

7P05796601

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| Unit Attack Squadron TWENTY-FIVE | Period Covered (From - To) 1 October 1964 - 1 April 1965 |
| Signature of Commanding Officer or authorized representative <i>R. F. Smith</i> R. F. SMITH | Date Forwarded 3 April 1965 |

DIRECTIONS: Complete in duplicate semi-annually for periods ending 31 March and 30 September, retain copy and forward original to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Op-05ASG, Navy Department, Washington 25, D. C., within 15 days after report period. No covering letter is required.

All units complete Part I and other Parts as indicated. Follow instructions for each blank; fill in all required

blanks using "same" to avoid repeating previously recorded information. If more space is needed, attach extra sheets. Amplifying and/or historically significant documents, including photos, may be appended with proper notation under Part VI.

Security classification may be at any level consistent with content. Identify classified items within the report, by an additional stamp at their position in the report. Avoid over-classification.

PART I - ALL UNITS

1. Designation: Omit if same as in previous period. If changed, enter previous designation, date of change and the authorizing directive. New units record date and place of commissioning.

2. Commanding Officer
R. F. Smith
R. F. SMITH, CDR, USN

C.O. relieved if command changed this period _____ Date of change _____

3. PERSONNEL ON BOARD

| | AVIATORS | AIR PILOTS | OTHER | TOTAL |
|---|----------|------------|-------|-------|
| At end of reporting period. Ships give ships company only; wings and groups give staffs only; air stations give station personnel only. | 22 | | 3 | 25 |
| OFFICER | | | | |
| ENLISTED | | | | 108 |
| CIVILIAN | | | | 0 |

4. Mission or function (If changed or specifically assigned during the period, then enter a brief with dates and identity of authorizing directive.)

Light Attack Squadron - Nuclear Weapons Delivery

5. Next senior operational command (Give start and end dates if changed during this reporting period.)

Commander Attack Carrier Air Wing TWO

6. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION: (Air Stations omit; ships enter in Part II. Wings and groups should not record squadron locations; ship-based units give name of ship only. Enter beginning and end dates when part of period is involved.)

| PERIOD (From - To) | PLACE |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 OCT 64 - 7 OCT 64 | NAS, LEMOORE, CALIFORNIA |
| 7 OCT 64 - 6 NOV 64 | USS MIDWAY (CVA-41) |
| 6 NOV 64 - 27 JAN 65 | NAS LEMOORE, CALIFORNIA |
| 27 JAN 65 - 5 FEB 65 | USS MIDWAY (CVA-41) |
| 5 FEB 65 - 23 FEB 65 | NAS LEMOORE, CALIFORNIA |
| 23 FEB 65 - 1 APR 65 | USS MIDWAY (CVA-41) |
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7. Participation in special exercises, operations, and operational tests (Principally those of a major nature rather than what is normally a part of routine operational training. Use official code names or descriptive titles, identify the overall command, and give dates, area and brief summary of own participation. Make reference to reports and orders covering the operation.)

Attack Squadron TWENTY-FIVE took part in Operation Silver Lance, an invasion of the coast of Southern California, from the deck of the USS MIDWAY (CVA-41) during the period from 23 Feb 1965 to 3 Mar 1965. The major objective of the squadron was the softening up of the area, which was followed by an amphibious assault on the coast. In accomplishing this mission, Attack Squadron TWENTY-FIVE flew one hundred fourteen sorties, compiling three hundred sixty-seven hours in the air.

8. *Official or other recognition of accomplishment* - (Such as unit citations, commendations and awards; decorations and awards to individuals, and records or events believed to be "firsts" which may be fleet-wide or apply only within the unit. Give dates of awards and events; claims for "firsts" are meaningless without a date.)

9. *General resume of activity* - (Narrative statement of activity not otherwise covered, summarizing work, training, special cruises and visits, conversion, modification, overhaul, new equipment, and the like. Air Stations consider, in addition, such things as reorganization, new operational administrative and management procedures introduced; special programs initiated or completed, construction in progress, expansion of facilities, etc. Use additional sheets as necessary. Documents appended should be identified in Part VI, page 4.)

PART IV - SQUADRONS

| 1. TYPE A/C ASSIGNED | NUMBER ON HAND | DATE FIRST RECEIVED |
|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| A-1H/J | 12 | |
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| 2. OPERATIONAL STATISTICS | MONTH | HOURS FLOWN | NO. OF FLIGHTS | MONTH | HOURS FLOWN | NO. OF FLIGHTS |
|---------------------------|----------|-------------|----------------|----------|-------------|----------------|
| | OCTOBER | 421.4 | 102 | JANUARY | 498.2 | 246 |
| | NOVEMBER | 437.1 | 204 | FEBRUARY | 600.3 | 201 |
| | DECEMBER | 412.4 | 151 | MARCH | 496.5 | 138 |

PART V - AIR STATIONS: On board refers in this instance to what is physically present; not to be confused with Home Port assignment. Do not repeat units reported as on board in the previous period unless they departed in this period. For composite units such as Carrier Air Groups, record only the parent group.

| 1. UNITS ON BOARD | ARRIVED | DEPARTED |
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| 2. COMMANDS AND ACTIVITIES ON BOARD | ARRIVED | DEPARTED |
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PART VI - DOCUMENTARY MATERIAL APPENDED (Number serially and describe sufficiently to insure proper identification.)

8. Official or other recognition of accomplishment - (Such as unit citations, commendations and awards; decorations and awards to individuals, and records or events believed to be "firsts" which may be fleet-wide or apply only within the unit. Give dates of awards and events; claims for "firsts" are meaningless without a date.)

Attack Squadron TWENTY-FIVE won the Battle Efficiency "E" for light attack(prop) squadrons for fiscal year 1965. Its aircraft were the first from aboard the USS MIDWAY to engage the enemy in Southeast Asia in combat on 10 April 1965. A record for the most hours flown by an attack squadron during a 30 day period was claimed when VA-25 flew 1896.5 hours on 409 flights from 10 April through 9 May 1965. Attack Squadron TWENTY-FIVE was also the first "SKYRAIDER" squadron to get a confirmed enemy MIG-17 kill when four of its aircraft engaged the enemy fighters over North Vietnam on 20 June 1965.

A list of individual awards is included as an addendum.

9. General resume of activity - (Narrative statement of activity not otherwise covered, summarizing work, training, special cruises and visits, conversion, modification, overhaul, new equipment, and the like. Air Stations consider, in addition, such things as reorganization, new operational administrative and management procedures introduced; special programs initiated or completed, construction in progress, expansion of facilities, etc. Use additional sheets as necessary. Documents appended should be identified in Part VI, page 4.)

During this period Attack Squadron TWENTY-FIVE flew extensively in combat in the Southeast Asian Theater. Our missions were many and varied. We flew seemingly countless RESCAP missions and on several occasions were extremely instrumental in the successful recovery of downed American aviators in enemy territory. We participated in a great number of co-ordinated air strikes against military targets in North Vietnam and on two such occasions lost pilots and aircraft of our squadron to enemy fire. One of our most effective missions was that of armed road reconnaissance in North Vietnam, as by our constant presence overhead we denied the enemy the use of his own transportation and communications system.

We were employed in South Vietnam in the role of close air support, being utilized during the amphibious landing and the founding of a friendly airfield at Chu Lai and doing extensive work with forward air controllers(airborne) in the Mekong Delta region and other areas of South Vietnam.

Other relatively minor missions involved us in armed escort and communications relay. We flew both in good weather and bad, day and night, to once more emphasize our effectiveness as an all weather attack squadron.

Also during this period we took time out to relax by making a few brief visits to Cubi Point, Philippines and had the opportunity to visit Japan and Hong Kong once each.

PART IV - SQUADRONS

| 1. TYPE A/C ASSIGNED | NUMBER ON HAND | DATE FIRST RECEIVED |
|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| A - 1 H/J | 12 | |
| | | |
| | | |

| 2. OPERATIONAL STATISTICS | MONTH | HOURS FLOWN | NO. OF FLIGHTS | MONTH | HOURS FLOWN | NO. OF FLIGHTS |
|---------------------------|-------|-------------|----------------|-----------|-------------|----------------|
| | April | 1418.0 | 339 | July | 806.6 | 179 |
| | May | 1149.6 | 283 | August | 1529.0 | 336 |
| | June | 1474.1 | 334 | September | 1021.4 | 231 |

PART V - AIR STATIONS: On board refers in this instance to what is physically present; not to be confused with Home Port assignment. Do not repeat units reported as on board in the previous period unless they departed in this period. For composite units such as Carrier Air Groups, record only the parent group.

| 1. UNITS ON BOARD | ARRIVED | DEPARTED |
|-------------------|---------|----------|
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| 2. COMMANDS AND ACTIVITIES ON BOARD | ARRIVED | DEPARTED |
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PART VI - DOCUMENTARY MATERIAL APPENDED (Number serially and describe sufficiently to insure proper identification.)

