



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
ATTACK SQUADRON TWENTY FIVE  
c/o FLEET POST OFFICE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 96601

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To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)

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Encl: (1) Events of 1981  
(2) Change of Command Booklet

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) and (2) are forwarded.

  
R. W. LEONE

Copy to:  
CINCPACFLT  
Director of Naval History

## EVENTS OF 1981

Attack Squadron TWENTY FIVE maintains 12 A-7E Corsair II light attack aircraft which were manufactured by LTV of Dallas, Texas. The squadron has been flying the Corsair II since acceptance of its first A-7B back in October 1968. The "Fist of the Fleet" have flown the Echo version of the A-7 since 1970 when the squadron was assigned to the Carrier Air Wing TWO and USS Ranger (CV-61) team.

During 1981 the squadron served under the command of Commander L. E. Thomassy, Commander Carrier Air Wing TWO, and under the operational control of the functional wing, Rear Admiral G. W. Lenox, Commander Light Attack Wing, U. S. Pacific Fleet.

The squadron's year began aboard its home away from home, the USS Ranger. The Commanding Officer of the "Fist" was CDR J. A. Lockard, and the Executive Officer was CDR R. W. Leone, U. S. Navy.

There were 207 enlisted personnel and the following officers assigned to VA-25: CDR J.A. "Spider" Lockard, CDR R.W. "Noodles" Leone, LCDR [REDACTED], LCDR [REDACTED], LCDR [REDACTED], LCDR [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], LTJG [REDACTED], LTJG [REDACTED], LTJG [REDACTED], LTJG [REDACTED], LTJG [REDACTED], LTJG [REDACTED], ENS [REDACTED] and CW02 [REDACTED].

The squadron was deployed during the end of 1980 when the USS Ranger was anchored in Mombasa, Kenya on December 1980 after spending 66 days on Gonzo Station in the Indian Ocean. On 3 January 1981 the anchor was hoisted and the squadron was back to work in the I.O.

From its vantage point on Gonzo the "Fist" saw the 444 days of the American Hostage Crisis in Iran come to a joyous close on 20 January 1981.

In January the Ranger held a coordinated exercise (ADEX 1-81) with the USS Independence. This at sea period lasted for 60 days and was capped off with the First Annual Gonzo Olympics consisting of running and strength events in which VA-25 swept the field to finish in first place overall.

On 24 January LTJG [REDACTED] experienced a nose gear landing emergency while operating in the Indian Ocean. He was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal for his handling of the night, open ocean aircraft emergency. The squadron received a personal letter from Vice Admiral MacDonald, Deputy CNO for AIR, commending the professionalism and team effort utilized in analysing and resolving this emergency.

The mid-cruise corrosion inspection was completed on 6 February with an overall score of satisfactory. In mid February another major training exercise (GONZOEX 81-1) was held with the USS Independence.

With the arrival of the USS Midway, the Ranger headed for Colombo, Sri Lanka for 4 days of liberty from 3 until 6 March. Having spent 4½ months in the Indian Ocean, we said goodbye to the I.O. on 11 March as the carrier transited the Straits of Malacca, Pattaya Beach, Thailand was our next port of call from 14 to 18 March.

While spending months in the Indian Ocean, aircraft availability and material condition was substantially increased despite the long logistic chain. Pride in workmanship instilled by solid leadership reduced repeat discrepancies to near 0.

March 20-21 was an important period for VA-25, culminating in the successful completion of the Navy Technical Proficiency Inspection (NTPI) with a satisfactory score.

It was on to Subic Bay, Philippines on the 23rd of the month. The squadron conducted training operations at NAS Cubi Pt. while the carrier underwent minor repairs, plotting a course for Hong Kong. Routine carrier operations were conducted until we anchored in Hong Kong on 6 April. On the 10th the screws were turning again, pushing us back to the Philippines where the ship and the Air Wing made final preparations before transiting the Pacific back to the States.

After a 4 day stay the squadron left Cubi Pt. on 16 April. A quick pit stop was made at Pearl Harbor on 28 April when many fathers, sons or brothers were welcomed aboard (for the tiger cruise), then it was full steam ahead for the mainland. Family and friends greeted the "Fist" aviators at the fly-in at NAS Lemoore on 4 May. The men and the remainder of the officers received their smiles and hugs at North Island when the ship pulled in the following day.

ATKRON 25 completed the WESTPAC/Indian Ocean cruise with a total of 1733 Ranger traps of which 1082 were day traps and 651 were night traps. This total averaged out to 93 traps per pilot during the deployment. From 1 January until anchoring back in San Diego the "Fist" had accumulated 743 traps in just 4 months. During the cruise 10 of the squadron aviators had become centurions and 6 pilots became double centurions on the USS Ranger. With a total squadron effort, a 94% sortie completion rate was achieved for the entire cruise. The squadron also achieved the highest ordnance delivery reliability in the Airwing. The "Fist of the Fleet" came away with Air Wing TWO's best squadron boarding rate and the Golden Tailhook Award for the 8 month WESTPAC/IO cruise.

