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FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE HUNDRED TWO
FLEET POST OFFICE
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From: Commanding Officer, Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWO
To: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: Command History;
submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12A

Encl: (1) Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWO Command History

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


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By direction

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OPNAV Report 5750-1

Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWO Squadron History
1 January 1968 - 1 January 1969

PART I

- 1 Jan 68 VF-102 was in the process of transitioning to the McDonnell F-4J Phantom II and preparing for the forthcoming deployment to Southeast Asia.
- 26 Jan 68 Conventional weapons deployment to Caribbean Sea aboard USS AMERICA.
- 12 Feb 68 Completed deployment and returned to NAS Oceana.
- 27 Feb 68 ADMAT inspection completed. VF-102 received grade of "High Excellent."
- 6 Mar 68 Deployed aboard USS AMERICA (CVA-66) to Caribbean Sea.
- 23 Mar 68 Completed deployment and returned to NAS Oceana.
- 19 Apr 68 Departed for Southeast Asia aboard USS AMERICA (CVA-66).
- 21 May 68 Arrived NAS Cubi Point, Philippine Islands.
- 24 May 68 Departed NAS Cubi Point, Philippine Islands.
- 31 May 68 Commenced combat flight operations for first line period on Yankee Station.
- 16 Jun 68 Commanding Officer, CDR W. E. WILBER and LTJG B. F. RUBINSKI missing in action over North Vietnam.
- 21 Jun 68 CDR F. G. FELLOWES, Jr., USN, assumed command of squadron.
- 25 Jul 68 LT. C. C. PARISH and LT. R. S. FANT missing in action over North Vietnam.
- 29 Oct 68 Terminated combat flight operations after fourth line period on Yankee Station.
- 3 Nov 68 Departed NAS Cubi Point, Philippine Islands.
- 12 Nov 68 Arrived Sydney, Australia.
- 16 Nov 68 Departed Sydney, Australia.
- 18 Nov 68 Arrived Wellington, New Zealand
- 20 Nov 68 Departed Wellington, New Zealand.

- 4 Dec 68 Arrived Rio de Janerio, Brazil
- 7 Dec 68 Departed Rio de Janerio, Brazil
- 16 Dec 68 Arrived Norfolk, Virginia and disembarked from USS AMERICA (CVA-66).
Returned to NAS Oceana, Virginia. Commenced standdown period.

PART II

On 1 January 1968 the VF-102 "Diamondbacks" were preparing for their training deployment to The Atlantic Fleet Weapons Range, Puerto Rico, aboard USS AMERICA (CVA-66). Transitioning to the new F-4J, with its changes in airframe and engines and particularly its sophisticated weapons system, had begun on 3 October 1967 with the arrival of the first aircraft. During the next few months the aircrews and maintenance personnel familiarized themselves with the aircraft as they prepared for the coming deployment to Southeast Asia.

VF-102 deployed to the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Range on 26 January 1968 aboard USS AMERICA (CVA-66) to polish the aircrews' conventional weapons delivery techniques. The deployment placed primary emphasis on day/night air-to-ground conventional weapons training. The aircrews expended practice bombs, high explosive bombs, napalm, illuminating flares, and air-to-ground rockets. The squadron returned to NAS Oceana on 12 February 1968 and commenced preparations for the ADMAT inspection which was conducted 27-29 February 1968. The "Diamondbacks" received a 92.56 High Excellent overall grade.

Immediately following the ADMAT inspection the squadron deployed aboard USS AMERICA to practice carrier operations and conventional weapons techniques at the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Range. Upon return to NAS Oceana on 23 March 1968, the squadron began accepting 13 new F-4J aircraft equipped with ECM gear and the AWG-10 weapons system. Modifications to the hydraulic

systems and the engines of all new aircraft was initiated. By the first of April 1968 the "Diamondbacks" were equipped with a complement of 13 new F-4J aircraft in various stages of modification and all fully outfitted for combat in Southeast Asia. The modification program was completed 9 April 1968.

