

**CONFIDENTIAL**

ACTION REPORT

**DECLASSIFIED**

ORIGINAL

USS SUWANNEE

CVE 27

SERIAL 069

2 OCTOBER 1944

ACTION REPORT MARIANAS OPERATION

[ COVERS 3 PHASES OF MARIANAS OPERATION AS  
PART OF CARRIER DIVISION 22. REPORT COVERS  
15 JUNE-1 AUGUST 1944. ]

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IN REPLY REFER  
TO No.

CVE27/ A12-1  
(95-hlr)  
Serial ~~069~~

U. S. S. SUWANNEE  
(CVE-27)

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DECLASSIFIED - OPNAV INST 5500.30  
BY *18 K...* DATE *20 AUG 57*

c/o Fleet Post Office,  
San Francisco, Calif.,

2 OCT 1944

From: The Commanding Officer.  
To: Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.  
Via: (1) Commander Task Group 53.7.  
(2) Commander Task Force 53.  
(3) Commander Fifth Fleet.  
(4) Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Action Report, Marianas Operation.

Reference: (a) PacFlt conf. ltr. 2CL-44.

1. In compliance with reference (a), and enclosure (C) of reference (a), the following report is submitted:

PART I

1. U.S.S. SUWANNEE, as part of Task Group 53.7, furnished air support for the Marianas Operation from 12 June to 1 August, 1944, including close support of ground forces on Saipan and for the landings and subsequent operations on Guam. During the period 12th to 20th of June, SUWANNEE maintained air combat patrols and anti-submarine patrols over Task Groups 53.1 and 53.2. From the 21st of June to 4 July SUWANNEE, as part of Task Group 52.14, engaged in close support of ground troops on Saipan and furnished aircraft for strikes against Tinian; it also maintained air cover during part of this period for Task Unit 52.17.8. From 7 July to 1 August SUWANNEE, again as part of Task Group 53.7, participated in the Guam attack, furnishing close support missions, strikes, target and carrier combat air patrols and anti-submarine patrols and special missions such as photographic, air observer and artillery spotter flights.

Statistical Summary of Operations.

A. Enroute to Saipan from Eniwetok, 12th to 20th of June.

1. SORTIES: Total 230.

| STRIKES |    | CAP | ASP | H/K | PHOTO |    | MISC. |    |
|---------|----|-----|-----|-----|-------|----|-------|----|
| VF      | VT |     |     |     | VF    | VT | VF    | VT |
| 0       | 0  | 118 | 112 | -   | -     | -  | -     | -  |

2. Total hours flown: VF 637.4 VT 245.4  
3. Average time per pilot: VF 20.56 VT 17.6

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4. Own aviation personnel losses:

| Pilot                     | <u>COMBAT</u> |      | Pilot | <u>OPERATIONAL</u> |      | Total |
|---------------------------|---------------|------|-------|--------------------|------|-------|
|                           |               | Crew |       |                    | Crew |       |
| -                         |               | -    | 1     | 2                  | 3    |       |
| (Shot down by own forces) |               |      |       |                    |      |       |

5. Own aircraft losses:

| VF | <u>Combat</u> |    | VF | <u>Operational</u> |    | Total |
|----|---------------|----|----|--------------------|----|-------|
|    |               | VT |    |                    | VT |       |
| -  |               | -  | -  | 1                  | 1  |       |

6. Bombs dropped on targets in tons: 1400 lb.(Depth bombs).

B. Air support at Saipan, 21st June to 4th July.

1. SORTIES: Total 397.

| <u>STRIKES</u> |    | <u>CAP</u> | <u>ASP</u> | <u>H/K</u> | <u>PHOTO</u> |    | <u>MISC</u> |    |
|----------------|----|------------|------------|------------|--------------|----|-------------|----|
| VF             | VT |            |            |            | VF           | VT | VF          | VT |
| 125            | 2  | 128        | 137        | -          | -            | 1  | 1           | 9  |

2. Total hours flown: VF 801.2 VT 567.5

3. Average time per pilot: VF 26.26 VT 26.88

4. Own Aviation personnel losses:

| Pilot | <u>COMBAT</u> |      | Pilot | <u>OPERATIONAL</u> |      | Total |
|-------|---------------|------|-------|--------------------|------|-------|
|       |               | Crew |       |                    | Crew |       |
| 1     |               | -    | -     |                    | -    | 1     |

