



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

FIGHTER SQUADRON ELEVEN

UNIT 60554

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From: Commanding Officer, Fighter Squadron ELEVEN
To: Director, Naval Historical Center (Attn: Aviation History Branch)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1997

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology of Outstanding Events
(3) Narrative of Outstanding Events
(4) Biography of CDR Mark A. Vance
(5) Photo of CDR Mark A. Vance

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (5) are hereby submitted.


M. A. VANCE

Copy to:
COMCARGRU SIX
COMFITWINGLANT
COMCARAIRWING SEVEN

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

COMMANDING OFFICER

(01 JAN 97 to 31 JUL 97)
CDR Ronald E. Weisbrook

(31 JUL 97 to Present)
CDR Mark A. Vance

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

(01 JAN 97 to 31 JUL 97)
CDR Mark A. Vance

(31 JUL 97 to Present)
CDR Douglas L. Whitener

LOCATION OF COMMAND

Naval Air Station Oceana
Virginia Beach, Virginia

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL ASHORE

Commander, Carrier Air Wing SEVEN
Commander, Fighter Wing, U.S. Atlantic Fleet
Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet

OPERATIONAL CONTROL AFLOAT

Commander, Carrier Air Wing SEVEN
Commander, Carrier Group SIX

AIRCRAFT

F-14B Tomcat
Tail Code "AG"

CARRIER ASSIGNMENTS

USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN 74)
Homeported at Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia

MISSION

Fleet Air Superiority and Power Projection Missions,
including: Combat Air Patrol, Air Intercept, Maritime Air
Superiority, Strike, Strike Escort, Forward Air Control
(Airborne), Close Air Support and Combat Search and Rescue.

CHRONOLOGY OF OUTSTANDING EVENTS

JANUARY

01-05 Holiday Leave Period

FEBRUARY

04-07 Material Condition Inspection (Programs)
10 Commence F-14B Transition Training at Fleet
Replacement Squadron, VF-101
18-28 Commence Integrated Weapons System Review (IWSR)

MARCH

01-21 IWSR Complete
01-31 F-14B Transition Training continues
27-28 NATOPS Unit Evaluation

APRIL

01-30 Air-to-Ground Unit-level Training
01-30 F-14B Transition Training continues
23 AIM-54 Missile Exercise (MISSILEX)
28-30 Field Carrier Landing Practice (FCLP)

MAY

01-13 FCLP/Air-to-Air Unit-level Training/Air-to-Ground
Unit-level Training
14-17 Carrier Qualifications, USS JOHN C STENNIS
(CVN 74)
18-30 Air-to-Air Unit-level Training

JUNE

02-11 Maintenance Practice Assist Visit by COMNAVAIRLANT
02-20 Strike Fighter Unit-level Training
19 Strike Fighter Advanced Readiness Program (SFARP)
begins
25-26 AIM-54/AIM-9 MISSILEX

JULY

01-11 SFARP (Air-to-Air)
14-26 SFARP (Air-to-Ground)
25-28 F-14 Combined Arms Coordination Course
28-30 Forward Air Control (Airborne) (FAC(A))
Training/FCLP
31 Change of Command

AUGUST

03-08 FAC(A) Training/FCLP
11-13 Carrier Qualifications, USS JOHN C STENNIS
(CVN 74)
12-28 TSTA I/II

SEPTEMBER

02-05 FAC(A) Training
05-07 Ripper Reunion
07-14 FAC(A) Detachment, NAS Fallon, NV
15-30 CVW-7 Fallon Detachment, NAS Fallon, NV

OCTOBER

01-04 CVW-7 Fallon Detachment, NAS Fallon, NV
06-16 FCLP
16-24 TSTA III
25 COMPTUEX Commences
29-30 AIM-54/AIM-7/AIM-9 MISSILEX onboard USS JOHN C
STENNIS (CVN-74)

