

The following History of VC-81 is part of the original Natoma Bay Logbook Project created in the 1970s and 1980s by John J. Sassano, historian and Bob Wall, editor. The current document attempts to recreate, in electronic form, that original LOGBOOK of the Natoma Bay Association.

The entire Natoma Bay Online Logbook Project can be found at:
<http://natomabaycve62.org/logbook/LBindex.html>

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VC 81

LEYTE OCT. 20 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

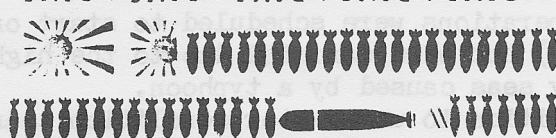
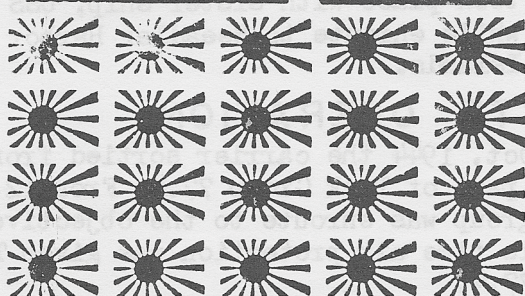
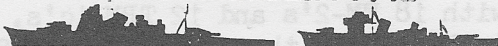
OCT. 25 1944

MINDORO DEC. 15 1944

LINGAYEN GULF JAN. 9 1945

SUBIC BAY JAN. 27 1945

IWO JIMA FEB. 19 1945



VC 81

17

HISTORY OF COMPOSITE SQUADRON EIGHTY ONE (VC 81)

VC 81 was commissioned on 22 December, 1943 at NAS, Seattle, Wash. Original complement was 26 pilots, personnel officer, and ACI officer, and 181 enlisted. Lieut. W. B. Morton was temporarily assigned as commanding officer. Originally trained for Atlantic duty its early training was so directed. On 3 Jan, 1944 the squadron was redesignated a Pacific squadron and a new commanding officer, Lieut. R. C. Barnes was designated VF combat commander. After NAS, Seattle training was continued at Pasco, Wash., NAS, Holtville, Calif., and Ream Field. With training completed, the squadron was loaded aboard USS Shamrock Bay (CVE 84) at San Diego on 16 May 1944 for carrier qualifications. Further training was then continued at Salton Sea and Inyokern and the VF to San Clemente Island. All this training behind them, VC 81 was now ordered to CASU 5 NAS, San Diego on 31 May 1944. Orders were received on 28 June 1944 to report aboard USS Kadashan Bay (CVE 76). After extensive carrier landing exercises VC 81 embarked 21 July 1944 for Pearl Harbor aboard USS Savo Island (CVE 78). There the squadron was attached to NAS Kaneohe. On 14 Sept. 1944 VC 81 was ordered aboard the parent carrier, USS Natoma Bay (CVE 62), with 18 FM-2's and 12 TBM-1c's. Training exercises took place with sister ship, USS Manila Bay (CVE 61), while enroute to Seeadler Harbor in the Admiralty Islands.

LEYTE OPERATION

On 12 Oct. 1944 the carrier sortied from Seeadler Harbor as part of Task Group 77.4. From 12 to 18 Oct. 1944 the group was enroute to the objective area. During this time air protection was given Task Groups 77.2 and 77.4.

Air operations were scheduled to start on 17 Oct. 1944 (A-3) but were canceled due to the high winds and heavy seas caused by a typhoon.

In addition to underwater demolition team support groups and target combat air patrols the CVE's were

called upon to furnish strikes against airfields in the Visayan Islands on 18 Oct. 1944 (A-2) and 19 Oct. 1944 (A-1). These strikes were to be flown by the fast carrier task units of Task Force 38 but they were delayed by an impending engagement with Japanese surfact units.

On 18 Oct. 1944 (A-2) eight VF and four VT were launched to strike airfields on Negros Island. Due to a very low ceiling and poor visibility the strike was negative with the exception of four trucks strafed and destroyed.

A duplicate strike was launched on 19 Oct. 1944 (A-1). Fuel dumps, storage dumps, and warehouses were destroyed by strafing, rockets and bombs. All parked aircraft had been destroyed by previous strikes.

In company with other planes eight VF and four VT of this squadron hit Iloilo, Panay Island, on the second strike of the day. VC 81 planes accounted for four warehouses, at least six luggers, an 800-ton vessel, oil tanks, and a runway.

On 19 Oct. 1944 (A-1) during a predawn launching Lieut. Hunter was observed to go into a spin from about 500 feet. When the fighter hit the water it burst into flame. There was no apparent cause of the accident. Nothing was recovered.

From 20 Oct. (A Day) through 24 Oct. (A+4) the majority of the missions flown were target and local CAP, target and local ASP, and direct support groups. The direct support groups were responsible for the silencing of AA batteries, destruction of bridges, dugouts, field artillery batteries, armored vehicles, recon cars, and the like. Special missions were flown when directed. These consisted of air coordinators, beach observers, support artillery observers, photographic missions, Pamphlet drops, and the dropping of medical supplies.

The morning of 25 Oct. 1944 (A+5) the planes were being loaded for a direct support group when a directive came through ordering four VT to be loaded with torpedoes and standby. This was the first indication that conflict was imminent with the Japanese northern battleship force which had sortied San Bernardino Strait. These VT were launched and after failing to rendezvous with other planes, proceeded to the aid of Task Unit 77.4.3 which was being heavily shelled by cruisers and battleships. The four planes led by Lieut. Morton started their attack on one of a group

of three cruisers. The Tone class CA turned into the attack putting Lieut. Morton into a bow on position. He straffed as he crossed the bow and made his drop on an Atago class CA beyond the first cruiser. A hit was observed aft the starboard beam. The other three planes dropped on the Tone. The drop of Lieut. Hiser was observed to hit amidships starboard. The drops of Lieut.(jg) Cady and Lieut.(jg) Lindstrom were known to be on a collision course when last seen.

As Lieut. Morton passed over the target the plane was hit with a 25mm. shell which exploded behind the instrument panel. A fragment lodged in his right thigh. The explosion wrecked the hydraulic controls, the prop control, and all the engine instruments. A successful water landing was made with no flaps and with the bomb bay doors open. All three survivors were picked up by a DE.

Cole, ARM3c, was taking pictures and observing the torpedo runs when a 40mm. shell came through the bomb bay window and exploded inside the tunnel. Cole was severely injured and. his life undoubtedly saved by the prompt and efficient first aid rendered by the turret gunner, Bosze, AOM3c.

The last two fish aboard were loaded and the planes catapulted downwind as the wind was from the direction of pursuit. The planes were immediately ordered by the task force commander to attack the battleship nearest the formation. At this time the pilots could see Jap shells falling near the screen. The pilots, Ensigns Gaiennie and Voltz joined with other torpedo planes and attacked the second BB, a Nagato class, as the leading BB was already under attack. With the two wagons were two heavy cruisers. The Nagato turned into the attack and combed the fish. Watching the wakes of their drops Ensigns Gaiennie and Voltz saw them hit amidships and on the fantail of an Atago class CA which was on the starboard beam of the Nagato. The cruiser was seen to sink shortly after. In the retirement run Ens. Voltz received a 40mm. hit outboard of the starboard wheel well. The hole was approximately 1.5 feet square. The plane's hydraulic system was damaged and the pilot landed it safely aboard.

Four VC-81 fighters on local CAP contacted a torpedo-carrying Jill 15 miles from the task unit. The Jill jettisoned its fish and ran with the fighters in hot pursuit. Ens. Walker chased the enemy through a cloud, pulled up under him and sent him down in flames.

