



**FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE HUNDRED TWO
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From: Commanding Officer, Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWO
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)

Subj: Command History; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12C

Encl: (1) Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWO Command History Update - 1982.

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted.


W. W. COPELAND, JR.

Copy to:
Director of Naval History

FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE HUNDRED TWO COMMAND HISTORY UPDATE - 1982

The year 1982 was a transition period for the VF-102 Diamondbacks. Having given up our trusty F-4J PHANTOMS in June of 1981, the Diamondbacks were ready in January of 1982 to receive the first of their new F-14A TOMCATS. Based ashore at NAS Oceana during the initial months of 1982, the Diamondbacks began receiving regular deliveries of TOMCATS, building towards the total complement of twelve. In addition to a new aircraft, VF-102 received a new mission, photographic reconnaissance, which was accomplished with the advent of the Tactical Air Reconnaissance Pod System (TARPS).

JANUARY

The first TOMCAT was accepted on 18 January 1982 by the Commanding Officer, Commander Ron Schneider, after a test flight by LT Jack Mitchard and LT Bob Van Wert.

FEBRUARY

The M61A1 Vulcan 20mm Cannon was exercised in both air-to-air and air-to-ground firing. This weapon, not carried by the PHANTOM, is internal to the TOMCAT.

MARCH

March marked the first missile shoots. Both AIM-7 SPARROWS and AIM-9 SIDEWINDERS were fired successfully, a credit to the combined maintenance team of the AO/IWT shops who quickly mastered the sophisticated fire control and weapons systems of the TOMCATS.

APRIL

The first of three TARPS pods arrived in April. Half of the squadron participated in Fleet Fighter ACM Readiness Program (FFARP) training with VF-43 pitting their Air Combat Maneuvering skills against realistic adversaries.

MAY

The Diamondbacks deployed aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66) for initial Carrier Qualification (CARQUAL) and Refresher Training (REFTRA) journeying to the Guantanamo Bay, Cuba operating area.

JUNE

After a week in port Norfolk, the Diamondbacks again deployed aboard AMERICA for Type Training (TYT) I and II. A pleasant portcall was enjoyed in St Thomas, Virgin Islands - a welcome relief to the rigorous work-up schedule. The first AIM-54 Phoenix missile firings were conducted in June in the Roosevelt Roads exercise area.

JULY

By the end of TYT II, the Diamondbacks had proved themselves equal to the task of a short transition to the TOMCAT. VF-102 had become a leader in flight hours and sorties flown. The aircrews had become very proficient with the TARPS pod earning praise from RADM Jerry O Tuttle, COMCARGRU EIGHT, for quality of prints and speed in processing.

AUGUST

The second half of Diamondback aircrews participated in FFARP with VF-43 during the inport period. The squadron was now at its full strength of 12 TOMCATS and 3 TARPS pods, ready for the final phase of the work-up period. On 23 August, the Diamondbacks set sail with AMERICA for the NATO exercises Northern Wedding and United Effort and the Operational Readiness Evaluation (ORE).

SEPTEMBER

Journeying to the cold waters of the North Sea, AMERICA participated in the multi-national NATO exercises Northern Wedding and United Effort. The exercises put the Diamondbacks to task in maintaining effective Combat Air Patrol (CAP) for the battle group and exercising the TARPS pod in support of amphibious landings. Intense Soviet interest in the exercise resulted in many intercepts of Soviet Bear, Badger and Bison aircraft. A port call in Edinburgh, Scotland, was thoroughly enjoyed by all Diamondbacks. A second port call in Portsmouth, England, was cut short by a crisis in Lebanon. AMERICA was ordered to set sail for the Mediterranean Sea to support the USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-66) on station off the coast of Lebanon. LT Rock Daze became the first Diamondback TOMCAT centurion, making his 100th TOMCAT arrested landing on AMERICA.

OCTOBER

While in the Mediterrean, the Diamondbacks participated in a third NATO exercise, Display Determination, working with Greek, French, British, Italian and other US units. As the crisis in Lebanon subsided, AMERICA was released from duty and proceeded to the Puerto Rico Operating Area to conclude its workup period with the final hurdles, TYT III and the Operational Readiness Evaluation (ORE). The intensive NATO flight operations paid off as the Diamondbacks took the demanding ORE in stride, outflying every previous record for sorties and flight hours flown and receiving a score of OUTSTANDING, the highest grade attainable. Furthermore, the TARPS component of VF-102 received a HIGH OUTSTANDING, reflecting six months of tremendous effort to make VF-102 the best TARPS squadron in the Navy. A tribute to this achievement was a request by Fighter Wing ONE to conduct a TARPS seminar to share VF-102's secrets to success.

NOVEMBER

Upon return in the first week of November, the squadron began preparing for a change of command. On 5 November 1982, Commander Ron Schneider was relieved by Commander W. W. Copeland, Jr., in ceremonies at NAS Oceana. November was a busy month with the squadron primarily occupied with preparation for the impending six month cruise in December.

DECEMBER

On December 8, the Diamondbacks deployed aboard AMERICA for a six month Mediterrean/Indian Ocean cruise. Christmas was spent in port, Palma de'Mallorca, a splendid port but not the same as being at home with one's loved ones.