Part I-8. Addendum

LIST OF INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| CDR H. E. ETTINGER | 4 Air Medals |
| CDR C. W. STODDARD | 1 Air Medal |
| LCDR E. A. GREATHOUSE | 1 Distinguished Flying Cross, 3 Air Medals |
| LCDR O. R. FORD | 3 Air Medals |
| LCDR R. L. BACON | 3 Air Medals |
| LT F. H. FRECKMANN | 4 Air Medals |
| <u>LT C. B. JOHNSON</u> | <u>1 Silver Star, 3 Air Medals</u> |
| LT D. B. DIXON | 2 Air Medals |
| LT D. R. LAACK | 4 Air Medals |
| LTJG D. L. ABRAHAMSEN | 4 Air Medals |
| LTJG L. O. WOODBURY | 3 Air Medals |
| LTJG M. L. WALMAN | 2 Air Medals |
| <u>LTJG C. W. HARTMAN</u> | <u>1 Silver Star, 3 Air Medals</u> |
| LTJG A. J. HINGSBERGER | 4 Air Medals |
| LTJG J. S. LYNNE | 1 Distinguished Flying Cross, 1 Air Medal |
| ENS H. M. LIVESAY | 3 Air Medals |
| PARKER, W. B., AOC | Secretary of the Navy Commendation Award |
| | |
| CDR R. F. SMITH | 2 Air Medals |
| LT J. JUAN | 2 Air Medals, 1 Navy Commendation Medal |
| LT J. C. BEAM | 1 Air Medal, 1 Navy Commendation Medal |
| LT J. M. SCOGGINS | 4 Air Medals, 1 Navy Commendation Medal |
| LT W. T. EADS | 1 Air Medal |
| LT M. H. DRAPER | 3 Air Medals |
| | |
| LCDR H. E. GRAY, JR. | 1 Distinguished Flying Cross, 5 Air Medals, 1 Purple Heart |
| LTJG C. L. DOUGHTIE | 1 Distinguished Flying Cross, 1 Navy Commendation Medal, 1 Purple Heart |

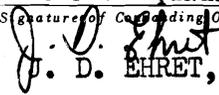
On 22 June 1965 LCDR E. A. GREATHOUSE, LT C. B. JOHNSON, LTJG C. W. HARTMAN, and LTJG J. S. LYNNE were presented the Vietnamese Air Force's highest award to aviators, the Air Gallantry Medal with Gold Wings, and made official pilots in the Vietnamese Air Force by Premiere Ky in ceremonies at his palace in Saigon.

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AVIATION HISTORY UNIT

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| | |
|---|---|
| Unit Attack Squadron TWENTY FIVE | Period Covered (From - To) 1 October 1965 to 1 October 1966 |
| Signature of Commanding Officer or authorized representative  J. D. EHRET, LCDR, By Direction | Date Forwarded 30 October 1966 |

DIRECTIONS: Complete in duplicate semi-annually for periods ending 31 March and 30 September, retain copy and forward original to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Op-05A5G, Navy Department, Washington 25, D. C., within 15 days after report period. No covering letter is required.

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Security classification may be at any level consistent with content. Identify classified items within the report, by an additional stamp at their position in the report. Avoid over-classification.

PART I - ALL UNITS

1. Designation: Omit if same as in previous period. If changed, enter previous designation, date of change and the authorizing directive. New units record date and place of commissioning.

2. Commanding Officer

| | | |
|------------------|--|--|
| CDR J. D. BURDEN | C.O. relieved if command changed this period CDR H. E. ETLINGER CDR C. W. STODDARD | Date of change 13 April 1966 14 September 1966 |
|------------------|--|--|

3. PERSONNEL ON BOARD

| | AVIATORS | AIR PILOTS | OTHER | TOTAL |
|---|----------|------------|-------|-------|
| At end of reporting period. Ships give ships company only; wings and groups give staffs only; air stations give station personnel only. | 19 | 3 | 3 | 22 |
| OFFICER | 19 | 3 | 3 | 22 |
| ENLISTED | 3 | 3 | 3 | 9 |
| CIVILIAN | 3 | 3 | 3 | 9 |

4. Mission or function (If changed or specifically assigned during the period, then enter a brief with dates and identity of authorizing directive.)

Attack Squadron

5. Next senior operational command (Give start and end dates if changed during this reporting period.)

Air Wing TWO

6. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION: (Air Stations omit; ships enter in Part II. Wings and groups should not record squadron locations; ship-based units give name of ship only. Enter beginning and end dates when part of period is involved.)

| PERIOD (From - To) | PLACE |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 15 OCT 65 to 23 NOV 65 | CVA-41 |
| 23 NOV 65 " 12 JUN 66 | NAS LEMOORE, CALIFORNIA |
| 13 JUN 66 " 01 OCT 66 | CVA-43 |
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7. Participation in special exercises, operations, and operational tests (Principally those of a major nature rather than what is normally a part of routine operational training. Use official code names or descriptive titles, identify the overall command, and give dates, area and brief summary of own participation. Make reference to reports and orders covering the operation.)

From 15 October to 4 November 1965, VA-25, embarked on the USS MIDWAY (CVA-41) participated in Yankee and Dixie Team Operations in the Gulf of Tonkin under the command of COMSEVENTHFILT. This action involved close air support in South Vietnam and lines of communication interdiction in North Vietnam. This operation was begun again aboard the USS CORAL SEA (CVA-43) commencing 13 September 1966.

8. Official or other recognition of accomplishment - (Such as unit citations, commendations and awards; decorations and awards to individuals, and records or events believed to be "firsts" which may be fleet-wide or apply only within the unit. Give dates of awards and events; claims for "firsts" are meaningless without a date.)

See enclosure (1) (History)

9. General resume of activity - (Narrative statement of activity not otherwise covered, summarizing work, training, special cruises and visits, conversion, modification, overhaul, new equipment, and the like. Air Stations consider, in addition, such things as reorganization, new operational administrative and management procedures introduced; special programs initiated or completed, construction in progress, expansion of facilities, etc. Use additional sheets as necessary. Documents appended should be identified in Part VI, page 4.)

After returning from cruise on November 23, the squadron enjoyed a relaxing period of leave and then began work in earnest once again. An Administrative and Material Inspection was held in the middle of February. We received a grade of 92.49.

VA-25 then continued its training cycle including carrier qualifications aboard the USS CONSTELLATION and a weapons deployment to Fallon, Nevada.

The squadron boarded the USS CORAL SEA (CVA-43) on 13 June and participated in a WEPTRAEX and Operation "Belaying Pin". VA-25 then participated in the Operational Readiness Inspection in Hawaii which we received a grade of 94.49.

The CORAL SEA arrived on Yankee Station on September 13 and current operations began. CDR C. W. STODDARD was lost in action the next day and CDR J. D. BURDEN took over as Commanding Officer.

AIR MEDALS

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>MEDAL</u> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| LT A. J. HINGSBERGER 654985/1310 | 9,8 |
| LT M. D. MADSEN 623682/1310 | 1,2 |
| LT D. R. LAACK 648620/1310 | 9,8 |
| CDR H. E. ETTINGER 504133/1310 | 10,9,8 |
| LTJG D. L. ABRAHAMSEN 663175/1310 | 9,8,7 |
| LT D. B. DIXON 644475/1310 | 5,4 |
| LCDR E. A. GREATHOUSE 594756/1310 | 9 |
| CDR C. W. STODDARD 521896/1310 | 6,5 |
| LCDR O. R. FORD 605689/1310 | 8,7 |
| HM2 W. G. MARKS 437 99 18 | 1 |
| LCDR R. L. BACON 609675/1317 | 10, 9, 8 |
| CDR J. D. BURDEN 506760/1310 | 1 |
| LTJG N. T. DARAMUS, Jr 668962/1310 | 6,5,4, |
| LCDR J. D. EHRET 604955/1310 | 1 |

CONT

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| LT F. H. FRECKMANN 630537/1310 | 11,10,9 |
| ENS L. E. GARDINER 690210/1315 | 1 |
| LT C. W. HARTMAN, III 6604843/1310 | 9,8,7,6 |
| LT C. B. JOHNSON 641391/1310 | 9,8,7 |
| LTJG H. M. LIVESAY 659584/1310 | 10,9,8,7 |
| LTJG J. S. LYNNE 669269/1310 | 7,6,5 |
| LTJG B. G. MARCUS 684568/1315 | 1 |
| LTJG A. A. NICHOLS 678463/1310 | 1 |
| LT R. M. RAUSA 623751/1317 | 1 |
| LCDR R. W. SMITH, JR. 585904/1317 | 1 |
| LTJG C. F. THOM, II 657182/1310 | 1 |
| LT M. L. WALMAN 657182/1310 | 9,8,7 |
| LT L. O. WOODBURY 686487/1310 | 9,8 |
| LT R. D. WOODS 632730/1315 | 1 |

NAVY COMMENDATION MEDAL WITH COMBAT V

NAME

CDR C. W. STODDARD(Gold Star)
521896/1310

LCDR R. L. BACON
609675/1317

LCDR O. R. FORD
605689/1310

LCDR E. A. GREATHOUSE
594756/1310

LT M. L. WALMAN
657182/1310

LT D. B. DIXON
644475/1310

LT L. O. WOODBURY
686487/1310

LT D. R. LAACK
648620/1310

LT M. D. MADSEN
623682/1310

LT A. J. HINGSBERGER
654985/1310

LTJG N. T. DARAMUS, Jr. (Gold Star)
668962/1310

LTJG D. L. ABRAHAMSEN
663175/1310

CDR H. E. ETTINGER
504133/1310

LT F. H. FRECKMANN
630537/1310

LT C. B. JOHNSON
641 391/1310

.T C. W. HARTMAN, III
6604843/1310

LTJG H. M. LIVESAY
659584/1310

LTJG J. S. LYNNE
669269/1310

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY COMMENDATION FOR ACHIEVEMENT

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|-----|
| ENS J. A. SINGLETERRY | 685960/6852 | USN |
| LT A. B. RODRIGUEZ | 650366/6852 | USN |
| ADR3 J. D. HILLARY | 692 84 16 | USN |

DISTINGUISH FLYING CROSS

NONE

GOOD CONDUCT

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----|
| AME2 A. J. BILLINGS, JR | 587 27 87 | USN |
| ADR2 B. BROOKS 3rd Award | 444 43 85 | USN |
| AMSC R. L. CARLSON 3rd Award | 489 33 47 | USN |
| AE3 F.J. HEBERT | 584 20 23 | USN |
| AMS3 J. M. HUMPTER | 598 80 40 | USN |
| AMH2 W. V. PATTERSON | 298 84 42 | USN |
| AZ2 M. PHILLIPS H. E. | 584 22 89 | USN |
| AEL POTTORFF 3rd Award | 471 26 00 | USN |
| ADR2 T. W. REID 3rd Award | 483 61 22 | USN |
| AO3 R. J. ROUKIE 1st Award | 903 99 96 | USN |
| ADR1 CG L. MITCHELL 3rd Award | 496 07 09 | USN |
| ADR3 R. J. WENDLING | 596 27 46 | USN |

PART IV - SQUADRONS

| 1. TYPE A/C ASSIGNED | NUMBER ON HAND | DATE FIRST RECEIVED |
|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| A1H | 12 | |
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| 2. OPERATIONAL STATISTICS | MONTH | HOURS FLOWN | NO. OF FLIGHTS | MONTH | HOURS FLOWN | NO. OF FLIGHTS |
|---------------------------|---------|-------------|----------------|-------|-------------|----------------|
| | OCTOBER | 961 | 316 | APRIL | 625 | 214 |
| NOVEMBER | 481 | 231 | MAY | 605 | 220 | |
| DECEMBER | 215 | 97 | JUNE | 553 | 197 | |
| JANUARY | 527 | 204 | JULY | 379 | 199 | |
| FEBRUARY | 573 | 226 | AUGUST | 300 | 130 | |
| MARCH | 485 | 218 | SEPTEMBER | 1022 | 303 | |

PART V - AIR STATIONS: On board refers in this instance to what is physically present; not to be confused with Home Port assignment. Do not repeat units reported as on board in the previous period unless they departed in this period. For composite units such as Carrier Air Groups, record only the parent group.

| 1. UNITS ON BOARD | ARRIVED | DEPARTED |
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| 2. COMMANDS AND ACTIVITIES ON BOARD | ARRIVED | DEPARTED |
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PART VI - DOCUMENTARY MATERIAL APPENDED (Number serially and describe sufficiently to insure proper identification.)

