U. S. MARINE CORPS PILOTS	45	
U. S. MARINE CORPS GROUND	8	209
U. S. NAVY	1	8
	54	217

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War Diary for VMF-251. February, 1945.

PILOTS ROSTER AS OF 1 FEBRUARY, 1945:

HUMBERD, William C.	Major	Commanding Officer.
BACHELER, William L.	Major	Executive Officer.
FURLOW, Thomas W.	Major	Flight Officer.
HART, Joseph P.	Capt.	
SCHROEDER, Frank A.	Capt.	Asst. Flight Officer.
WALLACE, Harold C.	Capt.	"Missing in Action"
CRUTCHER, Ernest R.	1stLt.	
CUNNINGHAM, Russell F.	1stLt.	
ERDMANN, William A.	1stLt.	
GARRETT, James D.	1stLt.	
GRAY, Roy C.	1stLt.	
HENLEY, Paul B.	1stLt.	
INGLEHART, George G.	1stLt.	
JENNINGS, Francis C.	1stLt.	
JONES, Ollie O.	1stLt.	
MAC LACHLAN, Archibald W.	1stLt.	
MOYNIHAN, Michael H.	1stLt.	"Missing in Action"
MUSSMAN, William E.	1stLt.	
NEILSON, Russell H.	1stLt.	
PIRAGES, William J.	1stLt.	
POEHLMAN, Arthur W.	1stLt.	
ROSELLEN, Robert R.	1stLt.	
SCHOETZ, David J.	1stLt.	
SCOVILLE, William H.	1stLt.	
SMITH, Howard F.	1stLt.	
WARREN, Arthur J.	1stLt.	
BARTON, Wilson G.	2ndLt.	
BEATTIE, Alexander D.	2ndLt.	
DAIGLE, Bernadin J.	2ndLt.	
EVANS, Arthur C.	2ndLt.	
FRANK, Lewis C.	2ndLt.	
HARRIS, Archibald "A"	2ndLt.	
IRWIN, Hugh E.	2ndLt.	
JERNIGAN, Curtis D.	2ndLt.	
KAMMEYER, Preston L.	2ndLt.	
LINDSEY, Robert E.	2ndLt.	
LINGENFELTER, Virgil A.	2ndLt.	
POOR, Ernest E.	2ndLt.	
RHODES, Frank A.	2ndLt.	
ROBINSON, James W.	2ndLt.	
SANDBACH, Harold G.	2ndLt.	
SCOTT, Charles	2ndLt.	
WARD, Ray G.	2ndLt.	
WOLF, John C.	2ndLt.	
WYATT, John W.	2ndLt.	

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War Diary for VMF-251. February, 1945.

This squadron was redesignated from Marine Observation Squadron Two Fifty One to Marine Fighting Squadron Two Fifty One. Authority COMINCH Dis. 262132 JAN45 as of 31JAN45.

1 February

Twenty-two planes of this squadron supplied fighter cover today for an east-bound convoy south of NEGROS ISLAND. Divisions handling this job were SMITH's, INGLEHART's, ERDMANN's, GARRETT's, and HENLEY's (less HENLEY and BARTON, who did not take off because a violent rainstorm prevented fueling of these two planes). Patrols were all negative.

2 February

CUNNINGHAM's division covered a LEYTE-bound convoy from 1445 to 1515 o'clock, with negative sightings. BACHELER and HARRIS flew combat air patrol of CAMOTES SEA from 0915 to 1251; and PIRAGES and IRWIN continued the job at 1200, leaving the area at 1510. Negative were the results.

3 February

JENNINGS, ERDMANN, WARREN, and WOLF took off at 0730 to reconnoitre DIKLOM and TAGALOAN Airfields on NW MINDANAO. No activity or anti-aircraft fire was seen. The flight then went over to CARMEN, along the coast, and there strafed and thoroughly holed three barges on the east bank of a large river.

At 1230, HUMBERD, KAMMEYER, INGLEHART, and SCOTT departed to do the same job of reconnoitering, searched the area from 1325 to 1405, but saw no signs of the enemy. Five of our planes furnished fighter cover for a cripple which was being towed to LEYTE. HART, ROBINSON, and SANDBACH returned from a ferry hop, bringing the squadron three new planes from MANUS, ADMIRALTY ISLANDS.