The "Fist" had completed another successful cruise. Many significant world events had occurred and passed into history. Highlighting just the major occurrences does not always give the clear picture. Other noteworthy facts sometimes pass without notice, such as the squadron having made it through an entire cruise with no liberty incidents, no flight deck injuries, and the squadrons safety gram cited as the finest on the USS Ranger.

Having returned to Lemoore, the squadron continued training to maintain readiness during the turnaround period. The post deployment corrosion control inspection went well, evaluated as satisfactory in all areas. Inspectors commented, "VA-25 aircraft are in better material condition than most deploying squadrons."

Mid-May brought the squadron training plan debrief in which the inspectors said of the debrief, "Best they have ever seen; it will serve as a model for the entire LATWING community."

Attack Squadron TWENTY FIVE completed its annual command inspection by Commander, Light Attack Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet, with an overall performance score of satisfactory on 22-23 June.

From 17 to 20 July the squadron participated in Orange Air Exercise (READIEX 1-81) in which we completed 104% of our scheduled missions.

The "Fist" travelled with the Airwing to Whidbey Island for a MINEX detachment during the period of 4-7 August.

Airwing TWO travelled to NAS Fallon for a major weapons deployment from 13 September through 26 September. The "Fist of the Fleet" flew more sorties than any other CVW-2 squadron.

Just prior to our cruise workup schedule, a Change of Command was conducted on 7 October 1981. CDR R.W. Leone relieved CDR J.A. Lockard as Commanding Officer and CDR S.L. Webb took over the duties as the Executive Officer.

The squadron successfully completed its Conventional Weapons Technical Proficiency Inspection on 8-9 October with performance evaluation of satisfactory.

On 13 and 14 October, VA-25 moved onboard the USS Ranger for Refresher Training (REFTRA) off the coast of Southern California. After 2 weeks at sea the ship made a transit northward to Vancouver, Canada for a port of call. Everyone spent 4 days enjoying one of the best liberty ports in the world. On 2 November we hoisted anchor for another week of work before pulling into San Diego.

Four more days were allotted to an Orange Air Exercise from 19 November through 22 November.

From 1 to 9 December the "Fist" were at sea on the USS Ranger for a Weapons Training Exercise. On 9 December VA-25 participated in a Nuclear Ordnance Readiness Exercise at Shade Tree Target in Arizona coming away with the best average hits in Airwing TWO.

During 1981 the "Fist of the Fleet" officer's ranks gained CDR [REDACTED], LCDR [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], and LT [REDACTED]. Departing the squadron during the year were CDR J.A. "Spider" Lockard, LCDR [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], and LT [REDACTED]. Ensigns [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] were assets to the squadron temporarily assigned for a short period from June to September, while awaiting class dates for flight training.

Personnel retention for the squadron increased significantly during the year due to the emphasis which was put on retaining quality personnel in the Navy. The 1981 retention data shows that 20% of the first term, 71% of second

term, and 62% of career personnel retained. For the last few months of 1981 the percentages were up to 60% for first term and 100% for second term and career personnel.

Attack Squadron TWENTY FIVE changed the aircraft color scheme during the last few months of the year from our green-tail image to that of full gray with black numbers and highlighting the "Fist" emblem in darker shades of gray. This change acts as camouflage which tends to enhance the survivability of the A-7 in a combat environment.

Total flight hours flown during 1981 was 4468 hours of which day and night hours included 3409 and 1059 hours, respectively. Arrested landings totalled 1071 with 674 day and 397 night traps. The overall boarding rate was 96% for the day and 91% for night time on board the USS Ranger.

VA-25 completed 1981 with a dynamic, visible and effective safety program. The squadron was the winner of CY 81 second quarter COMLATWINGPAC Aviation Safety Award. Also, the squadron had 11 COMNAVAIRPAC "Pros of the Week" selected.

The "Fist" has achieved 5 years, 7 months of accident free operations representing 26071 flight hours both embarked and shore based dating back to 23 June 1976. The squadron has also surpassed 400 days of foreign object damage free operations. This is not just a new Navywide standard, but an extension of the spirit and commitment by all hands toward pride through professionalism.

Attack Squadron TWENTY FIVE has been a pace setter in light attack aviation. The "Fist of the Fleet" represent the A-7 community in a positive, aggressive, and professional spirit to all who have had the opportunity to witness our actions. This year's achievements amply demonstrate the entire squadron's involvement in the pursuit of excellence. Whether the yardstick be the deployment of personnel on liberty or the aggressive professionalism demonstrated by the aviators, VA-25 is a winner, and proved it in 1981.

The squadron ended the year with the observance of Christmas and awaiting the New Year ready to embark on our ORE onboard the Ranger in January and the WESTPAC tour scheduled to begin in the spring of 1982.