



DECLASSIFIED

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
USS CONSTELLATION (CVA-64)  
FLEET POST OFFICE  
SAN FRANCISCO, 96601

1973  
USS Constellation  
IN REPLY REFER TO:  
CVA64/GLO:evs  
5750  
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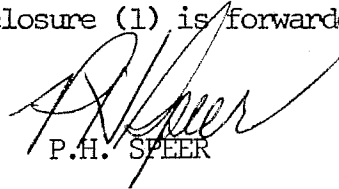
From: Commanding Officer, USS CONSTELLATION (CVA 64)  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-0502D2)

Subj: Command History update; forwarding of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5757.12B

Encl: (1) Command History update for period of 1 July 1972 to  
1 Nov 1973 w/copy of Presidential Unit Citation

1. In accordance with reference (a) enclosure (1) is forwarded.

  
P.H. SPEER

Copy to:  
Director of Naval History  
CINCPACFLT  
COMNAVAIRPAC

COMMAND HISTORY UPDATE  
FOR PERIOD  
1 July 1972 - 1 Nov 1973  
USS CONSTELLATION CVA-64

Enclosure (1)

After a three month Selective Restricted Availability period CONSTELLATION began Refresher Training, Carrier Qualifications, and saw the return of Air Wing Nine. While operating off the Southern California coast in early November, Capt. J.D. Ward decided to bring the CONSTELLATION in due to a fresh water shortage. When she left the next morning she also left behind a beach detachment of 130 sailors, mostly blacks, who had protested conditions on board. The CONSTELLATION returned the next evening with an A-7 Corsair aircraft hanging precariously over the angled deck. On the 10th of December, CONSTELLATION again returned to NAS North Island, this time with an F-4J Phantom II perched in the catwalk next to the angle deck, almost exactly the same position as the earlier A-7 had occupied.

On January 5, 1973, the CONSTELLATION left on her seventh combat cruise in the Western Pacific and on January 31, she arrived on the line to begin operations. Less than a month later, the Navy's participation in actual combat sorties came to an end with the signing of the Laotian cease-fire. CONSTELLATION and her Air Wing then stood by, remaining on station during the entire month of March while tense negotiations continued for the release of U.S. POW's. Additionally, CVW-9 aircraft flew from the deck of CONSTELLATION in support of the mine-sweeping operations being conducted in North Vietnamese waters.

The transition from combat operations to peacetime training and readiness operations was a welcome change on board CONSTELLATION. Attack Carrier Air Wing Nine still flew over 26,000 hours, but the in-port periods came more frequently.

Enclosure (1)

On March 19, CONSTELLATION became flagship for Task Force 77 and served in that capacity until September 19. On April 10, Captain P.H. Speer relieved Captain J.D. Ward in Subic Bay, R.P.

The CONSTELLATION's crew who had previously worked so hard in contributing to the war effort now turned their efforts toward the image of the Seventh Fleet Navymen in the Far East. Supporting "Operation Schoolhouse," over \$2,700 was donated to enable deserving indigent Philippine children to continue their education beyond the sixth grade. An appeal from the city of Bias in Negros Oriental province evoked a response by the crew in excess of \$1,500 for much-needed rice. Additionally, desperately needed well and pump equipment was provided for a Negrito village, and medicine was provided for a Red Cross Blood Bank in Hong Kong. Also mindful of our tradition to care for our own, CONSTELLATION and Carrier Air Wing Nine contributed \$10,000 for the Navy Relief Society in San Diego and on the return transit from WestPac donated \$27,000 for the Combined Federal Campaign.

On 1 July, 1973, the nation's highest unit award, the Presidential Unit Citation, was awarded to the CONSTELLATION by President Nixon for "...extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of duty in action against an armed enemy..."

On October 11, CONSTELLATION returned to San Diego, completing her eighth Western Pacific deployment since being commissioned.

Enclosure (1)



By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, I have today awarded

THE PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION (NAVY)

FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM TO

USS CONSTELLATION (CVA-64)

and

ATTACK CARRIER AIR WING NINE (CVW-9)

For extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of duty in action against an armed enemy in Southeast Asia from 22 October 1971 to 13 June 1972. During this period, USS CONSTELLATION and embarked Attack Carrier Air Wing NINE conducted extensive aerial day and night strikes, armed reconnaissance, and aerial mining in a determined campaign to halt massive infiltration of men and materials by the North Vietnamese into the Republic of Vietnam. Encountering an extremely formidable anti-aircraft defense network, CONSTELLATION strike aircraft nonetheless achieved exceptionally impressive battle damage results and succeeded in interdicting land and waterborne supply routes, thereby contributing directly to the halt of the enemy infiltration and invasion. By their courage, professional competence, teamwork, and dedication, the officers and men of USS CONSTELLATION and Attack Carrier Air Wing NINE reflected great credit upon themselves, their ship, and the United States Naval Service.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Richard Nixon".