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Reg. No.	OM 1882
L.S. No.	<del>                    </del>

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
MARINE OBSERVATION (FIGHTER) SQUADRON TWO FIVE ONE,  
MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP 24  
FIRST MARINE AIRCRAFT WING, c/o FLEET POST OFFICE,  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.

COMBAT TOUR

of

DUTY

of

MARINE OBSERVATION (FIGHTER) SQUADRON TWO FIVE ONE

from

1 June 1944

to

30 June 1944

Distribution:

Original - Commandant, U.S.M.C.  
1- D.A., U.S.M.C.  
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1- C.O., Flight Echelon, VMO-251  
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 War Diary of Marine Fighter Squadron VMO-251, for June, 1944.  
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ROSTER OF FLIGHT ECHELON

HUMBERD, William C., Major. Commanding Officer.  
 TELLER, Robert W., Captain. Executive Officer.  
 FURLOW, Thomas W., Captain. Flight Officer.  
 GALLAGHER, John P., Lieut. (MC) USNR, Flight Surgeon.  
 WELCH, Henry B., 2nd Lt. Intelligence Officer.  
 JONES, Morelle W., Str. Sgt. Intelligence and Flight Clerk.  
 HART, Joseph P., Captain.

CUNNINGHAM, Russell F. 1st. Lt.  
 FOLEY, James A. "  
 GARRETT, James B. "  
 GERETY, Edward J. "  
 GLENN, Joseph N. "  
 HENLEY, Paul B. "  
 INGLEHART, George G. "  
 JENNINGS, Francis C. "  
 KANE, John R. "  
 MAYA, Waldemar D. "  
 ROBINSON, Max K. "  
 SCHOETZ, David J. "  
 SMITH, Howard R. "  
 TANNER, Grover K. "  
 THORNTON, Powell D. "  
 WILSON, Cecil M. "

CONDON, Joseph A. 2nd Lt.  
 CRUTCHER, Ernest R. "  
 ERDMANN, William A. "  
 HELDEBRAND, Richard W. "  
 HOLIDAY, Robert C. "  
 LORCH, Orville F. "  
 MAC LAGLAN, Archibald W. "  
 MC MASTERS, John J. "  
 MOYNIHAN, Michael E. "  
 NEAL, Laurence L. "  
 NEILSON, Russell H. "  
 PIRAGES, William J. "  
 ROSELLEN, Robert R. "  
 SCOVILLE, William H. "  
 SIGAN, Nick A. "  
 SPRENGER, Robert F. "  
 STURGIS, James B. "  
 WEBBER, William G. "  
 WUBBEN, Hazlett H. "

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AT ESPIRITU SANTOS:

Strength of Squadron as of 1 June 1944:

	Officers	Men
Pilots	40	
Ground	8	247
Naval	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>
	<u>49</u>	<u>255</u>

1 June 1944

No flying because of weather.

2 June 1944

Two instrument hops.

3 June 1944

Six instrument hops. One (1) enlisted man transferred to M.A.G. 25.

4 June 1944

No flying today.

5 June 1944

Division tactics and instrument hops.

6 June 1944

Division tactics and instrument hops. Transferred four (4) F4U-1 airplanes to Lunga pool, Guadalcanal. Bureau numbers: 56353, 56350, 56305, 56298. Capt. TELLER, and Lieutenants MOYNIHAN, SCHOETZ, and HATHAWAY were the pilots. HATHAWAY'S plane was seen to crash in the water two or three miles off the southeast tip of Guadalcanal, the weather being such that visibility was extremely limited. HATHAWAY reported as "Missing in Action."

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**6 June 1944**

**Division tactics and instrument hops.**

**7 June 1944**

**Instrument, division tactics, and fighter-bombing flights. Capt. TELLER and Lts. MOYNIHAN and SCHOETZ returned from Guadalcanal on SCAT.**

**8 June 1944**

**Two planes to Turtle Bay Fighter Strip, Espiritu Santos, and return. All other flights secured on account of weather.**

**9 June 1944**

**Three planes to Turtle Bay and return.**

**10 June 1944**

**Division tactics and instruments. Transferred five F4U-1 aircraft to Lunga Pool, Guadalcanal. Pilots on this ferry hop were Lts. HENLEY, CRUTCHER, NEILSON, HOLIDAY, and STURGIS.**

**11 June 1944**

**Flying secured. The aforementioned five pilots returned from Guadalcanal via SCAT.**

**12 June 1944**

**Flew radar problems.**

**13 June 1944**

**Flew radar problems. JOHNSON, James H., 2nd Lt., detached to Hq. Sq. 11, N.A.G. 11. WUBBEN, Hazlett H., 2nd Lt., joined from same. One (1) enlisted man joined from same.**

