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

COMBAT TOUR

DUTY

MARINE OBSERVATION SQUADRON TWO FIVE ONE

From

1 January, 1945,

31 January, 1945.

Original - Commandent, U.S. Marilla Corps. 1 - The Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet.

1 - The Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet.

1 - The Commanding General, Aircraft, F.M.F., Pacific.

1 - The Commanding General, F.M.A.W.

1 - The Commanding Officer, M.A.C. - 14.

106916

Geographical location of VMO-251:

SAMAR, PHILIPPINES

Name of the Commanding Officer:

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

Name of Next Higher Echelon:

MARINE AIR GROUP FOURTEEN.

Composition as of 1 January, 1945:

				Officers	Men
U.	5.	MARINE MARY NAVY		42	209

(Page 1)

	PILOTS ROST	
HUMBERD, William C. BACHELER, William L. FURLOW, Thomas W.	Major Major Major	Commanding Office Executive Office Flight Officer.
SCHROEDER, Frank A. WALLACE, Harold C.	Capt. Capt.	Asst. Flight Off
CRUTCHER, Ernest R. CUNNINGHAM, Russell F.	lstLt. lstLt.	
ERDMANN, William A.	latit.	
GARRETT, James D.	letit.	
GRAY, Roy C.	lstit.	
HENLEY, Paul B.	1stit.	
INGIEHART, George G.	latlt.	
JENNINGS, Francis C.	lstlt.	
JONES, CLLie O.	lstLt.	
MAC LACHLAN, Archibald W	. lstlt.	
MOYNTHAN, Michael H.	lstit.	
MUSSMAN, William E.	latLt.	
MEILSON, Russell H.	lstit.	
PIRAGES, William J.	latit.	
POEHLMAN, Arthur W.	latit.	
ROBELLEN, Robert R.	latit.	
SCHOETZ, Devid J. SCOVILLE, William H.	lstLt.	
SIGAN, MCK A.	latit.	
SMITH, Howard F.	lstlt.	
STURGIS, Jemes B.	letit	
WARREN, Arthur J.	lstit.	
BARTON, Wilson G.	2ndIt.	
BEATTIE, Alexander D.	2ndIt.	
DAIGLE, Bernadin J.	and Lt.	
EVANS, Arthur C.	2nd Lt.	
FRANK, Lewis C. HARRIS, Archibeld "A"	2ndIt.	
IRWIN, Hugh L.	Zidlt.	
JERNIGAN, Curtis D.	2ndIt.	
KAMMETER, Preston L.	2ndlt.	
LINDSEY, Robert E.	2ndIt.	
LINERITER, Virgil A.	2nd Lt.	
POOR, Ernest E.	2ndIt.	
WARD, Buy G.	2ndIt.	
WOLF, John C.	2nd It.	
WYATT, John W.	2nd Lt.	

The following account of this squadron's move from BOUGAIN-VILLE to SAMAR was kept on route by Major William C. HUMBERD,

Squadron Commanding Officer:

Going back to 30 December, in order to give a more detailed account of this squadron's ferrying its planes from BOUGAINVILLE to SAMAR, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, the twenty-five Corsairs we then had in the squadron took off from PIVA NORTH Airfield, BOUGAINVILLE at 0825 (L), arriving at EMIRAU at 1100 L. The flight, less two planes which were left there according to plan for some other squadron, and one other which was grounded because of starter and other engine trouble, departed EMIRAU at 0730 L on 31 December, but returned to that base at 0915 because of having encountered a front seventy miles out. The flight took off again from EMIRAU at 1400 L, and in spite of bad weather, reached HOLLANDIA at 1830 L, on New Year's Eve.

Departed HOLLANDIA and arrived at OWI ISLAND, where our twenty-two planes, with their PBJ escorts, remained overnight.

2 January, 1945.

Flight departed OWI at C715 L, reaching PELILIU at 1030 L. Took off from PELILIU at 1400 and landed at our destination, SAMAR ISLAND, at 1745 L, with all twenty-two aircraft. The ferrying mission was completed without the loss of a plane, and would have been without damage to any except for one accident which occurred as our planes were landing at SAMAR. Because of the crowded condition of the runway (the field was still under construction) one plane, piloted by LINDSEY, struck another, causing slight damage to the plane hit, and putting LINDSEY's plane out of commission for several days, until another wing could be obtained for it.

