Reg. No. 1176
R. S. No.

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

COMBAT TOUR
OF
DUTY
OF
MARINE OBSERVATION SQUADRON TWO FIVE ONE

From

1 November, 1944,

to

30 November, 1944.

DISTRIBUTION:
Original - Commandant, U.S. MARINE CORPS.
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1 - The Commanding Officer, M.A.G. - 14.
1 - File.

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War Diary for November, 1944. VMO-251.

Geographical location of VMO-251:

PIVA NORTH AIRFIELD, BOUGAINVILLE

Name of The Commanding Officer:

WILLIAM C. HUMBERD, Major, USMC, (NA).

Name of Next Higher Echelon:

MARINE AIR GROUP FOURTEEN.

Composition of Unit as of 1 November, 1944:

	Officers	Men
U.S. Marine Corps Pilots	45	
U.S. Marine Corps Ground	8	249
U.S. Navy	1	8
	54	257

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War Diary for November, 1944. VMO-251.

PILOT'S ROSTER

HUMBERD, William C.	Major	Commanding Officer.
BACHELER, William L.	Major	Executive Officer.
FURLOW, Thomas W.	Major	Flight Officer.
JOHNS, Quinton R.	Major	
SCHROEDER, Frank A.	Capt.	
WALLACE, Harold C.	Capt.	
CONROY, Joseph A.	1stLt.	
CRUTCHER, Ernest R.	1stLt.	
CUNNINGHAM, Russell F.	1stLt.	
ERDMANN, William A.	1stLt.	
FLICKINGER, Judson	1stLt.	
GARRETT, James D.	1stLt.	
GRAY, Roy C. Jr.	1stLt.	
HANSON, Howard L.	1stLt.	
HEISEL, Thomas B.	1stLt.	
HENLEY, Paul B.	1stLt.	
HOLDERER, George M.	1stLt.	
INGLEHART, George G. Jr.	1stLt.	
JENNINGS, Francis C.	1stLt.	
JONES, Ollie O.	1stLt.	
KENNICOTT, John A.	1stLt.	
MAC LACHLAN, Archibald W.	1stLt.	
MOYNIHAN, Michael H.	1stLt.	
MUSSMAN, William E. Jr.	1stLt.	
NEILSON, Russell H.	1stLt.	
PIRAGES, William J.	1stLt.	
POEHLMAN, Arthur W.	1stLt.	
ROSELLEN, Robert R.	1stLt.	
SCHOETZ, David J.	1stLt.	
SIGAN, Nick A. Jr.	1stLt.	
SCOVILLE, William H.	1stLt.	
SMITH, Howard F. Jr.	1stLt.	
STURGIS, James B.	1stLt.	
TANNER, Grover K.	1stLt.	
WARREN, Arthur J. Jr.	1stLt.	
BARTON, Wilson G.	2ndLt.	
BEATTIE, Alexander D.	2ndLt.	
DAIGLE, Bernadin J.	2ndLt.	
EVANS, Arthur C. Jr.	2ndLt.	
FRANK, Lewis C.	2ndLt.	
GORMAN, James M.	2ndLt.	
HARRIS, Archibald "A" Jr.	2ndLt.	
KAMMEYER, Preston L.	2ndLt.	
WARD, Ray G.	2ndLt.	
WOLF, John C.	2ndLt.	

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War Diary for November, 1944. VMO-251

PILOT'S ROSTER LISTED BY DIVISIONS

The following divisions were usually employed as shown, though the line-up was not strictly adhered to in every flight. Chan ges are indicated in this roster and in the body of the diary.

HUMBERD	Division Leader	HENLEY	JENNINGS
SIGAN	Wingman	FLICKINGER	ERDMANN
INGLEHART	Section Leader	FRANK	MOYNIHAN
STURGIS	Wingman	HARRIS	TANNER
FURLOW	Division Leader	SMITH	
SCOVILLE	Wingman	NEILSON	
CUNNINGHAM	Section Leader	ROSELLEN	
GARRETT	Wingman	MAC LACHLAN	
BACHELER	Division Leader	HANSON	
PIRAGES	Wingman	DAIGLE	
CRUTCHER	Section Leader	HOLDERER	
KENNICOTT	Wingman	KAMMEYER	
JOHNS	Division Leader	JONES	
WOLF	Wingman	GORMAN	
SCHOETZ	Section Leader	HEISEL	
WARD	Wingman	POEHLMAN	
SCHROEDER	Division Leader	GRAY	
BEATTIE	Wingman	WARREN	
BARTON	Section Leader	MUSSMAN	
EVANS	Wingman	CONROY	

On 21 November the following new divisions were formed:

WALLACE	Division Leader	TANNER
FLICKINGER	Wingman	BEATTIE
BARTON	Section Leader	CRUTCHER
HARRIS	Wingman	LINGENFELTER
ERDMANN	Division Leader	MOYNIHAN
DAIGLE	Wingman	WOLF
FRANK	Section Leader	BARTON
JERNIGAN	Wingman	WARD

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War Diary of November, 1944. VMO-251.

1 November, 1944.

Flying secured for purposes of maintenance of new planes.

2 November, 1944.

Flying secured for purposes of maintenance of new planes.

3 November, 1944.

Flying secured for purposes of maintenance of new planes.

4 November, 1944.

Flying secured for purposes of maintenance of new planes.

5 November, 1944.

Flying secured for purposes of maintenance of new planes.

6 November, 1944.

FURLOW's division flew the Dawn Patrol. Observations negative.

0800. HENLEY and BARTON left the deck to make the SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE patrol. At MOTUPENA POINT they hit heavy rain, ceiling 500 feet. Retracing their route they flew up the west coast of this island until they struck a dense black front lying N to S over BUKA ISLAND. Crossing over to the east coast they observed and strafed three cooking fires in the coconut plantation at ARAWA BAY. Landed: 0945.