The next flight of four VT was loaded with 500 lb. SAP bombs as the torpedoes had been expended. Ens. Goodwin made three glide bombing runs on a BB before he could release his bombs. On his third run he laid a stick of four bombs just abeam from astern to amidships. The closet may have done serious damage. Lieut. Skill made a dive on the same ship one of his bombs hanging and the other falling short. Lieut. Wavell made a run on the after BB dropping three bombs, The second hit the turret just forward of the bridge. Lt.(jg) Conner made a run on the same ship, dropped two bombs, one of which hit the edge of the deck on the starboard quarter. Lieut Skill and Lt. (jg) Conner with two bombs apiece left, joined up and attacked an unidentified cruiser. Lt. (jg) Conner's drops were short. One of Lieut Skill's was a near miss just over the bow. The other hit amidships causing heavy smoke and probably serious damage.

Returning to the carrier Lt. (jg) Conner spotted a lone TBM circling a cruiser which was dead in the water. The plane had a torpedo aboard and wanted somebody to strafe for him. Conner obliged and, the plane scored a hit amidships, but was shot down on retirement.

Again the VT were loaded with 500 lb. SAP bombs. This time three were catapulted, Lieut. Auger scored a near miss on a CA. Ens. Praetsch dropped a near miss on a BB. Ens. Boldt did not return to the carrier. He reported again at Manus. His engine had been hit by AA forcing him to make a water landing. All personnel got clear and were picked up by a DD two days later.

Lieut. Reeves led the next attack group of three TBM's loaded with 500 lb. GP bombs. He attacked a Kuma class CL and scored a hit on the bow causing flame and smoke. Ens. Kesterke scored a direct hit just aft of the bridge which caused great masses of yellowish brown smoke.

The squadron's last strike of the day was composed of four VT and 12 VF together with planes from the other carriers. The Japanese formation was caught at the northern tip of Samar Island fleeing for the San Bernardino Strait. An attack was initiated at 1715. Ens. Gaiennie laid a bomb on both sides amidship of a Natori class CL. Lt.(jg) Cady and Lt.(jg) Conner also dropped near misses on the same ship. It was evidently seriously damaged as much white smoke appeared amidships and it immediately lost way. Lt.(jg) Conner evidently returned to expend his rockets as he is still

missing and presumed to be lost. The 12 VF made intense and repeated strafing attacks on two CL's and three DD's. These attacks are assumed to have caused heavy damage.

Eight VF and 1 VT were launched on 26 Oct. 1944 (A+6) to strike Japanese cripples in the Visayan Sea area. A CL and a DD were sighted and attacked. Lieut. Wavell scored a heavy hit amidships abaft the bridge with a 500 lb. SAP bomb and three rocket hits on the bow. The CL was left dead in the water and is presumed sunk. The DD was heavily damaged by the fighters and left in a sinking condition. While returning a strange looking ship was sighted near Bantayan Island. It was reported by the pilots to have been a BB-XCV Ise unit. Later reports from Com TF 38 identified it as the CA-XCVS Mogami and said it was sunk by strikes from the fast carrier task forces.

Upon the return from this strike all planes were low on gas,. Ens. Devlin radioed that he had enough gas for one pass only. He was waved off as the carrier was not into the wind and the LSO did not know the fuel situation. The pilot rolled up his wheels and landed in the water. He was seen after getting out of the plane but when a DD arrived they could find nothing but the Mae West life jacket.

On the afternoon of 26 Oct. 1944, four VT were launched and in company with planes from other carriers searched for the reported XCV. The results were negative as it had sunk. While returning the flight leader ordered the planes to hit dock facilities at Cebu City. Planes of VC 81 scored eight direct hits on a large pier and six hits on the warehouses. Large fires were started in the warehouse area.

On 27 Oct. 1944 (A+7) direct support and TCAP were resumed according to the original schedule. Six VC 81 planes on TCAP cornered, a Tony and shared the kill.

28 Oct. 1944 (A+8) was routine except for the destruction of a plane believed to have been a Nell. Lt. Mathson who had his division of LCAP was credited with the kill.

On 29 Oct. 1944 (A+9) the force left the objective area and. proceeded to the Admiralty Islands. There was very little flying as the necessary patrols were shared by the various carriers. This provided a very welcome period of rest for the pilots. The great majority fliers had seen their first real combat by attacking Jap surface forces under conditions which will probably never be duplicated again.

Pityliu Island

As the USS Natoma Bay approached Manus, all available planes were launched and landed ashore at the Pityliu Island Naval Air Field. This was on 3 Nov. 1944. The rest of the personnel went ashore when the ship anchored later in the day. The purpose of this temporary change was to give the squadron a rest and to permit them to do some flying and some training.

The squadron was based on CASU 42 and quarters were furnished by ACORN 28. Quarters for officers and men were screened Quonset huts located in a coconut grove. All food came from the general mess; and it was usually very poorly prepared and served. The first three or four days at Pityliu were spent in rest and recreation. Everyone swam, hunted shells and coconuts, played softball and drank beer. It was a welcome change from the shipboard routine.

During our stay at Pityliu there were several promotions. Lieut. Morton became LtCdr., and Ensigns Gingrich, Voltz, Taylor, Gaiennie, Goodwin, Praetsch made Lt. (jg).

Another highlight was a softball game with our sister ship USS Manila Bay. We lost a hard game and had to stand the beer at the club. This was followed by a Thanksgiving dinner that was far above the usual chow in quality.

Following the initial rest period a light schedule of training flights was inaugurated. This schedule was gradually increased. After the first week VC 81 was the ready squadron approximately every fourth day and flew CAP and picket patrols. On one of these patrols southeast of Manus Island about noon on 14 Nov. 1944 the engine of a TBM, piloted by Ens. McMahon quit probably due to water in the tanks. Ens. McMahon kept it airborne as long as possible and finally made a water landing near a small island. The large raft could not be removed and the small raft leaked; but the pilot and aircremen inflated their life jackets and swam ashore. They were located the next morning by squadron search planes and picked up by a Grumman Duck from the VJ squadron.

One other incident marred the stay at Pityliu. On 17 Nov. 1944 Ens. Peeler with Lt. (jg) Holton as a passenger while on a routine flight in a CASU 42 SBD which failed to recover from a spin and crashed into the sea. Both officers were killed and nothing was recovered.

While at Pityliu 3 VF pilots and 1 TBM pilot and aircrewmembers reported. This brought the personnel complement to 22 VF pilots, 18 VT pilots, 4 ground officers, and 51 men.

Day and night bounce drills were completed and preparations were being made to begin some ground training for the pilots and aircrewmembers when the squadron was suddenly ordered back aboard the USS Natoma Bay. Ground personnel returned the morning of 27 Nov. 1944 and the planes were recovered the same afternoon after the ship had left the harbor enroute to Kossol Passage. VC 81 was now part of TU 77.12.7; the job at hand was covering the landings on Mindoro Island. The group arrived at Kossol Passage on 30 Nov. 1944 and sortied from there the same day; however a change of plans rerouted the task unit back to Kossol where it remained until 10 Dec. 1944.

MINDORO OPERATION

On 10 Dec. 1944 TU 77.12.7 sortied from Kossol Passage with BB's, CA's, and DD's which contributed the other units of TF 77.12. This task force was enroute to the Sulu Sea to protect the convoys carrying troops and supplies for the landings on Mindoro Island.

The same day four VT pilots and aircrewmembers and three TBM's were temporarily detached and flew to Peleliu Island to make room for some extra fighter pilots and planes. Shortly after the sortie six FM's and pilots from VC 78 based on the USS Saginaw (CVE 82) landed aboard. Although all of these men were junior ensigns, they adjusted themselves very quickly and made a good record while on board. At this time the squadron's complement of aircraft was 24 FM-2's and TBM-1c's. There were 28 fighter pilots and 14 torpedo pilots aboard.