AT SAMAR, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

3 January, 1945.

(Page 3)

Today we began operations, with twenty out of twenty-two aircraft in commission. By noon the ground crew had repaired one of the two planes damaged yesterday in landing, giving us twenty-one out of twenty-two planes in operation. During the remainder of this month the ground crew of this squadron was to make, and did make a name for itself in these parts. In spite of rain and mud and a hastily constructed "line", and the usual handicaps of operating on field still under construction,

when the nightly availability report of VMO-251 went in, it was a monotonous "Twenty-one out of twenty-two in commission". Only three days out of this month has this squadron had more than one plane out of commission when the time came to fly. Not once during the month has the squadron failed to fulfill its scheduled number of flights, and then some, thanks to a hard working and efficient staff of technical men on the ground.

SMITH'S, WALLACE'S, HENLEY'S, SCHROEDER'S, JENNINGS', and BACHELER'S divisions flew combat air patrols over SAMAR ISLAND and LEYTE GULF, but no enemy was sighted.

4 January, 1945.

Combat air patrols again flown today, by BACHELER's, SCHROEDER's, SMITH's, JONES', and twice by CUNNINGHAM's divisions, with negative sightings.

5 January, 1945.

GRAY's, HENLEY's, WALLACE's, and HUMBERD's (less HUMBERD) divisions flew a constant combat air patrol over this island and LEYTE GULF. JONES' division escorted army C-47's to PANAY. No enemy contact made on either mission.

Joined the following Officers: Second Lieutenants Frank J. RHODES, James W. ROBINSON, Harold G. SANDBACH, and Charles SCOTT.

6 January, 1945.

JENNING'S (plus SMITH and NEILSON); BACHELER'S (plus GARRETT and POOR); and SCHROEDER'S (plus ROSELLEN and MAC LACHLAN) divisions furnished the air protection for many Army C-47's flying from TACLOBAN AIRFIELD, LEYTE, to MINDORO ISLAND, and return. DAIGLE flew a test hop.

7 January, 1945.

WALLACE'S division flew cover on an invasion-bound convoy. No attack was attempted by the enemy. INGLEHART'S, JONES', GRAY'S (plus SCOVILLE and JERNIGAN), and HENLEY'S (plus CUNNINGHAM and BEATTIE), gave protection to large flights of Army C-47's flying from LEYTE to MINDORO ISLAND and return. On one of these hops GRAY'S division, augmented by SCOVILLE and JERNIGAN, were airborne for six and one half hours.

(Page 4).

HUMBERD's division, with JENNINGS and ERDMANN, flew combat air patrol over one of several LINGAYEN-bound convoys. They were relieved by WALLACE's division (less WALLACE, who was forced to return to base thirty minutes after takeoff) and MOYNIHAN and WOLF. Pilots were again disappointed that no enemy aircraft came near.

HENLEY'S, GRAY'S and SCHROEDER'S divisions patrolled LEYTE GULF from dawn to dusk.

9 January, 1945.

O822. CUNNINGHAM, FRANK, SCOVILLE and JERNIGAN took off to sweep PANAY, NEGROS, and CEBU ISLANDS. At SAN JOSE AIRFIELD, on PANAY, while all four planes were strafing the field, JERNIGAN's plane began to smoke from the engine. He made it safely back to base, accompanied by the remainder of the flight. Inspection of the plane revealed several 7.7 MM bullet holes in the fuselage, fore and aft. Landed: 1140.

GRAY, WARREN, MUSSMAN and DAIGLE departed on the same sweep. No serviceable A/C observed on or near CEBU AIRFIELD, CEBU. At SAN ERIQUE, NEGROS, on a paved road near the field, the flight strafed, fired, and exploded four trucks and anarmored vehicle. Strafed a road grader at BACOLOD AIRFIELD, which would not burn, and fired a truck there. On a road SE of BAGO, NEGROS, GRAY and WARREN strafed and fired two trucks. The flight strafed a large supply of 50-gallon drums, which refused to burn. They strafed and sank two 60-foot motor launches near the pier at SAN JOSE. At SAN ERIQUE AIRFIELD they strafed several A/C at the south end of runway, which were covered with hay. Most of the A/C appeared unserviceable. Here GRAY was hit, while at 200 feet, by 20 MM. which blew off his aerial and the top of his cock-pit canopy, and inflicted various cuts on his face. Near BAGO, MEGROS, WARREN strafed and fired a 1940 hudson or Oldsmobile sedan. Many barges were seen in the harbor at CEBU. This flight drew AA fire from every enemy field on NEGROS.

