1979

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

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[redacted] (Unclassified upon removal of enclosures)

From: Commanding Officer, Attack Squadron FIFTEEN
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)

Subj: Command History (OPNAV Report Symbol 5750-1)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12C
(b) ATKRON FIFTEEN INST 5750.12A

Encl: (1) Chronological Summary of Events for 1979
(2) McClusky Award Nomination for 1979 (data)
(3) ATKRON FIFTEEN Officer Roster for 1979
(4) Biography of CDR J. J. MAZACH, USN
(5) Photograph of CDR J. J. MAZACH, USN
(6) ATKRON FIFTEEN Enlisted Roster for 1979
(7) ATKRON FIFTEEN 091638Z OCT 79
(8) COMCARAIRWING SIX 172055Z OCT 79
(9) USS INDEPENDENCE 250342Z OCT 79

1. In accordance with references (a) and (b), enclosures (1) through (9) are forwarded.

J. J. Mazach
J. J. MAZACH

Copy to:
Director of Naval History (OP-09BH) (w/encl)

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CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

JANUARY

1-10 ATKRON FIFTEEN based ashore at NAS Cecil Field, Florida.

11-17 ATKRON FIFTEEN embarked aboard USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-62) for Refresher Training. The squadron bombed HICACLE TGT and participated in an air-to-air gunnery detachment at Guantanamo Bay 12-14 January.

18-16 ATKRON FIFTEEN continued pre-cruise training. Operations included continuous competitive exercises at Pinecastle target with bombs, five inch rockets, captive shrike, walleye, and sidewinders. The squadron also trained in radar navigation, instrument navigation and field carrier landing practice. The Valions won Light Attack Wing ONE Bombing Derby 1-79. Received for duty on 22 January, ENS Frank "ART" NELOWET from Attack Squadron 174. Received for duty on 1 February, CWO4 J. O. "GUNNER" STRICKLEN from COMLATWING ONE (Commander Light Attack Wing ONE). Transferred on 5 February to COMCARAIRWING FIFTEEN, NAS Miramar, ENS J. L. "GUNNER" MCCOMB for duty.

FEBRUARY

16-23 Type-Training I found the squadron aboard USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-62) again. Poor weather conditions hindered most operations during this period. The squadron received training in SSSC (surface and sub-surface surveillance coordination), bombing, combat air patrol, night tanking, and automatic carrier landing system use. Commander SMITH, VALION CO, briefed the German Defense Minister and other VIPS on War-at-Sea tactics.

24-3 ATKRON FIFTEEN continued shorebased training at NAS Cecil Field, Florida.

MARCH

4-13 ATKRON FIFTEEN embarked aboard USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-62) and participated in Type-Training II. The squadron carrier qualified aboard INDEPENDENCE, bombed and performed services for other ships in the battle group. Received for duty on 9 March, LTJG D. J. "TUMBLEWEED" DICKMAN from Attack Squadron 174.

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Enclosure (1)

14-19 Port visit, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

20-27 In Type-Training III, the Squadron continued training in basic mission areas and also performed services for other units. The squadron dropped live ordnance on Vieques target, and notably, flew a photo mission for the ship's navigator on the coasts of Vieques and Puerto Rico. On the 25th of March, Commander SMITH led a coordinated Alpha Strike, and on the 27th, LT BROWN and LTJG SWIFT shot AIM-9 missiles during a MISSILEX.

28-31 This period was the "Operational Readiness Evaluation", a gruelling endurance and efficiency drill in which ATKRON FIFTEEN received a "Low Outstanding" for performance in all areas. This grade was the highest in Carrier Air Wing SIX. At one time ATKRON FIFTEEN had its full complement of aircraft airborne at the same time. Transferred for duty on 30 March to Naval Support Activity, Naples, Italy, LT J. H. "JOHN HENRY" HODGKINSON.

APRIL

1-4 Port visit, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

5-10 ATKRON FIFTEEN participated in COMPTUEX 2-79 providing services for other units. Received for duty on 9 April from Attack Squadron 174, Commander J. J. "RIBBIT" COONAN, Jr., as prospective executive officer.

11-18 The squadron continued shorebased operations at NAS Cecil Field, Florida.

19 The change of command took place with CDR J. J. MAZACH relieving CDR R. S. "YONEX" SMITH who transferred to Commander, THIRD Fleet Staff, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii for duty.

20-30 Pre-cruise training continued at NAS Cecil Field, Florida. Received for duty on 23 April from Attack Squadron 174, LTJG J. E. "GROUCHO" CANTU.

MAY

1-8 The VALIONS participated in a Light Attack Wing ONE Bombing Derby. Many squadron members attended schools and completed pre-cruise training. Commander R. C. ALLEN relieved Captain G. W. WHITE as COMCARAIRWING SIX on 4 May. Released to inactive duty in USNR on 1 May, LT N. D. "GEECH" MCCOLLOUGH.

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9-22 ATKRON FIFTEEN embarked aboard USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-62) once more to participate in READEX 79 and SOLID SHIELD. The VALIONS helped support amphibious operations on the beaches of Vieques Island and the Carolinas.