On the night of 12 Dec. the Surigao Strait was transited and the first naval task force entered the inland waters of the Philippines. On the following morning a heavy schedule consisting mostly of CAP over the convoys was begun. 13-17 Dec., 205 sorties amounting to 700 hours were flown by VC 81. Although most of these were CAP by fighters, there was some ASP and a fighter sweep over the airfields on northwestern Negros which was led by the squadron commander.

Shortly after noon on 13 Dec. 1944 the enemy planes discovered the presence of U. S. forces in the Mindanao Sea and their activity began. During the afternoon of 13 Dec. 1944 while on ASP, Lieut Roebuck monitored a vector given by the fighter director. He jumped two

Oscars; one ran for home and he downed the other. He in turn was jumped by two Oscars but managed to get away with a single bullet hole in the radio gear. The same afternoon while on ASP Ens. Mount attacked and shot down an Irving after quite a chase.

The enemy's air attacks continued on 14 Dec. 1944 while CAP over the Slow Tow Convoy a division led by Lt.(jg) Gingrich jumped four Zekes and sent all four into the sea in short order. The other members of the division were Ensigns Huston, Therrell, and Miller who was on detached duty from VC 78.

Four planes were destroyed on the ground and many more damaged on a fighter sweep led by LtCdr. Barnes. On 15 Dec. 1944 LtCdr. Barnes destroyed an Irving and a Kate; Ens. Walker destroyed an Irving; and Ens. O'Donnell destroyed a Jill. The majority of these planes were found at Dos Hermanos airdrome on Negros Island. The task force was scheduled to leave on 15 Dec. but while in the Mindanao Sea that night received orders to stay an extra day and cover the retirement convoys as the AAF had indicated their inability to do so.

On 16 Dec. 1944 while flying CAP over the beachheads at Mindoro the previously mentioned Ens. Miller got on the tail of an Irving and scored a damaging burst before his guns jammed. Ens. Tomkins came in and in two runs splashed the bandit. That afternoon while covering the retirement of the assault convoy Ens. Clifford Splashed a Val in one run. This put an end to the scoring spree of VC 81's part in this operation.

The return trip through the Surigao Strait was made about noon on 17 Dec. 1944 without any further incident.

The success of the cover flown in this operation was not measured by the number of aircraft destroyed but by the fact that complete mastery of the air over the convoys and carrier forces was maintained and shipping losses and damages were kept to a minimum through the dangerous inland waters of the Philippine Islands where hundreds of U.S. ships were within easy reach of enemy land-based aircraft.

After leaving Leyte Gulf the force proceeded to Kossol Roads, and after a stay of one day departed for Seeadler Harbor, Manus, where it arrived on the morning of 23 Dec. 1944, just one day after the squadron's first birthday. It had been a busy and profitable year; but not a year without the losses that invariably bring forth the futility of war.

LINGAYEN OPERATION

While at anchor at Manus the squadron returned to its original complement of 18 torpedo pilots and 12 TBM-1C's. Two more fighter pilots brought the total to 24 while the number of FM-2's was set at 20 for this operation. While at Manus a late ALNAV converted 11 ensigns to lieutenant (junior grade). The new one and a half stripers are Lt.(jg)'s Walker, Sargent, Murie, Higgins, Tate, Therrell, Greenwalt, Larsen, O'Donnell, Huston, and Tomkins.

The ship sortied from Seeadler Harbor on 27 Dec. and arrived at Kossol Roads on the 30th.

On 1 Jan. 1945 Kossol was sortied and the ship became part of TG 77.4 and traveled in company with TG 77.2, the fire support and bombardment group. The 3d, 4th, and 5th groups were enroute to the objective area via the Surigao Strait, Mindinao Sea, Sulu Sea, and the Mindoro Strait. During this period the ships were under constant air attacks, most of which were the Kamikaze variety. On 4 Jan. 1945 the Ommaney Bay (CVE 79) was hit and had to be abandoned and sunk that night. The USS Manila Bay (CVE 61) was hit on 5 Jan. but was able to carry on limited flight operations two days later.

The night of the 5th found the task groups in the objective area. Flight operations began on 6 Jan. 1945 and consisted of support groups, TCAP, searches, and many special missions.

The first TCAP of the day was assigned to fly ahead of the fire support group which was moving toward Lingayen Gulf. Without any vectors this division splashed four Japanese planes.

LtCdr. Barnes knocked down a Frances and a Val. Lt.(jg) Walker and Lt.(jg) Sargent both got a Val. After Lt.(jg) Sargent got his plane he started on a second Val which was very low on the water. While in a sharp turn he dug a wingtip in the water was killed when the plane cartwheeled and crashed.

The first direct support group consisted of seven VT and four VF. While the VT were bombing an ammo dump the fighters tallyhoed a bogey and gave chase. Lt.(jg)s Murie and Huston made head on passes at the Zeke. As they turned to come back his belly tank was on fire. After another short burst the pilot bailed out and the plane crashed.

While the VT were joining up preparatory to another run they were jumped by three Zekes and an Oscar. The three turret gunners of one section splashed one Zeke.

They were Barber, AOM3c, Hinckley, AMM3c, and Stone. Two others were driven off by fixed gunnery runs of TBM's. One Zeke made a headon pass at the bomber of Lt.(jg) Voltz. On this first run most of the fabric on the emppannage was shot away and the plane went into a spin. Lt.(jg) Voltz succeeded in righting it and found himself heading out to sea toward the carriers. At this time it seemed advisable to be over water in case a forced landing became necessary. The other planes were unaware of Lt(jg) Voltz's difficulty. The Jap fighters had followed him and began making gunnery runs on him. He made six before his ammunition was exhausted and he broke off the attack. On the third run Neese,AMM3, was killed. Sweeney, ARMLc, was hit but not critically injured. He removed Neese's body from the turret and tried to operate it but the mechanism was wrecked.

The plane was literally riddled by about 400 bullet holes and most of the instruments in the cockpit were wrecked. Lt.(jg) Voltz had very little control of the plane. Upon reaching the carrier he was unable to lower the arresting gear hook as it was shot up. Although surface conditions were extremely rough due to high winds a water landing had to be made. The flaps could not be lowered as the hydraulic system was completely out. The radioman, Sweeney, was in the second cockpit. The landing impact was unusually hard, but the landing was successful. Sweeney's shoulder blade was broken and he was semiconscious. Lt. (jg) Voltz' removed him from the plane and held him while he inflated the raft. There was no time to recover Neese's body. A DD picked up the survivors a short time later.

The afternoon of 9 Jan. 1945 12 fighters were launched for TCAP. Each division was assigned a different orbit point. One group was jumped by six Zekes who had altitude advantage. After a hot time of it Lt.(jg)s Larsen and Greenwalt accounted for a Zeke apiece. The other pilots claimed damages.

Another division spotted two Oscars and broke for them. Lt.(jg) Huston flamed one after a diving chase. Ens. Tomkins had to chase his 30 miles at deck level before it blew up.

While on direct support group on 13 Jan. 1945 Ens. McFarland, a VF pilot, could not get suction in his main fuel tank and had to land at Lingayen Airstrip. At the end of his landing run he hit a bomb crater and damaged a prop blade and a drag link. Parts were dropped on 14 Jan. and the plane was repaired. On 15

Jan. he took off and joined other planes to return to the base. One of these planes told him he was on fire. He was forced to bailout and sustained a compound fracture of his left thigh. He was taken to an Army field hospital and later evacuated to a hospital ship.