**14 June 1944**

**Flying secured. Standing by under orders to move.**

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15 June 1944

Standing by under orders to move. A squadron jeep in which Capt. WALLACE, Lt. GALLAGHER (Flight Surgeon) and Lt. MAYA were riding overturned when it struck a soft shoulder on the road leading from Segund Channel up the hill to Lugan Field. Capt. WALLACE, the driver, suffered a broken leg and was hospitalized in Navy Hospital Base Six (6). Lt. GALLAGHER suffered severe cuts and bruises about the head; and Lt. MAYA, minor lacerations and bruises. Capt. WALLACE will be hospitalized for quite some time and will be unable to accompany the squadron on its impending combat tour.

TANNER, Grover K., 1st. Lt., joined from Hq. Sq., M.A.G. 11.

WALLACE, Harold C., Capt., detached to Hq. Sq. 11, M.A.G. 11.

Squadron on this date was attached to the First Marine Aircraft Wing, by authority of Marairsopac Memo #17-1944, dated 14 June 1944.

16 June 1944

No flying. Standing by awaiting transportation to Green Island.

17 June 1944

Entire flight echelon, including thirty nine pilots, Flight Surgeon, Intelligence Officer, and Intelligence Clerk departed from Espiritu Santos at 0600 or shortly thereafter, and arrived at Green Island at 1445, to serve "STAD" with M.A.G. 14. One SCAF plane was held over at Guadalcanal and the pilots aboard that plane reached Green Island the following day.

AT GREEN ISLAND:

18 June 1944

For the information of the reader, the Squadron Combat Divisions are as follows:

Port Wing

HUMBERD (Flight Leader)  
SIGAN  
INGLEHART  
STURGIS

FURLOW, Division Leader.  
SCOVILLE  
CUNNINGHAM  
WEBBER

Starboard Wing

TELLER (Flight Leader)  
MOYNIHAN  
SPRENGER  
TANNER

BATE, Division Leader.  
WILSON  
SCHOETZ  
HILDEBRAND

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Squadron Combat Divisions continued:

Port Wing

GERETY, Division Leader  
ROSELLEN  
GARRETT  
WUBBEN

JENNINGS, Division Leader  
McMASTERS  
FOLEY  
CONDON

NEAL, Division Leader  
MAC LACHLAN  
ROBINSON  
GLENN

Starboard Wing

HENLEY, Division Leader  
LORCH  
MAYA  
CRUTCHER

HART, Division Leader  
HOLIDAY  
ERDMANN  
PIRAGES

SMITH, Division Leader  
NEILSON  
KANE  
THORNTON

Major HUMBERD led a flight consisting of BATE, TELLER, and HENLEY on a fighter sweep of the coast of New Ireland.

HART's division flew the dawn patrol, and JENNINGS' division with STERGIS in place of CONDON flew the dusk patrol over Green Island. KANE and THORNTON escorted SCAT to Emirau, planning to remain there overnight.

The following sixteen (16) aircraft were on this date assigned to this squadron:

FG-1's: 13216; 13274; 18036.  
F4U-1's: 56137; 49724; 49766; 55912; 56041; 56086; 56096;  
56112; 56163; 56200; 56405; 56108; and 56156.

19 June 1944

KANE and THORNTON flew fighter escort for SCAT back from Emirau to Green. HUMBERD's, TELLER's, and FURLOW's (less CUNNINGHAM), JENNINGS', BATE's, NEAL's, and HART's divisions each flew a combat patrol over Rabaul of two hours duration on station. On the first patrol, on station at 0700L 1st Lt. Joseph N. GLENN, in plane number 156137, upon return to base, went into the sea just off base when his engine failed at low altitude. A crash boat which reached the scene of the crash only a few minutes after the plane went in found no trace of the pilot. Lt. GLENN was therefore reported "Killed in Action".

HENLEY, MAYA and CRUTCHER departed for Guadalcanal via SCAT to get three F4U's. Aircraft #56137 lost as explained above. Aircraft #56246 assigned to squadron.

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20 June 1944

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HENLEY and CRUTCHER returned from Guadalcanal flying two F4U's. MAYA was held over at Guadalcanal.

CUNNINGHAM and WEBBER, fighter escort for SCAT to Emirau. HART and ERDMANN, fighter escort for Dumbo to Emirau. PIRAGES and LORCH flew fighter escort for Dumbo which was on station south of Cape St. George before and during today's strikes. TELLER's and GERETY's divisions had the four-plane dawn and dusk patrol over the island today. SMITH's division flew a combat patrol over Rabaul, reported sighting no unusual amount of Jap activity.

