1980

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

IN REPLY REFER TO:
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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 5750.12C

Encl: (1) Command History Cover Letter
(2) Chronological Summary of Events for 1980
(3) ATKRON FIFTEEN 071751Z JAN 81 (McClusky Award Data)
(4) COMNAVAIRLANT 260537Z NOV 80 (Battle "E" Award)
(5) COMLATWING ONE 211610Z MAR 80 (Safety "S" Award)
(6) COMLATWING ONE 281555Z OCT 80 (Golden Anchor Award Nomination)
(7) COMINEWARINSGRU 171730Z OCT 80 (Mine Warfare Certification)
(8) Biography of Commander J.J. COONAN
(9) Photograph of Commander J.J. COONAN
(10) ATKRON FIFTEEN Officer Roster for 1980
(11) ATKRON FIFTEEN Enlisted Roster for 1980

1. In accordance with references (a) and (b), enclosures (1) through (11) are forwarded.

J. J. Coonan
J. J. COONAN

Copy to:
Director of Naval History (OP09B9) (w/encl)

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ATTACK SQUADRON FIFTEEN
COMMAND HISTORY COVER LETTER
7 FEBRUARY 1981

Attack Squadron FIFTEEN, homebased at NAS Cecil Field, Florida flies the Vought A-7E Corsair II. During the current deployment to the Indian Ocean the "VALIONS" of VA-15 have nine A-7's. During turn-around periods the squadron is usually assigned twelve aircraft. VA-15 is under the administrative command of Commander Light Attack Wing ONE and Tactical Wings Atlantic Fleet. While under the operational command of Commander Carrier Air Wing SIX and USS INDEPENDENCE, (CV-62). At this time, USS INDEPENDENCE is under operational control of Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet.

VA-15's primary mission is all-weather, day-night air-to-surface attack with conventional and nuclear weapons. Secondary missions include counter-air, fleet air defense (including anti-ship missle defense), mine warfare, and day-night reconnaissance.

VA-15 received the newest version of the A-7E during the turnaround training period, from January to November 1980. This version includes the NWC-3 software change, as well as the FLIR (Forward Looking Infra-Red) pod with videotape recorder which enables the pilot to "see" at night and record what he sees. The updated A-7E also has the "strike attack vectoring" data link change and the new digital scan converter forward looking radar.

The VALIONS have used these aircraft modifications to great advantage and have modified tactics to conform with their expanded capabilities. The VALIONS have been innovative in other ways. On 19 September 1980 LCDR D. J. CARROLL planned and led a coordinated strike over 1400 NM to deliver over eighteen tons of ordnance on target. This exercise was planned in direct response to the need for extended power projection potential for carrier battle groups dealing with the current crises in the Middle East.

Currently, the VALIONS hold the Commander Naval Air Atlantic Fleet Battle Efficiency Award, the CNO safety "S", the Commander Naval Air Atlantic Fleet Silver Anchor Award for retention, and the Commander Mine Warfare Inspection Group "Miner of the Year" award for all Navy A-7 squadrons.

Attack Squadron FIFTEEN is currently commanded by CDR J. J. COONAN who assumed command from CDR J. J. MAZACH on 26 June 1980. The squadron is manned by 20 officers and 218 enlisted men.

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ENCLOSURE (1)

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JANUARY

1 - 20 VA-15 continued its post cruise standdown while conducting some training in all types of bombing.

20 - 30 A detachment of VALION personnel and aircraft participated in an orange (opposition) air assignment at Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico. The Roosevelt Roads detachment also had the opportunity to use the bombing range at Vieques. The remainder of the squadron at Cecil Field flew some training missions. On 31 January LT Kevin M. BROWN was transferred to TRARON TWENTY-SIX, NAS Chase Field, Beeville, TX.

FEBRUARY

1 - 4 The CVW-6 Orange Air Det continued at Roosevelt Roads. The airwing trained in coordinated strike

5 - 8 With the Orange Air Det returned, the VALIONS continued shorebased operations at NAS Cecil Field.

9 CDR Coonan, VALION Executive Officer, and LT Mcclain participated in a memorial fly-by for a VA-81 pilot lost in the Mediterranean.

10 - 29 The VALIONS continued turnaround training concentrating in all primary mission areas. On 29 February LT John C. IHLENBURG was transferred to ATKRON FORTY-FIVE, NAS Cecil Field, FL.

MARCH

1 - 6 Turnaround training at NAS Cecil Field.

