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III. MISCELLANEOUS

1. SALVAGE OPERATIONS OF MIG-15

When the MIG-15 appeared in Korean skies, the immediate need for knowledge of performance, capabilities, and characteristics of this enemy fighter became apparent. The only known data concerning the swept-wing jet was locked behind the Iron Curtain, pictures and appearances outside the USSR and satellites were practically nil. The United Nations forces were alerted to report crash landings of aircraft in any vicinity, hoping to be able to recover sufficient parts of a MIG for study. On 17 April 1951, Fifth Air Force recovered a few components in a salvage operation and a great deal of information was gained, but complete analysis was not possible.

In an aerial encounter on 9 July 1951, involving a flight of the 4th Fighter Interceptor Wing, an enemy pilot was observed landing in the water on the west coast of Korea, northwest of Pyongyang, after bailing out of a MIG-15. On 13 July, British Naval aircraft sighted a swept-wing aircraft crashed in shallow water in the vicinity where the bail-out had occurred. Pictures were taken by these aircraft from HMS GLORY, and forwarded to Deputy for Intelligence, Far East Air Forces. These photographs revealed the crashed aircraft was in two segments on sand banks, not far from shore. This information was immediately passed to Fifth Air Force who dispatched an RF-80 to the scene and initiated action by their Special Activities Unit #1. The RF-80 was hampered by weather over the area and the boat dispatched to the area by S.A. Unit #1 was unable to locate the wreckage due to fog and tides. High tide covered the aircraft completely and low tide made it impossible for surface craft to reach it. Elements of weather and tides hampered this salvage operation throughout.

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Salvage Operations of MIG-15 (Cont'd)

The US Naval Liaison Officer, JOC, contacted HMS KENYA, and arranged for representatives of South Korean Navy, EUSAK and Fifth Air Force to confer with members of the Royal Navy aboard HMS CARDIGAN BAY. Plans for Operation MIG were outlined; when concluded, Rear Admiral Scott-Moncreiff, RN, Commander Task Force 95 signalled Major General Everest, Commanding General, Fifth Air Force that salvage operations would commence as soon as practicable and the FAF representatives would return to his headquarters to brief him concerning the details.

Brigadier General Whitty, Commanding General, 2d Engineer Special Brigade, had informed Fifth Air Force that he would furnish special gear such as LCM's, LCU's, pontoons, derrick equipment, divers, underwater demolition charges and personnel as was desired for this operation. Fifth Air Force was requested to furnish high air CAP and HMS GLORY would furnish low air CAP: USS SICILY would relieve HMS GLORY if the operation was of long duration. HMS KENYA would remain at sea northwest of the area as early radar warning during the period. HMS CARDIGAN BAY would remain in the area in charge of the operation, while ROK Navy PML 302 would lead the special recovery LCU, fitted with a low crane, up the inner passage starting from Cho-Do after dark 18 July 1951. Brigadier General Doyle, Commanding General, FEAMCOM, would dispatch a processing team to K-14 with special handling and packaging equipment, aboard two C-119 aircraft, to return recovered material to Japan, for trans-shipment to Wright Patterson AFB.

Due to unforeseen difficulties and hardships caused by shallow water, swift tides, weather and mechanical troubles, some delays were experienced. However, the splendid cooperation of all agencies engaged in Operation MIG

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Salvage Operations of MIG-15. (Cont'd)

was most commendable. One incident that exemplifies this spirit of cooperation was evidenced when foreseeing a delay, Brigadier General Whitty requested assistance from naval forces at Inchon. The USN immediately furnished LSD 27 to transport LSU 960 to the salvage area, avoiding a delay that would have caused all forces to be subjected to longer exposure and hazards in enemy waters, easily in range of his guns and hostile aircraft.

The task force moved to the rendezvous point on 18 July 1951 and proceeded to Cho-Do Island. At 0625, 20 July 1951, it departed from Cho-Do and arrived a short distance from the target area by 1245. Fifth Air Force fighters arrived and continued top cover during daylight hours throughout the operation. Two fighters and the helicopter from HMS GLORY arrived about 1500, searched the area and finally after the high tide removed the muddy water covering the wreckage, marked the two segments with buoys. Small arms fire was heard on shore during this search, but no flak was noticed. Although the enemy troops had attempted to remove the wreckage by means of cables from the shore only the night before, no further attempts were made and only small arms and fifty-caliber fire were directed at the task force during the operations. Royal Navy low cover aircraft diminished this hazard by harassing these shore positions with periodic strafing, occasionally receiving bursts of AA in return, but with no damage to friendly aircraft.

At low tide the wreckage was plainly visible, miscellaneous debris and small parts were recovered in the intervening distance between segments, and a thorough search was made of the surrounding area. Slings were placed around the tail assembly, the wing assemblies, the engine and the larger components to facilitate hoisting aboard as soon as high tide allowed LSU 960 to move

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Salvage Operations of MIG-15 (Cont'd)

within a few feet of the wreckage. All parts except the wing assembly were recovered on 20 July. The swift current swept this component under the surface craft and despite strenuous efforts of two British and two American divers to replace slings and bring it aboard, final recovery was not effected until 0745, 21 July. By 0900, all salvage craft had returned to the HMS CARDIGAN BAY, at which time, the task force departed for Cho-Do and Incheon Harbor, where the MIG-15 was airlifted to FEAMCOM and eventually to the ZI.

As a parting gesture, HMS CARDIGAN BAY bombarded the enemy shore installations with air spotting by the CAP, firing seventy-two rounds of H.E. D.A. and recording hits.

The personnel assigned to units and vessels listed below deserve particular credit for the success of this operation:

- (a) HMS KENYA
- (b) HMS CARDIGAN BAY
- (c) HMS GLORY
- (d) USS SICILY
- (e) LSU 960
- (f) 532nd EB & SR and 50th Engineer Port Construction Co. aboard
LSU 960
- (g) South Korean Minesweeper 302
- (h) LSD 27
- (i) Representatives South Korean Air Force
- (j) FAFIK D/I and FAF S.A. Unit #1
- (k) FEAMCOM Special Processing Team

The members of Task Force 95 have every right to be proud of the success-

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Salvage Operations of MIG-15 (Cont'd)

ful accomplishment of Operation MIG. Their technical skill, their untiring efforts, their determination to overcome all obstacles, contributed materially to this splendid achievement which furnished the United Nations Forces with most valuable information, vital in accomplishing its mission against the spoilers of world peace.

This message of the Commanding General, Far East Air Forces, transmitted through COMNAVFE is considered most appropriate:

"COMNAVFE is proud to pass the following received from CG FEAF. Quote. Please extend my heartiest congratulations and well done for successful recovery operation 20, 21, 22 July under CTF 95 on west coast Korea. Please pass to Rear Admiral George Dyer and CTE 95.19 Rear Admiral Scott-Monerieff, RN, my admiration and appreciation for aggressive and determined spirit with which difficult and dangerous operation was executed. My thanks also to all other personnel involved for their contribution to results which I am sure will prove of greatest value.

Signed: O. P. WEYLAND, Lieutenant General USAF"

Note: Foregoing summarized from "A Historical Report of the Operation Involved in the Recovery of a MIG-15 During the Period 13 July to 24 July 1951" - FEAF. Additional information on a recovered MIG aircraft may be obtained from report No. ATIAA-59, 30 July 1951, published by Air Intelligence Center, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio, now in D/I Library.

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2. AIR FORCE PW RELATES AIR ATTACK:

The following excerpt is taken from the narrative of an Air Force pilot

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National Security Archive,
Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University,
2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20037,
Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, nsarchiv@gwu.edu