



VA-15  
[REDACTED]  
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
ATTACK SQUADRON FIFTEEN  
FPO NEW YORK, 09501

DECLASSIFIED 1977

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
01/JHH:gea  
5750  
1 March 1978

[REDACTED] (Unclassified upon removal of enclosures)

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)  
Subj: Command History (OPNAV Report Symbol 5750-1)  
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B  
(b) ATKRON FIFTEEN INST 5750.12  
Encl: (1) ATKRON FIFTEEN Chronology of Events for 1977  
(2) ATKRON FIFTEEN Narrative History for 1977  
(3) ATKRON FIFTEEN Flight Statistics for 1977  
(4) ATKRON FIFTEEN Ordnance Expenditure for 1977  
(5) ATKRON FIFTEEN Advancement/Reenlistment Statistics for 1977  
(6) ATKRON FIFTEEN Officer Roster for 1977  
(7) Biography of CDR R. S. SMITH, USN  
(8) Photograph of CDR R. S. SMITH, USN  
(9) ATKRON FIFTEEN Change of Command Program

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

  
R. S. SMITH

Copy to:  
Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)

Classified by: ATKRON FIFTEEN  
General Declassification Schedule  
of Executive Order 11652  
Automatically Downgraded at Two Year Intervals  
Declassified on 31 December 1984

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ATTACK SQUADRON FIFTEEN  
HISTORY FOR 1977  
CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

JANUARY

- 01-07 1977 opens with VA-15 at home at NAS Cecil Field, FL  
07-22 Squadron deploys to MCAS Yuma, Arizona with CVW-6 for weapons detachment  
23-31 VA-15 shore based at NAS Cecil Field for pre-workup training

FEBRUARY

- 1-22 Pre-workup training  
23 VA-15 moves aboard CV-66, Norfolk, Virginia

MARCH

- 24 FEB - 4 MAR Refresher training at Virginia Capes  
05-09 VA-15 aboard CV-66 inport NORfolk, Virginia  
10-18 Type Training I - Virginia Capes  
19-22 Inport Norfolk, Virginia

APRIL

- 23 MAR - 04 APR Type Training II - Virginia Capes  
05-13 CV-66 inport Norfolk, VA; VA-15 to NAS Cecil Field  
14-24 Type Training III/ORE in Jacksonville OPAREA

MAY

- 24 APR - 02 MAY CV-66 inport Norfolk, VA-15 returned to NAS Cecil Field, FL  
03-07 CV-66 transits from Norfolk to Mayport, FL conducting exercise  
ALoud FOXTROT - VA-15 embarked. VALIONS also flew sorties form NAS Cecil Field Fl for LATWING ONE bombing derby  
07-09 CV-66 inport Mayport, FL  
10-25 Exercise SOLID SHIELD-1977/TACS/TADS/OED

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JUNE

- 26 MAY - 07 JUN VA-15 returns to NAS Cecil Field
- 07 1 year accident free flight operations for VA-15
- 08-09 VA-15 returns aboard CV-66
- 10-21 UNDERWAY for South America
- 19 USS AMERICA crosses the equator and ALL HANDS pay homage to "NEPTUNUS REX"
- 22-24 Inport Salvador, Brazil
- 25-27 Transit to Rio de Janiero, Brazil; Brazilian S-2's and SH3's conduct joint ASW OPS from the USS AMERICA

JULY

- 28 JUN - 04 JULY Inport Rio de Janiero
- 4 VA-15 sponsors the Rio Lion's Club aboard the USS AMERICA for the July 4 celebration
- 05-08 Exercise QUICKDRAW-77 conducted in conjunction with the Brazilian Navy
- 09-19 CV-66 heads north to Norfolk, VA.

AUGUST

- 20 JUL - 14 AUG VA-15 returns to NAS Cecil Field
- 14-24 VA-15 aboard CV-66 for COMPTUEX in the Caribbean

SEPTEMBER

- 25 AUG - 20 SEP VA-15 at NAS Cecil Field
- 21-23 VA-15 aboard CV-66 for CARQUALS
- 24-26 VA-15 at NAS Cecil Field for PRECRUISE PACK-UP
- 27-28 Squadron moves to Norfolk, VA aboard CV-66

OCTOBER

- 29 SEP - 08 OCT Underway for the Mediterranean

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- 29-30 Exercise OCEAN SAFARI - flight operations conducted without divers throughout crossing
- 09-14 Inport Rota, Spain and turn-over with the USS INDEPENDENCE
- 15-25 CV-66 transited the Straits of Gibraltar. Conducted flight operations in the Tyrrhenian and Ionian Seas.

