

1997

5750
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From: Commanding Officer, Fighter Squadron TWO
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-0502)

Subj: SUBMISSION OF FITRON TWO 1997 COMMAND HISTORY REPORT

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) Fighter Squadron TWO Command Data
(2) Commanding Officer's Biography
(3) Executive Officer's Biography
(4) 1997 Chronology
(5) 1997 Narrative
(6) Annual Aviation Awards Data for 1997
(7) "Personal-for" winning AIRPAC Battle "E" and Boola-Boola
(8) Photograph of Squadron Aircraft (Desert Shot)
(9) Photograph of Squadron Aircraft (1997 Cruise Fly-in)

1. enclosures (1) through (9) are submitted as directed by reference (a)

S. D. Stewart
S.D. STEWART

Distribution:
Director of Naval history (OP-098H)
Naval Air Station Oceana

**FIGHTER SQUADRON TWO
1997 CHRONOLOGY**

13 - 26 JAN	Fleet Exercise aboard USS Constellation (CV-64)
27 JAN - 10 FEB	Strike Fighter Air Readiness Program (SFARP) detachment NAS Miramar, San Diego, California
11 - 23 FEB	Joint Fleet Exercise (JTFEX) aboard USS Constellation
27 MAR	Leave NAS Oceana for cruise
01 APR	USS Constellation departs NAS North Island, San Diego, California
02 APR	CVW-2 fly-on complete
16 APR	USS Constellation crosses the equator and the international date line (Golden Shellbacks)
21 - 23 APR	Exercise Foster Hope, South Pacific Ocean
24 - 28 APR	Port visit to Sydney, Australia
03 - 07 MAY	Port visit to Perth/Fremantle, Australia
11 MAY	Crossing the line ceremony
19 MAY	Straits of Hormuz transit
22 MAY	First Operation Southern Watch sortie
20 - 24 JUN	Port Visit to Jebel Ali, UAE
13 - 15 JUL	Exercise Red Reef, Arabian Gulf
19 - 22 JUL	Port Visit to Jebel Ali, UAE
26 - 30 JUL	Exercise Arabian Skies, Arabian Gulf
30 JUL	Last Operation Southern Watch sortie
01 - 03 AUG	Port Visit to Jebel Ali, UAE
08 - 13 AUG	Exercise Inspired Alert, Pakistan
23 - 27 AUG	Port visit to Singapore
31 AUG - 5 SEP	Port visit to Hong Kong, China
09 - 10 SEP	Port visit to Sasebo, Japan
18 SEP	USS Constellation crosses the international date line
25 - 27 SEP	Port visit to Everett, Washington
27 SEP - 01 OCT	Tiger Cruise
29 SEP	Fly-off
01 OCT	USS Constellation arrives at NAS North Island, San Diego, California
10 - 20 NOV	High Noon air gunnery detachment, NAS Key West, Florida

**FIGHTER SQUADRON TWO
COMMAND DATA**

Commanding Officer: James E. McAloon, Commander, U. S. Navy

Executive Officer: Scott D. Stewart, Commander, U.S. Navy

Senior Administrative Command: Commander Fighter Wing, U.S. Atlantic Fleet

Senior Operational Command: Commander Carrier Airwing TWO

I. Squadron mission:

Provide combat ready Strike-Fighter aircrew and aircraft to, when called upon, go into harm's way.

II. Aircraft: Grumman F-14D Bureau numbers:

100	163895	107	163903
101	159630	110	163989
102	164602	111	163894
103	164350	112	159595
104	164351	114	161166
105	164603	115	159600
106	163897	116	164349

III. Duty Station:

When Ashore:

Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia Beach, Virginia

When deployed:

USS CONSTELLATION (CV-64)

FIGHTER SQUADRON TWO 1997 NARRATIVE

1997 was an extremely successful year for the BOUNTY HUNTERS. It marked the addition of several new systems and upgrades to the Super Tomcat - making it the Navy's most formidable Strike-Fighter. After immense training with the new technology, the squadron made an extremely successful deployment to the Persian Gulf in support of Operation Southern Watch.

Early in the 1997 Fiscal year, VF-2's aircraft received several modifications that included hardware and software updates. The first was the addition of the new tape load "D02" in the winter of 1996. Later that the year and into 1997, the Low Altitude Navigation and Targeting Infrared at Night (LANTIRN) pod, BOL chaff rails, Night Vision Goggle (NVG) cockpits, Digital Tactical Air Reconnaissance Pod System (TARPSDI), ALR-67 Radar Warning Receiver (RWR) update, and Airborne Self-Protection Jammer (ASPJ) were all added.

