

CHAPTER III - OPERATIONS OF GROUP TASK UNITS.

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NAAF Beverly, Mass.

During March the following services were rendered and facilities furnished heavier-than-air units of the Fleet and visiting aircraft generally in addition to routine patrols of Coast Guard aircraft:

Serviced 41 Fleet aircraft.  
Serviced 83 Coast Guard aircraft.  
Serviced 10 Army aircraft.  
Serviced 7 Station aircraft.

Repaired 4 Fleet aircraft requiring 4 3/4 man-hours.

Field used by 231 VF-21, VT-21, VT-39 and VT-151 aircraft -  
Glide angle calibration, dive bombing and FCLP.  
Field used by 38 aircraft of VS-31 - patrol and escort.  
Field used by 49 miscellaneous Fleet aircraft.  
Field used by 18 Army aircraft.  
Field used by 8 Coast Guard aircraft - Air/Sea Rescue  
missions.  
Field used by 116 miscellaneous Navy and Coast Guard  
aircraft, including 2 helicopters.

(b) ZP-11 Blimp Squadron, South Weymouth, Mass.

Ships available during the month were:

K-15  
K-19 transferred to NAS, Lakehurst, 18 March.  
K-50  
K-61  
K-69  
K-82 received from Blimp Hedron ONE, 17 March.  
K-92  
K-100  
K-124

Blimp Squadron ELEVEN operates from NAS South Weymouth, under Commander Task Group 02.1.3 (Commander Northern Air Unit), Commander Task Group 02.1 (Commander Northern Group) and Commander Task Force 02 (Commander Eastern Sea Frontier). This Blimp Squadron has no subordinate units, but operates ZNP K-type airships assigned to it by Commander Fleet Airships, ATLANTIC.

Armament and equipment, so far, has varied with the different blimps. In general, they carry two free .30 cal. machine guns, one fore, and one aft, four 325 pounds depth

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charges set for 50 feet, MAD equipment, Radio (2 transmitters), and Radar. Fuel load usually carried is 600 gallons, the exact volume varying between 500 and 700 gallons, according to the estimated duration of each patrol. Blimps are able to operate for as long as 48 hours if necessary. (For full details on these blimps, see Chapter IV, page 5, "History of Group One Operations" which was included as Annex A (No. 7) of the December '42 War Diary.)

Because of unfavorable weather conditions all flying was secured on 7 days: March 3, 6, 7, 11, 16, 21, and 22.

This Squadron made a total of 87 flights which were subdivided as follows:

Escort	6
Night Escort	5
Patrol	31
Night Patrol	10
Training	22
Others	13
	87
Total	87

In March when 809 hours were spent in the air, 657 at sea, and 501 on mission; 61 vessels were escorted. Of the total 33557 miles flown, 27345 were flown over water.

The following ammunition was expended for training and operational purposes:

<u>.50 cal.</u>	<u>.30 cal.</u>	<u>Miniature Bombs</u>
1740 rds.	112 rds.	6
<u>MK-17 DC's</u>	<u>Float Lights</u>	<u>Bronze Slicks</u>
37	208	105

Special Accounts

On 25 March the K-69 took off on a special patrol in the area 43-35N, 67-50W where surface craft had made what appeared to be a good sound contact with a U-Boat. Upon arrival the K-69 reported to ComDesron 17 and was instructed to make an MAD search over the point of contact. The K-69 did so with negative results.

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Meanwhile because of probable activity of enemy submarines in the Bay of Maine and the possibility of extended operations north of 43-00, two air crews were sent from South Weymouth to the Advanced Base at Brunswick, Maine, and the K-69 was ordered to land there. The K-69 landed at 1942Q, refueled, and took off again at 2050Q and reported again to ComDesron 17. At 0230 the K-69 sighted a long narrow oil slick extending 4 to 5 miles. An MAD search produced negative results as did a sonobuoy dropped at the southeast corner of the slick.

On 26-28 March ships operating from South Weymouth maintained barrier patrols at designated areas across the approaches to Massachusetts Bay and operated on several missions with Desron 17 and CortDiv 35, investigating promising sound contacts of surface craft and other aircraft.

The K-100 on 29 March was in the area of 43-07N, 69-03W at 1800, standing by while SC-1280 and SC-1301 developed a sound contact. At 1830 the K-100 began making MAD runs over the area of the sound contact and dropped a Float Light to mark the spot of a doubtful signal which, however, coincided with the sound contacts of the SCs. Both SCs layed depth charge patterns over the area with no observable results.

On 30 March the K-50 proceeding from base to Cashes Ledge to report to CortDiv 35, sighted what appeared to be a submerging periscope at 1525Q at a distance of about two miles. The ship altered course for the point of the sighting (42-52N 69-08W) and laid down a sonobuoy pattern. Strong positive propeller beats were heard on four of the buoys. Revolutions of propeller were clocked twice at 240 RPM and 230 RPM and the speed estimated at 8 knots. The intensity of the sonobuoy reception gradually diminished until contact was lost. MAD runs produced negative results. At 1635 CortDiv 35 instructed the K-50 to stay with the contact and continue to search. At 2010, without further contact, the K-50 was relieved by the K-69 and returned to base.

No further contacts were obtained in this area. The K-50's sighting was evaluated by CESF and Cominch as probable.