NOVEMBER

- 26 OCT - 6 NOV Inport Brindisi, Italy
- 07-22 Flight Operations in the Ionian Sea, central Mediterranean, and Aegean Seas.
- 22-26 Inport Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia
- 27 Flight Operations in the Adriatic Sea

DECEMBER

- 28 NOV - 02 DEC Inport Trieste, Italy
- 03-15 Flight Operations in the central Mediterranean and Aegean Sea
- 16-26 Inport Palma de Mallorca, Spain
- 17 VA-15 Change of Command, CDR R. S. SMITH relieved CDR K. W. HUEHN
- 27-29 Flight operations in the Tyrrhenian Sea
- 30 DEC - 08 JAN 1978 Inport Genoa, Italy

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ATTACK SQUADRON FIFTEEN  
HISTORY FOR 1977  
NARRATIVE

(U) ATTACK SQUADRON FIFTEEN opened the door to the new year 1977 at NAS Cecil Field, Jacksonville, Florida under the command of CDR K. W. HUEHN, USN. The month of January marked the start of the work-up training cycle. The VALIONS deployed to MCAS Yuma, Arizona with Carrier Air Wing SIX (CVW-6) commanded by CDR R. F. BALL for a two week weapons deployment. During the weapons deployment VA-15 successfully fired 2 AGM-45 missiles at the China Lake G-Range and VALION pilots and maintenance personnel toured the LTV plant at Dallas, Texas. This tour enabled our personnel to view the A-7 in the fabrication process and developed a better appreciation for the complexity of the aircraft and the skills required to manufacture it. An outstanding briefing on quality assurance techniques and procedures highlighted the visit. This trip provided important face-to-face liaison with key LTV and NAVPRO Dallas staff members benefiting morale.

(U) January also marked the loss of two fine officers, LTJG [REDACTED] (to COMTRAWING 6, NAS PENSACOLA, FL) and LTJG [REDACTED] (to VA-174, NAS Cecil Field, FL).

(U) Following the weapons deployment to MCAS Yuma, VA-15 conducted an extensive flight, simulator and intelligence training program. Training flights included all facets of weapons delivery in a threat environment at the Pinecastle EW Range. The VALIONS made continuous use of the Night Carrier Landing Trainer, 2-F-84, and 2-F-111 (Electronic Warfare Trainers) based at Cecil Field along with briefs dealing with the threat posed by all soviet missile systems whether from land site, ship, or aircraft.

(U) This complete review continued when Attack Squadron FIFTEEN embarked aboard the USS AMERICA (CV-66) in Norfolk, Virginia (Commanded by CAPT R. B. FULLER, USN) for the purpose of Refresher Training aboard the carrier from 24 February to 4 March.

(U) The results of the February 1977 exam cycle, proved that Attack Squadron FIFTEEN achieved a 71 percent advancement rate (43 of 61), reflecting the command attention and importance placed on advancement and the dedicated efforts by each individual.

(U) The AMERICA remained in Norfolk, VA until 10 March, when she deployed to the Virginia Capes (VACAPES) for Type Training ONE (TYT-1). During the TYT-1 training flights, VA-15 successfully fired two (2) AIM-9G at drones on 15 March with one sidewinder splashing the drone, a direct hit.

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(U) The AMERICA returned to Norfolk on 18 March for a well-deserved weekend rest before heading to the VACAPES for TYT-2 (23 MAR - 4 APR). LCDR [REDACTED] reported from VA-174 just before leaving Norfolk.