From 6 Jan. through 17 Jan. direct support groups, TCAP and ASP, air-coordinators, photo hops, propaganda missions, searches, etc., were flown per schedule.

From 12 Jan. to 28 Jan. the ship operated with TG 77.2 as the Lingayen Defense Fleet to prevent any Japanese surface interference.

On the night of 28 Jan. the ship moved into an operating area to be in a position to support landings at Zambales Province in the Subic Bay area. On 29 and 30 Jan. the necessary support missions were flown. Enemy opposition in this area proved to be surprisingly weak.

On 30 Jan. our local CAP was vectored out to a bogey which turned out to be a lost Army transport which was low on fuel. Two of the CAP were detailed to lead him to the Lingayen airstrip. While returning the two pilots, Lt.(jg)s Gingrich and Huston, spotted a Japanese submarine running surfaced about 60 miles from the base. The task group remained in this area another day while the USS Tulagi (CVE 72) conducted hunter-killer operations without any success.

On the night of 31 Jan. Mindoro Strait was transited after contact had been made with another Japanese submarine. This one was surfaced and its course was directly toward the ships when it was contacted by the USS Boise's radar. Four DD's were left behind and the USS U. M. Moore (DE 442) made short work of the raider.

Surigao Strait was transited on 2 Feb. no contact having been made with enemy aircraft in the Sulu and Mindanao Seas. On 5 Feb. the ship dropped anchor at Ulithi.

Throughout this operation landings and takeoffs were hazardous due to the pitch and roll of the ship caused by the rough surface conditions of the South China Sea. In spite of this the pilots made a wonderful record on carrier operations.

IWO JIMA OPERATION

Enroute to Ulithi and during the first days at anchor there, the squadron seethed with rumors about being relieved. A relief squadron was due shortly, but VC 81 was sent on "one more short one" as a scheduled ship, the USS Tulagi (CVE 72) had condensor trouble and also was required for hunter-killer operations.

On 7 Feb. 1945 in compliance with ComAirPac restricted dispatches 311952 and 311940 of Jan. 1945, LtCdr. Morton relieved LtCdr. Barnes as CO of VC 81. Brief ceremonies were held on the flight deck with Capt. Morehouse, CO of USS Natoma Bay present as well as all members of the squadron. In the reorganization, Lieut. Skill became XO and Lieut. Auger became the engineering officer.

Five days after dropping the hook at Ulithi, on 10 Feb. 1945, the parent ship sortied Ulithi Harbor as part of TG 52.2 enroute to support the 3d, 4th, and 5th Marines amphibious assault on Iwo Jima. At Ulithi there had been no opportunity for rest and relaxation and as we shoved off for another operation after more than two months of almost continuous combat flight, most of the squadron had not been ashore since Nov. 1944. As the ship left the harbor, seven new rocket-equipped FM-2's and our first two TBM-3 aircraft were flown aboard.

Enroute to Iwo Jima CAP and ASP was furnished for our own force and for the fire support group. On 12 Jan. training flights were made over Tinian Island during the rehearsal of the amphibious assault.

The task groups arrived at the operating area off Iwo Jima the night of 15 Jan. We were operating within 700 miles of the Empire and within range of Empire-based aircraft. The weather was generally overcast, hazy, and visibility was poor. This made flying conditions bad throughout the operation. The cool weather, after the heat of the tropics was appreciated.

Support flight operations began on the morning of 16 Jan. 1945 with an untoward incident. Ens. Valpey, one of an eight plane CAP, was launched 90 minutes before sunrise into low clouds. Visibility was poor and the top of the clouds was 7500 feet; he was unable to rendezvous with his division. He encountered high westerly winds aloft, to 100 knots, and drifted east of the formation. He was able to make ZB contact and after following the lost plane procedure until, running low on fuel, he made a power water landing, seven

hours after being launched. He inflated his raft and got clear with all of his survival gear. Two and a half days later he was located by a search TBM from the USS Anzio (CVE 57). This plane dropped a larger raft, food and water and reported his position. It was 135 miles east of Iwo Jima. He was picked up later in the day by an OS2U, taken to a command ship and returned to base on a DD on 21 Jan. 1945.

Attacks on defense positions on Iwo Jima were begun on 17 Feb. The first attackers found that there was plenty of punch left on Iwo despite the prolonged bombing. Eight TBM's from this squadron made a rocket and bombing attack on dual purpose guns between Motoyama Airfields #1 and #2. The ceiling was low and the attack was poorly coordinated.

Fighter aircraft were not properly employed thus the TBM's were good targets for AA fire. The result was that four of the eight Avengers were badly damaged, LtCdr. Morton's Plane was hit twice in the starboard stub wing, and shrapnel wounded the radioman McDonald. The rupture of the main spar necessitated jettisoning the plane. Lieut. Reeves had one-third of the starboard elevator shot away. Lieut. Wavell, on the first run, was hit in the port wing, the bomb bay, and the starboard stub wing. He pumped his bomb bay doors open to make another run. This time he was hit twice in the starboard wing and got shrapnel holes in the elevators. All three of the above pilots brought their planes back and landed safely aboard. This proves again that the "Ol' bird" can take a tremendous amount of punishment and still get home. Ens. McMahon's plane took hits in the tunnel and through the bomb bay into the middle cockpit. Shrapnel set off a smoke bomb which caught the radioman's clothing, back pack and parachute on fire. Radioman Nause succeeded in extinguishing fires, but suffered second degree burns. Much of the contral surfaces was shot away and handling the plane was done mostly by tab. The Hydraulic system was knocked out. The extra can of fluid carried was of no avail. With five bombs still aboard Ens. McMahon made a good water landing. The plane stayed afloat for 98 seconds, and all personnel were picked up almost immediately by one of the vessels of the screen.

Attacks on the island continued and AA fire was soon reduced from intense to meager. Thousands of defense positions remained, these were attacked as systematically and regularly as possible. In this operation,

more bombs, rockets and ammunition were expended and more combat time was flown than in any of the previous ones participated in by the squadron. Aircraft support missions at Iwo were more difficult than on other operations because of the terrain. The blockhouses, pill boxes, caves, gun positions, and other defenses were well hidden and strongly constructed. Pilots could not see the target or see any evidence of damage. They were able to hit the targets by the use of grid charts, reference points and reports from ground observers. However, they kept hitting and it was gratifying to them to learn later when some of the squadron officers went ashore and examined some of the positions that they had damaged and destroyed many positions and that their efforts were appreciated by the ground forces. The Marines were interested in the aircraft operations and asked many questions. The few small enemy aircraft raids had been efficiently checked by carrier fighters; they were unaware that there had been any aircraft in the area, but knew that they had not been raided and were grateful for it. Typical comments were, "We like to have you carrier boys around" and "We dont want to see the carriers leave". They want close aircraft support.

On 17 Feb. 1945, a fighter sweep was sent to Chichi Jima to destroy aircraft and shipping. Four FM-2's participated in this strike. They swept over Susski Airfield and strafed aircraft on the field. Lt.(jg) Taylor' strafed two Betty type bombers and left one with both engines smoking. Two transport planes were heavily strafed with no visible damage. They also attacked the shipping in Futami Harbor with rockets and strafing. Two freighters and a transport type vessel were hit by shrapnel with slight damage. An auxiliary tank of Lieut. Roebuck's plane was set afire and jettisoned without damage. They then searched the coves around the island for landing craft and returned to base. One TBM accompanied them as a navigator and dumbo.