7 November, 1944.

SCHROEDER's and CUNNINGHAM's divisions flew the Dawn and Dusk patrol, observations Negative, and stood scramble alert a half day each.

0630. INGLEHART and STURGIS off on the SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE patrol, found the whole northern half of the island, north of six degrees south, covered completely, ceiling zero. Southern part of island had 3-5000 foot ceiling, with rain showers. Observations negative. Landed: 0800.

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7 November, 1944(Cont'd).

FURLOW and SCOVILLE took off at 0845 on patrol, strafed huts north of KARA AIRFIELD. No enemy activity whatsoever. SCOVILLE's plane developed a hydraulic leak near KIETA, so both planes returned to base early. Landed: 1005.

1045. HUMBERD and SIGAN found the weather bad and saw no signs of enemy activity. Landed: 1230.

GRAY and WARREN took off for the next patrol, but GRAY's plane had a faulty oil temperature gauge which registered a high temperature. GRAY returned to base shortly after takeoff, and WARREN was called back by operations a few minutes later.

The following officers returned from SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA: CRUTCHER, ERDMANN, MOYNIHAN, NEILSON, PIRAGES and SMITH.

8 November, 1944.

1305. JOHNS' four planes, with quarter-tonners, dropped one each on these targets: (1) Group of huts at WUNATAISIBI RIVER; (2) Buildings at the jetty on PONDO POINT; (3) Buildings at the mouth of the TOWANAMARONGA RIVER; and (4) NALIWAN PLANTATION, DUKE OF YORK ISLAND. All results were unobserved except on the last target. HEISEL scored a damaging hit on NALIWAN. The flight strafed all villages along the coast from PONDO to CAPE LAMBERT to KERAVAT. Fired the grass around a hut at RAGANGA PLANTATION, on the west coast of ATALIKLIKUN BAY; and started a fire among buildings at VUNALANA PLANTATION. Landed: 1620.

1320. BACHELER, WARD, KENNICOTT, and HARRIS did the afternoon GAZELLE-LEMINGI sweep. Found the target area covered solid with cloud, and only a 1000-foot ceiling. Consequently, after strafing huts on the DUKE OF YORK ISLAND, BACHELER brought the division back and bombed huts at CAPE LALAHAN, BUKA ISLAND. Two bombs hung in the bombing run, of which one was jettisoned and one was returned to base. The other two bombs exploded in the vicinity of the aiming point, but no results can be claimed. Landed: 1635.

1410. CUNNINGHAM, who was recently made a division leader, led his division on the PUT PUT to KERAVAT fighter sweep, armed with 1x500 lb. G.P. bomb, 4-5 second delay fuse. KAMMEYER, the second section leader, had engine trouble and returned to base escorted by his wingman, HOLDERER. CUNNINGHAM and DAIGLE continued to the target and put the first bomb on a village on the southwest coast of the DUKE OF YORK, for a damaging hit. DAIGLE's bomb cratered a garden at the KERAVAT FARMS. Both these spots were strafed, but no specific damage was actually seen by the pilots. Landed: 1630.

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8 November, 1944(Cont'D).

The following officers returned from SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA: JENNINGS, MAC LACHLAN, ROSELLEN and TANNER.

9 November, 1944.

0750. Sixteen-plane strike, led by BACHELER, and made up of his own, SMITH's, GRAY's, and JONES' divisions, left the deck and thirty minutes later deposited fourteen quarter-tonners in the Jap bivouac and supply area known as RATSOA # 2, located on the NW coast of BOUGAINVILLE. Two bombs hung and were returned to base. Any damage caused was obscured by jungle growth. All smoke had dissipated when our planes left the area. Landed: 0850.

JOHNS and SCHROEDER led their divisions in a dummy gunnery and bracketing flight. MAC LACHLAN flew a test hop.

10 November, 1944.

JENNINGS' division flew the Dawn Patrol, and stood the scramble alert until noon. JENNINGS and MAC LACHLAN flew the morning radar tracking course.

Today the SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE patrol. HANSON and FRANK led off at 0615, saw two fires at KOROMIRA MISSION and two just south of the PURIATA RIVER 75 yards inland. Strafed these fires plus huts at RUMBA and KIETA. Landed: 0750.

HOLDERER and KAMMEYER departedat 0800, strafed three Japs in a garden south of CAPE FRIENDSHIP, and saw a lone man standing on the beach east of LAKE LEHALA. HOLDERER reported having seen a man at this point twice before. Landed: 0930.

0940. SCHOETZ and TANNER strafed RURI BAY and the east coast of BUKA, where, between LONAHAN and CAPE TOSAHUI, they drew machine gun fire from a gun in the middle one of three caves dug in the side of the cliff. Both planes opened up on these caves, silenced the gun. Fired a hut at TEIMUP, north of NUMA NUMA, and returned to base, landing at 1045.

Afternoon sweeps and dusk patrol cancelled. KENNICOTT flew a test hop.

The following officers left for SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA: HUMBERD, FURLOW, SIGAN, INGLEHART, STURGIS, SCOVILLE, CUNNINGHAM, GARRETT, and HENLEY.

Transferred one enlisted man.

CONFIDENTIAL

11 November, 1944.

0730. SMITH's division off on the DUKE OF YORK to PONDO PLANTATION fighter sweep. With 4-5 second delayed quarter-tonners, SMITH and NEILSON scored direct hits, in low level bombing, on huts at RANGARERE and VUNIPA PLANTATIONS, respectively, destroying at least one structure each. ROSELLEN's bomb was a dud and MAC LACHLAN's a miss. The flight then strafed every plantation from PONDO to CAPE LAMBERT to ATALIKLIKUN BAY, and huts on the DUKE OF YORK. During one of which runs MAC LACHLAN's plane hit a tree putting a seven-inch gash in the leading edge of one wing. Landed: 1030.

