CNAL 019

2 June 1958

FOURTH ENDORSEMENT on VA-105 AAR ser 3-58, AD-6, 137605, accident occurring 4 March 1958, pilot TERNASKY

From: Commander Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet
To: Chief of Naval Operations (Op-57)
Via: (1) Chief, Bureau of Aeronautics (WA-61)
(2) Commander U.S. Naval Aviation Safety Center

Subj: Aircraft Accident Report

1. Forwarded, concurring in the conclusions and recommendations of the Aircraft Accident Board and the endorsements thereto.

(b) (6)

[redacted]

Copy to:
CNASC (2)
COMCARDIV-6
CO USS ESSEX (CVA-9)
COMATG-201
CO VA-105

2

ORIGINAL

FB2-6/A25
32:wrc
Serial: 302

MAY 16 1958

SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED IN ACCORDANCE
WITH PART VII, OPNAV INSTRUCTION 3750.6B

THIRD ENDORSEMENT on VA-105 AAR serial 3-58 concerning AD-6, 137605, accident occurring 4 March 1958, Pilot TERNASKY

From: Commander Carrier Division SIX
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-57)
Via: (1) Commander Naval Air Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet
(2) Chief, Bureau of Aeronautics (MA-61)
(3) Director, U. S. Naval Aviation Safety Center

Subj: Aircraft Accident Report; forwarding of

1. Forwarded, concurring with the conclusions and recommendations of the Aircraft Accident Board and the endorsements thereto.

(b) (6)

[redacted]

5

L+R

Special Handling Required in accordance
with Part VII, OPNAV INST 3750.6B

04:JHE:frh
CVA9/A25
Ser: 858
19 APR 1958

SECOND ENDORSEMENT on VA-105 AAR serial 3-58 concerning AD-6, 137605, accident occurring 4 March 1958, Pilot TERNASKY

From: Commanding Officer, USS ESSEX (CVA-9)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-57)
Via: (1) Commander Carrier Division SIX
(2) Commander Naval Air Force, Atlantic Fleet
(3) Chief, Bureau of Aeronautics (MA-61)
(4) Director, U.S. Naval Aviation Safety Center

Subj: Aircraft Accident Report; forwarding of

1. Forwarded, concurring in the conclusions and recommendations of the accident board and the [redacted] of the first endorsement.

(b) (6)

Copy to:
CATG-201
VA-105
NASC

6

SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED in accordance with Part VII, OPNAVINST 3750.6B

OO:EHE:jjc
Ser: 52-58
14 March 1958

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on VA-105 AAR serial 3-58 concerning AD-6, 137605, accident occurring 4 March 1958, pilot TERNASKY

From: Commander Air Task Group TWO HUNDRED ONE
To: Chief of Naval Operations (Op-57)
Via: (1) Commanding Officer, USS ESSEX (CVA-9)
(2) Commander Carrier Division SIX
(3) Commander Naval Air Force, Atlantic Fleet
(4) Chief, Bureau of Aeronautics (MA-61)
(5) Director, U.S. Naval Aviation Safety Center

Subj: Aircraft Accident Report; forwarding of

1. Forwarded, concurring in the analysis, conclusions and recommendations of the accident report.

2. The recommendation of the accident board concerning improved rescue facilities for plane guard destroyers is most heartily endorsed, since it is felt that present facilities and methods have not kept pace with technological advances in other aspects of carrier aircraft operations. This is not intended as any reflection on the excellent alertness, seamanship and courage displayed by the USS COMPTON and her gallant crew in effecting this rescue in 20 minutes under adverse conditions of wind, sea state, temperature, and pilot condition. Rather, it points up the additional adversity of the lack of adequate equipment with which to perform their mission as rescue destroyer.

3. Efforts are being re-doubled in the AD squadron and detachments to ensure thorough, efficient and safe maintenance procedures and practices to preclude engine failures/malfunctions and to determine the cause of the malfunction in this case.

