

HELICOPTER ANTI-SUBMARINE SQUADRON FOUR

FLEET POST OFFICE
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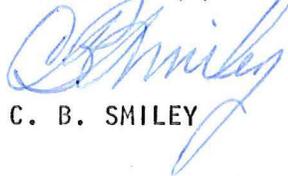
From: Commanding Officer, Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05A5G)
Via: Commander Carrier Anti-Submarine Air Group FIFTY-NINE

Subj: Command History; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAV INST 5750.12 dtd 8 November 1966

Encl: (1) Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR's Command History for 1969

1. In accordance with reference (a) enclosure (1) is forwarded.



C. B. SMILEY

Copy to:
CNO (OP-09B9)

1. CHRONOLOGY OF HIGHLIGHTS

On 1 January 1969 Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR was embarked aboard USS YORKTOWN (CVS-10) returning to home port after the Apollo 8 recovery mission.

On 4 February until 14 February 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR provided a plane guard detachment to USS BON HOMME RICHARD (CVA-31).

On 10 February 1969 two downed F-4 pilots were rescued by members of HELANTISUBRON FOUR.

On 18 February until 26 February 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR provided a plane guard detachment to USS BON HOMME RICHARD (CVA-31).

On 2 March until 21 March 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR provided a plane guard detachment to USS ORISKANY (CVA-34).

On 7 March 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR was presented the Isbell Trophy for Air Anti-Submarine Warfare excellence during 1968.

On 24 April 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR (Detachment ALPHA) embarked aboard USS PRINCETON (LPH-5) for the Apollo 10 recovery mission.

On 26 May 1969 CDR C. B. SMILEY piloted HELANTISUBRON FOUR aircraft No. 66 (BUNO 152711) and recovered the Apollo 10 astronauts, CERNAN, STAFFORD, and YOUNG.

On 8 June 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR (Detachment ALPHA) returned to NAS Imperial Beach.

On 23 June 1969 until 28 June 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR provided a plane guard detachment to USS BENNINGTON (CVS-20).

On 27 June 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR embarked aboard USS HORNET (CVS-12) for the Apollo 11 recovery mission. Detachment ALPHA remained at NAS Imperial Beach with CDR C. B. SMILEY as Officer in Charge.

On 7 July until 11 July 1969 and again from 22 July until 28 July 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR provided plane guard detachments to USS BENNINGTON (CVS-20).

On 24 July 1969 CDR D. S. JONES piloted HELANTISUBRON FOUR aircraft No. 66 (BUNO 152711) to recover the Apollo 11 astronauts, ARMSTRONG, ALDRIN, and COLLINS, the third manned lunar mission and the first men on the surface of the moon.

On 30 July 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR (Detachment ALPHA) embarked aboard USS BENNINGTON (CVS-20) for HUKASWEX 7-69 until 7 August 1969.

On 31 July 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR returned to home port from the Apollo 11 recovery mission.

On 13 August 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR was recognized for having flown 25,000 consecutive accident free hours.

On 25 August 1969 one survivor of a NAS Mirimar based F-4 was rescued by an HS-4 aircraft when the F-4 went down at sea off the coast of Southern California.

On 3 September 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR embarked aboard USS HORNET (CVS-12) to participate in HUKASWEX 9-69 until 8 September 1969.

On 9 September 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR provided a plane guard detachment to USS HORNET (CVS-12) until 12 September 1969.

On 17 September 1969, CDR C. B. SMILEY relieved CDR D. S. JONES as Commanding Officer Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR.

On 22 September 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR embarked aboard USS HORNET (CVS-12) to participate in HUKASWEX 11-69 until 1 October 1969.

On 27 October 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR embarked aboard USS HORNET (CVS-12) for the Apollo 12 recovery mission.

On 13 November 1969 five members of the USS HORNET (CVS-12) lifeboat

crew were rescued by members of HELANTISUBRON FOUR when their boat broached during a man-overboard drill.

On 24 November 1969 CDR W. E. AUT piloted HELANTISUBRON FOUR aircraft No. 66 (BUNO 152711) to recover Apollo 12 astronauts, CONRAD, GORDON, and BEAN.

On 4 December 1969 HELANTISUBRON FOUR returned to NAS Imperial Beach.

For the second successive year, Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR was awarded both the Isbell Trophy and the Commander Naval Air Force Pacific Fleet Battle Efficiency "E" for Anti-Submarine Warfare excellence during 1969.

II. COMMAND ORGANIZATION AND RELATIONS

Commanding Officers of Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR during 1969 were Commander Donald S. JONES, USN, 471810/1310 from 27 November 1969 until 17 September 1969; and Commander Charles B. SMILEY, USN, 575774/1310 from 17 September 1969.

Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR, stationed at NAS Imperial Beach, Imperial Beach, California when based ashore, is assigned to Commander Carrier Anti-Submarine Air Group FIFTY-NINE. During 1969 CVSG-59 deployed aboard USS HORNET (CVS-12), which was home ported in Long Beach, California.

The primary mission of Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR is anti-submarine warfare. The secondary mission is utility, search and rescue.

Sixteen SH-3D helicopters were assigned to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR at the beginning of 1969. In October of 1969 eight of these aircraft were transferred to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron EIGHT which was being re-activated.

As of 31 December 1969 there were twenty eight (28) officers assigned to

Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR, twenty six (26) of whom were pilots; and there were two hundred and sixteen (216) enlisted personnel assigned, twenty five (25) of whom were aircrewmembers.

BASIC NARRATIVE

1 January 1969: The squadron was in Hawaii aboard the USS YORKTOWN (CVS-10) enjoying a period of rest and relaxation following the recovery of the Apollo 8 astronauts, BORMAN, LOVELL, and ANDERS, the first men to orbit the moon.

2 January 1969: USS YORKTOWN got underway for CONUS at 0800 to end the period of rest and relaxation.

6 January 1969: Squadron arrive back at NAS Imperial Beach to be greeted by those left behind, Detachment ALPHA with CDR C. B. SMILEY as Officer in Charge.

31 January 1969: RADM Norman C. GILLETTE, Jr., USN, Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare Group THREE, toured the squadron area and attended the bi-monthly luncheon at the officers' club. He returned to Long Beach, California flying left seat in HS-4 aircraft NT-50.

1 February 1969: Squadron moved into new spaces in the newly completed hangar #158 at Naval Air Station Imperial Beach, California.

4 February 1969: Squadron provided a plane guard detachment to the USS BON HOMME RICHARD (CVA-31) for four days while the H-2's were grounded throughout the fleet.

10 February 1969: D. A. PEDERSEN and E. G. SLINEY were rescued by LT Joseph A. CASALE, LTJG Robert T. PLUMMER, AXAN James R. JOHNSON, and AW2 Curtis E. HILL when their F-4 went down at sea.

18 February 1969: Provided a plane guard detachment to USS BON HOMME RICHARD (CVA-31) for a period of eight days.

19 February 1969: Once again the squadron went through the agony of standing an ADMAT inspection.

2 March 1969: Provided a plane guard detachment to USS ORISKANY (CVA-34) for a period of 19 days.

7 March 1969: The ADMAT inspection was completed with a personnel inspection at morning quarters. The squadron was presented with the Isbell Trophy for Air Anti-Submarine Warfare excellence in 1968.

14 March 1969: Having been selected as the squadron to recover the Apollo 10 astronauts, HS-4 began making preparations for this honored task.

24 April 1969: Detachment ALPHA of HS-4 with CDR C. B. SMILEY, USN, as Officer in Charge embarked aboard USS PRINCETON (LPH-5) enroute to Hawaii and points South for the Apollo 10 recovery mission.

4 May 1969: Detachment ALPHA arrived in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

6 - 8 May 1969: Detachment ALPHA practiced recovery exercises near Hawaii.

11 May 1969: Detachment ALPHA departed Hawaii enroute to the recovery zone. On 16 May squadron aircraft flew NASA and press personnel to Samoa. Practiced more recovery exercises while enroute from Hawaii.

26 May 1969: Aircraft of Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR were on station at 0537 hours when the Apollo 10 command module entered the earth's atmosphere. LTJG C. E. STANDLEY, Aircraft Commander of Airboss THREE was the first to obtain a visual sighting of the command module. Splashdown occurred at 0551. LCDR S. E. WALLING, Aircraft Commander of Photo ONE was the first to arrive at the command module after splashdown. Recovery procedures were put into effect and astronauts CERNAN, STAFFORD, and YOUNG were recovered by CDR C. B. SMILEY, Aircraft Commander of Recovery THREE flying HS-4 aircraft NT-66 which had also been used to recover the Apollo 8 astronauts. The astronauts were delivered aboard the PRINCETON. At 1400 seven squadron aircraft

were launched from PRINCETON to deliver the astronauts and other NASA personnel to Samoa. The astronauts flew left seat in the aircraft in which they were embarked, and were presented Honorary Black Knight certificates.

8 June 1969: Detachment ALPHA rejoined Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR at NAS Imperial Beach, Imperial Beach, California after flying off from USS PRINCETON (LPH-5).