In the late afternoon of 21 Feb. 1945, Ensign Kesterke with James, ARM3c, as radioman ferried a passenger to the USS Bismark Sea (CVE 95). About the time they arrived, the force was attacked by enemy aircraft but just before sunset he was permitted to land. He had been aboard about 20 minutes when the ship was hit by a suicide dive bomber. Both Ens. Kesterke and James entered the water shortly before the explosion when the CVE capsized. They were picked up by a DD

and Ens. Kesterke was returned on 26 Feb. James was reported as being safe on a transport and returned to the States with other survivors.

The only barrier crash in more than 700 landings occurred on 28 Feb. when Ens. Clifford caught #9 wire, the barrier was not dropped in time and minor damage resulted.. This is an excellent record, comparing favorably with any carrier.

On 1 Mar. 1845, the CO of USS Natoma Bay, Capt. A. K. Morehouse was relieved and left the ship enroute to new and more responsible duties. He had been a good friend of the squadron.

The 16th day at Iwo Jima, 3 Mar. 1945, was eventful. It opened with a strike on a reported concentration of large enemy transports at Chichi Jima. Eight FM-2's from this squadron participated in the attack. They made three attacks; on the first firing rockets at the shipping and on the second and third attacking AA positions to protect the torpedo bombers which were following. The shipping was identified as one medium transport vessel and small FTC class freighters. Damage was observed. On the first attack as the fighters were retiring toward the entrance to Futami Harbor, The FM-2 piloted by Lt.(jg) Huston was apparently hit by AA fire. The plane went into a 45° dive and crashed into the water just inside the harbor. It exploded on impact and there was no survivor or wreckage afloat. He was one of the squadron's better pilots. He was quiet and unassuming, always alert and his keen eyes tally-hoed everything within sight. He was always the first to sight aircraft and shipping; he tally-hoed the only submarine sighted by the squadron. He was credited with the destruction of four airborne enemy aircraft.

The same day, on the 1000 launch, Lt.(jg) Tate's FM-2 veered to port due to a heavy roll of the ship and despite prompt and correct measures taken by him, it went over the after stack and into the water. He promptly disengaged himself and was picked up five minutes later by a DD with no injuries except minor bruises.

Another division of the CAP which Lt. (jg) Tate was scheduled to join was vectored to intercept a bogey which was about 30 miles from base at 1213. Ens. Gray sighted a Frances type Japanese bomber about two minutes later headed toward the disposition. The CAP had 2000 feet of altitude advantage. The Frances continued on course apparently not seeing the fighters.

Ens. Gray came in from the side and overshot but got a good burst into the starboard engine and it caught fire. Lt.(jg) O'Donnell followed a few seconds later and exploded the port gasoline tank. The enemy aircraft had not lasted 10 seconds before it plummeted to the water in flames at 1217.

The CVE's were scheduled to depart from Iwo Jima on the night of 7 Mar. 1945. All bombs and rockets had been expended several days earlier and the carrier aircraft were doing little except protect the island and shipping from enemy air and surface attack. At this time VC 81 had flown 2,232 sorties actually in combat, a total of 7,297.06 combat hours, in addition to 1,616.4 hours of routine patrols in combat zones have been flown. 9,644.9 training hours were flown prior to entering into combat. The grand total of all squadron hours is 18,558.9 from 22 Dec. 1943 through 7 Mar. 1945.

MESSAGES

1. From Commander, Seventh Fleet, on 25 Oct. 1944, following the Battle for Leyte Gulf.

YOU HAVE TURNED IN THE FINEST AIR SUPPORT PERFORMANCE THAT COULD BE DESIRED X YOUR RECORD FROM THE FIRST STRIKE UNTIL THIS MORNING HAS WON MY HIGHEST ADMIRATION X HOWEVER FOR YOUR MAGNIFICENT PERFORMANCE TODAY IN ATTACKING HEAVY UNITS OF THE ENEMY FLEET MY ADMIRATION IS BOUNDLESS X YOU HAVE ACCOMPLISHED A TASK THAT ONLY LARGE CARRIER TASK FORCES ,SHOULD UNDERTAKE X WELL DONE X KINCAID.

2. From Task Unit Commander to all hands, 25 Oct. 1944.

I AM PROUD TO BE IN THE SAME NAVY WITH YOU X STUMP.

3. From the Task Group Commander. Commander of CVE's during the Leyte operation 6 Nov. 1944.

THIS TASK GROUP HAS PARTICIPATED IN ONE OF THE DECISIVE BATTLES OF THIS WAR X THE AIRCRAFT OF THESE CARRIERS NOT ONLY HAVE MET AND DEFEATED ENEMY ATTACKING IN THE AIR BUT HAVE TURNED BACK A LARGE ENEMY FLEET COMPOSED OF HIS MOST MODERN SHIPS X THE INTREPID COURAGE, SKILL AND FIGHTING SPIRIT OF THE PILOTS AND AIRCREWMEN WERE SUPERB X NEVER HAVE FIGHTING MEN PERFORMED THEIR DUTY WITH GREATER DETERMINATION AND DISTINCTION X I AM PROUD TO HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO BE PRESENT AND OBSERVE YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS X MAY GOD BLESS EVERYONE OF YOU AND MAY THE CITIZENS OF YOUR COUNTRY FOREVER REMEMBER AND BE THANKFUL FOR YOUR COURAGE X T. L. SPRAGUE.

4. From the Task Group Commander (ComBatDiv) on retiring from the inland waters of the Philippine Islands 19 Dec. 1944.

ON RETIREMENT FROM A DANGEROUS AND TRYING MISSION
OUTSTANDINGLY AND STARTINGLY ACCOMPLISHED X THE TASK GROUP
COMMANDER WISHES TO EXPRESS HIS PRIDE IN YOUR JOB X HE
CONSIDERS IT A PRIVILEGE TO HAVE BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH YOU X
THIS IS THE FIRST COMBAT TEAM TO BE COMPOSED OF OLD BB'S,
CRUISERS, AND DESTROYERS OPERATING WITH THE CVE'S X BEYOND
ANY POSSIBILITY OF DOUBT THE BABIES HAVE PROVED THEMSELVES
THE EQUAL OF ANY X TO THE GUNNERS, ENGINEERS, COMMUNICATORS
AND ALL OTHERS BUT MOST ESPECIALLY TO OUR SUPERB FLYERS A
HEARTFELT "WELL DONE" X RUDDOCK.

5. From the Task Unit Commander on reaching port after the Mindoro operation.

TO SQUADRON PERSONNEL AND ESPECIALLY AGAIN TO OUR FLIGHT
PERSONNEL "WELL DONE" X IT HAS BEEN A PRIVILEGE AND HONOR TO
ASSOCIATE WITH YOU X STUMP.

6. From the Task Unit Commander during routine combat operations, Lingayen, 8 Jan. 1945.

NATOMA BAY AND AIR GROUP DOING FINE JOB X I AM PROUD OF YOU
X STUMP.

7. From comments of Commanding Officer, USS Natoma Bay following the Lingayen operation, 17 Jan. 1945.

THE COMBAT MORALE AND PERFORMANCE OF THE PILOTS OF VC 81
CONTINUES TO AROUSE THE ADMIRATION AND PRAISE OF THIS
REPORTING OFFICER. THEY ARE WILLING AND EAGER AT ALL TIMES
AND YET EXTREMELY MODEST IN THEIR CLAIMS. THEIR AIR AND
SHIPBOARD DISCIPLINE IS ABOVE AVERAGE. THE WAY THE SQUADRON
MET THE TEST IMPOSED ON THEM BY SEVERE SEA CONDITIONS OFF
LUZON WAS VERY GRATIFYING. THEY FLY AND ACT LIKE VETERANS.
A. K. MOREHOUSE.