The tape load, "D02", brought several changes to the software of the Tomcat. Most important was the addition of the air-to-ground capability in the Stores Management System (SMS) which made the Tomcat capable of accurately dropping munitions of several variants. Another change was the incorporation of Medium Pulse Repetition Frequency (MPRF) in the APG-71 radar.

The addition of the LANTIRN pod added the mission of precision strike to the Tomcat's now long list of capabilities. A Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) antenna was also added to the turtleback to accommodate the GPS system in the pod. A pigtail off this antenna is currently reserved for the future installment of GPS in the aircraft which will be included in tape load "D03". Ten of VF-2's fourteen aircraft had the LANTIRN hardwiring installed prior to deployment. The squadron received its first pod for training in the fall of 1996, and an additional five pods for deployment in April 1997.

The BOL chaff rails were an add on feature used on stations 1A and 8A. The wiring was installed in the fall of 1996, connecting the new rails to the ALE-39 expendables controller. Carrying the new rails more than doubled the expendables available, increasing the survivability of the new Strike-Fighter.

NVG cockpits were installed by updating the internal lighting scheme to be compatible with the night vision goggles. A total of six aircraft were modified and all of the aircrew's helmets had the NVG mounting brackets attached. Throughout the year, one RIO and two pilot instructors qualified as many aircrew as possible.

The existing TARPS pods were upgraded with a digital interface. This brought the capability to take digital reconnaissance imagery of targets and transmit the pictures via secure link to the aircraft carrier. The final installation and first flights were delayed and eventually occurred over Iraq - making the first flights actual combat sorties in support of Operation Southern Watch.

The ALR-67 RWR was updated with new wiring and threat library. The improvement enabled much better processing of data and an enhanced library for better threat identification.

ASPJ brought the Tomcat the first real onboard jamming system for protection against enemy radars. Although not optimized for the Tomcat, ASPJ vastly expanded its self-protection capability.

With these new systems installed at the end of 1996, the BOUNTY HUNTERS were given the tools to make 1997 the "Year of the Bullet" - and that is exactly what the squadron did.

The 1997 Fiscal year began with aircrew flying with the new systems and training for their new missions at NAS Oceana. In the middle of January, the squadron transported their twelve aircraft to NAS North Island in San Diego, California for Joint Fleet Exercise (JTFEX). From January 13th - 26th, the squadron was deployed onboard the USS Constellation (CV-64) for the exercise. During this time the squadron had one LANTIRN pod and one NVG cockpit. For the first time the Bullets were employing in their new role as self-escort Strike-Fighters carrying precision guided munitions. This included carrier based strikes from the training area west of San Diego, up to the China Lake ranges and back without refueling. This long range striking was the first demonstration of the outstanding performance of the Tomcat and was a sign of the things to come for the BOUNTY HUNTERS.

Due to the short time before their next boat detachment, a command decision was made to keep the squadron on the west coast. This provided a time for the squadron to practice more of their new air-to-ground role. VF-2 made Miramar their home for this detachment. During the two weeks, strikes were performed into the Chocolate Mountains (R2507) and the MCAS Yuma Tacts range. This included several Strike Fighter Weapons Training (SFWT) flights to qualify aircrew as flight leads and mission commanders.

Fleet Exercise (FLEETEX) followed between February 11th and 23rd. This time the BOUNTY HUNTERS performed their traditional role of defending the battle group against attack. The two week simulation stretched the fleets assets, but the Bullets were there throughout. When the training finally ended, the squadron flew across the entire country back to NAS Oceana.

Between February 24th and March 27th, the BOUNTY HUNTERS made the most of their pre-overseas movement period. The final jets were modified and the squadron packed for cruise. The remainder of squadron materials were placed in storage since VF-2 was scheduled to relocate to Hangar 200 at NAS Oceana post-deployment. It was a busy few weeks, but everyone made the most of their time at home in preparation for the upcoming deployment.

After the cross-country flight required to join the Constellation, the boat left the NAS North Island pier on April 1st - signaling the official beginning of cruise. The jets flew on from NAS North Island and were all safely aboard on April 2nd.

While heading for Sydney, Australia, the ship's Point of Intended Movement (PIM) began falling behind, resulting in several flights being canceled to make up for lost time. The BOUNTY HUNTERS used this time to continue training for the upcoming threat and reviewing the details of their new systems. The ship officially crossed the Equator and the International Date Line on April 16th, but the ceremony to rid the ship of Pollywogs was delayed until the following month when the ship would once again pass across the equator.