Transferred one enlisted man.

4 February

Thirty-two sorties today were flown, providing dawn to dusk fighter cover for a one hundred-fifty ship convoy in the MINDANAO SEA, for a total of one hundred nine (109) flying hours for the squadron.

5 February

Another convoy cover today, again in the MINDANAO SEA, utilized twenty of our planes. Patrol was negative.

The following officers detached to MADS-1: 1stLts. Ernest R. CRUTCHER, Roy C. GRAY, William E. MUSSMAN, and Ollie O. JONES.

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6 February

Today began our fighter-bomber attacks against enemy targets on CEBU, NEGROS, PANAY, MINDANAO, and northern SAMAR ISLANDS, which attacks were to occupy most of this squadron's time for the rest of the month. We started with a group of forty-six buildings located about a mile southwest of the runway at CAROLINA AIRFIELD, which lies on the northwest shore of NEGROS ISLAND. Guerillas had reported that the Japs were using these buildings as shops to keep in commission their two or three fighter planes which were still serviceable.

Two attacks were made, from 0800 to 1010; and from 1340 to 1610. Each plane carried a five-hundred pounder on either pylon, making the total bomb load hauled today, 32,000 pounds. In the morning attack, by the time the third division went into its dive, the entire western portion of the target was covered and obscured by a pall of black smoke from a large gasoline or oil fire caused by preceding bomb hits. The attack had been planned so that the prevailing easterly wind would not blow the smoke over the entire target. On the second run, (each plane dropped only one of its bombs on the first), two more fires were started and after that, three strafing runs completely riddled the few remaining buildings, and started another fire. Two Army P-38 pilots who happened to see this strike were heard to say over the radio, "The Navy's doing a good job down there". One of our pilots answered, with, "Navy, Hell. It's Marines!"

The afternoon attack was equally successful, and was witnessed by Colonel Z. C. HOPKINS, Commanding Officer of Marine Air Group Fourteen, and the Squadron Intelligence Officer. Photographs taken the next day by the army revealed that eighty per-cent of the group of buildings was totally destroyed, and fifteen per-cent severly damaged.

Pilots participating in these two strikes were those of BACHELER's, SCHROEDER's, SMITH's (with HENLEY in place of ROSELLEN) and CUNNINGHAM's divisions. Major BACHELER, Executive Officer of the squadron, led the flight.

Major Thomas W. FURLOW, returned from U. S. Naval Hospital 10.

7 February, 1945.

The skipper's wing, the self-styled "first team" of the squadron, consisting of Major HUMBERD's, and HART's, HENLEY's, and JENNINGS' divisions, carried the bombs today. It was a combined strike, with two squadrons of Marine Air Group Twelve, based at TANUAN, LEYTE, and three Army B-24's based at TACLOBAN, LEYTE. The target was a group of large buildings used by the Japs as barracks and administrative offices, located in MANDAUE TOWN, ten miles up the beach

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7 February(Cont'd)

from CEBU CITY, the heart of the enemy concentration on CEBU ISLAND.

The morning attack came at 0845, with the B-24's dropping centuries from ten thousand. This was followed instantly by our attack, and we were followed, in turn, by the M.A.G. 12 squadrons, carrying two thousand pounders each to the target. Results were very disappointing on the morning strike, chiefly because nearly fifty per cent of our bombs did not explode. The squadron ordnance Officer stated later that he believed he was furnished some bad detonators, and that his was no doubt the cause. One fire was started, however, and two bomb hits were observed with a large "H"-shaped building.

The afternoon attack, executed without benefit of the B-24's, went much better for us. One building was still burning from the morning strike; this second attack started one large fire burning fiercely before the planes left the target. WARD, who came in late because of a late take-off, reported lots of smoke over the target when he arrived, with five small fires he could count; and that somebody in HART's division started another big fire.

Army photographs taken the next morning showed the entire target blasted and most of the larger buildings were wrecked. No anti-aircraft fire was encountered either attack.

