

1981



**FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE HUNDRED TWO
FLEET POST OFFICE
NEW YORK 09501**

VF-102:00:rp
5700
08 October 1982

From: Commanding Officer, Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWO
To: Chief of Naval Operations, Naval Aviation History Office (OP-05D2)
Subj: Submission of 1981 Command History Report; forwarding of
Ref: (a) Chief of Naval Operations, Naval Aviation History Office ltr OP-05D2
dtd 5 Aug 82
Encl: (1) VF-102 Command History

1. In response to reference (a), enclosure (1) is forwarded.


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By direction



DIAMONDBACKS

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 Orbital," the famous Nuclear Task Force circumnavigation of the globe. As a result of their outstanding sustained performance during the cruise, the DIAMONDBACKS won the 1964 commandant's award.

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.

In June 1974, for the second consecutive year, VF-102 was ranked as the Number One Squadron in Air Wing Seven. A shore based period ended 19 July when 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, crossdeck OPS aboard the HMS ARK ROYAL and ground support operations with the Italians.

March 31, 1977, marked the beginning of cruise number seventeen for the Diamondbacks. Numerous NATO exercises were participated in with the Fighting Diamondbacks returning from cruise in late October.

The year 1978 began with several Caribbean Deployments aboard the newly commissioned Nuclear Carrier USS EISENHOWER. 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 and VF-102 were warmly received by record numbers of visitors.

In 1979 VF-102 began another Mediterranean cruise leaving in June and returning before Christmas. During that cruise 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 defused 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.

CDR Ron D. Schneider became the 24th skipper of VF-102 in July of 1981 leading the Squadron through the demanding transition stage. The first Tomcat was delivered in January of 1982. Regular deliveries followed as the Diamondbacks quickly painted their characteristic diamond design on the twin tailed swing wing fighter.

In a very short turn around especially for a transitioning squadron, the Diamondbacks took their Tomcats to sea in May aboard the USS AMERICA as part of Airwing One. Workups continued throughout the summer culminating in participation in the NATO exercise Northern Wedding in September. The Diamondbacks showed their prowess in numerous real word intercepts against Soviet Bears Badger and Bison aircraft while maintaining an air defense posture against exercise aircraft. During this period the Diamondbacks shattered the record for 20mm rounds fired in a single year by an F-14 squadron in only six months. The new record at year's end stood at 36,906 rounds besting VF-14's record of 24,600 rounds.

The Diamondbacks enjoyed a relaxing port call in Edinburgh, Scotland followed by a short stay in Portsmouth, England. This was cut short by a real world need for AMERICA in the Mediterranean due to unrest in Lebanon. The AMERICA sailed at once proceeding into the Med where she sails at the time of this writing.