

1976



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
ATTACK SQUADRON FIFTEEN
FPO NEW YORK, 09501

IN REPLY REFER TO:
002/JHH:ref
5750
16 MAR 77

From: Commanding Officer
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)
Subj: Command History (OPNAV Report Symbol 5750-1)
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B
(b) VA15INST 5750.12
Encl: (1) VA-15 Chronology of Events for 1976
(2) VA-15 Narrative History for 1976
(3) VA-15 Flight/Ordnance/Reenlistment Statistics for 1976
(4) VA-15 Officer Roster for 1976
(5) Biography of CDR K.W. HUEHN, USN
(6) Photograph of CDR K.W. HUEHN, USN

1. In accordance with references (a) and (b), enclosures (1) through (6) are forwarded.


K.W. HUEHN

Copy to:
Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)

VA-15 Chronology of Events for 1976

January

1-18 Aboard Naval Air Station, Cecil Field, F1
19 Fly aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66)
20-28 TYT-1

February

3-12 TYT-2
18-26 TYT-3

March

1-15 TYT-4 and ORE

April

13-14 Move to the USS AMERICA in Norfolk, Va
15-24 Depart Norfolk, Va and cross the Atlantic
24-26 In port Rota, Spain for turnover with the
USS INDEPENDENCE (CVA-62).

May

27 APR - 2 MAY Exercise OPEN GATE in the Atlantic Ocean,
West of Gibraltar
3-23 Operations - East Mediterranean
24 Visit Rhodes, Greece

June

25 MAY - 2 JUN Operations - East Mediterranean
3-5 Visit Taranto, Italy
5-26 Operations - East Mediterranean,
LTJG Josiah M. FLOURNOY Lost At Sea on 7 June
26-30 In port Bari, Italy

July

30 JUN - 3 JUL

Operations - East Mediterranean

3-10

In port Taranto, Italy

10 JUL - 1 AUG

Operations - East Mediterranean; Evacuation
of American Citizens from Beirut, Lebanon.

August

2-4

In port Naples, Italy

4-5

In port Gaeta, Italy for Commander SIXTH
Fleet Change of Command.

5-15

In port Naples, Italy

15-21

Operations - East Mediterranean

22

Augusta Bay for Pre-Exercise Conference

23-26

NATIONAL WEEK XXI

27

Augusta Bay for Post-Exercise Conference

28 AUG - 1 SEP

Operations - West Mediterranean

September

2-15

In port Palma de Majorca, Spain

16-17

Exercise POOPDECK 3-76

17-26

Operations - West Mediterranean

26-30

In port Barcelona, Spain

30 SEP - 1 OCT

Operations - West Mediterranean

October

1-2

In port Malaga, Spain

2

Attack Squadron FIFTEEN Change of Command.
CDR Kelvin W. HUEHN relieves CDR Gordon
E. EVANS.

3-5

Operations - West Mediterranean

5-12 Exercise DISPLAY DETERMINATION

12-15 Transit to Gibraltar and Outchop

15-16 In port Rota, Spain for turnover with
USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (CVA-42)

16-25 Return crossing to Norfolk, Va

25 Drop Anchor at Norfolk, Va and return to
NAS, Cecil Field, Fl. VA-15 welcomes
aboard their new Executive Officer,
LCDR R.S. SMITH.

25 OCT - 4 NOV Standdown and 50 percent leave period.

November-December

4 NOV - 31 DEC Requalification and training programs

VA-15 Narrative History for 1976

The year began for Attack Squadron FIFTEEN Valions under the leadership of Commander Gordon (Gordie) E. EVANS. In January, preparations were made for the squadron's first embarkation aboard the USS AMERICA (CV-66) in Norfolk, Virginia, for Type Training One (TYT-1) from 19-28 January. TYT-2 and TYT-3 were conducted from 3-12 February and 18-26 February, respectively. From 1-15 March the Fourth Type Training was held in conjunction with an Operational Readiness Exercise (ORE). VA-15 received a grade of Outstanding, for the ORE.

