

CHAPTER III - OPERATIONS OF GROUP TASK UNITS. C. Northern Air Group.

- 1 - PBM-3s #6581 at Norfolk for interim overhaul since 25 August, 1944.
- 2 - JRF-5 amphibian planes
Fuel capacity of 220 gals., with bomb load.
Armament 2 325 lb. depth bombs.
- 1 - SNJ-5 landplane
Fuel capacity of 110 gals.

All planes departing on patrols or special missions are fueled to capacity for full bomb load, except the JRF-2, which is fueled to 170 gals. when the flight is not of greater duration than three hours. The OS2U-3's do not have the free machine gun installed because of resulting additional weight. PBM-3S seaplanes carried 6 depth bombs on patrol during this period.

The amphibian aircraft are normally based and operated from the Beverly Airport, Beverly, Massachusetts, a Naval Auxiliary Air Facility of Naval Air Station, Squantum, Massachusetts.

In addition to its routine patrols this Squadron completed three escort missions and two special. Because of adverse weather conditions it was necessary to cancel all flights on six days: October 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

On 21 October the following orders were received: "CESF has directed that this unit no longer will be used as an anti-submarine patrol station. It is directed to prepare for air-sea rescue operations. Bomb racks are to be left on planes and all planes are to be kept in readiness for immediate conversion back to anti-submarine status if the need arises."

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

Ships available during the month were:

K-15	K-34
K-25	K-19
K-27	K-69

Wreck of K-9 sent to Lakehurst 12 October.

Blimp Squadron ELEVEN operates from NAS South Weymouth, under Commander Task Group O2.1.3 (Commander Northern Air Group), Commander Task Group O2.1 (Commander Northern Group) and Com-

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mander Task Force O2 (Commander Eastern Sea Frontier). This BlimpRon 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 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 poor weather conditions all flying was secured on nine days: October 8, 9, 14, 15, 19, 21, 27, 28, and 29.

This Squadron made a total of 91 flights which were subdivided as follows:

Escort	12
Night Escort	9
Patrol	35
Training	27
Others	8
	91

During the month when 844 hours were spent in the air, 665 at sea, and 476 hours on mission; 56 vessels were escorted. A total of 35519 miles was flown; of these 29095 were flown over water.

The following ammunition was expended for training and operational purposes:

<u>.50 cal. M/G</u>	<u>.30 cal. M/G</u>	<u>Miniature Bombs</u>
3475 rds.	1740 rds.	423
<u>Smoke Floats</u>	<u>Bronze Slicks</u>	<u>MK-47 DC's</u>
138	146	8
	<u>MK-17 DC's</u>	
	42	

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On October 23 the K-25, Ensign G.R. Anderson, USNR pilot, on routine Queen patrol was diverted at 1200Q and ordered to search for survivors of an SBD which had crashed at sea South of Nantucket. At 1551Q in 40-52 69-14 a raft was sighted containing two apparently uninjured survivors. Planes were on the scene circling the raft. The K-25 dropped its own raft and the survivors were seen to change from their raft to the larger airship raft. By means of hand signals and megaphone the K-25 led the Fishing Vessel Jerry and Jenny #244519 to the scene from a position three miles away. The survivors were taken aboard the Fishing Vessel at 1615Q. The K-25 then stood by the Fishing Vessel until the survivors were transferred to the Army Crash Boat #C-39069 at 1735Q.

Meanwhile at 1599Q the K-27, Lt. Commander C.A. Bolam, USN, Pilot took-off for the scene with gear aboard to pick up survivors if crashboats could not reach the scene before dark. The K-27 arrived at the scene at 1725 by which time the survivors had been picked up by the Fishing Vessel.

On October 31 after an inspection of the Squadron in front of Hangar No. 2, Lieutenant Commander J.F. Pear, USNR assumed command of Blimp Squadron ELEVEN. Lieutenant Commander C.A. Bolam, USN, who had been in command of Blimp Squadron ELEVEN since 29 March 1944, read his orders detaching him from the squadron. Lieutenant Commander Pear, the new commanding officer, had been executive officer of the squadron throughout the command of Lieutenant Commander Bolam.