Sydney found the Bullets in their first foreign country. Several squadron members participated in the Anzac (Australian Memorial Day) parade, marching next to the Australian military forces. The city was amazing, and the MWR trips included everything from tours through the Blue Mountains to time on the beaches of Bondi. The Ship pulled out on May 7th, headed for the opposite coast of Australia.

Transiting south of Australia, the roughest seas of cruise were encountered. The inclement weather caused the cancellation of several flights and put gray hairs on the heads of the aircrew that were able to launch. Pitching decks were standard with a peak of plus or minus fifteen feet. VF-2 and the Airwing met the challenge professionally, safely and remained mishap free.

The ship next pulled into Fremantle, Australia. Most of the free time was spent in the wonderful city of Perth, just up the river. The people were extremely friendly, making the BOUNTY HUNTERS feel right at home. The time in Australia was enjoyed to the utmost, however the personnel knew the next few months wouldn't be so carefree.

The transit north to the Persian Gulf was uneventful until the ship crossed the Equator a second time. Finally, the Pollywogs were cleansed from the ship. Everyone had a good time and the ship was now full of experienced Shellbacks. Shortly thereafter however, the Constellation's scheduled time to reach the Arabian Gulf was shortened by 24 hours, causing the ship to sprint the last few days.

The Constellation's station in the Gulf was primarily just north of Farsi Island. Flights into Iraq began within 3 days of arriving and the first VF-2 jet over hostile terrain occurred on May 22nd. During that flight, the BOUNTY HUNTERS accepted the now familiar role as an embedded Strike-Fighter sanitizing the airspace for violators of the UN no-fly zone. Sortie's continued with two to three per day and two VF-2 aircraft in each.

The summer Gulf weather and combat loads provided the ultimate challenge for the heavy Tomcats launching off the deck with light winds and high temperatures. These factors forced the decision to light load the aircraft with 20% less fuel to accommodate the weight of the combat stores and still launch airborne safely. Fortunately, the Constellation's short seventy-five minute cycle time for operations enabled the Tomcats to execute their mission with less fuel. The short cycle did present a challenge for the maintenance and ordnance personnel however, by reducing the time allotted for preparing the aircraft for flight. The BOUNTY HUNTER maintainers met the challenge and kept the jets flying - truly a testament to their professionalism and dedication.

For a short period while VF-2 was in the Gulf, the United States Air Force was unable to fly out of Saudi Arabia and the United States Navy was expected to "carry the load". This included performing the mission of patrolling the no fly zone, and flying fighter cover for the U-2's as they conducted surveillance flights. The new missions were done while still accomplishing their own, which included photographing areas of interest using both the standard TARPS and the new Digital TARPS.

In addition to the missions, VF-2 participated in simulating two major strikes. The first was a night strike that included both the Air Force and the Navy. The BOUNTY HUNTERS sent four Tomcats for long range LGB strikes and all four brought back outstanding video of what would have been an overwhelmingly successful strike. The second was an exclusively Navy day strike with over 50 aircraft. VF-2 provided four strikers in the air-to-ground role and four fighters in the air-to-air role. The all-Navy

practice strike showed the power of an aircraft carrier and the versatility that the new Super Tomcats bring to the fight.

The final Operation Southern Watch sortie was flown on July 30th, with the ship transiting out of the Gulf on August 4th. While in the Gulf, the ship pulled into Jebel Ali on three occasions. Each of these visits saw more freedom than the previous, yet the squadron was still extremely restricted due to social tensions. The Jebel Ali visits did, however, provide some time off during the day and even a quick trip into Dubai for some shopping and dining opportunities. Most personnel just took this time to enjoy the lack of operational tempo and attempt to fight the heat of the summer in the Gulf. In between the three visits to Jebel Ali, the squadron discovered that the port visits were not the only way to find relaxation. Operations were stopped for one day to drop anchor and have a steel beach picnic. Everyone enjoyed the day of relaxing on the normally hectic and dangerous flight deck.

When the Constellation departed the Gulf, the focus of the cruise changed from the operational mindset to a more benign role of basic training. VF-2's first opportunity for training was Exercise Inspired Alert, conducted with the Pakistani Air Force. Bad weather prevented the Pakistanis from participating most days. When weather permitted however, Air Combat Maneuvers (ACM) training was accomplished against Pakistani F-16's, MiG-21's, and Mirage III's. During the exercise, aircrew were also given the opportunity to go ashore and fly in these aircraft. The up-close look at the performance of the Pakistani aircraft created an even greater appreciation for the Tomcat.