7 The VALIONS had their post-cruise squadron party and awards ceremony at which the outstanding achievements of squadron members during the cruise were recognized.

8 - 12 Operations at NAS Cecil Field.

13 VA-15 received the CNO safety "S" for its outstanding safety program and record.

14 - 31 Shore-based training at NAS Cecil Field. At this time the VALIONS were declared the Commander, Naval Air Forces Atlantic Fleet nominee for the Admiral Clarence Wade MCCLUSKEY award for the most outstanding Navy attack squadron.

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APRIL

1 - 15 The VALIONS continued shore-based training at NAS Cecil Field, concentrating on bombing and field carrier landing practice. On 2 April ENS Galen E. ALEXANDER and CWO2 Dennis E. CORRELL were received from enlisted status. LT James S. HARMON was received for duty from ATKRON 174. On 7 April LTJG Ralph S. RUPPERT was received for duty from ATKRON 174.

16 CDR COONAN, VA-15, XO, lead a war-at-sea strike against USS SAMPSON (DDG-10). The VALION strike group used strike attack vectoring from a VAW-122 E-2C for the first time.

17 - 30 VALION training emphasized ACM. Overall squadron air-combat readiness has been greatly increased by this training. On 17 April ENS. Galen E. Alexander was transferred to USS SIERRA (AD-18) FPO Miami, FL.

21 - 25 The VALIONS paricipated in exercise QUICKTHRUST 1-80 in which they flew close-air-support missions controlled by ground and airborne forward air controllers. Fighter opposition was provided by Air Force F-15 Eagles and Marine F-4 Phantom II's.

MAY

1 - 5 Shorebased operations at NAS Cecil Field.

6 - 15 The VALIONS deployed to Fallon, Nevada for a weapons training period. During this period, LT Mcclain and LTJG Dickman each fired an AGM-45 shrike at the NAS China Lake range. The VALIONS flew more sorties, participated in more competitive exercises, and received more "E"'s than any other CVW-6 squadron. On 10 May CWO2 Dennis E. Correll was transferred to NAVSCSOL, Athens, GA.

16 - 31 VA-15 continued pre-embarkation training with emphasis on all types of competitive exercises. The pilots trained in field carrier landing practice in preparation for the carrier landing qualifications periods in June.

JUNE

1 - 30 The VALIONS prepared for deployment aboard USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-62) with field carrier landing practice (FCLP) as well as actual carrier qualification aboard "INDY". SAR/RESCORT missions were also practiced and tested in this period. On 9 June LT Douglas R. MAGNANT was transferred to AIRTEVRON FIVE Naval Weapons Center, China Lake, CA for duty, while on 23 June CDR Michael

NORDEEN was received from ATKRON 174 as prospective Exectutive Officer. On 26 June VALIONS bade farewell to CDR John J. MAZACH, who transferred to Commander Light Attack Wing ONE, NAS Cecil Field, FL.

JULY

1 - 7 VALIONS continued preparation for embarkation aboard USS INDEPENDENCE with FCLP training.

7 - 21 VALIONS participated in refresher training aboard USS INDEPENDENCE and used the bombing range at Vieques. On 11 July CWO3 Wilbur G. HINKLE was transferred to NAS Whiting Field, FL.

21 - 23 Port visit St. Thomas, V.I.

23 - 31 INDEPENDENCE participated in exercise SOLID SHIELD which stressed anti-air warfare training. The VALIONS also received beneficial air combat training with Air Force A-10's in support of exercise UNIVERSAL TREK 1-80.

AUGUST

1 - 3 The conclusion of exercise SOLID SHIELD took place and the CVW-6 fly-off took place in August.

3 - 8 CV-62 transited to Norfolk and squadron members returned home. On 8 August LCDR Charles J. NECHVATAL was received for duty from ATKRON 174.

9 - 31 VA-15 trained in many types of air-to-surface ordnance delivery. The VALIONS emphasized mine warfare training in expectation of the upcoming MINEX. During the latter part of the period FCLP was once again emphasized. On 22 August LTJG Robert R. GIRARD and LTJG James S. JENKINS were received for duty from ATKRON 174.

SEPTEMBER

1 - 5 Pre-embarkation training was completed. On 4 and 5 September pilots flew VA-15 aircraft aboard INDY for type training.

