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NAVAL AIR FORCE
FIGHTER SQUADRON ELEVEN

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From: Commanding Officer, Fighter Squadron ELEVEN
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05A56)

Subj: Command History Report; submission

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*Rec'd
5/23*

- Encl: (1) Chronology of events
- (2) Narrative history
- (3) Documentary annexes

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (3) are submitted.

[Handwritten Signature]
D. D. DAVISON

Command History Report

1. Chronology of events

1 JAN 68 to 10 JAN 68: Based ashore at NAS Oceana, conducting normal training operations.

11 JAN 68 to 26 JAN 68: Squadron deployed to NAAS FALLON, Nevada for conventional weapons training.

27 JAN 68 to 12 FEB 68: Returning to NAS Oceana, the squadron continued a normal training cycle and began "bouncing" at Fentress Field in preparation for carrier qualifications.

13 FEB 68 to 16 FEB 68: Squadron embarked in USS INDEPENDENCE (CVA-62) for carrier qualifications.

17 FEB 68 to 18 MAR 68: Deployed to NAS Key West, the squadron stood continuous ready alert on "hot pad" duty.

19 MAR 68 to 22 APR 68: Returning once again to Oceana, the squadron resumed its arduous training cycle, and began a heavy "bounce" schedule in preparation for a shakedown cruise.

22 APR 68 to 20 MAY 68: On board USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59), the squadron participated in exercises under the supervision of the Fleet Training Group.

20 MAY 68 to 11 JUN 68: After completing a successful cruise to GITMO, the Red Rippers returned to Oceana for routine training.

11 JUN 68 to 26 JUN 68: Back aboard USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59), the Red Rippers, along with Air Wing SEVENTEEN, cruised south of Jacksonville, Fla. Unable to complete the scheduled Operational Readiness Inspection due to turbine malfunctions aboard the ship, the cruise was shortened 10 days.

26 JUN 68 to 19 JUL 68: Once again returning to Oceana, the Red Rippers began final preparations for the cruise to the Mediterranean Sea with the U. S. Sixth Fleet. Again "bouncing" at Fentress Field was heavily scheduled.

19 JUL 68 to 26 JUL 68: Boarded USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59) the 19th and departed CONUS the 22nd, arriving in the MED on the 26th.

26 JUL 68 to 9 AUG 68: Operations in Tyrrhenian Sea.

9 AUG 68 to 16 AUG 68: Aboard USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59) the squadron visited Marseilles, France where the change of command occurred. CDR D. D. DAVISON relieved CDR J. S. CLARE.

Enclosure (1)

16 AUG 68 to 26 AUG 68: Operations in the Western MED.

27 AUG 68 to 3 SEP 68: Aboard USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59), the squadron visited Athens, Greece.

3 SEP 68 to 14 SEP 68: Operations in the Aegean and Ionian Seas.

15 SEP 68 to 22 SEP 68: Aboard USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59), the squadron visited Valetta, Malta.

22 SEP 68 to 28 SEP 68: The squadron participated in a large anti-air warfare exercise.

1 OCT 68 to 8 OCT 68: During an anchorage at Argostoli, Greece the squadron participated in a Fleet Commanders Conference.

9 OCT 68 to 15 OCT 68: Aboard USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59), the Red Rippers visited Tarranto, Italy.

16 OCT 68 to 4 NOV 68: Continuing operations aboard FORRESTAL with the Sixth Fleet, the squadron continued routine peacetime operations. During the month of October the aircrews set a squadron record of flight hours (536.4) in the McDonnell-Douglas F4B Phantom II.

5 NOV 68 to 10 NOV 68: The squadron visited Thessaloniki, Greece.

11 NOV 68 to 24 NOV 68: Continued normal operations aboard CVA-59 as USS FORRESTAL steamed toward the Western MED.

25 NOV 68 to 1 DEC 68: The squadron visited Palma de Majorica.

2 DEC 68 to 6 DEC 68: Peacetime operations in the Tyrrhenian Sea.

7 DEC 68 to 16 DEC 68: The squadron visited Genoa, Italy and sent a detachment of three aircrews and two aircraft to Wheelus Air Force Base in Libya.