23-31 ATKRON FIFTEEN returned to NAS Cecil Field, Florida to continue competitive exercises in many areas including RESCAP (Rescue Combat Air Patrol). Operational planning for the cruise was at a crisp pace during this period. Received for duty from Attack Squadron 174 on 24 May was LT A. G. "ZINGER" ABERCROMBIE. Discharged on 31 May was LT R. A. "CISCO" CHIMENTI.

JUNE

1-27 The squadron finished competitive exercises, operational planning, carrier qualifications and the dependents cruise before embarking for the Mediterranean deployment. On 7 June ATKRON FIFTEEN completed 3 years accident free. Transferred on 6 June to Naval Justice School, Newport, RI, LCDR G. J. "SPIDER" WEBB. Received for duty on 7 June was ENS Anton C. "TONY" PETRASH from Attack Squadron 174. Received for duty on 7 June from Attack Squadron 174 was LCDR A. F. "SPIDER" RICHARDSON. Received for duty on 11 June from Attack Squadron 174 was LCDR H. M. "FROG" CONNER. Released to inactive duty in USNR on 25 June was LTJG P. L. "PETE" GRAY.

28-5 ATKRON FIFTEEN began its transatlantic crossing in which the Valions had several good flying days. Transferred to NAS Jacksonville for separation on 29 June was LT L. E. "GIDEON" RICHARDS. Transferred to NAS Cecil Field for duty on 29 June was LCDR T. J. "FROG" VOGEL.

JULY

6 The War-at-Sea PASSEX (Passing Exercise) with USS EISENHOWER (CVN-69) took place.

7-9 The INDEPENDENCE continued its transit westward to Rota, Spain.

10-11 Port visit, Rota, Spain.

12-15 Air operations took place in the Tyrrhenian Sea. ATKRON FIFTEEN trained with captive walleye and practiced bombing and DCM (Defensive Combat Maneuering).

16-21 Port visit, Naples, Italy.

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22-31 The Valions participated in Exercise MULTIPLEX 2-79 in which the squadron performed services and practiced bombing. This at-sea period was interrupted by a two-day training anchorage at Augusta Bay, Sicily, before a transit to Haifa, Israel.

AUGUST

1-6 Port visit, Haifa, Israel.

7-11 ATKRON FIFTEEN participated in PHIBILEX, a multi-national exercise in the Eastern Mediterranean. ATKRON FIFTEEN bombed various targets in this exercise included Avgo Nisi, Karavi, Andravida, and Pachino.

12-20 Port visit, Palermo, Sicily.

21-30 EXERCISE NATIONAL WEEK. ATKRON FIFTEEN was part of the BLUE air complement aboard USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-62) and also provided ORANGE (opposition) air services. More than twenty naval units participated in this exercise which simulated a large-scale naval war in the Ionian Sea.

SEPTEMBER

1-4 Port visit, Athens, Greece.

5-11 ATKRON FIFTEEN participated in exercise PHIBILEX. The Valions flew various low level routes over Italy and Greece and bombed the Karavi and Avgo Nisi targets with MK-82 (500 LB), MK-84 (2000 LB) bombs and MK-45 flares.

12-26 A port visit and mid-cruise standdown took place in Naples, Italy. Transferred to Attack Squadron 45 for duty on 18 September was LT J. J. "CACTUS" SHEEHAN.

27-19 The Valions began a very intense at-sea period which included exercise DISPLAY DETERMINATION. The squadron received useful training in most primary mission areas. During this period, the squadron flew many low level training routes over Sardinia and Italy and bombed various targets including Capo Tuleda, Capo Frasca, Pachino, Avgo Nisi, Konya, and Karavi. ATKRON FIFTEEN also received very intense training in air defense and War-at-Sea strike coordination.

OCTOBER

20-23 Port visit, Palma de Mallorca. The Valions unwound with a squadron party to be remembered.

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24-25 Exercise LAFAYETTE, an exercise to penetrate French defenses along the southern coast was conducted. ATKRON FIFTEEN participated in very large scale simulated Alpha strikes which penetrated deep into southern France.

26-7 Port visit, Genoa, Italy.

NOVEMBER

8-9 Exercise DASIX (Defense Arrean SIXTH Fleet) took place. Once again, U. S. forces tested French air defenses in the southern sector.

10-14 Port visit, Toulon, France.

15-26 Exercise ILES D'OR was held in the Western Mediterranean. USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-62) participated with over forty other naval and air units from the U. S., U. K., Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Greece, and Italy. ATKRON FIFTEEN trained in many primary mission areas with heavy emphasis on War-at-Sea tactics. ATKRON FIFTEEN pilots led many Carrier Air Wing SIX BROADSWORD strikes against ORANGE (opposition) units.

27-1 Port visit, Malaga, Spain.

DECEMBER

2 Transit to Rota, Spain; port visit, Rota, Spain.

3-14 After the War-at-Sea PASSEX (Passing Exercise) with USS FORRESTAL (CV-59), INDEPENDENCE continued its transit to the continental United States. The squadron fly-off was on 13 December and returning squadron airlifts were on the 14th and 15th.

15-31 This period was the post-cruise standdown. The Valions flew a few cross-country flights and a small number of competitive exercises. The Valions rested easy during the Christmas Holidays - home at last after the Mediterranean cruise. Transferred to Training Wing THREE on 31 December was LT M. R. "BREEZY" GROOTHOUSEN.

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