0750. BACHELER's division handled the GAZELLE to LEMINGI sweep. Deposited four 500-pounders in a thirty-degree dive, on LEMINGI VILLAGE, damaging an undetermined number of huts. There was much smoke and dust still hanging over the village when the four planes came back in for a strafing run. No other observations. Landed: 1030.

0820. JOHNS' four planes on the PUT PUT - KERAVAT sweep bombed the Japanese EXPERIMENTAL GARDENS near KERAVAT AIRFIELD, for three area hits. One bomb hung and was dropped later on two trucks. These were two dump trucks on the road between WAT WAT PLANTATION and ARARA VILLAGE. All four planes made several strafing runs on the trucks, setting both of them afire. JOHNS got in a good burst at the driver of one truck, who was running into the woods. WARD strafed a tree-covered road about one mile north of the trucks, and caused an unseen target to burn, putting up two columns of smoke over 100 feet high. Landed: 1120.

1300. HANSON, DAIGLE, HOLDERER and KAMMEYER flew the afternoon DUKE OF YORK to PONDO sweep. Attempted to bomb a large house on the SERAGI PLANTATION, but missed with three, and the fourth pilot did not arm his bomb before releasing it. However, the house was smoked by strafing. Flight also strafed huts at CAPE POMAS, RAGANGA PLANTATION and VUNALAMA COFFEE PLANTATION. Observations negative. Landed: 1555.

1330. JENNINGS' division did the LEMINGI-GAZELLE sweep on the afternoon hop. Bombed huts and cross road three miles NW of NAMATANAI, NEW IRELAND; one missed and the other three were unobserved. It was due to clouds and an error in navigation that the flight leader brought the planes out over NEW IRELAND instead of NEW BRITAIN. On returning the flight strafed the west coast of BUKA and the NW shore of BOUGAINVILLE down to SORAKEN PLANTATION. Results of strafing unobserved. Landed: 1630.

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11 November, 1944(Cont'd).

1400. SMITH and division handled the PUT PUT sweep. ROSELLEN had trouble with his controls and returned to base fifteen minutes after takeoff. SMITH and MAC LACHLAN dropped on revetments to the north side of VUNAKANAU AIRFIELD, and NEILSON on a supply area in the WAT WAT PLANTATION, all unobserved. Strafed huts at ten or twelve places between KERAVAT and PUT PUT. Landed: 1615.

12 November, 1944.

0750. BACHELER led a sixteen-plane strike, with his, JENNINGS', SCHROEDER's, and JONES' divisions participating, against the KAPAVINAVI STOCKADE, located twelve miles inland from KOROMIRA MISSION, SE BOUGAINVILLE. This attack included also twelve F4U's of New Zealand Squadron 19, and twelve of NZ 23, making a total of forty planes. According to plan, the New Zealanders were to have hit the target and been out by 0830. However, it was 0850 before they cleared the target, causing our planes to circle for twenty minutes before attacking. Our pilots believe they found the correct target, and seven out of the 16 quarter-tonners hit close enough to be called "damaging" hits. One bomb hung and was jettisoned. The flight expended 4000 rounds of 50 caliber ammunition in strafing. Results were obscured by dense jungle. Landed: 0915.

13 November, 1944.

The squadron flew the SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE patrol today, five flights of two planes each. The first takeoff was at 0605 and the last plane landed at 1720. Targets sighted included twelve Jap soldiers with back packs, in groups of two, along the beach just within the restricted zone for bombing and strafing, so the Japs went Scot free. SMITH sighted and strafed a double-ender barge with cabin amidships in TONOLEI HARBOR. NEILSON saw six Japs swimming at TABUT, south of BUKA PASSAGE, and gave them a burst at 1000 yards. The six nudes last seen disappearing into the bush. The 1255 hop again saw Jap soldiers with back packs walking along the beach south of the restriction line at SORAKEN PLANTATION. There were only two this time, but they did not even attempt to take cover.

Transferred one enlisted man.

14 November, 1944.

Today the squadron flew twenty-four sorties over the Jap held GAZELLE PENISULAR, in the form of six four-plane fighter sweeps, described as follows: Assigned mission was to bomb and strafe any target sighted.

CONFIDENTIAL

14 November, 1944(Cont'd).

0730. BACHELER's division took off for the DUKE OF YORK to PONDO POINT sweep, each plane, as in all six of today's flights, carrying one 500-pound general-purpose bomb, fused for 4-5 second delay, The flight proceeded directly to PONDO POINT, located on the west coast of NEW BRITAIN south of CAPE LAMBERT. Arriving there at 0900 the four planes made a shallow 35 degree dive and bombed a group of buildings on the point, scoring one damaging hit by BACHELER, and two misses. KENNICOTT's bomb did not explode. BACHELER reported seeing three successive splashes in the water during his retirement, and this was assumed to be AA fire. The flight leader found CAPE LAMBERT covered with rain squalls so did not search that area. Returning across the peninsular the flight strafed the native village of REIT, located about fifteen miles due south of ATALIKLIKUN BAY. No enemy activity was seen during the entire flight. Landed: 1035.

0805. JONES' division , less POEHLMAN, off for the RABAUL area to carry out the CAPE GAZELLE-LEMINGI sweep. JONES tried his bombing technique on the old barge at the mouth of the WARANGOI RIVER, but missed. GROMAN dropped his quarter-tonner on a group of shacks at WAT WAT, and HEISEL on a road intersection at PUT PUT HARBOR. The first was unobserved and the second was observed to have missed. Strafed huts in various places from PUT PUT to CAPE GAZELLE, with unobserved results. Observations negative. Landed: 1145.

