

1985



**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
STRIKE FIGHTER SQUADRON 25
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94601-6203**

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From: Commanding Officer, Strike Fighter Squadron 25
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Encl: (1) Events of 1985

1. Per reference (a), enclosure (1) is forwarded.


J. C. LESLIE

Copy to:
CINCPACFLT
Director of Naval History

Joseph



EVENTS OF 1985

During 1985, Strike Fighter Squadron 25 served under CAPT J. J. Zerr, Commander, Carrier Air Wing 14 and CDR R. F. Johnson who assumed command while deployed to the Indian Ocean. The functional wing commander was initially COMO D. B. Cargill who was relieved by N. D. Campbell in August.

The squadron was commanded by CDR J. C. Leslie with CDR J. L. Arbiter serving as Executive Officer. Also serving with VFA-25 were: CDR D. G. Thompson, CDR S. C. Ronnie, CDR G. R. Peairs, LCDR J. L. Schubert, LCDR K. D. Cockrell, LCDR W. E. Maughan, LCDR S. E. Davis, LCDR D. D. Thompson, LCDR A. L. Kiggins, LCDR C. J. W. Berry, LT T. D. Abrahamson, LT D. W. Martin, LT P. E. O'Rourke, LT C. S. Moore, LT K. S. O'Harra, LT R. K. Mallette, LT E. R. Flora, LT R. M. Emerson, LT D. E. Sigler, LT J. K. Schwecke, LT T. C. Gurney, LT C. P. Fedyschyn, LT D. G. Frahm, LT K. F. Dail, LT L. J. Bartha, LT I. F. Keas, LTJG S. H. Funchess, LTJG J. J. Mosley, LTJG C. R. Mach, ENS G. W. Comstock and CWO4 T. W. Skoblicki.

The year began with an operational readiness exercise in preparation for the upcoming WESTPAC deployment. The squadron also worked with the airwing in joint exercises qualifying in the use of HARM, LDT, and FLIR.

On 21 February, VFA-25 flew aircraft aboard USS CONSTELLATION (CV 64) to commence WESTPAC '85 and the initial FA-18 Hornet extended deployment. Enroute to Hawaii the squadron continued its carrier qualifications and flew missions against aggressors from Navy and Marine squadrons based in Hawaii. The squadron also conducted long range missions to targets located in Hawaii proving the Hornet's capabilities.

From 8 to 13 March the ship was in port at Pearl Harbor. Underway and while enroute to the Philippines the first Hornet intercept of a Soviet Bear aircraft was conducted, and escorts were launched around the clock. The squadron continued flying long range missions to targets at Guam and the Philippines. The "Connie" reached Subic Bay 28 March.

On 2 April the ship was underway and made the short trip to Singapore where she remained from 6-9 April. Next, "Connie" steamed to the North Arabian Sea in the Indian Ocean to relieve USS CARL VINSON (CVN 70) on "Gonzo" station. April and May were spent flying routine training sorties and maintaining U.S. presence in the area. On 23 May the ship dropped anchor off the coast of Mombasa, Kenya for some well deserved liberty. Underway after five days, the "Connie" and her Battle Group participated in a short weapons training exercise in vicinity of Diego Garcia, before returning to Gonzo station.

The second stay of 59 days on "Gonzo" station was plagued by poor weather, as the summer months in the Indian Ocean are monsoon season. The at sea period ended with a port visit to Perth, Australia from 19 to 24 July. Leaving Australia the Constellation steamed north toward the Philippines arriving on 31 July. While in Subic Bay the end of cruise "Golden Tailhook" awards were presented. The "Fist of the Fleet" won the overall competition and placed four pilots in the top ten including CDR Peairs, LCDR Davis, LT Moore and LT O'Harra. Also, LT Moore, LT Flora, LT Mallette, and LT Fedyschyn captured four of the "Top Five Nugget" awards. The squadron's landing grade average was 3.54 and the overall boarding rate was 96.6%.

Leaving Subic Bay 2 August, "Connie" steamed to Hawaii, arriving on the 15th to on load the "Tigers" before heading towards San Diego. The final cruise highlight was the 20 plane Hornet fly-in, led by CDR Leslie, which arrived in the skies of Lemoore the morning of 23 August, culminating the first ever deployment of the FA-18 Hornet. The remainder of the squadron returned on 24 August.

A major milestone passed during the deployment was the accumulation of 40,000 hours and 9 years mishap free. The first operations upon return were work-ups for and completion of Red Flag 86-01 from 26 October to 8 November. The "Fist" flew both Red (adversary) air and Blue offensive counter air missions in support of the exercise. Simultaneously with the Red Flag exercise the squadron supported a detachment to Naval Fighter Weapons School, "Topgun".

December marked the completion of the Command Inspection which was held on the 17th and 18th, resulting in the squadron receiving 8 commendatory marks.

The completion of the first operational deployment of the FA-18, coupled with the outstanding safety record VFA-25 continues to maintain (over 41,000 hours and 9½ years mishap free) reflect the "Fists" ongoing determination to be front runners in the field of tactical naval aviation.