5. Own aircraft losses:

| VF | <u>COMBAT</u> |    | VF | <u>OPERATIONAL</u> |    | Total |
|----|---------------|----|----|--------------------|----|-------|
|    |               | VT |    |                    | VT |       |
| 2  |               | -  | -  | 1                  | 3  |       |

6. Bombs dropped on targets in tons: 46.

C. Enroute to and air support at Guam, 10th July to 1st August.

1. SORTIES: Total 776.

| <u>STRIKES</u> |    | <u>CAP</u> | <u>ASP</u> | <u>H/K</u> | <u>PHOTO</u> |    | <u>MISC</u> |    |
|----------------|----|------------|------------|------------|--------------|----|-------------|----|
| VF             | VT |            |            |            | VF           | VT | VF          | VT |
| 284            | 45 | 231        | 162        | 2          | -            | 5  | 11          | 36 |



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2. Total hours flown: VF 1880.8 VT 797.2
3. Average time per pilot: VF 62.6 VT 61.3
4. Own aviation personnel losses:

| <u>COMBAT</u> |      | <u>OPERATIONAL</u> |      | Total |
|---------------|------|--------------------|------|-------|
| Pilot         | Crew | Pilot              | Crew |       |
| -             | -    | -                  | -    | -     |

5. Own aircraft losses:

| <u>COMBAT</u> |    | <u>OPERATIONAL</u> |    | Total |
|---------------|----|--------------------|----|-------|
| VF            | VT | VF                 | VT |       |
| -             | 1  | 3                  | -  | 4     |

6. Bombs dropped on targets in tons: 137.

Grand totals for period, 12th June to 1st August.

1. Total sorties: 1409 VF 898 VT 511.
2. Total hours flown: 4929.5 VF 3319.4 VT 1610.1
3. Average time per pilot: VF 108.9 VT 105.8
4. Own personnel losses: Total 4.  
 Combat: 1 pilot  
 Operational: 1 pilot, 2 crewmen
5. Aircraft losses: Total 8.  
 Combat: 2 VF, 1 VT  
 Operational: 3 VF, 2 VT
6. Bombs dropped: 284 tons.

PART II

(a) At 1310L on 2 June, 1944, SUWANNEE departed Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides Islands, for Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands, in accordance with CTG 53.7 Movement Order 5-44, in company with SANGAMON, CHENANGO, ABBOT, ERBEN, HALE, WALKER, FULLER and HUDSON. SANTEE, POCOMOKE, BENNETT, GUEST and HALFORD joined the formation at 1700L. CTG 53.7 in SANGAMON. TG 53.7 joined TG 53.1 with CTF in APPALACHIAN on the way to Kwajalein. Routine air operations were conducted. TG 53.7 anchored at Kwajalein Atoll on 8 June.



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(b) See Action Report, Marianas Operation, of Commander Task Group 53.7.

(c) See Action Report, Marianas Operation, of Commander Task Group 53.7.

(d) See Aircraft Action Report, Marianas Operation, Air Group SIXTY, forwarded 17 August, 1944.

On 26 June at 2302K a twin-engined enemy plane made a run on SUWANNEE off the coast of Saipan (Lat. 14° 55'N; Long. 146° 06.2' E) and dropped torpedo, bomb or mine 500 yards off the starboard beam which SUWANNEE avoided by hard left turn. Although splash was seen and heard, there was no later explosion possibly indicating a "dud". The plane passed over the bow and retired in a northerly direction. At 2350K a second plane which had been orbiting near the formation approached and was shot down by the screen.

(e) See Action Report, Marianas Operation, of Commander Task Group 53.7.

1. 12 June to 20 June, 1944. Enroute to Saipan.

12 June As part of TG 53.7, SUWANNEE at 0710L departed South Anchorage, Kwajalein, in accordance with CTF 53 Movement Order A163-44, in company with SANGAMON (CTG53.7), CHENANGO, HALE, ABBOT, ERBEN, WALKER as Task Group 53.7.

