



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
ATTACK SQUADRON TWENTY FIVE
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From: Commanding Officer, Attack Squadron TWENTY FIVE
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP 05D2)

Subj: Command History for 1973; submission of

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Encl: (1) Attack Squadron TWENTY FIVE Command History for 1973

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted.


G. R. VEZINA

ATTACK SQUADRON TWENTY FIVE COMMAND HISTORY 1973

VA-25 started its second line period of the cruise on 14 January, returning directly to combat air strikes against North Vietnam. As before, these sorties were tactical strike, reconnaissance, and interdiction missions.

Shortly before the end of combat operations in Vietnam, VA-25 took part in a dramatic demonstration of new techniques and applications of tactical air power. Flying in conjunction with "PAVE KNIFE" equipped A-6's from Attack Squadron 145 and other Air Wing TWO aircraft, our squadron's A7E's dropped laser-guided bombs (LGB's) on selected targets in the panhandle region of North Vietnam. In a space of slightly less than two hours the mini-task force succeeded in completely destroying 15 bridges out of the 17 targeted.

On the day following the signing of the Vietnamese cease-fire accords, the four attack carriers then conducting air operations in the Gulf of Tonkin and the South China Sea (USS RANGER, USS ENTERPRISE, USS ORISKANY, and USS AMERICA) rendezvoused to commemorate the event. Meanwhile, combat sorties were still being launched into Laotian airspace. VA-25 took part in these operations until the end of the line period on 7 February.

On that date RANGER pulled off the line and headed directly for Hong Kong and well deserved liberty from the 9th to the 15th of February. The liberty was especially memorable and enjoyable due to the fact that a large number of VA-25 wives had made the trip to Hong Kong.

VA-25 returned to the line on 17 February and immediately recommenced combat strikes into Laos. These strikes, which were to continue until the Laotian cease-fire came into effect on the 22nd, consisted mainly of interdiction missions with occasional assignments to CAS (Close Air Support). The ship/air wing team relaxed into a ready alert status on the day that the accords were signed and remained in that condition until the line period ended on 14 March.

Following a week's R&R in Subic Bay, Philippine Islands, we commenced our fourth line period on 21 March. This line period was devoted primarily to readiness and type training. In addition, the RANGER was tasked with providing support for Operation ENDSWEEP. The line period lasted until 13 April, when we once again headed for a brief stand-down period in the Philippines.

The fifth line period, 23 April to 5 May, was essentially the same as the previous one. Readiness and type training continued at a reduced pace, as well as continuing support of the effort to clear Vietnamese waters of mines. At the end of this line period, however, instead of heading east for the Philippines as we had become so accustomed to doing, the RANGER turned south for Singapore.

VA-25 and the RANGER team thoroughly enjoyed their stay in Singapore, which lasted from 8-14 May. The visit was doubly welcome in that it was a change from the normal routine of cycling in and out of Subic Bay between line periods. After leaving Singapore, the ship took a brief jog south to

Enclosure (1)

the Equator and, on 15 May, all of the pollywogs aboard (of which there were quite a few) were properly initiated into the Royal Order of the Deep.

The squadron returned to the South China Sea for our sixth line period, extending from 17 May to 2 June. Once again we resumed the routine of maintaining proficiency and readiness. Unfortunately, it was during this line period that we suffered our first and only aircraft loss of the cruise. On 28 May, LT [REDACTED] was forced to eject from his aircraft following an engine malfunction shortly after catapult launch. The ejection was successful and he was recovered unharmed, but the aircraft was lost at sea.

We left the line for the last time on 30 May, once again inbound to Subic Bay. On 2 June, just prior to our arrival in port, CDR Paul M. MOORE relieved CDR Edwin A GREATHOUSE as Commanding Officer, Attack Squadron TWENTY FIVE.

Following a short stay used mainly for cross-decking assets to other carriers, RANGER and VA-25 departed for Yokosuka, Japan, our last port of call before returning to the United States. On 9 June, following a short four-day visit to Japan, we departed the Western Pacific enroute to Alameda, California. During the cruise the squadron had flown 1610 sorties (51% either combat or combat support) and had logged a total of 3185.4 flight hours.

VA-25's aircraft flew off to our home base at the Naval Air Station, Lemoore, California, on the 21st of June with the remainder of the squadron arriving in Alameda with RANGER on the following day. The squadron then entered a stand-down period until 24 July. This time was well spent renewing acquaintances with wives, families, and old friends and resting from the squadron's seven month deployment.

Following the stand-down, the squadron commenced its turnaround training cycle in preparation for the next scheduled deployment. Many new personnel, both officer and enlisted, checked aboard and were gradually assimilated into the squadron.

The first major evolution following our return to the United States was the Attack Carrier Air Wing TWO weapons deployment to NAS Fallon, Nevada. VA-25 distinguished itself in many ways during this two-week period of concentrated weapons delivery training and competition. Squadron pilots won an outstandingly high number of individual "E's" in competitive exercises, aircraft availability and systems status were at an all-time high, and VA-25 took first place in the Air Wing Bombing Derby convincingly. At the same time, the squadron was participating in the COMLATWINGPAC (Commander, Light Attack Wing, Pacific) Derby VII bombing competition; several VA-25 pilots placed extremely high in the individual events, and only a technical disqualification prevented the squadron from placing first overall.

Immediately following our return from the weapons deployment all hands turned to in preparation for the squadron's annual ADMAT (Administrative/Material and Training) Inspection. Despite the fact that there was only slightly more than a week to prepare for the event, it was an extremely successful evolution with the squadron receiving an excellent rating of 94.96.

VA-25 returned to the shipboard operating environment on 4-5 December, when most of the squadron's pilots underwent Carrier Qualification training aboard USS RANGER off the coast of southern California. Following this last major evolution of the year, the squadron returned to training type missions flown from NAS Lemoore with the primary emphasis being placed on introducing new aviators into fleet-type operations and practices.

Since returning from the cruise the squadron had flown a total of 1232 sorties, included in which were virtually all types of A7E operations, and had amassed a total of 2203.4 flight hours.

As the holiday season approached all hands were more than thankful that this Christmas, unlike the last one, would be spent in peace and at home with families and friends.