0815. SMITH's division away on the PUT PUT-KERAVAT sweep. One bomb on a truck parked on road near NAPAPAR, hit 50-100 feet short in the jungle. One bomb on a footbridge and one on huts at EXPERIMENTAL FARMS both unobserved. NEILSON scored the only hit, on four huts a half-mile south of RAPOPO AIRFIELD. This flight, in the words of the division leader, "strafed divers huts at RALABANG, WAT WAT PLANTATION, and RAVIOLA VILLAGE, plus one Jap in a garden near the last-named place." Results of strafing not seen. Flight observed five empty ground-defense gun emplacements along the beach between LIVUAN and KAMAR, east coast of GAZELLE PENINSULAR. Landed: 1045.

1245. JOHNS' four planes departed from base and fifty-five minutes later deposited four 500-pounders on buildings at WIRAWIR POINT, PONDO PLANTATION, with no damage seen. Strafed huts and a cave mouth on STOCKHOLM PLANTATION, and put 50 calibers into every village from CAPE LAMBERT to VUNAPALDIG. Also strafed two iron water tanks twenty feet tall, at KULIL VILLAGE, inland from MANDRES PLANTATION. Pilots counted four huts left blazing. Landed: 1540.

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CONFIDENTIAL

14 November, 1944(Cont'd).

1330. SCHROEDER, BEATTIE, BARTON, and EVANS, all new comers to the squadron except BARTON, handled the CAPE GAZELLE-LEMINGI sweep. The first two planes, netted a direct and a damaging hit on huts at PUT PUT PLANTATION; the second two, two direct hits on LEMINGI VILLAGE. Destroyed five and damaged at least six huts in the two places. Landed: 1610.

1400. JENNINGS, back in harness after a flare-up of appendicitis, led his division on the PUT PUT-KERAVAT sweep. The first two planes reported damaging hits on huts NW of WURAWUNURUR; the second two scored area hits on huts at EXPERIMENTAL FARMS. The flight strafed ULAGUN VILLAGE, and returned to base at 1645.

15 November, 1944.

Flying secured because of maintenance, except for two test hops by DAIGLE and MOYNIHAN.

Joined the following officers from Headquarters Squadron MAG-24. 2ndLts. Hugh E. IRWIN, Curtis D. JERNIGAN, Robert E. LINDSEY, and Virgis A. LINGENFELTER.

16 November, 1944.

A forty-four plane strike was called for this morning, led by sixteen F4U-1D's of this squadron, in response to a request from Australian troops held up by an enemy force at the PANDI RIVER, west coast of NEW BRITAIN, south of OPEN BAY. Our planes were led by BACHELER, and included his, SMITH's, ERDMANN's and JONES' divisions. Takeoff was at 0645, and attack was delivered at 0800. This squadron's assigned target was the western third of the shoreline of a rectangular little island formed by the split mouth of the PANDI RIVER. The target was easily located, and though no actual results of the attack were apparent, the pilots reported that their target was completely and thoroughly hit by 15 out of the 16 500-pounders carried. They also reported the attack was well coordinated, the 16 planes of VMF 212 and the 12 planes of VMF 223 coming in right on schedule. Flight landed at base at 0930.

MUSSMAN flew a test hop.

Four divisions (BACHELER's, SMITH's, SCHROEDER's, and ERDMANN's) had a two-hour night hop, worked on squadron tactics.

1stLt. Francis C. JENNINGS, to sick N.A.B. 158, BOUGAINVILLE.

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17 November, 1944.

SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE patrol again today, with the first takeoff at 0600, by GRAY and WARREN. They caught and strafed two Japs in a square-ended rowboat about thirty feet offshore on the west coast of POPORANG ISLAND, in the SHORTLAND GROUP. They made five runs, each time drawing 12.7 mm machine gun fire from the hilltop on southern tip of FAISI ISLAND. Pilots claim one "probable" Jap, one rowboat, and damage to a ramp-type landing barge which was tied up to a pier just 100 yards up the beach from the rowboat. Saw many smoke columns north of KAHILI. Landed: 0800.

0825. JOHNS and WOLF made a complete circuit of the island; the leader strafed a Jap in a field near IULA, one "probable". Observations negative. Landed: 1025.

1035. BACHELER and WALLACE searched for a reported floating mine in BOUGAINVILLE STRAIT, found only a floating gasoline drum, which they did not strafe. BACHELER strafed and knocked down a Jap on the beach west of KOROMIRA MISSION. Observations otherwise negative. Landed: 1300.

1250. BARTON and EVANS thoroughly searched MATCHIN BAY without seeing any vessel or boat which had been reported sighted in that area. Strafed huts all along the east and west coast of BUKA ISLAND; NUMA NUMA, ARAWA BAY, and KOPAI. Did not go south of KIETA because southern part of island was cloud-covered. Landed: 1455.

1520. SCHOETZ and WARD searched MATCHIN BAY and the west coast of BUKA ISLAND for surface craft, with negative results. Strafed huts on east and west coast of BUKA PASSAGE. KAHILI was closed in, so flight cut across the southern part of this island and after searching south of MOTUPENA POINT, returned to base, landing 1725.

ERDMANN's and JOHNS' divisions flew the dawn and dusk patrols, with negative observations.

16 November, 1944.

0805. BACHELER again led a sixteen-plane fighter-bomber attack, with his own, SCHROEDER's, HANSON's, and GRAY's divisions. Also participating were sixteen F4U's of VMF 223, which hit a different but nearby target fifteen minutes after our attack.