OPNAV REPORT
(5750-3)

ATTACK SQUADRON TWENTY FIVE
FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO 96601

HISTORY OF ATTACK SQUADRON TWENTY FIVE

ATTACK SQUADRON TWENTY FIVE evolved from the famous TORPEDO SQUADRON SEVENTEEN, which at the termination of World War II, was sent to NAAS Fallon, Nevada for reformation under the command of Commander Rubin H. KONIG. At this time the squadron flew TBM type aircraft.

In February 1946, the squadron was ordered to NAS Brunswick, Maine and the TBM's were replaced with SB2C's. In August of that same year, the squadron was again transferred, this time to NAS Norfolk, Virginia. Redesignated as VA-6E, it became a component of Carrier Air Group FIVE, and in January 1947, the Air Group embarked on the newly completed USS VALLEY FORGE (CVB-45) for a shakedown cruise in the Caribbean until 1947. In December 1947, CVGB-5 was redesignated Carrier Air Group SIX, and VA-6B became VA-65 in conformity with the numbering system. At the same time, Commander KONIG was relieved by Lieutenant Commander BUTLER as Commanding Officer.

In early 1948, VA-65 became a plank owner for the second time when it embarked in USS CORAL SEA (CVB-43) for her maiden voyage. At the completion of the cruise, the squadron again returned to NAS Norfolk, remaining there until the latter part of 1948, when it went aboard the USS MIDWAY (CVB-41). Upon return to NAS Norfolk from this training cruise, Lieutenant Commander BUTLER was relieved by Lieutenant Commander HANLEY as Commanding Officer.

Early in 1949, VA-65 embarked in USS MIDWAY (CVB-41) for the second time to make a two-month Mediterranean cruise. Afterwards VA-65 was homeported at NAAS Oceana, Virginia. In mid-1949, VA-65 received its first Battle Efficiency "B" for being the best single engine bombing squadron in

Encl to oct 65 - 2006 West Summary

COMAIRLANT for the year 1948. In the latter part of 1949, CVG-6 went aboard its fourth ship in three years, USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (CVB-42), for a two-month cold weather training cruise. On 12 November 1949, the ship and Air Group crossed the Arctic Circle. After completion of this cruise, and on 3 February 1950, Commander Phillips relieved Lieutenant Commander Hanley as Commanding Officer.

VA-65 received its second Battle Efficiency "E" award in June 1950 for being the best single engine bombing squadron in COMAIRLANT during 1949. The following month, with the invasion of South Korea, a combat ready air group was ordered to the West Coast. Along with VF-35, VF-24, VF-63 and VF-64, VA-65 became a part of the "revised" Air Group TWO, with Commander Donald M. WHITE as CAG, and departed NAAS Oceana for NAS Alameda, California in August 1950.

VA-65, along with the Air Group embarked in USS BOXER (CV-12), on 24 August 1950, and sailed for Korea in a record breaking run. This first tour of duty in the Korean Theater lasted until 11 November 1950, when the squadron returned to NAS Alameda. The stay at Alameda was short-lived. On 2 December 1950, the squadron was called back from leave to mobilize, with Air Group TWO, for immediate departure to Korean waters. The Air Group aided in the successful evacuation of UN troops from Hungnam on this tour. On 19 March 1951, the Air Group transferred to USS PHILIPPINE SEA (CV-47), and served with her until returning to NAS Alameda on 9 June 1951. During this period, 24 August 1950, until 9 June 1951, the squadron logged a total of seven months in a combat operational status, crossed the Pacific Ocean four times and served aboard three "ESSEX" class carriers. Seventeen hundred and eighteen missions were flown during this period, of which 1,645 were combat missions,

totaling 5,583 combat hours.

VA-65, with Air Group TWO, moved to NALF Santa Rosa, California on 11 July 1951, with Commander G. A. Sherwood relieving Commander Phillips as Commanding Officer on 31 August 1951. On 8 February 1952, the Air Group departed NAS Alameda aboard USS BOXER (CV-21) for its third Korean tour. With the squadron's primary mission being interdiction maximum results were achieved on 23 June 1952, when a coordinated strike was successfully conducted against the North Korean hydro-electric plants. A tragic highlight of this cruise was a shipboard fire on 4 August 1952, in which the squadron lost one man. The squadron returned to NAS Alameda on 25 September 1952. While on leave at his home in Salt Lake City, Utah, on 22 October 1952, Commander Gordon A. Sherwood passed away. Lieutenant Commander M. R. Novak became acting Commanding Officer until he was relieved by Lieutenant Commander H. M. Thompson on 28 October 1952.

On 3 August 1953, VA-65, with Air Group TWO, boarded USS YORKTOWN (CVA-10) for its fourth Korean tour, this time under peaceful conditions as the truce was signed 27 July 1953. During this cruise the squadron flew experiments with the U.S. Air Force from Japan and the Nationalist Chinese Air Force on Taiwan, as well as flying numerous training flights as part of Task Force SEVENTY-SEVEN. The squadron returned to NAS Alameda on 3 March 1954. On 12 March 1954 Lieutenant Commander H. M. Thompson was relieved by Lieutenant Commander J. A. Rapp.

The squadron conducted routine training until 3 November 1954, when it deployed aboard USS ESSEX (CVA-9). The squadron participated in exercises off the Philippine Islands, and on 22 January 1955 was ordered to guard the evacuation of the Tachen (Formosa) Islands. The highlights of this cruise were visits to Bangkok, Thailand, Hong Kong, and Japan as well as ports in the Hawaiian and Philippine Islands. VA-65 returned to NAS Alameda on 21 June

1955, and on 15 July 1955, Commander John R. Bowen II relieved Commander J.A. Rapp as Commanding Officer.

Upon completion of a sixteen-month training cycle on 11 November 1956, VA-65 deployed aboard USS SHANGRI-LA (CVA-38), for its sixth cruise aboard an "ESSEX" Class carrier. During this cruise the Squadron visited ports in Hawaii, Japan, Okinawa, the Philippine Islands, and Hong Kong. The squadron flew in numerous exercises as part of Task Force 77. The largest exercise was Operation BEACON HILL, which was a simulated invasion of the Philippine Islands. The squadron also participated in the search for President Magsaysay's aircraft on 17 March 1957, and the following week, participated with Air Group TWO in a flyover during the deceased President's funeral ceremonies. The squadron's primary mission during this cruise was special weapons delivery. Thirty-eight (38) "long range, low level" hops were flown while accumulating a total of 2593 hours for all type missions.

The squadron commenced its training cycle again in July 1957, with seven "second tour" pilots from the November 1956 - May 1957 deployment remaining. Phase I training lasted until November 15, 1957 with one Fallon conventional weapons training deployment and one China Lake Special weapons period.

Phase II continued until 15 May 1958 with major emphasis being placed on conventional weapons delivery techniques, instrument flying, medium angle loft deliveries, navigation, night flying and FCLP/MLP. The squadron made two more Fallon deployments, one in February 1958, and another in May 1958, with an additional China Lake deployment in December 1958. The majority of the pilots day and carrier qualified on the USS MIDWAY in March 1958. COMFAIRALAMEDA conducted the squadron Administrative/Material Inspection on 8 and 9 May, 1958 assigning a grade of 89.51 - Good.

Phase III commenced May 15, 1958 at which time CDR E.V. Izac, Jr., relieved CDR W.C. Bares as Commanding Officer. The squadron flew to San Diego on 16 May 1957, and embarked in USS KEARSARGE (CVA-33) for two weeks of day-carrier qualification and refresher landings. Commencing 7 May 1958, the squadron commenced refitting all its AD-6 aircraft with the more reliable R-3350-26 WC engine. Aircraft availability dropped to approximately one-half of the assigned aircraft while the other half were undergoing engine changes. This program continued until 24 July 1958 when the last WC engine was installed. The squadron flew to San Diego the weekend of 13-15 June 1958, and embarked in KEARSARGE for night carrier landing qualifications. Twenty-one of the pilots were night-qualified. On 26 June 1958, the squadron participated in Operation BLUE COAT a STRIKEEX. During the period 7-11 July 1958, the squadron received orders to load all aircraft and gear aboard USS MIDWAY (CVA-41) due to the tense international situation precipitated by the United Arab Republic - Iraq coup. USS LEXINGTON was sent to the Far East soon thereafter as a precautionary measure; however, USS MIDWAY remained in the Alameda area with the squadron aboard. USS MIDWAY was ordered to Hunters Point for shaft repairs and the squadron off-loaded at Alameda. From 26-31 July 1958 the squadron participated in the ORTA, exhibiting a successful display of potential power resulting from the previous long months of training.

