

## VFA-22 Fighting Redcock Squadron History

Fighting Redcocks of Strike Fighter Squadron TWENTY-TWO have been a critical element of Naval Aviation for over 56 years. Originally commissioned as Fighter Squadron SIXTY-THREE at Naval Air Station (NAS) Norfolk, Virginia in 1948, the squadron was re-designated as Attack Squadron 22 in July 1959. The first Redcock aviators flew the F-8F BEARCAT. Later Redcocks flew the F-4U CORSAIR, F9F-2/5 PANTHER, F9F-6/8 COUGAR, FJ-4B FURY, A-4B/C/D/F SKYHAWK, A-7E CORSAIR II, and the FA-18C Hornet. Today, the 220 enlisted men and women and 26 officers of VFA-22 are based in NAS Lemoore, California, and maintain and fly the FA-18E Super Hornet.

Over the past 56 years, the Fighting Redcocks have been repeatedly called into action in support of national objectives. Over the years, the squadron completed three combat deployments during the Korean War and six combat deployments during the Vietnam War. In April 1988, while in the Arabian Gulf, VA-22 aircraft participated in sinking the Iranian Frigate SAHAND which fired missiles at two American A-6 Intruders. In 1993, the Fighting Redcocks

deployed aboard the USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CVN 72) to the Arabian Gulf and participated in Operation SOUTHERN WATCH, enforcing the United Nations southern no-fly zone sanctions over Iraq. Before returning home from deployment, the squadron diverted to the coast of Somalia and provided air support during Operation CONTINUE HOPE. In December 1998, VFA-22 led the only Carrier Air Wing ELEVEN air strike of Operation DESERT FOX, which significantly degraded Iraq's capability to produce and deliver weapons of mass destruction. In October 2001, VFA-22 was the first on the scene with USS CARL VINSON (CVN 70) to perform strikes against Taliban and Al Qaeda forces in Afghanistan in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. In 2003, VFA-22 deployed with Carrier Air Wing NINE on board USS CARL VINSON (CVN 70) on an extended eight month Western Pacific deployment in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

The Fighting Redcocks have also participated in several peacetime missions, including providing assistance in evacuating American service members and their family members from the Philippines after the eruption of Mount Pinatubo.

Throughout its history, VFA-22 has consistently made a significant and positive impact on naval aviation's drive

for operational excellence and increased combat capabilities. In 1985, the squadron was the first West Coast squadron to successfully employ an AGM-88 High Speed Anti-Radiation Missile. In 1993, VFA-22 was the first squadron to deploy with the AIM-120 AMRAAM Advanced Medium Range Air to Air Missile. In 1999, Fighting Redcock aviators employed the AGM-54 JSOW Joint Stand-Off Weapon in combat for the first time and achieved a 100 percent kill ratio. Again in 2001, VFA-22 entered the fray during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and not only employed more ordnance than any other Navy squadron, but was one of the first to integrate the JDAM (Joint Direct Attack Munition) in the close air support arena.

During the command's fifty-plus-year history, the Fighting Redcocks have deployed on fifteen different aircraft carriers, under the command of eight separate Operational Commanders, Carrier Air Group SIX (CVG-6), Carrier Air Group TWO (CVG-2) which was redesignated Carrier Air Wing TWO (CVW-2) in December 1963, Carrier Air Wing NINETEEN (CVW-19), Carrier Air Wing FIVE (CVW-5), Carrier Air Wing FIFTEEN (CVW-15), Carrier Air Wing ELEVEN (CVW-11), Carrier Air Wing NINE (CVW-9), and Carrier Air Wing FOURTEEN (CVW-14). Throughout its illustrious history, VFA-22 has won

many distinctive honors. The squadron won the Commander, Light Attack Wing Pacific Fleet, John L. Nicholson Retention Award in 1980 and 1981. The squadron also won the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, Golden Anchor Retention Award and the Rear Admiral Clarence Wade McClusky Award as the best Attack Squadron in the United States Navy in 1981. The Fighting Redcocks have also earned two Meritorious Unit Commendations, three Bruce Carrier Awards for Excellence in Aviation Maintenance, the Scott F. Kirby Award for ordnance excellence, and five Battle "E" awards. In 1999, the Secretary of the Navy awarded the squadron the Navy Unit Commendation (NUC) for its role during Operation DESERT FOX and recently, the squadron was awarded its second NUC for participation in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. The squadron also earned the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet Retention Excellence Award for 2000 and 2001. Squadron achievements in 2003 included the Bruce Carrier Award for maintenance excellence and Commander, Carrier Air Wing NINE's endorsement for the 2003 Secretary of Defense Maintenance Award and Battle "E".

In August 2004, the Redcocks successfully transitioned to the Navy's newest and most technologically advanced strike fighter aircraft, the FA-18E Super Hornet.

In October 2004, the squadron participated in Dissimilar Air Combat Training in Fargo, North Dakota with the Happy Hooligans of Fighter Squadron 178.

Additionally, the Redcocks participated in EXERCISE Resultant Fury with the U.S. Air Force. During this exercise the Redcocks successfully released modified Joint Stand Off Weapons (JSOW) against moving maritime targets.

In December, the Redcocks officially became part of Carrier Air Wing FOURTEEN and embarked onboard the USS RONALD REAGAN (CVN-76) for flight deck certification and carrier qualifications.

The Officers and Sailors of the VFA-22 Fighting Redcocks are proud of the splendid accomplishments and noteworthy achievements of their predecessors. Armed with a rich heritage and high standards established by those from our cherished past, VFA-22 continues to strive for tactical excellence and remains ready to execute any contingency operation when directed by National Command Authority in support of national security objectives.