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18 November, 1944(Cont'd).

The target consisted of three heavily revetted storage bins at KURAKAKAUL, inland from TALILI BAY, which were reported through confidential sources to be possible hideout for Japanese seaplanes which have been operating in the RABAUL area at night, harassing our PT boats. HOLDERER did not get off because of a flat tail wheel, and KENNICOTT was forced to drop his bomb at BUKA ISLAND because of vibration which set up in his plane immediately after takeoff. He was accompanied by CONROY, who saw him drop out of formation and thought he was in difficulty. These two unloaded their bombs on SORAKEN PLANTATION, south of BUKA PASSAGE, with unobserved results and returned to base.

The thirteen planes which did reach the target all reported their 13x1000 lb. bombs hit in the vicinity of the assigned target, though it was difficult, because of the pinpoint size of the target, to estimate how many bombs were on. Photographic Interpretation Unit reported the next day that only three bombs hit close enough to the revetments to do any possible damage. Landed: 1100.

Detached Major Quinton R. JOHNS, USMC, to VMF-212.

19 November, 1944.

0815. SMITH's division and a newly-formed division with MOYNIHAN the leader(plus WOLF, SCHOETZ, and WARD) took off for a one-hour dummy gunnery and bracketing hop.

0845. Another newly-formed division, with WALLACE leading, plus LINGENFELTER, PIRAGES, and LINDSEY took off for dummy gunnery and bracketing practice with ERDMANN's division.

20 November, 1944.

0740. Sixteen F4U-1D's, with 1x500 G.P. bomb each, and led by BACHELER, took off to give further air-ground support to the Australian troops in the PANDI RIVER sector of western NEW BRITAIN. Our assigned target was the wooded right bank of the westernmost mouth of the PANDI RIVER, where Jap infantry was reported to be dug in. BACHELER's, ERDMANN's, TANNER's, and JONES' divisions participated in this strike, which put all but one of the sixteen bombs into the target. One strafing pass, from south to north, was made by all planes of the flight, but dense foliage obscured any possible damage done to the enemy. A total of 7,560 rounds of 50 caliber ammunition was fired by our planes. The attack was delivered at 0900, and the flight reached base at 1030.

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War Diary for November, 1944. VMO-251.

21 November, 1944.

0720. Another sixteen-plane strike, again led by BACHELER, took off from base, and twenty-five minutes later deposited fifteen quarter-tonners on a suspected Jap bivouac area at SORAKEN PLANTATION, on the NW shore of BOUGAINVILLE, just south of BUKA PASSAGE. Good coverage was had of the assigned target, but no results of the attack were visible. One strafing run on the target was made by all sixteen planes after the bombing. Flight land: 0825.

WELCH, Squadron Intelligence Officer, gave a demonstration to all pilots of the squadron on the use of the new Emergency Drinking Water kit which has been placed in all pilots' back packs. Water from EMPRESS AUGUSTA BAY was successfully converted into drinking water, during the demonstration.

22 November, 1944.

The RABAUL fighter sweeps, which have been reduced to two instead of three, flown twice daily, were handled by this squadron today. ERDMANN's division led off at 0800, on the DUKE OF YORK to CAPE ARCHWAY sweep. (All planes in today's sweeps carried 1x500 lb. G.P bomb, with 4 to 5 second delayed fuses). This division bombed a group of huts on the SE coast of the DUKE OF YORK ISLAND, for three area hits, but no observed damage; and, also, strafed many villages and isolated huts on that island, likewise with apparently negative results. Landed: 1100.

0815. SMITH's division departed for the WATOM ISLAND to PONDO PLANTATION sweep. Bombed huts between CAPE LAMBERT and PONDO, but overshot with three, and one was a dud. Strafed every village and hut from CAPE LIGUAN to CAPE LAMBERT to PONDO PLANTATION, firing two and smoking twelve. Observed many vehicle tracks on the beach twomiles south of PONDO PLANTATION. Landed: 1040.

1220. JONES' division left the deck to handle the WATOM ISLAND to PONDO PLANTATION sweep; all four planes bombed a 40-foot Jap landing craft on the beach at POKOLOMA POINT, the closest bomb hitting twenty feet away. The boat was spotted by HEISEL, leader of the second section. It had a rail-enclosed platform on the stern, and was actually flying a Jap flag, which HEISEL cut down on his first run. After several strafing runs by all planes, the boat was sent to the bottom. The flight continued and strafed many fires and huts along the coast to the east from CAPE LAMBERT. Landed: 1530.

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CONFIDENTIAL

22 November, 1944(Cont'd).

1315. TANNER's division worked the afternoon DUKE OF YORK to CAPE ARCHWAY sweep, found the eastern shore of the GAZELLE PENINSULAR covered over with cloud. Consequently, the flight operated only on the DUKE OF YORK ISLAND, putting one bomb each on huts at JACQUINOT POINT; huts south of LABOAL VILLAGE; LABOAL VILLAGE; and UPULIN VILLAGE. The first two were ares hits, the thire unobserved, and the fourth fell short, hit in the water. Strafed various other villages, but no damage was observed on this hop. Landed: 1410.

1440. In response to a hurry-call from Australian ground forces, the eleven remaining planes of the squadron were scrambled to attack ULAMONA VILLAGE, on the west coast of NEW BRITAIN, south of OPEN BAY. This strike included a total of forty-five F4U's, made up of 16 planes from VMF 223; 12 from VMF 212; 6 from NZAF 15; and our own. All eleven thousand-pounders from our planes hit the village, with two direct hits by BARTON and LINDSEY, his wingman. pilots reported that when they went back in to strafe, the entire village appeared to have been leveled. Our flight was led by Major BACHELER, and included his and SCHROEDER's divisions, plus MOYNIHAN, WOLF, and MAC LACHLAN. Returned: 1730.

