

CONFIDENTIAL
SECURITY INFORMATION

PERIOD 1 NOVEMBER 1951 THROUGH 30 NOVEMBER 1951

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Marine Attack Squadron 251, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Philip "D" Crawford, 97004/7302, U. S. Marine Corps is located at the U. S. Marine Corps Air Station, El Toro (Santa Ana), California. The squadron is a unit of Marine Aircraft Group 13, under the command of Colonel Ernest R. West, 04751/9807, U. S. Marine Corps.

During the period covered by this report, 1 November to 30 November 1951, Marine Attack Squadron 251 conducted routine assignment of personnel, on the job training, and basic

training in I-N-T-R-O-D-U-C-T-O-R-Y S-U-M-M-A-R-Y

assigned.

The missions of this squadron are:

a. First, to conduct flight operations in support of the Fleet Marine Force and Naval Forces at sea and on land operations.

b. Second, to support the Fleet Marine Force and Naval Forces at sea and on land operations.

The tasks assigned are:

a. First, to support the Fleet Marine Force and Naval Forces at sea and on land operations.

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During the period covered by this report, 1 November to 30 November 1951, Marine Attack Squadron 251 conducted routine assignment of personnel, on the job training, and basic training in order to accomplish the missions and tasks assigned.

The missions of this squadron are:

a. First, to conduct flight operations in support of the Fleet Marine Forces and Naval Forces afloat in Amphibious operations.

b. Second, to augment or replace Naval air units aboard aircraft carriers and to provide air defense of advanced Naval bases.

The tasks assigned are:

a. Must be prepared to provide adequate close air support through ability to deliver;

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(1) Accurate dive bombing attacks;

(2) Accurate glide bombing attacks;

(3) Accurate strafing attacks.

b. Must be prepared to provide adequate air defense by ability to intercept and destroy all attacking enemy aircraft.

c. Must be prepared to assist in defending against enemy surface attack.

d. Must be prepared to operate from either a land base or a carrier base.

e. Must be prepared to support offensive action as follows:

(1) Deliver coordinated attacks against ship and land targets;

(2) Deliver attacks against the enemy's air forces.

f. Must be prepared to provide Anti-Submarine defense as directed.

g. Must be prepared to provide spotting for naval gunfire and shore artillery as directed.

h. Must be prepared to furnish visual aerial reconnaissance.

During the month of November the squadron completed preparations for and joined in field operations simulating combat conditions at Camp Joseph H. Pendleton, Oceanside, California. The order

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for this operation, Lex III, was received 6 November (see Appendix 2).

On 13 November a contingent from the squadron boarded a transport at Seal Beach and proceeded to the Pendleton beach area where a landing was effected on 15 November.

On 16 November one (1) AD-1 type aircraft sustained damages in a landing accident.

On 24 November the squadron returned to El Toro.

During the month of November, squadron aviators participated in a total of five hundred and twenty-two (522) sorties, for a total of seven hundred and seventy-six (776.0) hours. A summary of flight time is attached as Appendix 4.

At the end of the period covered by the report, the personnel strength of Marine Attack Squadron 251 was forty-seven (47) officers and one hundred and eighty (180) enlisted men as shown in Appendix 4.

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1 November 1951

Five (5) AD-1 type aircraft (No. 00110, 00100, 00102, 00103, 00111) were transferred to Station 701. Twelve (12) AD-1 type aircraft were received (No. 01000, 01001, 01002, 01003, 01004, 01005, 01006, 01007, 01008, 01009, 01010, 01011).

2 November 1951

A working inspection was held in the squadron area.

C-H-R-O-N-O-L-O-G-I-C-A-L N-A-R-R-A-T-I-V-E

A field equipment inspection of officers and men was held followed by a shelter tent pitching drill.

3 November 1951

Two (2) AD-1 type aircraft (No. 00200, 00201) were transferred to Station 701.

4 November 1951

Two (2) AD-1 type aircraft (No. 00300, 00301) were transferred to Station 701.

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DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 70959

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1 November 1951

Five (5) AD-1 type aircraft (Bu. No. 09115, 09300, 09227, 09202, 09311) were transferred to FASRON 701. Twelve (12) F4U-4 type aircraft were received (Bu. No. 81400, 81847, 82120, 97074, 97226, 97349, 81111, 81177, 81264, 96998, 81151, 81184).