The thirteen (13) aircraft at Lugan Field, Espiritu Santos, still assigned to this squadron were on this date transferred to M.A.G. 11, Turtle Bay.

21 June 1944

JENNINGS', BATE's, HENLEY's and SMITH's divisions flew the Rabaul combat patrols today. HENLEY's team reported three barges under way in Simpson Harbor. SMITH's said there was a Jap barge plying back and forth in the vicinity of the shined-up Emily parked in Simpson Harbor that reminded them of the Staten Island ferry. HART and ERDMANN escorted Dumbo back from Emirau. CUNNINGHAM and WEBBER did the same job for SCAT. MAC LACHLAN took a test hop.

Two (2) F4U-1's, #56221 and 56305, assigned to squadron.

22 June 1944

Rabaul patrol again today. HENLEY's division, over the target at 0605 L reported that all fields looked the same, but that there were eight smoking fires around the perimeter of Simpson Harbor; also two fires on Matupi Island, the small island inside Simpson Harbor. At 0620 this team had some excitement. They sighted an unidentified medium bomber twenty miles away north of the Duke of York Island. They gave chase and closed to ten miles, at which point they recognized the bogey, much to their disappointment, as a friendly B-25. TELLER's division reported two planes on the eastern end of the Keravat strip. NEAL's team was given the mission of taking a close look at these planes, one of which was reported to look as if it were preparing to take off. NEAL's men took a close look - they buzzed the field at tree-top level and found that the planes were sitting flat on the ground minus an undercarriage and with grass growing up around them. FURLOW's division saw three trucks running back and forth on Vunakanau; out onto the runway and back into the revetments, as if to lure the Corsairs down to within range of the rapid-firing AA. This division also sighted and reported two trucks parked on the Tobera strip, with ten to fifteen Japs working with shovels on the coral runway. By the time FURLOW's flight had circled and lost altitude to strafe, the Japs were not to be seen. HUMBERD's

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22 June 1944 (continued)

division flew the dusk patrol over Rabaul, reported things all quiet. ROBINSON took a test hop.

23 June 1944

0630 (L) NEAL, MAC LACHLAN and ROSELLEY took off to search St. George Channel and New Ireland for lost B-25. Search negative. Returned 0900. 1112. JENNINGS' division off to search east coast of New Ireland for lost B-25. Sighted good sized fire on hill on Cape Senna. Otherwise negative. Landed 1340. FURLOW's and SMITH's teams flew the dawn and the dusk patrols over Green Island. ROBINSON and SIGAN flew a lengthy Dumbo escort from 0845 to 1340. Assisted in the rescue of a New Zealand F4U pilot who was down in the water off the New Britain coast. Sighted a large fire at Bulbuk. HUMBERD's division was scrambled to help in this same operation but were not needed so returned to base. BATE and WILSON flew escort for Dumbo to Emirau, remaining overnight.

Two (2) F4U-1's, #56096 and 55912 transferred to M.A.G. Service Squadron.

One (1) F4U-1, #50050, assigned to squadron.

24 June 1944

0535. HART and division up for dawn patrol. Down at 0735 with negative report. BATE was a one-man escort for Dumbo from Emirau, landed 0930. Negative except for sightings of friendly vessels.

0830. SCHOETZ and HILDEBRAND off to escort Dumbo during strike. Back at 1210. ROBINSON and MAC LACHLAN escorted SCAT to Emirau. SMITH and division flew a negative search for the lost B-25.

Today began actual combat fighter-bombing for the squadron, several of our planes having now been equipped with bomb racks. Our first mission was to drop 500 pound bombs on two barges that had just been sighted tied up along the shore at Cape Roloss, New Ireland. HENLEY's division was given the job. No direct hits were obtained, but one bomb hit right between the two barges, and all hit within one hundred feet of the target. HUMBERD's team went out for a second try but found someone else had beaten them to the prize, and the barges were burning fiercely. They proceeded up the west coast of New Ireland until they found another target, two small barges 20 to 30 feet long tied up to a pier. Their bombs overshot 150 to 200 feet.

FOLEY led the dusk patrol over base and reported all quiet.

One (1) F4U-1, #56156, transferred to M.A.G. 14 Service Squadron.



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25 June 1944

Starting today we could do more than just sit over Rabaul and watch the Japs down below. We could give them something to think about, in the tangible form of four 500 pound bombs every two hours, spread out over the period so they wouldn't know when they were coming.