13 June Conducted air operations, CAP and ASP over TG 53.1.

14 June Conducted air operations, CAP and ASP over TG 53.2.

15 June Conducted air operations, CAP and ASP over TG 53.1 and TG 53.7. At 1025K L.T. Bingham, AOM3c, turret gunner in a TBM1C, piloted by Ensign H.G. Jedlund, USNR., shot down a Betty 25 miles from the formation.

16 June Conducted air operations, ASP and CAP over TG 53.2; launched a special 2 VT, 2 VF anti-snooper patrol. At 1015K Ensign K.N. Montgomery, USNR., in a F6F-3 shot down a Betty. At 1443K Ensign R.A. Singleton, USNR., in a F6F-3 shot down a Betty while flying CAP over TG 53.2. At 1351K formation went to General Quarters, SUWANNEE launching 8 VF which intercepted and determined unidentified planes were friendly.



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- 17 June Launched 2 VT, 2 VF anti-snooper patrol for evening sweep.
- 18 June Conducted air operations, ASP and CAP over TG 53.2. At 2254K SUWANNEE went to General Quarters, radar contact later fading from screen.
- 19 June Ship fueled five DDs, launched 7 VF, 7 VT for evening sweep.
- 20 June U.S.S. ENOREE fueled SUWANNEE. Conducted air operations, ASP and CAP over TG 53.1. Shortly after 0600K Lieutenant (jg) Paul Higginbotham, USNR., pilot of a TBM1C and crewmen W.V. Barlow, ARM3c, R.L. Wolfe, AOM2c, were shot down by a Task Group of our own forces while flying ASP. They were not recovered. [See Pages 13, 14]
2. 21 June to 4 July, 1944. Air support of Saipan.
- 21 June At 0800K joined Task Group 52.14 (Rear Admiral G.F. Bogan in WHITE PLAINS). With SANGAMON and screen received new Task Unit designation TU 52.11.2 (CTU 52.11.2, Rear Admiral V.H. Ragsdale). Launched local ASP and CAP and target CAP over Saipan and Tinian. When relieved, target CAP bombed and strafed assigned targets on Saipan, as did a special strike mission.
- 22 June Launched local ASP and CAP and target CAP. Ensign P.C. Finley, USNR., in an F6F-3, while flying with SANGAMON CAP, was officially given an assist in shooting down a Judy.
- 23 June Launched strike against Saipan anti-aircraft and strike against Tinian airdromes. Lieutenant (jg) John D. Shea, USNR., in an F6F-3 made a forced landing on Aslito airfield, Saipan, when plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire. The plane and pilot later returned.
- 24 June Launched target ASP, strike against Tinian airfields, strike on Rota and a photographic mission with fighter cover for Guam.
- 25 June Conducted air operations including target ASP and two strikes on Tinian airfields. Lieutenant (jg) John C. Simpson, USNR., in an F6F-3 was shot down by anti-aircraft, his body recovered and buried on Saipan. [See Pages 13, 14]



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- 26 June Ship launched local ASP, strike against Tinian airfields. Two F6F-3s were hit by anti-aircraft and forced to land at Aslito Field, Saipan. One VF was recovered. No personnel injuries. At 2302K SUWANNEE went to General Quarters because of unidentified plane on screen. An enemy twin-engined plane came in low as the formation maneuvered evasively and, when sighted was about 75 feet off the water and 1000 yards off the starboard bow. At 500 yards the plane dropped a torpedo, mine or bomb, assumed to be a "dud" because no explosion followed. Plane zoomed over SUWANNEE'S bow, retiring in a northerly direction. At the time of the run SUWANNEE was off the coast of Saipan (Lat. 14° 55' N; Long. 146° 06.2' E). Course was 170°, swinging to 095° at time of drop. Plane course was about 070°. SUWANNEE did not fire. At 2350K a second plane approached the formation and was shot down by the screen.
- 27 June Flew local ASP, launched strike against Tinian airfields. Lieutenant E.A. Fischer, USNR., in an F6F-3 was hit by anti-aircraft and forced down at Saipan. Plane was repaired and recovered. No personnel injuries.
- 28 June Proceeded to Garapan Anchorage, Saipan, and received ammunition. With SANGAMON and screen assumed new Task Unit designation, TU 52.14.3 (Rear Admiral Ragsdale, CTU 52.14.3 in SANGAMON). Proceeded from Saipan to rendezvous with TU 52.17.8. At 2312K SUWANNEE went to General Quarters as an unidentified plane approached. The formation apparently was undiscovered.
- 29-30 June Launched CAP and ASP over TU 52.17.8 and TG 53.2.
- 1 July Conducted air operations, ASP and CAP over carriers and TU 52.17.8. A TBM1C piloted by Ensign H.G. Jedlund, USNR., crashed into the water after catapult launching, pilot and crew being recovered by screen
- 2 July Fueled 5 DDs of screen.
- 3 July Maintained ASP and CAP over carriers and TU 52.17.8.
- 4 July Departed from TU 52.17.8, again assuming designation TG 53.7 (CTG 53.7 in SANGAMON).
- 5 July Launched ASP and CAP over carriers.