Following the ORE, the Valions returned to NAS Cecil Field for the remainder of March and part of April. At Cecil Field, the Valions detached LCDR John S. BALTUTIS, LT Leroy H. STRICKLAND, LT Russel G. MUNSON and LTJG James W. FLEMING while welcoming aboard ENS John H. HODGKINSON.

On 15 April the Valions commenced their first Mediterranean cruise aboard the USS AMERICA. The crossing was active with five days of flight operations. Inchoption to the SIXTH Fleet took place on 25 April. After a short stop in Rota, Spain, for turnover with the USS INDEPENDENCE, the USS AMERICA conducted an anti-submarine warfare exercise, OPEN GATE.

On 3 May the USS AMERICA entered the Mediterranean Sea and concluded exercise OPEN GATE. At this time, VA-15 welcomed LTJG Charles H. JOHNSTON aboard.

The USS AMERICA transited to the Eastern Mediterranean Sea to relieve the USS SARATOGA on 6 May. USS AMERICA maintained a vigilant posture off the coast of Lebanon as prescribed by operation FLUID DRIVE during the evacuation of American Citizens.

During the period from 3 May to 2 June, the Valions were involved in daily flight operations in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. The uncertainty of the Lebanese political-military situation demanded that the USS AMERICA remain at sea near this area of interest.

The at-sea period was extended when landing parties were denied access to the Island of Rhodes on 24 May as the USS AMERICA dropped anchor for a short port call. Large crowds expressing hostile, anti-American sentiments precluded several attempts to establish a landing party ashore.

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On 25 May, the USS AMERICA set out to conduct routine training and surveillance flight operations south of Crete until moving to Taranto, Italy on 2 June after 35 days at sea. In port, the Valions welcomed ENS Peter L. GRAY before unexpectedly pulling up anchor on 5 June. Lebanon's volatile situation required that the USS AMERICA resume her vigilant posture off the coast of Lebanon.

On 7 June, LTJG Josiah M FLOURNOY was killed in a mid-air collision with an A-6E Intruder while executing a routine night training flight in A-7E BUNO 159979.

On 9 June, USS AMERICA moved to a position 100 nautical miles from the Lebanese coast. All aircrews were standing-by to supply close air support for the evacuations of Americans and British subjects by sea or by caravan to Damascus, Syria should it be required. The Valions provided close surveillance of all Soviet ships south of Cyprus until the evacuation was completed.

On 26 June, the USS AMERICA anchored at Bari, Italy after 20 days at sea for four days of well-deserved rest and relaxation before returning to the eastern Mediterranean Sea on 29 June. The carrier's evacuation posture was eased during the next several days of routine cyclic operations before anchoring at Taranto, Italy on 3 July.

The Fourth of July Bicentennial Celebration began with a 22 gun salute from the USS AMERICA's saluting battery. The Italian Navy returned the honors with the correct 21 gun salute. The day's festivities also included Marine drill demonstrations, a barbecue with entertainment and numerous competitive events won by Valions.

On 12 July, the USS AMERICA departed Taranto to begin eastern Mediterranean Sea operations for the last time. As the political-military situation of Lebanon worsened, USS AMERICA maintained an increasing vigilant stance. On 27 July, Commander Carrier Air Wing SIX supplied support for the amphibious transport, USS CORONADO, which evacuated 308 Americans and foreign nationals.

Eastern Mediterranean Sea operations continued until 2 August when the USS AMERICA stopped in Naples, Italy before steaming to Gaeta, Italy on 4 August. USS AMERICA was the flagship for the SIXTHFLT Change of Command on 5 August in which Vice Admiral H.D. TRAIN relieved Vice Admiral F. C. TURNER as Commander SIXTH Fleet. Upon return of the USS AMERICA to Naples, Italy, LTJG Robert C. YAKELEY joined the Valions.