NOVEMBER

01-24 COMPTUEX onboard USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN 74)
03 First Laser-Guided Bomb dropped by VF-11
(successful drop of a GBU-16)
27 Thanksgiving Holiday

DECEMBER

01-02 Fighter Derby Competition
03-05 Fleet Air Superiority Training
11 Command Christmas Party
15-19 Material Control Inspection
15-19 ADMAT Inspection
20-31 Holiday Leave Period

NARRATIVE OF OUTSTANDING EVENTS

In 1997, Fighter Squadron ELEVEN completed a successful Homeport Change from NAS Miramar, CA to NAS Oceana, VA. In January, the Rippers were awarded the 1996 COMNAVAIRPAC Battle "E" and Joseph C. Clifton Awards, recognizing VF-11 as the best F-14 squadron in the Navy. The Homeport Change officially concluded on 8 January and the Red Rippers spent the remainder of the month transferring F-14D aircraft and accepting the F-14B and F-14B (Upgrade).

In February, VF-11 continued to accept aircraft while aggressively pursuing formal ground training such as Air-to-Air Weapons Training Officer and Electronic Warfare Officer courses. On 10 February, the squadron began the F-14B transition syllabus at VF-101, the F-14 Fleet Replacement Squadron (FRS).

During the month of March, the squadron continued the F-14B transition. Aircrew participated in Familiarization, Weapons and Strike training at VF-101. Fighter Squadron ELEVEN's maintenance personnel provided aircraft on a daily basis to support the syllabus, reflecting strongly on the Maintenance Department's ability to quickly adapt to the F-14B.

The Fighting Red Rippers continued to charge through FRS training in April. Strike and Tactics training was emphasized while the aircrew began Field Carrier Landing Practice (FCLP) to prepare for the first F-14B carrier operations in Ripper history. The Rippers capped this busy month with a successful AIM-54 missile shoot.

May opened with continued FCLP while simultaneously conducting unit-level Air-to-Air and Air-to-Ground training. VF-11 aircrew also successfully Carrier Qualified onboard their new home, the USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN 74).

With successful completion of the F-14B syllabus, the Rippers launched into predeployment training, beginning with the Strike Fighter Advanced Readiness Program (SFARP) in June. Concurrent with the initial two-week Ground School, the squadron successfully fired AIM-54 and AIM-9 missiles from six Ripper aircraft.

In July, the squadron completed the SFARP flight syllabus, which covered the entire spectrum of F-14 Air Strike Warfare missions. On 31 July, CDR Mark A. Vance relieved CDR Ronald E. Weisbrook as Commanding Officer.

The squadron returned to sea onboard USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN 74) in August, marking VF-11's first training with Carrier Air Wing SEVEN (CVW-7). The squadron also began Forward Air Controller (Airborne) (FAC(A)) training for eight aircrew.

In September, the Rippers welcomed squadron alumni to the 70th Anniversary Ripper Reunion. The reunion consisted of social and sporting events and culminated with a banquet at which the squadron presented a specially commissioned painting of past and present Ripper aircraft to the Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Florida. The Rippers then launched to NAS Fallon for a week of FAC(A) training prior to the CVW-7 Fallon Detachment.

While at NAS Fallon, VF-11 received advanced training in Air Intercept, Strike, Strike Escort, Close Air Support and Combat Search and Rescue missions.

In October, the Rippers returned home to NAS Oceana to prepare for continued turnaround training onboard USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN 74), deploying for TSTA III and COMPTUEX. During this six week at-sea period, the Rippers successfully expended AIM-54, AIM-7 and AIM-9 missiles. The Skipper guided the squadron's first Laser Guided Bomb to a direct hit.

The Red Rippers began December with the Fighter Derby Competition and Fleet Air Superiority Training. The Command Christmas Party was held on 11 December.

Fighter Squadron ELEVEN ended 1997 with a well-deserved holiday leave period, concluding a fast-paced and challenging year.