When the exercise was complete, the ship continued homeward bound - but not without several port calls along the way. The beautiful city/country of Singapore was the first of the selected locations and was a nice change from the port visits in the Gulf. The following stop was the port of Hong Kong, which had just turned over to the Communist Chinese in July. The change in politics proved to be totally unnoticeable and the BOUNTY HUNTERS enjoyed the modern city immensely.

After leaving Hong Kong, the trip home was greatly anticipated by everyone. A quick stop in Sasebo, Japan was scheduled to unload ordnance from the ship. Here, some personnel were able take a day trip to visit the historic city of Nagasaki. Upon leaving Japan, the next stop would be in the United States.

The transit across the Pacific once again found the Constellation in some rough seas. The ship was following a northern great circle route and again the flying was light due to weather. During this time, the remaining ordnance was transferred off the ship - signaling the end of Constellation's ability to project power. The long journey ended with the ship pulling into Everett, Washington. This was to enable the Tiger Cruise members to board, and for the ship's personnel to enjoy themselves with trips down to Seattle. Being in the United States was a large step forward, but it wasn't home for the BOUNTY HUNTERS - that was still a few days away.

The Constellation pulled out on September 27th heading to her home in San Diego, California. The Tigers onboard were treated to a flight cycle demonstration and preparations began for the fly-off. The morning of September 29th finally came and, with weather clearing across the country, the BOUNTY HUNTERS "manned up" for their trip home. All fourteen aircraft launched, rendezvoused overhead and commenced the cross-country trip. Tanking support was waiting just outside of Nevada and flew with VF-2 to

Kansas. After "topping off" one last time, the formation headed unescorted toward Virginia Beach. The aircraft then flew in an impressive fourteen jet diamond while passing overhead NAS Oceana. One of the most integral parts of the fly-in, the maintenance personnel, arrived in Oceana the evening of October 1st after the Constellation had arrived in NAS North Island that morning.

Cruise marked the peak of the Bullets power. VF-2's fourteen Super Tomcats were the most potent group of Strike-Fighters the Navy had ever deployed. This would be the last time the fourteen aircraft would be together, as all F-14 squadrons were downsized to ten jets.

Post-overseas movement found the BOUNTY HUNTERS reacquainting themselves with their families. It was also a time to put the jets through long-term maintenance, while others were given to other F-14D squadrons to help meet their operational requirements.

One final detachment for the year was conducted for gunnery practice in Key West, Florida. Here the BOUNTY HUNTERS once again proved that they hadn't lost the edge. The competitions of Grand Slam and High Noon were conducted with most banners returning with over one hundred hits. In fact, nine of eleven pilots achieved individual "E's" for excellence in air-to-air gunnery.

The year closed out quietly for VF-2. Being low priority for maintenance support and having most of the aircraft out of reporting status allowed little flying. The year was over and it was time to look forward to building again for the next deployment.

Both operationally and in training, VF-2 proved that 1997 was the "Year of the Bullet." The BOUNTY HUNTERS were awarded the COMNAVAIRPAC Battle Efficiency and Boola-Boola Awards, and the CNO Safety "S" Award. A well earned group of awards given to an outstanding strike fighter squadron.



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMBATANT COMMAND
FIGHTER SQUADRON TWO
UNITED STATES
FPO 31 098 04-0101

1650
Ser 00 005
5 Jan 98

From: Commanding Officer, Fighter Squadron TWO
To: Commander, Fighter Wing, U.S. Atlantic Fleet

Subj: ANNUAL AVIATION AWARDS DATA FOR 1997

Ref: (a) COMFITWINGLANTINST 1650.1K

Encl: (1) Fighter Squadron TWO Annual Aviation Awards Data for 1997

1. In accordance with reference (a), the Bounty Hunters take great pride in submitting enclosure (1) for the competitive period 1 January through 31 December 1997.

2. The Bounty Hunters enjoyed a record setting year thanks to hard work, dedication, tactical innovation, and tenacity. In spite of seemingly insurmountable obstacles, from last minute aircraft modifications to enduring the rigors of the Arabian Gulf summer while deployed on a conventional carrier, the "Bullets" persevered in superior fashion. Words cannot adequately describe the pride I feel in the teamwork and professionalism displayed by my officers and men over the past year. They truly embody the warrior concept that has made this Nation great and that symbolizes Battle Efficiency Award Performance.

3. I honestly believe that this command performed above and beyond in setting the stage as the first West Coast deployer to execute a complete set of work-ups and deployment post homeport. Change. Exceptionally talented people, doing an outstanding job, have propelled us to the top.