(b) (6) [redacted]

Copy to:
VA-105
NASC

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT REPORT
OPNAV FORM 3750-1 (REV. 11-65)
PAGE 1

See Instructions for completion prior to filling out

ORIGINAL

OPNAV REPORT 375

PART I – GENERAL

1. AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT BOARD CONVENED BY: Commander Air Task Group 201

2. DATE OF ACCIDENT: 4 MAR 1958 | TIME: 1855A | 3. AAR SERIAL NO.: 3-58

4. TO: CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS (Op-57)

5. ENCLOSURES:
(1) Plane Capt. State. VA10
(2) ISO Statement
(3) Ass't Air Off. State. USS ESSEX
(4) Pilot, Wingman's State. VA-105
(5) Plane Capt. State. VA(AW)-33
(6) Witness' State. (DD-705) (1)
(7) Medical Off. Statement
(8) Flight Surgeon Report ATG-201
(9)

6. VIA: (1) CO, USS ESSEX (CVA-9)
(2) COMCARDIV SIX
(3) COMNAVAIRLANT
(4) BUAER
(5)
(6)
(LAST) DIRECTOR, U. S. NAV. AV. SAFETY CENTER

7. REPORTING CUSTODIAN (if different than item number 1)

8. ACTIVITY OPERATING AIRCRAFT (if different than item 7)

SECTION A – IDENTIFICATION

9. KIND OF FLT.: 3A1

10. TIME OF DAY: ☐ DAWN ☐ DAY ☐ DUSK ☒ NIGHT

11. LOCATION OF ACCIDENT: 1600R – 400 yds USS ESSEX LAT 36° 29N Long. 14°38E

12. ELEV. ABOVE LEVEL: SEA LEVEL

13. PLACE OF LAST TAKE-OFF: USS ESSEX (CVA-9)

14. CLEARED FROM USS ESSEX TO USS ESSEX

15. TYPE CLEARANCE: ☐ IFR ☒ VFR ☒ LOCAL ☐ OPERATIONAL ☐ AIRWAYS ☐ DIRECT ☐ OTHER, Specify

16. TIME IN FLT.: C-13

17. TYPE ACCIDENT: B-(Water-controlled)

18. PHASE OF FLIGHT: (7) Landing Approach

19. MODEL: AD-6

20. SERIAL NO.: 137605

21. DAMAGE TO AIRCRAFT: ☒ A. ☐ B. ☐ C. ☐ D.

22. DOL. COST: $318,000

23. AIRSPEED (kts): 95 (est.)

24. A/C WT.: 17,380

25. LIST MODEL, SER. NRS, REPORTING CUSTODIAN AND DAMAGE CLASSIFICATION OF ANY OTHER A/C INVOLVED (compl separate OPNAV Form 3750-1 for each A/C): None

AIRCRAFT

SECTION B – PERSONNEL INFORMATION

PILOT AND CO-PILOT

	1. PERSONNEL (PILOT OR PERSON AT CONTROLS AT TIME OF ACCIDENT)	2. NAME (last, first and middle initial)	3. RANK, RATE	4. FILE SERVICE NO.	5. DESIG. NAVAL	6. DATE DESIG. NAVAL	7. DATE OF BIRTH	AGE
PILOT		TERNASKY, Eugene F.	CDR	(b) (6)	1310	8-19-42	2-15-19	3
CO-PILOT								

	8. PERSONNEL	9. OPERATIONAL FLT. TRAINER AVAILABLE?	9. OPERATIONAL FLT. TRAINER USED?	10. UNIT TO WHICH ATTACHED	11. TYPE INSTRUMENT CARD
PILOT		☐ YES ☒ NO	☐ YES ☐ NO	VA-105	☒ STANDARD ☐ SPECIAL
CO-PILOT		☐ YES ☐ NO	☐ YES ☐ NO		☐ STANDARD ☐ SPECIAL

8

12. PILOT, CO-PILOT, STUDENT EXPERIENCE

TOTAL PILOT HOURS

ITEM	PILOT	CO-PILOT	STUDENT	ITEM	PILOT	CO-PILOT	STUDENT
ALL MODELS	2871.	221.4	263.9	CV LANDINGS DAY/NIGHT	269/35		
ALL MODELS IN LAST 12 MOS.	180.2	5.1		FCLP LANDINGS DAY/NIGHT	151/65		
ALL MODELS IN LAST 3 MOS.	53.7			INSTRUMENT HOURS, LAST 3 MONTHS	.8		
ALL SERIES THIS MODEL	766.2	9.6		NIGHT HOURS, LAST 3 MOS.	6.6		
ALL SERIES THIS MODEL, LAST 12 MONTHS	180.2	4.0		(jet accidents only) TOTAL JET PILOT HOURS			
ALL SERIES THIS MODEL, LAST 3 MONTHS	53.7			DATE LAST FLIGHT, ALL SERIES THIS MODEL	3-4-58		
				DURATION LAST FLIGHT, ALL SERIES THIS MODEL	2		

