

HEADQUARTERS  
MARINE FIGHTING SQUADRON TWO FIFTY ONE  
U. S. NAVAL AIR STATION  
GROSSE ILE, MICHIGAN

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HISTORY

MARINE FIGHTING SQUADRON TWO FIFTY ONE  
U. S. NAVAL AIR STATION  
GROSSE ILE, MICHIGAN

PERIOD

1 AUGUST 1946

TO

30 SEPTEMBER 1946

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I CHRONOLOGY:

The Marine Fighting Squadron Two Fifty One (VMF 251) was commissioned on 1 July 1946. Major Ralph G. McCormick, U. S. Marine Corps Reserve, was the first commanding officer and remains in that capacity. Major McCormick resides in Dearborn, Michigan.

During the period of this report, Marine Fighting Squadron Two Fifty One (VMF 251) remained under command of Marine Air Detachment, U. S. Naval Air Station, Grosse Ile, Michigan. Commanding that unit is Lieutenant Colonel Roy L. Kline, USMC, of Sioux City, Iowa.

The primary mission remains the carrying out of a training schedule designed to maintain Marine Aviation Reserve personnel participating at as high a level of proficiency in their aviation functions as possible.

II NARRATIVE

Marine Fighting Squadron Two Fifty One (VMF 251) utilized a new schedule arrangement during the period covered by this historical report. Personnel were divided into two divisions - Division One and Division Two. Each Division meets on separate dates. By this means maximum use is derived from limited aircraft and training facility. This advantage was somewhat negated because it worked against a gen-



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eral trend toward the increasing "group spirit" of the squadron. To increase the value of the aircraft, pilots were urged to fly on non-scheduled drill days.

Statistically, the training for the month of August had forty-six (46) pilots flying a total of eighty-eight point four (88.4) hours. That was an average of one point nine (1.9) hours per pilot. During September the per-pilot average dropped five-tenths (0.5) of an hour as the same number of pilots flew a total of 83 hours.

In addition to a training program for personnel regularly assigned to Marine Fighting Squadron Two Fifty One (VMF 251), a group of enthusiastic "volunteers", sixteen (16) in number, averaged more flight time than those assigned to the squadron. The Commanding Officer maintains a priority list of the "volunteer" pilots to be assimilated into the squadron when vacancies occur.

Based on a standard of "output" the period was quite successful. But as the period ended, much work lay ahead, both from the standpoint of "squadron building" and training. A severe drawback to the squadron's efficiency as a self-contained unit was lack of enlisted strength. However, this weakness promised not to remain permanent.

One unfortunate incident occurred during the period. This had to do with the destruction of a small fishing craft



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in a practice bombing area in Lake Erie. Three pilots were briefed to attack bombing target with three pound practice bombs. They mistook a fishing boat, of similar coloring, for the target. One of the pilots' marksmanship was good enough to strike the fishing craft's fuel tank. That caused a fire which sent seven passengers overboard to safety and burned the boat to the waterline. A Board of Investigation was ordered and the senior member, Lieutenant Colonel Roy L. Kline, USMC, directed an extensive investigation into the incident.

In general, the squadron during this period made good progress. Interest generally was very high. Those already participants were actively engaged in attempting to convince others to join up.

RALPH G. MC CORMICK,  
Major, USMCR,  
Commanding.

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