1415. HUMBERD, INGLEHART, and STURGIS (SIGAN did not get off) departed for the PANAY, CEBU, NEGROS sweep, found the weather over the target area to have deteriorated to 8/10 cumulus, from 1500 to 10,000 feet. Flight made one strafing run on south end of SAN JOSE AIRFIELD, at the SW tip of PANAY ISLAND, and reported on return to base that all aircraft they saw there are wrecks. STURGIS observed two possibly serviceable twinengined bombers on NW side of SAN ENRIQUE AIRFIELD. This flight drew no AA fire. Landed: 1730.

SMITH's division, plus CRUTCHER and IRWIN; and another flight composed of JONES, HARRIS, POEHLMAN, WYATT, KAMMEYER and BEATTLE . each flew escort for a flight of Army C-47's to MINDORO ISLAND, and return to LEYTE.

MOYNIHAN and WOLF flew LEYTE GULF patrol, but were redalled to base after one hour, because of bad weather.

10 January, 1945.

GRAY's, and SCHROEDER's divisions flew LEYTE GULF patrol today, with negative sightings by each flight. HUMBERD's division took off at 0915 to escort a flight of C-47's to MONDORO. Our planes spent two hours at the rendezvous, but the C-47's never took off. The flight eventually was called back because of bad weather to the west, and HUMBERD's four planes returned to base, landing at 1215.

O725. JENNING'S, ERDMANN, MOYNIHAN, and WOLF left for the VISAYAN ISLANDS sweep, observed a cargo vessel at LILOAN POINT, north of CEBU CITY, of doubtful serviceability. It was dead in the water, forty feet offshore. This flight made two strafing runs from BINALBAGAN to BACOLOD, encountering no AA. JENNINGS fired a truck at SAN ERIQUE. Flight was weathered out of northern NEGROS. Weather generally bad. Landed: 1430.

The remaining scheduled flights for today were cancelled because of weather.

11 January, 1945.

Two flights of four planes each, made up of SMITH, SIGAN, ROSELLEN, and MAC LACHLAN; and SCHROEDER, CRUTCHER, PIRAGES, and KAMMEYER took off to strafe DEL MONTE and BUTUAN AIRFIELDS, on northwest MINDANAO. SIGAN strafed and fired four trucks just west of DEL MONTE #1, but no serviceable aircraft were found on or near any of the seven DEL MONTE fields. All the runways looked in good repair. The flight observed a crashed Corsair on its belly at a point approximately ten miles west of DEL MONTE #3. Apparently the Army Fifth Fighter Command already knew of this crash, as no further word was received by this squadron after the matter was reported. MAC LACHLAN, while at fifty feet altitude over DEL MONTE Airfield #1, was hit by 20 Mm in the bottomside of his port wing; the projectile took out 10x30 inch section of the topside of the wing, but the plane, accompanied by SIGAN, returned safely to base, landing thrity minutes before the remainder of the division, which pancaked at 1100

SCHROEDER's division attacked houses and gun revetments beside DEL MONTE and BUTUAN fields, with unobserved results. The pilots saw many gun flashes on the ground at DEL MONTE, and also along the eastern side of the BUTUAN strip. However, none of our aircraft was hit. Landed: 1135.

12 January, 1945.

0730. WALLACE'S division took off with directions from base to proceed to a point west of the CALAMIAN GROUP Islands for further instructions. The flight hit bad weather before reaching the rendezvous, and when the flight leader could not raise base on his radio, for further instructions, he returned to base, landing at 0945. This division took off on two other missions during the day, but was compelled by weather to return from each.

JENNINGS' and GRAY'S divisions, plus INGLEHART, RHODES, STURGIS, and SCOTT, flew the combat air patrol over LEYTE GULF. The first two divisions searched the area near JUGBAN, northwest MINDANAO, for a reported radar station, and reconnoitered SURAGAIO, but saw nothing of any importance.

13 January, 1945.

BACHELER, ROBINSON, PIRAGES and SANDBACH; and CUNNINGHAM, BEATTIE, SCOVILLE, and JERNIGAN flew combat air patrol over the island of MINDORO. JONES' division escorted Dumbo to LUZON. JENNINGS' division flew the LEYTE GULF patrol. GRAY's division, plus INGLEHART and SCOTT were ordered to cover a convoy which could not be located because of foul weather. This flight was airborne from 1340 to 1650. SCHOETZ flew a test hop to TANAWAN, LEYTE.

14 January, 1945.

Sixteen planes were put in the air today by this squadron to provide continuous cover, in flights of four planes each, for a LUZON-bound convoy. The divisions handling this job were WALLACE'S, HENLEY'S, HUMBERD'S, and GRAY'S. The enemy made no attempt to attack, while our planes were on station.