0520. NEAL's division took off with four 500 pound bombs, Bombed targets of opportunity, including the revetment area of the Rapopo airfield. Results not too good as the pilots were not leading the target enough to allow for the trail of the bomb released from 5000 feet. Undershot as much as 1500 feet. Returned 0840.

ROBINSON and MAG LACHLAN landed at 0900 from Emirau, as SCAT escort.

HUMBERD and division off at 0720 for Rabaul without bombs because of a lack of sufficient number of bomb racks. Reported five bomb craters in Rapopo runway, and a fire 1 mile northeast of Vunakanau putting up 1500 feet column of smoke. Landed at 1110.

FURLOW and division off at 0945 for Rabaul, carrying three 500 pounders. SCOVILLE's plane sprang a hydraulic leak causing the wheels to come down. SCOVILLE was thereupon compelled to jettison his bomb and return to base, escorted by WEBBER. Of the remaining two bombs, one was a dud and didn't explode and the other was dropped in the town of Rabaul without any observable damage. FURLOW and CUNNINGHAM received automatic tracer AA fire at 5000 feet from Hospital Ridge, inaccurate, however. Their patrol over, FURLOW and CUNNINGHAM went down after two trucks they saw moving southwest of Vunapope supply area. They gave these trucks a good strafing, saw them stop, but did not flame them. Landed 1300.

1115. TELLER and division off to Rabaul with two 500 pound bombs. One bomb aimed at Vunakanau revetments fell 150 feet short. The other would not release and later fell off the plane into a wooded area. This division started a strafing run on the town of Rabaul but turned away rather than risk going through intense automatic AA fire coming from the town.

1315. BATE took his division off, were on station over Rabaul from 1400 to 1600. Four bombs (500 pound, 1/10 second delay fuse) were carried, of which two were duds, one was unobserved, and the fourth burst among buildings to the southwest of Vunakanau. Reported that it must have been tea-time in Rabaul, there was so little activity observed. Landed 1650.

1515. SMITH's division, less THORNTON who was unable to get off, took off for Rabaul with three 500 pounders. One bomb aimed at buildings north northeast of Keravat fell 100 yards short. One aimed at buildings 200 yards southeast of Vunakanau revetments was correct for range but 50 feet off in deflection. The third bomb almost spelled the doom of the four-motored seaplane, Emily, parked in Simpson Harbor.

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25 June 1944 (continued)

The bomb was correct as to range but a bit off in deflection and burst in the water less than 100 feet from the plane. This team on the way home strafed a dock and a group of buildings on the Neinduk Plantation with no observable damage.

THORNTON and SCOVILLE took test hops.

26 June 1944

The early Rabaul patrols today were weathered out, the first patrol taking off at 1130.

1130. HART led MAC LACHLAN, GARRETT, and WUBBEN to Rabaul, each carrying a 500 pounder. Weather was 6 to 10/10 over target, which consisted of a group of trees southwest of Vunakanau which is believed to be a plane hide-out. One bomb was a dud. Releases were made at 4000 to 4500 feet, and all three bombs fell 100 to 200 feet short, with one falling as much as 2000 feet short. Their patrol over, this team then strafed Rapopo from 2500 feet. No observable damage. Landed 1445.

1408. JENNINGS and division off to Rabaul, with four 500 pounders. This team drew meagre inaccurate light AA from Rapopo, and meagre accurate medium AA from Vunakanau, nobody being hit, however. These four planes put three out of four bombs smack in the Ralum supply area, the fourth bomb being unobserved. Retirement at better than 300 knots, no immediate damage was able to be seen. Patrol otherwise negative. Landed 1710.

What was to be our last patrol of Rabaul from Green Island turned out, through no fault of our own, to be a fizzle. FURLOW's division, less CUNNINGHAM, took off at 1538 with only one bomb (again an insufficiency of bomb racks) and it failed to explode when dropped. The patrol was also negative as far as sighting any Jap activity was concerned. Landed 1800.

27 June 1944

FURLOW and division flew the dawn security patrol over Green. FURLOW and SCOVILLE flew escort for Dumbo over St. George Channel. HUMBERD flew to Bougainville for orders, and returned. ROBINSON led the dusk security patrol, with SIGAN, IRDMANN and TANNER. MAC LACHLAN flew a carburetor test hop.

The following five (5) aircraft were transferred to VMF-212:

#FG-1: 18036; 13216; 13274, and 13280.

#F4U-1: 56041.

Received from M.A.G. 14, one (1) aircraft #F4U-1: #56037.

Received from VMF-218, five (5) aircraft #F4U-1: #55942;

55994; 56129; 56190 and 56241.