23 November, 1944.

GRAY's division flew the dawn patrol, and SMITH's division the dusk patrol, both negative. Acting on instructions from ComAirNorSols, both these flights searched the MATCHIN BAY area for evidence of a Jap submarine which was reported as making monthly calls at that point, but search was negative in both instances.

The squadron flew the SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE PATROL today, with TANNER and BEATTIE leading off at 0622. Then came CRUTCHER and LINDENFELTER; HEISEL and POEHLMAN; ERDMANN and DAIGLE; and last, FRANK and JERNIGAN, who landed at 1730. The patrols today were singularly negative. The Japs just didn't come out today.

24 November, 1944.

0815. Sixteen-plane strike, again led by Major BACHELER, took off to bomb and strafe EBERY's LEASE, located north of KAHILI AIRFIELD, Southern BOUGAINVILLE. Flight consisted of BACHELER's SMITH's, and JONES' divisions, plus the second division made up of WALLACE, FLICKINGER, BARTON, and HARRIS. The first division, plus the first two planes of the second, hit the gun positions; near misses had a salutory effect upon the gun crews, except for one position which put up a large dose of 40 MM. This fire was

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24 November, 1944(Cont'd).

too low and also off in deflection. The rest of the planes scored area hits in the reported bivouac area north of the garden area, but pilots did not wait for results. On the way out our planes drew machine-gun fire from the hill west of KAHILI AIRFIELD and from the first large derelict vessel east of KAHILI. Six to eight planes strafed the last-named gun, and drew yellowish smoke from the vessel, which was still smoking during our rendezvous. Flight returned to base at 0915.

1stLt. Howard L. HANSON detached to forward echelon MADep Sq-1, GUADALCANAL to await transportation home.

25 November, 1944.

0745. Sixteen Corsairs, with 1x500 lb. bomb, and BACHELER leading, took off. Twenty-five minutes later it was raining quarter-tonners at KARAKA, on the southeastern shore of BUKA ISLAND. The target was a Jap bivouac and supply are atop a 75-foot coral cliff, protected by two medium AA positions on the edge of the cliff. BACHELER's division hit these guns, and apparently did a good job, as the only AA fire received by the flight was that reported by one pilot who said he thought he waw a machine gun flashing on the ground, off the port side of his plane as he went into his dive. The bombing run was made from west to east. The attack caused an explosion in the northern half of the target area, which put up black and yellowish smoke to 600 feet, and was still burning during our rendezvous. Flight returned to base at 0850.

NEILSON and MAC LACHLAN flew test hops.

1stLt. Joseph A. CONROY detached to forward echelon MADep. Sq-1, GUADALCANAL to await transportation home.

26 November, 1944.

0940. BACHELER led four divisions against the TOMAVATUR RADAR STATION, located two miles SE of VUNAKANAU AIRFIELD, NEW BRITAIN. SCHROEDER's, SMITH's, and GRAY's divisions made up the balance of the flight. Again BACHELER's division took the gun positions, and this time no AA fire was put up by the enemy. The remaining twelve planes deposited their quarter-tonners on the radar station, located along a road on the top of a steep ridge. The two radar screens are easily visible in the stereo photos, and the pilots reported they were likewise in the actual attack. Only four bombs of the sixteen were seen to explode outside the immediate vicinity of the targets, but no actual damage was seen.

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26 November, 1944(Cont'd).

The flight strafed along NINE MILE ROAD to the coast, returned to base at 1215. Other aircraft participating in this raid were 16 planes of VMF 212, which struck after we did.

HEISEL and MOYNIHAN flew test hops.

27 November, 1944.

Flying secured for purposes of maintenance.

28 November, 1944.

0800. SMITH's division off for the WATOM ISLAND to PONDO PLANTATION Fighter-bomber Sweep. ROSELLEN's plane started leaking oil forty-five minutes out, so he dropped out of the flight and landed at GREEN ISLAND. The other planes continued to the target area, and contrary to the intelligence officer's request to pick targets with shorter names, the first two planes bombed BAMPFRAGEWERK PLANTATION on the TORIU RIVER, south of OPEN BAY. SMITH scored a direct hit on a hut and NEILSON a damaging hit. MAC LACHLAN bombed a barge pulled up on shore on PONDO POINT, but overshot. The flight found that the late dry spell is very conducive to making huts burn. The fired approximately one dozen, a few at each of the following places: SERAGI, VUNALAMA, NEW MOBISBERG, and MAITAIKUITAP PLANTATIONS, plus other places between CAPE LAMBERT and ATALIKLIKUN BAY. Landed: 1135.

0830. ERDMANN's four planes on the DUKE OF YORK to CAPE ARCHWAY Sweep concentrated their attention on the DUKE OF YORK ISLAND, put two quarter-tonners each into the ULU and PAL PAL PLANTATIONS. ERDMANN's was the only bomb which did any visible damage, knocking over one hut. FRANK's strafing fired a hut at PAL PAL. Other strafing produced no visible results. Landed: 1055.

1230. MOYNIHAN's division handled the afternoon WATOM ISLAND sweep. MOYNIHAN chalked up a direct hit on a row of QUONSET-type huts near the beach at PONDO PLANTATION, and WARD a direct hit on huts nearby. BARTON's bomb started a fire among huts on the same plantation. The pilots reported, however, that there are no signs of life on this plantation and that all the huts and buildings are badly shot up. Strafing started a fire two to three miles inland from CAPE LAMBERT, which was burning twenty-five minutes later. Also started twosmall fires among huts

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28 November, 1944(Cont'd).

at St. JOHNS, and three at PONDO PLANTATION. Observed a large fire between BITA PAKA and TAPO MISSION, near TOBERA which was burning when our planes arrived at NEW BRITAIN, and still burning when they left, more than a half hour later. Landed: 1535.