15 January, 1945.

Twenty-four planes today acted as fighter cover for another of our convoys, from dawn to dusk; divisions employed, in order of takeoff, were Bacheler's, Schroeder's, Smith's, Cunningham's, Jones', and then Bacheler's again. Flying position four in the first of Bacheler's division's hops was IRWIN; in the second hop, Sandbach, who recently joined the squadron, flew the position.

While SMITH's division was covering the convoy, the second section (ROSELLEN and MAC LACHLAN) assisted one of the screening destroyers in an attack on a possible submarine, with unobserved results. Otherwise, today's cover was without incident.
Major BACHELER's hydraulic-system went out, causing him to land without flaps, which he did successfully.

16 January, 1945.

HUMBERD'S, HENLEY'S, WALLACE'S (with KAMMEYER as second section leader), and JENNINGS' divisions flow cover for one of our several convoys plying between LEYTE GULF and LINGAYEN GULF.

1015. GRAY, WARREN, MUSSMAN and DAIGLE took off for Southern LUZON to hit Jap rolling stock or other enemy targets. The flight found three trucks near NAGA camouflaged with grass and leaves spread over the tops of them. Our fifty calibers left two of these trucks burning, and the other full of holes. Smoked another truck, at IRIGA. Also at NAGA, the flight strafed a train standing on a siding, consisting of one locomotive and five cars. The train did not appear to be in good condition however, and no results of the strafing were visible. Smoked two flat-bed trucks under a shed north of NAGA. The flight got no farther than BASIAD BAY because of weather. Reconnoitered LEGASPI AIRFIELD on the way back, but saw no aircraft or enemy activity there. Landed: 1420. Later, GRAY's division took off again, flew the LEYTE GULF patrol.

strafing runs on a railroad roundhouse at PAMPLOPA; strafed a total of fifteen railroad cars on various sidings, together with railroad water towers at separate points along the way. The railroad cars smoked from our incendiaries and tracers, but the other targets mentioned above would neither smoke nor burn. A heavy front lying from LAMON BAY to the southeast stopped the mission at that point, and a reconnaissance of the peninsular that was proved negative. Landed: 1540.

1240. HENLEY's division departed to take up where Major HUMBERD left off. They covered the target area (Southern LUZON peninsular) from 1330 to 1630, but found little to shoot at. They reported on landing at 1700 that all the railroad and highway bridges are bombed out and useless to the enemy, the railroad rails twisted and rusted. They observed a total of six trains, each stopped at a station, but they were all already burned and strafed so that the Japs would never use them again.

1450. JENNINGS' and WALLACE'S divisions took off, rendezvoused over LEYTE with four P-47's, and proceeded to IOILO, PANAY ISLAND, to make a strafing attack on some reported fuel tanks on the west coast of GUIMARAS ISLAND. The attack was delivered as planned, but the tanks were heavily revetted with concrete so that they appeared to be pill boxes, and no results of the strafing could be seen. Barges seen in a nearby river mouth were all derelicts. The flight did some blind strafing along roads up the west coast of NEGROS Island starting at BACOLOD. Landed: 1700.

17 January, 1945.

Today this squadron maintained a four-plane fighter sweep over the Southern LUZON peninsular from 0800 to 1645, each division being relieved on station by the next. BACHELER's four planes led off, but saw little, excepting a locomotive burning near OAS. SCHROEDER, ROBINSON, EVANS, and LINDSEY were next. Over target from 0915 to 1115. SCHROEDER fired one truck and one camouflaged automobile northwest of NAGA. Somewhere in the vicinity of SAN JOSE Airfield, SCHROEDER's plane accumulated six 50-caliber bullet holes in the aft section of fuselage. Only superficial damage resulted. LINDSEY exploded a truck about ten miles northeast of NAGA. This flight landed at 1215. In the landing, EVANS' plane caught in the slip stream, dragged the port wing and spun off the runway into the ditch. The pilot suffered bruises and cuts about the head, and the plane was stricken from the Navy List.

JONES' division, on the target from 1045 to 1300, smoked a sixty-foot barge tied up to wharf near SANIEPAN. LUCENA and surrounding territory was covered completely, up to 13,000 feet. Reconnaissance to the south was without results. CUNNINGHAM's four planes strafed and fired several box cars at LIBMANAN and at CATABANGAN. They smoked a sedan. At BINAHALAN they strafed a boat and a good look at SAN JOSE Airfield revealed nothing but a beatenup truck and a steam roller in doubtful condition. They covered the area from 1215 to 1400 and were followed by BACHELER's division on station from 1400 to 1500. This flight found it raining all over Southern Luzon. They went around this, to the west, and reconnoitered LUCENA, which appears to have a runway in good condition. Strafed a locomotive, (dead in the water, so to speak, with no steam up) at CASTILLO with unobserved results. No AA encountered on this or other hops today. SCHROEDER's division finished the day by strafing a radio station flying a Jap flag. at the eastern end of LEGASPI AIRFIELD. The radio towers were plainly visible, but the pilot could see no damage caused by his fifties.