On Saturday, 16 August 1958, MIDWAY with the squadron embarked, departed Alameda for the 1958-1959 WESTPAC cruise. After spending three days in Hawaii, the Formosa crisis erupted with a threatened invasion of the little Quemoy, Matsu Island, the Pescadores and Taiwan by the Chinese Communists. On 24 August MIDWAY was ordered to proceed immediately to the area, where it operated on the line as an alert carrier within Task Force 77. Port calls were sacrificed for the purpose of an effective alert, and up to 1 November 1958, MIDWAY had visited only Cubi Point, Philippines for a period of 7 days -

establishing a record for a prolonged period at sea without going into port.

After 1 November 1958, the Quemoy crisis slowly slipped out of the lime-light and tension in the Far East eased. As a result of this MIDWAY returned to a "normal" cruise schedule. This included in-port periods in such well known places as Yokosuka, Manila, Buckner Bay and Hong Kong.

During the cruise, MIDWAY was honored with such dignitaries as Secretary of Defense McElroy (14-15 October) and President Chiang Kai-Chek (14 November 1958). For each of these very important guests CAG-2 staged an air show with the jets displaying their flashy best and the Skyraiders exhibiting their very effective close air support capabilities.

Participating in a world-wide operation called DICE CUP was MIDWAY'S "Swan Song". Termination of DICE CUP marked the end of MIDWAY'S WESTPAC deployment, and a few hours later we were relieved on station by USS RANGER.

Upon arrival in CONUS VA-65 was immediately reformed and on 3 April 1959, Commander Edward V. IZAC, Jr., was relieved by Commander John W. FAIRBANKS. Without delay, the Air Group began an intensive turn around training program in order to be ready for deployment by 10 August 1959, aboard USS MIDWAY.

On 1 July 1959, VA-65 was redesignated as Attack Squadron TWENTY-FIVE (VA-25) to conform with the Air Group TWO squadron numbering sequence.

After five short months at NAS Alameda, including one three week Fallon deployment, VA-25 again loaded her planes, personnel and gear aboard MIDWAY for a seven month cruise in WESTPAC. Two weeks in Hawaii during the first of September 1959 included a successful OPTA (Operational Training) and more liberty than could be afforded.

As MIDWAY sailed for Guam and the Philippines, the LAOS crisis was prominent in the news and kept all hands on their toes. However, this crisis soon subsided and MIDWAY enjoyed such ports as Yokosuka and Buckner Bay.

As a result of a serious fire onboard MIDWAY while at Cubi Point, she was ordered back to Yokosuka for repairs and VA-25 conducted flightops from NAS Atsugi, Japan. After two weeks in the yard, MIDWAY operated off the coast of Japan before proceeding to celebrate Christmas in Kobe, Japan.

After a Merry Christmas, MIDWAY went to sea for another week and on 2 January 1960, was again in Yokosuka, Japan for ten days. VA-25 off-loaded and flew out of NAS Atsugi for the third and last time this cruise. On the 13th of January the Air Group flew aboard MIDWAY as she sailed for Okinawa and a month of intensive air operations. The month of February was highlighted by a five day visit to Sasebo, Japan and Operation BLUE SKY, an exercise with the Chinese Nationalists Air Force, during which VA-25 flew many simulated strikes against Taiwan. During this period the 1000th landing by VA-25 for this Cruise was made by Commander FAIRBANKS. On 19 February MIDWAY visited Hong Kong. After a week of trying to buy out Hong Kong, MIDWAY got underway for a last look at Yokosuka.

On 3 March 1960, the last day of flight operations for the cruise, LTJG A.D. WILSON made the last landing for the Air Group. The squadron had flown a total of 4047.4 hours with 1132 landings by VA-25 pilots since leaving CONUS on 15 August 1959. All pilots but one of VA-25 were by this time members of the MIDWAY Centurion Club. After a five day stay in Yokosuka, Japan, MIDWAY got underway at 1100 on 10 March for CONUS with a short two-day stop in Pearl Harbor. On 23 March 1960, the squadron flew ashore, conducting simulated offensive training strikes against CONUS with the USAF defending. Two days later MIDWAY sailed under the Golden Gate and VA-25 off-loaded at NAS Alameda for a welcome eleven month training cycle.

During this unusually long training cycle (one year) the squadron completed a number of deployments. In June and September 1960 deployments were made to NAAS Fallon for practice in conventional bombing techniques and close air support operations. In October and November 1960 a three week period was spent at NAF China Lake practicing low angle loft and lay down maneuvers. On 7 August 1960 CDR J.W. FAIRBANKS was relieved by CDR W.S. HERTIG as Commanding Officer.

On 29 August 1960, after a one week deployment aboard USS LEXINGTON, VA-25 flew aboard USS KEARSARGE to complete night carrier qualifications and build-ups. All pilots were qualified in two days.

During December 1960, the squadron conducted operations with USS MIDWAY off the California coast.

From 15 January to February 1961, USS MIDWAY with Carrier Air Group TWO embarked, departed Alameda for the 1961 WESTPAC cruise. On 23 February, COMFAIRHAWAII conducted an ORI and NORM for MIDWAY and her Air Group. VA-25 came thru with a tentative score of 91.00, the second best score achieved by an AD squadron in the Pacific.

The 89,000th landing was made aboard USS MIDWAY by LCDR BRADY on 24 February 1961. USS MIDWAY continued its WESTPAC cruise and on 23 March, after three days of a scheduled seven day visit in Hong Kong, was ordered to sea as an alert carrier during the Laotian crisis. MIDWAY proceeded to Cubi Point to load aboard a Marine F8U squadron and operated in the South China Sea through 31 March 1961. During the period 1 April to 1 July 1961, VA-25 visited Kobe, Iwakuni, Sasebo and Yokosuka. Over sixty percent of this time was spent at sea conducting routine training including participation in Operation "BORN SHOTS". LT J.F. FRANCIS made the 91,000th landing aboard USS MIDWAY (CVA-41) on 1 May 1961, followed by LT D.L. CLARKE making the 92,000th

landing on 26 May 1961. Many noteworthy events occurred during July, August and September. Foremost among them was the Change of Command in which CDR C.R. BRADFORD relieved CDR W.S. HERTIC. The occasion was marked by an impressive ceremony on 3 August 1961, followed by an even more impressive cocktail party that evening.

Three members of the squadron were admitted to MIDWAY'S exclusive Double Centurion Club. On 19 July 1961, LT J.E. JONES became the 6th member of the club; on 7 August, LTJG A.D. WILSON became the 7th; and on 4 September, LCDR J. "L" BRADY, III became the 8th member.

Along with making his 200th landing aboard MIDWAY, LCDR BRADY also had the distinction of making his second 1000th landing, the 94,000th on MIDWAY.

It goes without saying of course, that the biggest event of this period was a safe return of All Hands back to CONUS on 28 September 1961. In over seven months in WESTPAC, ATKRON 25 logged a total of 3641 hours in the air. This was done with a minimum of shore basing involved.

After a welcome leave period, the squadron regrouped minus the faces of many old hands but with a number of new and eager replacement pilots from the RAG. During the next deployment, a carqual period from 6 November until 15 November 1961, LT J.E. CLARKE became the eleventh pilot to achieve double centurion aboard USS MIDWAY. During this same period LCDR H.F. GRIFFITH, the Executive Officer, made the 96,000th landing aboard MIDWAY.

It seemed as if we had hardly returned to NAS Moffett when it was once again time to leave.

On 26 November 1961, the squadron moved into the cold climate of the Sierras at NAAS Fallon, Nevada for three weeks of weapons training. This was the first cold weather operations for many pilots but All Hands "turned to" and made it a successful deployment. The first week was limited to

perfecting our low angle loft capabilities and curing some cases of "SWITCHITIS". The second week found us practicing glide bombing runs and strafing. The "highlight" of this week was the superb crash landing by LT L.D. HUGHES of his crippled aircraft. The landing was so well executed, thus reducing damage, that it was classified as an incident. The third and final week was spent COMPEXING with VA-165 observing and grading. The older, more experienced pilots won more E's but also bought their share of cheer at the O'club in the evenings. The squadron returned to NAS Moffett Field on 15 December 1961 with 28 E's which proved their excellence in ordnance delivery.

On 1 February 1962, the squadron was back aboard MIDWAY for "group ops". This cruise was uneventful as well as short. On 7 February we returned to NAS Moffett with another MIDWAY Centurion - LT G.M. GALES.

On 22 February 1962 the squadron received its annual Administrative/ Material inspection by COMFAIRALAMEDA.

Just prior to another ten days of operation with MIDWAY, the squadron said good-bye to its own LCDR "Diamond Jim" BRADY who departed for duty at NAS North Island. On 22 February, the men of VA-25 once again called MIDWAY home. From 22 February until 2 March, the squadron participated in a WEPTRAEX. This was the Squadron's first test as a new team. During one of the long range strikes to NAAS Fallon on 24 February LTJG T.W. RANDALL experienced complete engine failure at 18,500 feet. LTJG RANDALL stayed with his aircraft attempting unsuccessfully to restart the engine. At 9,500 feet, realizing a restart was impossible, he bailed out and about five minutes later was safely aboard the Navy rescue helicopter on his way to NAAS Fallon. During this period, four VA-25 pilots became MIDWAY Centurions. On February 27, LCDR H.F. GRIFFITH and LT G.T. McGRUTHER made

thier 100th landings. The following day LTJG T.W. RANDALL, back from NAAS Fallon, made his 100th landing. On 1 March, LT L.D. HUGHES came aboard for his 100th landing. On 2 March 1962 the squadron returned to NAS Moffett. Nine days later we once again embarked in MIDWAY for a STRIKEX, exercise "POT SHOT". The squadron's intensive training paid dividends and all went smoothly. On 23 March, we came home for our last minute preparations for deployment. During these last fourteen days, the A-20-R COMPEX was completed and the squadron earned additional E's. On 6 April, USS MIDWAY, with VA-25 embarked, sailed westward under the Golden Gate for the Western Pacific. Enroute to WESTPAC, MIDWAY and Air Group TWO underwent an Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) at Pearl Harbor beginning 16 April 1962.