16 DEC 68 to 22 DEC 68: Operations were carried on jointly with the French Navy.

23 DEC 68 to 3 JAN 69: The USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59) pulled into Golfe Juan, France for a Christmas visit.

* Incorrect

Command History Report

2. Basic Narrative

Commissioned 1 February 1927, the Red Rippers have had several designations, but remain the oldest continually active fighter squadron in the Navy. * The insignia is composed of a boar's head from the Gordon Gin label with a string of bologna beneath it. A blue shield emblazoned with a red lightning bolt bracketed by two red balls comprises the remainder of the insignia. The insignia is probably best explained by the following excerpt written many years ago by one of the original members.

"The boar's head is taken directly from the one that graces the label of the Gordon's Gin bottle. The scroll effect under the head is a string of link sausage, a good line of bologna, which all members were to be adept at "shooting". The balls on the shield might be called balls of fire; actually, they were supposed to typify good, strong masculinity. The bolt of lightning was the bar sinister of bastardy. The whole theme was worked into a sort of toast or creed with which the squadron's members were to begin and end all good drinking bouts. I can't remember all of the toast, but it was something to the effect that, "Here's to us, the RED RIPPERS — a goddamn bunch of gin drinking, bologna slinging, two balled, he-man bastards!"."

Continuing training began the previous year, the squadron started the new year (1968) at NAS Oceana, Virginia. On the 11th of January the group deployed to NAAS Fallon, Nevada for practical training in conventional weapons delivery. During the two-week period, the Red Rippers flew an impressive 305 hops for a total of 342.9 hours of

Enclosure (2)

flight. Following a very successful time on the Nevada bombing range, the squadron returned to home-base at NAS Oceana, Virginia. Back at Oceana in the end of January, routine training was resumed; and in the beginning of February emphasis was placed on Field Carrier Landing Practice at Fentress Field. During this period a total of 169 hops (72 night hops) was amassed yielding 81.2 total hours of flight (56.4 hours at night). In the middle of the month, the squadron spent 3 days aboard USS INDEPENDENCE (CVA-62) for carrier qualifications completing 58 day arrested landings and 26 night arrested landings. Immediately after the successful carrier qualifications, VF-11 deployed to NAS Key West, Fla., standing continuous ready alert on "hot pad" duty; during which time they flew 181 hops totalling 271 hours of flight. After one month of duty in Key West, the squadron returned to Oceana the 19th of March. Routine training was undertaken again and flight time up to 22 April totalled 343.5 hours. Of this total, 82.1 hours were night time and were due largely to heavy bounce periods at night on Fentress Field, preparing for a cruise to GITMO aboard USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59). Leaving home again on 22 April, VF-11, along with CVW-17 (Carrier Air Wing SEVENTEEN), participated in exercises controlled by the Fleet Training Group. At the conclusion of a successful cruise for refresher training, the squadron returned to Oceana for final preparations prior to the short cruise, on the FORRESTAL for the Operational Readiness Inspection. On the 11th of June we find the Red Rippers regrouping with Air Wing SEVENTEEN aboard FORRESTAL for a deployment south of Jacksonville, Florida. Unable to complete the scheduled Operational Readiness Inspection due to

turbine malfunctions aboard the ship, the cruise was shortened ten days. In the two week period from 11 June to 26 June, the Red Rippers totalled 282.1 hours (57.4 at night), and thus, from the point of crew proficiency in operations around the ship, the cruise was very successful.