8 February

Flying secured today, for maintenance purposes. BACHELER's and SMITH's divisions stood scramble alert all day. Major HUMBERD gave a demonstration of napalm bombing, a few hundred yards off the beach, in front of ours and the 93rd Seabees camp.

9 February

Flying secured today because of foul weather.

10 February

0730. JENNINGS, ERDMANN, KAMMEYER, and ROBINSON took off, bombed MOLOGO Airfield, NEGROS. KAMMEYER got a damaging hit on a bunch of buildings south of the east end of the runway, but nobody's bombs started any fires; pilots reported that the runway must have at least a hundred bomb craters in it, and there is nothing left to shoot at, in the whole area. Landed: 1000.

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10 February(Cont'd)

0730. SCHROEDER, EVANS, DAIGLE, and JERNIGAN hit SILAY Airfield on western NEGROS, with two thousand pounders each, but it was the same story, airfield and fiailities completely bombed out, and nothing left to serve as a target. JERNIGAN and DAIGLE strafed a thirty-five foot barge with an inboard engine. They fired it on the second run, and left it burning. DAIGLE saw a man jump overboard on the first run.

SMITH, NEILSON, HENLEY, and MAC LACHLAN left at 0730, with two thousand pounders each to hit TALISAY Airfield, another enemy-held air base on western NEGROS. Found the field completely unserviceable and did no damage with their bombs. Landed: 0930 at TANUAN. 1115, at SAMAR.

1500. SMITH's division (less MAC LACHLAN who did not takeoff) off again, this time to hit OPON Airfield, MACATAN ISLAND, near CEBU CITY. They dropped four half-tonners on buildings west of the southwest end of the strip, with no observed damage. Two other bombs were duds. Landed: 1620.

1445. SCHROEDER's division (less SCHROEDER, who did not take off because of a locked brake), led by DAIGLE, deposited three half-tonners on a red-topped building at Southwest end of the runway at CAROLINA Airfield, northern NEGROS. Three more bombs of like weight were put on a large building on the south side of Highway # 1, running east to west, south of the field. No observed damage. Landed: 1650.

BACHELER's division patrolled a convoy west of PANAY ISLAND, from 1300 to 1415 o'clock. Negative. IRWIN returned early to base with a gasoline leak. Flight landed: 1540.

Major William C. HUMBERD,(06025), United States Marine Corps, detached to Marine Air Group Fourteen. Major William L. BACHELER, (06779), United States Marine Corps Reserve, assumes command of the squadron.

11 February

Two strikes were called today, against the Jap-held town of SURIGAO, MINDANAO. Time of attack was set at 0930 and 1530, with sixteen Corsairs in each flight, loaded with two half tonners per plane. The first flight was off at 0845 o'clock led by Major FURLOW and his division of SCOVILLE, CUNNINGHAM, and SANDBACH; and the following divisions in the order named: HART, RHODES, GARRETT, and POOR; HENLEY, BARTON, SCHOETZ, and WARD; and INGLEHART, SCOTT, NEILSON, and LINGENFELTER.

11 February(Cont'd)

Bad weather dogged today's operations, however, and the flight was unable to get through. The weather continued bad, and the afternoon show was called off by operations.

12 February

The strikes ordered for yesterday were delivered today, in more favorable weather, and with the following changes in the line-up: MAC LACHLAN flew tail-end-Charlie for Major FURLOW; SANDBACH flew wing on INGLEHART; and KAMMEYER led INGLEHART's second section. Although guerillas had reported that SURIGAO had been evacuated by the enemy recently, the USAAF 85th Fighter Wing, under which this squadron is tactically operating, still desired that this town be levelled to prevent the enemy from occupying it again.

The morning attack occurred at approximately 0930 o'clock with our planes approaching out of the sun and diving on the eastern portion of the town. Many good hits were scored out of the total of sixteen tons of bombs dropped, and misses were few. Several fires were started, one of which was still to be burning when our planes returned for the afternoon attack.

The afternoon strike, with the same pilots and the same bomb load, hit the western portion of the town. The attack was witnessed from a TBM by the Squadron Engineering Officer, Mess Officer, Intelligence Officer, and Flight Surgeon, all of whom were well satisfied with the results. In this, as in the morning attack, each plane released its two thousand-pounders at once, with devastating effect. Each explosion sent dust columns to nearly one thousand feet. Time of attack was 1540, and the flight landed at SAMAR Airfield fifty minutes later.