8. From Commander Seventh Fleet at the end of the Lingayen operation, 18 Jan. 1945.

THE SPLENDID WORK OF THE CVE'S, DAY AFTER DAY, UNDER
DIFFICULT CONDITIONS HAS BEEN OF TREMENDOUS VALUE TO THE
SUCCESS OF THIS MISSION X IT IS FULLY APPRECIATED X I AM
PROUD TO HAVE THE CVE'S OPERATE WITH ME X TO ALL A HEARTFELT
"WELL DONE" X KINKAID.

9. From Commander Seventh Fleet on this unit leaving the Seventh Fleet, 3 Feb. 1945.

THE SUPERB PERFORMANCE OF YOUR GALLANT GROUP HAS CONTRIBUTED IN LARGE MEASURE TO THE SUCCESS OF THE SEVENTH FLEET IN THE PHILIPPINE CAMPAIGN X "WELL DONE" X GOOD LUCK X KINKAID.

10. From Commander CarDiv 24 on shifting his flag from the USS Natoma Bay on which VC 81 was embarked, 8 Feb. 1945.

I REGRET TO LEAVE THE NATOMA BAY WITH THE FINE FIGHTING SPIRIT AND COMBAT EFFICIENCY SHOWN IN A LONG CAMPAIGN X THE AIR AND SHIP PERSONNEL HAVE DONE AN OUTSTANDING JOB OF ENEMY DESTRUCTION X ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS YOUR PLANES HAVE SHOT DOWN ENEMIES ATTEMPTING TO ATTACK X YOU HAVE A GREAT TEAM X WELL DONE X STUMP.

11. From SecNav for carrier support in the Iwo Jima operation 25 Feb. 1945.

CONGRATULATIONS FOR YOUR PART IN THE PERCENT OPERATION X YOU HAVE SUPPORTED THE GROUND FORCES CONTINUOUSLY AND PRECISELY X JAMES FORRESTAL.

12. From Commander aircraft Support Control Units, Iwo Jima operation, 3 Mar. 1945.

EXTREMELY DIFFICULT DIRECT SUPPORT ATTACKS HAVE BEEN EXECUTED IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE FRONT LINES TO THE GROUND TROOPS FULL SATISFACTION X CONGRATULATIONS FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF ALL STRIKE AIRCRAFT X

13. From the Task Group Commander and Commander Escort Carrier Force near the end of the Iwo Jima operation, 4 March 1945.

EACH REPORT FROM THE MARINES ON IWO JIMA CONTINUES TO PRAISE THE EFFICIENT AND SYSTEMATIC DESTRUCTION GIVEN THE JAPANESE FORCES BY THE CVE AIRCRAFT X "WELL DONE" TO EVERY ONE FOR THE DIFFICULT AND CROWDED SCHEDULE YOU HAVE MAINTAINED AND TO THE CVE'S FOR DOING MUCH MORE THAN IS NORMALLY ASSIGNED X UNUSUAL AND SOMETIMES CONFUSED DETAILS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT WITH EXCELLENT SPIRIT TO MAKE A WINNING TEAM X DURGIN.

ENEMY AIRCRAFT DESTROYED

Airborne

1944

25 Oct.	Jill	Ens. Walker
27 Oct.	Tony	Lieut Speirs Lieut Roebuck Ens. Gingrich Ens. Taylor Ens. Huston Ens. Peeler
28 Oct.	Nell	Lieut. Mathson
13 Dec.	Oscar Irving	Lieut. Roebuck Ens. Mount
14 Dec.	Zeke Zeke Zeke Zeke	Lt. (jg) Gingrich Ens. Huston Ens. Therrell Ens. Miller
16 Dec.	Irving	Ens. Tomkins Ens. Miller
	Val	Ens. Clifford.

1945

6 Jan.	Frances Val Val Val Zeke Zeke	LtCdr. Barnes LtCdr. Barnes Lt.(jg) Walker Lt.(jg) Sargent Lt.(jg) Murie Lt.(jg) Huston Barber, AOM3c Hinckley, AOM3c Stowe, AMM2c
9 Jan.	Zeke Zeke Oscar Oscar	Lt. (jg) Greenwalt Lt. (jg) Larsen Lt. (jg) Huston Lt. (jg) Tomkins
3 Jan.	Frances	Lt. (jg) O'Donnell Ens. Gray

On Ground

15 Dec. 1944	Irving Kate Irving Jill	LtCdr. Barnes LtCdr. Barnes Lt. (jg) Walker Lt. (jg) O'Donnell
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DAMAGE TO ENEMY SHIPPING

Sunk

1944

19 Oct.	2 LCM's	Lieut. Hiser
	3 LCM's	Lieut. Auger
	LCM	Lt. (jg) Lindstrom
25 Oct.	ATAGO (CA)	Ens. Gaiennie
		Ens. Voltz
26 Oct.	SHIGURE (DD)	LtCdr. Barnes
		Lieut. Mathson
		Lieut. Roebuck
		Ens. Walker
		Ens. Devlin
		Ens. Mount
		Ens. Peeler

1945

6 Jan.	FTC	Lieut. Reeves
	FTD	Lt. (jg) Gaiennie
	FTD	Lt. (jg) Goodwin
	FTD	Lt. (jg) Praetsch
	SC	Lt.(jg) Voltz
	SC	Lt. (jg) Lindstrom
	SD	Lieut. Reeves
	SD	Lt. (jg) Goodwin

Probably Sunk

1944

19 Oct.	FDT	LtCdr. Barnes
		Ens. Walker
		Ens. O'Donnell
27 Oct.	3 barges	Lieut Spiers
	3 barges	Lieut. Roebuck
	3 barges	Ens. Tate
	3 barges	Ens. Higgins

1945

6 Jan.	FTD	Lieut. Hiser
	FTD	Lt.{jg) Gaiennie
	FTD	Lt. (jg) Praetsch
	SC	Lt. (jg) Gaiennie
	SD	Lieut. Reeves

Damaged

1944

25 Oct.

KONGO (BB)	Lieut. Wavell Lt. (jg) Conner
ATAGO (CA)	Lieut. Morton
TONE (CA)	Lieut. Hiser Lt. (jg) Cady Lt.(jg) Lindstrom
MOGAMI (CA)	Lieut. Skill
KUMA (CL)	Lieut. Reeves Ens. Kesterke
NATORI (CL)	Lt. (jg) Conner Lt.(jg) Cady Ens. Gaiennie
TERUTSUKI(DD)	
SHIGURE (DD)	LtCdr. Barnes Lieut. Speirs Lieut. Mathson Lieut. Roebuck Lt. (jg) Gingrich Ens. Walker Ens. Murie Ens. Sargent Ens. Tate Ens. Higgins Ens. O'Donnell Ens. Peeler
NATORI (CL)	Lieut. Wavell

26 Oct.

27 Oct.

3 SD	Lieut. Speirs
2 SD	Lieut. Roebuck
2 SD	Ens. Tate
2 SD	Ens. Higgins

1945

6 Jan.

FTD	Lieut. Reeves
FTD	Lieut. Hiser
2 FTD	Lt.(jg) Gaiennie
FTD	Lt. (jg) Praetsch
SC	Lieut. Reeves
SC	Lt. (jg) Lindstrom
SC	Lt. (jg) Praetsch
2 SC	Lt. (jg) Goodwin
2 SD	Lieut. Hiser
2 SD	Lt. (jg) Gaiennie
SD	Lt. (jg) Lindstrom

17 Feb.	FTD	Lieut. Speirs
	FTD	Lieut. Roebuck
	TB	Lieut. Speirs
3 Mar.	FTC	Lieut. Roebuck
	FTC	Lt. (jg) Gingrich
	FTC	Lt. (jg) Huston
	FTC	Lt. (jg) Greenwalt
	FTC	Ens. Mount
	TB	Lt. (jg) Larsen
		Ens. Johnstone

