



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
STRIKE FIGHTER SQUADRON FIFTEEN
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From: Commanding Officer, Strike Fighter Squadron FIFTEEN
To: Director of Naval History, Aviation History
Branch, Naval Historical Center

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY REPORT - 2003

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G
(b) U.S. Navy Regulations, 1990
(c) OPNAVINST 3120.32 (series)

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronological History
(3) Narrative History - 2003
(4) Commanding Officer's biography and portrait
(5) Squadron History
(6) Squadron Aircraft Photograph (e-mail attachment)

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (6) are submitted.
2. POC: LT A. Roy, PAO, DSN 433-9521, (757)433-9521.


E. D. LANGFORD

Copy to:
PAO
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COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

MISSION

The mission of Strike Fighter Squadron Fifteen (VFA-15) is to maintain a maximum state of air combat readiness as a deterrent or striking capability against any and all enemies of the United States of America, as may be directed by higher command authority. The primary function of VFA-15 within that mission is to conduct offensive air superiority and air-to-surface attack operations.

ORGANIZATION

VFA-15 is organized in two primary levels: command and departmental. The organizational structure has been established within the framework of primary billets authorized by the Chief of Naval Personnel and within the guidelines established in references (b) and (c). In this particular application, the organizational structure and billet descriptions depicted in reference (c) have been tailored, as necessary, to fit the structure of a deployable aviation command.

3. VFA-15, based at NAS Oceana, VA, is commanded by CDR Edward D. Langford, USN. It has an immediate external command relationship as outlined below:

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL

Command/Operational Control	Commander, Carrier Air Wing EIGHT, NAS Oceana, VA
Administrative Control (embarked)	Commander, Carrier Air Wing EIGHT (ashore) Commander, Strike Fighter Wing, Atlantic, NAS Oceana, VA
Support Control	Commander, Strike Fighter Wing, Atlantic Atlantic

The 12 FA-18C Hornet aircraft assigned to the squadron have "AJ" tail code markings. The bureau number breakdown is as follows:

<u>AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>BUREAU NUMBER</u>
300	164627
301	164629
302	164643
303	164646
304	164655
305	164611
306	164691
307	164689
310	164673
311	164680
312	164631
314	164657

VFA-15 consists of 249 enlisted members and 22 officers.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

DEPLOYMENT USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN 71): 6 Jan-28 May 03

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM: 21 Mar-16 Apr 03

FLY-IN NAVAL AIR STATION OCEANA: 28 May 03

TIGER CRUISE, USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT: 23-25 Jul 03

NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE ADVERSARY DETACHMENT: 27 Jul-07 Aug 03

CQ, USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN 71): 9-26 Sep 03

VFA-15 CHANGE OF COMMAND: 19 Sep 03

KITTY HAWK 100 YEARS OF FLIGHT FLY-BYS: 15-17 Dec 03

STRIKE FIGHTER SQUADRON FIFTEEN
NARRATIVE HISTORY - 2003

On the 6th of January 2003, VFA-15, fresh from a rigorous and accelerated interdeployment training cycle, deployed aboard USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) amidst growing tensions in the Middle East. From 19 March to 15 April, VFA-15 engaged in combat operations in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. There, the men and women of Strike Fighter Squadron FIFTEEN served with honor and distinction while demonstrating the versatility of Naval Aviation and the professionalism of the VALIONS. The multitude of mission types undertaken by VFA-15 is testament to the versatility of the FA-18 Hornet. In the early days and nights of the war, VFA-15 provided fleet air defense while also striking targets deep into the heart of Iraq including air defense sites, military facilities, and terrorist camps. VFA-15 was additionally tasked with providing close air support for special operations ground forces in the northern portions of Iraq. All told, VFA-15 delivered over 245,000 pounds of ordnance with unprecedented accuracy.

Upon their triumphant return from combat on the 28th of May, the VALIONS spearheaded the Navy's new Fleet Response Plan and took on the title of "surge carrier." As the surge carrier, VFA-15 maintained the highest levels of proficiency and readiness in order to be ready to deploy immediately in response to global crisis. Such an enormous responsibility required the total dedication and focus of all 226 members of VFA-15.

Taking an opportunity to thank those friends and loved ones who support them daily, VFA-15 took part in the *Roosevelt's* Tiger Cruise from 23-25 July 2003. A Tiger Cruise is an air-wing wide event that allows family members and loved ones a glimpse inside the demanding life aboard a carrier. This three-day cruise exposed loved ones to the dynamic workings of the ship, the air-wing and the day-to-day life of Sailors embarked on a warship.

Immediately on return from Tiger Cruise, the VALIONS readied themselves for a joint training exercise with F-16 Weapons School in Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. From 27 July to 7 August, VFA-15 burned the candle at both ends to meet the demanding training requirements and provide the highest levels of support to the Air Force. This detachment also gave the VALIONS valuable insight into Air Force methods and tactics, allowing VFA-15 to become an even more effective combat force.

September brought an chance for VFA-15 to return to its to the fundamentals of Naval Aviation and start a new chapter in its venerable history. Aboard the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* from 9-26 September, the VALIONS conducted carrier qualifications and operations. On the 19th of September, CDR A. L. Lewis passed command of VFA-15 to his Executive Officer, CDR Edward D. Langford.

For the remainder of 2003, the VALIONS maintained the highest levels of squadron readiness through unit level training maintaining the status of "surge carrier" well into 2004. December 15-17 brought special honor to VFA-15 as their services were requested for the Kitty Hawk 100 Years of Flight celebration. VFA-15 performed three days of multi-plane fly-bys of the commemoration.

VFA-15's maintenance, for the second year, posted an incredible 98% sortie completion rate. Always providing fully mission capable aircraft, the uncompromising dedication of the VFA-15 maintainers was the driving force behind the incredibly successful year of the VALIONS.