13. ALL PERSONNEL ON BOARD

	NAME (last, first and middle initial)	RANK, RATE	FILE SERVICE NO.	UNIT TO WHICH ATTACHED	INSTRUCTOR CODE	BILLET	ACCIDENT CONTRIBUTION
1.	TERNASKY, Eugene F.	CDR	(b)	VA-105	A	Pilot	CP
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							

(If additional space is necessary, attach additional sheet(s))

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT REPORT

1. CEILING	2. VISIBILITY	3. WIND DIRECTION AND VELOCITY	4. TEMPERATURE	OUTSIDE RUNWAY	5. DEW POINT	6. ALTIMETER SETTINGS
2,300	10	NE/34	59°F		52°F	29.85

7. OTHER WEATHER CONDITIONS *(winds aloft, icing levels, state of sea, etc., if pertinent to accident)*
Sea State 8 to 10, Water Temp 61°F

ITEM	P	S	ITEM	P	S	ITEM	P
PILOT ERROR			LANDING SIGNAL OFFICER ERROR			MATERIAL FAILURE OR MALFUNCTION	X
CREW ERROR			OTHER PERSONNEL ERROR, Specify			MATERIAL INADEQUACY	
SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL ERROR			ADMINISTRATIVE ERROR			~~ROLLING AND PITCHING DECK~~/ROUGH SEAS	
MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL ERROR			AIRPORT OR CARRIER FACILITIES			UNDETERMINED	
SERVICING PERSONNEL ERROR			WEATHER			OTHER, Specify	

FOR ACCIDENTS ABOARD DEPLOYED CARRIERS *(Complete following Section on Pilot)*

1. DATE DEPLOYED	2. DAY-HOURS/LANDINGS LOGGED SINCE DEPLOYED	3. DAY-HOURS/LANDINGS LOGGED LAST 30 DAYS
2 FEB 1958	13.8/4	13.8/4
4. INSTRUMENT HRS. LOGGED SINCE DEPLOYMENT	**5. NIGHT-HOURS/LANDINGS LOGGED SINCE DEPLOYED**	**6. NIGHT-HOURS/LANDINGS LOGGED LAST 30 DAYS**
5	1.7/1	1.7/1

PART II – MAINTENANCE, MATERIAL AND FACILITIES DATA

SECTION A – AIRCRAFT AND ENGINE DATA

1. AIRCRAFT HISTORY	DATE OF MANUFACTURE	SERVICE TOUR	MONTHS IN THIS TOUR	TOTAL NO. OF OVERHAULS	FLIGHT HRS. SINCE LAST OVERHAUL	FLIGHT HRS. SINCE ACCEPTANCE	TYPE CHECK LAST PERFORMED	FLIGHT HRS. SINCE LAST CHECK	NO. OF DAYS SINCE LAST CHECK
	6-24-55	2	6	1	182	1092	Accept.Chk 1st Int.	39.5	41
2. ENGINE HISTORY (NO. 1 NO. 2 NO. 3 NO. 4)		ENGINE MODEL	SERIAL NO. OF ENGINE						
	Not Known	R-3350-26 -WA	W76407	3	65.6	1472.5	Accept.Chk 1st Int.	39.5	41

a. DID FIRE OCCUR: ☐ BEFORE ACCIDENT ☐ AFTER ACCIDENT ☒ DID NOT OCCUR

b. DID EXPLOSION OCCUR IN FLIGHT? ☐ YES ☒ NO

3. GENERAL

c. CHECK IF APPLICABLE ☐ AMP FOR SERIAL

d. HAS DIR BEEN REQUESTED ☐ YES ☐ NO

e. FAILED COMPONENTS INVOLVED

4. NAVAL AIR FACTORS

CHECK BELOW ITEMS PRESENT IN THIS ACCIDENT

a. ☐ AIRCRAFT DESIGN
b. ☒ AIRCRAFT EQUIPMENT
c. ☐ MAINTENANCE
d. ☐ UNDETERMINED
e. ☐ TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION
f. ☐ OTHER, Specify
g. ☐ SURFACE FACILITIES
h. ☐ HUMAN ENGINEERING (e.g. cockpit configuration)