The hop which we had been waiting for was assigned today. It was a sixteen-plane strafing attack against Jap troops in the LINGAYEN GULF sector; to be exact, at ROSARIO, where the army is meeting with stiff ground opposition from the Jap. The flight took off at 0835, but to the disappointment of all, hit a tremendous front about one hundred miles this side of MANILA. Major HUMBERD took the flight to 23,000 feet without getting over the clouds, and at a point 50 miles east of MANILA turned back for base. One plane in the flig t, piloted by WALLACE, had earlier returned to base because of hydraulic failure causing the landing gear to drop. Flight landed at base at 1200.

19 January, 1945.

Flying secured because of bad weather.

Joined Captain Joseph P. HART.

20 January, 1945.

Today we racked the Jap's motor pool on LUZON to the extent of twenty-one trucks and three sedans, plus one 35-foot motor launch, as follows:

Among JENNINGS' division, which was over the area from 0945 to 1215, JENNINGS exploded a sedan at LIPA, and at CARDONA he strafed two loaded ammunition trucks which were side by side in the road. The resulting explosion put up dust and smoke to one thousand feet, lifted the plane three to four hundred feet in the air, and the pilot stated that a truck wheel and fender passed him on the way up. WOLF and MOYNIHAN fired two and riddled two other trucks at LIPA. ERDMANN exploded a truck at BAGUMGAYAN, and the division strafed, burned and sank a 35-foot motor launch under way in LAGUNA DE BAY.

HENLEY'S division, over target from 1220 to 1445, fired one truck and one sedan at SANTA ROSA, one truck at ALAMINOS, and one truck at MUNTINGLUPA. In addition, WARD fired two trucks northwest of GUISAT.

GRAY'S division was over target from 1500 to 1700. In this flight WARREN and DAIGLE fired four trucks, and GRAY and MUSSMAN four trucks and one sedan, all along the road and in the vicinity of SAN MATEO to MONTALABAN, NE of MANILA. The flight also riddled two barges at LINGA, on western shore of LAGUNA DE BAY.

WALLACE's four planes took off at 1000, but struck bad weather near ANTIMONAN, where they turned back to base, landing at 1400.

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Then came the bad news. Major HUMMERD and his section leader, INGLEHART, leaded and reported that at 1405 o'clock, while strafing a truck just north of MUNTINGLUPA, on the western shore of LAGUNA DE BAY, SIGAN and STURGIS collided head-on, at less than one thousand feet altitude, and crashed in flames. Both planes appeared to explode when they hit the ground. Neither pilot was seen to leave his plane, nor was any sign of life visible to the other pilots when they examined the scene. As a matter of record, SIGAN, Nick A., lstlt. (026767), USMCR, was flying the plane bearing Squadron Number Two; Engine Number P-17656; and Bureau Number 57169. STURGIS, James B., Jr. lstlt. (026811), USMCR, was flying plane Number Four; Engine Number P-19061; and Bureau Number 57531. Both pilots have been reported "Killed in Action".

21 January, 1945.

O615. Pre-dawn takeoff by Jones, Sandbach, Poehlman, and WYATT, to patrol the west coast of LEYTE in the neighborhood of Palompan. The purpose of this hop was to intercept a Jap plane which on previous occasions has slipped in on the water and strafed the area. Patrol, however, was negative, as the Jap did not put in an appearance. Landed: O815.

SMITH, ROBINSON, ROSELLEN, MAC LACHLAN, and Captain Joseph P. HART, who has now rejoined this squadron after serving for a short time as an assistant operations officer for the First Marine Air Wing; took off at 0845, escorted a flight of C-47's to MINDORO, circled the island while the transport planes unloaded, then escorted them back to LEYTE. Our planes landed at 1515, after being airborne for six and one half hours.

SCHROEDER, HARRIS, FRANK, LINDSEY, SCOVILLE, and JERNIGAN took off at 1100 and escorted another group of C-47's to MINDORO. They returned to base at 1710, after six hours in the air. On landing, LINDSEY bounced, stalled, added throttle, and went over on his back. The plane crashed, shearing off the engine and both wings at the gull, and landed on its back in the mud off the side of the runway. The crash occurred approximately one hundred yerds from where our planes are parked. The men of our ground crew raced to the spot and extricated the pilot from the cockpit. The plane was stricken from the Navy List and the pilot suffered severe cuts and bruises about the head. However, LINDSEY was released from the hospital eight days later, and will no doubt recover completely from his injuries.