Guerilla radio report of the results of the above strike stated: "U. S. planes struck burning all houses center sector, lasting two days. Few supplies burned. Both raids few casualties".

13 February

Target for today was LILOAN, which is made up of a large number of scattered buildings in an area along the eastern shore of CEBU ISLAND, fifteen miles north of CEBU CITY, the principle and sole remaining enemy stronghold on the island. There were two attacks, at 0825 and 1620 o'clock, both led by Major BACHELER, Squadron Commander and flown by the following pilots: BACHELER's division, with HARRIS, PIRAGES, and IRWIN; JENNINGS' division, with ERDMANN WOLF, and ROBINSON; SCHROEDER's division, with EVANS, DAIGLE, and JERNIGAN; and SMITH's division, with NEILSON, MAC LACHLAN, and BEATTIE.

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13 February(Cont'd)

The morning attack caused two explosions on the ground which put flame to 200 feet; several buildings had large holes blown in their sides and some were destroyed completely. The afternoon attack destroyed three buildings and left two smoking. Both strikes put a total of 14,000 rounds of 50 caliber bullets into the target. Pilots observed that the buildings appeared to have mud walls, which no doubt accounts for the relatively small number of fires started. Each Corsair unloaded two half-tonners in each attack, making the total bomb load for today 64,000 pounds.

14 February

The Jap-held town of SURIGAO was under attack again today by this squadron. Two flights of sixteen Corsairs, both led by Major FURLOW, Squadron Executive Officer, and both attacks were participated in by the same pilots, were flown as follows: Major FURLOW's division, with MAC LACHLAN, CUNNINGHAM, and FRANK; GARRETT's division, with SANDBACH, POOR, and RHODES; HENLEY's division, with BARTON, SCHOETZ, and WARD; and INGLEHART's division, consisting of himself, SCOTT, KAMMEYER, and LINGENFELTER.

Both of today's attacks were aimed at these buildings remaining in the western end of town. Each plane dropped its two thousand-pounders in the first run. The morning attack, at 0940 o'clock, started four fires which put up black smoke to 400 feet; and one large explosion. The second strike started two large fires and several smaller ones. Returning pilots reported "Not one good building left standing in this town."

Radio report this date from guerillas who were occupying a ring-side seat at the performance stated: "Houses NW section totally burned; high school damaged. SURIGAO CITY now vacated by Nips."

15 February

Sixteen Corsairs, with a thousand-pounder on right and left pylons, and no belly tank, hit the enemy-held town of BUTUAN, on the AGUSAN RIVER, NW MINDANAO twice today, at 1145 and 1640. Several buildings were destroyed in the two attacks, but the pilots reported that "results were not very encouraging to look at". However, here's what the guerillas had to say about it, over the radio, that night: "Air strike by 16 planes hit area BUTUAN to AGUSAN PEQUENO bridge. Results reported good. Specific results not available yet . . ."

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15 February(Cont'd)

Major BACHELER led both of today's strikes. The line-up read: BACHELER, HARRIS, PIRAGES, and IRWIN; SCHROEDER, EVANS, FRANK, and JERNIGAN; SMITH, NEILSON, ROSELLEN, and MAC LACHLAN; JENNINGS, ERDMANN, WARREN, and WOLF. Total ammunition expended from our guns was 17,000 rounds of 50 caliber.

In addition to the above-mentioned strikes, CUNNINGHAM's division of ROBINSON, BEATTIE, and LINDSEY made two hops to MINDANAO to reconnoitre certain Jap-held airfields along the northwestern coast of the island. No evidence of serviceable aircraft or enemy activity was seen by any of the pilots.

1stLt. Arthur W. POEHLMAN detached to MADS-1.

16 February

The following sections flew the combat air patrol of LEYTE GULF this date: FURLOW, SCOVILLE; HART, WYATT; GARRETT, POOR; HENLEY and BARTON; SCHOETZ and WARD; INGLEHART and SCOTT. One section was sent to "angels twenty" to intercept a bogey, but no meat balls could be found.

