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2 April 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Whale Tale III Launching and Landing of U-2 from
USS Ranger during period 29 February, 3 March,
9 - 10 March 1964

1. Driver Involvement

a. During the above period Mr. Robert Schumacher, Lockheed test pilot, Messrs. Barnes, [redacted] Edens and Bedford, Detachment G drivers, successfully completed the required touch and go's and arrestments necessary to qualify them for U-2 operation from an aircraft carrier.

2. Sequence of Events

a. 28 February - The Edwards Detachment personnel, the Lockheed representatives, and the group from Headquarters arrived aboard the carrier USS Ranger at North Island.

b. 29 February - At 0830 on 29 February, the carrier proceeded approximately 20 miles out to sea to await the arrival of Mr. Schumacher ferrying the U-2 from Burbank. Mr. Schumacher made several successful touch and go approaches but on his first trap he approached with the nose set towards the deck and the aircraft hook engaged the arresting cable approximately 18 inches from the deck. This resulted in the nose of the U-2 coming in contact with the deck destroying the pito-u tube and damaging the fuselage. The aircraft was removed to the hangar deck via the elevator situated aft of the island, where the Lockheed mechanics proceeded to make the necessary repairs. Upon completion of the repairs, the aircraft was returned to Burbank by Mr. Schumacher. The Ranger returned to North Island.

c. 2 March - Once again Mr. Schumacher rendezvoused with the Ranger approximately 20 miles from San Diego shore line and after making several touch and go approaches successfully completed 4 trap landings.

d. Following Mr. Schumacher's performance, Mr. Robert Ericson from Detachment G took off in the U-2 and made several touch and go approaches. It was observed that Mr. Ericson was having difficulty in landing the aircraft on the carrier. It was

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also pointed out that a Norweign trawler was observed in close proximity to the carrier during this exercise which required Capt. Lemos, the Skipper of the Ranger, to remove the Ranger from the vicinity of the trawler. This procedure required approximately 15 minutes, during which time Mr. Ericson was consuming very precious fuel. After making another touch and go approach, it was decided to have Ericson return to North Island instead of attempting to land on the carrier. The writer immediately followed Mr. Ericson from the carrier by Navy aircraft and arrived at North Island in company with Messrs. Barnes, Schumacher, and 3 Lockheed maintenance types shortly after Ericson. Ericson arrived at North Island with five gallons of fuel remaining in the aircraft.

e. The writer took the necessary steps to insure the security of the aircraft at North Island after it had been determined that the weather both at Edwards and Burbank did not permit the aircraft to proceed to those locations. The writer in company with the above group remained at North Island overnight and left at 0615 the following morning for the carrier.

f. 3 March - Mr. Barnes left North Island with the U-2 and Mr. Ericson accompanied the writer and the Lockheed group by Navy aircraft to the Ranger. Shortly after the arrival of the writer aboard the Ranger, Mr. Barnes proceeded to make two touch and go approaches, the second of which resulted in his shearing part of the star board wing tip which destroyed his right airon resulting in his being ordered to return directly to North Base. Although experiencing some difficulty in navigating the aircraft enroute, Mr. Barnes did effect a satisfactory landing at North Base, without incident. The Ranger then returned to North Island and it was decided to continue the exercise on 9 and 10 March 1964.

g. 8 March - Once again the writer in company with Messrs. Cunningham and Cherbonneaux along with the Edwards Detachment personnel arrived aboard the USS Ranger.

h. 9 March - The Ranger proceeded to a point approximately 20 miles from the San Diego coast line to await the arrival of the first U-2 being flown by Mr. Barnes. The aircraft arrived in the pattern at approximately 1045 hours and Mr. Barnes made several touch and go approaches and completed two successful trap landings. Following this exercise

arrived with the second U-2, shot several touch and go landings and successfully completed four arrested landings. Once again Mr. Barnes took off to complete successfully his two remaining trap landings and prior to the

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completion of the afternoon's exercise, Mr. Edens also managed to accomplish several touch and go approaches and one successful trap landing. The group remained aboard the Ranger overnight approximately 20 miles off the San Diego coast.

i. 10 March - During the morning of 10 March, Mr. Edens completed his three remaining trap landings successfully and Mr. Bedford completed four touch and go approaches and three trap landings. Like Mr. Schumacher, Mr. Bedford on his third trap landing dove for the deck upon his approach and suffered minor damage to the nose of the aircraft. As a result of this damage, it was decided to terminate the qualifications at this point and return the aircraft to the hangar deck for repair by the Lockheed group. Meanwhile the other U-2 was refueled to full capacity, 1345 gallons and was successfully launched by Mr. Schumacher for return to North Base. It was noted that this launching was successfully completed within 550' of the carrier runway. After the second aircraft was repaired, Mr. Barnes returned to North Island and the Headquarters and Edwards Detachment personnel disembarked.