During the period 1 May - 1 July 1962, the squadron visited Yokosuka, Sasebo, Hong Kong, and Subic Bay. During routine operations in May 1962, LT Bruce M. WOODWORTH became a MIDWAY Centurion. From 4 to 7 June 1962, exercise "COUNTERTHRUST" was conducted. The squadron logged an impressive 1,031 hours from the deck of the USS MIDWAY during June 1962.

The month of July was exceptional for the Skipper of the squadron. CDR BRADFORD not only became a MIDWAY Centurion but also made the 102,000th landing aboard USS MIDWAY. On 11 August 1962, CDR BRADFORD was relieved as Commanding Officer by CDR J.A. OVERN.

With the cruise nearing completion, the ship visited Beppu and Yokosuka before departing for CONUS on 9 October 1962. On 20 October 1962 the squadron returned to Moffett Field. On 3 January 1963 the squadron commenced moving to NAS Lemoore. The official date of the change of location to NAS Lemoore was 7 January 1963.

After getting settled in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley, the squadron commenced a long and quite active training schedule with a two week weapons

deployment to NAAS Fallon on 27 January 1963. The squadron went aboard USS HORNET for carrier qualifications from 24 February to 4 March 1963.

From 24 April to 8 May 1963 NAAS Fallon again saw the squadron working on the targets. During this time the pilots competed in both conventional and nuclear weapons delivery methods. The squadron collected 32 E's in the COMPEX.

On 25 June 1963, the reins of the squadron again changed hands. This time CDR H.W. PRESSON, the Executive Officer, relieved CDR J.A. OVERN as Commanding Officer. In July 1963 the tempo of operations began to increase with the deployment of the entire Air Wing to NAAS Fallon for two weeks of weapons work. The Air Wing then deployed 3 more times aboard USS MIDWAY. The first was from 3 August to 16 August 1963, for the WEPTRAEX. The second was from 16 September to 26 September 1963, in preparation for the STRIKEX which took place during the third deployment from 8 October to 25 October 1963. For the STRIKEX, VA-25 received the highest grade of all the squadrons aboard MIDWAY.

On 8 November 1963, USS MIDWAY with VA-25 embarked, sailed west under the Golden Gate for a seven-month cruise. The first operation was the ORI. Again VA-25 led the ship and the embarked squadrons with an overall grade of 93.51.

Two individual grades are particularly noteworthy. The weapons loading teams received a grade of 99.25, and the Maintenance Department received a grade of 95.35 for the outstanding condition of the aircraft. This is one of the highest Maintenance grades ever received by a SPAD squadron on an ORI.

After leaving Pearl Harbor, the ship set course for Subic Bay, our first port of call.

Other ports of call during the cruise included Hong Kong, Sasebo, Beppu, Iwakuni and Yokosuka.

One of the highlights of the cruise was an at sea competition between USS MIDWAY and USS KITTY HAWK which covered a two-day period. VA-25 contributed to a USS MIDWAY victory by defeating the "ARABS" of VA-115 at both bombing and rocket firing.

The squadron returned to NAS Lemoore on 26 May 1964 for regrouping and training for the next deployment.

On 29 May 1964, CDR R.F. SMITH, the Executive Officer, relieved CDR H.W. PRESSON as Commanding Officer. The squadron then settled down to a one month post cruise leave period. On 8 July through 17 July the squadron commenced its training cycle by going aboard USS MIDWAY to participate in the USS RANGER'S STRIKE which was conducted off the coast of California. Air Wing TWO had the dubious honor of being the invading enemy for this exercise. The month of August saw the squadron getting ready for its Administrative and Material Inspection for which it received a grade of 92.98, which is an adjective grade of excellent.

In the first week of September ATTACK SQUADRON TWENTY FIVE proved itself to be the number one prop Attack Squadron in the Pacific Fleet by placing first in READY STRIKE TWO SIXTY-FOUR competition which was conducted at the Naval Air Facility China Lake, California. ADMIRAL T.O. MOORER (CINCPACFLT) presented CDR R.F. SMITH with a plaque for the squadron's outstanding performance in this exercise.

The targets of Fallon, Nevada was again the site of the squadron's 1964 weapons deployment from 8 September through 24 September. The pilots of VA-25 competed in both conventional and nuclear weapons competitive exercises.

USS MIDWAY was again called home when the squadron embarked on 6 October 1964 for five weeks of air operations in the Hawaiian area and a STRIKE off the coast of California. While on cruise the squadron acquired four

centurions, CDR R.F. SMITH, the Commanding Officer, CDR H.E. ETTINGER, the Executive Officer, LT E.A. GREATHOUSE, and LT O.R. FORD.

From 6 November 1964 until 27 January 1965, the squadron was once again based at NAS Lemoore, California, while a routine schedule was followed. During the period of 27 January to 5 February 1965, VA-25 was back aboard USS MIDWAY for a WEPTRAEX off the coast of Southern California. The highlight of this exercise was when LT D.B. DIXON became a MIDWAY Centurion on 3 February 1965.

Later the same month VA-25 flew aboard USS MIDWAY to take part in Operation SILVER LANCE, a simulated invasion of the Southern California coast. VA-25's portion of the exercise lasted from 23 February 1965 until 3 March 1965 and was primarily to soften up the area prior to an amphibious assault. During this period, the squadron flew one hundred and fourteen sorties, logging three hundred sixty-seven hours in the air. We added two names to the list of USS MIDWAY Double Centurions as LT J.C. BEAM and LTJG G.M. STOVER made their two hundredth arrested landings on 24 and 25 February respectively. Also, LT D.B. DIXON made the 128,000th landing aboard USS MIDWAY on 3 March 1965.

On 6 March 1965, USS MIDWAY, with Attack Carrier Air Wing TWO embarked, departed for the Western Pacific area. During this cruise visits were planned to Australia and the Indian Ocean. However, the Vietnamese crisis made these visits seem doubtful, and it was not long before the news came that our schedule had been significantly altered.

On 10 and 11 March, the squadron flew long range and medium range practice strikes to Hawaii, simulating delivery of nuclear weapons. Sandwiched between two weekends in Pearl Harbor the squadron, along with MIDWAY and Air Wing TWO, underwent an Operational Readiness Inspection conducted by

COMFAIRHAWAII, from 15 to 18 March 1965. VA-25 received a grade of EXCELLENT on this inspection.

The USS MIDWAY sailed for Buci Point, Philippines on 22 March 1965. On 3 April we flew to Cubi Point, and USS MIDWAY arrived the following day. The next few days were spent flying coordinated strikes against Scarborough Shoals, West of Luzon, and in FMLP. USS MIDWAY departed Cubi Point on 8 April 1965 and we flew aboard the following day.

We arrived in the Gulf of Tonkin on 10 April 1965 and flew several SAR and RESCAP missions the next few days. On 12 April 1965 a flight of four VA-25 "SPADS", led by LCDR H.E. GRAY, the Operations Officer and consisting of LCDR R.L. BACON, LTJG L.O. WOODBURY and LTJG A.J. HINGSBERGER, while on a RESCAP mission into Laos, became the first aircraft from aboard the USS MIDWAY to engage the enemy in battle.

From then on the action came hot and heavy. An almost daily diet of RESCAP flights as well as night and day road reconnaissance missions into North Vietnam and the surrounding area followed. On 15 April we took part in a saturation bombing against a VIET CONG stronghold in western South Vietnam joining with planes from other carriers and Air Force land bases. The next day VA-25, led by CDR R.F. SMITH, attacked and destroyed the Bai Duc Thou highway bridge in North Vietnam. On 17 April LTJG D.R. LAACK returned from an escort mission with a bullet hole in his aircraft's horizontal stabilizer becoming the first in the squadron who could prove, "Those guys are shooting back over there!".

The next Sunday, April 18th, was Easter, and we were cursed (or blessed) with bad weather which cancelled all daytime flights. However, the night road reconnaissance mission did get off and struck a gold mine. LCDR H.E. GRAY and LTJG L.O. WOODBURY found a long convoy of enemy trucks on a road

just southwest of Vinh in North Vietnam. After making several runs, they flashed a contact report back to the MIDWAY. The entire Air Wing was then sent out to finish off the convoy in strikes that carried through the night and into the next morning. During that afternoon, CDR SMITH lead VA-25 aircraft for a "seeding" mission of several road "choke points".

For the next few days the air battle conducted by the squadron consisted mainly of road reconnaissance and rescap mission. On the 21st of April, pilots flying their nightly rounds thought they picked up signals from a survival radio. Hopefully these were thought to have emanated from LT PHIL BUTLER of VA-22, who had been shot down the previous night. This was later confirmed when other air wing pilots talked to him on the radio. However, after evading for about three days, LT BUTLER was unfortunately captured by the North Vietnamese before he could be rescued.

Shortly after midnight on the 22nd of April, LCDR GRAY and LTJG WOODBURY again spotted a fifteen to twenty truck convoy, this time northwest of Vinh. They attacked it successfully and relayed the news to MIDWAY. Once more many other Air Wing aircraft were launched to finish off the job.

For nearly a week after this, our action was limited to seeding roads, road reconnaissance, and rescap. The sole exception occurred on the 23rd of April, when VA-25 in coordinated strikes with the rest of the air wing, attacked several bridges just south of Vinh in an attempt to cut communist logistic and communication routes. On 28 April, VAW-13 DETACHMENT ONE found several P.T. boats in a North Vietnamese river. The VA-25 Spads were called into action once more. LT J. JUAN and LT C.B. JOHNSON were the first on the scene and attacked until fuel requirements dictated their return to MIDWAY. Shortly thereafter, CDR H.E. ETTINGER, LT D.R. LAACK and LT J.M. SCOGGIN arrived to continue the attack with napalm, thus marking the first time

napalm had been used from the deck of MIDWAY since joining YANKEE TEAM. The tally sheet for this engagement showed three P.T. boats sunk, with all aircraft returning safely.