Major BACHELER flew to LEYTE on business.

17 February

We had the day off today, except for flying twelve planes over to LEYTE to pick up belly tanks. Major BACHELER returned from LEYTE.

18 February

Once more the 85th Fighter Wing ordered us to hit SURIGAO, MINDANAO, this time with three thousand-pounders per plane. One plane was late taking off and failed to join up, and two others developed a hydraulic leak, so only thirteen planes reached the target. The pilots reported no difficulty in carrying the extra load. One even said he would like to try it with three two-thousand pounders just so he could say he had equalled the bomb load of the B-24's which ply out of here.

The attack was without incident. Two good fires were started in spite of the fact that there was very little target left after the previous bombings by this and other squadrons. Takeoff was 0740, the attack at 0900, and the flight landed at 0925, all times "Item".

18 February,(Cont'd)

The above attack, as well as the one about to be described was led by Major FURLOW,and flown by the following divisions, listed as always Division Leader first, then Wingman; Second section Leader, and Wingman. FURLOW, SCOVILLE, FRANK, and RHODES; HART, WYATT, GARRETT, and POOR; HENLEY, BARTON, SCHOETZ, and WARD; and INGLEHART, SCOTT, KAMMEYER, and LINGENFELTER.

The target consisted of a group of buildings near LICANAN Airfield, north of DAVAO CITY, MINDANAO, a distance of 240 nautical miles away. The takeoff was at 1300; the load, two half tonners and twelve hundred pounds of gasoline in the belly tank. The flight was airborne for four hours, and average fuel consumption ran two hundred ninety gallons, or a little better than seventy gallons per hour. There was no observed damage though many of the bombs appeared to hit well within the assigned target area. The attack was seriously handicapped by a solid overcast over the target at 2,500 feet.

Three planes of the afternoon hop did not get off because each had a blowout in one of its main landing gear tires. These occurred while the planes were down toward the end of the runway taxing or turning around on the hardpan at the end of the runway and resulted from running over stray chunks of coral. Naturally, the extra load had a lot to do with it; consequently, it is believed to be inadvisable, as long as the runways and taxiways are not absolutely free from rocks, to load the F4U-1D with two thousand pound bombs plus a belly tank.

19 February

BACHELER's, SCHROEDER's, SMITH's and JENNINGS' divisions departed at 0845, with one thousand pounder and a belly tank, to again hit the building at LICANAN, MINDANAO. The approach to the target was from the east, to take advantage of the morning sun; and to the south of the target to avoid known anti-aircraft gun positions. The flight leader, Major BACHELER, pushed over at ten thousand feet, followed in order by all planes in a sixty five degree dive with wheels down. Bombs were released at about two thousand feet; retirement was to the east, with a rendezvous at two thousand feet five miles south of SAMAL ISLAND, DAVAO GULF. The attack went as planned, with no specific damage seen however, except that some pilots saw debris flying during the bombing. No strafing run was made because of the proximity of several anti-aircraft positions known to be occupied.

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19 February(Cont'd)

One other strike, led by Captain HART, and made up of his division (WYATT, GARRETT, and ROBINSON), went out today. Taking off at 1305 with two half-tonners each, they bombed a group of buildings on the enemy-held island of CAPUL, which guards the western entrance of SAN BERNADINO STRAIT. This attack was part of the preliminaries for a landing by the Army several days hence, on this and Biri Island, at the eastern entrance of the strait. One large building, marked on the overlay furnished by guerillas as "Barracks #2" was flattened by the bombing, and possibly other buildings were damaged. Flight Landed: 1500.

20 February

Three separate hops of four planes each deposited eight half-tonners on each of three NEGROS Airfields: FABRICA, LA CARLOTTA, and LA HUG. HART's division hit the first; HENLEY, BARTON, JENNINGS, and SCHOETZ, the second; and INGLEHART, SCOTT, LINGENFELTER, the third. Observed results of these three attacks could be listed on a gnat's eyelash, simply because there was nothing at the so-called "targets" to be hit. These places have been bombed so many times that there is just nothing left.