On 10 April 1968 the "Diamondbacks" embarked in USS AMERICA and proceeded to the Caribbean Sea for an Operational Readiness Inspection. Strike tactics and ECM procedures were the final stage in a long and arduous period of preparation for combat in Southeast Asia. The next stop was Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where the "Red Tails" of Carrier Air Wing SIX participated in an air show and enjoyed a few days of relaxation and recreation. The long journey to Subic Bay, Philippines via the Cape of Good Hope ended as USS AMERICA steamed into Subic Bay on 21 May 1968. Departing for Yankee Station on 24 May 1968, the squadron participated in operation "Newboy" and utilized the Mark-4 gun pod. The gun pod proved to be a quite reliable and accurate weapon.

Combat operations on Yankee Station commenced 31 May 1968. The mission of Carrier Air Wing SIX was to maintain air superiority and interdict traffic in North Vietnam south of the 19th parallel. VF-102 and her sister squadron, VF-33, were assigned the missions of BARCAP, MIGCAP, TARCAP, Photo Escort, Attack, and Armed Reconnaissance. The weapons configuration for the Combat Air Patrol and Photo Escort missions was two Sidewinder missiles and three Sparrow III missiles. The Attack and Armed Reconnaissance sorties utilized the same missile configuration with the addition of six 500 pound Mark-82 bombs or four 1000 pound Mark-83 bombs. Occasionally 5 inch Zuni rockets and Cluster Bomblets were employed, with illuminating flares generally carried on all night missions. The AWG-10 proved to be a very reliable weapons system and the F-4J proved to be an effective bombing platform. The "Diamondbacks" flew 510 sorties for a total of 892 flight

hours and expended 586,544 pounds of ordnance from 31 May 1968 to 27 June 1968.

The men of Fighter Squadron 102 were struck hard by the realities of combat on 16 June 1968 when their skipper, Commander W. E. WILBER and his Radar Intercept Officer, Lieutenant (junior grade) B. F. RUPINSKI were lost in a MIG encounter southwest of Vinh Son, North Vietnam. Commander WILBER is carried as a prisoner of war and Lieutenant (junior grade) RUPINSKI is missing in action. On 21 June 1968 Commander F. G. FELLOWES, Jr., USN, who had been acting commanding officer since 16 June 1968, assumed command of the squadron.

VF-102 departed Yankee Station 28 June 1968 for a period of rest and relaxation at Subic Bay, Philippines. Several aircraft were flown ashore to NAS Cubi Point and on 2 July 1968 and 5 July 1968 the squadron participated in AIM-7E missile shoots.

The missions and tactics remained basically the same for the second combat line period and flight operations commenced 7 July 1968. From 7 July to 2 August 1968 the "Diamondbacks" flew 525 sorties for a total of 935 flight hours and expended 685,998 pounds of ordnance.

Lieutenant C. C. PARISH and his Radar Intercept Officer, Lieutenant R. S. FANT were downed by enemy anti-aircraft artillery fire 25 July 1968 while on a bombing mission three miles north of Vinh, North Vietnam and are missing in action.

Flight operations were terminated 2 August and the USS AMERICA steamed for Subic Bay, Philippines. On 3 August 1968 the "Diamondbacks" again participated in an AIM-7E missile shoot off the coast of the Philippine Islands. All of VF-102's aircraft were flown ashore and underwent Airframe Change 430. USS AMERICA departed Subic Bay 8 August 1968 for Hong Kong, and the "Diamondback" aircrews flew aboard the ship while enroute.

