



**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 1998

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 Douglas L. Whitener  
(5) Photo of CDR Douglas L. Whitener

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "D. L. Whitener".

D. L. WHITENER

Copy to:  
COMCRUDESGRU EIGHT  
COMFITWINGLANT (N002)  
COMCARAIRWING SEVEN

## COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

### COMMANDING OFFICER

(01 JAN 98 to 04 DEC 98)  
CDR Mark A. Vance

(04 DEC 98 to Present)  
CDR Douglas L. Whitener

### EXECUTIVE OFFICER

(01 JAN 98 to 04 DEC 98)  
CDR Douglas L. Whitener

(04 DEC 98 to Present)  
CDR Milton D. Abner

### 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, Cruiser-Destroyer Group EIGHT

### AIRCRAFT

F-14B Tomcat  
Tail Code "AG"

### CARRIER ASSIGNMENTS

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

### MISSION

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

## CHRONOLOGY OF OUTSTANDING EVENTS

### JANUARY

01-05 Holiday Leave Period  
12-26 JTFEX on board USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN 74)  
26-31 POM Leave Period

### FEBRUARY

01-10 POM Leave Period  
18-22 Pre-deployment CQ on board USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN 74)  
26 Rippers deploy on board USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN 74)

### MARCH

13-31 Deployed to Arabian Gulf  
Jebel Ali Port Call

### APRIL

1- 30 Deployed to Arabian Gulf  
Jebel Ali Port Call

### MAY

1-31 Deployed to Arabian Gulf  
24-31 Beacon Flash Detachment to Oman  
Jebel Ali and Bahrain Port Call

### JUNE

1-30 Deployed to Arabian Gulf

### JULY

22 Rippers depart Arabian Gulf  
Bahrain and Perth, Australia Port Call

### AUGUST

26 Return home from deployment  
Hobart, Australia and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii Port Call  
27-31 POM Leave

### SEPTEMBER

01-28 POM Leave  
14-18 Post-cruise MCI

### OCTOBER

03-08 Exercise FUERTES DEFENSAS Phase II  
12-16 Bomb Derby  
14-16 USS HARRY S TRUMAN (CVN 75) "Fleet Week" Detachment to  
Ft. Lauderdale  
23-31 Key West Guns Detachment (ACM/Guns)

### NOVEMBER

01-06 Key West Detachment (ACM/Guns)  
11-19 Operation FUERTES DEFENSAS Phase III  
25-29 Thanksgiving Holiday Leave

DECEMBER

04 Change of Command  
11 Command Christmas Party  
12-31 Holiday Leave Period

## NARRATIVE OF OUTSTANDING EVENTS

January of 1998 found the Red Rippers completing pre-deployment work-ups in preparation for an "Around the World" cruise.

VF-11 completed JTFEX, the last phase of pre-deployment work-ups, on board USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN 74). This exercise is conducted to allow the entire battle group a chance to work together one last time prior to deployment. The exercise took place off the coast of Puerto Rico, allowing the Rippers to hone their bombing skills on the Vieques Target Range. Upon return from this exercise, the squadron began the POM leave periods.

After completing POM leave in mid-February, the Rippers were at sea for several days to complete pre-cruise Carrier Qualifications (CQ) to ensure every pilot would be qualified upon completion of the Atlantic transit to the Arabian Gulf. The jets remained aboard USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN 74) after CQ and the boat was ready to leave for deployment on 26 February 1998.

The first half of March found VF-11 in transit to the Arabian Gulf, making the trip in a record 13 days. Flight ops were conducted while transiting the Mediterranean Sea. The Rippers completed their turnover with VF-102 and took the torch for Operation SOUTHERN WATCH. The remainder of March was spent getting familiar with the operating area, the beginning of over five months in the Arabian Gulf for VF-11. At the end of March, the Rippers enjoyed a short port call in Jebel Ali.

VF-11 advanced 33 percent of their enlisted personnel during the March exam cycle. This mark was unmatched in the battle group.

April, May and June found the flight deck getting hotter and hotter with each passing day and VF-11 planning and flying many practice strikes as well as enforcing the no fly zone over southern Iraq in support of Operation SOUTHERN WATCH. Not only was a great deal of planning accomplished, but a great deal of training as well. Many of the younger aircrew progressed steadily through the SFWT program improving squadron readiness and experience.

In May, eight aircrew and a small group of maintainers went on a week-long ACM detachment to Oman. This outstanding training opportunity allowed the Rippers to enhance their tactical skills while employing the F-14B Tomcat against Jaguars and BAE Hawks flown by the Omani Royal Air Force. While this detachment was taking place, the rest of the squadron had liberty call in Bahrain.

In July, after almost seven straight weeks at sea, the USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN 74) revisited Bahrain. VF-11 spent the remaining two weeks in the Arabian Gulf flying sorties in support of United Nations sanctions and Operation SOUTHERN WATCH before starting the journey east to San Diego, CA.

Finally, the day came everyone was waiting for and on 22 July 1998, USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN 74) left the Arabian Gulf and began steaming for Australia. VF-11 went from summer to winter in about a week, but no one was complaining about a stop in Perth and Hobart.

After Australia, the boat stopped in Hawaii for a few days of liberty and to pick up friends and family for Tiger Cruise. A couple of days after Hawaii in late August, all the Ripper jets launched off the deck of the USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN 74) for the last time and began heading east for the trip home to NAS Oceana, VA.

September found VF-11 enjoying post-deployment leave. Several jets were transferred to other squadrons preparing for deployment and the rest were prepared for the Material Condition Inspection.

In October, VF-11 competed in the annual Fighter Wing Bomb Derby. This competition is for points towards the Battle "E" as well as a trophy to be displayed in the squadron spaces. Along with the Bomb Derby, the Rippers embarked a small detachment on board USS HARRY S TRUMAN (CVN 75) in support of Ft. Lauderdale's "Fleet Week" celebration. The end of October found VF-11 on a two-week Guns detachment to Key West that went into early November. The main purpose of the detachment was to practice for and compete in the annual High Noon Gunnery Competition, in which the Rippers demonstrated their superior marksmanship.

On December 4<sup>th</sup>, VF-11 had a Change of Command where CDR Doug "Conan" Whitener relieved CDR Mark "Cyrus" Vance as the Commanding Officer of the squadron. The Rippers welcomed CDR Milton D. Abner as the new Executive Officer.

VF-11 ended 1998 with a squadron Christmas party and a holiday leave period after a very hardworking and successful year in Red Ripper history.