Major FURLOW, with Lieutenants SCOVILLE, CUNNINGHAM, and SANDBACH, took off at 0800 with a one-ton bomb load, their destination being LUMBIA Airfield, MINDANAO, where guerillas have reported three operational Zekes to be hidden. Not seeing the Zekes, our planes bombed the dispersal areas, concentrating on clumps of trees where the planes might be placed, but without any observed results. 2,500 rounds of fifty caliber were put into buildings nearby. Landed: 1100.

Ten planes, led by SMITH, and flown by his division of NEILSON ROSELLEN, and MAC LACHLAN; INGLEHART's division, with SCOTT, LINGENFELTER, and RHODES; plus DAIGLE and JERNIGAN; went on a strafing hop to BIRI ISLAND, SAN BERNADINO STRAIT, to assist the Army, which had just been repulsed in their attempted landing on said island. While the Army retired to a nearby island, our planes went in and thoroughly strafed along the beaches and the village of BIRI, leaving many huts smoking and one blazing fiercely.

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21 February

Fourteen planes in two-plane sections covered two convoys in the MINDANAO SEA. Two more Corsairs of this squadron flew a three-hour patrol of LEYTE GULF, and two were sent to DAVAO GULF to search for a downed pilot. The search was negative, however.

22 February

Major FURLOW led two sixteen-plane fighter-bomber attacks against ILOILO, PANAY, morning and afternoon; takeoff times, 0815 and 1325 respectively. Attack times, 0950 and 1445. Pilots of these two strikes were: SCOVILLE, CUNNINGHAM, FRANK; HART, SANDBACH, SCOTT, KAMMEYER, and LINGENFELTER.

The bomb load was two quarter-tonners per plane. Distance to target, 190 nautical miles. Average fuel consumption with this load and one-hundred-seventy gallon belly tank was seventy gallons per hour. The morning attack was handicapped by a stiff wind from the north, causing many misses. In the afternoon there were two fires going in our target when our planes arrived. The 1445 attack started two good fires in the western portion of the target, which consisted of several good buildings and houses. One bomb caused an explosion with much flame. Landing times: 1100 and 1600 respectively.

23 February

Major BACHELER's wing struck twice at KABACAN, Jap-held village in south-central MINDANAO. Pilots participating under Major BACHELER's leadership were HARRIS, PIRAGES and IRWIN; SCHROEDER, EVANS, DAIGLE, and JERNIGAN; SMITH, BEATTIE, ROSELLEN, and ROBINSON; and JENNINGS, ERDMANN, WARREN, and WOLF.

First takeoff was at 0810, attack at 1130; second takeoff at 1310, attack at 1620. The target was a small village at the junction of the KABACAN and PULANGI Rivers, occupied by the enemy. The first attack started one fire with a big column of white smoke. In the afternoon no specific damage could be seen, but several hits were so close that they must have caused some damage. Guerilla leaders report that in addition to the damage caused, these attacks are a tremendous morale-booster for the Filipino troops. Todays attacks unloaded sixty-two quarter tonners on the target.

24 February

Major FURLOW's division, of SCOVILLE, CUNNINGHAM, and FRANK, took off at 0735 with two thousand-pounders and firty minutes later bombed LAHUG Airfield, CEBU, with unobserved results. Intense and accurate 20 and 40 MM anti-aircraft fire hit one of VMF-218's planes which were attacking the same target, and our four planes circled the downed pilot for two hours awaiting arrival of PBY. The pilot was rescued. Flight landed: 1115.

At 1400 o'clock INGLEHART's division, with SCOTT, KAMMEYER, and LINGENFELTER, departed with a similar bomb load for SILAY Airfield, NEGROS ISLAND, but no targets of value were sighted, and our planes bombed the strip, with unobserved results. Landed: 1600.

Eight more of our planes flew combat air patrol over LEYTE GULF.

25 February

0815. BACHELER, HARRIS, PIRAGES, and IRWIN; and ERDMANN, WARREN, and WOLF left the deck with two half-tonners, bombed Jap-occupied BUENA VISTA, MINDANAO, demolishing one building and possibly damaging many others. Landed: 1010.