On the last day of April, VA-25 took part in strikes against a military supply depot a few miles southwest of Thanh Hoa, North Vietnam. Led once again by CDR ETTINGER and employing a mixed load of napalm and general purpose bombs, the squadron conducted highly successful attacks. As the month came to a close, VA-25 pilots had logged 252 combat missions with over 1400 combat hours since arriving on station in the Gulf of Tonkin.

The beginning of May found us operating extensively in South Vietnam against the Viet Cong. On 1 May the squadron took part in the saturation bombing of a Viet Cong stronghold southwest of Saigon. The next two days were spent bombing in the Mekong River Delta with the aid of an airborne forward air controller from the Air Force. For the next few days the flying was relatively uneventful as we continued our rescap missions, close air support in the Mekong Delta and the reconnoitering and seeding of roads.

On 7 May, VA-25 stood by overhead to support the Marines amphibious landing on the coast of South Vietnam at Chu Lai, 50 miles south of Da Nang. During the launch at dawn, ENS H.M. LIVESAY flew off VA-25's one-millionth pound of ordnance since its arrival in the combat area 28 days earlier. The next day we were again on station as the Marines continued to bring supplies ashore at Chu Lai and as the Seabees began construction of the new airfield there. In the afternoon CDR SMITH and LTJG WALMAN made a strike on Dong Thanh supply depot. Meeting with no opposition, they made a total of 29 bombing runs between them to leave the large complex 50% destroyed.

VA-25 logged one more day of armed coastal and road reconnaissance before departing the Gulf of Tonkin on 10 May for a much needed rest at Cubi Point, Philippines. The following day all aircraft flew into Cubi, with MIDWAY arriving a day later. While in port, everyone took advantage of the liberty and the opportunity to quench their thirst with San Miguels. An "All Hands" party was held on the beach on the 15th. However, it was soon time to get underway again, and the squadron birds were flown back aboard on 19 May.

By 20 May, we were back in action. That day, eight of our "Spads" attacked the harbor at Vinh, led by the Skipper, CDR SMITH. There they encountered heavy flak but still inflicted 80% damage to the target. All planes returned safely to MIDWAY. Once more the squadron conducted semi-regular road reconnaissance, road cutting, RESCAP missions, and anti-P.T. boat coastal patrols.

The next two days were spent seeding Mugia Bass, choke points on enemy supply routes, and searching for P.T. boats and enemy truck convoys. On the afternoon of 24 May, CDR ETTINGER relieved CDR SMITH as Commanding Officer of VA-25 in ceremonies conducted on the flight deck of MIDWAY.

The following day another truck convoy was located in North Vietnam in the early morning and attacked successfully. Later that afternoon eight squadron aircraft struck a military barracks area in North Vietnam. They encountered moderate flak which was very professionally and completely silenced by the flak suppression F-8's from VF-111. In all, the SPADS made 56 bombing runs and left the area nearly totally demolished.

Two action packed days closely followed. LCDR FORD, leading a strike against the Phu Ban Supply Depot in North Vietnam, left it in ruins. A PT boat was found and sunk in a river of North Vietnam. The week was closed

out with armed reconnaissance missions and then the monsoon season began in earnest by observing a day of "holiday routine". CDR C. W. STODDARD, USN, the squadron's new executive officer reported aboard on 27 May.

On the 30th, eight "SPADS" were launched in terrible weather to strike a key bridge on Route One, North of Thanh Hoa. The results left something to be desired as one section returned to MIDWAY with a rough-running engine; another section landed aboard USS BON HOMME RICHARD because of a sump light, and the remaining four planes were eventually recalled due to the extremely poor weather. It was probably just as well, since MIGS had been reported airborne and tracked as far south as Vinh. The next day completed the story on the weather as MIDWAY rode out 100 mph winds while caught up in tropical storm "BABE".

With the advent of June, the P.T. boat killers were again on the prowl, sinking four on the first. An afternoon flight led by LCDR R.L. BACON sank three in a river between Vinh and Dong Hoi. The next day on a strike against a bridge near Mugia Pass in North Vietnam, LT J. M. SCOGGIN dropped a span, while other aircraft made several road cuts.

On 4 and 5 June, the Air Wing's primary concern and major flying efforts were directed toward RESCAP for one of our own downed pilots, LT Paul ILG of VA-22, who had ejected from his crippled A-4 Skyhawk over unfriendly land on the 3rd. VA-25 flew many long hours of RESCAP missions over the area trying to pinpoint LT ILG's position. Radio contact had been made with him, but because of moderate flak in the area, rescue helicopters could not approach close enough to effect a rescue. While searching for LT ILG on June 4, LT FRECKMANN experienced serious engine trouble which necessitated his diverting to the emergency field at Udorn, Thailand. The end result was an engine change for his aircraft. On the 5th, VA-25 diligently continued its

RESCAP vigil and in addition took on the task of communications relay while the rescue efforts were continued. To the elation of all concerned, particularly LT ILG, a successful pickup was made near the end of that day. Things were back to normal for the next few days as VA-25 continued with its armed reconnaissance destroying several military targets in North Vietnam, among them: railroad cars, ferries, barges, road repair equipment, and bridges. On the 9th of June, LT J.M. SCOGGIN made his 300th landing aboard MIDWAY to become the first triple centurion in VA-25's history and a member of the very exclusive "300 Club" aboard MIDWAY.

10 June 1965 was to be a tragic day for VA-25. Though starting as many other days with night road reconnaissance and RESCAP missions, a mid-morning strike of eight squadron planes coordinated with four A-4 flak suppressors was led by CDR C.W. STODDARD. Despite the continuation of extremely adverse weather conditions, all twelve aircraft successfully punched through and located the target site, the Co Dinh thermoelectric plant eight miles southwest of Thanh Hoa. Although rainshowers, 4000-5000 foot ceilings, heavy cloud cover and reduced visibility existed in the target area, each aircraft made two runs by sections on the power plant. LTJG J.S. LYNNE scored a direct hit on a primary part of the complex with a 2000 pound bomb completely destroying the building. Flak from automatic weapons fire was moderate, and as the last aircraft were pulling off the target, CDR STODDARD observed an explosion on a nearby hillside. A radio check revealed that LTJG C.L. DOUGHTIE, flying Canasta 573, was missing. CDR STODDARD and his wingman made several passes over the crash scene to no avail. LTJG DOUGHTIE who had just joined the squadron on 25 May was on his 8th mission. It was a sad day indeed as eight went out and only seven returned, marking our first combat loss.

The next day we flew weather reconnaissance and RESCAP missions. While returning from one of these, LTJG C.W. HARTMAN had the distinction of making the 25,000th carrier controlled approach (CCA) aboard MIDWAY.

For the following three days we flew RESCAP and reconnaissance missions. On 14 June, LTJG D. L. ABRAHAMSEN's sharp aim dropped a bridge in North Vietnam that had eluded the squadron for two days. LT M.H. DRAPER made his 200th MIDWAY landing on returning from the strike.

The RESCAP flight continued, and on 16 June the squadron also launched a strike of eight planes against the Yon Phu barracks area on the coast of North Vietnam. No enemy ground fire was observed as the aircraft made seven runs each - a total of 56 runs, which turned into a real case of writer's cramp for our AI, LTJG D.W. METZLER, as he filled out the several pages of data per run required by a recent SEVENTH FLEET directive.

On the 17th, another truck convoy was spotted, attacked, and heavily damaged. The remainder of the week was taken up by RESCAP, road cuts, and armed reconnaissance.

Sunday, the 20th of June, opened as any other day. A few RESCAP were scheduled, but in general it appeared to be a day of relatively light flight operations. Nothing certainly existed to indicate that this was destined to be a true Red Letter Day for ATTACK SQUADRON TWENTY FIVE, one which would indelibly write a page in the annals of naval aviation history. In the late afternoon LCDR E.A. GREATHOUSE, LTJG J. S. LYNNE, LT C. B. JOHNSON, and LTJG C. W. HARTMAN, were assigned to a special request from the 2nd Air Div., Saigon, for a RESCAP mission into the interior of North Vietnam. While enroute about 50 miles north west of Thanh Hoa and without fighter protection, the four SPADS were jumped by two communist MIG fighters. As the MIG's made repeated attacks, the four Skyraiders dove for the deck jettisoning their

external fuel tanks and ordnance on the way down. After several passes one MIG broke off from the fight, but the other continued to hassle with the "SPADS" right down to treetop level. Around and around in tight little defensive turns and circles went the sections of SPADS with the MIG fighter breaking in and out through the middle until finally the second section of LT JOHNSON and LTJG HARTMAN were in position to bring their 20MM guns to bear. That was the "finish". It was scratch one MIG who was observed to roll into a nose down turn at about 700 feet altitude and crash into a 500 foot ridgeline. We have often wished that we could have been witnesses at Hanoi that night to the debrief of the other MIG pilot who was last seen "sheddadling" for home.

The "MIG KILLERS FOUR" were promptly dispatched to Saigon the following day to meet the press. South Vietnam's new Premier, Air Vice Marshall KY, who is a USN trained "SPAD" pilot, personally made them official members of the Vietnamese Air Force, giving each a set of Vietnamese Air Force Wings and decorating all with the AIR FORCE GALLANTRY MEDAL, the highest decoration awarded by the South Vietnamese government to aviators.

The 23rd of June was also a significant day. CDR H.E. ETTINGER, the "Skipper", flew VA-25's two millionth pound of ordnance from the deck of MIDWAY in this Southeast Asian operation as around the clock operations continued. In afternoon ceremonies on the flight deck, VADM BLACKBURN, USN COMSEVENTHFLT, presented LCDR GREATHOUSE and LTJG LYNNE with the Distinguished Flying Cross for their part in the MIG encounter. LT JOHNSON and LTJG HARTMAN were each credited with a "half-kill" on the downed MIG and were awarded the Silver Star for their outstanding achievement.