**FIGHTER SQUADRON TWO
ANNUAL AVIATION AWARDS DATA FOR 1997**

1. Per reference (a), the following data is submitted:

a. OPERATIONS:

- (1) Sorties - 2,302 Total, 1,465 Day, 837 Night.
- (2) Hours - 4,011.6 Total, 2,867.6 Day, 1,144.0 Night.
- (3) Sorties Embarked - 1,580 Total, 875 Day, 705 Night.
- (4) Hours Embarked - 2,617.5 Total, 1,649.1 Day, 968.4 Night.
- (5) CV Landings - 1,698 Total, 986 Day, 712 Night.
- (6) Landing Grades - 3.431 Overall, 3.441 Day, 3.417 Night.
- (7) Boarding Rate - 94.2% Overall, 95.6% Day, 92.1% Night.
- (8) Ordnance Expenditures - Air-to-Air - 14 Allocated/ 7 Used.¹
Air-to-Ground - 316 Allocated/ 304 Used.
Expendables - 45,179 Allocated/ 45,074 Used.
- (9) Contributions to weapons system and tactical development.
 - Introduced and incorporated the F-14D/NVG/LANTIRN/FAC 'A' concept to OPERATION SOUTHERN WATCH. Performance on "Killer Scout" missions absolutely superb. Proved concept and set the stage for others to follow.
 - Introduced and incorporated the F-14D/FAC 'A' as Rescue Mission Commander (RMC) for CSAR in the CJTF-SWA and Fifth Fleet AOR. Flawless execution during two major CSAREX's as well as real world alert operations.
 - Key participant in ARABIAN SKIES Theater Ballistic Missile Defense exercise. Bullet aircraft availability and professionalism critical to the success of National Command Authority - level interest program.
 - Lead squadron in exercise INSPIRED ALERT multinational operations with Pakistan. Provided ideal "boiler-plate" for follow on exercises.

¹ Air-to-Air ordnance expenditure fell short of NCEA because one SWATSLANT and five CVW-2 missile firing exercises were canceled for weather and airspace considerations while deployed.

- Bullet aircrew filled critical TAD billets on CJTF-SWA staff resulting in seamless integration of CVW-2 assets in joint Operation Southern Watch operations.
- Forefront of Constellation Battle Group AAW crossdeck program, lending valuable expertise to surface combatants, vastly improving Battle Space Management.

(10) General contributions to the TOMCAT community:

- First West coast deploying F-14 squadron to complete work-up/deployment cycle from NAS Oceana. Numerous lessons learned provided great benefits to entire community.
- First West coast squadron to deploy with LANTIRN. In spite of minimal assets prior to cruise, performance in Operation Southern Watch eye-watering. VF-2 became the “go-to” unit for the most difficult targets during monthly CJTF-SWA sponsored joint strikes. Immeasurably enhanced the F-14 reputation in the joint operational arena of Southern Iraq.
- First West coast squadron and first F-14D squadron to deploy with TARPS DI. Through herculean efforts, completed install while on station with no impacts on operational requirements. Successful Digital Imagery after only two flights which became the most highly visible tasking from the CJTF-SWA.
- Multiple articles submitted for official publication
 - ◆ “Why Miramar?” Establishment of a Permanent F-14 Detachment as NAS Miramar - submitted to Proceedings.
 - ◆ “Close Air Support” submitted to Approach.
 - ◆ “LANTIRN and the F-14D” submitted to NSAWC Journal.
 - ◆ “The F-14D and FAC ‘A’... A Match Made in Heaven” submitted to Proceedings.
 - ◆ “Custer’s Last Cruise” The Lessons We Haven’t Learned On Cruise - submitted to Proceedings.

- ◆ “The Evolution of the Merge” submitted to NSAWC Journal.
- ◆ “F-14D Over Iraq” submitted to NSAWC Journal.

b. SAFETY:

- (1) Total number of reports submitted - 49 Total, 2 HAZREPS, 47 NAMDRIP.
- (2) Number of articles submitted - 7 Total, 3 Pro-of-the-Week, 4 Safety
- (3) Dates of squadron safety standdowns - 6 JAN, 8 APR, 28 MAY, 17 AUG, 19 SEP, 11 DEC.
- (4) Number of NATOPS changes submitted - 14.
- (5) Dates of outside Safety Surveys - 1 DEC (CFWL).
- (6) Class A Mishap-Free Flight Hours/ Years - 23,593.1 hours/ 5 years, 11 months, 18 days.