STATISTICS

Flight time -

Squadron combat hours	7,297.6
Squadron training hours	9,644.9
Squadron routine patrol	1,616.4
Squadron flight hours	18,558.9

Carrier landings -

Squadron carrier landings	3,190
Barriers crashes VF	21
Barriers crashes VT	2
Barriers crashes-not pilot error	9
Most landings without barrier or deck crash	475

Aircraft losses since commissioning

VF - operational	16
VF - combat	2
VT - operational	5
VT - combat	6
Total operational	21
Total combat	8

Combat data -

Combat sorties - VF	1,434
Combat sorties - VT	819
Total days of combat	71

TABULATIONS

Leyte operation -- 18-30 Oct. 1944:

VF - Sorties	275
Hours	992.8
Average landing interval	41 seconds
Average launching interval	33 seconds
VT - Sorties	162
Hours	541.8
Average landing interval	43 seconds
Average launching interval	50 seconds
(catapult)	
Ammunition expended:	
.50 cal.	87,475 rounds
.30 cal.	1,500 rounds
Rockets expended: 3.5" H.E.	208
Bombs expended:	
100# GP	228
250# GP .	20
500# GP .	80
500# SAP	19
Torpedoes expended	6

Mindoro operation - 13-17 Dec. 1944:

VF - Sorties	133
Hours	477.8
Average landing interval	48 seconds
Average launching interval	32 seconds
VT - Sorties	23
Hours	69.7
Average landing interval	44 seconds
Average launching interval	60 seconds
Ammunition expended:	
.50 cal.	8,000 rounds
.30 cal.	None

Luzon operation - Lingayan Gulf and Subic Bay - 3 Jan.-2 Feb. 1945:

VF - Sorties	542
Hours	1,794.2
Average landing interval	37 seconds
Average launching interval	32 seconds
VT - Sorties	292
Hours	949.8
Average landing interval	46 seconds
Average Launching interval	53 seconds

Ammunition expended:

.50 cal. 47,900 rounds

.30 cal. 1,000 rounds

Rockets expended: 3.5" H.E. 352

Bombs expended:

100# G.P. 287

250# G.P. 60

500# G.P. 120

500# S.A.P. None

Iwo Jima operation--14 Feb.-7 Mar.

1944:

VF - Sorties 484

Hours 1,457.7

Average landing interval 38 seconds

Average launching interval 35 seconds

VT - Sorties 312

Hours 1,013.1

Average landing interval 40 seconds

Average launching interval 47 seconds

Ammunition expended:

.50 cal. 75,000 rounds

.30 cal. 2,000 rounds

Rockets expended: 3.5" H.E. 732

Bombs expended:

100# G.P. 418

250# G.P. 58

500# G.P. 132

500# S.A.P. 12

Napalm 26

ROSTER OF VC 81 PERSONNEL

OFFICERS

Auger, Lieut. John B.
Ausman, Ens. Ralph C.
Barnes, LtCdt. Robert C.
Boldt, Ens. Charles H.
Cady, Lt. (jg) Joseph
Carnes, Ens. Billy S.
Clifford, Ens. John E.

Conner, Lt. (jg) Leon S.
Coughlan, Ens. James F.
Cram, Lt. (jg) Sheldon L.
Devlin, Ens. Walter J.
Fitzhugh, Ens. James L.Jr.
Forbes, Ens. Forrest B.
Gaiennie, Lt(jg) George W.
Garafalo, Ens. Paul C.
Gingrich, Lt(jg) Stewart L.
Glockner, Ens. Edward L.
Goodwin, Lt.(jg) John T.
Goodwin, Ens. Thomas P.
Gray, Ens. John E.
Greenwalt, Lt(jg) Robert R.
Hard, Ens. Edward H.
Hatch, Ens. Harriman H.
Higgins, Lt. (jg) Edward J.
Hiser, Lieut. Wilbur F.
Holton, Lt.(jg) Lloyd S.
Hunter, Lieut. Adrian C.
Huston, Lt.(jg) James M.
Johnstone, Ens. Daryl V.
Kesterke, Ens. Gordon W.
Larsen, Lt.(jg) Jack A.
Lindstrom, Lt.(jg) Ross A.

Looney, Lieut. Jack L.
Mack, LtCdr. Quentin W.
Mann, Ens. William M.
Marek, Ens. John P.
Markley, Lieut. Truman W.
Mathson, Lieut. William L.
Jr.
McFarland, Ens. Robert D.

ENLISTED MEN

Baker, Kenneth M., ARTlc
Barber, "J" "D", AOM3c
Ballard, Thomas E., AMM3c
Bianco, Felix, AMM3c
Bonnette, Davis J., AMMlc
Bosze, Joseph, AOM2c
Brucklacher, Edgar R.,
AMM2c
Bullis, Donald E., ARM3c
Cole, Merton C., ARM2c
Comrie, Gordon K., AMM2c
Coon, Morris E., ARM2c
Courier, Charles D., ARM3c
Cresci, Gordon Max., AOM3c
Dayis, Ralph E. Jr., AOM2c
DeLaura, Edward V., ARM2c
Diamond, George J., ARM3c
Donovan, John J ., ARM2c
Fitts, Glenn L., AOMlc
Garrison, Earl R., PRlc
Hamilton, Jay R., AMM3c
Hannaman, Robert D., AMM2c
Hawkos, Alton V., ARM2c
Hendricks, Oliver G., AOM2c
Hicks, James E., ARM2c
Hillen, Samuel J ., AMM3c
Hill, Louis K., AMM2c
Hinckley, Horace V., AMM3c
Huffman, Harry "H", AOM2c
Hyatt, Merle L., AOMlc
James, Edmund H. ARM3c
Kelley, Wayne R., ARM3c
Klaassen, Theodore K.,
AMM2c
Lee, Harry A., AMM3c
Machin, Robert R., AOM2c
Malloy, Bernard J., AOM2c
Marshall, Everett L. ACRM
Margadonna, Italo G. ACMM
Markert, Walter J., ARM3c

Mason, Edward W., Aemlc

OFFICERS (continued)

McMahon, Ens. James J.
Morton, LtCdr. William B.

Mount, Ens. Robert
Murie, Lt(jg) Robert A.
Nielson, Ens. John W.
O'Donnell, Lt.(jg) John
Parker, Ens. Robert L.
Peeler, Ens. Billie R.
Reeves, Lieut. Roy S.
Praetsch, Lt.(jg) Robert C.
Roebuck, Lieut. Mac J.

Sampson, Ens. Russell
Sargent, Lt.(jg) John P.
Jr.
Sims, Ens. Eugene P.
Skill, Lieut. Wesley E.
Spiers, Lieut. Carl L.
Stratton, Ens. Elmer G.