5 - 15 VA-15 participated in Type Training ONE. During this period several senior squadron members led coordinated strikes on several excellent target facilities in the Carolinas, including Dare County, Stumpy Point, The Cherry Point targets, and Cecil Field's own Pinecastle target. After entering the Puerto Rican Oparea, the VALIONS once again used Vieques target. During this period CVW-6 performed its minex. The accuracy of the

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VALION Miners won them the "Miner of the Year" award for all A-7 squadrons on both coasts. The VALIONS also were awarded the CVW-6 Golden Tailhook Award for carrier landings for the Reftra and exercise SOLID SHIELD grading periods. On 12 September LCDR Carl M. TANKERSLEY was received for duty from ATKRON 174.

15 - 17 Port visit to Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

17 - 24 Type Training II period began. The VALIONS practiced bombing on Vieques target and provided services for the battle group. Many anti-air warfare exercises and strafe training highlighted this period.

25 - 29 Type Training II was completed. CDR Nordeen, VALION Executive Officer, led a large coordinatd strike on Vieques.

30 Port visit, St. Thomas, V.I.

OCTOBER

1 - 2 Port visit, St. Thomas, V.I.

2 - 7 The VALIONS continued operations aboard CV-62 in the Puerto Rican Oparea during Type Training III period. The VALIONS bombed Vieques and stresssed use of the KB-18/LB-31 camera system. The photographic results of this training have been highly satisfactory.

8 - 14 This period included Type Training III, COMPTUEX ,and the Operational Readiness Evaluation. VA-15 dropped eight laser-guided bombs and trained in nuclear mission preparation, flight and weapon delivery. On the Operational Readiness Evaluation the VALIONS received a score of low-outstanding.

14 - 15 VALION pilots flew back to NAS Cecil Field.

17 Commander Mine Warfare Inspection Group announced VA-15 to be A-7 "Miner of the Year" squadron.

18 - 27 The VALIONS continued shorebased operations at NAS Cecil Field.

28 VA-15 was nominated by Commander Light Attack Wing ONE for the Golden Anchor Award for retention; thereby, VA-15 became Silver Anchor Award winner for A-7 squadrons on the East Coast.

29 - 31 Pre-deployment preparations continued.

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NOVEMBER

1 - 16 The VALIONS continued pre-embarkation training at NAS Cecil Field. A six day carrier qualification period took place during the last week. On 10 November LCDR William H. MONROE was received from ATKRON 174 for duty.

17 - 19 The VALIONS bade farewell to home and hearth enroute the Indian Ocean aboard USS INDEPENDENCE. On 18 November LCDR Dennis J. CARROLL was transferred to COMLATWING ONE, NAS Cecil Field, FL, while on 19 November LCDR Robert A. BROOKS was transferred to COMLATWING ONE NAS Cecil Field, FL.

19 - 25 CV62 continued its transit into the mid-Atlantic.

26 VA-15 was awarded the Commander, Naval Air, Atltantic Fleet Battle "E" (for effeciency) for performance from 1 October 1979 to 30 September 1980.

27 - 30 VALIONS continued transit operations. On 29 November all VALION pollywogs became shellbacks.

DECEMBER

1 - 7 USS INDEPENDENCE continued its transit around the Cape of Good Hope enroute a blue water turnover with USS EISENHOWER, (CVN-69).

7 INDY inchopped Seventh Fleet.

8 INDEPENDENCE and EISENHOWER conducted a battle group verses battle group anti-air warfare passing exercise prior to their blue water turnover.

9 - 10 The transit continued northward in the Indian Ocean. Operations involving VA-15 included service missions to exercise battle group anti-air warfare capabilities.

11 - 16 INDY's battle group continued northward conducting limited flight operations.

17 CDR Nordeen, VALION Executive Officer, intercepted and escorted a Soviet IL-38 MAY conducting surveillance of CV-62.

18 LT Mcclain intercepted and escorted another Soviet IL-38. INDY conducted an anti-air warfare passing exercise with USS RANGER (CV-61). VA-15 A-7's were used effectively as combat air patrol against attacks by RANGER aircraft.

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19 - 24	INDY contiued operations on Gonzo Station in the Northern Arabian Sea.
25	Christmas on Gonzo Station. Soviet IL-38 MAYS conducted surveillance of the INDEPENDENCE battle group.
26 - 31	The VALIONS continued operations on Gonzo Station. On New Year's Eve the VALIONS held a casino night for Navy Relief and the squadron Welfare and Recreation Fund.

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