19 June 1969: CDR SMILEY, LT WALKER, AWHC SLIDER, and AWH2 MARTIN, the crew of NT-66 during the Apollo 10 recovery mission, represented the squadron when HELANTISUBRON FOUR, UDT-11, and the Apollo 10 astronauts were honored by the city of San Diego. The astronauts were met at San Diego International Airport by the other members of the party, and were then honored by a motorcade through the city of San Diego.

23 June 1969: Provided a plane guard detachment to USS BENNINGTON (CVS-20) for a period of five days.

27 June 1969: Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR embarked aboard USS HORNET (CVS-12) enroute to the Apollo 11 recovery zone. Detachment ALPHA remained at NAS Imperial Beach with CDR C. B. SMILEY as Officer in Charge. In company with HS-4 were three officers from Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron TWO who were assigned to observe the Apollo recovery techniques. It was expected that HS-2 would recover the Apollo 12 astronauts since HS-4 was slated for a Western Pacific deployment in October 1969.

7 July 1969: Arrived at Pearl Harbor and began a period of simulated exercises while not in port.

7 July 1969: Detachment ALPHA provided a plane guard detachment to USS BENNINGTON (CVS-20) until 11 July 1969, and then from 22-28 July 1969.

12 July 1969: Departed Hawaii for the recovery zone, commencing a

period of preparation including preparing for the visit of President Nixon who intended to observe the Apollo 11 recovery from HORNET.

24 July 1969: The day of the recovery of astronauts ARMSTRONG, ALDRIN, and COLLINS, crew of Apollo 11, the first men on the moon. President Nixon arrived aboard HORNET at 0500 in Marine ONE, after the recovery helicopters had been launched at 0420. Splashdown occurred at 0550 and LCDR RICHMOND in NT-53 (Swim ONE) was the first on the scene and marked the position of the floating command module. LT BARRETT arrived next in NT-64 (Swim TWO) and dropped a swimmer and lowered the biological isolation garments for the astronauts to don. After the decontamination procedures were complete, CDR JONES recovered the three astronauts and delivered them to the HORNET to begin their stay in the mobile quarantine facility. President Nixon addressed the astronauts and then departed HORNET in Marine ONE. Thus, for the third time, NT-66 (BUNO 152711) was used to recover the astronauts, and incidentally, was the only helicopter in the world which had been used to recover men who had departed the gravitational influence of the earth. As a result NT-66 became probably the most famous helicopter in the world and HELANTISUBRON FOUR received requests even from behind the iron curtain, for pictures of "Helicopter 66".

6 July 1969: Arrived in Pearl Harbor to offload the astronauts and NASA equipment. Departed the following day enroute CONUS.

30 July 1969: Detachment ALPHA embarked aboard USS BENNINGTON (CVS-20) with four aircraft for HUKASWEX 7-69 until 7 August 1969. Three (3) officers and approximately sixty (60) enlisted personnel remained at NAS Imperial Beach to await the expected arrival of HS-4 on 31 July 1969.

31 July 1969: Squadron returned to NAS Imperial Beach and was greeted by CAPT MUNSON, Commanding Officer of NAS Imperial Beach, and CAPT HATTERSLY, COMFAIROPS, with a cake and a band. Also present was the news media.

8 August 1969: The squadron was presented with a plaque from the General Electric Corporation by A. J. FLEISHMAN in recognition of the contribution to the Apollo space program. General Electric manufactures the T-58 turboshaft engines which are used in the SH-3D aircraft flown by HS-4.

13 August 1969: The squadron had a formal personnel inspection in whites. CDR CANAAN, Commander Carrier Anti-Submarine Air Group FIFTY-NINE, was the inspecting officer and offered his congratulation for the successful completion of 25,000 consecutive accident-free hours of flying and for the squadron's contribution to the aerospace program.

25 August 1969: LT J. S. DAVIS, LTJG L. L. DUNCAN, AWH2 A. R. DOMINGUEZ, and AN J. S. SCHULTZ were flying a routine mission off the coast of San Diego, California when they heard a distress signal from the pilots of a NAS Mirimar based F-4 which was on a training hop. When LT DAVIS arrived on the scene, the instructor pilot of the downed F-4, LT J. H. RULIFFSON, was in the water, but the replacement pilot was nowhere to be seen. LT DAVIS rescued the downed pilot and returned to NAS Imperial Beach after an unsuccessful search for the second pilot.

3 September 1969: The squadron embarked aboard USS HORNET (CVS-12) with the other squadrons of Carrier Anti-Submarine Air Group FIFTY-NINE to participate in HUKASWEX 9-69 with units of Destroyer Squadron THIRTY-ONE under the command of RADM GILLETTE, Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare Group THREE.