(U) The VALIONS splashed a second drone on 24 March with another AIM-9G. On 28-29 March the VALIONS were embarked when the USS AMERICA hosted the Chief of Naval Operations, ADM HOLLOWAY; the Secretary of the Navy, the honorable GRAHAM CLAYTOR, JR; and the Commander in Chief Atlantic Fleet, ADM ISSAC KIDD. VA-15's Executive Officer, LCDR R. S. SMITH, lead a spectacular flight demonstration which included bombing, strafing, high speed flying, air-to-air refueling and precision formation flying for the honored dignitaries.

(C) While deployed for TYT-2 the VALIONS participated in the simulated MINEX of Charleston harbor, the NTPI and an exercise load sequence plan. Attack Squadron FIFTEEN's four NTPI loading teams performed without a single discrepancy. Additionally the NTPI inspectors rated ATKRON FIFTEEN's administrative procedures and records as tops in the air wing.

(U) In recognition of the Easter season, the VALIONS returned to NAS Cecil Field to spend the holiday (5-13 April) with their families. When at home for this short break, VA-15 hailed LTJG [REDACTED] and said farewell to LCDR [REDACTED] (to CHNAVPERS WASH, DC), LT [REDACTED] (NAVWPNEVAL FAC, KIRTLAND AFB, ALBUQUERQUE, NM), LT [REDACTED] (to VA-174, NAS CECIL FIELD), and LT [REDACTED] (to CIVPAC).

(C) On 12 April, VA-15 personnel returned to Norfolk, VA in preparation for the upcoming TYT-3 and Operational Readiness Exercise (ORE). Type Training 3 made a fresh start on 14 April with a full schedule of cyclic flight operations in the Jacksonville Operating Area. VA-15 flight operations during the next five days included numerous war-at-sea on combatants simulating Soviet or hostile platforms, "Alpha Strikes", a second MINEX and a SINKEX.

(C) 21 April signaled the commencement of the examination of the previous 4 months of training. The ORE utilized a very demanding Mediterranean scenario where VA-15 pilots lead or participated in war-at-sea strikes on simulated Kyndas, Krestas and Kievs and an exercise LSP prior to FINEX on 24 April.

(U) During the ORE, the VALIONS received a grade of low outstanding with the most sorties flown, best boarding rate, best landing interval and best sortie completion rate (76 out of 77) for all squadrons in CVW-6.

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(U) Attack Squadron FIFTEEN returned to NAS Cecil Field on 25 April to welcome ENS [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (from VA-174). The week at Cecil Field passed quickly and on 2 May it was again time to return to Norfolk for the beginning of ALOUD GOLF. From 3-7 May, the America transited to NS Mayport, FL for a 3 day visit. During this time, several VALIONS participated in LATWING ONE bombing derby. LT [REDACTED] placed for runner-up for individual pilot honors and the squadron finished 4th (10 squadrons participated). The derby was entered with extremely short lead time and an absolute minimum of shore based support as the majority of the squadron was deployed for exercise ALOUD GOLF anticipating exercise SOLID SHIELD 77 (during this time frame).

(C) Exercise SOLID SHIELD 77 (10-25 May) emphasized air operations exercising the TACS-TADS/OED interface with the Army, Air Force, Marines and Navy to ensure maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness for the operational task. Upon conclusion of SOLID SHIELD, the USS AMERICA headed north to Norfolk on 25 May.

(U) Upon arrival in Norfolk, the VALIONS returned to Cecil Field for a 2 week pre-cruise interlude. During this well deserved visit home, VA-15 received ENS [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from VA-174 and celebrated one year of accident free operations on 7 June. Attack Squadron FIFTEEN then prepared itself for a mini-deployment aboard CV-66 to Brazil in an effort to show the flag and to operate with the Brazilian Navy.

(U) The VALIONS returned to Norfolk on 8-9 June and the AMERICA got underway on 10 June. During the 12 day cruise to South America, flight operations were conducted on a daily basis to give all aircrews maximum time in the air and on "the ball". On 19 June, flight operations were ceased in order to pay full respects to Neptunus Rex and cleanse the AMERICA of it's Pollywog Vermin as she crossed through the domain of Equitoria.

(U) The America dropped anchor at Salvador, Brazil on 22 June where the VALIONS got a quick taste of the "Tropical Delights". Combined operations with the Brazilian S-2's and SH-3's began on 25 June. During the transit south, Brazilian S-2's conducted carrier quals to bring their pilots up to speed, while the Brazilian carrier was under repair.