Arriving back, once again, at their Oceana home, the Red Rippers maintained a rigorous training schedule consisting primarily of "bounce" periods at Fentress to retain the high degree of proficiency gained on the short cruise off Jacksonville. In the three week period from 26 June to 19 July 1968, flight time totalled 44 day hops and 91 night hops resulting in 164.1 total hours of which an impressive 109.1 were night hours. Through the remainder of the month, the squadron was attached to USS FORRESTAL. Boarding with all hands and equipment on 19 July, the squadron was prepared to depart the Continental United States for a scheduled nine-month cruise in the Mediterranean with the U. S. Sixth Fleet. The ship left Pier 12 in Norfolk, Virginia on 22 July and the cruise was officially underway. After an uneventful Atlantic crossing, the ship and its air wing arrived in the Mediterranean Sea on 26 July and steamed towards the Tyrrhenian Sea to conduct air operations.

The month of August found the squadron in ports in both the Eastern and Western Mediterranean. Beginning in Marseilles, France as the first port visit, the Red Rippers took advantage of the lull in activities with a change of command. On 9 August 1968, Commander James S. CLARE was relieved of command of Fighter Squadron ELEVEN, The World Famous Red Rippers, by Commander David D. DAVISON in a

ceremony aboard USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59).

Back to sea on the 16th of August, flight operations continued until the last week of the month, when the fantastic port of Athens was visited. Settling down to rest after their first full month on the cruise, the Red Rippers enjoyed the sights of ancient Athens and also found time to take advantage of the last days of summer relaxing on the beaches of modern Athens. Leaving Athens on the 3rd of September, flight operations were conducted in the Aegean and Ionian Seas. Valetta, Malta was the next port visited and was thoroughly enjoyed by all hands.

October saw the Red Rippers continue routine peacetime operations in the Eastern Mediterranean. During these operations, the Rippers set a squadron record of flight hours (536.4), which was the highest they had obtained in the three years since transitioning to the McDonnell-Douglas F4B Phantom II. With only one port visit to Tarranto, Italy and alot of flying, the month of October turned into November and found the Rippers in the Ionian Sea preparing to visit Thessaloniki, Greece the 5th of November. After a five day stay, they transited to the Western Mediterranean and flew for two weeks before visiting the Spanish port of Palma de Majorica. With the weather in the 60's and 70's, the visit to Palma was welcomed and enjoyed by all. With the dawn of the first day of December, the Rippers left Palma and began the last month of the year in the Tyrrhenian Sea for a week of air ops. Pulling into Genoa, Italy on 7 December, the squadron detached two aircraft and three crews to Wheelus Air Force Base in Libya for 10 days of air to air missile exercises. Following

an extremely successful missile flying period and an equally successful and relaxing port period, the World Famous Red Rippers regrouped for an aerial exercise with the French Air Force titled "Exercise Lafayette". For four days, from the 16th to the 22nd, the Red Rippers and the air wing simulated opposition forces against the French engaging in simulated aerial combat, etc. to help both countries gain better insights into their respective aerial capabilities, both offensive and defensive. After this short period of pretended hostilities, the men of Fighter Squadron ELEVEN visited Golfe Juan, France on the French Riviera. Settling down for Christmas and New Years' Eve in France, the Red Rippers ended 1968 on French soil looking forward to visiting many new places and more flying in the coming year.