Twenty planes were flown by this squadron today, to provide a continuous air patrol of LEYTE GULF; all patrols were negative.

0710. JENNINGS, ERDMANN, MOYNIHAN, and WOLF departed to reconnoiter Southern LUZON. The flight made five strafing runs on a radar station and power plant at CALUAUAG, with unobserved results. They drew light AA fire from a door which opened on the side of a hill nearby. Observed a grass-covered runway, with a wind sock in the mountains east of NEGRITOS CAMP. Landed: 1145.

1400. HUMBERD, LINGENFELTER, INGLEHART, and SCOTT left the deck to sweep Southern LUZON for hidden seaplenes. They strafed and smoked three trucks east of SORAGON BAY. Observations otherwise negative. Large front lying east to west over VISAYAN SEA. Landed: 1800. On this hop. LINGENFELTER returned early to base with hydraulic trouble.

1015. WALLACE'S division took off on a special scramble mission to escort a flight of C-47's to MINDORO. WALLACE and his wingman lost sight of the flight in bad weather and returned to base. The second section, GARRETT and POOR finished the escort, landing at 1540.

23 January, 1945.

Twenty-eight sorties flown today, twenty-four of which were combat air patrol of LEYTE GULF, to protect the great amount of friendly shipping in these waters; four aircraft handled the mission of an early dawn patrol of CAMOTES SEA and the western shore of LEYTE ISLAND. All patrols were negative. The weather became so poor over the gulf that the last three flights were directed by base to return early, which they did, the last flight landing at 1500.

24 January, 1945.

WALLACE'S and HENLEY'S division flow the dawn and dusk CAMOTES SEA Patrol. HUMBERD'S and JENNINGS' divisions were fighter cover for a convoy southwest of NEGROS ISLAND. GRAY and LINGENFELTER flow two LEYTE GULF patrols, and GARRETT and POOR escorted the C-47's to BOHOL and return. WALLACE and RHODES were sent on a special mission to hunt barges along CEBU ISLAND in conjunction with our PT boats, but could not establish radio contact with the boats, and returned to base, landing at 1620. Takeoff was at 1400.

O645. BACHELER's division went down the east coast of MIN-DANAO but were stopped by bad weather before reaching DAVAO, their destination. They came back, cut across the island, and reconnoitered DEL MONTE and BUTUAN Airfields, plus SURAGAIO, all with negative results. Landed: 1045.

O645. SMITH, NEILSON, ROSELLEN, and CRUTCHER flew the CEBU, PANAY, NEGROS Sweep. They strafed and burned one sedan at BACOLOD, and two more on the east coast; plus two trucks along the west coast. They observed an SBD with American markings and of doubtful serviceability at Tanjay Airfield. Reconneitered all Jap fields on these three islands, with negative observations. Drew AA fire from SERAVIA, SILAY, PILAR, and FABRICA. SMITH's plane was hit in the port aileron by 20 MM, surveying the aileron. NEILSON's plane received a hole in the cowl, caused by a rock blown upward by an exploding automobile. Landed: 1130.

O645. HART, WYATT, JONES, and FRANK strafed BUTUAN AIRfield, NW MINDANAO, concentrating on buildings and 50-gallon drums along the NW side of the runway. Two houses nearby were burned to the ground. The flight strafed all fields at DEL MONTE. JONES smoked two trucks at SURAGAIO. HART strafed a radio station on the coast due north of BUTUAN; two trucks off a road inland; and strafed and smoked a 30 foot motor launch near TAGOLOAN. Landed: 1045.

1020. CUNNINGHAM's division saw no serviceable barges or aircraft near CEBU City and LAHUG Airfield just outside the city, on the east coast of CEBU ISLAND; but they strafed thoroughly three trucks they found hidden under some trees. Drew 20 MM from MACTAN ISLAND but no one was hit. Landed: 1550.

1345. HART, WYATT, JONES, and FRANK strafed all Jap airfields on the island of NEGROS, except DUMAGETTE, which was closed by weather. The eastern coast of CEBU was likewise clouded over. JONES exploded a truck near the Jap field at ALICANTE. HART and WYATT riddled a truck at LA CARLOTTA, and WYATT strafed another at CAMANG CAMANG, with unobserved results. Landed: 1700.

