

1980

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From: Commanding Officer, Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWO
To: Chief Of Naval Operations OP-05D2

Subj: Command History for 1980

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12C of 11 January 1980
(b) CNO OP-05D2 ltr dated 14 September 1981

Encl: (1) VF-102 Command History

1. In accordance with reference (a) and (b), the VF-102 Command History covering events of 1980 is forwarded.


C. M. GRAUERT
By Direction

FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE HUNDRED TWO COMMAND HISTORY

Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWO was commissioned on 1 July 1955. The first Commanding Officer was CDR Robert F. Regan, USN, who, along with four officers and fifty enlisted men, comprised the plank owners of VF-102. The squadron chose as its symbol the deadly rattlesnake, "Diamondback."

The Diamondbacks first deployed to the Mediterranean aboard the USS RANDOLPH in July 1956. Their first operational commitment came during the Suez Crisis of that year.

Safely back from cruise, the Diamondbacks took delivery of the F4D-1 Skyray. The squadron's outstanding performance led to its selection to be AIRLANT's entry in the April 1958 "All Navy Weapons Meet." The move to NAS Oceana, Virginia came during the summer of 1959, and in January 1960 the Diamondbacks were at sea again, this time on the USS FORRESTAL (CV-59).

The Diamondbacks were one of the first Navy squadrons to receive the F-4B Phantom II, and began the process of transitioning in September 1961. Upon completion of carrier qualifications on USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-62), the squadron joined Carrier Air Group ONE for the shakedown cruise of the newly commissioned nuclear powered carrier USS ENTERPRISE (CV-65). VF-102 deployed to the Mediterranean in August of 1962, but the ship was hurriedly returned to participate in the Naval Blockade of Cuba. The Diamondbacks were back in the Mediterranean by February 1963, this time for a full eight month cruise.

One year later, VF-102 was again at sea, and during the summer of 1964 sailed with the ENTERPRISE (CV-65) on "Operation Sea Orbit," the famous Nuclear Task Force circumnavigation of the globe. As a result of their outstanding sustained performance during that year, the DIAMONDBACKS won the 1964 COMNAVAIRLANT "E".

In the spring of 1965, the Diamondbacks transferred to the newly commissioned USS AMERICA (CV-66) and, after several short work up cruises, deployed to the Mediterranean once again.

The squadron was again awarded the COMNAVAIRLANT "E" for 1966 and left for its ninth cruise in January 1967. It was after this deployment that the Diamondbacks began the transition to the F4J. VF-102 celebrated its thirteenth birthday "on line" in Southeast Asia aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66). After completing their second around-the-world cruise, the squadron was able to celebrate Christmas 1968 at home.

In March 1969, the Diamondbacks were reassigned to Carrier Air Wing SEVEN and the USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-62), returning to the Mediterranean twice within the next year and a half. During the latter cruise, the squadron received the Meritorious Unit Citation for operations in the Jordanian Crisis of September 1970.

The 1971-1972 cruise saw VF-102 in an exercise above the Arctic Circle, operating with and from the HMS ARK ROYAL. After a long turnaround period, the Diamondbacks were again in the Eastern Mediterranean, conducting carrier operations during the October 1973 Yom Kippur War.

ENCLOSURE {1}

In June 1974, for the second consecutive year, VF-102 was selected as the Number One Squadron in Carrier Air Wing SEVEN. A shore based period ended 19 July 1974 and the Diamondbacks deployed on their fifteenth Mediterranean Cruise.

The Diamondbacks sixteenth cruise began 15 October 1975 and included operations in the North Atlantic with the French Navy, crossdeck OPS aboard the HMS ARK ROYAL, and ground support operations with the Italian Armed Forces.

March 31, 1977, marked the beginning of cruise number seventeen for the Diamondbacks. VF-102 participated in numerous NATO exercises the Mediterranean, and returned from cruise in late October 1977.

The year 1978 commenced with several Caribbean deployments aboard the newly commissioned Nuclear Carrier USS EISENHOWER (CV-65). Late that year, the squadron transitioned from Carrier Air Wing SEVEN to Carrier Air Wing SIX attached to USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-62). VF-102 finished the year with a highly effective weapons deployment to Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico and a short deployment offshore the eastern United States. This culminated in a two day Public Relations visit to Boston harbor, where the INDEPENDENCE (CV-62) and VF-102 were warmly received by a record number of visitors.

In 1979 VF-102 began another Mediterranean cruise leaving in June and returning prior to Christmas. During that deployment, the Indy had the opportunity for combined OPS with the French carrier Clemanceau.

In November 1980, VF-102 began its last cruise with the F4J Phantom, deploying to the Indian Ocean aboard the USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-62). The DIAMONDBACKS were operating on Gonzo Station when the Iranian Crisis was diffused with the release of all American hostages from Tehran. After transiting the Suez Canal enroute to Norfolk, the INDEPENDENCE (CV-62) was delayed in the Eastern Mediterranean due to the Syrian-Israli missile crisis in Lebanon. The DIAMONDBACKS finally returned to Oceana on 10 JUNE 1981 and immediately commenced transitioning to the F-14 TOMCAT.