1200. SCHROEDER, EVANS, DAIGLE, and JERNIGAN; and SMITH, NEILSON, ROSELLEN, and MAC LACHLAN departed with the same bomb load and with the same assigned target. The attack started several small fires and SCHROEDER, the flight leader, scored a direct hit on the largest building in the target. Landed: 1400.

26 February

Target for today: Two large buildings at LA PAZ, PANAY, which are marked each with a large white cross on the roof, but which, according to reliable reports, are not hospitals at all, but are being used by the enemy to house troops and supplies. Also, eight planes of each flight were put on two large warehouses nearby.

The pilot's line-up for both hops was FURLOW, SCOVILLE, CUNNINGHAM, and FRANK; HART, WYATT, GARRETT, and POOR; HENLEY, BARTON, SCHOETZ, and WARD; and INGLEHART, SCOTT, KAMMEYER, and LINGENFELTER. Attacks on the target, one hundred ninety-two nautical miles away, were delivered at 0925 and 1320. Results of both were disappointing, except for the fact that strafing set afire one of the "hospitals". Bomb load was two half-tonners per plane.

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27 February

Flying secured for purposes of maintenance.

Captain Harold C. WALLACE, (010221), USMCR, and 1stLt. Michael H. MOYNIHAN, (026751), USMCR, transferred to "Prisoners of War and M Missing Persons Det."

Second Lieutenant Henry B. WELCH, (027881), USMCR, accepted appointment to the rank of First Lieutenant.

28 February

BACHELER's and JENNINGS' divisions took off at 0700 to hit PARANG, MINDANAO, but hit a front lying over northern MINDANAO which went up to 25,000 feet. After trying without success to find a hole through it, the flight returned to base, landing at 0900. Pilots on this hop, beside division leaders, were BARTON, PIRAGES, and IRWIN; and ERDMANN, WARREN, and WOLF.

The afternoon attack scheduled for the same place was cancelled by operations because of weather. Two aircraft of this squadron porvided protection for a convoy south of NEGROS ISLAND.

(A) Strength as of 28 February, 1945.

	Officers	Men
U. S. Marine Corps Pilots	37	
U. S. Marine Corps Ground	8	208
U. S. Navy	1	8
	46	216

(B) AIRCRAFT

1. 18 F4U-1D's at the end of the month.
2. Operational losses: One.
3. Combat losses: None.

(C) OPERATIONS

1. Total hours flown for month: 1653.5
2. Total number of individual flights: 631
3. Total number of individual flights on combat missions: 576
4. Total number of flights where enemy opposition was encountered: None

(D) PLANES DESTROYED

1. None

(E) SHIPPING DESTROYED

1. None

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War Diary for VMF-251. February, 1945.

PREPARED BY:

HENRY B. WELCH,
First Lieutenant, U. S. Marine Corps Reserve,
A. C. I. Officer.

APPROVED BY:

WILLIAM L. BACHELER,
Major, U. S. Marine Corps Reserve,
Commanding Officer.

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SQUADRON SUMMARY of MISSIONS, HOURS, and FRIENDLY and ENEMY LOSSES

28 February, 1945 (DATE) — VMF-251 (SQUADRON) — 18 (NUMBER of PLANES AVAILABLE at END of MONTH) — F4U-1D (TYPE)

NAME	COMBAT MISSIONS			ALL MISSIONS						ENEMY PLANES DESTROYED							ENEMY SHIPPING		FRIENDLY LOSSES			
				NUMBER						THIS MONTH				TOTAL					PLANES			
	STARTED	COMPLETED	TOTAL HOURS	STARTED	COMPLETED	ENGAGED ENEMY	DAY	NIGHT	TOTAL HOURS	NUMBER	TYPE	AIR OR GROUND	BROT FORWARD	NUMBER	TYPE	AIR OR GROUND	DESTROYED	DAMAGED	COMBAT	OPERAT'NL	BUREAU NUMBER	PILOT LOST?
Bacheler	16	15	43.5	19	18	0	19	0	47.1													
Barton	22	21	60.8	22	21	0	22	0	60.8													
Beattie	15	15	47.1	15	15	0	15	0	47.1													
Cunningham	19	17	46.4	19	17	0	19	0	46.4													
Daigle	14	13	36.1	14	13	0	14	0	36.1													
Erdmann	16	15	43.2	16	15	0	16	0	43.2													
Evans	17	17	48.9	17	17	0	17	0	48.9													
Frank	12	12	39.4	16	16	0	16	0	42.5													
Furlow	15	12	35.2	17	14	0	17	0	38.2													
Garrett	17	15	35.8	18	16	0	18	0	36.3													
Harris	17	17	49.1	19	19	0	19	0	51.1													
Hart	19	17	46.6	24	24	0	24	0	61.1													
Henley	20	20	50.0	21	21	0	21	0	51.7													
Humberd	5	5	11.8	6	6	0	6	0	12.3													
Inglehart	21	20	45.8	23	22	0	23	0	48.5													
Irwin	19	16	46.0	20	17	0	20	0	47.0													
SQUADRON TOTALS																						