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- 7 July Anchored Eniwetok.
- 9 July U.S.S. BULLWHEEL and U.S.S. ARETHUMA fueled SUWANNEE.
3. 10 July to 1 August, 1944. Air support of Guam.
- 10 July In accordance with dispatch orders got underway at 0546L, assuming designation TU 53.7.1 (CTU 53.7.1 in SANGAMON).
- 11 July Flew ASP and CAP over formation.
- 12 July Maintained ASP and CAP over own force.
- 13 July Launched local ASP and CAP. Launched fighter-bomber strikes against Orote airfield and Adelup Point, Guam. Lieutenant (jg) Quinn LaFargue, USNR., in an F6F-3 crashed into sea after waveoff. The pilot was recovered.
- 14 July Launched target CAP and ASP, flights striking designated targets on Guam when relieved on station.
- 15 July Maintained target CAP and ASP. Launched strike Guam installations and airstrips.
- 16 July Maintained ASP and CAP over carriers. Inaugurated Marine air observer and artillery spotter flights over Guam.
- 17 July Launched local and target ASP and CAP, all striking designated targets on Guam when relieved. Strike was made on enemy installations.
- 18 July Maintained local and target ASP and CAP. Launched special smoke mission. An F6F-3 piloted by Ensign B.L. McManemin was forced by engine failure to land in water off east coast of Guam, screen recovering pilot. A TBM1C piloted by Lieutenant (jg) Paul Golsh, USNR., was hit by anti-aircraft fire, injuring C.J. Parks, ARMLc, seriously, and H.D. Booz, AOM2c. Golsh, unable to land on the carrier, flew to Saipan to secure medical aid.
- 19 July Proceeded to Garapan Anchorage, Saipan, for ammunition, returning to the Task group the same evening.



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20 July Local and target CAP and ASP were maintained. Two strikes were made against enemy installations. F6F-3 piloted by Lieutenant (jg) John D. Shea, USNR., crashed in the water after a waveoff, the screen recovering the pilot.

21 July Launched fighter-bomber strikes in support of troops landing on Guam.

22 July Flew local CAP. Launched several special missions and two bombing missions over Guam.

23 July Conducted air operations, local ASP and CAP, with patrols striking designated targets when relieved from stations. A TBM1C piloted by Lieutenant (jg) W.C. Keller, USNR., and crew with a Marine Observer made a forced landing in water, all rescued.

24 July ASP and CAP flown and six strikes launched against Guam.

25 July U.S.S. SAUGATUCK fueled SUWANNEE. Launched strike against Rota airstrip and installations.

26 July Six strikes were made against Guam; target ASP and CAP also supported troops when relieved from patrols.

27 July Rear Admiral T.L. Sprague relieved Rear Admiral V.H. Ragsdale as CTG 53.7 and CTU 53.7.1. Two strikes were launched against Guam; local ASP planes were used on support missions.

28 July Loaded ammunition at Saipan Harbor, Saipan. Proceeded to rendezvous with TG 53.7.

29 July Launched five strikes against Guam installations and enemy troops.

30 July Maintained local CAP, launched strike against Guam.

31 July Two strikes were made on Guam.

1 August Launched strike on Guam. In company with TG 53.7 departed Guam for Eniwetok.

4 August Arrived Eniwetok.

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7 August Task Group dissolved.

PART V

(c) See Aircraft Action Reports, Air Group SIXTY, Marianas  
Operation, forwarded 17 August, 1944.

*W.D. Johnson*  
W.D. JOHNSON.

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