(U) The America stopped at Rio de Janeiro on 28 June for a week filled with sun, beaches and samba. The stop at Rio lasted through the Independence holiday when the VALIONS sponsored the Rio de Janeiro Lion's Club aboard the CV for the holiday festivities.

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(U) Attack Squadron FIFTEEN seized the opportunity to excel as ambassadors of goodwill on the South America deployment by contacting the local Lion's Club in Orange Park, Florida and offering to be their representative. The Lion's gladly accepted the offer and made arrangements for Attack Squadron FIFTEEN VA-lions to sponsor a July 4th open house on board the USS AMERICA in Rio de Janiero. Commander Kel HUEHN presented the Rio Lion's Club district governor with a gold lion on behalf of the Orange Park Lion's Club. This project promoted increased good relations both with the Rio community and within the local area.

(U) Upon departing Rio on 5 July the America and her air wing conducted exercise QUICKDRAW 77, a joint exercise with the Brazilian Navy. Following the exercise, the America turned north on 9 July to begin the long voyage back to Norfolk arriving on 19 July. During the transit, ATKRON FIFTEEN received the highest grade for COMCARAIR-WING SIX mini-corrosion inspection.

(U) Following the South American cruise the personnel of VA-15 returned to Cecil Field to say goodbye to LT [REDACTED] (to COM-NAVAIRSYSCOM, WASH, DC) and welcome to CWO2 [REDACTED] (from NAS FALLON, Nevada).

(U) Subsequent to the South American cruise, the VALIONS had no time at Cecil Field for a post cruise stand down. All VALIONS were preoccupied by the CWTPI with VA-15 producing most satisfactory results.

(U) Mid-August marked the squadron return to Norfolk for the 12 day COMPTUEX 5-77 conducted in the Caribbean from 14-26 August. The VALIONS again successfully fired an AIM-9G at a target drone. Attack Squadron FIFTEEN also engaged in air-to-air gunnery during COMPTUEX with very encouraging results as one flight of three VALIONS recorded 56 hits. This stirred great interest in continuing such valuable training. With LATWING ONE assistance and much effort expended, VA-15 successfully obtained the necessary banners and cable for towing to pursue this mission while deployed. This is believed to be a first for a Light Attack Squadron and has proved very valuable for both fighter and light attack squadrons in Carrier Air Wing SIX. Upon FINEX, the America returned to Norfolk and the VALIONS returned to Cecil Field for one last sight of home before "the long cruise".

(U) During this last three week period before cruise (25 AUG - 20 SEP), ENS [REDACTED] and LTJG [REDACTED] joined Attack Squadron FIFTEEN from VA-174. The pre-cruise corrosion inspection brought many kudos to the VALIONS aircraft division for their "outstanding" maintenance of VA-15's Corsairs.

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(U) During the September 1977 exam cycle, VA-15 achieved a 71 percent advancement rate (29 of 41).

(U) CARQUALS were held on 21-23 SEP in anticipation of a full flight schedule during the crossing to Rota. The VALIONS packed up and moved completely to Norfolk on 27-28 SEP saying farewell to LT [REDACTED] (to VT-4, NAS PENSACOLA, FL) and LTJG [REDACTED] (to NATTC, MEMPHIS, TN), family, friends and Cecil Field.

(U) The USS AMERICA weighed anchor for the Atlantic Ocean. Exercise OCEAN SAFARI was conducted on 29-30 SEP and flight operations without divert fields continued until reaching Rota, Spain on 9 October.

(U) The America remained import Rota until 14 October for turn-over with the USS INDEPENDENCE and INCHOP to the SIXTH FLEET.

(U) Upon departure from Rota, CV-66 transited the straits of Gibraltar to the Mediterranean Sea and sailed to the Tyrrhenian and Ionian seas conducting flight operations along the way.

(U) Following operations in the Ionian Sea, the USS AMERICA cast anchor at Brindisi, Italy on 26 October 1977. LT [REDACTED] departed the squadron (to VA-45) while visiting Brindisi.