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SQUADRON SUMMARY of MISSIONS, HOURS, and FRIENDLY and ENEMY LOSSES

(DATE) (SQUADRON) (NUMBER of PLANES AVAILABLE at END of MONTH) (TYPE)

NAME	COMBAT MISSIONS			ALL MISSIONS NUMBER						ENEMY PLANES DESTROYED THIS MONTH				TOTAL			ENEMY SHIPPING		FRIENDLY LOSSES PLANES			
	STARTED	COMPLETED	TOTAL HOURS	STARTED	COMPLETED	ENGAGED ENEMY	DAY	NIGHT	TOTAL HOURS	NUMBER	TYPE	AIR OR GROUND	BROT FORWARD	NUMBER	TYPE	AIR OR GROUND	DESTROYED	DAMAGED	COMBAT	OPERAT'NL	BUREAU NUMBER	PILOT LOST?
Jen nings	17	16	43.9	18	17	0	17	0	44.5													
Jernigan	16	16	42.0	16	16	0	16	0	42.0													
Kammeyer	19	18	42.7	19	18	0	19	0	42.7													
Lindsey	3	3	7.0	5	5	0	5	0	9.7													
Lingenfelter	18	16	42.4	18	16	0	18	0	42.4													
Mac Lachlan	18	18	45.1	21	21	0	21	0	48.1													
Neilson	16	15	38.3	18	17	0	18	0	40.3													
Pirages	18	16	45.6	20	18	0	20	0	47.6													
Poor	17	16	39.6	18	17	0	18	0	40.1													
Rhodes	17	16	41.3	18	17	0	18	0	41.8													
Robinson	14	14	38.0	18	18	0	18	0	47.3													
Rosellen	12	10	31.5	13	11	0	13	0	34.0													
Sandbach	15	13	34.3	18	16	0	15	0	41.3													
Schoetz	21	19	48.6	21	19	0	21	0	48.6													
Scott	20	19	46.6	20	19	0	20	0	46.6													
Scoville	19	17	49.5	20	19	0	20	0	50.8													
SQUADRON TOTALS																						

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(DATE) (SQUADRON) (NUMBER of PLANES AVAILABLE at END of MONTH) (TYPE)

NAME	COMBAT MISSIONS			ALL MISSIONS						ENEMY PLANES DESTROYED							ENEMY SHIPPING		FRIENDLY LOSSES			
				NUMBER						THIS MONTH			BROT FORWARD	TOTAL					PLANES			
	STARTED	COMPLETED	TOTAL HOURS	STARTED	COMPLETED	ENGAGED ENEMY	DAY	NIGHT	TOTAL HOURS	NUMBER	TYPE	AIR OR GROUND		NUMBER	TYPE	AIR OR GROUND	DESTROYED	DAMAGED	COMBAT	OPERAT'NL	BUREAU NUMBER	PILOT LOST?
Schroeder	16	16	46.1	16	16	0	16	0	46.1													
Smith	18	18	49.6	20	20	0	20	0	51.6													
Ward	20	19	48.9	20	19	0	20	0	48.9													
Warren	10	9	33.2	17	16	0	17	0	47.1													
Wolf	16	15	43.3	16	15	0	16	0	43.3													
Wyatt	10	10	30.4	10	10	0	10	0	30.4													
SQUADRON TOTALS	614	576	1563.6	666	631	0	666	0	1653.5													

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