5. FLIGHT DATA

A. ALTITUDE AT MALFUNCTION	B. AIR SPEED (kts)	C. OPERATING TEMPERATURE	D. WEIGHT OF AIRCRAFT	E. C.G. (% MAC)	F. KIND OF FUEL	G. PRESSURE
Est. 500 ft.	Est.130	Unknown	17,380	21%	115/145	Unknown

H. EVIDENCE OF FUEL CONTAMINATION: Unknown

I. CAUSE OF ENGINE FAILURE OR FLAMEOUT: Unknown

J. FUEL CONTROL REGULATOR/CARBURETOR *(List Stock and Ser. nos., give time since overhaul, if applicable)*
R-2915-293-6/37-ZSTA — 73.0 hrs. since OVHL

K. EXTERNAL STORES ABOARD A/
2 300 gal.tanks (50 ga each tank

(If additional space is necessary, attach additional sheet(s))

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT REPORT

PART II – MAINTENANCE, MATERIAL AND FACILITIES DATA (Cont'd)

a. ☐ CLEARANCE AUTHORITY
b. ☐ FLIGHT PLANNING INFORMATION SOURCE
c. ☐ LANDING AIDS (GCA, CCA, ILS, etc.)
d. ☐ TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER (Field or Ship)
e. ☐ APPROACH AND ENROUTE AIDS TO NAVIGATION
f. ☐ RUNWAY WATCH
g. ☐ LANDING SIGNAL OFFICER
w. ☐ OTHER, Specify Open sea ditching

h. ☐ RUNWAY
i. ☒ WATER LANDING AREA
j. ☐ APPROACH ZONE
k. ☐ END ZONE
l. ☐ SHOULDERS
m. ☐ TAXIWAY
n. ☐ PARKING AREA

o. ☐ EMERGENCY ARRESTING GEAR (Runway)
p. ☐ AIRCRAFT SERVICING, HANDLING & DIRECTING (Field or Sh
q. ☐ CRASH AND RESCUE
r. ☐ SEARCH AND RESCUE
s. ☐ CATAPULT
t. ☐ ARRESTING GEAR (Carrier)
u. ☐ BARRIER OR BARRICADE (Field or Ship)
v. ☐ FLIGHT DECK

SECTION B – FOR USE BY CONTRACTOR FACILITIES (THIS INVOLVES DISCLOSURE REPORT OR ASCUBA, ITS ANALYSIS, ETC.)

a. EQUIPMENT INVOLVED: ☐ CATAPULT ☐ ARRESTING GEAR

B. PRESSURE SETTINGS	C. WIND OVER DECK	D. RELATIVE HEADWIND	E. APPROACH SPEED (MPH-HEADING)

F. MARK NUMBER	G. MODEL NO.	H. LOCATION ON SHIP	I. LAUNCHING BRIDLE AND CONFIGURATION USE

J. CATAPULT/ARRESTING GEAR BULLETINS OR NOMOGRAMS USED

K. THIS PORTION SHALL BE COMPLETED WHENEVER (1) A MAJOR AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVOLVES ARRESTING GEAR BARRIER AND/OR BARRICADE EQUIPMENT, OR (2) AN AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVOLVES MALFUNCTIONING OF ARRESTING GEAR, BARRIER AND/OR BARRICADE EQUIPMENT. MINOR ACCIDENTS OR ROUTINE DAMAGE TO CABLES, WELDINGS AND OTHER EXPENDABLE COMPONENTS NEED NOT BE REPORTED.

2. SHIPS DATA			CONTROL VALVE SETTINGS				
ENGAGED	DECK RUNOUT (FT.)	RAM TRAVEL (IN.)	CONSTANT PRESSURE DONE (P.S.I.)	CONSTANT PRESSURE RATIO	CONSTANT RUNOUT (WT. LBS.)	ACCUMULATOR PRESSURE (PSI)	COMMENTS (for cable failure specify number of landings and months in service)
DECK PENDANT							
DECK PENDANT							
BARRIER							10
BARRIER							
BARRICADE							

PART III – REMARKS (continue on separate pages if necessary)

ARTICLE	SECTION	ITEM

PART IV – SIGNATURES (INDICATE DATE SUBMITTED TO C. O.)