2 November 1951

A working inspection was held in the squadron area.

3 November 1951

A field equipment inspection of officers and men was held followed by a shelter tent pitching drill.

6 November 1951

Two (2) AD-1 type aircraft (Bu. No. 09960, 09201) were transferred to FASRON 701.

7 November 1951

Two (2) AD-1 type aircraft (Bu. No. 09153, 09204) were transferred to FASRON 701.

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8 November 1951

Two (2) AD-1 type aircraft (Bu. No. 09245, 09307) were transferred to FASRON 701.

13 November 1951

A forward echelon of the squadron embarked at 0715 on a transport at Seal Beach for the proposed landing on the Camp Pendleton beaches.

15 November 1951

The forward echelon of the squadron landed at Camp Pendleton and established a tent camp beside the air strip.

16 November 1951

The remainder of the squadron at El Toro and the squadron aircraft were flown to the Pendleton air strip at 1200.

18 November 1951

The landing gear of AL-12 (Bu. No. 09295) collapsed upon landing. Class D damage was sustained by the aircraft. The pilot, Captain Herschal "A" WATSON 029394/7302 USMCR was uninjured.

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Authority NND 70959

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19 November 1951

Operation Lex III was declared at an end at 1230. The squadron remained in the field to conduct routine flight operations.

24 November 1951

The squadron secured the camp area, transported equipment, personnel, and aircraft to Marine Corps Air Station, El Toro.

29 November 1951

The squadron, excepting duty section four (4), was granted liberty for the remaining days of the month in view of working day routine being followed for the two previous weekends.

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Authority NND 70959

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A-P-P-E-N-D-I-X T-H-R-E-E

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LEX III SUMMARY

The Lex III Operation order was received 6 November 1951. Preparation for the operation was intensive. The Logistics section issued field gear, crated supplies and equipment, and readied vehicles for sea transport. The Operations department prepared flight schedules for pre D-day combat air patrols and close air support sorties in accordance with the operation order. Personnel and Intelligence sections prepared field desks, safes, and files for movement into the field.

At 0715 13 November 1951 the forward echelon consisting of 8 officers and 103 enlisted men departed for the Port of Embarkation. This contingent with four vehicles and approximately twenty tons of supplies was embarked upon the U.S.S. Mountrail. The ship sailed at 1330 and proceeded to the Pendleton beach area. A landing was effected the morning of 15 November and supplies and equipment were transported ashore. That afternoon a tent camp was established by the landing party at the Pendleton air strip.

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From 12 November to 16 November the squadron flew combat air patrol and close air support sorties in support of the amphibious phase of Lex III. At 1100 on 16 November, the squadron was flown to the Pendleton air strip while the remainder of the personnel and equipment were air lifted to Pendleton. The tent camp was occupied and Operations were continued in the field.

To simulate combat conditions on the ground numerous air raids on the strip were held and enemy guerrilla troops employed infiltration tactics in the camp and aircraft line areas.

At 1230 19 November, Lex III was declared terminated. During the operation the squadron flew thirty-nine (39) combat air patrol sorties, one hundred and forty-seven (147) close air support sorties, for a total of three hundred and thirty and six-tenths (330.6) hours.

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MARINE ATTACK SQUADRON 251
MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP 13
MARINE CORPS AIR STATION
EL TORO (SANTA ANA), CALIFORNIA

STATISTICAL SUMMARY
November 1951

1. PERSONNEL	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>ON HAND</u>
A. Officer Strength		
(1) Naval Aviators:	53	47
(2) Aviation Ground Officers	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>
(3) TOTAL	60	50
B. Enlisted Strength:	182	180
(1) Naval Aviation Pilots	0	4
2. AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED AT END OF PERIOD:	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>ON HAND</u>
A. F4U-4	0	12
B. AD-1	24	12
3. AIRCRAFT LOST:		0
4. AVERAGE AIRCRAFT AVAILABILITY:		61%
5. TOTAL NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL FLIGHTS:		522
6. TOTAL HOURS FLOWN:		776.0

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