1400. SCHROEDER, HARRIS, EVANS, and ROBINSON strafed BUTUAN Airfield with no results seen. HARRIS and ROBINSON strafed and thoroughly holed three trucks near DEL MONTE. ROBINSON spetted and strafed two more trucks along NW coast of MINDANAO, with unobserved results. The flight observed many trucks around the town of DAVAO, but could not go down after them because their gas was getting low and they were going to have to battle the weather most of the way home. Landed: 1800.

War Diary for VMO-251. January, 1945.

25 January, 1945 (Cont'd).

1400. SMITH's division off the deek on their second flight of the day. They found the weather extremely bad over MINDANAO, could not get through to DAVAO. They backtracked, then cut over to DEL MONTE Airfields, where at 8,000 feet, NEILSON's oil pressure fell off to forty pounds. The flight immediately started back for base, one hundred and fifty miles away. Tracked by two land-based and one ship-borne radar station; with one fighter escort at ten thousand feet in communication with base, and another down on the water inspecting the waves in event the pilot decided to make a water landing, this Corsair refused to quit flying, and landed safely about 1645 with eight pounds of oil pressure.

26 January, 1945.

JENNINGS', WALLACE'S, GRAY'S, and HUMBERD'S divisions flew the LEYTE GULF patrol today, furnishing continuous cover of the area from 0620 to 1830. HENLEY and BARTON patrolled over convoy Mike Seven from 1145 to 1450; they were relieved on station by SCHOETZ and WARREN, who continued the patrol from 1450 to 1800. POOR teamed up with another plane of VMF-223 to make a barge hunt along the coasts of CEBU. They were over the target area from 1630 to 1730, saw nothing to shoot at, but were themselves shot at by machine gun firing tracer from the docks at CEBU Town. Landed: 1800.

27 January, 1945.

WARHORSE BASE Convoy, south of NEGROS ISLAND, and headed this way, was protected today by sixteen planes of this squadron flying cover over it. Flights were made by BACHELER's, SMITH's, SCHROEDER's, and CUNNINGHAM's divisions.

HART and WYATT were over CEBU from 1500 to 1630 hunting barges. They found two hidden alongside a bridge across a small inlet north of CEBU Town, and left them smoking furiously. At CARMEN, HART spotted a metal barge about forty-five feet long, which the Japs evidently had in "dry-dock". It was resting on wooden horses, and was up from the beach underneath some trees. Both planes poured plenty of lead into it, and though it would not burn, the pilots reported it will no doubt never float again.

26 January, 1945.

INGLEHART, KAMMEYER, WARREN, and SCOTT executed the dawn and dusk patrol of CAMOTES SEA and the west shore of LEYTE ISLAND. They landed at 0840, reported the entire island of LEYTE covered by rainstorms. Both patrols negative.

O730. WALLACE'S division departed on the Southern LUZON fighter sweep, which extends from the southern AA ring of MANILA down the peninsular to LEGASPI Airfield. They strafed a barge near MABIO POINT with unobserved results, and strafed a sedan on a road along the NW shore of LAGUNA DE BAY, south of TAYTAY. After one of these strafing runs, WALLACE'S plane disappeared from sight, south of TAYTAY. The other pilots saw no smoke or flame from the ground or any other evidence of a crash, and they had had perfect radio contact with WALLACE until a minute before his disappearance. They never saw him again, and repeated efforts to contact him by radio were fruitless. This occurred at approximately 1000 o'clock, and the flight landed at base at 1245.

JENNINGS, ERDMANN, MOYNIHAN, and WOLF departed at 0915 on the same sweep mentioned above. Over target at 1030, they fired a truck at ALITAGTAG. On LAGUNA DE BAY, north of the town of GAMUTAN, they smoked two camouflaged barges tied together along the shore. The leader spotted a single-engine biplane standing on NIELSON AUXILIARY Airfield and started down to strafe it. Intense light and medium AA fire opened up on JENNINGS from a position along the south side of the runway. ERDMANN, JENNING's wingman, immediately turned into and strafed these positions. silencing them. The second section, led by MOYNIHAN, then came across the field, and passing it MOYNIHAN called on the radio to ask if everyone was O.K. Five seconds later the others looked back and saw an explosion close to or upon the ground. Circling back they saw MOYNIHAN's plane sitting on its belly only one quarter mile from the field. The engine was smoking, and the fabric on the ailerons and tail surfaces was afire, but the plane appeared otherwise to be in tact. Nothing could be seen of the pilot, however, nor whether the cockpit canopy had been jettisoned. These pilots have been reported "Mission in Action".

As a matter of record, the following information is set forth concerning the two missing pilots: WALLACE, Harold C. Capt., (010221), USMCR, and MOYNIHAN, Michael H., 1stlt., (026751), USMCR.