Sturdy, Lt.(jg) Don W.
Swint, Ens. George III
Tate, Lt.(jg) Claude D.
Taylor, Lt.(jg) Robert P.
Therrell, Lt(jg) Bradford.
L.
Tomkins, Lt.(jg) Lewis A.
Valpey, Ens. Daniel P.
Voltz, Lt.(jg) Robert F.
Walker, Lt.(jg) Ralph L.
Wavell, Lieut. Kenneth E.
Wilson, Ens. Earl V.
Wilson, Ens. William J.
Duttin, Ens. Robert E.
Freeman, Ens. James

ENLISTED MEN (continued)

Matusoff, Marvin H., ARM2c
McDonald, Bertram A., Jr.,
ARM1c
McDonald, Ismael R., AOM3c
Nause, Merle E., ARM3c
Neese, George H., AMM3c
Nelson, Robert A., ARM3c
Oda, Marvin L., AMM2c
Olijar, John, ARM3c
Payne, Charles A., Y1c
Petersen, Robert "M", ARM3c
Pritchard, William A.,
AMM2c
Pyatt, Leon A., ARM3c
Reilly, James F., AMM3c

Remme, Myron K., ARM3c
Robson, John G., AMM3c
Roux, Lorne E., ACMM
Schrambeck, Edward J.,
ARM3c
Smith, Frank L., AMM1c
Stowe, Bill Jr., AMM2c
Sullivan, John T., ACM
Sweeney, Michael D., ARM1c
Vaughan, Carl C., ARM2c

VC 81 COMMISSIONING

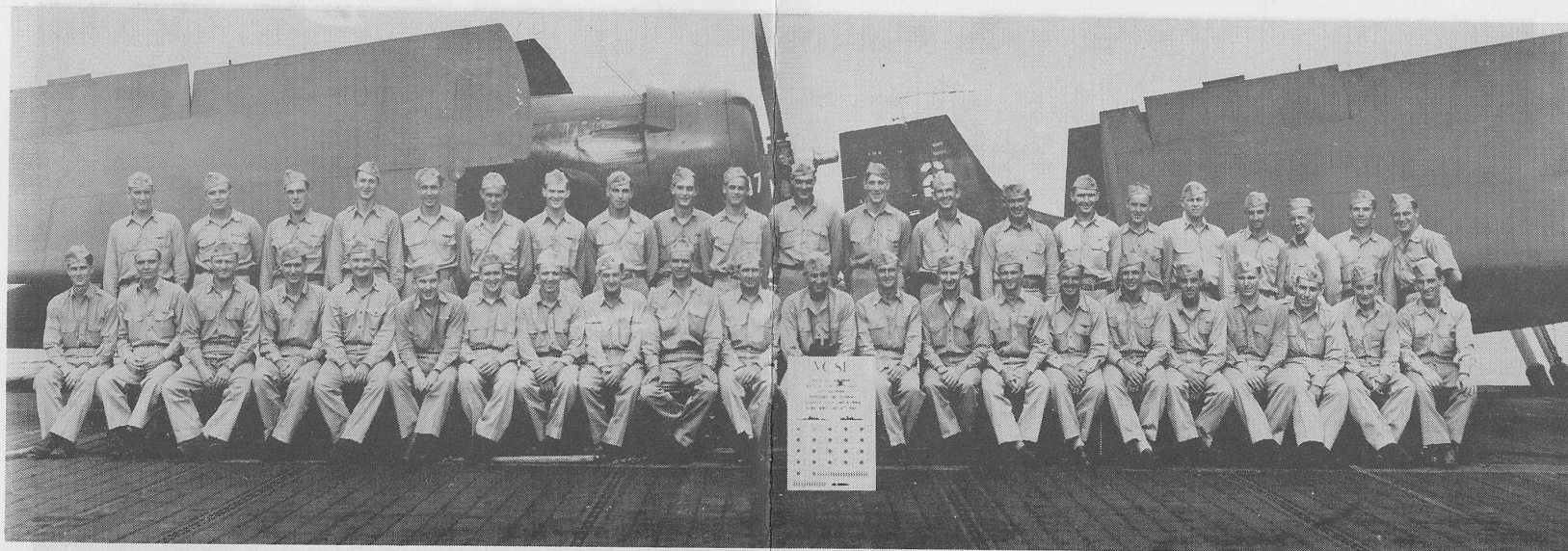


SQUADRON VC 81 COMMISSIONING

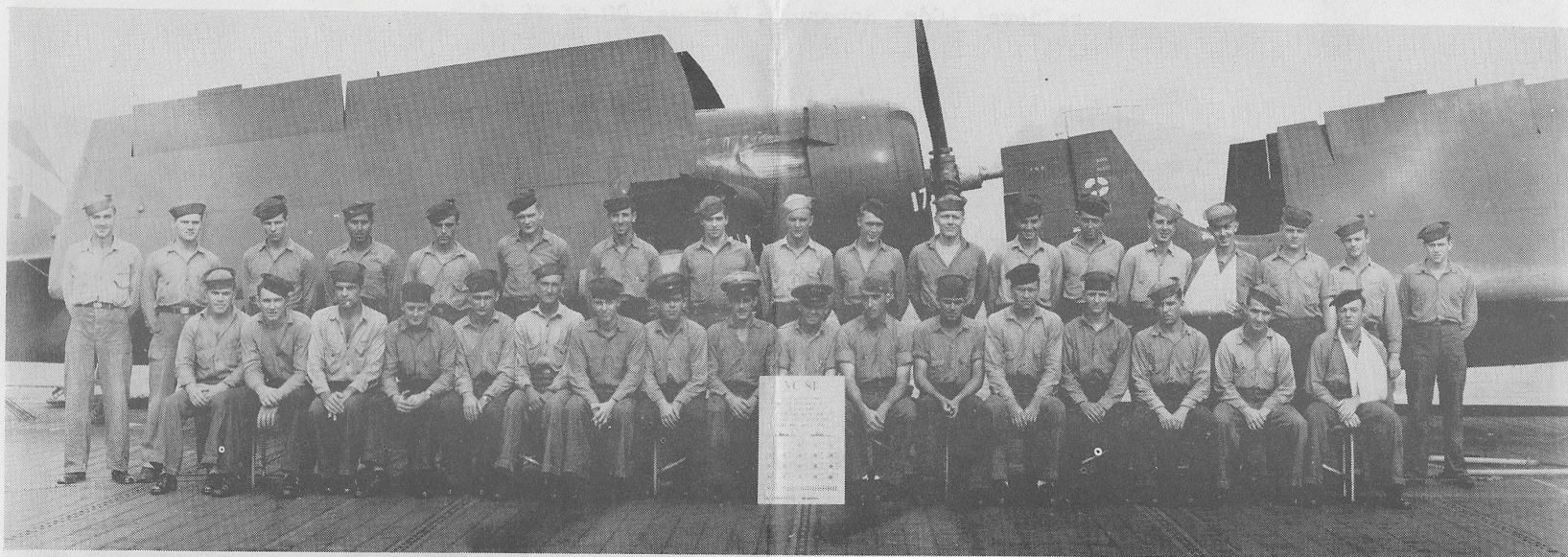
N.A.S., Seattle, Wash. 22 December 1943

Front row, seated: Tate, Larson, Reeves, Weyell, Marshall, McNamee, Ayer, Hutton, Tomkins, Skell, Norton, Capt.
Row 2, standing: Barnes, Kester, Volter, Brewster, Gingham, Higgins, Gram, Gaby, Wark
Back row, standing: Goodwin, Lindstrom, Goodwin, Gray, Riser, O'Donnell, Sampson, Mount, Roehrk, Mure,
Boyle, Taylor, Spahr, Watson, Walker, Greenwalt, Johnson, Calanite

VC 81 OFFICERS



Front row, seated: Tate, Larsen, Reeves, Wavell, Markley, McMahon, Auger, Huston, Tomkins, Skill, Morton, Capt. Morehouse, Barnes, Kesterke, Voltz, Praetsch, Gingrich, Higgins, _____. Cram, Cady, Marek
 Back row, standing: Goodwin, Lindstrom, Goodwin, Gray, _____, Hiser, O'Donnell, Sampson, Mount, Roebuck, Murie, Boldt, _____, Taylor, Speirs, _____, Mathson, Walker, Greenwalt, Johnstone, Gaiennie



VC 81 ENLISTED PERSONNEL

7 Feb. 1945 Capt. A. K. Morehouse observes as LCdr. William B. Morton
relieves LCdr. Robert C. Barnes, CO of VC 81