(b) (6) [redacted]

(b) (6) [redacted]

(b) (6) [redacted]

(b) (6) [redacted]

V - THE ACCIDENT

CDR TERNASKY was the flight leader of 4 AD-6's on a night tactics flight scheduled for an 1830A launch from the USS ESSEX (CV-9). Recovery time was to be 1945A. After a normal pre flight inspection, start, and warm up, CDR TERNASKY was the second aircraft of his flight to become airborne on a deck launch at 1842A.

At 1845, CDR TERNASKY reported that his aircraft, AP402, had a rough running engine. At 1846 he declared an emergency and requested a landing as soon as possible. He was in the vicinity of the ship at approximately 1500 feet altitude.

The ESSEX completed the launch and immediately commenced a respot forward for a ready deck to recover AP 402. At 1850, the USS ESSEX reported on land/launch frequency that the deck was ready to recover the emergency aircraft.

CDR TERNASKY acknowledged and commenced a mirror approach slightly high and wide at the 180° position. After entering a long straightaway he reported that he was losing power and did not believe that he could get aboard. It was recommended by the LSO on the platform that he prepare to ditch the aircraft and to raise his landing gear and to complete his landing check-off list.

CDR TERNASKY turned slightly right and made what appeared to be a good water landing on the starboard quarter of the USS ESSEX at 1855A. The USS COMPTON (DD 705) in plane guard station bearing 160° relative, 1000 yards from the USS ESSEX, immediately proceeded to the scene of the crash, arriving at 1858A.

11

The pilot was sighted in the water clear of the aircraft which was still afloat, and a life ring on a line was thrown to him. The COMPTON's searchlights illuminated the pilot. CDR TERNASKY did not retrieve the life ring which was in his vicinity, and he drifted away from the destroyer. The COMPTON made a second approach to the pilot and was alongside at 1909A, and put a swimmer in the water.

CDR TERNASKY appeared to be unconscious when reached by the swimmer and some difficulty was encountered before getting him aboard at 1915. Artificial respiration was immediately commenced with negative results, and CDR TERNASKY was declared dead by the USS DES MOINES medical officer at 2134A. Times set forth above were those recorded in log, USS ESSEX and from the air department, USS ESSEX. Time of death was that recorded by the log of the USS COMPTON.

VI - DAMAGE TO AIRCRAFT

The aircraft, AD-6 BUNO 137605, sank as a result of the crash, and no components were recovered.

VII - THE INVESTIGATION

1. CDR TERNASKY had eaten at the regular evening meal in the wardroom of the USS ESSEX at 1700. He appeared to be mentally and physically fit for his flight in every respect.

2. CDR TERNASKY briefed his flight at length and in detail in accordance with squadron doctrine, from the squadron briefing folder, covering particularly night and emergency procedures, and the divert field, Halfer.

3. CDR TERNASKY was wearing the following personal flight equipment:

a. Sweatshirt
b. Anti-g suit (full length)
c. summer flying suit
d. inner-liner jacket,
e. field shoes
f. Life vest
g. scarf
h. 38 caliber revolver loaded with tracers
i. APR-5 helmet

He carried his oxygen mask, plugged it in when manning aircraft, but did not don it for the launch.

4. No ready deck was indicated over the ready room teletype circuit from Air Operations. Halfar, Malta, was specified as primary divert field, and was 010°T, 18 miles distant. Halfar has 8000 ft runways, night lighting, UHF communications. All air group pilots had been briefed on the field facilities and photographs of the field were available.

5. The meteorolical conditions for the time of the mission were: a full moon had risen before sunset; a broken ceiling of about .6 existed at 2000 feet, with tops at about 4000 feet; the wind was from 070°, force 34 knots, causing 6 to 8 feet waves with extensive white caps.

6. Pilots manned planes at 1800A, and the AD's were started at 1810A.

7. After starting, CDR TERNASKY called his plane captain up on the wing to point out that his fuel pressure was fluctuating when he selected external tanks to check suction. After checking with a trouble shooter and completing an 1800 rpm turn up CDR TERNASKY gave a thumbs up signal that all aircraft systems were functioning satisfactorily before he left the spot.