9 September 1969: Provided plane guard detachment to USS HORNET (CVS-12) for a period of three days.

17 September 1969: Commander Charles B. SMILEY, USN, relieved Commander Donald S. JONES, USN, as Commanding Officer of Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR at 1100. Captain C. J. SEIBERLICH, Commanding Officer, USS HORNET (CVS-12), was the guest speaker at the change of command ceremonies.

22 September 1969: The squadron again embarked aboard USS HORNET (CVS-12) under the overall command of ASW Group THREE for HUKASWEX 11-69. During this nine day exercise ASW Group THREE utilized new tactics for anti-submarine warfare which had been conceived by RADM GILLETTE and his staff.

1 October 1969: Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR returned to NAS Imperial Beach faced with the prospects of having the Western Pacific deployment cancelled, but being assigned the Apollo 12 recovery mission instead. In addition, Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron EIGHT was being reactivated to join HS-4 in Carrier Anti-Submarine Air Group FIFTY-NINE, as one of the measures being utilized to effect a reduction of forces in the Navy. As a result, HS-4 was required to furnish to HS-8 eight aircraft, seven (7) officers, and forty-five (45) enlisted personnel, in addition to assorted types of support equipment, office space, etc. These requirements were met by Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR with a spirit of willingness to help establish a good squadron in HS-8.

27 October 1969: Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR embarked aboard USS HORNET (CVS-12) for the Apollo 12 recovery mission. This was the first deployment for HS-4 at its reduced manning level, and there were no detachments left behind.

31 October 1969: Arrived in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii and began a period of simulated recovery exercises when not in port.

10 November 1969: Departed Pearl Harbor enroute to the recovery zone.

13 November 1969: HORNET was conducting a man-overboard drill on this date when trouble developed. As the life boat was lowered into the water with its crew in it, the sea painter did not function properly causing the boat to broach, throwing five of the crew members into the sea. At the time LT G. R. W. CONN, LTJG G. A. CASEY, AWH3 F. E. DISCO, and AWH3 J. W. TOWNE were in the HS-4 ready room in SAR standby. Their aircraft had already been preflighted by them, but upon manning they were told that the aircraft had gone down, so they preflighted the alternate aircraft and got it airborne within fifteen minutes. Due to the high density altitudes that were encountered that day, LT CONN made two trips to rescue the members of the lifeboat crew. Three men were rescued on the first trip, and the remaining two were rescued on the next trip. LT CONN then picked up a couple of UDT swimmers from the HORNET and proceeded to clear the debris from the area. The members of the lifeboat who were rescued were CPL A. (NMN) GRAFF, USMC, HM3 G. D. WILLIAMS, USN, SM2 T. W. SAYERS, USN, SA A. K. MEREIROS, USN AND LT J. M. McLAREN, USN.

24 November 1969: Apollo 12 astronauts, CDR GORDON, CDR CONRAD, and CDR BEAN were recovered from the second moon walk mission by CDR W. E. AUT, LTJG G. A. CASEY, AWHC K. V. CUNNINGHAM, and AWH2 A. R. DOMINGUEZ in "Old Reliable", NT-66. Thus NT-66 remains the only helicopter in the world that has recovered astronauts who had been in moon orbit. CDR AUT coined a new

phrase when he told a worldwide television audience that the recovery was "outstanding to above average".

4 December 1969: Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR returned to NAS Imperial Beach for a period of leave during the remainder of December. During this period the squadron underwent parts of an operational readiness inspection. In early 1970 the squadron was informed that it had been awarded the Battle Efficiency "E" by Commander Naval Air Force Pacific, and in addition had been selected as the recipient of the Isbell Trophy. Both awards were for air anti-submarine excellence during the 1969 competitive cycle.

31 December 1969: At the end of 1969, Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR had quite a bit to be proud of. Her men had recovered all twelve of the astronauts who had orbited the moon and consequently had recovered the four astronauts who had walked on the surface of the moon. Her pilots and aircrewmembers performed in a professional and competent manner during the three HUKASWEX's in which she participated, and had been rewarded with the Isbell Trophy and the Battle Efficiency "E" for their efforts. Of course her pilots did not deserve all the credit by any means. The maintenance department did an exemplary job of keeping the aircraft in operating condition so that there were very few commitments which HS-4 could not keep due to down aircraft. Of special note is the fact that HS-4 ended 1969 with 26,918.5 consecutive accident-free hours of flight time. This amounts to 3 years, 26 days, 14 hours, and 30 minutes of time airborne without an accident.