On 24 June a strike and road reconnaissance mission led by LCDR GREATHOUSE downed its primary target bridge, damaged two more bridges as

well as ferry boats, in efforts to continue thwarting the enemy's lines of supply. LTJG HINGSBERGER made his 200th MIDWAY landing to become a double Centurion. LCDR R. L. BACON, who hopefully would have been satisfied with just making another successful landing, had to settle for considerably less. Experiencing a sump warning light while 26 miles from the ship, he attempted a straight-in approach. But on final, at 600 feet, 1½ miles astern, his engine failed. A good ditching prevented injury to him, and he was promptly plucked from the water by the on-station helo. LCDR BACON was back aboard MIDWAY in less than 3 minutes after his aircraft entered the water. An appreciative wall done was given to LCDR WETZEL of HU-1 DET A. Nonetheless it was another aircraft scratched from the fast dwindling inventory of "SPADS", and evoked the following comment in the LSO book on LCDR BACON's pass; "Not enough power - little to early land,"

The rest of the week was taken up by RESCAP, road reconnaissance and midchannel missions. On Sunday, 27 June, our last day on Yankee station this time out, LCDR BACON and LTJG HINGSBERGER struck and destroyed a barracks building and compound area about 15 miles northwest of Vinh. During the ensuing road reconnaissance LCDR FORD and ENS LIVESAY made a very effective road cut by sliding a mountain side down across the road and into the river below with their bomb load. Returning over the coast, they utilized their remaining ordnance to damage seven barges.

On the next day the USS MIDWAY, left Yankee station enroute to Yokosuka, Japan for that long awaited visit. The first of July the Air Wing made its flyoff to NAS Atsugi, VA-25 contributing five planes to the fly away. The next day the MIDWAY arrived in Yokosuka.

All hands enjoyed the liberty and shopping available to them in Japan. On 5 and 6 July the squadron held an All Hands party at Yokosuka and a good

time was enjoyed by all. From the fifth to the sixteenth flight operations were scheduled at Atsugi, but the weather hampered the completion of these operations to a great extent, and most of the action in Atsugi was on the golf course.

On 17 July MIDWAY departed Japan, once again headed for the troubled waters of the Gulf of Tonkin. The next three days the squadron participated in exercises to test the early warning capability of Okinawa and Taiwan and prepared to re-enter combat by bombing the Spar and practicing day and night tactics. The MIDWAY spent the 21st and 22nd of July in the area of Pratus reef, about 135 miles southeast of Hong Kong, aiding the disabled destroyer USS Frank Knox, which had run aground there.

On 23 July 1965, USS MIDWAY and VA-25 began once more to use their might against the enemy. VA-25 taking part in road reconnaissance and communications relay missions. Particularly effective was one four-plane armed reconnaissance mission on which LTJG N. T. DARAMUS, flying his first actual combat mission, destroyed one North Vietnamese bridge; LTJG C. W. HARTMAN, by now a combat veteran, destroyed two more; and LT D. R. LAACK, also an old hand, dropped still another. On their return to MIDWAY, LT LAACK also made his 200th landing aboard.

The rest of the month the squadron was mainly employed in the role of armed reconnaissance while a few communications relay missions were flown. Many of the missions during this period were hampered by poor weather; those that did get in dropped a few secondary bridges and cut some roads. Primarily we harassed the enemy merely by our presence overhead.

During this week our RESCAP missions came to the forefront. On 27 July LCDR E. D. GREATHOUSE and ENS H. M. LIVESAY, on Rescap station with the HU-16 in the Gulf of Tonkin, were called away to aid in the rescue operations for

a downed Air Force pilot just 35 miles northwest of Hanoi. They went in, located the downed flyer, and remained in the area until a friendly helicopter approached the area. They guided the helo in and provided aerial cover while the pickup was made. They then binged to Danang A. B., where they landed 10.7 hours after take-off.

The very next day one of our flak suppression A/C on our strike was hit over North Vietnam near the Laotian border. LTJG GRANT TOWNSEND, of VA-23, flying an A-4E from MIDWAY, was hit during a run and was forced to eject. The Spads, led by CDR H.E. ETTINGER, then turned their efforts to rescue and made strafing runs on Communist troops which were trying to capture the downed pilot. The remaining Spads in the flight guided a helicopter in to make the pickup and acted as communications coordinator. That same day LT M. H. DRAPER and LTJG L.O. WOODBURY were returning to MIDWAY just after sunset from their Rescap station with the HE -16. They were called upon to aid in the rescue of two VF-21 officers who had ejected from their F-4 Phantom just 25 miles from MIDWAY. They located the downed flyers in the water and remained overhead until the MIDWAY'SS helicopter made the pickup.

The first five days of August were spent on day and night road reconnaissance as well as Rescap as the squadron carried out constant surveillance of enemy communications and supply lines. During this period CDR ETTINGER and LTJG ~~ABRAHAMSEN~~ became double centurions aboard MIDWAY. On 1 August, LCDR O.R. FORD received our first 37 millimeter hit, taking it in his left wing while flying about 45 miles southwest of Vinh. He made it back aboard the MIDWAY with a hole about three feet in diameter in the outer wing. On the fourth and fifth of the month, we struck supply caves in the hills west of Quang Khe, inflicting minor damage, before breaking up into sections for reconnaissance work. Early in the morning of 6 August one of our night reconnaissance

flights discovered and successfully attacked a North Vietnamese truck convoy, destroying three trucks and damaging seven. Later in the day we flew an eight plane strike against targets deep in Mig country about 100 miles West of Hanoi.

The following day, 7 August 1965, was another dark day for VA-25. Led by CDR ETTINGER, an eight plane strike was launched against military targets a little east of Dien Bien Phu in Communist North Vietnam. Due to adverse weather, the strike was cancelled while the Spads were enroute. They diverted to the alternate target, The Dong Hoi Citadel. Fifty percent damage was inflicted at the Citadel, and anti-aircraft fire seemed light although two of the attacking jet aircraft received minor hits. Even so, LCDR H.E. GRAY, JR., was apparently hit in his second run on the target, and his aircraft crashed into the target area. He was presumed to have been killed as no parachute was observed. MIDWAY held memorial services for him three days later. Thus VA-25 lost its second pilot over North Vietnam inside of two months.

In the next few days the target near Dien Bien Phu was successfully struck and the Dong Hoi Citadel was struck again. Rescapes and road reconnaissance closed out our action in the North for awhile.

On 13 August 1965, USS MIDWAY moved south once again to take up the fight against the Viet Cong in the Mekong Delta and inland South Vietnam. We flew extensively in this area for ten days, bombing in close support of friendly troops and directed by airborne forward air controllers. Much of the results of these missions was obscured by the dense jungle below, but the ones who could tell said we were very effective. VA-25 "SPADS" ranged from the east central coast of South Vietnam to the southwest tip of the Mekong Delta and the edge of the Gulf of Siam. It was a welcome change to get away from the heavy and widely scattered flak up North. It was on this trip down South that VA-25 got its first confirmed water buffalo kills.

On 22 August ENS LIVESAY brought his disabled aircraft back from the coast 130 miles to the MIDWAY to make a safe but smokey landing; his troubles stemmed from an engine malfunction rather than enemy action.

On 23 August, MIDWAY moved back up North for two days to relieve the disabled USS CORAL SEA. During this period several planes from MIDWAY were lost as armed reconnaissance missions searched for communist SAM sites in North Vietnam. VA-25 took part in RESCAP and rescue missions for the downed aviators. On the 25th MIDWAY headed East for some well deserved liberty in Cubi Point and Hong Kong.

The next day we were involved in cross deck operations with the H.M.S. ARK ROYAL, largest of the British carriers, and then flew into Cubi Point. MIDWAY pulled in a day later.

MIDWAY was underway for Hong Kong on the third of September. The air wing flew aboard that same day through much bad weather as it was the Philippines' rainy season. The next day MIDWAY bucked the force of a tropical typhoon enroute, and on Sunday, 5 September, finally arrived in Hong Kong. For five days everyone aboard took advantage of the shopping and liberty offered by this British colony before departing on 10 September for another stint on Yankee Station.

Enroute we bombed the spar to sharpen our eyes, and on the twelfth of September the squadron entered combat once more. For the first week there were only fourteen pilots in the squadron available to fly, and it was a busy time for them. There was a steady diet of RESCAP and armed reconnaissance missions both day and night. The Vietnamese area was undergoing the transition from the Southwest monsoon to the Northeast monsoon, and the weather was seldom conducive to the successful completion of our reconnaissance missions.

On 16 September an Awards Ceremony was held on the hangar deck in which many members of VA-25 received medals and honors earned during previous at sea periods. That same afternoon on a RESCAP mission over North Vietnam CDR Stoddard, VA-25's Executive Officer, had his aircraft hit in the cockpit area by enemy fire. He received multiple superficial wounds and the aircraft was extensively damaged, but he made it to Danang air base in South Vietnam where he made a successful gear up landing.

The next couple of days we fought the weather again in attempts to carry out our road reconnaissance, and of course, we continued our RESCAP mission.

Monday, 20 September 1965, found our RESCAPS making headlines again. During a large scale strike against a target in North Vietnam, close to Hanoi, a Navy A-4 Skyhawk was shot down. CDR ETTINGER and LTJG WOODBURY, in the area for that express purpose, located the downed pilot and guided MIDWAY's helicopter over land to make the pickup. They experienced heavy enemy ground fire, but the operation was a complete success. Others from VA-25 attacked Tiger Island once more the same day.

For the next three days life was relatively unspectacular for the squadron as it conducted its usual missions of RESCAP and road reconnaissance and attacked some military targets on Tiger Island. However, on Friday, 24 September, LT D. R. LAACK and LTJG J. S. LYNNE on another RESCAP mission played a vital role in the successful pickup of an Air Force pilot who had ejected from his jet fighter between Tiger Island and the heavily defended coast of North Vietnam. As the amphibious rescue aircraft approached the vicinity of the downed pilot, it came under heavy fire from several gun positions on the mainland. LT LAACK's flight attacked the gun positions with all its available ordnance, silencing some positions and sufficiently decreasing the enemy firepower to allow the rescue aircraft to land and pickup the pilot in the water.