Received from Casu 14, Guadalcanal, three (3) aircraft #F4U-1:

#49895; 50157 and 50014.

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28 June 1944

HUMBERD, FURLOW, HART, SMITH, and ROBINSON led their divisions in ferrying our twenty F4U's to Piva Uncle, Bougainville. The remainder of the pilots had already flown down via SCAT the previous day. GALLAGHER, WELCH, and JONES, (Flight Surgeon, Intelligence Officer, and Intelligence Clerk) brought up the rear, arriving at Bougainville at 1400 on SCAT.

AT BOUGAINVILLE

29 June 1944

Today we "graduated" from 500 pounders to 1000 pounders.

0850. HUMBERD's flight, consisting of his, FURLOW's, JENNINGS', and GHERTY's divisions took off for Rabaul to bomb and strafe Target EASY (two AA gun emplacements of 4 guns each, south of Ralum supply area), carrying a total of sixteen 1000 pound bombs. The flight approached the target area from the east, to the north of Tobera strip, at an altitude of 10,000 feet. Pushover followed a 40 to 60 degree peel-off, angle of dive varied from 50 to 70 degrees, speed of dive from 360 to 380 knots IAS, bombs away at 3600 to 5000 feet, with no dive brakes used. Lead by each pilot in sighting varied from 100 to 175 mils. Of the 16 bombs dropped, 12 were observed to hit well within the target area and in a good group. Two other bombs dropped by the last two pilots in the flight were not observed, and might also have hit within the target area. This flight drew moderate, accurate (as to altitude) heavy AA from a point south of Target EASY. CONDON felt his plane jolted by a burst of AA fire.

The squadron was commended by Strike Command for the excellent results obtained by this strike.

30 June 1944

0845. TELLER led his flight, composed of his own, HART's, BATE's, and HENLEY's divisions on a bombing and strafing attack of AA Target GEORGE, located due east of Tobera field. The 13 planes which reached the target found both primary and secondary targets closed in completely. TELLER and HART brought their divisions back by way of Buks Airrome, where they unloaded seven bombs just off the southwest end of the strip. They observed a column of smoke rising 200 feet from where the bombs struck. MOYNIHAN, the eighth pilot of these divisions, was late taking off because of a flat tail wheel, and never succeeded in overtaking and joining the flight. His bomb was jettisoned. Flight landed at 1145.

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30 June 1944 (continued)

One F4U-1 airplane, #56190, was lost on this mission, in a water landing caused by loss of oil from the engine. When the oil pressure began to drop, as a result of a bad oil leak, SHOETZ, the pilot, and HILDEBRAND, his wingman, turned back for base. Ten minutes later, at approximately 0925, the engine conked at 6000 feet, and SCHOETZ rode the plane down to the water, trying to get it started again. The sea was running in swells, which could not be seen from even low altitude because of a complete absence of white-caps. SHOETZ landed into the wind, and hit one of these swells, inflicting on him severe cuts and bruises about the head. He had no trouble getting out of the plane and inflating and climbing aboard his rubber boat. He stated later that he did not know he was hurt until he noticed his own reflection on the back of his signalling mirror. HILDEBRAND circled the downed pilot and noticed that he was drifting away from his dye marker. HILDEBRAND flew low over the raft, dropped his own dye marker, and SCHOETZ paddled over to it. HILDEBRAND continued to circle until Dumbo arrived. The first Dumbo to reach the scene refused to land because of the large swells, but the second one did land and rescued the pilot. SCHOETZ taken by Dumbo to Green Island, where he was hospitalized, returning to Bougainville two days later via SCAT.

TOTAL HOURS FLOWN DURING JUNE, 1944 . . . . .	1408.5 hours.
TOTAL NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL FLIGHTS . . . . .	515
TOTAL INDIVIDUAL COMBAT MISSIONS . . . . .	200
TOTAL INDIVIDUAL COMBAT MISSIONS WHICH ENCOUNTERED ENEMY AIR OPPOSITION . . . . .	None.
TOTAL AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED AS OF 30 JUNE 1944 . . . . .	19 F4U-1's.
TOTAL AIRCRAFT LOST DURING JUNE, 1944	
ENEMY ACTION . . . . .	None.
OPERATIONAL . . . . .	2
ENEMY AIRCRAFT DESTROYED DURING PERIOD.	
SQUADRON TOTAL . . . . .	0
INDIVIDUAL SCORES . . . . .	0

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APPROVED:

William C. HUMBERD, Major, USMC.,  
Commanding Officer.

Prepared by:

Henry B. WELCH, 2nd Lt., USMCR.,  
Intelligence Officer.

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