1305. JONES' division took off for the DUKE OF YORK to CAPE ARCHWAY sweep, put one bomb each on huts between VUNAKANAU and TOBERA buildings at TOBERA AIRFIELD, and huts at MATALA PLANTATION. GORMAN's bomb hung and had to be jettisoned. Results of the other bombs were unobserved. The flight strafed a sixteen-foot boat pulled up onto the beach near TALILIS PLANTATION, and strafed huts and gardens between VUNAKANAU and TOBERA AIRFIELDS. Several huts smoked, but would not burn. The flight looked for the twelve trucks reported yesterday by the New Zealand pilots to be at UTAVALO PLANTATION (NW of TOBERA), but saw none. They observed two parachutes in the trees approximately a hundred yards apart and 1/4 to 1/2 mile inland from the beach at WAT WAT PLANTATION. Landed: 1550.

29 November, 1944.

Squadron flew the SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE Patrol today, plus the dawn patrol by SCHROEDER's division and the dusk patrol by MOYNIHAN's. Dawn and dusk patrol were negative.

0615. JENNINGS flew today, thirteen days after his appendectomy. He and BEATTIE handled the early morning patrol of SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE. JENNINGS got a Jap on the beach near MOSIGA, and he and his wingman both strafed another at the same place, on their way back. They observed the southern shore of SHORTLAND ISLAND from treetop level, without seeing any huts or other targets. Saw many cooking fires in the KARA AIRFIELD area and at TONOLEI HARBOR, which they strafed. Also strafed structures at KAHILI AIRFIELD, with unobserved results. Landed: 0800.

0750. CRUTCHER and LINDENFELTER saw two Japs in a garden near KAHILI and two more who ran into the bushes near the MODIAI RIVER, but couldn't bring their guns to bear on them. Strafed huts at KIETA and on north shore of SHORTLAND ISLAND. Landed: 1029.

1025. GRAY and WARREN observed two boat slides made of logs, leading from the water, up to the beach and into the trees, near MOISURU, east of KAHILI AIRFIELD. On the slide and under the trees they spotted one barge or boat, strafed it and set it afire. In looking for the other targets they drew AA fire as follows:

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29 November, 1944(Cont'd).

Intense light from BALLALE ISLAND.
Moderate medium from FAISI ISLAND.
Meagre 20 MM from KANGU HILL.
Meagre light from EBERY's LEASE.

Both planes escaped damage from this fire, and returned to base at 1230.

1300, ROSELLEN and MAC LACHLAN made one strafing run each on a large(30x50 feet) thatched building at KOLIAI, SHORTLAND ISLAND. It burst into flame, put up flames to 75 feet in height, and much black smoke. It burned for half an hour and was still burning when this section left the area. ROSELLEN saw a large building, 50x100 feet in size, at NILA, POPORANG ISLAND. No attack was made on this target. The flight drew AA fire from FAISI and BALLALE ISLANDS. MAC LACHLAN's plane had its windshield shattered by AA from BALLALE; (the bullet or shrapnel did not enter the cockpit). Pilots observed many good villages on the eastern portion of SHORTLAND ISLAND, and on POPORANG ISLAND. ROSELLEN observed the large coastal defense gun in its turret-like revetment at MOILA POINT. Flight completed the circuit of this island with no other observations, landed 1510.

1500. BACHELER and PIRAGES flew the last island patrol but saw very little in the way of enemy activity. They made a complete circuit of BOUGAINVILLE and BUKA ISLANDS, strafed and fired three huts north of Mt. BAI, BUKA. Landed: 1745.

The following Officers returned from SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA: SIGAN, INGLEHART, STURGIS, SCOVILLE, CUNNINGHAM, and HENLEY.

JENNINGS returned to duty from N.A.B.-155, BOUGAINVILLE.

30 November, 1944.

Flying secured because of weather.

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ACTIVITIES OF GROUND ECHELON

On 1 November, 1944, this squadron organized a Ground Defense emergency bill. In this we feel we have the ideal program for Aviation troops that will give as much protection in the case of emergency as possible with the number of men assigned to the squadron. This bill will use every ground officer and enlisted man in the squadron with a definite assignmentfor all.

For this emergency bill each department, Engineering, Line, and Ordnance has been reduced to the absolute minimum number of men to keep twenty-two (22) aircraft in operation. In this case where an emergency should arise when the aircraft can not be operated, this group of men shall serve as demolition squads for their respective departments, and are further organized into combat platoons and squads. There assignment after the completed demolition of their respective departments they shall be used to support to the forward and command echelons.

The forward echelon is composed of all other members of the squadron, regardless of their technical SSN. From this group of men a well rounded program of training and instructions are now in progress, organized in three (3) rifle platoons, four (4) 30 caliber ground machine gun crew and four (4) 50 caliber AA machine gun crew.

Through the Army's XIV Corps, Americal Division and the 164th Infantry, of which this squadron had previously worked with in the early days of Guadalcanal, arrangements were made for use of the thirty (30) caliber and fifty (50) caliber machine guns, and qualified instructors from the 164th Infantry.

After two weeks instruction in nomenclature, functions and cycle of operation of the 30 caliber Browning water cooled machine gun, twelve (12) men were given instructions in the actual firing of the weapon for a period of three days. At the end of the three day period of firing, ten (10) of the twelve (12) men assigned were qualified in accordance with the regulation Army time and range. Some scores were outstanding.

For the 50 caliber AA machine gun, only the nomenclature, functions and cycle of operation has been completed. Arrangements are being made for actual firing of the 50 caliber machine gun.

