

About this time a serious kink in the very life line of good close air support came into sharp focus. With greater U. S. air traffic than ever operating on Luzon, and all aircraft communication being handled on four VHF (very high frequency) radio channels, the confusion caused by so many planes on the same frequency was often a hazard to positive control at critical moments.

Fortunately, radio facilities incorporated in the SBD permitted a workable solution to the problem although a heterogeneous situation already existed with regard to aircraft radios within the two different models of the Douglas dive bomber then assigned to MAGSDAGUPAN. The SBD-6 was equipped with a four-channel VHF radio and a two-channel MHF (medium frequency) set. But SBD-5's had only the MHF. Under these conditions it had been necessary for each flight of -5's to attach themselves to a flight of -6's to work inside the forward bomb lines. When working alone, in the early stages, these less-adaptable planes were usually assigned longer range targets.¹¹⁵ Wisely, the earlier model Dauntlesses were not intermingled throughout the squadrons, but were assigned exclusively to VMSB-243 and VMSB-244.¹¹⁶

After finding the VHF channels too crowded, all MAGSDAGUPAN squadrons and their radio jeeps switched to medium frequencies for air-ground liaison.¹¹⁷ The -6's were still able to monitor one VHF channel simultaneously with lower range transmis-

¹¹⁵ "The Employment of Marine Dive Bombers in Support of the Sixth Army on Luzon." LtCol L. A. Christoffersen. Unpublished monograph, AWS-SC, MCS, Quantico, 1950.

¹¹⁶ These two squadrons employed one plane, equipped with both types of radio, to receive ground instructions on VHF and relay information to the rest of the flight on MHF.

¹¹⁷ *McCutcheon*, 11.

sions, and the -5's thus became able to perform support of the closest type.

Constantly there was a search for improved efficiency. Along with the experiments and changes in communications, there were experiments in tactics and in weapons, always with the hope of doing it better. Sometimes, of course, these experiments did not succeed.