The balance of September was spent in armed vigilance of the enemy's potential logistics network in North Vietnam with relatively little action. On the night of the twenty-seventh, VA-25's four-millionth pound of ordnance was delivered on the enemy in an armed reconnaissance mission. The next day LCDR GREATHOUSE led a flight of four that totally demolished an enemy bridge on a strike prior to their road reconnaissance.

During the night of 30 September - 1 October USS MIDWAY headed south for a change of scenery down on "Dixie Station". At dawn two four-plane flights led by CDR STODDARD and LCDR FORD from our squadron were launched on a strike against a Viet Cong Training Area near the coast of South Vietnam. The ship was near the coast and without leaving sight of MIDWAY the two flights destroyed forty-two buildings and damaged ten more in the target area. The airborne forward air controller was very pleased as the "SPADS" made run after run dropping explosives and napalm into the dense foliage hiding many of the buildings from sight.

For the next week ATTACK SQUADRON TWENTY FIVE continued to bring praise upon itself with its accurate bombing of many and varied targets in South Vietnam. Once or twice more the squadron was assigned very lucrative targets, and sometimes we had simply to bomb the jungle using the forward air controllers knowledge to bomb worthy targets hidden below the jungle roof.

On the sixth of October LT F. H. FRECKMANN became a MIDWAY CENTURION when he made his 100th landing aboard returning from a combat mission. Two days later MIDWAY left "DIXIE" station for short visit to Cubi Point, arriving there on 10 October 1965.

During the week's stay in Cubi, squadron personnel mixed recreation and entertainment with preparations for what was to be the last thrust against Communism in Southeast Asia for this cruise. Just prior to leaving port MIDWAY was informed

that she would be utilized solely on "Dixie" station this time out. Although it meant more work, it meant less AAA weapons interference and was met with the mixed emotions of relief and sadness because for many it deprived them of that last chance to GET IN A LICK FOR DEMOCRACY against HO CHI MINH on his home grounds.

On 19 October VA-25 was once again operating against the Viet Cong in South Vietnam. For the first three or four days the squadron flew close air support for the South Vietnamese special forces camp at Plei Me, near the border in central South Vietnam. The camp was under siege by the Viet Cong and had been for several days. It was literally fighting for its life. The afternoon of 20 October, a flight of four "SPADS" led by LT MADSEN and including CDR STODDARD, LT JOHNSON, and LTJG DARAMUS provided close air support in conjunction with other aircraft from CVW-2 and the Air Force for the valiant defenders. The A-1s bombed, strafed and dropped napalm to break a VC suicide charge at the very perimeter of the camp. Although this was not the end of the VC bid to capture Plei Me, it has since been said by the survivors, "that without the accurate air support in those first few critical hours, Plei Me would have undoubtedly been captured by the Viet Cong." Once more "the Fist of the Fleet" had struck a mighty blow against the Communists of Southeast Asia. On 23 October a three-plane flight of VA-25's A-1's under the leadership of CDR ETTINGER bombed along a road 30 miles south to clear the area for friendly troops' passage. When the friendlies arrived, they found 102 Viet Cong killed by the air attack. This flight also delivered our five-millionth pound of ordnance on the enemy.

As the action moved ahead in ensuing days, the targets once again began to be scattered in a widespread area along the south central coast, the Mekong Delta Region and around Saigon. On the twenty-seventh, CDR ETTINGER

led a flight of four into the Saigon area and at the direction of an airborne forward air controller, bombed a Viet Cong village leaving 22 buildings destroyed and the town in flames.

Again on the 30th, forty miles north of Nha Trang while leading a flight of three A-1's, CDR ETTINGER attacked a VC concentration and left 23 buildings destroyed and numerous more damaged. Five miles to the east LCDR FORD led a flight of four A-1's onto a VC village which accounted for 33 more buildings destroyed. The significance of these two flights is that a total of 56 buildings were destroyed with 56 bombs.

The third of November was another tragic day for ATTACK SQUADRON TWENTY FIVE. About an hour before sunrise, as the squadron aircraft were being prepared for the early morning launch, one of the plane captains Airman Eddie BILLUPS, Jr., fell from the flight deck into the sea. A search for him was conducted until noon at which time it was presumed that he had drowned.

The last day in combat on the cruise was 4 November 1965. On the last launch CDR STODDARD, the Executive Officer, carried off the six millionth pound of ordnance delivered by VA-25 against the enemy during the cruise. This particular piece of ordnance happened to be a porcelain privy, complete with box fins and a nose fuse. It is felt that nothing more need be said about this strike except that it was highly successful.

During this at sea period five squadron pilots became MIDWAY Centurions. They were LCDR BACON, LT JOHNSON, LTJG HARTMAN, LTJG WALMAN, and ENS LIVESAY. Double Centurions were CDR ETTINGER, LCDR GREATHOUSE, LCDR FORD, LT LAACK, LT ABRAMSEN and LTJG HINGSBERGER.

On 6 November MIDWAY pulled into Cubi Point for one last quick stop before heading for home. Many took advantage of this last minute opportunity to do some overseas shopping. Two days later MIDWAY was enroute to Alameda, due to arrive on 23 November.

On 12 November, while enroute to Alameda, there was a memorial service held on the hangar deck for Airman Eddie BILLUPS, Jr. That same day there was a final Awards Ceremony for the Air Wing in which squadron pilots added to their collections of air medals.

On 23 November, the squadron's "SPADS" were flown ashore to NAS LEMOORE from several hundred miles at sea. COMNAVAIRPAC, Vice Admiral CONNOLLY, was on hand to personally welcome the returning warriors of Attack Squadron TWENTY FIVE. It was a fine gesture by the Admiral but to make a gross understatement, "the pilots were more impressed by the sight of their wives and families." It was a joyously tearful reunion with the Hanford High School Band providing colorful background music and the local TV and news media recording the highlights. Coverage of the homecoming was shown on nationwide TV (NBC's Huntley-Brinkley TV News Program).

The following day, USS MIDWAY tied up at Alameda and the ship received a rousing welcome from families, relatives and friends along with brass bands and the Bay area news media. It was great to be home again.

Squadron personnel were fortunate to return home in time to enjoy the two major holiday seasons because the leave policy was one which allowed over 50% of the personnel to be with their families and loved ones during the major part of November and December. In January, the training cycle began again in earnest. Early February saw VA-25 working with USS CONSTELLATION (CVA-64), one of the Navy's newest and largest flattops in her shakedown cruise after an extensive six months overhaul and refurbishing.

On 15 and 16 February, COMFAIRALAMEDA conducted the squadron's annual Administrative/Material Inspection. A highly respectable grade of 92.54 or Excellent was assigned as All Hands worked very hard in maintaining VA-25's traditionally high standards of excellence.

The squadron held an All Hands party on 21 February in order to celebrate a successful cruise with their families and friends. It was truly an outstanding party. It was held at the air station's CPO Club featuring a delicious buffet supper with live music for dancing and plenty of liquid refreshments. "A good time was had by all."

A Personnel Inspection was held in conjunction with an Awards Ceremony and Open House on Saturday, 5 March, in which many of the officers and men received final decorations for their outstanding performances during the past cruise. Fifteen officers and twelve enlisted men received awards. Among the awards given to the officers were two Distinguished Flying Crosses, twelve Air Medals, thirteen Navy Commendation Medals, two Secretary of the Navy Commendations for Achievement and one Purple Heart. The enlisted men received nine Good Conduct Medals and one Navy Commendation for Achievement Award.

On Friday 25 March, 1966 the squadron conducted a Special Awards Ceremony in tribute to a former squadron mate, LCDR Harold E. GRAY, Jr., who lost his life on a combat mission over North Vietnam on 7 July 1965. His widow, Mrs. Carolyn GRAY of Columbus, Georgia, along with LCDR GRAY's parents and members of his immediate family attended the ceremony. CDR ETTINGER made posthumous presentations to Mrs. GRAY of the Distinguished Flying Cross with a Gold Star in lieu of a second DFC, an Air Medal with Gold Stars in lieu of Second, Third and Fourth Air Medals and one Purple Heart.

Tragedy struck the squadron when Ensign James H. SINGLETERRY was in an automobile accident on 2 April 1966. Ensign SINGLETERRY had joined the squadron in October 1965 and had served as Avionics/Weapons Officer since that time. He was highly respected by All Hands and was truly an outstanding Naval Officer.

On 12 April, Captain BOYDSTUN, Commanding Officer of NAS LEMOORE,

presented the "Golden Mule" to the squadron. The "Golden Mule" is symbolic of excellence in safety concerning the operation of ground support equipment (yellow-vehicles) at NAS LEMOORE. Seldom is this award achieved by any of the fleet units at NAS LEMOORE as the RAG squadrons almost always win the award. An impressive Change of Command ceremony occurred in the squadron on 13 April 1966 as Commander C.W. STODDARD "flected up" to relieve Commander H.E. ETTINGER as Commanding Officer of Attack Squadron TWENTY FIVE.

In late April and early May the squadron shifted its base of operations to NAAS FALLON for an intensified three weeks of training in conventional weapons delivery techniques. High winds at the time played havoc with the efforts of the pilots to achieve their "E's" during the graded COMPEX.

The squadron got its first look at its new home in late May. The forthcoming cruise would not be made embarked in MIDWAY, but her more modern sister ship, USS CORAL SEA (CVA-43). Day and night carrier qualifications were conducted aboard CORAL SEA while the nucleus of the squadron remained at LEMOORE. This ideal setup was shortlived however, and the squadron departed NAS LEMOORE and embarked in CORAL SEA on 13 June. Operating out of Alameda with Attack Carrier Air Wing TWO embarked, CORAL SEA participated in a WEPTRAEX off the Southern California coast until the end of June. At this time, CORAL SEA returned to Alameda and many of the squadron personnel went on well earned leave and liberty over a long "4th of July" holiday weekend.