

1976



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
ATTACK SQUADRON TWENTY FIVE
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From: Commanding Officer, Attack Squadron TWENTY FIVE
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Encl: (1) Attack Squadron TWENTY FIVE Command History

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

J B Hamilton
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Copy to:
CINCPACFLT
Director of Naval History

ATTACK SQUADRON TWENTY FIVE COMMAND HISTORY

January 1976 was spent in final preparation for the Bicentennial Cruise aboard USS RANGER as a Component of CVW-2. The cruise got underway from San Diego on 30 January.

On 4 February, the ship launched a few of our aircraft to Barbers Point so refresher landings could be made on the 5th. Bad weather interrupted the plans and RANGER tied up in Pearl Harbor on 8 February after the storm ebbed. The Squadron aircraft at Barbers Point were recovered when the ship pulled out on the 10th.

A big share of the long second leg of the journey to Subic Bay was devoted to Phase II Equal Opportunity Training. On 19 February, VA-25 became part of the 7th Fleet. The Staff of CTF-77 arrived aboard on the 20th to make the USS RANGER the Flag Ship.

Following a Command Inspection on the 28th, the ship pulled into Subic Bay, a port the Squadron was to call home for some months to follow. Liberty didn't last long as work on the aircraft began on March 2nd for the first flight on the 5th. That day, VA-25 became the first A7 Squadron in WESTPAC to successfully launch a mission utilizing the Extended Range Data Link Walleye.

On 15 March the ship got underway and immediately began air operations preparing for READEX 2-76, an exercise involving the entire 7th Fleet. The hours were long and work tedious as the Squadron maintained a 24 hour alert status. During READEX, the Squadron flew over 300 hours and completed 173 carrier landings. During this period the Squadron was awarded the CVW-2 Golden Tailhook with a landing average of 3.8 and LT [REDACTED] receiving honors for having the "best" landing average of 1st cruise aviators.

On 21 March, NE 402 received major damage from parts of an aircraft which struck the ramp. Luckily, no one was injured. The month of March ended with RANGER pulling into Manila for a few days of rest and recreation for the crew. While there, the USS RANGER/CVW-2 hosted more than 100,000 guests.

On 4 April the ship departed Manila for a short period of air operations prior to returning to Subic.

Departing the Squadron's home away from home on 23 April, air operations were conducted with the Squadron concentrating on Day/Night Dive Bombing and continuing to develop the ERDL tactics. Prior to arrival at Hong Kong on 3 May, the Squadron

amassed 277 hours and 159 traps, 50 being at night. This was the first half of the period for VA-25 to win it's second CVW-2 Golden Tailhook Award.

After a short stay in Hong Kong, air operations were conducted in the South China Sea and then back into Subic on 15 May. During this period the Squadron once again was among the leaders flying a total of 239 hours. The squadron had completed 602 traps (177 at night) since the beginning of the cruise, maintaining a .893 boarding rate, the best in CVW-2.

The Squadron was to remain in Subic Bay until 4 June, our departure being delayed by Typhoon Oglá. Liberty was secured for 2 days as the tugboats attempted to keep the RANGER from tearing up the pier. Finally, on the 4th, the weather cleared and the ship got underway for 7 days of operations.

The weather was hot and the hours long as the "Green Tails" kept them in the air, leading the way with 101 sorties and 198 hours.

On 2 June the ship got underway to recover aircraft and head for Singapore. The first flight of Fists, CDR Ogle and LTJG [REDACTED], were overhead in high holding when CDR Ogle's aircraft (NE 406) had severe compressor stalls. After shutting the engine down and attempting several relights, all to no avail, CDR Ogle ejected. CDR Ogle escaped without injury but the aircraft was lost at sea. While orbiting the scene, LTJG [REDACTED] experienced compressor stalls, but was able to limp back to Cubi for a safe landing. As a result, all the A-7's were grounded until the cause (hydrogen peroxide contamination of JP-5) could be found. This was to end most of the flying for the A7's this cruise.

On 2 June the ship came back into port and loaded aboard the A-7's prior to heading for Singapore. The transit and most of the inport period at Singapore was spent on a complete change of High Pressure Fuel Pumps for the A-7's.

Leaving Singapore on July 6, the ship detoured across the equator to rid the ranks of slimy pollywogs, then made a short run towards Subic Bay only to be turned around and sent to the Indian Ocean. It was the first time since December 1974 that 7th Fleet ships had entered the Indian Ocean. We were to stay over three weeks with very limited flying. Those aircraft that had been flown or engines turned were soon to receive their second new H. P. Pump.

Arriving back in Subic on 5 August, the men received a long deserved rest. After frantic buying of the last minute "good deals" the ship departed the Philippines 14 August and headed East.

Greeting the USS RANGER in Hawaii were several "Tigers" to ride the ship back to the states with their sponsors. Once again, Equal Opportunity and Career Benefit Lectures were in the spotlight with the pilots receiving a review of CONUS instrument flight procedures from Attack Squadron One Twenty Seven.

Flying off the ship on 6 September for Lemoore, the Squadron began a long turnaround. For its consistent overall performance while onboard, the "Fist of the Fleet" was awarded the CVW-2 Cruise Golden Tailhook Award with a Squadron average of 3.6.

September was spent in giving maximum leave and getting settled into new spaces. Schools and advanced training were the primary goal through the end of October. Five Squadron pilots were back aboard USS RANGER for refresher traps in mid-October.

On 29 October, CDR J. B. Hamilton relieved CDR P. W. Ogle as Commanding Officer with CDR W. L. Butler taking over as Executive Officer.

The months of November and December were spent flying training missions to targets at Fallon, Nevada; Yuma, Arizona; and numerous service sorties in the Southern California Op area. Low level navigation and radar training missions were flown throughout the Western United States. On 23 November, VA-25 competed in LATWINGPAC Bombing Derby X taking 1st place in day dive bombing and finishing 3rd overall.

During the year officer turnover saw CDR Ogle, CDR [REDACTED], CDR [REDACTED], LCDR [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], and LT [REDACTED] leave; while eight officers, CDR Hamilton, CDR Butler, LCDR [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], and LTJG [REDACTED] joined the squadron. Throughout the year, the Squadron flew a total of 4012 hours, 3117 day and 895 night, and completed 783 arrested landings.

The Squadron finished the year in a high state of readiness.