8. All jets and one AD-6 on the 1830 launch had gotten off before CDR TERNASKY became airborne. Six AD-6's, one AD5N, and two AD5W made up the remainder of the launch. The launch was in progress when the emergency was declared, and the launching continued as the most expeditous method of clearing the landing area. Two AD-6's were taxiied forward, three AD-6's and five F2H-4's were pulled forward by tractor. There was no delay in moving the deck forward, every aircraft spotted in the landing area was moved as soon as the plane ahead was clear.

9. CDR TERNASKY did not switch from the land/launch frequency to air group common immediately after take off, in accordance with standard operating procedures. He remained on land/launch and declared his emergency on that channel.

VII - THE INVESTIGATION (Cont'd)

10. Long orange flames were observed by both ground and air observers emitting from the exhaust stacks of 402.

11. CDR TERNASKY orbited in the vicinity of the ship at approximately 1500 feet waiting for landing clearance.

12. At the time of the emergency, the USS SARATOGA was 9 miles from the ESSEX and had a ready deck.

13. From his radio transmissions, CDR TERNASKY appeared to be calm and deliberate in the face of the emergency situation and the anticipated ditching.

14. In the final part of the mirror pass to the landing, AP 402 lost power to the extent that the aircraft could not maintain altitude to complete the carrier landing.

15. CDR TERNASKY was instructed by the LSO to pick up his landing gear and go over his check off list, and CDR TERNASKY acknowledged. The LSO kept the pilot advised by radio of his altitude above the water as he made his ditching.

16. The aircraft appeared to make a good water landing with considerable spray.

17. The plane guard destroyer, USS COMPTON (DD-705) was alongside the pilot in three minutes after the crash, had him illuminated by searchlights, and had a life ring and line next to him in the water.

18. There is a divergence of opinion among observers in the COMPTON as to whether CDR TERNASKY made any movements to retain the life ring, or whether there were any motions to indicate he was conscious at that time.

19. The pilot drifted away from the rescue destroyer, necessitating another approach. The COMPTON was alongside the pilot on the second approach with a swimmer in the water at 1909A.

20. The swimmer reported no signs of life when he reached CDR TERNASKY. Consequently, considerable difficulty was encountered in getting him aboard. Attempts to get him aboard via the cargo net were fruitless, and the pilot was eventually hoisted aboard by a line with a hook to his life vest.

21. Attempts to resuscitate CDR TERNASKY were commenced as soon as he was brought aboard and continued until he was declared dead.

22. When first observed in the water by COMPTON personnel, CDR TERNASKY was bareheaded. His APH-5 helmet was not equipped with a nape strap. This is included on newer issues of the APH-5 and is to be a retrofit to all issues. The purpose of the nape strap is to prevent the helmet from rotating forward or coming off under conditions of high longitudinal forward decelerations.

VII - THE INVESTIGATION (Cont'd)

23. Because of the choppy seas, the USS DES MOINES was unable to transfer a medical officer to the COMPTON on the first attempt. Reports of the pilots condition were transmitted to the DES MOINES by voice radio, and the COMPTON's pharmicists mate was instructed by voice radio as to treatment, which included an injection of 1 cc of adrenalin directly into the heart. On the second attempt, the DES MOINES transferred a doctor to the COMPTON, and he pronounced CDR TERNASKY dead from drowning at ~~2130~~. 2134 A

24. The medical officer's report and autopsy findings indicated that CDR TERNASKY had suffered internal injuries to the extent to impair his ability to maintain survival in the water.

25. An investigation of the maintenance history of AD-6 BUNO 137605 revealed the following:

a. The aircraft was received from VA-85 on 26 January 1958. The aircraft was given a full and complete intermediate check prior to the first test flight at NAS Jacksonville on 27 January 1958. No power plant discrepancies were noted. Yellow sheets for the past 19 hours prior to the fatal flight showed no discrepancies whatsoever. This aircraft was considered by squadron pilots to be one of the best assigned to the unit.

b. The aircraft engine was on its third tour with 76.8 hours since overhaul. The spark plugs were new AC-181 and were installed at the time of the acceptance check and had logged 39.5 hours since installation.

c. The aircraft had flown two previous flights the day of the accident. Both pilots reported very good performance with no discrepancies noted.