Command History Report

3. Documentary Annexes - Part I, Flight Information

1 JAN 68 - 10 JAN 68	40 hops (35 day, 5 night) 60 hrs. total (53.7 day, 6.3 night)
11 JAN 68 - 26 JAN 68	305 hops (253 day, 52 night) 342.9 hrs. total (285.3 day, 57.6 night)
27 JAN 68 - 12 FEB 68	97 hops (25 day, 72 night) 81.2 hrs. total (24.8 day, 56.4 night)
13 FEB 68 - 16 FEB 68	39 hops (25 day, 14 night) 34 hrs. total (26.5 day, 7.5 night) 84 arrested lds. (58 day, 26 night)
17 FEB 68 - 18 MAR 68	181 hops (144 day, 37 night) 271 hrs. total (231.9 day, 39.1 night)
19 MAR 68 - 22 APR 68	301 hops (222 day, 79 night) 343.5 hrs. total (261.4 day, 82.1 night)
23 APR 68 - 20 MAY 68	157 hops (124 day, 33 night) 221.3 hrs. total (179.2 day, 52.1 night)
21 MAY 68 - 11 JUN 68	72 hops (36 day, 36 night) 80 hrs. total (47 day, 33 night)
12 JUN 68 - 26 JUN 68	170 hops (136 day, 34 night) 282.1 hrs. total (224.7 day, 57.4 night)
27 JUN 68 - 19 JUL 68	135 hops (44 day, 91 night) 164.1 hrs. total (55 day, 109.1 night)
20 JUL 68 - 31 JUL 68	85 hops (158 day, 33 night) 110.5 hrs. total (99.7 day, 10.8 night)
AUGUST 1968	191 hops (158 day, 33 night) 304.9 hrs. total (252.5 day, 52.5 night)
SEPTEMBER 1968	275 hops (206 day, 69 night) 426.9 hrs. total (305.9 day, 119.9 night)
OCTOBER 1968	333 hops (268 day, 65 night) 536.4 hrs. total (419.3 day, 117.1 night)
NOVEMBER 1968	240 hops (171 day, 69 night) 390.4 hrs. total (279.8 day, 110.6 night)

Enclosure (3)

DECEMBER 1968

133 hops (111 day, 22 night)
248.6 hrs. total (212.9 day, 35.7 night)

Part II, Deployment Information

1 JAN 68 to 10 JAN 68	NAS Oceana, Virginia
11 JAN 68 to 26 JAN 68	NAAS Fallon, Nevada
27 JAN 68 to 12 FEB 68	NAS Oceana, Virginia
13 FEB 68 to 16 FEB 68	USS INDEPENDENCE (CVA-62)
17 FEB 68 to 18 MAR 68	NAS Key West, Florida
19 MAR 68 to 22 APR 68	NAS Oceana, Virginia
23 APR 68 to 20 MAY 68	USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59) "GITMO"
21 MAY 68 to 11 JUN 68	NAS Oceana, Virginia
12 JUN 68 to 26 JUN 68	USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59) "JACKSONVILLE"
27 JUN 68 to 19 JUL 68	NAS Oceana, Virginia
20 JUL 68 to 31 DEC 68	USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59) "MED"

Part III, Cruise Schedule Information

22 JUL 68	Left Norfolk for MED
26 JUL 68	Arrived MED
30 JUL 68 to 5 AUG 68	Tyrrehnian Sea Ops
6-8 AUG 68	Porto Conte Anchorage
9-16 AUG 68	Marseille, France
17-23 AUG 68	Western Med. Ops
24-26 AUG 68	Anchorage Soudha Bay, Crete
27 AUG 68 to 3 SEP 68	Athens, Greece
3-14 SEP 68	Aegean/Ionian Sea Ops
15-16 SEP 68	Anchorage St. Paul's Bay, Malta
17-24 SEP 68	Valetta, Malta

22-28 SEP 68	AAW Exercise
1-2 OCT 68	Fleet CDRS Conference, Argostoli Bay, Greece
6-8 OCT 68	Anchorage Argostoli Bay, Greece
9-15 OCT 68	Tarranto, Italy
16 OCT 68 to 4 NOV 68	Ionian Sea Ops
5-10 NOV 68	Thessaloniki, Greece
11-24 NOV 68	Western Med Ops
25 NOV 68 to 1 DEC 68	Palma de Majorica
2-6 DEC 68	Tyrreahnian Sea Ops
7-16 DEC 68	Genoa, Italy (also DET at Wheelus Air Force Base, Libya)
17-22 DEC 68	Exercise "Lafayette" (with French)
23-31 DEC 68	Golfe Juan, France