The visit to Naples ended on 15 August. After several days of routine flight operations, the USS AMERICA dropped anchor in Augusta Bay, Sicily, for the NATIONAL WEEK XXI which emphasized all facets of aviation for attack, fighter, and ASW aircraft. The exercise started on 23 August and was concluded on 27 August with the Post-Exercise Conference in Augusta Bay.

Flight operations continued while transiting westwardly to the Balearic Basin. On 1 September USS AMERICA dropped anchor at Palma de Majorca. The visit to Palma ended on 15 September when the USS AMERICA weighed anchor to participate in exercise POOPDECK 3-76, a two day bilateral exercise with the Spanish Air Force and Navy.

Following POOPDECK 3-76, normal flight operations were conducted with the addition of SINKEX II, which employed air and surface assets delivering live ordnance against a small surface target vessel.

The last days of September were passed in Barcelona, Spain. On 30 September, the USS AMERICA began a slow transit to Malaga, Spain stopping there on 1 October. On 2 October, inport Malaga, Commander Kelvin W. HUEHN relieved Commander Gordon E. EVANS as "Skipper" of the Valions.

The USS AMERICA departed Malaga on 3 October and steamed to Gibraltar to join with the USS NIMITZ, HMS ARK ROYAL, and FS CLEMENCEAU for exercise DISPLAY DETERMINATION. USS AMERICA concluded her portion of the exercise on 11 October and began to make her way toward Rota, Spain for turnover and outchop. The USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT relieved the USS AMERICA in Rota, Spain on 14 October.

The USS AMERICA departed for the United States on 15 October. During the crossing to Norfolk, the Valions received the CVW-6 Golden Tailhook Award from CDR Skip ARMSTRONG (COMCVW-6). The Valions won the Golden Tailhook Award for maintaining the highest cumulative landing grade for all five competitive landing periods during the SIXTH Fleet deployment.

The fly-off for VA-15 aircraft was held on 23 October with the rest of the squadron personnel flying back to NAS Cecil Field on 25 October from Norfolk, Virginia.

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The remainder of October and first part of November were uneventful with the time being used for post-cruise leave and squadron standdown. Several new additions to the squadron were made in November. The Valions welcomed their new Executive Officer, LCDR Robert S. SMITH, as well as LT Robert A. CHIMENTI, LTJG Norman D. MCCOLLOUGH, and LTJG John J. SHEEHAN III. LT William P. PEARCE transferred to VA-45.

Late November and December marked the beginning of Attack Squadron FIFTEEN's shorebased training cycle. Routine training flights and ground training lectures were conducted until mid December when the Christmas and New Year Holiday leave period commenced.

VA-15 Flight, Ordnance, and Reenlistment Statistics

I. 1976 Mediterranean Cruise Statistics:

- a. CV sorties - 1371
- b. CV flight hours - 2623
- c. Total CV traps - 1340
 - (1) Day - 816
 - (2) Night - 524

II. 1976 Total Flight Hours - 4437

III. 1976 Ordnance Expenditures:

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>QUANTITY</u>
a. 20 mm T.P. ammo (M-55)	58,797 rounds
b. 20 mm (M-51)	9,660 rounds
c. MK-76 Practice Bomb	3,955
d. MK-106 Practice Bomb	336
e. MK-82 GP Bomb	558
f. MK-83 GP Bomb	35
g. MK-84 GP Bomb	6
h. AGM-45 SHRIKE	1
i. 5" ZUNI Rockets	44
j. 2.75" FFAR	61
k. MK-52 Mine	12
l. NW-20 Chaff	4,273
m. MK-58 Smoke	258
n. MK-45 Flare	487
o. MK-46 Decoy Flare	1,124

IV. 1976 Reenlistment Statistics

FIRST TERM - 41.6% SECOND TERM - 50%

Enclosure (3) to VA15
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