Instructions in all small arms in handled by our own Ordnance department. During this month all rifles in this squadron have been zeroed and calibrated.

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War Diary for November, 1944. VMO-251.

Two letters received this month from Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps concerning this organization War Bond Program. Letter from Commandant of the Marine Corps dated 3 July, 1944.

"The Commandant notes with pleasure that you have attained 92.1% participation in the War Bond Allotment Program. Congratulations to you, the War Bond Promotion Officer, and to the Officers and men of your Command for this achievement".

Letter from Director of Personnel, Headquarters, U.S Marine Corps dated 7 August, 1944 enclosing a comparative percentage of Personnel participation in War Bond Allotment Program of which this organization was listed No. 3 of Marine Aviation Activity.

(A) Strength as of 30 November, 1944:

	Officers	Men
U.S. Marine Corps Pilots	46	
U.S. Marine Corps Ground	8	247
U.S. Navy	1	8
	55	255

(B) AIRCRAFT

1. 23 F4U-1D's at the end of the month.
2. Operational losses: None.
3. Combat losses: None.

(C) OPERATIONS

1. Total hours flown for month: 821.3
2. Total number of individual flights: 413.
3. Total number of individual flights on Combat Missions: 363.
4. Total number of flights where enemy opposition was encountered: None.

(D) ENEMY PLANES DESTROYED

1. None.

(E) ENEMY SHIPPING DESTROYED

1. None.

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PREPARED BY:

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

APPROVED BY:

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

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

30 November, 1944 (DATE) | VMO-251 (SQUADRON) | 23 (NUMBER of PLANES AVAILABLE at END of MONTH) | F4U-1D (TYPE)

NAME	COMBAT MISSIONS			ALL MISSIONS NUMBER						ENEMY PLANES DESTROYED THIS MONTH				ENEMY PLANES DESTROYED 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?
BACHELER	15	15	342	20	20	0	19	1	42.7													
BARTON	13	13	27.3	15	15	0	14	1	30.3													
BEATTIE	11	11	24.3	13	13	0	12	1	26.3													
CONROY	2	2	5.8	3	3	0	3	0	6.8													
CRUTCHER	9	9	21.7	11	11	0	10	1	24.7													
CUNNINGHAM	2	2	3.5	2	2	0	2	0	3.5													
DAIGLE	14	14	29.0	16	16	0	15	1	33.0													
ERDMANN	12	12	24.0	14	14	0	13	1	28.0													
EVANS	9	9	19.3	11	11	0	10	1	22.3													
FLICKINGER	5	5	8.3	5	5	0	5	0	8.3													
FRANK	9	9	18.2	10	10	0	10	0	19.2													
FURLOW	2	2	3.0	2	2	0	2	0	3.0													
GARRETT	1	1	1.0	1	1	0	1	0	1.0													
GORMAN	9	9	19.1	9	9	0	9	0	19.1													
GRAY	8	8	15.5	8	8	0	8	0	15.5													
HANSON	7	7	15.0	8	8	0	8	0	16.0													
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				ENEMY PLANES DESTROYED 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?
HARRIS	4	4	7.3	5	5	0	4	1	9.3													
HEISEL	12	12	25.6	12	12	0	12	0	25.6													
HEULE	1	1	1.7	1	1	0	1	0	1.7													
HOLDERER	4	4	8.2	4	4	0	4	0	8.2													
HUMBERD	1	1	1.7	1	1	0	1	0	1.7													
INGLEHART	1	1	1.5	1	1	0	1	0	1.5													
IRWIN	6	6	11.8	6	6	0	6	0	11.8													
JENNINGS	6	6	12.2	6	6	0	6	0	12.2													
JERNIGAN	5	5	11.5	6	6	0	6	0	12.5													
JOHNS	4	4	10.8	5	5	0	5	0	11.8													
KAMMEYER	10	9	16.3	11	10	0	10	1	18.3													
JONES	9	9	19.1	9	9	0	9	0	19.1													
KENNICOTT	11	11	25.3	11	11	0	11	0	25.3													
LINDSEY	4	4	8.0	5	5	0	5	0	9.0													
LINGENFELTER	5	5	13.2	7	7	0	7	0	15.2													
MAC LACHLAN	12	12	26.0	15	15	0	14	1	30.0													
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				ENEMY PLANES DESTROYED 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?
MOYNIHAN	12	12	22.5	14	14	0	13	1	25.5													
MUSSMAN	6	6	12.8	6	6	0	6	0	12.8													
NEILSON	13	13	27.8	16	16	0	15	1	31.8													
PIRAGES	11	11	24.0	12	12	0	11	1	26.0													
POEHLMAN	9	9	18.8	9	9	0	9	0	18.8													
ROSELLEN	13	11	25.3	16	14	0	15	1	29.3													
SCHOETZ	9	9	15.3	10	10	0	10	0	16.3													
SCHROEDER	9	9	21.0	10	10	0	9	1	22.0													
SCOVILLE	2	2	3.0	2	2	0	2	0	3.0													
SIGAN	1	1	1.7	1	1	0	1	0	1.7													
SMITH	12	12	26.8	15	15	0	14	1	30.8													
STURGIS	1	1	1.5	1	1	0	1	0	1.5													
TANNER	11	11	21.8	13	13	0	13	0	23.8													
WALLACE	2	2	3.8	3	3	0	3	0	4.8													
WARD	10	10	19.3	11	11	0	11	0	20.3													
WARREN	9	8	16.2	9	8	0	9	0	16.2													
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				ENEMY PLANES DESTROYED 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?
WOLF	10	10	21.8	12	12	0	12	0	23.8													
SQUADRON TOTALS	363	359	752.8	413	409	0	397	16	821.3													

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