VIII - ANALYSIS

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1. CDR TERNASKY's aircraft, AD-6 BUNO 137605 checked out properly in pre flight check and in the take off spot, but developed engine trouble immediately after becoming airborne. For this reason the pilot did not switch to air group common frequency as per SOP, but after assuring himself that engine performance was not satisfactory, he reported a rough running engine. As engine performance deteriorated, he declared an emergency and requested an immediate landing.

2. Being in the vicinity of the ESSEX and able to observe the progress of the launch and the condition of the deck, CDR TERNASKY elected to orbit the ESSEX, rather than attempt to go to Halfar or the SARATOGA. Halfar was about 20 miles away with no rescue facilities in between, and to attempt to reach the SARATOGA would involve obtaining a steer, changing navigational aids frequencies, and communications frequencies, setting up a landing pattern around the SARATOGA, and proceeding away from the rescue facilities which were alerted in the vicinity of the ESSEX. In addition, he could not be sure that the SARATOGA would be ready in all respects to receive him immediately upon his arrival.

VIII - ANALYSIS

3. Respotting of the ESSEX deck was accomplished in the minimum time possible, only 4 minutes after the emergency was declared.

4. A bailout at night under high wind conditions would have been extremely hazardous. The pilot would run the severe risk of drowning before getting out of his parachute by being dragged through the water. Locating the pilot in the water would be more difficult without the aircraft to mark the spot. It is doubtful that the plane could have climbed to bail out altitude with the partial power failure. And finally the pilot probably considered that he had an excellent chance of getting aboard, observing the rapidity with which the deck was being cleared.

5. The water landing was well controlled and the plane was put down in a good attitude. However the board believes that the aircraft struck the face of a wave, causing a violent stoppage. This landing shock did not exceed the limits of the cockpit restraining equipment, but did exceed the tolerances of the human body and resulted in internal injuries which incapacitated the pilot to a definite degree. The pilot instinctively released his lap belt, removed his parachute harness, before or after being freed of the cockpit, inflated his life vest, and then being only semi conscious, or lapsing into unconsciousness, he was unable to survive the heavy seas and spray to which he was exposed, and was drowned.

6. The pilot would have been unable to have selected a ditching course if a more favorable one could have been determined. The low altitude at which the ultimate power failure occurred, had him committed straight ahead.

IX - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. The aircraft accident board concludes that:

15

1. The direct cause of the accident was power plant failure of unknown character in AD-6 Bureau Number 137605.

2. The fatal results of the accident were due to drowning, when the pilot suffered shock and internal injuries to the extent that he was unable to survive the heavy seas.

3. The ditching technique was sound and well executed and that the pilot's injuries were the result of severe shock incurred by landing head on into heavy seas.

4. There were no known personnel errors or operational inefficiencies which contributed to the accident or fatal results except as noted in paragraph 5 below. At each stage in the sequence of events that comprise this accident, there was only one reasonable course of action and in each case it was carried out properly and efficiently.

5. There will always exist the possibility that the pilot's life would have been saved had he been picked up on the first pass of the rescue destroyer. This can only be conjecture however, and no personnel error can be attributed to this failure. The difficulties of locating, approaching, and retrieving a pilot at night in heavy seas and strong winds demands a certain amount of luck as well as superior seamanship.

IV - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Cont'd)

B. The Aircraft Accident Board recommends that:

1. Plane guard destroyers be provided with improved facilities for the rescue of personnel, especially injured or incapacitated persons, under all conditions of sea and weather. The board recommends a device locally manufactured by a destroyer several years ago, consisting of a wire basket approximately five feet in diameter and two feet deep, with sufficient kapok padding around the rim to provide positive buoyancy, and a ring supported by a tripod structure for hoisting. The basket is dropped into the water so that it floats free, and the survivor is pushed and floated into the basket. The basket is then hoisted aboard by davit or crane by the attached ring.

(b) (5), (b) (6)

(b) (5), (b) (6)

(b) (5), (b) (6)

(b) (5), (b) (6)

(b) (5), (b) (6)

(b) (5), (b) (6)

(b) (5), (b) (6)

(b) (5), (b) (6)

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(9) (q)

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