(U) The 10 day stop on the South Italian Peninsula quickly passed, and the AMERICA soon weighed anchor to hold flight operations in the Ionian Sea on 7-8 NOV before stopping at the Souda Bay, Crete training anchorage (on 9 NOV).

(U) A MISSILEX was held on the Namfi Missile Range (on 10-11 NOV) for the F-14 Tomcat, and missile equipped surface combatants. Following the missile shoot, CV-66 returned to Souda Bay for one day.

(U) During the Souda Training Anchorage (on 12 NOV) preparations were made for the CRAE on AVGO NISI (13-15 NOV). The VALIONS expended over 100 percent of their ordnance allotment for the CRAE during the 2 day period. Flight operations in the Aegean Sea continued to 21 November when the America arrived at Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia. The stay in Dubrovnik during the Thanksgiving holiday went quickly and CV-66 was underway on 27 NOV for Trieste, Italy. The America remained in that windy city for four more days where high seas often prohibited boating to the beach.

(U) On 5-6 DEC the squadron's Executive Officer, CDR R. S. SMITH lead a flight of 4 A-7 aircraft on a "cross country" to Souda Bay as guest of the Greek Air Force. This was the first scheduled visit of USN tactical jet aircraft to Greek soil in several years.

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(U) The next week was spent at the Souda Bay training anchorage and conducting flight operations in the Aegean Sea north of Crete and in the central Mediterranean. During these flight operations, the VALIONS made full use of the Avgo Nisi target.

(U) On 12 DEC, the America commenced a westerly transit conducting flight operations south of Sicily and Sardinia. The VA-15 Corsairs made maximum use of the Sicily and Sardinia low levels, and Pachino and the Capo Frasca targets.

(U) Following an extensive operating period, the America dropped the hook at Palma de Mallorca. During this 10 day visit, Attack Squadron FIFTEEN held its change of command aboard the USS AMERICA. CDR R. S. SMITH, USN relieved CDR K. W. HUEHN as Commanding Officer on 17 December. Also during the stay in Palma, the VALIONS said farewell to CDR [REDACTED], (to COMLATWING ONE) and welcomed aboard LCDR J. J. MAZACH, the VALIONS new Executive Officer, and LCDR [REDACTED] (both from VA-174). The VALIONS enjoyed the Christmas holiday in Palma but soon got underway on 27 DEC.

(U) Flight operations were conducted during the 2 day transit through the Tyrrhenian Sea to Genoa, Italy. The VALIONS spent the remainder of 1977 in port Genoa, Italy, the home of Christopher Columbus.

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1977 FLIGHT TIME

1. TOTAL FLYING DAYS: 236
2. TOTAL TIME: 5623.2 HOURS
3. TOTAL DAY TIME: 4249.7 HOURS
4. TOTAL NIGHT TIME: 1373.5 HOURS
5. TOTAL SORTIES: 3216
6. TOTAL DAY SORTIES: 2306
7. TOTAL NIGHT SORTIES: 914
8. TOTAL TRAPS: 2128
9. TOTAL DAY TRAPS: 1411
10. TOTAL NIGHT TRAPS: 717

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Enclosure (3)

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ATTACK SQUADRON FIFTEEN  
1977 ORDNANCE EXPENDITURE REPORT

MK76 PRACTICE BOMB	8892
MK106 PRACTICE BOMB	276
MK82 LDGP	981
MK82 INERT	331
MK83 INERT	28
MK84 LDGP	22
MK84 INERT	8
AIM-9G	4
AGM-45	2
20MM TP	37,637
20MM HEL	6421
MK58 MARINE MARKER	666
MK45 FLARES	284
MK46 DECOY FLARES	230
CHAFF	3662
2.75 INCH ROCKETS	555
BDU-20	1
BDU-36	2
BDU-8	3
MK52 MINES	12
MK131	541
MK 2 CTG	10,902
MK 4 CTG	8,696

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ADVANCEMENTS

	FEBRUARY	SEPTEMBER
# EXAMINED	61	41
# ADVANCED	43	29
PERCENT	71%	71%

REENLISTMENTS

FIRST TERM	CAREER
NOT ELIGIBLE: 10	5
ELIGIBLE: 27	15
REENLISTED: 10	9
PERCENTAGE: 27.02%	50.00%

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