3. Security

a. In the opinion of the writer, the security support provided by the Marine detachment aboard the ship was excellent. Through Capt. Frederic Tolleson, Commanding Officer of the Marine detachment aboard the Ranger, we were able to insure more than adequate coverage over the Bird fuel trucks, and all related equipment. Capt. Tolleson was provided an access list reflecting the names of the individuals who would have need to work on the Bird or make use of any of the special equipment.

b. An air-conditioned area approximately 2500 sq. ft. situated adjacent to the number 4 elevator approximately 2 decks above the hanger deck will be available for the storage of the B configuration, the tracker camera, and other special equipment. There will be two entrances to this area, one adjacent to the elevator which is controlled from inside the special equipment area and the other a secure door which will be guarded by a Marine sentry, also on a 24 hour basis. This door, which is controlled by an electric buzzer, is opened from the inside by the Marine sentry, who in turn controls access to an inner door which enters into the special equipment area. Capt. Tolleson assured the writer that a man will be available to guard this space on a 24 hour basis.

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c. During the time the aircraft is on the flight deck Capt. Tolleson arranged to have several Marine guards in the vicinity of the Bird to insure that no curious sailors come within wing tips distance of the aircraft. Also during this time there will be a sufficient number of Marine guards patrolling the flight deck, the catwalks adjacent to the flight deck, and the island structure to insure that no photographs are taken of the U-2. When the aircraft is on the hangar deck, where it will be situated when not being prepared for actual operations, it will be confined in a roped off area along with the fuel trucks containing approximately 5,000 gallons of fuel each, access to which area will again be controlled by the Marine personnel.

d. The B camera will be removed from the aircraft on the hangar deck and moved by the number 4 elevator to the special equipment area described above, where it will be stored when not in use.

e. During the Whale Tale III exercise, the Executive Officer, when the Ranger was clear of the harbor, made an announcement via the public address system concerning the presence of the U-2 and citing the cover story involving Lockheed and the Office of Naval Research. The Executive Officer, during the briefing of the ship's crew, emphasized the sensitivity of the operation and strongly prohibited the crew from discussing the presence of the U-2 with anyone.

4. Problems

a. In view of the continuous noise aboard these carriers, it will be necessary to secure a suitable area where the operational pilot can rest prior to mission time. This will have to be a sound proof compartment. A proposal has been made to utilize the Admirals Sea Cabin for this purpose.

b. In view of the anticipated damage to the aircraft incurred during this operation, it will be necessary to insure an ample supply of spare parts aboard the carrier. This will be handled by Materiel.

c. In view of the probability of aircraft damage, it will be necessary to utilize two aircraft in this operation. It is pointed out that there are two aircraft configured for this use.

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d. During the handling of the Bird on the flight deck, it will be necessary to slow down the carrier or change its direction to decrease the wind velocity blowing across the flight deck. It is recommended that a maximum wind velocity of 15 knots be tolerated for this procedure.

5. Operational Concept

a. The operational concept as outlined in the accompanying status report remains pretty much the same with the following exceptions:

(1) The operational aircraft will be landed aboard shortly after the carrier leaves the California coast. In this way the drivers will be able to improve their efficiency during the time the carrier is proceeding to the target area, estimated to be approximately eight days. Admittedly this increases the risk of the aircraft being spotted during the trip to the area of interest but it is felt that the operational readiness that could be developed upon by this procedure would justify this risk.

6. Miscellaneous Points

a. Personnel - As now planned it is estimated that there will be approximately 30 people participating in the operation from Detachment G. It is recommended that a maximum of three Security types from the Detachment be employed. Mr. Cunningham has recommended that a representative from Headquarters Security and Operations, accompany the group on the initial deployment. The writer is not convinced at this time of the need for his presence.

b. It should be kept in mind that Detachment Security personnel will be responsible for accompanying the take from the aircraft carrier, in all probability via Navy A3D to Honolulu, where it will be then turned over to a Security courier for onward movement to E-K. At the present time Operations is talking in terms of six missions. If these were to take place back to back it would impose a hardship on the Detachment Security personnel. This matter will have to be further resolved, depending on the number of missions approved.

c. Advanced Notification - It has been determined that the Navy will require at least 10 days notification to make a carrier available for an IDEALIST operation.

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d. Aircraft Readiness - It has been decided that the U-2s while on board ship will have to be flown at least every five days to insure their operational readiness.

e. Camera - As of this writing, it is planned to use the 112B camera for this exercise.

f. Communication - During the Whale Tale III exercise, it was determined that a minimum of two hours was required for the transmission of messages. Communications Division has assured the Operations personnel that this time will be reduced to everybodys satisfaction.


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