With an average temperature of 88 degrees and what seemed to be greater than 100% relative humidity, the "Red Tails" returned to Yankee Station 18 August 1968 for their third line period in Southeast Asia. The squadron flew 430 sorties for a total of 764 flight hours from 19 August 1968 to 11 September 1968, expending a total of 589,979 pounds of ordnance with no combat losses. On 13 September 1968, while enroute to Yokosuka, Japan, numerous members of Fighting 102's aircrews received air combat decorations from Rear Admiral L. V. SWANSON, COMCARDIV TWO. At the personnel inspection preceding this ceremony, Commander M. E. MALAN, Executive Officer, USS AMERICA (CVA-66) commented that he had never seen a finer looking squadron than VF-102 in all his years in the Navy. The squadron participated in its fourth AIM-7E missile shoot on 14 September 1968 while enroute to Japan.

After a period of relaxation, the fourth and final line period began 28 September 1968. Flying over sixty percent of their missions at night, VF-102's 17 aircrews and 12 aircraft amassed a total of 1222 flight hours in 463 sorties and expended 801,241 pounds of ordnance from 28 September 1968 to 23 October 1968. The maintenance personnel did an exceptional job in keeping their supersonic "Phantoms" in the air as evidenced by "Millivine 105" which flew 59 consecutive maintenance free hops.

The basic mission of Carrier Air Wing SIX continued to be a program of interdiction against roads, bridges, tracks, and barges to curtail the flow of men and materials to South Vietnam. The aircrews and personnel of VF-102 took great pride in the role they were playing in that mission. Toward the end of the line period several "Diamondback" aircraft were launched from USS AMERICA at the maximum catapult weight of 56,000 pounds. Their payload consisted of 2 Sparrow III missiles, 2 Sidewinder missiles, 4 Zuni rocket pods, 6 Mark-82 500 pound bombs, and full centerline fuel tank.

This armament configuration proved to be very effective on missions of an attack nature.

Needless to say, operations in the combat zone were a taxing experience for all personnel; yet, it was also very rewarding. Rear Admiral L. V. SWANSON, COMCARDIV TWO, presented Carrier Air Wing SIX's "Silver Tailhook" award to Commander F. G. FELLOWES, Jr. and the aircrews of VF-102 at the conclusion of the fourth line period. The "Silver Tailhook" had previously been a rotating award presented each line period to the squadron which had shown the greatest proficiency in the carrier's landing pattern. Since VF-102 had won the award for all four line periods, the "Silver Tailhook" was permanently presented to the "Diamondbacks".

The USS AMERICA (CVA-66) departed the combat zone for the last time on 30 October 1968 enroute to Subic Bay, Philippines, the first stop on the continuation of her around the world cruise. Departing Subic Bay on 3 November 1968, USS AMERICA set sail for her next port of call, Sydney, Australia. During the nine day transit, all hands enjoyed a flight deck cook-out and day of holiday routine. The exceptional hospitality and friendliness of the people of Sydney, Australia was enjoyed and appreciated by all.

On 16 November 1968 USS AMERICA steamed from Sydney Harbor, arriving at Wellington, New Zealand 18 November 1968. Another fine welcome was extended by our friends "down under." The next leg of the homeward journey was fourteen days in duration and took the squadron to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil via Cape Horn, completing an around the world cruise. The sunny beaches and beautiful sights of Rio were left behind on the morning of 7 November 1968; Norfolk, Virginia and home were but eight days away. On 16 December 1968 USS AMERICA (CVA-66) steamed into Norfolk, Virginia and the "Diamondbacks"

were home from their first combat tour. The squadron disembarked from USS AMERICA 16 December 1968 and moved back to NAS Oceana, Virginia Beach, Virginia. 1 January 1969 found the personnel of the Fighting Diamondbacks enjoying a maximum holiday leave period and the Christmas holidays with their families.

PART III

Lessons learned, conclusions, recommendations, and operations summaries for 1968 have been compiled and are contained in Carrier Air Wing SIX Cruise Report, 1968 -- Classification SECRET. Inquiries may be directed to the following address:

Commanding Officer
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New York, New York 09501

Enclosures:

- (1) Biography of Commanding Officer, Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWO
- (2) Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWO Officer Precedence List
- (3) Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWO Enlisted Roster