GRAY'S division, with DAIGLE flying second section leader, departed on the LUZON sweep. DAIGLE had hydraulic trouble and returned to base early, with LINGENFELTER. The other two planes continued the sweep, with negative results. Landed: 1700.

(Page 15)

Captain Wallace's disappearance, took off to search for him.
They combed the entire LaGuna DE Bay erea without seeing a trace of pilot or plane. During this procedure, the flight strafed and Ward exploded an ammunition truck on the east and of NICHOLS FIELD. Drew no AA fire. Landed: 1840.

29 January, 1945.

This squadron flew a total of one hundred thirteen hours this date, in providing air protection for two convoys. Those flying were Bacheler's, Schroeder's, Jones', Cunningham's, Smith's, and for a second hop, Bacheler's divisions. Cunningham's division landed approximately two minutes before the field became closed in by a violent rainstorm, and Bacheler, who was still out, had to R.O.M. at Tamuan, Leyte Island.

30 January, 1945.

Weather was exceedingly bad today, and all planes were kept on the ground until 1250, when one flight of four planes, GRAY's division, was dispatched to patrol LEYTE GULF. However, they found the gulf covered solid, and were instructed by base to return, which they did at 1515. Flying was secured for the remainder of the day.

31 January, 1945.

Southern Luzon Fighter Sweep again today, with special instructions from Colonel Smith, M.A.G. 14, Executive and Operations Officer, to search NAGA for a reported fourteen thousand Japs in that vicinity. Smith's division was the first flight off, at 0645; found rainstorms all around the town of MAGA but got in low and made several low sweeps of the place. There were no signs of activity except a few people running for cover. Pilots could not tell whether these were Jap or Filipino. The area one mile south of the town, where the Japs were reported to be was found to be open form lands, with no cover for troops. This flight continued to the sirfield at LUCENA, about 100 miles south of MANILA where MEILSON spotted a message written out on the runway by means of cloth strips, reading: "45th INF. REG. 44th (HUNTERS) DIV. AID BADLY NEEDED. REF. TO MAJ. VANDERPOOL, LO. SWPA. HUNTERS HERE. "This message was copied down by the flight leader on the margin of his map and flown back to base. It was then telephoned to Group Operations by the Squadron Intelligence Officer, for etion. Flight landed: 1215.

(Fage 16)

War Diary for VMO-251. January, 1945.

31 January, 1945 (Cont'd).

CUNNINCHAM's division, made up of BEATTIE, WOLF, and JERNIGAN, departed at 1000 and were out only three hours, having hit bad weather. Reconnoitered LEGASPI AIRFIELD and there turned back toward base. At BULAN they drew meagre 40 MM fire but no one was hit. They strafed and riddled a truck a half mile west of the field. They likewise strafed a garage at BULAN which was crowded with cars and trucks of doubtful serviceability.

PIRAGES, IRWIN, FRANK, and HARRIS took off at 1345, battled with bad weather all the way and had a negative sweep of Southern LUZON, landing at 1815.

U. S. Marine Corps Pilots
U. S. Marine Corps Ground
U. S. Navy

U. S. Navy

(B) AIRCRAFT

- 1. 17 F4U-1D's at the end of the month.
- 2. Operational losses: Four(4).
- 3. Combat losses: Two(2).

(C) OPERATIONS

- 1. Total hours flown for month: 2,409.2
- 2. Total number of individual flights: 629
- 3. Total number of individual flights on combat missions: 626
- 4. Total number of flights where enemy opposition was encountered:
- (D) ENEMY PLANES DESTROYED

1. Mone.

(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 C. HUMBERD, Major, U. S. Marine Corps, Commanding Officer.

SQUADRON SUMMARY of MISSIONS, HOURS, and FRIENDLY and ENEMY LOSSES January, 1945 VMO-251

VMO-251 FLU-1D's (DAT€) (SQUADRON) (NUMBER of PLANES AVAILABLE) at END of MONTH (TYP€) ENEMY PLANES DESTROYED COMBAT ALL MISSIONS ENEMY SHIPPING FRIENDLY LOSSES MISSIONS NUMBER THIS MONTH & TOTAL PLANES

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Berton									44.4								
Boattle									37.8								
Crutcher									50.9								
Gunninghan	12																
Dalgle								The state of	63.3								
									60.8								
Brans									43.2						1	57297	No
Break									52.3								
Carret	17																
Cray									67.0								
Barris			65.0						650								
									21.6								
Boaley	15																
Bunberd									46.0								
malchart	17		63.2					0	63.2								
QUADRON TOTALS																	

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

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

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